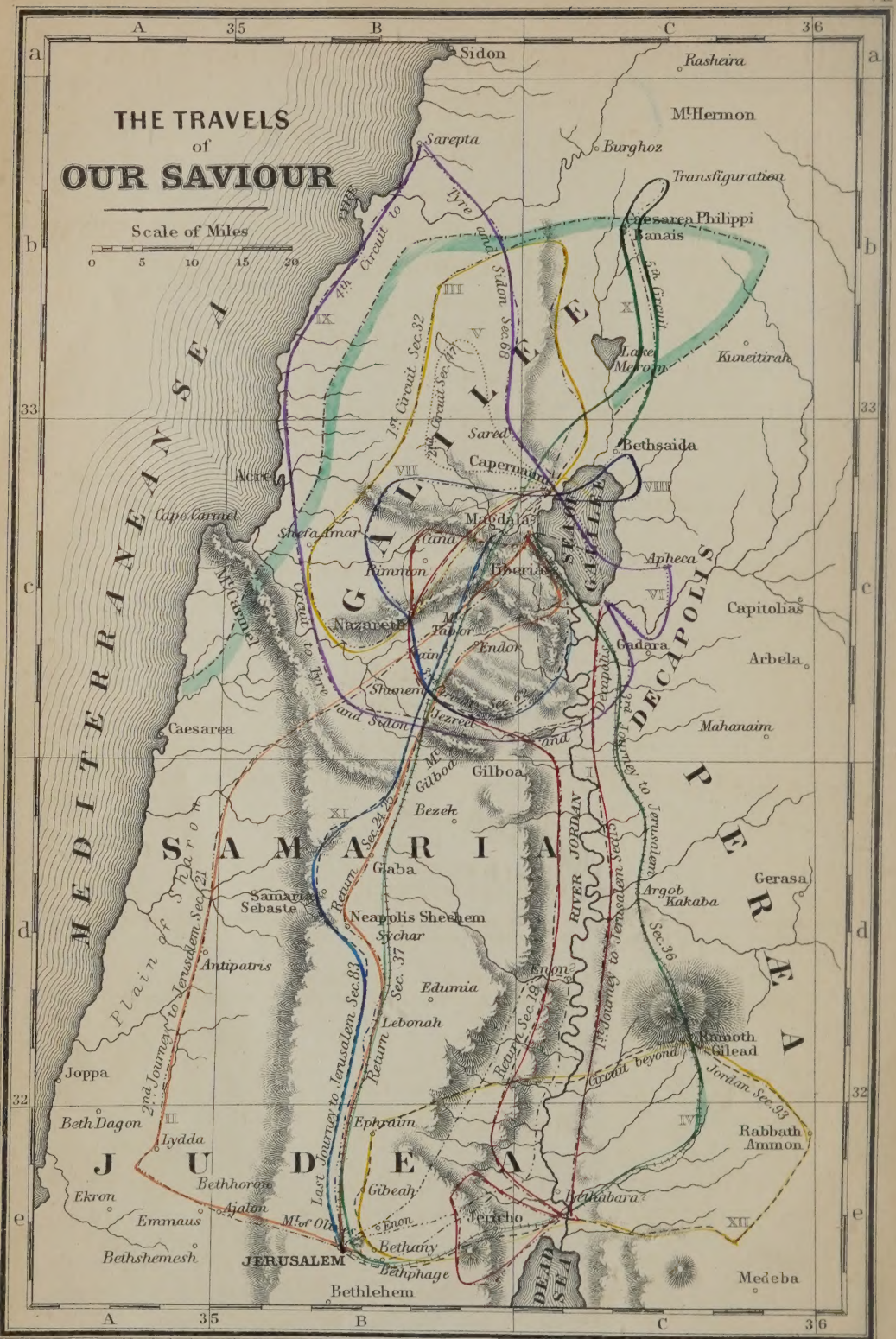
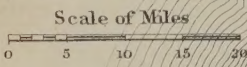


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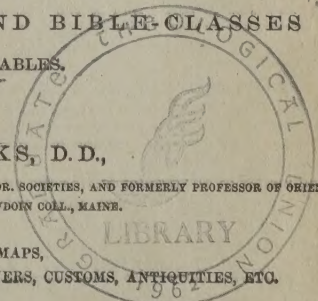
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PUBLISHERS' ADVERTISEMENT.

98-13128

THIS work is designed to accomplish the following purposes:

1st. To combine, as far as possible, in one work of reasonable and convenient compass, and at a price to bring it within the reach of all, the peculiar excellencies and advantages of *Henry's*, *Scott's*, and *Doddridge's* Commentaries (confessedly the most popular and useful in the language,) together with a large quantity of matter, explanatory and illustrative of the Scriptures, from other sources.

2d. To present the whole, thus collected and combined, in a form at once attractive and convenient for *family use* and private reading, with special reference also to the wants of SABBATH SCHOOLS and BIBLE CLASSES.

3d. In the selections, the aim has been throughout, on the one hand, to be as full as possible, drawing largely from the rich sources opened by a range of as many as a *hundred authors*; and, on the other hand, to guard against tediousness and repulsiveness, by too great minuteness. The design has been to draw out the *best parts of the best writers*, with a strict watchfulness that every part should be *evangelical, plain, familiar, and applicatory*, and adapted to the exigencies of our country and the times, and suited to the wants of the great body of the people. To this end all words in foreign languages are omitted in the critical notes and quotations.

Each of the leading Commentaries forming the main body of this work has its peculiar advantages, and its friends and admirers; and each has its defects. It is hoped that here, the advantages of all will be found combined without their defects, so that the admirers of each may here meet on common ground. To accomplish this object, great care has been taken. The *Text*, according to the authorized version in common use, is arranged in a column by itself, to admit of its being read independently of all remarks; to this are added the popular and full *Marginal References* of Scott, *entire*; *Henry's Exposition or Commentary* will be found slightly abridged, or, more properly, perhaps, condensed; but every useful or important thought is retained, and in his own language, and this is also placed by itself in columns parallel with and by the side of the text, so as to be read independently of all the rest.

At the end of every suitable division of the text are placed the Practical Observations of Scott, arranged separately as in his own work; and at the bottom of the page is a large body of Explanatory, Illustrative, and Critical Notes, containing whatever in addition is valuable in Scott and Doddridge, with copious selections from Adam Clarke, Gill, Burder, Calmet, Rosenmueller, Bloomfield, and many other authors. Wherever it is practicable, wood engravings, illustrative of the subjects, are introduced. Thus an amalgamation of the different authors is carefully guarded against, and each reader may often consult his own favorite. In the notes, also, the manners and customs, natural history, geography, botany, &c., of the Bible, are fully illustrated.

It is therefore believed that this work offers to the reader more advantages than the possession of the works of Henry, Scott, and Doddridge themselves would, even could they all together be procured at the same expense; as he is saved the trouble of turning over and searching for a passage in three different works, and finding much of the same matter in all, besides having the additional views of many other esteemed writers.

In the abridgment of Henry, great carefulness has been used, so that his most jealous friends should not be offended by any liberties taken; and it is confidently believed it will be found much more pleasant reading in this form than in the original.

On the *Doctrines*, it may confidently be asserted that Henry, Scott, and Doddridge, speak their own opinions unadulterated and entire. Where anything has been omitted from Scott, it was because it is anticipated in the remarks of Henry.

In the mechanical department the publishers have exerted themselves to the utmost to present the work in a handsome and durable form. In carrying their plan into execution, an expense will be incurred surpassing that attending any other work ever issued in America, with one or two exceptions; and they have fixed the price so low, that nothing but an extensive sale can sustain them in the enterprise. They are happy, however, in saying, that the encouragement thus far given has been *unparalleled* in this country.

In using this work in family worship, it is not recommended that all the remarks should be read, but with a portion of text the observations of Scott, which are more particularly designed for that object, or selections of the *practical parts* of Henry. Difficult passages will occasionally render a resort to the explanatory notes needful.

THE NEW TESTAMENT OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST.

INTRODUCTION WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO 'THE FOUR GOSPELS'

GENERAL VIEW.

WITHOUT enlarging on the great desirableness of a revelation from God, and its appropriate evidences subjects referred mainly to the Introduction of this work at large, the state of the Jews themselves, as acknowledged by their own historian, and much more that of the heathen, might be assumed as needing the interposition of the Most High. 'I deem it unnecessary,' observes Dr. PALEY, 'to prove that mankind stood in need of a revelation, because I have met with no serious person who thinks that even under the Christian revelation we have too much light, or any assurance which is superfluous.' And he adds, 'I desire, moreover, that, in judging of Christianity, it may be remembered, that the question lies between this religion, and none: for if the Christian religion be not credible, no one, with whom we have to do, will support any other.*' Such, indeed, was the state of the question in his day; but in ours, the Gospel has come again in contact with Judaism, and with Mohammedism, Hindooism, and almost every other form of false religion:† nevertheless, it stands, and not only so, but advances; and its progress, as the church of Christ believes, will be bounded only by the extent of our world. This view of it rests on its intimate connection with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, of which it is to be considered as in fact a necessary continuation, or completion. For 'the New Testament is founded on the Old; proceeds on the supposition of its divine origin, and professes to be the accomplishment of the plan laid down in its prophecies and typical institutions. "Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever He shall say unto you. Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days."‡ And when Paul was arraigned before the Roman governor, he declared that he asserted 'none other things than Moses and the prophets did say should come.¶ Hence it is justly remarked by Dr. SCOTT: 'The history, contained in this part of Scripture, is an exact counterpart of the prophecies, promises, and types of the Old Testament, in respect of its grand Subject, the great Redeemer and his kingdom and salvation. An enlightened student of the Old Testament, before the coming of Christ, must have expected exactly such events, and such changes in the outward state of the church, as the New Testament records: and the sole reason, why the Jews in general, and the apostles in particular, for a time, did not expect such events and changes, is, "their understandings were not opened to understand the Scriptures." A careful and constant examination of the sacred volume, diligently comparing one part with another, renders this manifest; so that it is possible, and perhaps not difficult, to form a connected narrative of all the grand outlines of the history, contained in the New Testament, from the very words of the Old. The person of the Redeemer as Emmanuel, his descent in human nature from Judah, and from David when the family was reduced to poverty and obscurity; his miraculous conception, his birth at Bethlehem, his character miracles, and doctrine; the reception given him by his countrymen, the unparalleled contempt and enmity shown Him, the manner and all the circumstances of his death and burial, even to minute particulars; the end and design of his sufferings and death, his resurrection, ascension, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit the conversion of vast multitudes, the obstinate unbelief and opposition of the Jewish nation, the tremendous judgments of God on them for these crimes; the abrogation of the ceremonial law, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the calling of the Gentiles, the glorious triumphs of Christianity, and indeed the state of the church, through all intervening ages, till the consummation of all things, might be related in

Evidences of Christianity. Preparatory considerations.
The mention of several systems of belief recalls the pithy representation, made by an able advocate of Christianity, of the grand apology of deists for declining to believe it: "Various theological systems equally and respectively claim to be a revelation from heaven. But it is impossible that every one of these systems can be a divine revelation. Therefore, no one of them is." This is the sum total of Mr. Volney's

entire argument, in his celebrated work. Apply its principle, and see its validity: various bank-notes equally and respectively claim to be genuine. But it is proved that many of them are forgeries. Therefore, logically, all are forgeries.' See 'Difficulties of Infidelity,' by Rev. G. S. FAIRB.
1 Acts 3: 22, 24. Dick on the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures.
¶ Acts 26: 22.

the words of the prophets, only by substituting, in a few instances, the past for the future tense. To a degree so astonishing do the two divisions of the sacred Scriptures confirm and illustrate each other!*

TITLE.

From an early period, it appears that the name of 'New Testament,' though neither given by divine command, nor applied by the apostles, was adopted, to designate the collection of writings composed after the ascension of Christ, and acknowledged by his followers to be of divine authority and origin.† This title however, is justified by several passages in Scripture, (Matt. 26: 28. Gal. 3: 17. Heb. 8: 8. 9: 15—20.) and warranted particularly by the apostle Paul, 2 Cor. 3: 14. In these passages, the original word denotes a COVENANT, and had been, by the apocryphal writers, assigned to the Old Testament, or to the five books of Moses.‡ 'This translation must be adopted,' observes MICHAELIS, 'if respect be had to the texts of Scripture, from which the name is borrowed; and beside, a Being incapable of death, can neither have made an old, nor make a new testament.' But SCOTT judiciously remarks: 'the word signifies a stipulation between two or more contracting parties; sometimes, the absolute appointment of a person in matters entirely at his own disposal; more rarely, a last Will. It is called the *New Testament* in contra-distinction to the *Old*; not as if the one contained only the old covenant of works, and the other the new covenant of grace; but because the New Testament gives an account of the abrogation of the old dispensation, and of the introduction of one both new and better. The Mosaic law, the national covenant made with Israel, and the Levitical priesthood, formed as it were an edition both of the covenant of works and of the covenant of grace: but at the coming of Christ, the end being answered, this was antiquated and set aside; and the Christian dispensation, containing clearer light and greater encouragement, not attended with burdensome ceremonies, or clouded by types and shadows, or restricted to any place or nation, formed a new edition of the covenant of grace; yet so that unbelievers continue, as of old, under "the ministration of death," the covenant of works. This dispensation, therefore, is compendiously called "The New Covenant," or "The New Testament," with reference to the death of Christ the Mediator.'

DIVISION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Although at different periods, and for different purposes, various divisions have been made of the books of the New Testament, yet they may very conveniently be arranged into *Historical, Doctrinal, and Prophetic*. This, however, is not so to be understood, as that one of the classes shall exclude the subjects of the other: for, like the books of the Old Testament, those of the New are of a mixed nature, and contain *history, prophecy, and doctrine*. The books that may be termed *historical*, are the writings of the four evangelists, narrating the life, conversations, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, together with the 'Acts' written by one of them: the Epistles comprise the *doctrinal* division, and the *prophetic* is the book of 'Revelation.'§ Thus 'the canon of the New Testament,' as Bp. TOMLINE remarks, consists of twenty-seven books, which were written by eight authors, all of whom were cotemporary with our Savior. These books were written at different times, and at places remote from each other; and when the latest of them was published, the Gospel had been preached, and churches founded, in many parts of Asia, Europe, and Africa. Different churches at first received different books, according to their situation and circumstances; their canons were gradually enlarged, and it was not long, though the precise time is not known, before the same, or very nearly the same books were acknowledged by Christians of all countries. Persecutions, and other causes, prevented, for several centuries, any general assembly for settling their canon; and we must therefore have recourse to ecclesiastical writers; among whom it is satisfactory to find an almost perfect agreement.'

INSPIRATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

'It does not rest its claim, to be received as a divine revelation,' observes Dr. SCOTT, 'on the Old Testament merely, and the evidences by which that is confirmed. While Christ and his apostles appealed to the ancient Scriptures, and showed "that thus it was written, and thus it must be," they confirmed their instructions, and combated the prejudices of their hearers, by the most undeniable miracles, wrought in the open face of day, before multitudes of all characters, and challenging the investigation of the most powerful, sagacious, and inveterate of their enemies. The prophecies also of our Lord, and of his apostles, interspersed through the books of the several writers of the New Testament, and fulfilled through all succeeding ages, form a demonstration of its divine authority, gathering clearness and energy by revolving centuries. Other proofs, external and internal, might be mentioned; but these hints may show, that the New Testament stands on its own basis. Indeed, it is utterly inconceivable, that Christianity could have made its way in the world, by the obscure persons who propagated it, had it not been confirmed beyond the possibility of denial.'

* Introd. to the N. T.

† MICHAELIS, Introd.

‡ Id. ibid.

§ CARPENTER

inspiration is desired to be, such an influence of the Holy Spirit on the mental powers, as perfectly to qualify men for communicating the knowledge of the will of God. Not that every thing mentioned in the Scriptures needed such an influence, in order to make it known to the writers. Many things they knew, as others, from the possession, in common with them, of intellectual faculties, of memory and judgment; in these things it was only necessary they should be preserved infallibly from error. This implies a care exercised, in the providence of God, over all the sacred writers, in whatever degree inspired, to secure a faithful relation of the histories, doctrines, prophecies and precepts they were to communicate. Other things required that they should be endowed supernaturally with more than ordinary vigor of mind. Without miraculous assistance, the evangelists, for instance, simple and illiterate men, could not have so recalled, after a lapse of years, the discourses and miracles of Christ, that no unfair, inaccurate, or confused account should be transmitted. The promise, given them by their Lord, (John 14: 26.) of the Holy Ghost, to bring to their remembrance all things whatsoever Christ had said to them, proves that their mental powers received from his agency, new strength and capacity. In several passages of Scripture, there is such elevation of thought and style, such grandeur, and a sublimity of ideas and expressions, to which the acknowledged powers of the writers bore no proportion, as must have resulted from superior influence upon them. It is also manifest, that the subjects of many passages, which no natural means could discover, nor any elevation of the faculties reach, as thoughts and purposes of the divine mind, must have been distinctly revealed. This is the just and scriptural term.*

Now, 'the writers of the New Testament speak of themselves and of each other, as divinely inspired, (Rom. 10: 14—17. 16: 25, 26. 1 Cor. 1: 21. 2: 7, 10. 7: 40. Eph. 3: 3—5. 1 Thes. 2: 13. 2 Pet. 3: 15, 16. 1 John 4: 6.) Should any then think, that, provided these writers be regarded as wise and good men, it is not so absolutely necessary to vindicate their divine inspiration; let them consider, whether laying a groundless claim to divine inspiration, be not such an impeachment of any writer's probity and veracity, as to render him unworthy of credit in all other things?†

WRITINGS OF THE FOUR EVANGELISTS.

We ordinarily speak of these under the designation of 'the four gospels.' But there is hazard of leaving an impression on the uninformed or inattentive mind, that these are distinct systems of faith. Now, it pleased God simply to commission four individuals to write the life of Christ. The display in Him of the divine mercy to men in their redemption, is the grandest work of God. But, as there never was but one way of salvation for sinners, men fallen from happiness and the favor of God by transgression; so there can be but one Gospel. Salvation began to dawn in the days of Adam; it brightened through succeeding ages, in prophecy, types and ceremonies; but when the Messiah came, it shone in its perfect splendor. And though it was the same in the respective ages of the patriarchs, prophets, and apostles, yet Christians have high advantages over the ancient church. We live more than they, under the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, who 'takes of the things of Christ, and shews them unto us.' The work of the evangelists was, to give a faithful representation of Emmanuel, the Savior. Fully have they proved, that He has done all that was necessary to redeem the world, to work out a finished salvation, and to bring in an everlasting righteousness, 'that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.' Yet each adopts his own plan and style, and records some things which the rest omit. They vary, it may be, with regard to circumstances, out all agree invariably as to facts.‡ They were competent witnesses of the facts themselves, and it is plain were neither enthusiasts nor fanatics; their whole manner and appearance, as they exhibit themselves, being, in the furthest degree, removed from such a character. They evidently relate with integrity and sincerity what they knew; had no earthly advantage to gain by imposing on men; appealed to miracles which were undeniable, and to other notorious proofs, and suffered every thing for the truth of their narration, even death itself.§

PROOFS OF AUTHENTICITY.

It has been well said, that 'the books which bear the names of the apostles and evangelists are known to be theirs in the same way that we know the works of Cæsar, Cicero, Virgil, Horace, Tacitus, to be theirs—an unanimous or generally concurring tradition.'|| Abundant proof is afforded from the primitive age of the church of Christ, that, although there were other works handed down among different communities of professing Christians, purporting to exhibit a narrative of the life of Christ, and a history of his people, yet 'there were no other gospels but those of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, admitted by the church. This we learn from Polycarp, a cotemporary of the apostles, and from Justin Martyr, Tatian, Irenæus, Tertullian, and Clement of Alexandria, all of whom lived in the second century.'¶ From Eusebius it appears that early 'Harmonies' were made of the four narratives, that of Tatian, by its very name of *Diatessaron*, distinguishing four, and no others. Indeed the external evidences of authenticity, which have

* DICK HORNE

† SCOTT, *Intro. to N. T.*

‡ JONES.

§ HORNE.

|| LARDNER.

¶ ED. TOMLINS *CATE. &c.*

been accumulated in the ancient Christian, Jewish, and heathen Testimonies of LARDNER; the *internal*, exhibited by the very style, by a comparison of the narratives with other parts of the Scriptures, by their holy character and tendency, and the concurrence of prophetic annunciations with the simple statements of fact, corroborated by unquestionable miracles—all establish the truth and genuineness of the historical records of the evangelists, with every studious, candid, and judicious inquirer. Let an inquirer of such character but consider the force with which the evidence of independent history, relating to the period impressed the mind of the learned MICHAELIS when he wrote, 'It is sufficient, in answer to the question, "Is the New Testament ancient and genuine?"' to reply, 'COMPARE IT WITH THE HISTORY OF THE TIMES, AND YOU CANNOT DOUBT OF ITS AUTHENTICITY.' '*

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The design of this work was, not to supply the learned with critical disquisitions on the original text out to furnish the intelligent and practical Christian with the general results of such investigations, and thus to produce a *popular*, though not unlearned commentary—agreeably to the discrimination made by our distinguished countryman, Prof. STUART, to which I beg leave to refer.† The critical commentators, however, have been consulted; but, whatever writer has been quoted, the most condensed forms of expression and representation, consistent with perspicuity, and with justice to the authors, have been adopted. Indeed, it is to be acknowledged, that much acquaintance with biblical criticism, as it was in his day, is very perceptible in HENRY,‡ as it is on all hands granted to DODDRIDGE, and is generally, without the show of minute reference, found in SCOTT. With their valuable matter has been united what is additionally useful or necessary in the rich and learned, though often miscellaneous biblical labors of the late Dr. CLARKE, and the highly important collections of BLOOMFIELD, in his 'Recensio Synoptica.'

With respect to the present volume, my acknowledgments are due to several clerical gentlemen, at various times, and to a diversified extent connected with me in the labor of preparing it—through the liberality of the publishers, and their anxiety to meet the urgency of patrons for its early appearance—yet the gentlemen have not allowed me to mention their names. That of one, however, whose ill health prevented further aid, appears p. 596, in a valuable note on Luke 24: 36—48. That the LORD may prosper these, and all other labors for extending the knowledge, and the intelligent and practical use of his sacred Truth, in the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom, is the wish and prayer of the Editor,

WM. JENKS.

* introd. to N. T.

† 'Commentaries on the Scriptures may be divided into two classes, of which the first may be called *learned*, being designed to promote the critical study of the Scriptures. The circle to which this species of commentary must be confined, is that of critical students, who design to obtain a knowledge of the original. This was not the plan of Doddridge. He states his main design to be that of "promoting family religion, and to render the reading of the New Testament pleasant, and profitable to those who had not the benefit of a learned education." Of course it is the second sort of commentary, i. e. the *popular*, at which the author aims. To judge of his performance, then, by the rules we would apply to the commentaries of Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Hengstenberg, and others of the same cast, would be to judge of it by unfair analogy, and *est inæqually.*' Remarks on Doddridge's Fam. Exp.

I If any reader of this work desires to become better acquainted with Mr. Henry, let him consult his Life, written (as also that of his father, the memorable Philip Henry, and sister, Mrs. Savage) by my respected correspondent and friend, J. B. WILLIAMS, of Shrewsbury, Eng. Esq. LL. D. and F. A. S. I fully agree with Prof. STUART, that the quaintness, &c., observable in Henry is not a desirable model for our theological students; but the Professor will unquestionably agree with me, that it is desirable every student of Divinity should possess what our venerated Dr. ALEXANDER so aptly calls Henry's 'ubiquity' in the Scriptures—in every part of which he seems continually *at home*, and fresh. The quaintnesses, which belonged to his age, have, for the most part, been eliminated from the present text.

Note. If, in the references, any deficiency be found, the reader is requested to consult the Exposition.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW,

WITH AN EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

OF Matthew, surnamed Levi, the author of this Gospel, little is known, except what he has recorded of himself (1: 3. Notes, 9: 9—13.) It appears he was a Jew by birth, and by calling a publican, till Christ commanded his attendance; when he left the receipt of custom to follow the Savior, and was of those who accompanied Him all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up. Acts 1: 21, 22. This made him a competent witness.

Some of the early Fathers have asserted that this Gospel was written in Hebrew, or Syriac; [meaning, as is supposed, the Syro-Chaldaic dialect of Palestine,* prevailing after the Jewish captivity;] and within eight years from the ascension of Christ. But it is not pretended that we are in possession of such a copy. Nor are the learned ready to admit that we have but a translation in Greek. Dr. Whitby, to whom both Henry and Scott refer with approbation, and who is followed by Dr. Hales, has labored to disprove the early tradition, and establish a Greek original only. But, on the other hand, Dr. Campbell vindicates at large, and with much show of argument, this opinion of the primitive Church,† which, nevertheless, has manifestly authorized our present Greek.

It is, however, generally granted, that this portion of the New Testament was the first committed to writing. Its priority in order is of very early date. But great diversity of opinion has prevailed respecting the time of its composition. Some assign it to the year 37 or 38† of the Christian era, others to between 61 and 65||; and there are those who apply the former date to the Hebrew copy, and the latter to the Greek: for, to reconcile the different opinions, the hypothesis is maintained,§ that this Gospel was written by its author in both languages.

Matthew is supposed to be distinguished from the other Evangelists by the frequency of his references to the Old Testament, having written his Gospel, as is presumed, for Jewish Christians. He also records more of our Lord's parables, than they; and seems, on the whole, as is thought, more observant of the order of events. He begins with the genealogy of Christ in the line of Joseph, husband of Mary, his mother; relating circumstances concerning his miraculous conception, birth and infancy. He gives a brief account of the ministry of John the Baptist, and records the temptation of Christ, and entrance on his own public ministry. He then proceeds with a narrative of his miracles and discourses, and the manner of his crucifixion, death and burial; and, having borne witness to his glorious resurrection, and appearance to his disciples, closes the history with some most important words spoken by the Lord Jesus, immediately, as is supposed, before his ascension into heaven. HENRY, CAMPBELL, SCOTT, &c.

* See a discussion of this subject, from the German critics, in the Biblical Repository, vol. 1. Andover. Also Kuinoel's Comm. on the N. T. Proleg. † Embraced also by Mr. Hales, Ep. Marsh, and the late Dr. A. Clarke. ‡ On the authority of Eusebius. § Mill, Lardner, Percy, &c. || Dr. Townsend; Horne; Ep. Tomlinson; Schick; and see Dr. Alexander's useful compend on the Canon of Scripture.

A. M. 4000. B. C. 5. CHAP. I.

The genealogy of Christ in the line of Joseph, from Abraham and David, 1—17. His miraculous conception, by the Holy Ghost, of the virgin Mary; and the doubts of Joseph, to whom she was espoused, removed by an angel; who directs him to take her home, and to call the son born of her, Jesus, 18—21. This is shown to accord with the prediction of Isaiah, 22, 23. Joseph obeys, and Jesus is born, 24, 25.

THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

2 ⁴Abraham begat

a Gen. 2: 4. 5: 1. Is. 53: 8. Luke 3: 27, &c. Rom. 9: 5.
b 9: 27. 15: 22. 22: 42—45. 2 Sam. 7: 13, 16. Ps. 89: 22. 132: 11. Is. 9: 5. 11: 1.
c 1 Jer. 23: 5. 33: 15—17. 26. Am. 9: 11. Zech. 12: 8. Luke 1: 31, 34, 69.
d John 7: 42. Acts 4: 30. 13: 22, 23.
e Rom. 1: 3, 4. Rev. 22: 16.
f Gen. 12: 3. 22: 18. 26: 3—5. 28: 13, 14. Rom. 4: 13. Gal. 3: 16.
g Gen. 21: 2, 3. Job. 21: 2. 1 Chr. 1: 28. Is. 51: 2. Luke 3: 34. Acts 7: 8. Rom. 9: 7—9. Heb. 11: 11, 17, 13.

V. 1—17.—Of this genealogy of our Savior, observe,

I. The title. It is the book (or account, as the corresponding Hebrew word sometimes signifies) of the generation, or ancestry, of Jesus Christ: or, the narrative of his birth,† a book of Genesis. The Old Testament begins with the book of the generation of the world; and this is its glory: but the glory of the New excels in this, that it begins with the book of the generation of Him that made the world. As God, his outgoings were of old, from everlasting, (Mic. 5. 2.) and none can declare his generation; but, as Man, He was sent forth in the fulness of time, of a woman, as is here declared.

II. Its principal intention. This genealogy is neither endless nor needless; nor is it vain-glorious, as are commonly those of great men. Of what avail are ancient pedigrees? Its design is, to prove that our Lord Jesus is the Son of David, and the Son of Abraham; hence of that nation and family out of which the Messiah was to arise. (2) Of this promise Abraham and David were, in their day, the great trustees. The promise of the blessing was to Abraham and his seed; of the dominion, to David and his seed; and they who would have an interest in Christ,

as the Son of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth are to be blessed, must be subject to him as the Son of David, by whom all the families of the earth are to be ruled. See Gen. 12: 3. and 22: 18. for the first promise; and 2 Sam. 7: 12. Ps. 89: 3, &c. 132: 11. for the second. Therefore, unless it can be proved that Jesus is a son of David and a son of Abraham, we cannot admit Him to be the Messiah. Now this is here proved from authentic records, as if o' heralds. The Jews were very exact in preserving pedigrees. (3) In this there was a providence, to clear up the descent of the Messiah from the fathers; and, since his coming, the nation is so dispersed and confounded, that it is doubted if any one can legally prove himself a son of Abraham: it is certain, however, that no one can prove himself a son of Aaron, or a son of David. Hence the priestly and kingly office must be given up, as lost forever, or belong to our Lord Jesus. Christ is here first called the Son of David, as expected, and commonly spoken of, under that title, among the Jews. They who owned Him as the Christ, called Him the Son of David; ch. 15: 22. 20: 31. 21: 16. The Evangelist, therefore, undertakes to show, that He is not only a son of David

NOTES.—Verse 1.

(1) The title, 'book of the generation,' is, by most commentators, applied only to the genealogy, yet the opinion is not universal; for some, as Calnet, Hammond, L'Enfant and Beausobre, and Dr. A. Clarke, consider it applicable also to the whole book, including the history of our Lord's birth, acts, sufferings, death, resurrection and ascension. Eo.
(2) The inspired writer, having mentioned the promised Savior, (long foretold as the son of Abraham and of David,) by his name Jesus, and his office as the CHRIST, Messiah, Anointed of God, introduces the genealogy, by which the claim would in part be authenticated. (Marg. Ref.) The whole of the New Testament, however, shews, that this was not considered as the only or main proof. For the genealogies a o

not once referred to in the argument; but the appeal is made to the ancient prophecies, his own miracles, and his resurrection from the dead. (Acts 13: 23, 31—37. Rom. 1: 3, 4. 2 Tim. 2: 8.) SCOTT.

(3) From the Acts of the Apostles it appears, that they, in exhibiting the history of Christ, generally pursued the method of commencing with the confirmation of his resurrection, of which they were the faithful and credible witnesses. ROBERTSON.

(3) That even to the time of Christ, they [the Jews] had genealogical tables [both of their families and tribes, is evident from Josephus, who, having given us the genealogy of his family, says, "I give you this succession of our family as I found it written in the public tables." WILKINSON.]

[Fract. Obs.]

SCOTT.

o 18-25. 2: 13. Luke 1: 27. 2: 4,
5, 48. 3: 23. 4: 22.
p Mark 6: 3. Luke 1: 31-35. 2:
7, 10, 11.
q 27: 17, 22. John 4: 25.

a different hypothesis is followed, in making Salathiel son-in-law of Nerī, which was adopted by BARRETT, though contrary to that of GROTJUS. ERB. The marginal references contain nearly all the information to be obtained on the subject of this genealogy. It is conceded, that it does not prove Jesus to be 'the son of David,' but merely that Joseph, husband of Mary, and father-in-law of Jesus, was descended from David. But Jewish custom required the genealogy of Joseph to be produced: and it leaves the proof, arising from Mary's descent from David, as stated by St. Luke, in full force; and that is perfectly conclusive. For, if 'Jacob, the son of Matthan, the son of Eleazar, begat Joseph' (v. 15, 16) Joseph could not be 'the son of Heli, the son of Matthan, the son of Levi,' (Luke 3: 23, 24,) by marrying Heli's daughter, and by legal adoption.

(7) As there have been found difficulties almost insuperable in attempting to make out the even number of *lunar generations* of each of these periods, the English editor of Calver's (*Fragment*, no. 330) ingeniously suggested a method, by considering *generations* as denoting a *period of time*, or mean of calculation, by the general (not individual) course of human life. In pursuing this thought, he has made it appear probable, that, allowing for the gradual diminution of human longevity, each of these divisions may have occupied the number of *lunar periods* of time, equivalent, each of them, to the ordinary convenience of a generation of mankind at the periods, respectively. ROSENMÜLLER effects the object by reckoning David and Josiah twice, each at the end of one series and at the beginning of the next; but see (NOTE 6) Dr. A. CLARKE; who also remarks, or, the 17th verse, from SCHOETGEN, that the Jews had a 'technical method of summing up generations in this way; as in one of their books: "From the time when the moon first appeared, and the first man was created, the moon was at full. From Solomon to Zedekiah were after fifteen generations;" "rations;" the moon was then in the wane, and Zedekiah's eyes were "put out." That is, the regal state came to its zenith or light and glory in the time of *Solomon*, but decreased gradually till it became "nearly extinct in the days of Zedekiah."

Ed.

18 ¶ Now 'the Vir^{ty} of Jesus Christ was on this wise. When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

19 Then Joseph 'her husband, being 'a just man, and not willing to make her 'a public example, 'was minded to put her away privily.

20 But, 'while he thought on these things, behold, 'the angel of the Lord appeared unto him 'in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, thou son of David, 'fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for 'that which is 'conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

21 And 'she shall bring forth a son, and

^c Luke 1:27, &c.
^d Gen. 3:15. Job 14:4. 15:14. Luke 1:25. Gal. 3:4. 5. Heb. 7:26. 10:5.
^e Lev. 19:20. Deut. 22:23, 24.
^f 1. 2. 3. 4. Ps. 112:4, 5. Mark 6:20.
^g Luke 2:25. Acts 10:22.
^h Gen. 38:24. Lev. 20:10. Deut. 22:21.
ⁱ Gen. 3:15. 18:8, 9.
^j Deut. 24:1-4. Mark 10:4.
^k Ps. 25:8. 9. 94:19. 119:125. 143:8. Prov. 3:5, 6. 12:5. Is. 26:3. marg. 30:21.
^l Judg. 13:3, 8, 9. Luke 1:10-13, 19, 26, &c. 2:4-14.
^m 2:13, 13, 22. Gen. 31:11. Num. 12:6. Job 4:13-16. 33:15, 16. Joel 2:28.
ⁿ Is. 7:12, 13. Jer. 33:26. Luke 2:4.
^o 5:1, 7. Gen. 40:3. 1 Kings 17:13. Is. 51:7. Jer. 40:3. Luke 1:30.
^p Is. Jer. 31:22.
^q Gen. 3:15.
^r 1 Kings 17:12, 13. 19:10. Judg. 13:3, 8. 2 Kings 4:16, 17. Luke 1:13, 35, 36.

give the perplexity of the blessed virgin. She herself knew the divine original of this conception; but how prove it? She would be dealt with as with a harlot. Note, After much advancement, lest we be puffed up, we must expect something to humble us; some reproach, as a thorn in the flesh, nay, as a sword in the bones. No daughter of Eve was ever so dignified, as was the virgin Mary, and yet in danger of incurring the imputation of one of the worst of crimes; still, conscious of her innocence, she committed her cause to him that judgeth righteously. Note, Those who keep a good conscience, may cheerfully trust God with the keeping of their good names; and have reason to hope that He will clear up, not only their integrity, but their honor, as the sun at noon.

III. Joseph's perplexity, what to do. Great, doubtless, was his trouble and disappointment, on finding one he so valued come under suspicion of a crime so heinous. 'Is this Mary?' he began to think; 'how may we be deceived in those we esteem best! how disappointed, where we expect most!' A thing so ill he is loth to believe of one whom he thought so good; still, the matter, too bad to be excused, is too plain to be denied. What a struggle, between that jealousy which is the rage of man, and is cruel as the grave, on one hand, and the affection he has for Mary, on the other.

V. 18-25. The mystery of Christ's incarnation is to be adored, not pried into. If we know not the way of the Spirit in the formation of common persons, (Eccles. 11:5.) much less do we know how the blessed Jesus was formed. When David admires how he himself was made in secret, and curiously wrought, (Ps. 139:13-16.) perhaps he speaks, in spirit, of Christ's incarnation. We have some circumstances here attending the birth of Christ, not recorded by Luke, though he writes of it more largely, as:

I. Mary's espousals to Joseph. The mother of our Lord was espoused, or contracted, not completely married to Joseph: a purpose of marriage was solemnly declared, and a promise of it made, if God permit. (8) We read of a man who has betrothed a wife, and has not taken her, Deut. 20:7. Christ was born of a virgin, but a contracted virgin, 1. To put respect on the married state, as honorable among all, against that doctrine of devils which forbids to marry, and places perfection in the single state. 2. To save the credit of the blessed virgin, her conception being protected by a marriage, and so justified in the eyes of the world. An ancient says, It was better it should be asked, Is not this the son of a carpenter? than, Is not this the son of a harlot? 3. That the blessed virgin might have a guide of her youth, a companion of her solitude and travels, a partner in her cares, and a help meet for her. Some think that Joseph was now a widower, and that those who are called brethren of Christ, (ch. 13:55.) were Joseph's children by a former wife. So thought many of the ancients. Joseph was a just man, she a virtuous woman. Believers should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers; but let those who are religious choose to marry with those who are so, as they expect the comfort of the relation, and God's blessing in it. It is good also to enter into the married state with deliberation, not hastily; to preface the nuptials with a contract. Better take time to consider before, than find time to repent after.

II. Her pregnancy of the Promised Seed; before they came together, she was found with child, which really was of the Holy Ghost. Probably, it was after her return from her cousin Elisabeth, with whom she continued three months, (Luke 1:56.) that she was perceived by Joseph to be in this state, and did not herself deny it. Note, Those in whom Christ is formed will shew it: it will be found to be a work of God, which He will own. We may well imagine

the perplexity of the blessed virgin. She herself knew the divine original of this conception; but how prove it? She would be dealt with as with a harlot. Note, After much advancement, lest we be puffed up, we must expect something to humble us; some reproach, as a thorn in the flesh, nay, as a sword in the bones. No daughter of Eve was ever so dignified, as was the virgin Mary, and yet in danger of incurring the imputation of one of the worst of crimes; still, conscious of her innocence, she committed her cause to him that judgeth righteously. Note, Those who keep a good conscience, may cheerfully trust God with the keeping of their good names; and have reason to hope that He will clear up, not only their integrity, but their honor, as the sun at noon.

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Verses 18, 19.

(8) St. Luke relates a variety of circumstances here omitted; but this succinct narrative was deemed sufficient to introduce that history of Christ, which was first given to the church. His mother Mary, a virgin of the house of David, contracted or betrothed to Joseph, had, before the completion of the intended marriage, by a most extraordinary miracle, continuing yet a virgin, conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit; that the promised Saviour might be 'the Seed of the woman' (the strictest sense; and though truly man, our Brother and Redeemer, yet he not be conceived and born in sin. Scott. (Notes. Gen. 3:14, 15. 15:7. 14. Jer. 31:21, 22.) 'No woman of Israel,' says Lightfoot, 'was married, unless she had been first espoused.' This espousal was at her own or her father's house; and generally some time elapsed before she was taken home to that of her husband. Deut. 20:7. Judg. 14:7, 8. Between the time of her espousal and the marriage, there frequently passed a considerable time; nor could this contract, says Selden, be broken, but by a real divorce. If, during the time of it, the bride should trespass against her fidelity she owed to her bridegroom, she was treated as an adulteress.

GALMET, CLARE

Observe, 1. The extremity he would avoid. He was not willing to make her a public example. By the law, a betrothed virgin, who played the harlot, was to be stoned to death. Deut. 22:23, 24. But he was not willing, though able, to take advantage of the law against her, if she be guilty, it is not known, nor shall it be from him. How different was his spirit from that of Judah, who, in a similar case, hastily decreed, Bring her forth, and let her be burnt! Gen. 38:24. How good is it to think on this, as Joseph did here! Had our censures and judgments more of deliberation, there would be more of mercy and moderation in them. Bringing her to punishment, is here called making her a public example: which shews the end to be aimed at in punishments—warning to others; that all may hear and fear. Smile the scorner, and the simple will beware. Some of rigorous temper would blame Joseph for his clemency, but it is here spoken of to his praise. He was a just man, a religious, good man; and therefore inclined to be merciful, as God is, and to forgive as one forgiven. (9) The law charitably supposed that a betrothed damsel, if defiled in the field, cried out, (Deut. 22:26, 27.) and she was not to be punished. Some charitable construction or other Joseph is disposed to make, and herein is just, tender of another's unblemished good name. Note, It becomes us, in many cases, to be gentle toward such as are suspected of having offended, and make the best of what at first appears bad, in hope it may prove better. The rigor of law is (sometimes) the height of injustice. That court of conscience which moderates the rigor of law we call a court of equity. Perhaps the faulty were overtaken in the fault, and are therefore to be restored in the spirit of meekness.

2. His expedient. He was minded to put her away privily, that is, to give a bill of divorce into her hand before two witnesses, and so stifle the matter. Being a just man, a strict observer of the law, he would not marry, but resolved to put her away; yet, in tenderness for her, as privately as possible. Note, Necessary censures should be managed without noise. The words of the wise are heard in quiet. Christ himself shall not strive nor cry. Christian love and prudence hide a multitude of sins, even great ones, so far as may be done without having fellowship with them.

IV. Joseph's release from perplexity by an express from heaven; (v. 20, 21.) While he thought on these things, and knew not what to determine, God graciously directed him. Note, Those who would have direction from God, must think on things, and consult with themselves. God will guide the thoughtful, not the unthinking. When he had gone as far as he could, in his own thoughts, God came in with advice. Note, God's time to instruct his people is, when they are oppressed, and at a stand. His comforts most delight the soul, in the multitude of its perplexed thoughts.

The message was sent to Joseph by an angel of the Lord; probably the same that brought tidings to Mary—even Gabriel. Intercourse with heaven by angels, with which the patriarchs had been dignified, begins now, after long disuse, to be revived; for when the First-Begotten is to be brought into the world, the angels are ordered to attend his motions. How far God

(9) It is without reason that the word rendered just, as applied to Joseph, is by some rendered merciful, or good-natured. If we consider the information he might have received from persons of such an extraordinary character as Zacharias and Elisabeth, (who would certainly think themselves obliged to interpose on such an occasion, and whose story so remarkably carried its own evidence with it.) besides the intimation the prophecy of Isaiah gave, and the satisfaction he undoubtedly had in the virtuous character of Mary herself, we must conclude that he had acted a very severe and unrighteous part, had he proceeded to extremities without serious deliberation, and that putting her away privately would, in these circumstances, have been the least measure justice would suffer him to take. — By the original word we may suppose is expressed the infamy of a public divorce, though she had not been stoned, which was the legal punishment. But there was besides a private kind of divorce, in which no reason was required, and the dowry was not forfeited, as in the former case; and by this she would not have been so defamed. See Selden, Is Heb. 14. c. xvi. 11. Lightfoot, Hor. Heb.

DODGE

thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which, being interpreted, is, God with us.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife;

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: and he called his name JESUS.

1 Luke 1:31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

Fruit of her womb, Luke 1: 42. His conception must be otherwise than by ordinary generation, that so, though partaking of the human nature, He might escape the corruption and pollution of it, and not be conceived and shapen in iniquity. Some, as the mother of Alexander, have vainly pretended to conceive by a divine power; none ever really did, except the mother of our Lord. His name in this, as in other things, is *Wonderful*. We do not read that the virgin Mary did herself proclaim the honor done her; she hid it in her heart; therefore God sent an angel to attest it. Those who seek not their own glory have honor from God; this is reserved for the humble.

Joseph is told, *secondly*, that Mary should bring forth the *Savior of the world*; (v. 21.) *She shall bring forth a Son.* What he shall be is intimated, [1.] In the name to be given him; *Thou shalt call his name Jesus, a Savior.* This is the same with Joshua, changing only the termination, to conform it to the Greek. Joshua is called *Jesus*, (Acts 7: 45. Heb. 4: 8.) from the Seventy. There were two of that name under the Old Testament, both illustrious types of

Verse 21.

[10] 'Precious Lord Jesus! I would say, Oh give thy people grace to see Thee, and to know Thee, in this most blessed name; and never to hear it, or to call upon Thee by it, without connecting with it the angel's words.'

HAWKER.

Verses 22, 23.

[11] This seems to be the evangelist's observation on these extraordinary events: yet it is probable, the angel shewed Joseph, that this child was He, to whom all the prophets bore witness. The prophecy has already been explained. (Note, Luke 1: 14.) This prophecy was strictly fulfilled, when the virgin Mary's Son was called *Jesus*; for *Jehovah-Salvation* and *Immanuel*. *God with us*, are expressions of similar signification. If God be with us sinners in Jesus Christ, he is 'become our Salvation.'—But the Savior has been known to vast multitudes, through successive generations, and been peculiarly dear to them by his name *EMMANUEL*: and will be so to the end of time, yea, to all eternity.—*They shall call*—(23) 'Thou shalt call'—Sept. 7: 14, which accords to the Hebrew. Some copies read it so here. (See Griesbach.) SCOTT.

There are more references in this than in any other Gospel to Jewish customs; and St. Matthew seems studiously to have selected such circumstances as were calculated to conciliate or strengthen the faith of the Jews. That he published his Gospel in Palestine for the immediate use of the Jews, was the opinion of all ancient ecclesiastical writers, confirmed by the contents of the book itself: for he omits no op-

portunity of explaining the Scriptures, and of pointing out the fulfilment of prophecy, which was known to have greater weight with the Jews than any other species of evidence. TOMLINE. Matthew is also, observes BENGEL, the only evangelist who has made special mention of dreams or visions: as that of the wife of Pilate, of the magi, or wise men, and those of Joseph, here and in ch. 2. This course, as he remarks, well became the primitive periods of the Gospel. Ed. On the application of the prophecy cited from Isaiah, and its fulfilment in Jesus Christ, for misapplying which, the excellent DOMINICUS has admonished on GORIUS, [see his note,] it has been well observed: 'That a virgin shall bear a son, is the very spirit and meaning of the original text, independently of the illustration given by the prophet: and the fact recorded by the evangelist is the proof of the whole. But now could that be a sign to Ahaz, which was to take place so many hundreds of years after? I answer, the meaning of the prophet is plain, not only Rezin and Pekah should be unsuccessful against Jerusalem at that time, which was the fact; but Jerusalem, Judah, and the house of David, should be preserved, notwithstanding their depressed state, and the multitudes of their adversaries, till the time should come, when a virgin should bear a son.' Until then, the house of David could not fail, nor did it: but when that unprecedented and miraculous fact did take place, the kingdom and house of David became extinct! This is an irrefragable confutation of every argument a Jew can offer in vindication of his opposition to the Gospel of Christ.—The prophecy could not fail.

Christ; Joshua, Captain of Israel at their first settlement in Canaan, and Joshua, their High-Priest at their second settlement after the captivity, Zech. 6: 11, 12. Christ is our Joshua; but 'Captain of our salvation, and High-Priest of our profession, and, in both, our Savior;—a Joshua instead of Moses, doing that for us, which the law could not do, in that it was weak. Joshua had been called Hoshea, but Moses prefixed the first syllable of the name *Jehovah*, making it *Jehoshua*, (Num. 13: 16,) to intimate that the Messiah, who was to bear that name, should be *Jehovah*. He is therefore able to save to the uttermost, neither is there salvation in any other. [2.] In the reason of that name; *For He shall save his people from their sins*; not the nation of the Jews only, (for his own received Him not,) but all who were given Him by the Father's choice, and all who have given themselves to Him by their own. He is a King who protects his subjects, and, as Israel's Judges of old, works salvation for them. Note, Those whom Christ saves, He saves from the guilt of sin by the merit of his death, and from the dominion of sin by the Spirit of his grace. Saving them from their sins, He saves them from wrath, and the curse, and all misery here and hereafter. (Marg. Ref. h.) Christ came to save his people, not in their sins, but from their sins; to purchase for them not a liberty to sin, but a freedom from sins, to redeem them from all iniquity; (Tit. 2: 14.) and so, to redeem them from among men, (Rev. 14: 4.) to Himself, who is separate from sinners. Those, therefore, who leave their sins, and give up themselves to Christ as his people, are interested in the Savior, and the great salvation He has wrought out, Rom. 11: 26. (10)

V. The fulfilling of Scripture. Matthew, writing among Jews, more frequently observes this, than any other of the evangelists. In our Lord Jesus, Old-Testament prophecies were accomplished, shewing that this was He that should come, to whom all the prophets bear witness, and we are to look for no other. Now, in the birth of Christ was fulfilled that promise of a sign given to Ahaz, (Isa. 7: 14.) Behold, a virgin shall conceive; when the prophet, encouraging the hope of deliverance from Sennacherib's invasion, directs the people of God to look to the Messiah, who should come of the Jews, and of the house of David: whence it was easy to infer, that, though afflicted, neither of them could be abandoned to ruin, while God reserved for them such an honor and blessing. (See note 11.) Deliverances wrought of God for the Old-Testament church were types and figures of Christ's great salvation; and if God will do the greater, He will not fail to do the less.

This prophecy is justly ushered in with *Behold*, commanding both attention and admiration; for here is the *mystery of godliness*, which is, without controversy, great, that *God was manifested in the flesh*.

1. The sign, that the Messiah shall be born of a virgin. A virgin shall conceive, and, by her, He shall be manifested in the flesh. A virgin is signified by *o-mah*, in the strictest sense, as Mary professes to be, Luke 1: 34. I know not a man; nor had the sign been wonderful, if it had

CHAP. II.

Who ^a came from the east, guided by a star to see Jerusalem, inquiring for a King, who was born King of the Jews. 1. 2. Jerol. being alarmed, because that Christ should be born at Bethlehem, a. sends the wise men thither, 3-8. The star guides them to Jesus, when they honor and worship, and, being warned by God, they return before another way, 9-12. Joseph is directed to go, with the child and his mother, into Egypt, 13-15. Herod murders the children at and near Bethlehem, 16-18. After Herod's death, Joseph returns from Egypt, with Jesus and Mary, and goes to dwell at Nazareth, 19-23.

NOW when ^a Jesus was born in ^b Bethlehem of Judea, in the days ^c of Herod the king, behold, there came

e 125. Luke 2:4-7.
c 3. M^o. 5:2. Luke 2:11, 15. John 7:32.
c 19. Gen. 49:10. Dan. 9:24, 25.
Mag. 2:6-8.

Thus, a step is taken toward peace and correspondence between God and man, the two natures uniting in the person of the Mediator—an unexceptionable Reference, a *Days-man*, fit to lay his hand upon them both, as partaking the nature of both. Behold, in this, the deepest mystery, and the richest mercy, that ever was. By the light of nature, we see God as a God above us; by the light of the law, as a God against us; but by the light of the gospel, as Immanuel, God with us, in our own nature, and (which is more) in our interest. Herein the Redeemer commended his love. With Christ's name, Immanuel, we may compare the name given to the gospel church, (Ezek. 48:35.) *Jehovah Shamamah*—the Lord is there; the Lord of hosts is with us.

Nor is it improper to say, that, when He was called *Jesus*, the prophecy that styled Him Immanuel was fulfilled; for if He had not been God with us, He could not have been a Savior. In the bringing of God and man together, consists his salvation; and this He designed, to bring God to be with us, which is our great happiness, and to bring us to be with God, which is our great duty.

VI. Joseph's obedience. Being raised from sleep, by the impression of his dream, he did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, though it was contrary to his previous sentiments and intentions. He took unto him his wife without delay, and without dispute. Extraordinary direction like this we are not now to expect; but God still has ways of making known his mind in doubtful cases, by hints of providence, debates of conscience, and advice of faithful friends. By each of these, applying the general rules of the written word, we also should, in all, specially the most important steps and turns of our life, like this of Joseph, take direction from God; and we shall find it safe and comfortable to do as He bids us.

VII. The accomplishment of the divine promise; (v. 25.) *She brought forth her first-born son*. The circumstances are related more at large, Luke 2:1, &c. Note, What is conceived of the Holy Ghost is never abortive. What is of the will of the flesh, and of the will of man, often fails. But if Christ be formed in the soul, God himself has begun the good work which He will finish; and what is conceived in grace, will, no doubt, be brought forth in glory.

Further, Joseph, though he solemnized the marriage with Mary, his espoused wife, yet knew her not till the birth of her son, that holy thing. Much has been said concerning the perpetual virginity of the mother of our Lord; and

been otherwise. In calling the Messiah the seed of the woman, it had ever been intimated He should be born of a virgin, so as not to be the seed of any man. Nor was Christ to be born, only as supernaturally, but because his birth was to be spotless, pure, and without stain of sin. Christ would be born not of an empress, or queen, in outward pomp or splendor, but of a virgin; to teach us spiritual purity, and deadness to delights of sense—so to keep ourselves unspotted from the world, as to be chaste virgins of Christ.

2. The truth proved by this sign, that He is the Son of God, and Mediator between God and man. They shall call his name Immanuel, that is, He shall be Immanuel; so, He shall be called, that is, shall be, the Lord, our Righteousness. Immanuel signifies God with us; a mysterious name, but very precious; God incarnate among us, so reconcilable to us, at peace with us, and taking us into covenant and communion with Himself. The Jewish people had God with them, in types and shadows, dwelling between the cherubim; but never so as when the Word was made flesh—a blessed Shechinah.

Jerome was very angry with Helvidius for denying it. Certainly, it cannot be proved from Scripture. (12) Dr. Whitty inclines to think, that, from the phraseology used, it is intimated, that, after the birth of her first-born, the reason ceasing, Joseph lived with her, according to the law Exod. 21:10. Observe, Christ was the First-Born; and so He might be called, though his mother had not any other children after him, according to Scripture language. Nor was it without a mystery that He is so called; for He is the First-Born of every creature, that is, the Heir of all things; and He is the First-Born among many brethren, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence. Joseph, also, called his name Jesus, as directed. God having appointed Him to be the Savior, which was intimated in giving Him the name Jesus, we must accept of Him to be our Savior, and, in concurrence with that appointment, call Him Jesus, our Savior. [Pract. Obs.]

CHAP. II. V. 1-8. It was a mark of humiliation put upon the Lord Jesus, that, though He was the desire of all nations, yet his coming into the world was little observed, and his birth obscure; herein He made Himself of no reputation. If the Son of God must be brought into the world, one might justly expect that He should be received with all the ceremony possible; that crowns and sceptres should have been immediately laid at his feet; and that the mighty princes of the world should have been his humble servants. Such a Messiah the Jews expected, but we see nothing of all this. He came into the world, and the world knew Him not; nay He came unto his own, and his own received Him not; for, having undertaken to make satisfaction to his Father for the wrong done Him in his honor by the sin of man. He did it by despoiling Himself of the honors undoubtedly due to an incarnate Deity; yet, as afterwards, so in his birth, some rays of glory darted forth amidst his greatest debasement. Though there was the hiding of his power, yet He had beams coming out of his hand. (Hah. 3:4.) enough to condemn the world, and the Jews especially, for their stupidity.

The first, who took notice of Christ after his birth, were the Shepherds, (Luke 2:15.) who saw and heard glorious things concerning Him, and published them to the amazement of all that heard, v. 17, 18. After that, Simeon and Anna spake of Him by the Spirit, to all who were disposed to heed what they said, Luke 2:38. Now, one would think, these hints should have been taken by the men of Judah, and Jerusalem, and they should, with both arms, have embraced the long looked for Messiah; but, for aught that appears, He continued nearly two years after at

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 18-23. Let us often recollect how the Son of God entered this lower world, and learn to despise the distinctions of rank, birth, and affluence, in comparison with the real dignity which piety and holiness confer. A poor, obscure virgin, espoused to a carpenter, was chosen to be the honored mother of Him, 'by whom kings reign,' and before whom they are to appear in judgment! Doubtless He could have assumed our nature in an imperial palace, as well as in a cottage, or rather stable. But his dignity and honor, like his 'kingdom,' were not 'of this world.' Indeed, 'the honor that cometh from God' is seldom unattended with trials. She, whom God pronounced 'highly favored,' and 'blessed among women,' was exposed to suspicions of criminality, and indeed to infamy, and most terrible punishment. Let us not expect to escape calumny and suspicion, even when most conscientious, or from those we most love. Keeping a clear conscience, let us leave to God the protection of our characters; nor, if appearances be against us, fail to keep on in the path of duty, not over anxious to vindicate ourselves, but waiting till He shall justify us from undeserved reproaches. In due season, He will appear for us; yet if, in the

mean time, we have severe mortifications, these are necessary, as 'thorns in the flesh,' to keep down our pride, which else might tarnish all our endowments and services.—In dubious cases, a pious man should deliberate; and he who desires to know, that he may do, the will of God, and uses proper means of instruction, shall not be left to fall into any fatal error.—Whilst we make observations on the incarnation, in such an extraordinary manner, of the Son of God, let us not overlook its object. Men may pervert, abuse, or dislike the sacred truths of God's Word; but surely none can be encouraged to continue in sin, by a free and gracious salvation from sin. None can have evidence that they are the people of Christ, who are not now saved from the dominion of their sins, and are not seeking continually for deliverance from the remaining power and pollution of them. Every time that we name the sacred name of Jesus, we should be reminded to rely on Him for this complete salvation; that we may be delivered from guilt, and from sin, experience daily the fulfilling of the Scriptures, and be saved in EMMANUEL, 'the Lord our righteousness,' 'with an everlasting salvation.'

SCOTT

the kingdom and house of David have failed—the virgin, therefore, must have borne forth her son—and this son is Jesus the Christ. Thus Moses, Isaiah and Matthew concur; and facts the most unperishable have confirmed the whole. Behold the wisdom and providence of God!

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verdes 24, 25.

(12) This heavenly vision fully satisfying the mind of Joseph, he rendered implicit obedience, and delayed not to take Mary home to him as his wife.—As to the terms on which, after the birth of her Son,

Joseph and Mary lived together, or whether she had more children, as some have said, did not seem good to the Holy Ghost to gratify men's foolish curiosity. They who have contended for, and those who have denied, Mary's perpetual virginity, have alike indulged in uncertain and useless conjectures. It is true, that some of the zealous champions for the affirmative intended the support of their antichristian worship of the virgin Mary, and antichristian admiration of virginity and celibacy; but we want no additional proof that God alone ought to be worshipped, and that marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled. See v. 16.

wise men from the east to Jerusalem.

2 Saying, Where is he that is 'born King of the Jews?' for we have seen 'his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

3 ¶ When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

d 1 Kings 4:30. Job 1:3. Ps 72:9-12.
e 1:10. Gen. 1.
f 2:5. Ps 2:6. Is. 9:6. J. 32:1, 2.
g 1:7. 5:35. Zech. 9:9. Luke 2:11.
h 19:34. 23:3. 34. John 1:49. 12:13.
i 19:37. 19:12-15, 19.
j 1:11. Ps 45:11. John 9:33. 20:23.
k Heb. 1:6.
l 8:29. 23:37. 1 Kings 18:17, 18. John 11:47. Acts 4:24-27. 5:24-28.
m 1:21. 1:25, 7.
n 2:13-25. 26:3-47. 27:1. 1 Chr. 2:4. 8:2. 2 Chr. 36:14. Ezra 10:5.
o 1:26. 12:7. John 7:52. 13:3.
p 7:29. 13:52. 2 Chr. 34:15. Ezra 7:6, 11, 12. Jer. 8:3. Mark 8:31. Luke 20:19. 26:10. John 8:3. Acts 4:5. 6:12. 23:9.
i Mat. 2:7. John 3:10.

men of what would follow, when those who were *afar off* should be made *nigh* by Christ. They were scholars; they dealt in curious arts; good scholars should be good Christians, and then they complete their learning when they learn Christ. They were men of the east, who were noted for their sooth-saying. Isa. 2: 6. Arabia is called the land of the east, (Gen. 25: 6.) and the Arabians are called *men of the east*, Judg. 6: 3. The presents they brought are the products of their own land; the Arabians had done homage to David and Solomon as types of Christ. Jethro and Job were of that country. (2)

3. As they were in their country in the east, they saw an extraordinary star, such as they had not seen before, which they took to be an indication of an extraordinary person born in Judea, over which land this star was seen to hover, in the nature of a comet, or meteor rather, in the lower regions of the air. Note, Extraordinary appearances of God in the creatures, should put us upon inquiring after his mind and will therein. Christ foretold *signs in the heavens*. The birth of Christ was notified to the Jewish shepherds by an angel, to the gentile philosophers by a star; to whom God spake in their own lan-

Bethlehem, unknown till these wise men came. Note, Nothing will awaken those that are resolved to be regardless. Oh the amazing stupidity of these Jews! And no less that of many professing Christians. Observe,

1. This inquiry was made in the days of Herod the King. This Herod was an Edomite, made king of Judea by Augustus and Antony, then rulers of Rome, a man made up of falsehood and cruelty, yet complimented with the title of *Herod the Great*. Christ was born in the 35th year of his reign. (1) The *scripture* was now departed from Judah, and the *lawgiver from between his feet*; and therefore now was the time for Shiloh to come, and to Him shall the gathering of the people be, witness the wise men. Gen. 49: 10.

2. Who were these *wise men*, here called *Magi*? Some take the name in a good sense; the Magi among the Persians were their philosophers and priests; nor would they admit any one for their king, who had not first been enrolled among the Magi. Others think they dealt in unlawful arts. The word is used of Simon, the sorcerer, Acts 8, 9, 11, and of Elymas, the sorcerer, Acts 13: 6; nor does the Scripture use it in any other sense; thus it was an early instance and presage of Christ's victory over the devil, when those who had been his devotees became the adherents of Jesus; so soon were the trophies of his victory over the powers of darkness erected. Well, whatever sort of wise men they were before, now they began to be wise men indeed.

This we are sure of, that they were gentiles. The Jews regarded not Christ, but these gentiles inquired Him out. Note, Often those who are nearest to the means are farthest from the end, see ch. 8: 11, 12. The respect paid to Christ by these gentiles was a happy presage and specimen

of what would follow, when those who were *afar off* should be made *nigh* by Christ. They were scholars; they dealt in curious arts; good scholars should be good Christians, and then they complete their learning when they learn Christ. They were men of the east, who were noted for their sooth-saying. Isa. 2: 6. Arabia is called the land of the east, (Gen. 25: 6.) and the Arabians are called *men of the east*, Judg. 6: 3. The presents they brought are the products of their own land; the Arabians had done homage to David and Solomon as types of Christ. Jethro and Job were of that country. (2)

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guage, and in the way they were best acquainted with. Some think that the *very night*, which the shepherds saw the night after Christ was born, was the same, which to the wise men, who lived at such a distance, appeared as a star; which we cannot easily admit, because the star they had seen in the east, they saw some time after, leading them to the house where Christ lay, as a candle set up on purpose. The idolaters, especially the eastern nations, worshipped the stars as the *host of heaven*, whence the planets have the names of their idol gods. We read of a particular star they had in veneration, Amos 5: 26. Thus the stars, that had been misused, came to be put to the right use, to lead men to Christ; the gods of the heathen became his servants. Some think this star put them in mind of Balaam's prophecy, that a star should come out of Jacob, pointing to a *seigneur* that shall *rise out of Israel*; see Num. 24: 17. Balaam came from the mountains of the east, and was one of their *wise men*. Others impute their inquiry to the general expectation, in the east, of some great prince to appear. Tacitus takes notice of it, l. 5. of his history. 'Many had the belief, that the ancient writings of the priests predicted, that about that time an eastern power would prevail, and that persons proceeding from Judea would obtain dominion.' Suetonius also, in his life of Vespasian, speaks of it; so that this extraordinary phenomenon was construed as pointing to that king; and we may suppose that a divine impression enabled them to interpret this star as a signal pointing to Christ. (3)

4. They came from the east to Jerusalem. Whither should they come to inquire for the King of the Jews, but to Jerusalem, the mother city, *whither the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord*? They might have said, 'We shall hear of this prince shortly in our own country, and it will be time enough then to pay our homage to Him.' But so impatient were they, that they took a long journey to inquire after Him. Note, Those who truly desire to find Christ, will not regard perils in seeking Him. *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord*. The question is, *Where is He that is born King of the Jews*? They do not ask, whether there was such an one born, they are sure of that, but, *Where is He born*? Note, Those who know something of Christ, cannot but covet to know more of Him. They call Christ the *King of the Jews*, for so the Messiah was expected to be, and He is protector and ruler of all the spiritual Israel, He is *born a king*. To this question they expected a ready answer, and to find all Je-ru-

NOTES. Verses 1, 2.

(1) Herod, an Edomite by descent, yet proselyted to the Jewish religion, was king of Judea by means of the Romans, and after much war and bloodshed. Though long prosperous, horrible cruelties tarnished his whole administration. With many others, he had put to death Mariamne, his wife, and two of his own sons, and, though old, was full of ambition and jealousy, and prompt to acts of tyranny and cruelty, as ever, at the time when these *wise men* came to inquire about the birth of Christ. Several of this name being mentioned in the New Testament, a genealogical notice of them may be useful. Herod, improperly called *the Great*, son of Antipater, an Idumean, married ten wives, of whom Doris was mother of Antipater, his eldest son, executed, by his order, five days before his own death. Mariamne, daughter of Hircanus, the last of the Asmonean race, was his second wife, and mother of Alexander and Aristobolus—all three executed by Herod. The last, however, left two sons and a daughter; Agrippa, the eldest, called Herod, who put James, the Apostle, to death, and imprisoned Peter, Acts 12, whose son Agrippa, tetrarch of Galilee, sat with Felix, husband of Drusilla, the elder Agrippa's daughter, and his other sister Bernice, when Paul pleaded, Acts 26. Herod, second son of Aristobolus, was king of Chalcis, and had a son, Aristobolus, to whom Nero gave Armenia, heless, and who married Salome, the dancer, mentioned by Mark, ch. 6: 22, daughter of Herodias. This Herodias was the third child and only daughter of Aristobolus, married her uncle Philip, and then his brother Antipater, while Philip yet lived, and procured the death of John the Baptist, who had reproved this incestuous marriage. Matt. 14: 3. Mark 6: 17. Luke 3: 19. By another Mariamne, his third wife, Herod had Herod-Philip, (first husband of Herodias,) and Salome. By his fourth wife he had Archelaus, mentioned in v. 22, who reigned, with the title of Tetrarch, nine years, and Philip, who was the first husband of the dancer, Salome, above. Herod's fifth wife was mother of Herod Antipater, who married Herodias, his brother Philip's wife, was the prince to whom Pilate sent our Lord, Luke 13: 31-32, and died in exile, according to Josephus, with his infamous wife. The elucidation of the sacred history does not require a further acquaintance with this family.

JOSEPHUS, CALMET, DR. A. CLARKE.

2, 'These wise men, or Magi, are by many supposed to have belonged to the celebrated priesthood of Persia, which was much

respected among the eastern nations, and had the pre-eminence in politics and natural philosophy, as well as religion, "having," as Bp. Porteus observes, "juster sentiments of God and his worship, than any of the ancient heathens, and fittest of them all to have the first knowledge of the Son of God, and of salvation by Him imparted to them." But probably these were of the class mentioned by Daniel the prophet, as magicians, astrologers, Chaldeans and soothsayers, who had nearly the same character as the Persian magi; and were held in great esteem by the old monarchs of Babylon, being consulted by them in all cases of difficulty. The prophet was indeed, appointed their master, Dan. 5: 11, 12. This order of men retained their influence in the east to the time of our Savior; though it is probable they did not come, on the occasion of his birth, from Persia, but from some neighboring part of Syria, Arabia, or Mesopotamia. They were particularly famous for their skill in astronomy, and had kept a regular account of the most remarkable phenomena of the celestial bodies for some centuries before the reign of Alexander the Great.' HENLETT. Doubtless, the opinion prevailing at that time in the east, that in Judea an extraordinary person would arise, who should have dominion over the nations, originated from a partial acquaintance with the writings of the ancient prophets, and from Jews dispersed in great numbers in all these countries. Such an event was expected by these 'wise men,' or sages, who looked for intimations of its taking place; and it is probable they were divinely apprised of its speedy approach, and shewn something of the Redeemer's real glory, and the nature of his kingdom. Many think they came out of Arabia; and from the opinion that the prophecy of David was fulfilled by them, (Ps. 72: 9, 10, 15,) the popish legend that they were three kings seems to have arisen. (This representation, however, is countenanced by a name so respectable as that of Bp. Porteus, Lect. II. on Matt.) Remote regions of Arabia extended far south of Judea; and the queen of Sheba called 'the queen of the south,' (2: 42,) is supposed to have come thence. (Note, 1 Kings 10: 1, 2.) SCORR.

(3) An extraordinary luminous appearance in the heavens, which they noticed, and gathered from it, instructed, doubtless, of God, perhaps in a supernatural dream, that One was born to be the King of the Jews, induced them to take a long and expensive journey, to pay their homage. Probably they supposed the inhabitants of Jerusalem well acquainted with the event, and came thither, inquiring openly, and

5 And they said unto him, "In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet,

6 And "thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda, for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, "Go, and search diligently for the young child; and, when ye have found him, bring

lem worshipping at the feet of this new King; but no man can give them any information. Note, There is more gross ignorance in the world, and in the church too, than we are aware of. Many that we think should direct us to Christ, are themselves strangers to Him. They ask, as the spouse of the daughters of Jerusalem, *Say ye him, whom my soul loveth?* But they are never the wiser. However, like the spouse, they pursue the inquiry, *Where is He that is born King of the Jews?* Are they asked, 'Why do ye make this inquiry?' It is because they have seen his star in the east. Are they asked, 'What business have ye with Him? What have the men of the east to do with the King of the Jews?' They have their answer ready, *We are come to worship Him.* They conclude that He will be at length their King, and therefore they will sometimes ingratiate themselves with Him and with those about Him. Note, Those in whose hearts the day-star is risen, to give them any knowledge of Christ, must worship Him. Have we seen Christ's star? Let us study to give Him honor.

5. News of this inquiry at last came to court. And when Herod heard it, he was troubled, v. 3. He could not be a stranger to the prophecies concerning the Messiah and his kingdom, and the times fixed for his appearing by Daniel's weeks; but having himself reigned long and successfully, he began to hope that those promises would fail, and that his kingdom should be perpetuated, in spite of them. What a damp therefore must it shed on him to hear of this King's birth, now, when the time fixed for his appearing had come. Note, Carnal hearts dread nothing so much as the fulfilling of the Scriptures. But though Herod, an Edomite, was troubled, one would have thought Jerusalem should rejoice to hear that her king comes; yet, it seems, all Jerusalem, except the few that waited for the consolation of Israel, were troubled with Herod, apprehensive of I know not what ill consequences; that it would involve them in war, or restrain their lusts. They, for their part, desired no king but Herod; no, not the Messiah himself. Note, The slavery of sin is foolishly preferred by many to the glorious liberty of the children of God, only because they apprehend difficulties from the necessary revolution in the government of the soul. Herod and the Jews were thus troubled, apprehending that the kingdom of the Messiah would clash with the secular powers; whereas the star that proclaimed Him King, plainly intimated that his kingdom was heavenly. Note, The reason why the kings and people of the earth oppose the kingdom of Christ, is, because they do not know it. (4)

6. No one pretends to tell where the King of the Jews is, but Herod inquires where it was expected *He should be born*. The persons he consults are, the chief priests, teachers by office, and the scribes, who made it their business to study the law; *their lips must keep knowledge*, but then the people must inquire the law at their mouth, Mal. 2: 7. It was generally known that Christ should be born at Bethlehem; (John 7: 42.) but Herod would have counsel's opinion upon it, and applies to the proper persons; and, to be better satisfied, has them all together—the chief priests and scribes, and demands of

them the place, according to the Scriptures, *where Christ should be born*. Many a good question is put with an ill design; so was this by Herod. The priests and scribes need no long time to give an answer, but agree that the Messiah must be born in Bethlehem, the city of David, here called Bethlehem of Judea, to distinguish it from another city in the land of Zebulun. Josh. 19: 15. Bethlehem signifies the house of bread; fit place for Him to be born in, who is the true Manna, the bread which came down from heaven, given for the life of the world. The proof they produce is taken from Micah 5: 2, where it is foretold, that though Bethlehem be little among the thousands of Judah, (so it is in Micah,) no very populous place, yet it shall be found not the least among the princes of Judah; (so it is here:) (5) for Bethlehem's honor was not, as that of other cities, the multitude of people, but the magnificence of the princes it produced. Though, on some accounts, Bethlehem was little, yet herein it had pre-eminence over all the cities of Israel, that the Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this Man, even the Man Jesus Christ, was born there, Ps. 87: 6. Out of thee shall come a Governor, the King of the Jews. Note, Christ will be a Savior to those only who will be willing to take Him for their Governor. Bethlehem was the city of David, and David the glory of Bethlehem; there, then, must David's Son and Successor be born. Of the famous well at Bethlehem, by the gate, David longed to drink; (2 Sam. 23: 15.) in Christ we have not only bread enough and to spare, but may take of the water of life freely. Observe here, how Jews and gentiles compare notes about Jesus Christ. The gentiles know the time by a star; the Jews knew the place by the Scriptures; and so they are capable of informing one another. Note, It would contribute much to the increase of knowledge, did we thus mutually communicate what we know. Men grow rich by bartering; so, if we have knowledge to communicate to others, they will communicate to us; thus many shall discourse, shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

7. Herod was now old; had reigned thirty-five years; this King was but lately born, and not likely soon to commence any important design; yet Herod is jealous of Him. Kings cannot endure to think of successors, much less of rivals; and therefore nothing less than the blood of this infant King will satisfy him. He will not reflect, that, if the child be indeed the Messiah, in opposing Him, he would be found fighting against God, than which nothing is more vain, or dangerous. Passion has mastered his reason and conscience. Now, see how cunningly he laid his project. He privily called the wise men, not openly owning his fears; it would

declaring both what they had seen, and why they had come. It was an early intimation of the calling of the gentiles into the church of Christ, even when the Jews would neglect Him, and be rejected by Him. 'Christ,' says Beza, 'a poor child, laid in a crib, and neglected by his own people, has, notwithstanding, a noble witness of his divinity from heaven, and of his kingly estate from strangers.' It is plain these wise men did not arrive at Bethlehem till after the presentation of Christ at the temple, (Notes, 9–12. Luke 2: 36–39.) and likely that Joseph and Mary purposed settling at Bethlehem, and had procured a residence there.

VERSES 3–6.

(4) As a suspicious trait, Herod no sooner heard of 'the king of the Jews' than the dread of a rival haunted him. He neither understood the spiritual nature of the Messiah's kingdom, nor considered that, being now old, a new-born infant was not likely to give him disquietude, and was therefore greatly troubled. The citizens of Jerusalem also, not having formed a proper judgment of blessings to be expected from the Messiah, were in consternation. They had witnessed so many of Herod's cruelties, whenever a competitor was suspected, that they seem to have dreaded new scenes of confusion and bloodshed; and thus were troubled at that event, which should have given them joy. Herod, however, by a strange mixture of regard for the word of God, and contempt of it, supposing that ancient prophecies were about to be fulfilled, yet hoping to defeat them, framed his plan for the purpose. First, he convened the priests and scribes, or the heads of the twenty-four courses, with the high priest at their stated superior, and the professed interpreters of the law, to know assuredly from them at what place the promised Messiah was to be born. Using this information to direct the wise men where to find Him, he might by their means discover and cut Him off; rendering abortive, by one blow, God's purposes and prophecies, from the beginning! To Herod's question they returned a proper answer, referring in confirmation of it, to a prophecy already considered. Note, Micah 5: 2. That prophecy differs in the quotation from our version of the prophet, especially as it is here said, 'Thou art not the

least,' &c. Some, [as Surenhusius, in his elaborate examination of the two passages,] propose reading the clause in Micah interrogatively, 'Art thou little among the thousands of Judah?' It is, however, plain that the sense, rather than the exact words of the Old Testament prophecies, is quoted in many parts of the New Testament; and that though these quotations are often taken from the Septuagint, yet that is not uniformly nor exactly adhered to: 'And thou, Bethlehem, the house of Ephraim, art one of the least to be among the thousands of Judah; out of thee shall one come forth to me, to be for a ruler of Israel.' Sept. (Though thou be a small town, yet thou shalt be famous and noble, through the birth of the Messiah, who shall be born in thee.' SCOTT. Both by ancient and later Jews this prophecy (6.) is owned as pointing out the Messiah's birthplace. Bethlehem Ephratah was 'in the land of Judah,' as appears from Micah's prophecy, from Ruth 1: 2, and the Septuagint version of Josh. 15: 60, and so described by Matthew, partly to distinguish it from another Bethlehem in the land of Zebulun. Josh. 19: 15, and partly because its other name, Ephratah, being now disused, was not familiar to Herod.

(5) What Micah calls thousands, Matthew calls princes; the Israelites being divided into thousands, and each thousand having its prince. [Thus, in England, as Hammond remarks, the hundreds contained originally so many families, and retain the name, in reference to the first distribution.] Micah speaks of a Ruler in Israel, Matthew of a Governor that shall rule or feed my people Israel. [See Rev. 19: 15, in Gr. since, as Beza observes, 'Kings are fully called feeders and shepherds of the people.' Hence says Scott, He shall rule, as a shepherd does his flock, who, in feeding, rules, and in ruling, feeds.] It should also be noticed, that the evangelist is giving the version of the chief priests and scribes.

VERSES 7, 8.

(6) The sages were called to an interview by Herod privily; lest the Jews themselves should ascertain the time of the Messiah's birth, or understand the tyrant's plot, or give these travelers better information. He wished also not to appear too solicitous respecting their object: nor

me word again, 'that I may come and worship him also.

[Practical Observations.]

9 When they had heard the king, they departed: and, lo, *the star which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they were come into the house, *they saw the

2 Sam. 15:7-12. 2 Kings 19:31, 38. Ezra 4:2. Ps. 122:3. 51:11-15. 100v. 35:24, 25. Jer. 41:5-7. Luke 20:20, 21. Ps. 25:12. Prov. 2:1-6. 8:17. 2 Pet. 1:19. Deut. 32:13. Ps. 77:1. 105:3. Luke 2:9, 11, 20. Acts 13:46-48. Rom. 15:9-13. Luke 21:26-32, 33.

rise up in judgment with that generation, and with this too, and will condemn them; for they came from a far country to worship Christ, while the Jews, his kinsmen, would not go to the next town to bid Him welcome. It might have been a discouragement to these wise men, to find Him, whom they sought, thus neglected at home. Are we come so far to honor the King of the Jews, and do the Jews themselves so slight Him and us? Yet they persist in their resolution. Note, We must continue to attend upon Christ, though we be alone. Whatever others do, we must serve the Lord; if they will not go to heaven with us, yet we must not go to hell with them.

1. Now, observe, by the first appearance of the star, v. 9, 10. it was intimated where they might inquire for this King; then it disappeared, and they were left to take the usual methods for such an inquiry. Extraordinary helps are not to be expected where ordinary are to be had. Well, they were upon their journey to Bethlehem, but that is a considerable town, where shall they find Him? Here they were at their wit's end, but not at their faith's end: they believed that God, who had brought them there, would not leave them; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them. (7) Note,

be his disgrace to let the wise men know them, and dangerous to let the people know. (8) Sinners are often tormented with secret fears. Herod learn of the wise men when the star appeared, that he might act accordingly; then employs them to inquire further, and bring him an account. All this might look suspicious, if he had not covered it with a show of religion—that I may come and worship Him also. Note, The greatest wickedness often conceals itself under a mask of piety. Absalom cloaks his rebellious project with a vow. But see how strangely Herod was infatuated, in trusting it with the wise men, and not choosing managers that would be faithful to him. It was but seven miles from Jerusalem; how easily might he have sent spies to watch the wise men, and destroy the Child they worshipped. But God can hide from the enemies of the church those methods by which they might easily destroy it; when He intends to lead princes away spoiled, his way is, to make the judges fools.

V. 9-12. We have here the wise men's humble attendance upon Christ, and the honors they paid Him. From Jerusalem they went to Bethlehem, resolving to seek till they find; but it is strange that not one person of the court, church, or city, should accompany them, if not in conscience, yet in civility to them, or in curiosity to see the new-born Prince. As the queen of the south, so the wise men of the east, will be his disgrace to let the wise men know them, and dangerous to let the people know. (8) Sinners are often tormented with secret fears. Herod learn of the wise men when the star appeared, that he might act accordingly; then employs them to inquire further, and bring him an account. All this might look suspicious, if he had not covered it with a show of religion—that I may come and worship Him also. Note, The greatest wickedness often conceals itself under a mask of piety. Absalom cloaks his rebellious project with a vow. But see how strangely Herod was infatuated, in trusting it with the wise men, and not choosing managers that would be faithful to him. It was but seven miles from Jerusalem; how easily might he have sent spies to watch the wise men, and destroy the Child they worshipped. But God can hide from the enemies of the church those methods by which they might easily destroy it; when He intends to lead princes away spoiled, his way is, to make the judges fools.

If we go as far as we can in our duty, God will enable us to do that which we of ourselves could not do. Up, and be doing, and the Lord will be with thee. The law adds the active, not the idle. The star had long left them; yet now returned. They who follow God in the dark, shall find that light is soon for them. Israel was led by a pillar of fire to the promised land, the wise men by a star to the promised Seed, who is himself the bright and morning Star. Rev. 22:16. God would rather create a new thing, than desert those who faithfully seek Him. This star was the token of God's presence with them; for He is Light, and gives before his people as their guide. Note, If we by faith eye God in all our ways, we may see ourselves under his conduct; He guides with his eye, (Ps. 32:8.) and saith to them, This is the way, walk in it. There is a day-star that arises in their hearts, 2 Pet. 1:19. When they saw the star, v. 10, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy. Now they saw that they had not undertaken this long journey in vain. When the desire comes, it is a tree of life. Now they knew that God was with them; and the tokens of his presence cannot but fill with joy unspeakable those souls that know how to value them. Now they could laugh at those in Jerusalem, who, probably, had laughed at them, as coming on a fool's errand. The watchmen can give the spouse no tidings of her beloved; yet it is but a little she passes from them, and finds him. Cant. 3:4. We cannot expect too little from man, nor too much from God. How transported with joy these wise men were, on seeing the star, none know so well as those, who after a long, melancholy night of temptation and desertion, under the power of a spirit of bondage, at length receive the spirit of adoption, witnessing with their spirits, that they are the children of God. This is light out of darkness, and life from the dead. Now they might hope to see the Lord's Christ speedily, the Sun of righteousness; for they see the morning star. Note, We should be glad of every thing which will direct us to Christ. This star was sent to conduct the wise men into the presence-chamber of the King; by this master of ceremonies they were

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-8. It is often found, that they who live distant from means of grace, are led to use double diligence; and thus first get acquainted with Christ and his salvation.—But neither natural science, abstruse speculations, nor curious arts, avail in this great concern. The Sacred Scripture must be searched, with attentive diligence, obedient faith, and fervent prayer. This is 'a light shining in a dark place;' and they who follow its holy direction will spare no labor or expense in inquiring after Jesus, our Prince and Savior; they will render Him honor and submission, will devote their talents to his service, and not be reluctant to avow their expectations from Him and obligations to Him. But, alas! should eastern sages, or strangers from distant nations, come to many of those cities where Christianity is now professed, purposely to inquire after Christ and his religion; how much would they be surprised at the ignorance and inattention of those, who have the best opportunities of instruction, respecting the truths and duties of their holy profession! Such inquirers would not indeed excite consternation in either rulers or people; but would probably occasion astonishment, and incur the derision of those, who never acquainted themselves with Him, whose disciples they profess to be. In few places would rulers and teachers assemble, to consider and answer their inquiries: and were this done, it would perhaps arise rather from profane policy, than a cordial desire to promote the

knowledge of Christ and his salvation!—The Scripture must be fulfilled; and they who are acquainted with the Bible, and believe its testimony, are likely to find the right way, and point it out to others: and all who are related to Christ, and submit to Him as the Governor and Shepherd of Israel, will be numbered with 'the princes of his people,' however little in other respects. But let us beware of a dead faith. Facts prove, that a man may have a prevailing persuasion of many truths, and yet hate them violently, because they interfere with his ambition, interests, or sinful indulgence. Such belief produces uneasiness, and strengthens his resolution of opposing the cause of God: and so great is human inconsistency, that a man may deliberately form projects to defeat those purposes, which he cannot but perceive are from God; and may vainly hope for success in his impious, infatuated attempts! Indeed this is the enmity, malignity and misery of Satan from age to age. But 'He who sitteth in heaven will laugh' at these puny enemies; yea, 'the Lord will have them in derision: yet will He speak to them 'in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.' He can infatuate or crush them when He sees good; but they often for a time impose on the unsuspecting simplicity of pious men, and, by pretending to join them in honoring Christ, draw them in to forward their base designs.

SCOTT.

allow the report of it to spread abroad, that his design might the more easily be effected.

VALPY, KUINOEL.

Verses 9-12.

7) (The town being built on the ridge of a hill overlooking a valley that extends to the Dead sea, any phenomenon elevated over it must be seen afar. Ed. of Calmet.) What appeared, however, was no star, planet, or comet, properly so called; but a luminous meteor in our atmosphere, which at a distance looked like a star. 1) Now any appearance of a body of light in the air is called by Greek and Latin authors a 'star,' though it be only a meteor, that is, a transient accidental luminous vapor: neither of considerable height, nor long continuance; in which sense also the Scripture speaks of stars falling from heaven. Matt. 24:29. Mark 13:25. And such was that which the wise men saw.—2) *Ps. Porcius*, and which was formed by God for the purpose; as the cloudy pillar pointed out the spot, where Israel was to encamp in the wilderness.—It is evident that Joseph and Mary resided at this time in Bethlehem, 1) because if Christ had been now at Nazareth, He could

hardly have been carried into Egypt, without passing through Herod's dominions.' Doddr.] and that they fed thence into Egypt. SCOTT.

(8) 1) Perhaps they expected this great Prince would have been born in the family of Herod; at least it must have surprised them to find Him accommodated only like a carpenter's child; but, wisely considering that such miraculous honors as the star gave Him, were far beyond any external circumstance, they paid Him their homage as readily as if they had found Him in the richest palace. An amiable example of that humble, ingenious temper, which fits a man for the reception of the gospel.' Doddr.] Opening their treasures, they presented Him the choicest productions of their country, brought with them for the purpose. The fathers have generally supposed that, by these gifts, they acknowledged the deity and royalty of Christ. We must, however, conclude, that God, who directed and prospered their journey, gave them also some knowledge relating to the person and office of the new-born King; that their worship was of the same nature with that of other believers in every age; and that their abundant joy arose from

young child with Mary his mother and fell down and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

12 And being warned of God in a dream, that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

13 ¶ And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph

introduced. Now God fulfils his promise of meeting those who are disposed to rejoice, and work righteousness, (Isa. 64:5.) and they fulfil his precept, *Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the Lord*, Ps. 105:3. Note, God is sometimes disposed to favor young converts with very encouraging tokens of his love, in reference to the difficulties they meet at their first setting out in the ways of God. Further,

2. We may well imagine their expectations were raised to find this royal Babe, v. 11, though slighted by the nation, yet honorably attended at home; and what was their disappointment, when they found a cottage was his palace, and his poor mother all the retinue He had! Is this the *Savior of the world*? Is this the *King of the Jews*, nay and the *Prince of the kings of the earth*? Yes, this is He, who, though He was rich, yet, for our sakes, became thus poor. However, these wise men were so wise as to see through this veil, and in this despised Babe to discern the glory as of the *Only-begotten of the Father*.⁽⁸⁾ They did not think themselves baffled; but, as having found the King they sought, they presented themselves first to Him, and then their gifts. *They fell down and worshipped Him*, though he was not read that they so honored Herod, though he was in the height of royal grandeur; but to this Babe they gave this honor, not only as to a king, but as to a God. Note, All that have found Christ adore Him and submit themselves to Him. *He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him*. It will be the wisdom of the wisest, and by this it will appear that they know Christ, themselves, and their true interests,

if they be the faithful worshippers of the Lord Jesus. In the east, when they did homage to their kings, they made them presents.⁽⁹⁾ Thus the subjection of the kings of Sheba to Christ is spoken of, Ps. 72:10. *They shall bring presents and offer gifts*. Isa. 60:6. Note, With ourselves, we must give up all that we have to Jesus Christ; and if we be sincere in the surrender of ourselves to Him, we shall be willing to part with what is dearest to us and most valuable to Him; nor are our gifts accepted, unless we first present ourselves to Him as *living sacrifices*. God had respect to Abel, and then to his offering. Their gifts were gold, frankincense, and myrrh, money, and money's worth. Providence sent this to Joseph and Mary for relief in their present poor condition. These were the products of their own country; what God favors us with, we must honor Him with.

3. Herod appointed them to inform him of their discoveries; and, it is probable, they would have done so, if not countermanded, not suspecting their thus being made tools in a wicked design. Those who are honest themselves, easily believe that others are too, and cannot think the world so bad as it really is; but the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation. It does not appear that they promised to return to Herod, and if they had, it must have been with the usual proviso, *If God permit*; God did not permit them, and prevented the mischief Herod designed to the child Jesus, and the trouble in which it would have involved the wise men. They were warned of God, by an *oracular intimation*. Some think it implied that they asked counsel of God, and that this was the answer. Note, Those who act cautiously, and are afraid of sin, if they ask direction of God, may expect to be led in the right way. They were warned not to return to Herod, or to Jerusalem: these were unworthy to hear concerning Christ, whom they might have seen with their own eyes, and would not. *They departed to their own country by another way*, to bring the tidings to their countrymen. It is strange we hear no more of them, and that they or theirs did not return to attend Him in the temple, whom they had worshipped in the cradle. However, the direction they had from God in their return, would further confirm their faith in this Child, as the Lord from heaven.

the persuasion, that they had found the salvation of God for their souls, as well as 'the King of the Jews.' Probably, on arriving in their own country, they reported what they had seen, heard, and learned; and this would be a preparation for the future preaching of the gospel in those regions. Scott. 'It occurred unquestionably by the infinitely wise providence of God, that these foreigners should come to adore the new born King. This was designed to excite and admonish the Jews to prepare their minds for the reception of the Messiah, whom at that time all were expecting. It tended also to cherish and confirm the hope, which the parents and other pious persons, instructed of God had entertained concerning the Child.' Rosenm. 'And if, as early antiquity reports, some messengers of extraordinary respect were afterwards sent from Abgarus, king of Edessa, in Arabia, (which might be fact, though the letters now remaining be spurious,) it is very possible, the report of these sages, preserved by tradition, (if they were the dead,) might add weight to that of Christ's miracles, (about thirty years after,) and dispose that prince to take the greater notice of Him.' Dodd.

(9) *Worship—gifts*. The original word rendered worship, is so compounded as to signify *crouch* and *adore*, as a dog at his master's foot: meaning to prostrate one's self to another, according to the eastern custom, still in use. In this act the person kneels, puts his head between his knees, and with his forehead touches the ground. This is used to express both civil and religious reverence. In Hindostan this homage is paid by prostrating the body at full length. Dr. A. Clarke, at the interview of Dr. Judson with the emperor of Burmah, he says, [10]

V. 13-15 We have here Christ's flight into Egypt, to avoid the cruelty of Herod, which was the effect of the wise men's inquiry; for, before that, his obscurity was his protection. Little respect, compared with what should have been, was paid to Christ in his infancy; yet even that, instead of honoring, did but expose Him. Now observe,

1. Joseph knew neither the danger of the Child, nor how to escape it, but God, by an angel, tells him in a dream, as He did before, ch. 1:20. Joseph, before his alliance, had not been wont to converse with angels as now. Note, Those who are spiritually related to Christ, have that communion with heaven, to which they were before strangers. Joseph is here told their danger. *Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him*. Note, God knows all the cruel purposes of the enemies of his church. *I know thy rage against Me*, says God to Sennacherib, Isa. 37:28. How early was the blessed Lord Jesus involved in trouble! Usually, even those whose riper years are attended with toils, have a quiet infancy; but the life of Jesus and his sufferings began together. He was born a man stricken with, as Jeremiah was, Jer. 15:10. Both Christ, the head, and the church, his body, agree in saying, *Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth up*. Pharaoh's cruelty fastens upon the Hebrews' children, and the great red dragon stands ready to devour the man child as soon as it should be born, Rev. 12:4.

Take the young Child, and flee into Egypt. Thus early must Christ give an example to his own rule, *When they persecute you in one city flee into another*, ch. 10:23. He that came to die for us, when his hour was not yet come, fled for his own safety. Self-preservation, being a part of the law of nature, is eminently a part of the law of God. But why flee into Egypt? Egypt was infamous for idolatry, tyranny, and enmity to the people of God, to whom it had been a house of bondage, and particularly cruel to the infants of Israel. In Egypt, as much as in Ramah, Rachel had been weeping for her children; yet that is appointed a place of refuge to the holy child Jesus. Note, God can make the worst of places serve the best of purposes. For the earth is his, and He makes what use of it He pleases; sometimes the earth helps the woman, Rev. 12:16. God, who made Moab a refuge to his outcasts, makes Egypt such for his Son.⁽¹⁰⁾

Joseph and Mary might be tempted to think, 'if this Child be the Son of God, has He no other way to secure Himself from a man that is a worm, than by such a mean retreat?' Cannot He summon legions of angels as his life guard, or cherubim with flaming swords to keep this tree of life? Can He not strike Herod dead, or wither the hand that is stretched out against Him, and so save us the trouble of this remove? They had been lately told, that He should be the glory of his people Israel; and is the land of Israel so soon too hot for Him? But we find not that they made any such objections. Their faith, being tried, was found firm; and they be-

every head, excepting ours, was now in the dust. Monse Zah read the petition of the missionaries, and, on the emperor's stretching out his hand, 'crawled forward,' and presented it. Similar prostrations belong to the court ceremonies of China and Japan; and, throughout all



the East, it is believed, even to the islands, no one comes before a superior without a present. 'No mark of esteem,' says Prof. Paston, is more common through all the oriental regions, none more improperly required by the rules of good breeding, than a present.' See Gen. 32:13, 43:11. 1 Sam. 9:7. 10:27. Prov. 15:16, &c. Ed.

Verses 13-15

(10) The Lord easily defeated the subtle malice of Herod, directing Joseph, by his angel in a dream, to flee without delay into Egypt,

in a dream, saying, 'Arise; and take the young child and his mother and flee into Egypt, and be thou there, *until I bring thee word: 'for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt;

15 And was there until the death of Herod: 'that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, 'Out of Egypt have I called my son.

[Practical Observations.]

16 ¶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, "was exceeding

d 10:23 Rev. 12:5,14.
e 19:20, Josh. 3:13,17; 4:10,18. Dan. 3:25,26. Acts 16:36.
f 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

Jid, with an implicit confidence upon God, *not knowing whether he went.* Heb. 11:8. Joseph and Mary, having little, had little to take care of. Abundance encumbers a necessary flight. If the rich have the advantage of the poor, while they possess what they have, the poor have the advantage of the rich when they are called to part with it.

Joseph took the young Child and his mother. The young Child may be put first, as the principal person, and Mary is called, not the wife of Joseph, but, which was her greater dignity, the mother of the young Child. This was not the first Joseph driven from Canaan to Egypt, as a shelter from the anger of his brethren. This Joseph ought to be welcome there for the sake of that.

They continued in Egypt till the death of Herod, which some think was seven years, others, not seven months. They were at a distance from the temple, and among idolaters; but God sent them there, and *will have mercy and*

lieve *this is the Son of God*, though no miracle appears, but they must use ordinary means to preserve Him. Joseph had great honor in being the husband of Mary, but it has trouble attending it, as all honors in this world have. He must carry the young child into Egypt; and now it appears how well God had provided for the young child and his mother, in appointing Joseph to stand in so near a relation to them. Now the gold, which the wise men brought, stands them in stead to bear their charges. God foresees and provides against his people's distresses. He intimates the continuance of his care in saying, *Be thou there, until I bring thee word.* He must expect to hear again from God, and not stir until he fresh orders. God will keep his people still in dependence upon Him. Our Lord's going into Egypt is an instance of his humiliation. As there was no room for Him in the inn, so there was no quiet room for Him in the land of Judea. Thus was He banished from the earthly Canaan, that we, who for sin were banished from the heavenly Canaan, might not be forever excluded. If we and our infants be ever brought into straits, let us remember the straits into which Christ was brought, and be reconciled to them.

We see also here, that God justly leaves the Jews, who had slighted Him. We see too an earnest of his favor to the Gentiles, to whom the apostles were to bring the Gospel, when the Jews rejected it. If Egypt entertain Christ, cast out of Judea, it will be here long said, *'Blessed be Egypt my people,'* Isa. 19:25.

2. The journey would be inconvenient and perilous, both to the Child and his mother. They were but poorly provided for, and likely to meet cold entertainment in Egypt; yet Joseph *was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.* He immediately arose, and went away by night, the same night, probably, in which he received the order. Note, Those, who would make sure work of their obedience, must make quick work of it. Joseph went out, as Abraham his father:

V. 9—15. The Lord will guide with his counsel those who follow the teaching of his word, and wait on Him for further light: He can help them even by means of ungodly men, who know more than they practise; and none shall ever seek his face in vain.—Every indication of obtaining an interest in Christ will give great and sincere joy to the humble inquirer after Him: he will not be stumbled at finding the Savior or His disciples in obscure cottages, after having in vain sought them in palaces and populous cities; he will never fear honoring the Lord of glory too much, or being too devoted to his service. 'So let us rejoice in every thing which may be a mean of leading our souls to Christ, and of disposing us to cast ourselves down before Him with humility and self-resignation.' Happy they who consecrate not only their gold and other possessions, but also their souls and bodies to that Great Ruler, whose office it is to feed and govern the Israel of God; under whose conduct and care they shall receive blessings infinitely more valuable than all the treasures of the East or West! Doddg.] Our Father also, who knows what his

not sacrifice. Though far from the temple of the Lord, yet they had with them the Lord of the temple. A forced absence from God's ordinances, and a forced presence with the wicked, may be the lot, are not the sin, yet cannot but be the grief of good people.

3. Out of Egypt have I called my son, &c. 11:1. This word of the prophet undoubtedly referred to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, in which God owned them for his son, his first-born, (Exod. 4:22.) but it is here applied, by way of analogy, to Christ, the Head of the church. Note, The Scripture has many accomplishments, so copious is it, and so well ordered in all things! God is daily fulfilling the Scripture. Scripture is not of private interpretation, we must give it its full latitude. When Israel was a child, then I loved him; and thou, h I loved him. I suffered him to be a great while in Egypt, but because I loved him, I called him out of Egypt. They that read this, must, in thought, not only look backward, but forward. That which has been shall be again, Eccl. 1:9. and the manner of expression intimates this; for it is not said, I called him, but I called my son, out of Egypt. Note, It is no new thing for God's sons to be in Egypt, a strange land, and house of bondage; but they shall be fetched out. They may be hid in Egypt, but not left there. All the elect of God, by nature children of wrath, are born in a spiritual Egypt, and in conversion effectually called out. It might be objected against Christ, that he had been in Egypt. Must the Sun of Righteousness arise out of that land of darkness? No strange thing, as this shews; Israel was brought out of Egypt to be advanced to the highest honors; and this is but doing the same thing again. [Pract. Obs.]

V. 16—18. 1. Herod waited long for the return of the wise men; he hopes, though slow, they will be sure, and he shall crush his rival at his first appearing; but he hears that they are gone off another way, which, increasing his jealousy, makes him suspect they are in the interest of this new king. He is exceeding wrath, and the more desperate for being disappointed. Note, Inevitable corruption swells the higher for the obstruction it meets.

2. If he could not reach this king of the Jews by a particular execution, he doubted not but to involve him in a general stroke, which, like the sword of war, should devour one as well as another. This would be sure work; as they who would destroy their own iniquity, must be sure to destroy all their iniquities. Herod was an Edomite; enmity to Israel was bred in the bone with him. Doeg was an Edomite, and, for David's sake, slew all the priests of the Lord.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

children need, uses some as his stewards to supply the wants of others, and He will provide for them in every emergency, though the provision come from the ends of the earth.—Let us remember, that this event was an indication, that Jesus was 'the Light of the Gentiles,' as well as 'the glory of Israel; [—] let us look on it as a beautiful emblem of that more glorious state of the Christian church, when the Gentiles shall come to its light, and sages and kings to the brightness of its rising; when the abundance of the sea shall be converted to it, and the wealth of the Gentiles consecrated to its honor; Doddg.] and, whilst we are thankful for our mercies, let us recollect, that if we do not honor and worship, as our Lord and Savior, Him, who now reigns on his glorious throne, these eastern sages will rise up against us too in judgment; for they came from far, to worship Him as an infant in the arms of his mother.—But if we sincerely follow his guidance, He will by various interpositions direct our conduct; and He has unnumbered methods of defeating the most subtle and best concerted machinations of his enemies. Scott.

with the young Child and his mother, and there to wait till he had orders to return. Immediately he obeyed, and set out that night on his journey. Thus was 'the King of the Jews' driven, as an exile, out of his own land. 'He came to his own, but his own received Him not.' Shelter was sought for Him in a country, which had ever been most hostile to the people of God. Here they remained till the death of Herod, which seems to have taken place a few months after.—Many prophecies seem to have had a double meaning, both respecting the church, and Christ the Head of the church. In reference to this from Hosea, (Note. Hos. 11:1.) there appears to have been a particular intention of Providence in Christ's going into Egypt, that He might come up at the divine call from the same place, whence the nation of Israel had been brought. 'The same love of God, which had moved Him to free Israel

from Egyptian bondage, so operated that He would not leave Christ in Egypt, but bring Him back to his own people, whom He was to instruct 'in the knowledge of divine truth.' Rosenm.] Every circumstance favors the conclusion, that Joseph was warned to flee, immediately after the departure of the wise men, and considered the case too urgent to admit delay. Numbers of Jews were settled in Egypt, which would render his situation more comfortable, than it would else have been. Out of Egypt, &c. (15.) This is rendered in the LXX, 'Out of Egypt have I called his children;' but the evangelist gives the sense of the Hebrew. Scott.

Veres 16—18.

Herod, finding the wise men did not return to him, and supposing himself deceived, was, by jealousy, disappointment and in

wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they are not.

19 But when Herod was dead, behold,

Gen. 49:7 2 Kings 8:12 Prov. 28:15, 16 2 Sam. 5:7 Hos. 10:14 Rev. 17:6
J. 15.
J. 31:15 Ramah.
Jer. 40:1 9:17-21. Ez. 2:10, Rev. 8:13.
Gen. 35:9-13
Gen. 37:33-35 42:36 Job 14:10
Ps. 76:10. Is. 51:12 Dan. 8:25. 11:43.

of little children are proofs of their martyrdom. How early did persecution against Christ and his kingdom commence! Think ye that He came to send peace on the earth? No, but a sword, such a sword as this, ch. 10, 34, 35. A passive testimony was here given to the Lord Jesus. When in the womb He was witnessed to, by a child's leaping in the womb for joy at his approach; so now, at two years old, He had contemporary witnesses. They shed their blood for Him, who afterwards shed his blood for them. These were the infancy of the noble army of martyrs. If these infants were thus baptized with blood, though their own, into the church triumphant, it could be said, that what they got in heaven, abundantly compensated them for what they lost on earth. Out of the mouth of these babes and sucklings God did perfect praise; otherwise, it is not good to the Almighty that He should thus afflict.

There is an absurd tradition, that there were 14000 children slain. But, in one of the most populous cities in the world, there would not be found so many male children under two years old; much less in Bethlehem, having not near a fortieth part. It is strange that Josephus does not mention this fact. It is probable that, writing after Matthew, he would not relate it, because, being a zealous Jew, he would not thus far countenance the Christian history. But, had it not been true, he would have contested it. Macrobius, a heathen writer, says, that when Augustus Cæsar heard that Herod had slain his own son, among the children put to death, he observed, it was better to be Herod's swine than his son. Usage forbade his killing swine, but nothing restrained him from killing his son. Some think he had a young child at Bethlehem; others, that two events are confounded—the murder of the infants and of his son Antipater.

Some observe another design of Providence; that, as by the Old Testament prophecies, Bethlehem was the place, and this the time, for the Messiah's birth, and all the children of Bethlehem, &c. at the time, being murdered, none but

Jesus, who alone escaped, could pretend to be the Messiah. Herod thought he had baffled all the Old Testament prophecies, defeated the indications of the star, and devotions of the wise men. Having burnt the hive, he thinks he has killed the master bee; but God in heaven has him in derision. Whatever crafty, cruel devices are in men's hearts, the counsel of the Lord shall stand.

3. Then was fulfilled that prophecy, (Jer. 31: 15.) A voice was heard in Ramah. See the fullness of the Scripture! That prediction was accomplished in Jeremiah's time, when Nebuzaradan, after destroying Jerusalem, brought all his prisoners to Ramah, and assigned them to the sword, or captivity. Then was the cry in Ramah heard to Bethlehem; for the two cities, one in Judah's lot, the other in Benjamin's, were not far apart. Now the prophecy was again fulfilled. The noise was heard from Bethlehem to Ramah; for Herod's cruelty extended to all the coasts of Bethlehem, even into the lot of Benjamin, among the children of Rachel. Some think the country about Bethlehem was called Rachel, because there she died, and was buried. Rachel's sepulchre was nigh Bethlehem, comp. Gen. 35: 16, 19. and 1 Sam. 10: 2. Rachel's heart was set upon children; the son she died in travail of, she called Benoni, the son of her sorrow. These mothers were like Rachel, lived near her grave, and many of them descended from her; and therefore their lamentations are elegantly represented by Rachel's weeping.

It was lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning; all little enough to express their sense of this aggravated calamity. There was a great cry in Egypt when the first-born were slain; so here, when the youngest were, for whom we naturally feel special tenderness. Here was a representation of this world. We hear in it lamentation, and weeping, and mourning, and see the tears of the oppressed. Our way lies through a vale of tears. This sorrow was so great that they would not be comforted. They hardened themselves in grief. Blessed be God, there is no occasion of grief in this world, no, not that which is supplied by sin itself, that will justify us in refusing to be comforted. They would not be comforted, because they are not, are not living, are not in their mother's embraces. If, indeed, they were not, there might be an excuse for sorrowing as without hope; but we know they are not lost, but gone before; if we forget they are, we lose the best ground of comfort, 1 Thess. 4: 13. Some make this great grief of the Bethlehemites a judgment upon them for their contempt of Christ. They that would not rejoice for the birth of the Son of God, are justly made to weep for the death of their own sons. They only wondered at the tidings the shepherds brought, but did not welcome them. The quoting of this prophecy might serve as an answer to those who would say, 'Can He, who is to be the consolation of Israel, be introduced with all that lamentation?' Yes, for so it was foretold, and the Scripture must be fulfilled; and besides, the bitter weeping in Ramah, was but a prologue to the greater joy; for it follows, thy work shall be rewarded, and there is hope in thy end. The

ignation, wrought up to a rage bordering on madness. Determining to make sure the destruction of his competitor, he sent forth, as is probable, some of the soldiers of his guard, and slew the male children of Bethlehem and its dependent villages, under two years of age, (that is, says Doddridge, from their entrance upon the second year, and under.) having regard to the appearance of the star. Thus was the date of Christ's birth publicly marked, and the pretension of any other, as born about the same time at Bethlehem, cut off. This event formed another accomplishment of the prophecy of Jeremiah, already considered. (Note. Jer. 31: 15-17.)—Rachel, who was buried betwixt Ramah and Bethlehem, might be poetically represented on this occasion to weep for the slaughter of her children. Descendants of Joseph and Benjamin were, doubtless, murdered, as well as those of Judah, in this massacre. It may be observed, the evangelist does not say, 'that it might be fulfilled;' but 'then was fulfilled.' It was a fulfilment of the words, though not the event immediately predicted.—No pen can describe the horrors of a scene so brutal, nor the anguish of mothers over their butchered offspring; and we have objected to the authenticity of the narrative on this account. But the last act of Herod's life, as related by Pridaure, must convince the reader that he could perpetrate any wickedness. For that tyrant, knowing how hated he was, concluded that none would mourn his death, but rejoice at it. To prevent this, he collected at Jericho, where he then was, the principal Jews

of his kingdom, shut them up in the circus, and commanded that, as soon as he should die, they should be put to death; this, said he, 'will provide mourning for my funeral.' But the wicked order was not executed. Scott. Mr. Henry remarks: 'For the church of Rome to put the Holy Innocents into their calendar, and observe a day in memory of them, while they have so often, by their barbarous massacres, justified, and even outdone Herod, is but to do as their predecessors did, who built the tombs of the prophets, while they themselves 'slew up the same measure.' It is probable he referred to the then recent slaughter of the persecuted Vandois and Huguenots. Ed. 'As for the silence of Josephus, it is to be considered, that Bethlehem was but a small place; and therefore, in a reign of so much cruelty, the slaughter of its infants might not be greatly noticed. Josephus was not old enough to remember it himself; and if he did not find it in the memoirs of Nicholas of Damascus, (that flattering historian, of whom we know he made great use in compiling the life of Herod,) he might be unwilling to introduce it, if known to him: lest the occasion should lead him to mention what, generally at least, he is solicitous to decline, I mean Christian affairs. And if we compare contemporary historians of every age, we shall find some material fact or other omitted by each of them; yet that silence of one is never used as an argument against admitting the express testimony of the rest.' DODD.

'an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,

20 Saying, ⁷ Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: ⁸ for they are dead which sought the young child's life.

21 And ⁹ he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea, in the room of his father Herod, ¹⁰ he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, ¹¹ being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside ¹² into the parts of Galilee:

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called ¹³ Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, ¹⁴ He shall be called a Nazarene.

13. 1:20. Ps. 39:7. Jer. 23:10. Ec. 11:16.
14. Prov. 3:5, 6.
15. Ps. 41:9. 1 Kings 1:21, 40. 12:1—3.
16. Gen. 6:22. Heb. 11:3.
17. Gen. 19:17—21. 1 Sam. 16:2. Acts 2:13, 14.
18. 1:20. Ps. 45:14. 73:24. 107:5.
19. 1:21. Lk. 30:21. 43:17, 18.
20. 3:13. John 7:11, 42, 52.
21. John 19:17. 19:18. Acts 2:22.
22. 7:1. Ps. 69:10. Lk. 33:1, 2. John 1:45, 46. Acts 21:5.

whether the Lord, and many a one has the church in like manner weathered. *They are dead*—Herod and his son Antipater, who, though mutually jealous, yet probably concurred in seeking the death of Jesus. If Herod first kill Antipater, and then die himself, the coast is cleared, and *the Lord is known by the judgments He executes*, when one wicked instrument destroys another. Joseph, according to his orders, returns to the land of Israel, not pleading

worse things are, the sooner they will mend. Unto them a Child was born, sufficient to repair their losses.

V. 19—23. Christ was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; therefore He must return from Egypt. Observe,

1. Herod dies. Such quick work did divine vengeance make! Note, Herods must die; proud tyrants, the terror of the mighty, the oppressors of the godly, in the land of the living, down to the pit they must go. *Who art thou then, that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die?* (Isa. 51:12, 13.) Of all sins, the guilt of innocent blood fills the measure soonest. It is a dreadful account which Josephus gives of the death of this same Herod, (Antiq. b. xvii. ch. 6, 7, 8.) that he was seized with a disease which burned him inwardly with inexpressible torture; that he was insatiably greedy of meat; had the colic, gout, and dropsy; such an intolerable stench attended his disease, that none could come near him; and so passionate was he, that he was a torment to himself, and a terror to all that attended him; his innate cruelty being thus exasperated, made him more barbarous than ever; having ordered his own son to be put to death, he imprisoned many of the nobility and gentry, and ordered that, as soon as he was dead, they should be killed. But that execution was prevented. See what kind of men have been the enemies and persecutors of Christ and his followers! Christianity has been opposed by few, but such as have divested themselves of humanity, as Nero and Domitian.

2. God had sent Joseph into Egypt, and there he stayed till God ordered him thence. Note, In all our removes, it is good to see our way plain, and God going before us; we should not move one way or the other without order. These orders were sent by an angel. Note, If our intercourse with God be kept up on our part, it shall be on his, wherever we are. No place can exclude God's gracious visits. Angels come to Joseph in Egypt, to Ezekiel in Babylon, and to John in Patmos. *They are dead* which sought the young Child's life. *They are dead*, but the young Child lives. Persecuted saints sometimes live to tread on the graves of their persecutors. Thus did the church's King

the conveniences: Egypt, or the difficulties of the journey, it being, as is thought, the beginning of winter when Herod died. God's people follow his direction, whithersoever He leads them, wherever He lodges them. Did we look upon the world as our Egypt, a place of bondage and banishment, and heaven only as our Canaan, we should as readily arise, and depart thither, when called for, as Joseph did out of Egypt.

3. God reveals his mind to his people by degrees, to keep them still waiting on Him, and expecting to hear further from Him. Joseph received his orders in a dream, probably as before, through the ministration of an angel. God could have signified his will by the Child Jesus, but we do not find that the Child had any thing to do with these events. *In all things it behoved Him to be made like his brethren; he is a child, He spake as a child, and did as a child; and drew a veil over his infinite knowledge and power; as a child He increased in wisdom.*

Joseph might think that Jesus, being born in Bethlehem, must be brought up there. Yet he is prudently afraid, for he hears that Archelaus reigns in Herod's stead, not over all the kingdom, as his father did, but only over Judea, the other provinces being in other hands. See, then, if one enemy of Christ and his church drops off, another presently appears, to keep up the old enmity. Joseph must, therefore, not take the young Child into Judea. Note, God will not thrust his children into danger, but when necessary for his glory and their trial, *Precious in the sight of the Lord are the life and death of his saints; precious is their blood to Him.*

The family settle in Galilee, where Philip, a mild man, ruled. Note, Providence so orders it commonly, that his people shall not want a quiet retreat from the storm. When one climate becomes too hot, another shall be kept cool. Galilee was far north; Samaria between it and Judea; thither they were sent, to Nazareth, a city upon a hill, in the centre of the lot of Zebulun. There the mother of our Lord lived, when she conceived that holy thing; and probably Joseph lived there too, Luke 1:26, 27. Thither they were sent, there they were well known, and there was the most proper place for them, among their relations. Thence our Savior was called *Jesus of Nazareth*, which was to the Jews a stumbling block, for, can any good thing come out of Nazareth? In this is said to be fulfilled what was spoken by the prophets, *He shall be called a Nazarene*. This may be regarded,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16—23. We can assign no limits to the wickedness of the human heart, when furious passions and great authority combine; and when sinners are callous, by habit, and daring, y^e impunity in atrocious crimes. The near approach of death, instead of weakening the ambition, malice, or cruelty of such men, hurries them, apparently, to seize the fleeting moment for perpetrating their enormities, as if afraid of not treasuring up wrath enough; or as if they would set death, and even God Himself at defiance! No wonder, then, they are unmoved with compassion for bleeding infants, and inconsolable parents, and seem to delight in 'lamentation, weeping, and great mourning,' occasioned by their cruelties; yet are they more wretched by their own vile passions, than they can render others.—From such scenes let us avert our eyes, to contemplate the reception which the Lord of glory met, when He condescended to 'visit *His* in great humility,' and from his early persecutions learn *what* usage we must expect, if we are children of God, in this world which lieth in wickedness; and at what price all our hopes and comforts were purchased for us by our Surety. As the early honors He received proved an occasion of peril and

fatigue; so those who belong to Him cannot reasonably expect honor from God, without meeting trouble and contempt from men. Let it suffice us to be as our Master, hoping to have the promises of Scripture fulfilled to us, as the prophecies were in Him. But we must not expect uniform comfort from ever dear relations; as our children are far more frequently the occasion of care and distress, than of abiding satisfaction: yet we should not 'refuse to be comforted,' when they are taken from us. For though they die, as sinners, according to the righteous sentence of God, and not in the peculiar circumstances of these infants, martyrs, as they may be termed, for Christ; yet we may comfortably conclude, that when they cease to be with us on earth, they are only gone before us to heaven, through 'the second Adam,' the Lord of life and salvation.—We must expect to share 'the reproach of Christ,' and to be branded with some opprobrium for his sake: yet, if this be because we are consecrated to God through Him, and copy his example of truth and righteousness, we may glory in the distinction; assured that 'as we suffer with Him, we shall also be glorified together.'

SCOTT.

Verses 19—23.

Joseph, informed by an angel in a dream that Herod and Antipater were dead, and being admonished to return, came immediately into the land of Judah: but finding that Archelaus, the son of Herod, who 'in the very beginning of his reign massacred three thousand Jews at once in the temple, and was afterwards, in the tenth year of his government, banished by Augustus,' Doddridge had obtained from the Romans that part of the country in which Bethlehem was situated, and perhaps learning his jealous, cruel disposition, he was afraid to settle there. Hence he fixed his residence at Nazareth, where, as we find from the evangelist, Luke, he had formerly dwelt. Scott. 'Being thus returned to his own city, Jesus was there brought up and educated in a place so very contemptible among the Jews, that it was grown into a proverb with them, That no good thing could be expected thence; John 1:42 7, 59' so that 'y^e his way was further opened by the

'providence of God, that [there] might be fulfilled what had been spoken in effect by many of the prophets, "He shall be called a Nazarean," that is, he shall appear in mean and despicable circumstances, and be treated as the mark of public contempt and reproach.'—'If this solution be not allowed, I must acquiesce in Chrysostom's opinion, that the passage referred to is lost: [which supposition, however, is rejected as erroneous by Rosenmüller, who considers the evangelist as referring to passages like Ps. 22. Isa. 52. 63.] for it is very unnatural to explain this text by Samsu's being appointed a Nazarene, Judg. 13. 5. of the Messiah's being spoken of as the branch, [meszar,] Isa. 11: 1. or, as Wisdom, by God's being called [meszar] the preserver of men, Job 7: 20. The joint sense of many Scriptures is similarly referred to, John 7: 38, and James 4: 5. And that the Messiah should be treated in a very contemptuous manner, was foretold by David, Ps. 22. 6, &c. 69. 9. b. by Isaiah, ch. 52. 12 and by Zechariah, ch. 11: 12, 13.'

D. DODD.

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CHAP. III.

John the Baptist's preaching and manner of life, and the prophesy fulfilled to him, 1-4. Multitudes resort to him, and are baptized, 5, 6. His bold and solemn address to the Pharisees and Sadducees, 7-10. His testimony concerning Christ, 11, 12. Jesus is baptized; the Holy Spirit descends upon him, and the Father, by a voice from heaven, declares him to be his beloved Son, 13-17.

IN those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, 1. And saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

a Luke 3:1, 2.
b 1:11, 14, 2, &c. 16:14. 17:12, 13.
c 2:25-27, 32. Mark 1:1. 6:15-28.
d Luke 1:1-17, 7:26. 8:22-29. John 1:6-8, 11-13. 3:27-39. Acts 1:22, 13:29, 15:3, 19:4.
e Luke 3:3-5. Mark 1:7. Luke 1:17.
f 1:17. John 1:5, 6, 8, 1:17. Luke 1:7-9.
g 4:17. 11:30. 12:1. 21:23-29. 1 Kings 3:47. Job 42:6. Ez. 19:30-52.
h 1:15. Mark 1:15. 5:12. Luke 13:3, 5, 15:7, 10. 15:30. 21:17. Acts 2:34. 3:19. 11:18. 17:30. 20:21. 26:2. 2 Cor 7:10. 1 Tim. 3:25. Heb. 6:1. 2 Pet. 3:9. Rev. 21:21.
i 5:3, 10, 19, 20. 6:10, 23. 10:7. 11:11. 12:1. 13:11, 21, 31, 33, 41, 45, 17, 32. 15:1. 16:12. 20:1. 22: 22, 23, 25, 14. Dan. 2:4. Luke 6:20. 25:14.
j Luke 3:3-5. Col. 1:13.

CHAP. III. V. 1-6. 1. Observe the time of John's appearing. In those days, after what was recorded in the last chapter; in the time appointed of the Father, for the beginning of the Gospel; the fulness of time, often mentioned in the Old Testament. Now the latter half of the last week of Daniel began, when the Messiah was to confirm the covenant with many, Dan. 9: 27. Christ's appearances are all in their season. The glorious things, spoken of John and Jesus, before and at their birth, would have led us to expect some extraordinary tokens of the divine presence with them while very young. But nothing uncommon appears in regard to either, (except Christ's disputing with the doctors in the temple,) until they were thirty years of age. The greatest part of their life is wrapped in obscurity. In outward appearance they differed little from other children, as the heir, while under age, differs nothing from the servant, though he be lord of all. This shews that even when God is acting as the God of Israel, the Savior, He is verily a God that hideth Himself, Isa. 45: 15. The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. Gen. 28: 15. Our beloved stands behind the wall long, before He looks forth at the

NOTES. Verse 1.

John entered on his public ministry, as some think, about his thirtieth year; but such as assign a longer time for his ministry before the baptism of Jesus, must conclude that he began to preach at an earlier period; for Jesus, who was born but six months after him, was baptized when thirty years old. The mortified spirit and conduct of John, who, in retirement and by contemplation, doubtless, had attained uncommon degrees to the work of a holy fortitude, zeal, humility, and devotedness to God, were peculiarly suited to that severe ministry of the law, and God of humbling reformation, by which he was to prepare the Jews for receiving their expected Messiah. But, as a priest, and son of one so distinguished as Zechariah, his birth miraculous and greatly noticed, and himself a person so excellent and remarkable; he could not be very obscure in his retirement. Probably, his reputation was considerable before he entered on his public work, and this conduced to his popularity. He was called the Baptist, or Baptizer, because he admitted the Jews into the number of his disciples by the external rite of baptism, as a sign of profession of repentance. His ministry was not at Jerusalem, but in the wilderness, or less populous parts of the country. He came down as a herald, the first approach of the Messiah, to preach, or proclaiming as a herald, the near approach of the Messiah, their expected King. "By those days," says Beza, "he meant, while Jesus yet remained in private at Nazareth." SCOTT. "After the history of the nativity and infancy of Christ, follows now the second part of the Gospel, containing an account of the words and actions of John, and of Jesus preparatory to his public appearance as the Messiah, ch. 3: 4-11." ROSEN. "This phrase, in those days, is the same with in those years. It is an ordinary thing in the Hebrew, to confound the words signifying a day and a year; and the Greeks did the same, as appears by the Seventy interpreters, 1 Sam. 1: 3, 7." POOLE. "The ministry was short, says Dr. A. Clarke; 'for, he appears to have been put to death in the 27th year of the Christian era.'" E. V. 2.

The Jews, thinking the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom their own exclusively, and expecting temporal deliverance from the Romans, with victory, prosperity, and pre-eminence, were disposed to prepare for his coming by levying armies and making insurrections. But John simply preached 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;' which, doubtless, he enlarged on, explained, and applied to his hearers. The kingdom of heaven signifies the gospel dispensation; so called, because the God of heaven then began to set up that kingdom, which will fill length all the earth. (Marg. Ref.—Notes Dan. 2: 34, 35, 44, 45. 7: 9-14.) It is set up in opposition to the power of the devil, 'the god,' and 'prince of this world;' and in the person of Christ, the Son of God, manifested to destroy the works of the devil. Sinners enter it [14]

windows. Cant. 2: 9. It shows also, that faith must have an eye principally to Christ his office and undertaking, for there is the display, while in his person is the hid-eg, of a power. All this while, Christ was God-mag yet we are not told what He said or did, till He appeared as a Prophet; and then, hear ye Him. Young men, though well qualified, should, as we forbear, to put themselves into public service but be humble and self-diffident, swift to hear, and slow to speak. Matthew says nothing of the conception and birth of John, but finds him at full age, as if dropped from the clouds, to preach in the wilderness. For above three hundred years, the church had been without prophets; those lights had been long put out, that He might be more desired, who was to be the great Prophet. From Malachi to John there had been no pretender to prophecy. To John, therefore, Malachi points more directly than any of the Old Testament prophets, Mal. 3: 1. Behold, I send my messenger.

2. John did not appear in an uninhabited desert, though it be called a wilderness; but in a part of the country thinly peopled, not so much inclosed and cultivated as cities and towns. It was like the six cities and their villages mentioned Josh. 15: 61, 62. John preached in the cities and villages near his birth place, Hebron. His active life began where he had spent his time in contemplation; yet still he showed how well he loved retirement, as far as would consist with his business. The word of the Lord found him in a wilderness. Note, Commonly the sweetest intercourse the saints have with Heaven is when they are farthest from the noise of this world. In a wilderness, the law was given, and as the Old Testament so the New Testament Israel, was first found in a desert land, and there God led him about, and instructed him. Deut. 32: 10. John Baptist was a priest of the order of Aaron, yet we find him preaching in a wilderness, not officiating in the temple; but Christ, who was not a son of Aaron, is often found in the temple, sitting there as one having authority. So it was foretold, Mal. 3: 1. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; not the messenger, who was to prepare his way. This intimated that the priesthood of Christ was to thrust out that of Aaron, and drive it into a wilderness. The

by faith in Christ: then, their rebellions being pardoned, they return to their allegiance, are willing subjects, and enjoy all the immunities and privileges of the kingdom. These are all of a heavenly nature; they come from heaven, prepare the soul for heaven, and at length issue in the felicity of heaven; which sometimes also is meant by 'the kingdom of heaven.' 'It is plain that the Jews understood it of a temporal monarchy, which God would erect, the seat of it Jerusalem, the capital of the world instead of Rome; and the expected Sovereign of this kingdom, whom they learned from Daniel to call the Son of men; understanding by it the promised Messiah, or Christ, or Anointed One of God. Both John the Baptist, then, and Christ, used this phrase—and gradually taught the Jews to affix right ideas to it, a lesson they were remarkably unwilling to learn. This very demand of repentance shewed, that 'it was a spiritual kingdom; and that no wicked man, how politic or brave, how learned or renowned soever, could possibly be a member of it.' DOUGL. This 'kingdom of heaven,' a term peculiar to Matthew, to which, however, 'the kingdom of God,' in other parts of the New Testament, appears synonymous, was at hand. The King was about to appear, to collect followers, finish his work, ascend his throne, and abrogate the legal dispensation, terminate the national covenant of Israel, admit the Gentiles into the church, and introduce the dispensation of Christianity. If the Jews, then, meant to share its blessings, they must prepare for them by repentance; trust no longer in outward distinctions; but, comparing their temper and conduct with the law of God, must judge and condemn themselves, be sorry and humbled for their sins, and turn from them all to the love and service of God.—This word rendered 'repentance' implies a total revolution in the mind, a change in the judgement, dispositions and affections, another and better bias to the soul. Without it, the people could neither understand the nature of the kingdom of heaven, welcome Christ, become his subjects, nor desire his salvation. SCOTT. Repent ye. 'A doctrine must fit for the gospel, and most suitable to the time, and a word or phrase agreeable to the doctrine. A nation, leavened with the error of the Pharisees concerning justification by the works of the law, was necessarily to be called off to the contrary doctrine of repentance, or could not receive the Gospel.'—And, 'however the schools of the Pharisees had ill defined repentance,—in which, 'for the most part, it was thought to consist in the confession of the mouth only; yet they asserted that repentance itself was necessary to the reception of the Messiah.' It is worthy of observing, also, that John said not 'Repent and believe the Gospel,' which our Savior did, ch. 4: 17. yet John preached the Gospel, Mark 1: 2. John 1: 7-9, for his office, chiefly was to make Christ known, who, when he should come, was to be the great Prophet of the Gospel.

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, *Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.*

4 And the same John had this raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; *and his*

† Is. 40:3. Mark 1:3. Luke 3:3-6.
John 1:23.
Is. 57:14, 15. Mal. 3:1. Luke 1:17, 76.
11:8. 2 Kings 1:8. Zech. 13:1. Mal. 4:5. Mark 1:6. Luke 1:17. Rev. 11:3.
b 11:8. Lev. 1:22.

but must do it in repentance. His business was to call men to repent of their sins. Bethink yourselves; as the original implies. Admit a second thought, to correct the errors of the first. Change your minds. Ye have thought amiss, now think aright. Note, True penitents have other thoughts of God and Christ, sin and holiness, this world and the other, than they have had. This change of the mind, produces a change of the way. Those who are truly sorry for what they have done, will be careful not to do so more. This repentance is a necessary duty, in obedience to the command of God, Acts 17:30, and a necessary qualification for the comforts of the Gospel. If man's heart had continued upright, divine consolations might have been received without this painful operation preceding; but being sinful, it must first be pained, before it can be laid at ease. The sore must be searched, or it cannot be cured. *I wound and I heal.*

The kingdom of heaven is at hand. The ancient prophets called people to repent for the obtaining and securing of temporal blessings, and for preventing and removing temporal national judgments. But now, though the duty is the same, the reason is new, and purely evangelical. Men are now considered personally, not so much in a social or political capacity. Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; the Gospel dispensation of the covenant of grace, the opening of the kingdom to all believers, by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a kingdom of which Christ is the sovereign, and we must be the willing, loyal subjects of it. It is a kingdom of heaven, not of this world, a spiritual kingdom: its original from heaven, its tendency to heaven. John preached this kingdom as *at hand*; to us it is come by the pouring out of the Spirit, and the full exhibition of Gospel grace. This is a great inducement to repent. There is nothing like the consideration of divine grace to break the heart, both for sin, and from sin. Evangelical repentance flows from a sight of Christ, from a sense of his love, and the hopes of pardon and forgiveness through Him. Kindness in conquering; abused kindness, humbling and melting. What a wretch was I to sin against such grace, against the law and love of such a kingdom! It is a great encouragement to repent. Return to God in a way of duty, and He will, through Christ, return to you in a way of mercy. The proclamation of pardon discovers and fetches in the malefactor, who before fled and absconded. Thus are we *drawn to it with the cords of a man, and the bands of love.*

4. The prophecies respecting John, as Isa. 40:3, 4, *the voice of one crying in the wilderness.* John owned it, John 1:23. I am the voice, and that is all. God is the speaker, who makes known his mind by John, as a man does by his voice. The word of God must be received as such. 1 Thess. 2:13. What is Paul or Apollos but the voice? John is called the voice

of one crying aloud, which is startling and awakening. Christ is called the Word, which, being distinct and articulate, is more instructive. John, as the voice, roused men. Then Christ, as the Word, instructed them. Rev. 14:2. The voice of many waters, and of a great thunder, made way for the melodious voice of harpers, and the new song, v. 3. Some observe that, as Samson's mother must drink no strong drink, yet he was designed to be a strong man; so John Baptist's father was struck dumb, and yet he was designed to be the voice of one crying. When the crier's voice is begotten of a dumb father, it shows the excellency of the power to be of God, and not of man. John was Christ's harbinger and forerunner. It was said of him, before he was born, that he should make ready a people prepared for the Lord, Luke 1:17. He intimated the nature of Christ's kingdom, for he came not in the gaudy dress of a herald at arms, but in the homely one of a hermit. Officers are sent before great men to clear the way; so John prepares the way of the Lord. In the Jewish nation, at that time, all was out of course. The vitals of religion were eaten out by the traditions of the elders. The scribes and Pharisees, that is, the greatest hypocrites in the world, had the key of knowledge and of government at their girdle. The people, in general, were very proud of their privileges, confident of justification by their own righteousness, insensible of sin; and though now under the most humbling providences, being lately made a province of the Roman empire, were yet unhumiliated. They were, as in Malachi's time, insolent and haughty, and ready to contradict the word of God. John was sent to level these mountains, to take down their high opinion of themselves, and to show them their sins, that the knowledge of Christ might be more acceptable and effectual. This doctrine is still as necessary as then. Note, There is a great deal to be done, to make way for Christ into a soul, to bow the heart for the reception of the Son of David. There must be a discovery of sin, and a conviction of the insufficiency of our own righteousness; prejudices must be removed, high thoughts brought down, and rendered obedient to Christ. Bars of iron must be shattered, ere the everlasting doors be opened for the King of glory to come in. The law of sin and Satan is a crooked way; the law must be made straight. Heb. 12:13.

5. They, who expected the Messiah, as a temporal prince, would think that his forerunner must come in great splendor; but though great in the sight of the Lord, he was mean in the eyes of the world; and, as Christ himself, having no form nor comeliness; to intimate betimes, that the glory of Christ's kingdom was to be spiritual, and its subjects, ordinarily, poor and despised. John did not go in long clothing, as the Scribes, or soft clothing, as the courtiers,

V. 3.

The ministry of John fulfilled a prophecy already considered. (Note, Isa. 40:3-5.) He was 'a voice,' that conveys the mind of the speaker, and then vanishes: he declared the mind of God concerning his Son, and ended his short ministry. He proclaimed Christ, as the Son of God, the King of Israel, and the Savior of the world. (Notes, John 1:29-34. 3:27-36.) and thus prepared the way of JEMOAH, for so is the word in Isaiah, and made his paths straight. 'The idea is taken,' observes Dr. A. Clarke, 'from the practice of eastern monarchs, who, whenever they entered upon an expedition, or took a journey through a desert country, sent harbingers before them, to prepare all things for their passage; and pioneers to open the passes, level the ways, and remove all impediments.' So John's preaching, by humbling the proud, detecting hypocrites, counteracting the prejudices of the people, rectifying their judgment, and raising them, from low and grovelling pursuits, to aspire after things truly great and excellent, prepared the way for the reception of Christ. 'Make straight the paths of our God,' says the Sept. Scotts. The prophecy here fulfilled is of the kind termed 'typical'; as it is first related to the liberation of the Jews, by Cyrus, from the Babylonish captivity, and then to the deliverance of the church, by Christ, from the thralldom of Satan. For, it would have been preposterous in the prophet to promise deliverance to far distant generations, as a consolation to the afflicted soon after the times of Hezekiah; although the fulfilment of the one by no means precludes that of the other, which is, indeed, the foundation of all deliverances.

SPANHEIM.

Verse 4.

This extraordinary man, who was 'great in the sight of the Lord,' was very homely in his attire, wearing a coarse and rough garment, (Note, 2 Kings 1:8.) wrought in a rude manner, and girted about him with a piece of undressed leather, and frugal in his diet; faring as a

poor person, desiring neither abundance nor delicacies; (his food consisting, that is, frequently, of locusts, allowed as clean by the law, (Marg. Ref.) and the honey made by bees in the uncultivated lands) taking any thing that came to hand in his retirement, to satisfy his wants, and in important matters of a more important, spiritual nature. As he could live on little, and was inured to hardship, he was independent of the rich and great, and might more plainly reprove them: a circumstance not without effect in forming other parts of his character. SCOTT. Chardin states that garments of camels' hair are worn by the modern dervishes; a coarse cloth being made of it in the east, and used for manufacturing the coats of shepherds and camels-drivers, and also to cover tents. John, doubtless, wore this kind, and was thus distinguished from those residents in palaces, who wore soft raiment. CALMET. There has been, from an early period, a diversity of opinion with respect to the sustenance of the Baptist. Our countryman, the learned author of 'The Natural History of the Bible,' does not admit that insect-food is here meant, though 'locusts were eaten in the east,' since 'previous dress, &c.' is needed—which does not seem an employment worthy of one, whom the Scripture represents as sufficiently occupied in devout meditation, and therefore would have buds and pods of trees, which the original may signify, intended; but says Prof. PAXTON, 'however disgusting that kind of meat may appear to us, the orientals entertain a different opinion.' 'A monk, who had travelled into Egypt, asserts, that in the country they subsisted on them four months in the year. In feeding on that insect, the Baptist submitted to no uncommon privation, and practised no savage rigor, like many hermits who inhabit deserts; but merely followed the abstemious mode of living, to which the people were accustomed, in the less frequented parts of the country. His food appears particularly mentioned to show, that he fared as the poorest of men, in a manner corresponding with the meanness of his dress.' MORIER is quoted as saying that in Bussire locusts are

meat was locusts and wild honey.

5 Then ^{he} went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,

6 And ^{he} were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

[Practical Observations.]

Dent 32:13. 1 Sam. 14:25-27.
 14:25. 11:17-12. Mark 1:5. Luke 16:16. John 3:23. 5:33.
 11:12-16. Ex. 36:25. Mark 1:9. Luke 3:15. John 1:25-21. 31-37. 3:33-25. Acts 1:1. 2:3-11. 10:39.
 24. 11:16. 19:15. 1 Cor. 10:2. Col. 2:12. Tit. 3:5-6. Heb. 6:2. 9:10. 10:22. 1 Pet. 3:21.
 16:21. 26:10. Num. 5:7. Josh. 7:19. Job 33:27, 28. Ps. 32:5. Prov. 24:13. Dan. 9:4. Mark 1:5. Luke 15:18-21. Acts 19:18. 22:16. Jam. 5:16. 1 John 1:9.

finds with his loins girt, Luke 12: 35. 1 Pet. 1: 13. His diet was plain. It was locusts and wild honey; not as if he never ate anything else, but these he frequently fed upon, when he retired into solitary places. Locusts were a sort of flying insect, very good for food, and allowed as clean, Lev. 11: 22. They required little dressing, were light and easy of digestion; whence it is reckoned among the infirmities of old age, that the grasshopper or locust is then a burden to the stomach, Eccl. 12: 5. Wild honey was that which Canaan flowed with, 1 Sam. 14: 26. Either it was gathered immediately as it fell in the dew, or rather, as it was found in the hollows of trees and rocks, where bees built, that were not, like those in hives, under the care of men. This intimates that a little served his turn; a man would be long ere he filled his belly with locusts and wild honey. John came neither eating nor drinking, ch. 11: 18. not with the delicacy and formality of others. He could seldom find time for a set meal. Now this agreed with the doctrine he preached, repentance, and fruits meet for repentance. Note, Those who call others to repentance, should themselves live a life of seriousness and mortification. John thus showed his deep sense of the badness of the times, in which he lived, and of the need of repentance. Every day was a fast day to him. This agreed with his office as Christ's forerunner. He showed that he had experienced the powers of the kingdom of heaven. Note, Those who know spiritual pleasures, cannot but look upon the delights of sense with a holy indifference. By giving others this example, he made way for Christ. A conviction of the vanity of the world; is the best preparative for the entertainment of the kingdom of heaven in the heart. *Blessed are the poor in spirit.*

6. Great multitudes came to him from the city, and from all parts of the country; some of all sorts, men and women, young and old, rich and poor, Pharisees and publicans. They went out to hear of him, what they had heard so much about. This was a great honor put upon John. Note, Frequently those have most real honor, who least court the shadow of it. Those

who live a mortified life, command respect. Men have a secret reverence for them, more than we imagine. This gave John a great opportunity to do good, and showed that God was with him. Now people begin to press into the kingdom of heaven. Luke 16: 16. A blessed sight it was to see the net cast where were so many fish. It showed that it was now a time of great expectation. It was generally thought the kingdom of God would soon appear; Luke 19: 11. therefore, when John lived and preached at this rate, so very different from the Scribes and Pharisees, they were ready to say of him, that he was the Christ. Luke 3: 15. This occasioned the crowd. Those who would have the benefit of his ministry, must go out to him in the wilderness, sharing his reproach. Note, They who truly desire the sincere milk of the word, if it be not brought to them, will seek it. They who would learn the doctrine of repentance, must go out from the hurry of this world. It appears that of the many who came to John's baptism, there were but few that adhered to it; witness the cold reception that Christ had. Note, There may be many forward hearers, where there are but few true believers. Curiosity may bring many to attend upon good preaching, and to be affected with it for a while, who yet are never subject to the power of it. Ezek. 33: 31, 32.

John's disciples were baptized of him in Jordan, thus professing their repentance, and belief that the kingdom of heaven was at hand. They confessed their sins; a general confession, it is probable, they made to John, that they were polluted by sin, and needed cleansing; but to God a confession of particular sins, for He is the party offended. The Jews had been taught to justify themselves; but John teaches them to accuse themselves, and not to rest in the general confession of sin made for all Israel, once a year, upon the day of atonement; but to make a particular acknowledgement, every one of the plague of his own heart. Note, A penitent confession of sin is required, in order to peace and pardon. Those only are ready to receive Christ as their Righteousness, who are brought with shame to own their guilt, 1 John 1: 8. The benefits of the kingdom of heaven, now at hand, were thereupon sealed to them by baptism. He washed them with water, to show that from all their iniquities God would cleanse them. It was usual with the Jews to baptize those whom they admitted proselytes to their

used as food by the lowest peasantry. Burckhardt also mentions that the Bedouins eat them entire. After many similar statements, the American editor of Calmet observes, 'there can surely be no difficulty in admitting locusts to have been



Verses 5, 6.

Through a divine influence on their minds, multitudes resorted to John, from all parts of Judea, and from Jerusalem, so that city and country, as it were, went out to him; specially the inhabitants of those regions which lay on each side of the Jordan, where, after a time, he commonly exercised his ministry. His celebrity at length drew the Jews of all ranks and parties to him; and when they were brought to confess their sins, profess repentance, a purpose of submitting to the Messiah who was at hand, and leading a new life, they were baptized by John, in or at the river Jordan. The law of Moses prescribed 'divers washings,' or baptisms, in which water was variously used, as an emblem of the purging of the soul from the pollution of sin, in order that the priests or people might attend acceptably on the service of God. (Note, Heb. 9: 8-10.) By degrees it became customary in the Jewish church to baptize those, who were proselyted to their religion from the Gentiles, both male and female, as well as to circumcise the males, denoting that they deemed them unclean in themselves, and not meet to join the congregation of the Lord, till they were washed from the filthiness of their gentile state. The prophets also often alluded to this emblem of the soul's being cleansed from sin; and some passages of the

New Testament intimate, that both the cleansing from guilt by the blood, and from pollution by the Spirit of Christ, were comprised under this outward sign; yet is the latter more generally intended. (Marg. Ref. n. o.) Baptism had been before in use, but John was singular in baptizing all his disciples, though Jews, and without distinction of previous character, intimating that by nature and practice they were all polluted, and could not be admitted among the true people of God, except washed from their sins in the fountain about to be opened by the Messiah. He had express divine direction for this: (John 1: 33.) but, though his use of baptism was introductory to the appointment of that ordinance to be the initiatory sacrament and seal of the new dispensation, as circumcision had been of the old; yet we should not consider it as the same with Christian baptism; but rather as an institution for the time being, introductory to the change which was gradually to take place, when the old dispensation should be abrogated, and the new established. Baptism, as used by John, was not to supersede circumcision; for it seems he baptized none but circumcised persons, except women, as appears highly probable, though not mentioned. We cannot suppose he 'baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' or that Jesus was thus baptized; nay, the contrary is clear: (Notes, Acts 19: 1-6.) and probably Christ's disciples did not use that peculiar form of Christian baptism before his ascension.—Some, at least, whom John baptized, received Christian baptism also, when admitted into the Christian church; for, doubtless, several who heard Peter on the day of Pentecost had been John's disciples; yet he exhorted them all to be baptized in the name of the Lord (Acts 2: 38-41.) John's baptism and Christian baptism were not, then, exactly the same, and inferences from one respecting the other are inconclusive. Adults only, it appears, were baptized by John, circumcision continuing still the initiatory ordinance, and seal of the covenant. Hence we never read that he baptized households, as did the apostles.—Water was the outward sign; but whether administered by immersion or not, is incapable of decisive proof. The use of it is essential, because water is the universal purifier; the quantity and mode of application circumstantial, varying as occasion may require. The inward, spiritual signification is the same as that of circumcision, that is, *regeneration and sanctification* by the cleansing power of the Holy Spirit. Some contend zealously that baptism always signifies immersion; but the use of the words baptize and baptism, in the New Testament, 20: 23. 23. Mark 7: 4. 10: 38, 39. Luke 3: 16. 11: 36. 14: 35. Acts 1: 5.

7 ¶ But when Ie
saw many of the
Pharisees and Saddu-
cees come to his bap-
tism, he said unto them,
O generation of vipers
who hath warn-
ed you to flee from the
wrath to come?

8 Bring forth there-
fore fruits meet for
repentance.

5:20, 12:21, 16:12, 9-6-11, 12, 22: 1, 3-4, 23:13, etc. Mark 7:3-5, 8:1, 12:13, 13, Luke 7:30, 11:39-40, 16:14, 16:11, John 1:24, 7:45, 19, 8:10, Acts 13:2, 5:17, 15:5, 23:3-9, 26:5.
15:33, 33, Gen. 3:15, Ps. 5:3-9, 15:73, 33, Luke 3:7, John 3:4, 1 John 3:10, Rev. 12, 9, 10, Jer. 6:10, Ez. 3:1-21, 33:3-7, Acts 20:31, Heb. 11:7, 12:1, 13:1, Rom. 5:9, 1 Thes. 1:10, 2 Thes. 1:9, 11th, 6:13, Rev. 6:16, 17, 21:2-30-32, 15:116, 17, Luke 3:8, 9-4, Acts 20:29, Rom. 2:1-7, 2 Cor. 7:10, 11, 2 Pet. 1:4-8, Gal. 5:22, 23, Eph. 6:9, Phil. 1:1, Rev. 22:2, 23:13, 36:3.

Sadducees come about him, he found it necessary to deal more closely. These were two of the three noted sects among the Jews; the third was the Essenes, not mentioned in the Gospels, for they lived in retirement. The Pharisees were zealous for ceremonies, for the power of the church, and the traditions of the elders. The Sadducees ran to the other extreme, and were little better than deists, denying the existence of spirits and a future state. It was strange that they came to John's baptism, but their curiosity brought them; some of them probably submitted to be baptized, but the generality did not; for Christ says, (Luke 7: 29, 30.) that when the publicans justified God, and were baptized of John; the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. Note, Many come to ordi-

religion, especially proselytes of the gate, who were not circumcised, as the proselytes of righteousness were. Some think it was also a custom for leaders, of religious character, to admit disciples by baptism. Christ's question concerning John's baptism, Was it from heaven, or of men? implied that there were baptisms of men, who pretended not to a divine mission; with this usage John complied, but his was from heaven, and it was distinguished from all others, in that it was the baptism of repentance, Acts 19: 4. All Israel were baptized unto Moses, 1 Cor. 10: 2. The ceremonial law consisted in divers washings or baptisms; (Heb. 9: 10.) but John's baptism refers to the remedial law, the law of repentance and faith. It was in Jordan, that river which was famous for Israel's passage through it, and Naaman's cure; yet, probably, John did not baptize in that river at first, but afterwards, when the people who came to his baptism were numerous, removed to Jordan. By baptism he obliged them to live a holy life, according to their profession. Note, Confession of sin must be accompanied with holy resolutions, in the strength of divine grace, not to return to it.

V. 7-12. Application is the life of preaching; so it was with John's preaching. Observe, To the people generally, he thought it enough to say, Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand; when he saw the Pharisees and Sadducees come about him, he found it necessary to deal more closely. These were two of the three noted sects among the Jews; the third was the Essenes, not mentioned in the Gospels, for they lived in retirement. The Pharisees were zealous for ceremonies, for the power of the church, and the traditions of the elders. The Sadducees ran to the other extreme, and were little better than deists, denying the existence of spirits and a future state. It was strange that they came to John's baptism, but their curiosity brought them; some of them probably submitted to be baptized, but the generality did not; for Christ says, (Luke 7: 29, 30.) that when the publicans justified God, and were baptized of John; the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. Note, Many come to ordi-

nances, who feel not the power of them. Now to them John speaks with all faithfulness, and what he said to them, he said to the multitude (Luke 3: 7.) for they were all concerned. His application was plain, home, and to the conscience. He did not simply preach before them, but to them. Though his education was private, he was not bashful in public, nor did he fear the face of man; for he was full of the Holy Ghost and of power.

1. The title which he gives them is not one of honor; but he begins harshly, O generation of vipers! Christ gives them the same, ch. 12: 34. 23: 33. They were as vipers, though specious, yet venomous; full of enmity to every thing good. They were a viperous brood, the offspring of those that had the same spirit. They gloried in being the children of Abraham; but John showed them that they were of their father the devil. (Gen. 3: 15. John 9: 44.) They were all alike, though enemies to one another; they were confederate in mischief. Note, A wicked generation is a generation of vipers, and they ought to be told so. It becomes ministers of Christ boldly to show sinners their true character. Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? This shows that they were in danger of the wrath to come, and their case so nearly desperate, (the Pharisees by their parade of religion, and the Sadducees by their arguments against it,) that it was next to a miracle to do them any good. What brought you hither; what fright has led you to inquire for the kingdom of heaven? Note, There is a wrath to come; besides present wrath, there is future, the stores of which are treasured up for hereafter. It is the great concern of every one of us, to flee from that wrath. It is wonderful mercy that we are fairly warned; think, Who hath warned us? God, who delights not in our ruin; He warns by the written Word, by ministers, by conscience. These

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-6. The most eminent and useful servants of God often grow up and minister in retired situations; but, wherever stationed, He will bring those to attend on them whom He purposes to save by their labors: and can convene multitudes in the desert, as easily as in populous cities.—The world at large is 'the kingdom of the wicked one,' except as some are translated, by the grace of God, 'from the power of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son.' These will soon be received into the realms of felicity, where their King now reigns in glory; but those who remain strangers or enemies to this deliverance, and consequently subjects of Satan, will have their portion with their prince, in the region of darkness and despair. This kingdom of God and heaven is 'come nigh to us;' but it must be in our hearts; nor can we understand its nature, excellency and glory, except we be broken in spirit with godly sorrow, humbled in repentance, taught to hate sin, and are longing for deliverance from its pollution as well as punishment. Preachers of salvation, therefore, must introduce their message of plenteous redemption by 'the ministration of condemnation,' shewing sinners the nature and necessity of 'repentance, and works meet for repentance.' Thus prophets and apostles; as well as John the Baptist, 'prepared the way of the Lord,' and led sinners to welcome his salvation and submit to his authority. Thus even the King of glory, when He humbled himself to be a 'Preacher of righteousness,' prepared the way for rendering Himself precious to the hearts of his hearers. Deviations, then, from this good old way will not be found im-

provements on it; and if repentance were more clearly preached, 'The Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world,' would not so often be pointed out in vain, nor would men so much neglect or pervert the Gospel.—They who preach repentance, mortification, and the renunciation of worldly interests and indulgences, will commonly succeed in proportion as they exemplify their own doctrine. If they seem nearly as much alive to the pursuit of wealth, or as desirous of the pleasures and decorations of life, as others, their declamations will have little influence. Nor can ministers in general be sufficiently independent to be faithful to all, and in all cases, except they learn to be content with slender accommodations, and frugal in expense. Indeed, it is no disgrace, but an honor, to the servant of God, to appear, and be willing to be, poor, in attire, table, furniture, and all belonging to him. External appendages may be needful to preserve from neglect and contempt those who have not superior wisdom or piety; but 'the man of God,' who is devoted to Him, and 'furnished for every good work,' has a more valuable distinction, and needs them not.—How small a portion of those, who attend the most faithful preachers, become true disciples of Christ! Novelty attracts many; some go because others do; and many are brought under transient convictions. They attend divine ordinances, confess their sins, and seem to be disciples; but having neither true repentance, nor the living faith of real Christians, in time of temptation they fall away.

SCOTT

Heb. 9: 10.) cannot accord with this exclusive interpretation. On the other hand, some, arguing perhaps too much from modern habits, have been sufficiently decided for the opposite interpretation. Vastly too much eagerness and acrimony have been employed in disputes on the subject, and far too little attention given to the instruction suggested by this ordinance. SCOTT. Such are the views of pedobaptists generally, but on the mode of baptism different sentiments are expressed by Campbell; and, more at large, with a valuable exemplification in passages from the Scriptures and several of the classics, by Prof. Stuart, Bibl. Repos. Ed. 'The warmest advocates for immersion, who are themselves partakers of the baptism of the Spirit, will confess that 'the outward sign, void of the inward effect, is nothing worth. And 'they who contend for infant baptism, if they know any thing of the Lord, must as readily allow, that nothing, short of the regeneration of the heart, can be profitable before God.'

HAWKER.

Verses 7-10.

Of the sect of the Pharisees, which professed the greatest strictness, were the most reputable of the Jewish scribes and elders. Some of them appear decent formalists of moral character, but inflated with spiritual pride. They dealt largely in ostentatious austerities and mortifications. Others of them were detestable hypocrites, making their

reputation for sanctity a cloak of exorbitant avarice, and the occasion for oppression and iniquity.—The Sadducees, the scornful infidels of the time, professed to receive some parts of the sacred writings, and to reject others; but paid no proper regard to any of them. Some of them, at least, seem to have been mere philosophizing atheists; and the rest sceptics, who treated every thing relating to God and eternity as doubtful and disputable; consequently, with contemptuous indifference. Considering the rewards promised in the law as referring but to this world, they counted prosperity a proof of the divine favor, and poverty or distress an evidence of a man's being accursed of God; thus, to relieve the indigent and miserable was an attempt to counteract Him, and therefore sinful. A convenient opinion for a hard, selfish heart!—Whether transient convictions, or a regard to reputation, brought these Pharisees and Sadducees to desire John's baptism, is not clear; but evidently, they came with wrong views and feelings. The Sadducees were as proud of their superior discernment, as the Pharisees of their superior sanctity, and with as little reason. Instead, then, of sanctifying their characters or courting their favor, John addressed them plainly, and even roughly, as a race of subtle, designing men, of poisonous principles and practice, i.e. genuine children of the old serpent. (Marg. Ref. 6.) No doubt they deserved the coming wrath of God, but it is not

is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

12 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

[Practical Observations.]

15 ¶ Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

Mark 1:7, Luke 7:27, Acts 13:25, Eph. 3:18, 1 Pet. 5:5.
 16 44, 44:3, 52:20, 21, Zech. 13:3, 3:2-4, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:16, John 1:35, Acts 1:5, 22:3-4, 11:15, 13:1, 1 Cor. 12:13, Gal. 3:27, 11:15, 3:28, 4:18, Jer. 4:11, 15:7, 61:2, Luke 3:17.
 13:11, 19:30, Mal. 3:3, 4:1, John 1:29.
 13:30, 48, Am. 9:9.
 10 Job 21:18, Ps. 141: 35:5, Is. 52:4, 71:3, Hos. 13:3, Luke 3:17, 1:1, 1 Cor. 12:13, Gal. 3:27, 11:15, Ex. 20:17, 43, Mark 9:43-48, 2:22, Mark 1:8, Luke 3:21.

his wheat, and not a grain of ripe fruits were gathered in. In heaven, the saints are separated from corrupt neighbors without, and corrupt affections within. They are not only gathered into the barn, (ch. 12:30,) but into the garner, thoroughly purified. Hell is the unquenchable fire, which will burn up the chaff, and will certainly be the portion, punishment, and everlasting destruction of hypocrites and unbelievers. So that here life and death, good and evil, are set before us; according as we are now in the field, we shall then be in the floor.

V. 13-17. Our Savior, from his childhood, had lain hid in Galilee, as it were, buried alive; but now, after a long and dark night, behold, the Sun of righteousness rises in glory. The fulness of time was come, that Christ should enter upon his prophetic office; and He chooses

as with fire; the seven spirits of God appear as seven lamps of fire, Rev. 4:5. Is fire enlightening? So the Spirit is a spirit of illumination. Is it warming? And do not their hearts burn within them? Is it consuming? And does not the spirit of judgment, as a spirit of burning, consume the dross of their corruptions? Does fire make all it seizes like itself? And does it move upwards? So does the Spirit make the soul holy like itself, and its tendency is heavenward. Christ says, *I am come to send fire*, Luke 12:49.

Whose fan is in his hand. His ability and authority to distinguish, as the Person to whom all judgment is committed, is the fan in his hand, Jer. 15:7. Now He sits as a Refiner. Observe, the visible church is Christ's floor: *O my threshing, and the corn of my floor*, Isa. 21:10. The temple, a type of the church, was built upon a threshing-floor. In this floor there is a mixture of wheat and chaff. True believers are as wheat, substantial and valuable; hypocrites are as chaff, light and useless, carried about with every wind. Good and bad are now mingled together in the same external communion, but there is a day coming, when the floor shall be purged, and the wheat and chaff shall be separated. Something of this kind is often done in this world, when God calls his people out of Babylon, Rev. 18:4. But it is the day of the last judgment, the great winnowing day, which will infallibly determine concerning doctrines and works, (1 Cor. 3:13.) and concerning persons, (ch. 25:32, 33.) when saints and sinners shall be parted forever. Heaven is the garner into which Christ will shortly gather all it shall be lost. He will gather them as the reaper's scythe is used to gather them to their people.

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7-12. The servant of God must judge of the characters of men by the rule of Scripture, not by outward rank, profession, or reputation. [Happy he, who, imitating the impartiality of this faithful messenger, gives to every one "his portion of meat in due season," and abhors the thought of flattering men in their vices, or buoying them up with delusive hopes in their birth or profession, while they are destitute of real and vital religion? Dodd.] None are further from the kingdom of heaven, than formalists, proud of their own supposed goodness, and infidels, elated with an idea of their superiority to vulgar prejudices. They little suspect, that they are more the children of the wicked one, and better serve his cause, than the vilest of the profligates they disdain; or that they are likely to receive still deeper damnation. On reading such declarations, indeed, they clamor loudly of bigotry, uncharitableness, and fanaticism; yet will they find them true, except (which is not likely,) they take warning, and flee from the wrath to come; and all the miseries of death, effects of God's displeasure against the sins of men, are not worthy to be compared with this. Happy they, who flee for their lives to the Savior; for He will not reject them, whether they have heretofore been Pharisees, Sadducees, or publicans. Yet, unless

we bring forth fruits meet for repentance, our profession of Christianity will not avail us. The Lord can raise up true disciples to Christ where his name has not yet been heard; and He will never spare any man who works iniquity, (nay, who does not work righteousness,) on account of his creed, sect, or forms of godliness: for 'now is the axe laid to the root of the trees; and every tree, not only which bringeth forth bad fruit, but which bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire.' But our hearts will not produce this good fruit, except the regenerating Spirit of Christ graft the good word of God on them. 'No outward forms can make us clean; no ordinances, by whomsoever administered, or in whatever mode, can supply the want of the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire;' this alone produces the purity of heart, and the exalted and holy affections, which uniformly accompany salvation. All professed Christians, who are destitute of this inward seal of the covenant, are but chaff amidst the wheat: and our Lord has 'his fan in his hand, and will thoroughly purge his floor.' For this, He employs various methods now; but the grand separation will be in the day of judgment, when 'He will gather the wheat into his garner, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.' Scott.

John denotes a general benefit. (Marg. Ref. e-h. Note, Acts 1:4-6.)—The Savior would communicate to his disciples the divine Sanctifier, as purifying water, to wash away internal pollutions; and as refining fire, to consume their dross, kindle a holy flame of love and zeal, illuminate with heavenly wisdom, and convert their whole souls into his own pure and holy nature. At the same time, to use another emblem, He would come to his visible church, then containing a few believers and many hypocrites, as the husbandman to his heap of threshed corn—with his fan in his hand; and as the husbandman, by winnowing the heap, separates wheat and worthless chaff, so Christ, by his doctrine, the convicting Spirit, his omniscience, his providential dispensations, and at the last judgment, would separate believers and unbelievers.—The expression 'unquenchable fire,' as fully proves that the wicked will never be released from the place of torment, as 'their work that never dies' does that they will never be annihilated. (Marg. Ref. i-n. Notes, Mark 9:13-50.) Scott. Whose fan, &c. Fans, instruments used in the east for winnowing corn, are of two kinds; one a sort of fork, having teeth, with which they throw up the corn to the wind, the other may be blown away; the other formalists to produce

wind when the air is calm, Isa. 30:24, Calmet. 'A winnowing shovel,' the first is called by Campbell, 'a implement very ancient, simple, and properly manual. The fan (or nan) (of the other kind) so called is more complex, contrived for raising an artificial wind, by the help of sails.' Elser notices, and it is very observable, a somewhat similar use of this image, in the explanation given by Servius of Virgil's 'mythic van' of the heathen rites; 'which rites pertained,' says he, 'to the purification of the soul, and by them men are purified, as corn by the van.' En.

Ver. 13-15.

John having some time exercised his ministry, Jesus came to be baptized of him. Being free from sin, He could not repent; and He needed no forgiveness, regeneration, or newness of life: but He would honor baptism, as the ordinance of God, and use it as a solemn introduction to his most sacred work and offices; of which John's testimony, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the voice from heaven, were many notifications. John, aware of his divine dignity and excellence, by immediate revelation, (Note, John 1:30-34.) hesitated to comply; declaring that he needed to be baptized of Christ with the baptism of the

14 But John fort ade him, saying, 'I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, 'Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And, lo, a voice from heaven, saying, 'This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

p Luke 1:13. John 13:18-19.
John 1:16. 2:27-28. Acts 1:5-9.
Rom. 3:23-25. Gal. 3:27-29. 4:6.
Eph. 2:3-5. Rev. 7:9-17.
John 13:7-9.
p John 1:7-8. Is. 42:1. Luke 1:6.
John 4:1. 8:29. 13:15. 15:10. Phil. 2:7-8. Heb. 7:26. 1 Pet. 2:21-24. 1 John 2:6.
1 Mark 1:10.
Ez. 1:1. Luke 3:21. Acts 7:56.
Is. 11:2. 42:1. 59:21. 61:1. Luke 3:22. John 1:31-34. 3:34. Col. 1:13, 19.
y John 5:37. 12:28-30. Rev. 14:2.
Is. 12:1. 17:5. Ps. 2:7. Is. 42:1, 21. Mark 1:11. 9:7. Luke 3:22. 9:35. Eph. 1:6. Col. 1:13. 2 Pet. 1:17.

Thus he was *made sin for us*, though He knew no sin. John's baptism is now a repute; that is the present dispensation, and now Jesus will be baptized with water; but his baptizing with the Holy Ghost is reserved for many days hence, Acts 1:5. Honor must now be put upon John's baptism. Note, Persons of the greatest attainments should yet bear testimony to ordinances by diligent attendance on them. What we see God owns, and while we see He does so, we must own. John was increasing, and, therefore, it must be thus yet; shortly he will decrease, and then it will be otherwise. Now there is a fair opportunity for Christ's appearing in public. See John 1:31-34. He must be signalized by wonders from heaven, in that act of his own, which is most condescending.

Thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness. Note, There was a propriety in every thing Christ did for us; (Heb. 2:10. 7:26.) and we must study to do not only that which behoves us, but that which becomes us. Our Lord looked upon it as well becoming Him to own every divine institution, and to show his readiness to comply with all God's precepts.—Thus it becomes Him to justify God in sending John his forerunner. Thus it becomes us to countenance and encourage every good thing by pattern as well as precept. Christ often mentioned John and his baptism with honor, which, that He might do the better, He must be baptized. Thus Jesus began first to do, then to teach, and his ministers must take the same method. Thus Christ fulfilled the righteousness of the ceremonial law, which consisted in divers washings; thus He recommended the gospel ordinance of baptism to his church, and showed what virtue He designed to put in it. It was proper for Christ to submit to John's washing with water, because it was a divine appointment; but, to oppose the Pharisees' washing with water, because it was a human invention.

John was entirely satisfied with the will of Christ; and then he suffered

with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, as of fire, for that was Christ's baptism, v. 11. Though John was filled with the Holy Ghost from the womb, (Luke 1:15.) yet he acknowledges he had need to be baptized with that baptism. Note, They who have much of the Spirit of God, yet, while in this imperfect state, see they have need of more. Though John was the greatest ever born of woman, yet being born of woman, as others of Adam's race, he was polluted. Note, The purest souls are most sensible of their own remaining impurity, and most earnestly desire cleansing. The best and holiest of men have need of Christ, and the better they are, the more they see of that need. This was said before the multitude, who greatly venerated John, and were ready to embrace him as the Messiah; yet he publicly owns that he has need to be baptized of Christ. Note, It is no disparagement to the greatest of men to confess that they are undone without Christ. John was Christ's forerunner, and yet owns that he has need to be baptized of Him. Note, They, who were before Christ, depended on Him. While John was dealing with others about their souls, see how feelingly he speaks of his own. I have need to be baptized of Thee. Note, Ministers are concerned to look to it that they preach to themselves, and be themselves baptized with the Holy Ghost. Take heed to thyself first; save thyself, 1 Tim. 4:16.

Comest Thou to me? Does the holy Jesus come to be baptized by a sinner, as a sinner and among sinners? How can this be? Note, Christ's coming to us may be well wondered at. Jesus said, suffer it to be so now. Christ accepted his humility, but not his refusal. It is fit that Christ should take his own method, though we do not understand it, nor are able to give a reason for it. Suffer it to be so now.—Every thing happens in its season. But why now?

Christ is now in a state of humiliation. He is not only found in fashion as a man, but is made in the likeness of sinful flesh, as if He needed to be washed, though perfectly pure, and though He knew no sin. John's baptism is now a repute; that is the present dispensation, and now Jesus will be baptized with water; but his baptizing with the Holy Ghost is reserved for many days hence, Acts 1:5. Honor must now be put upon John's baptism. Note, Persons of the greatest attainments should yet bear testimony to ordinances by diligent attendance on them. What we see God owns, and while we see He does so, we must own. John was increasing, and, therefore, it must be thus yet; shortly he will decrease, and then it will be otherwise. Now there is a fair opportunity for Christ's appearing in public. See John 1:31-34. He must be signalized by wonders from heaven, in that act of his own, which is most condescending.

Thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness. Note, There was a propriety in every thing Christ did for us; (Heb. 2:10. 7:26.) and we must study to do not only that which behoves us, but that which becomes us. Our Lord looked upon it as well becoming Him to own every divine institution, and to show his readiness to comply with all God's precepts.—Thus it becomes Him to justify God in sending John his forerunner. Thus it becomes us to countenance and encourage every good thing by pattern as well as precept. Christ often mentioned John and his baptism with honor, which, that He might do the better, He must be baptized. Thus Jesus began first to do, then to teach, and his ministers must take the same method. Thus Christ fulfilled the righteousness of the ceremonial law, which consisted in divers washings; thus He recommended the gospel ordinance of baptism to his church, and showed what virtue He designed to put in it. It was proper for Christ to submit to John's washing with water, because it was a divine appointment; but, to oppose the Pharisees' washing with water, because it was a human invention.

John was entirely satisfied with the will of Christ; and then he suffered

Him. The same modesty which led Him to decline the honor, now induced him to perform the service Christ enjoined on him. Note, No humility must make us decline our duty.

2. Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water. Others that were baptized stayed to confess their sins; but Christ, having no sins to confess, went up immediately out of the water: so we read it, but not right, for it is from the water, from the brink of the river, to which He went down to be washed, that is, to have his head or face washed; (John 13:2.) for here is no mention made of putting off or on his clothes, which would not have been omitted, had He been baptized naked. Straightway, as one that went to work with the greatest cheerfulness; He would lose no time. How was He straitened till it was accomplished!

Now when He was coming up out of the water, lo! the heavens were opened unto Him, so as to discover something beyond the starry firmament, at least to Him. This was to encourage Him with the prospect that was set before Him. Heaven is opened to receive Him when He has finished his work. It was also to encourage us to submit to Him. Note, Sin shut up heaven; stopped all friendly intercourse between God and man; but now, Christ has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Divine light and love are darted down upon men, and we have boldness to enter into the holiest. We have mercies from God; we make returns of duty to Him, and all by Jesus Christ, who is the Ladder that has its foot on earth and its top in heaven; by whom alone it is that we have any comfortable correspondence with God, or hope of heaven at last. The heavens were opened at Christ's baptism, to teach us that when we duly attend on the ordinances, we may expect communion with God.

He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, or as a dove, and lighting upon Him.—Christ saw it, (Mark 1:10.) John saw it, John 1:33, 34. and it is probable that all the standers by saw it; for this was intended to be his public inauguration. Observe, The Spirit of God lighted on Him. In the beginning of the old world, the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, hovered, as a bird upon the nest! (Gen. 1:2.) So here, in the beginning of the new world, Christ needed not, as God, to receive the Holy Spirit, but it was foretold that the Spirit of the Lord should rest upon Him, Isaiah 11:2. 61:1. He was to be a Prophet, and prophets always spake by the Spirit of God. Christ was to execute his prophetic office, not by his divine nature, says Dr. Whitby, but by the influence of the Holy Spirit. And the Spirit descended upon Him, by Him to be derived to all believers, in his gifts, graces and comforts. The ointment on the heart ran down to the skirts. Christ received gifts for men, that He might give gifts to men.

He descended on Him like a dove. Whether it was a real dove, or, as the representation in visions, is uncertain. If there must be a bodily shape, (Luke 3:22.) it must not be that of a man, for the being seen in fashion as a man was peculiar to the second Person. None therefore was so fit as the shape of one of the fowls of heaven, heaven being opened; and of all these, none so significant as that of a dove.

The spirit of Christ is a dovelike spirit, not

Holy Spirit, and could not be surprised that Jesus applied to him, an inferior, and a poor sinful man. Admitting this, Jesus still intimated his propriety; 'for,' says he, 'it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness.' As we find that Jesus never spake of Himself in the plural number. He meant John also, and all servants of God, in a subordinate sense. It became Christ, as our Surety and Example, perfectly 'to fulfil all righteousness'; and it becomes us to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of God, according to their meaning and intent, without exception, while they are in force. So far is Christ's example obligatory; but it does not bind us to do exactly as He did: for He was circumcised, kept the Passover, and observed the seventh day Sabbath, according to the dispensation under which He lived. Scott. There were two kinds of baptism among the Jews; one was that of the priests at their consecration, Lev. 8:6. the other that of heathens proselyted to the Jewish religion. The latter, indeed, is not expressly mentioned in Scripture, but there seems a plain allusion to it, Ez. 36:24, 25. Macknight. Now as Christ had submitted to circumcision, the initiatory ordinance of the Mosaic dispensation, it was necessary He should submit

to the initiatory ordinance of the Baptist's dispensation, instituted by the same authority, and an introduction to his own dispensation of eternal mercy and truth. But it was necessary on another account. Our Lord represented the High Priest, and was to be the High Priest over the house of God;—now, as the High Priest was initiated into his office by washing and anointing, so must Christ be; hence He was baptized, or washed, and anointed by the Holy Ghost. Thus He fulfilled the righteous ordinance of his initiation into the office of High Priest, and thus was prepared to make an atonement for the sins of mankind.

Verses 16, 17.

Immediately on leaving the water, while Jesus prayed, (Note, Luke 3:21, 22.) 'the heavens were opened,' and the Holy Spirit descended like a dove, 'the emblem of purity, gentleness and love, and lighted upon Him,' in the form, probably, and with the hovering motion of a dove.—This visible descent of the Spirit upon Christ was a token of being endued with power with his sacred mission; and, to qualify Him as Man, for every part of his mediatorial work; and to be 'concomitant'

CHAP. IV.

th^rat, being led by the Spirit into the wilderness, fasts forty days; is tempted by the devil; overcomes him by the word of God; and is ministered to by angels, 1-11. He dwells at Capernaum, and fulfils a prophecy of Isaiah, by preaching in Galilee, 12-17. He calls Peter, Andrew, James, and John, to follow Him, 18-22. He teaches in the synagogues, and heals the diseases; so that, his fame being spread abroad, He is followed by great multitudes, 23-25.

THEN ^a was Jesus ^b led up ^b of the Spirit into the wilder-

^a Mark 1:12, 13. Luke 4:1, &c. Rom. 8:4.

^b 1 Kings 19:12. 2 Kings 2:16. Ez. 3:12, 14. Ps. 119:24. 40:2. 43:3. Acts 8:39.

therefore are the tidings of peace with God brought by the Spirit as a dove. It speaks God's good-will toward men, that his thoughts toward us are of good and not of evil. By the voice of the turtle heard in our land (Cant. 2: 12), the Chaldee paraphrase understands the voice of the Holy Spirit. That God is in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, is a joyful message, that comes to us on the wings of a dove.

The voice from heaven explaining and completing this solemnity, was probably heard by all present. The Holy Spirit manifested Himself in the likeness of a dove, but God the Father by a voice; for when the law was given, they saw no manner of similitude, but only heard a voice: (Deut. 4: 12.) and so this Gospel came, the best news ever heard from heaven, for it speaks plainly and fully of God's favor to Christ, and us in Him.

This is my beloved Son. Observe the relation He sustains. Jesus Christ is the Son of God by eternal generation, as he was begotten of the Father before all worlds, (Col. 1: 15. Heb. 1: 3.) and by supernatural conception; He was therefore called the Son of God, being conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost; (Luke 1: 35.) yet this is not all; He is the Son of God by special designation to the office of the world's Redeemer. He was sanctified, and sealed, and sent upon that errand, brought up with the Father for it, (Prov. 8: 30.) I will make Him my first-born, Ps. 89: 27. He is my beloved Son; his dear Son, the Son of his love, (Col. 1: 13.) He had laid in his bosom from all eternity, (John 1: 18.) had been always his delight, (Prov. 8: 30.) but particularly as Mediator, He was his beloved Son. He is mine elect, in whom my soul delights. (Isa. 42: 1.) Because He consented to the covenant of redemption, and delighted to do that will of God, therefore the Father loved Him, John 10: 17. 3: 35. Behold, then, behold and wonder, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that He should deliver up His own Son, who is the Son of His love, to die for those that were the generation of His wrath; nay, and that He therefore loved Him, because He laid down His life for the sheep. Now know we that He loved us, seeing He has not withheld His Son, his only Son, his Isaac, whom He loved, but gave Him to be a sacrifice for our sin.

See how ready He is to own us in Him. He is my beloved Son, not only with, but in whom, I am well pleased. Hitherto God had been displeased with men, but now his anger is turned away, and He has made us accepted in the

that of a silly dove without heart, (Hos. 7: 11.) but like an innocent dove, without gall. The Spirit descended, not in the shape of an eagle, which, though a royal bird, is still a bird of prey; but in that of a dove, one of the most inoffensive of birds. Such was the spirit of Christ. He shall not strive nor cry. Such should Christians be; harmless as doves. The dove is remarkable for her eyes; we find that both the eyes of Christ, (Cant. 5: 12.) and the eyes of the church, (Cant. 1: 15. 4: 1.) are compared to doves' eyes, for they have the same spirit. The dove mourns much, (Isa. 38: 14.) Christ wept oft; and penitent souls are compared to doves of the valleys. The dove was the only fowl that was offered in sacrifice, (Lev. 1: 14.) and Christ, by the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. The tidings of the decrease of Noah's flood were brought by a dove, with an olive leaf in her mouth; fitly

Beloved, Eph. 1: 6. Let all the world observe that this is the Days-Man, who has laid his hand upon us both, and that there is no coming to the Father but by Him, John 14: 6. In Him our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable, for He is the altar that sanctifies every gift, 1 Pet. 2: 5. Out of Christ God is a consuming fire, but in Christ, a reconciled Father. This is the sum of the Gospel; it is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that God has declared by a voice from heaven, that Jesus Christ is his beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased, with which we must by faith cheerfully concur, and say that He is our beloved Savior, in whom we are well pleased.

CHAP. IV. V. 1-11. We have here a famous duel, fought between Michael and the dragon, the Seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, nay, the serpent himself; in which the Seed of the woman suffers, being tempted, and his heel is bruised; but the serpent is baffled in his temptations, and his head is broken. Jesus comes off a conqueror, securing not only comfort, but conquest at last to all his faithful followers.

1. Immediately after the heavens were opened to Him, and the Spirit descended on Him, and He was declared the Son of God, the Savior of the world, the next we hear of Him. He is tempted; for then He is best able to grapple with the temptation. Note, Special tokens of divine favor will not secure us from being tempted. After great honors, we must expect something humbling. Paul had a messenger of Satan to buffet him, after he had been in the third heavens. God usually prepares his people for temptation; He gives strength according to the day, and more than ordinary comfort before a sharp trial. The assurance of our sonship is the best preparative for temptation. If the good Spirit witness to our adoption, that will furnish us with an answer to all the suggestions of the evil spirit, designed either to defile or disquiet us.

Then, after baptism, He was tempted. Note, After communion with God we must expect to be set upon by Satan. The enriched soul must double its guard. When thou hast eaten, and art full, then beware. Then, on commencing his public life, He was tempted as He never had been in privacy. Note, The devil has a particular spite against useful persons, especially at their first setting out. It is the advice of the son of Sirach, (Ecclesiastic. 2: 1.) My son,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13-17. The most eminent saints have ever had the most exalting thoughts of themselves, and the most exalted apprehensions of Christ; have felt their need of his atoning blood and sanctifying Spirit more than others, and thought the meanest place in his service too high and honorable for them. As proof of this, he, who was 'filled with the Holy Ghost' from his birth, and was 'the greatest of all that had been born of woman,' declares himself unworthy to wear Emmanuel's shoes. Let us compare and contrast his character and language with those of self-sufficient Pharisees and Sadducees, ancient and modern; and of those especially, who derogate from the honor of Christ to exalt themselves. But 'before honor is humility;' and the Lord honors those who honor Him. While we admire the self-abasement of our Surety, in 'fulfilling all righteousness' for our justification, even while it made Him appear as if He had been a sinner; let us copy his example, and honor God in all his institutions, seeking his grace in the use of all appointed means. Thus we may wait for the 'supply of the Spirit of Christ,' to make us fruitful in works of righteousness, to receive communion with Him, as 'the Spirit of adoption, witnessing with our spirits that we are the children of God,'

accepted in his 'beloved Son, in whom He is well pleased.' [And let us be earnest in our applications to our gracious Redeemer, that, as we are "baptized with water in his name," He would also "baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire;" that, by the operations of his Holy Spirit on our cold and stupid hearts, He would enkindle and quicken that divine 'life, that flaming, yet well governed zeal for his glory, which distinguishes the true Christian from the hypocritical professor, and is indeed the seal of God set upon the heart, to mark it for eternal happiness.' Dodd.] But let us remember, that the Spirit of Christ resembles the gentle, loving dove, and not any fierce bird of prey: furious contests therefore cannot spring from his influence; nay, they banish Him from our hearts and assemblies, weaken the evidences of our adoption, and mar our comfort. 'For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;' and by abounding in these, we best glorify the God of our salvation, to whose service we were devoted, and baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; to whom be glory evermore, Amen. Scott.

ed the people from Him, as Head of the church. (Marg. Ref. x.)—A voice, at the same time, was heard from heaven, God the Father Himself acknowledging Jesus as his beloved Son, in whose person, character, righteousness and mediation, He was fully satisfied: intimating thus, that those who would find acceptance with the Father, must hear, believe and obey his Son, and seek blessings in his name, and for his sake. At the baptism of our Lord, there was a manifestation of the three Persons in the sacred Trinity, acting in their proper relations, according to the economy of our redemption: the Father appointing and sealing the Son as Mediator; the Son solemnly accepting, and entering on the work; and the Holy Spirit descending on Him, as, through his mediation, to apply salvation to the souls of his people. 'What an assemblage of facts and circumstances in these first three chapters of the

'New Testament! How suitable to raise expectation, and fix attention on the extraordinary Individual to whom we are introduced.' His genealogy, traced back to David and Abraham; his miraculous conception; the repeated interposition of angels; the wise men conducted by an extraordinary star to the scene of these transactions; prophecies fulfilled in each circumstance; a forerunner, (himself the subject of prophecy,) coming to 'prepare the way of the Lord;' and finally, the miraculous appearance and voice from heaven, at his baptism, announcing Him to be "the beloved Son of God"—what impressions must these things make! Yet are they introduced, apparently without design to strike or affect; but as facts which the truth of history required to be related. Scott.

ness to be tempted of the devil.

2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

• Gen. 3:15. John 14:30. Heb. 2:13. 1:15-16.
• Ex. 24:18. 34:28. Deut. 9:9, 13, 25.
• 2:13. 1 Kings 19:4. Luke 4:2.
• 2:13. Mark 1:13. John 4:6. Heb. 2:14-17.

God. The most active men must find time to be alone with God. Those are not fit to speak the things of God in public who have not first conversed with Him in private. When Christ would appear as a Teacher come from God, it shall not be said of him, 'He has newly come from travelling. He has been abroad and has seen the world,' but, 'He is newly come out of a desert; He has been alone, and conversing with his own heart.' Christ withdrew that He might give Satan advantage. Note, Though solitude is a friend to a good heart, yet Satan knows how to improve it against us. *Woe to him that is alone.* Those who under pretence of sanctity retire into deserts find that they are not out of the reach of spiritual enemies, and that they want the communion of saints. Christ retired, that Satan might have leave to do his worst. To make the victory more illustrious, He gave the enemy sun and wind on his side, and yet baffled him. He might give Satan advantage, for the prince of this world had nothing in Him, but he has in us, and, therefore, we must pray not to be led into temptation. He retired, that He might have opportunity to do his best Himself, that He might be exalted in his own strength; for so it was written, *I have trod the wine press alone, and of the people there was none with Me.* Christ entered the lists without a second.

3. He did not wilfully thrust Himself upon the combat, but was led of the Spirit to be tempted of the devil. The spirit that descended upon Him like a dove made Him meek and yet bold. Note, Our care must be not to enter into temptation; but if God bring us into it for our trial, we must not think it strange, but double our guard. *Be strong in the Lord; resist, steadfast in the faith; and all shall be well.* If we tempt the devil to tempt us, we provoke God to leave us; but wherever God leads us, we may hope that He will go with us, and bring us off more than conquerors.

Christ was led to be tempted of the devil only. Others are tempted, when they are drawn aside by their own lust and enticed; (James 1:14.) The devil takes hold of that handle and ploughs with that beifer, but our Lord had no corrupt nature, and therefore He was led securely, as a champion into the field, to be tempted purely by the devil.

Temptations are fiery darts, thorns in the flesh, buffetings, siftings, wrestlings, combats, all which denote hardship and suffering; therefore Christ submitted to them, because He would humble Himself, in all things to be made like unto his brethren; thus He gave his back to the smiters. There is no conquest without a combat; Christ was tempted that He might overcome the tempter. Satan tempted the first Adam, and triumphed over him; but the second Adam shall triumph over him, and lead captivity captive. It thus appears, that our enemy is subtle, spiteful, and daring; but withal, he is not invincible. Though he is a strong man armed, yet the Captain of our salvation is stronger than he. It is some comfort to us to think that Christ suffered, being tempted; for thus it appears that temptations not yielded to are not sins; they are afflictions only, and such as may be the lot of real Christians. And we have a High Priest who knows what it is to be tempted, and who is therefore more tenderly touched with the feeling of our infirmities in an hour of temptation. Heb. 2:18. 4:15. But it is much more a comfort to think that Christ conquered for us, being tempted; not only that our enemy is conquered and disarmed, but that we are interested in Christ's victory over him, and through Him are more than conquerors.

He was dieted for the combat, as wrestlers, who are temperate in all things; (1 Cor. 9:25;) but Christ beyond any other, for He fasted forty days and forty nights, as did Moses the great lawgiver, and Elias the great reformer, in the Old Testament. John Baptist came as Elias in those things which were moral, not in those which were miraculous; (John 10:41.) That

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. It is generally computed that the birth of Christ was four years before the era from which we generally calculate. The chapters are dated according to the vulgar era, nevertheless; and as He was thirty years of age at his baptism, that event is dated after Christ 26; and the computation proceeds on the same principle, so far as the date is ascertainable.

VERSES 1, 2.

It is natural to suppose, that the public descent of the Holy Spirit on Jesus would have caused the Jewish nation without delay to acknowledge Him as the Messiah. Instead of this, He was immediately led up by the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. He might be inclined to retire and prepare for his work by fasting, prayer, and other holy exercises, yet He was specially led forth by the Spirit to contend with the adversary of God and man. He went forth to be tempted. As our Surety, our Champion, our David, He went to meet the Goliath, who had so long defied the armies of the living God, and had never found a saint able wholly to vanquish him.—Satan assumed the first Adam in paradise, and so overcame him, that he eat the forbidden fruit, when he had free and innocent access to that of every other tree. But the 'second Adam' met the enemy in a dreary wilderness, and by a miracle sustained a fast forty days and nights, that the devil might not be interpreted. Satan knew that this was the Holy God of God, and for what end He came into the world; but from the private enemy with which he oppress the purposes of God, though

honor was reserved for Christ. Christ fasted not for mortification, having no corrupt desires; but that He might humble Himself, and might seem as one whom no man seeketh after. He fasted, not only that He might give Satan an occasion; but also that He might recommend fasting to us, when God calls us to it, or when we are destitute of daily food, or when it is requisite for keeping under the body, or the quickening of prayer, those excellent preparatives for temptation. If good people are brought low, they may be consoled in reflecting that their Master was in like manner exercised. A man may want bread, and yet be a favorite of Heaven. Forty days' converse with heaven was instead of meat and drink to Him, but He was afterwards an hungered, to show, that He was really Man; and He took upon Him our natural infirmities that He might atone for us. Man fell by eating; in that way we often sin, and therefore Christ was an hungered.

That which Satan aimed at, in all his temptations, was to bring Him to sin against God, and so to render Him forever incapable of being a Sacrifice for the sin of others. Whatever the pretence was, he aimed to bring Him to despair of his Father's goodness, to presume upon his Father's power, and to alienate his Father's honor. In the first two, the temptation seemed innocent, and therein appeared the subtlety of the tempter; in the last, the temptation seemed desirous. The former two are artful, which there was need of great wisdom to discern; the last was a strong temptation, which there was need of great resolution to resist; yet Satan was baffled in the end.

The tempter came to Him. Note, The devil is the tempter, and, therefore, he is Satan, an adversary; for those are our worst enemies, who entice us to sin, and are Satan's agents.—He is emphatically *the tempter*, because he was so to our first parents, and is so still, and all other tempters are so on work by him. He came to Christ, in a visible appearance, not terrible, as afterwards, in darkness in the garden; no, if ever the devil transformed himself into an angel of light, he did it now, and pretended to be a good genius, a guardian angel.

Observe the subtlety of the tempter. Christ began to be very hungry, and, therefore, it seemed very proper to turn stones into bread for his necessary support. Note, It is one of Satan's wiles to take advantage of our outward condition. He is an adversary no less watchful than spiteful; and the more ingenious he is against us, the more industrious must we be in guarding against him. When He began to be hungry, and that in a wilderness, then the devil assailed Him. Note, Poverty is a great temptation to discontent, and the use of unlawful means for relief, and it is excused with this, that hunger will break through stone walls; which yet is no excuse, for the law of God ought to be stronger to us than stone walls.—Aur prays against poverty, not because it is an affliction and reproach, but because it is a temptation; lest I be poor and steel. Those, therefore, who are in straits, need to double their

always baffled, he was desirous of assailing Him. Perhaps he had some expectation of success. He knew that, as Man, Jesus was like us in all things, except sin. If he could gain the advantage, the plan of redemption would be frustrated. As he had instigated Herod to murder Jesus in his infancy, so he now tried to draw Him into sin; and if unsuccessful, he would still have the pleasure of inflicting uneasiness, for our Lord 'suffered being tempted.' In proportion to his perfect holiness would He be distressed by the detestable suggestions of the tempter; and that which preserved Him from defilement, exposed Him to suffer. But to this He submitted, that He might have sympathy with his people in temptation, and be able to relieve them.—It is probable, that Satan repeated his temptations during the forty days, interrupting Christ's holy meditations by his hateful suggestions; (Luke 4:2.) but of this we are not informed. After his long abstinence, He became hungry in a place, where ordinary sustenance could not be had. Probably no distress is more severe, than extreme hunger, without the prospect of relief; and the tempter chose this crisis for his most artful and vehement assault. Scott. 'Man was overcome by the temptation of Satan, and so sin, death, and all evil entered; therefore our Redeemer must deliver us from sin, Satan, and misery, by conquering the tempter in his way of temptation, or which he conquered: to give us notice also, that the warfare preparatory to our future state is waged by overcoming temptations, or being overcome by them. There is no study of temptations and need once from a great part of the Christian life.—The sensual are never at war with.' BAYNES

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, 'If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.'

4 But he answered and said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

[Practical Observations.]

(f) Luke 19:12. 24-7. Luke 22:31, 32. 1 Pet. 5:5. Rev. 2:10. 12-13. 17. Luke 4:2-10. 22-24. Ex. 16:3. Num. 11:4-6. Ps. 78:17-20. Heb. 12:16, 17. 7:10. Luke 4:1, 12. Rom. 15:14. Eph. 6:17. 1 Pet. 3:3. Luke 4:4. 14:15-21. Ex. 16:15, 35. 23:15. 1 Kings 17:12-15. 2 Kings 14:25. 7:1-2. Hag. 2:16-19. Mal. 3:5-11. Mark 6:3-14. 8:1-9. John 6:5, 6c. 31, 6c. 63.

fictions could not consist with, when really they proceed from God's fatherly love. With Job they can answer, *Though He slay me, though He starve me, yet will I trust in Him*, and love Him as a friend, even when He seems to come forth against me as an enemy. The devil aims to shake our faith in the word of God. Thus he began with our first parents; *Yea, has God said so and so?* Surely He has not. So here, *Has God said that Thou art His beloved Son?* Surely He did not say so; or if He did, it is not true. *We give place to the devil*, when we question the truth of God's word. The devil carries on his designs very much by possessing people with hard thoughts of God, as if He were unfaithful, and had forgotten those who had ventured their all upon Him. He pretended that God forbade our first parents the tree of knowledge, because He grudged them the use of it. So here, he insinuates to our Saviour, that his Father had cast Him off. But if Christ seemed to be a mere man now, because He was hungry, why was He

not confessed to be more than a man, when 'of forty days He fasted, and was not hungry'?

Secondly, 'If thou art the Son of God, prove it by this command that these stones—*a heap of which probably lay near—be made bread.*' John Baptist said, but the other day, that God can out of stones raise up children to Abraham; a divine power can, therefore, no doubt, out of stones, make bread for those children; is Thou hast that power, exert it now in a time of need for Thyself? He does not say, *Pray* to have it done, but *command* it to be done; thy Father hath forsaken Thee, set up for Thyself. The devil is for every thing which is assuming. He gains his point, if he can but bring men off from their dependence on God.

But Christ would not command these stones to be made bread. Not because He could not; He, who turned water into wine, could have turned stones into bread. And why would He not? Because the more plausible the temptation is, the more dangerous it is. Christ was soon aware of the snake in the grass, and would not do any thing which looked like questioning the truth of the voice which He had heard from heaven; nor distrust his Father's care of Him; nor limit Him to a particular way of providing for Him; nor do any thing that looked like setting up for Himself; nor gratify Satan. Some would have said, to give the devil his due, this was good counsel; but for those who *relied upon God*, to consult him, is more than his due; it is like inquiring of the god of Ekron, when there is a God in Israel.

He answered, it is written. Observe, Christ baffled all the temptations of Satan with, *It is written.* He is Himself the Eternal Word, and could have produced the mind of God, without having had recourse to the writings of Moses; but He put honor on the Scripture, and therein set us an example; and He says this to Satan, taking it for granted that he knew well enough

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-4 Retirement, fasting, meditation and devotion are suitable preparations for the ministry; and they, who are led by the Holy Spirit to take this office, will seek communion with God and a blessing from Him in the use of all means of grace. Yet we must not yield to discouragement, if, in thus seeking God, we should be peculiarly assailed by the devil.—This subtle enemy leaves the slothful unmolested; but when we seek to do good, to glorify God, or to enjoy communion with Him, Satan will surely assail us, as far as he is permitted; and the Lord often permits him to do this, either to counterbalance our comforts, or prove the power of our grace. The enemy knows how to avail himself of circumstances, and whether we be full or hungry, he can vary his temptations accordingly.—The Lord is able to suspend the cravings of appetite; but as this is not his ordinary method, they are presumptuous who attempt such abstinence, as renders their appetites unruly, and thus exposes them to temptation; yet the trial of our faith and love sometimes consists in patiently bearing the cravings of nature, rather than remove them by committing sin. Satan will not assail believers, in the full exercise of faith and love, with solicitations to gross iniquities. He is most dangerous, when most plausible, and when his temptations seem to be friendly hints, tending to something profitable without evident calamity. In a very specious manner he tempts men to unbelief, or harasses their minds by needless perplexities. To

the poor or afflicted he suggests, that it they were the children of God, they would not be left to such sufferings; thus insinuating, that God is unkind, or unfaithful: or he excites them to affect independence even of God, by attempting sinfully to supply their own wants. He affrights the mind with prospects of greater difficulties, and represents a conscientious trust in the Lord, as leading to ruin. By his emissaries he persuades men, that compliances must be made, and deviations admitted, or else they must starve; or he tries to embolden them to some convenient, or gainful sin, as they are the children of God, and there is no danger of being cast off. In these, and numberless ways, he tempts to impatience, distrust, sinful deliverances from trouble, and to a preference of sin to suffering. And we often listen to his flatteries, and dishonor our profession, or honor it less than we ought to do. But the 'sword of the Spirit' is a warranted weapon, which Satan cannot stand against; and it is wise to answer all his suggestions with, 'Thus it is written.' 'Let God be true and every man a liar.' Our dependence is on the Lord; his promise is our support; his precept our rule. By these men live; and while we lean on a promise, and obey the plain precept, we must be safe, whatever appearances be against us. 'Our Father knoweth what things we have need of,' and sooner shall all nature recede from its course, than any of his promises fail. Scott.

Verses 3, 4.

Satan seems to have acted before invisibly, suggesting thoughts to Christ, as he does to his people; but now he took a visible form, not terrifying, but as a friend, and perhaps an 'angel of light.' In this character he proposed, that if Jesus were 'the Son of God, He should command the stones before Him to be made bread.' The subtlety of the tempter appears in not urging Him to create a feast, but merely to change a stone into a loaf for his necessity, and to show that He was the Son of God. Where was the harm in this, when He was ready to perish with hunger? Some think the temptation was chiefly designed to make Him question whether He were the Son of God; but this seems to have been assumed, as a principle, in much the same manner, as when Eve was tempted by the serpent, she was told, 'Thou shalt be as gods,' self-sufficient and independent. (Notes, Gen. 3:1-6.) He might here address Christ: 'What! art Thou the Son of God, and left 'in this desert to perish with hunger! Can it be! Is this the love of the Father! Wait no longer on Him for a supply, which has been so delayed, and of which there is no prospect. The case is urgent, and the power inherent in Thee. Exert Thyself, and show thy divinity, by commanding these stones to become bread.' This seems his meaning; but to satisfy the appetite by working a miracle, would have implied distrust in God, and a disposition to leave the path of duty, and to seek improper means of relief; like him, who said 'this evil is of the

Lord, why should we wait for the Lord any longer?' Christ, as Man, was bound to obey the whole law. Whatever would have been in the least sinful for us, would have been utterly inconsistent with the end for which He came into the world. The gift of miracles in Christ was in many respects a talent. While He 'fulfilled all righteousness,' as I set us a perfect example, it was necessary for Him to use this talent exclusively to confirm his mission and doctrine, to good to men, and honor the Father; and not to accommodate or relieve Himself. This is the true difference between *holiness* and *selfishness*. It would have been the duty of a prophet, in such a condition, to wait, and not relieve himself by a miracle, unless directed by God. Jesus, therefore, would not listen to a proposal so insidious, but answered it by a text of Scripture. (Note, Deut. 8:2.) Man depends on God, and not on soul. He can sustain life without food, but food cannot sustain life without Him. To rely on his promise, obey his precepts, and thus commend our lives to his keeping; to suffer any extremity rather than break his commands, or question his Word, which alone secures our souls, constitutes our duty. This reply, therefore, repelled the temptation, and the tempter was overcome by the 'sword of the Spirit.' Scott.

Both Mr. Henry and Dr. Scott, with Michaelis, consider the wilderness of Sinai as most probably the place of our Lord's temptation. But Dr. Doddridge regards as preferable the opinion of Maimonides, that it might be the wilderness near Jordan, and he says he 'is a miserable'

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their

what was written. It is possible that the devil's children may yet know very well what is written in God's book; *the devils believe and tremble*. When tempted to sin, we must repel the temptation with, *It is written*. The Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, the only offensive weapon in all the Christian army; (Eph. 6: 17.) and we may say of it as David of Goliath's sword, *none is like that* in our spiritual conflicts.

All these answers are taken from the book of Deuteronomy, which signifies the second law, and in which there is very little ceremonial.—The Levitical purifications, though of divine institution, could not drive away Satan, much less holy water and the sign of the cross, which are of human invention; but moral precepts, and evangelical promises mixed with faith, are *mighty through God*, for vanquishing him.—This is quoted from Deut. 8: 3. where the reason given why God fed the Israelites was, that

man shall not live by bread alone. This Christ applies to his own case. Israel was God's son whom He called out of Egypt; (Hos. 11: 1.) So was Christ; (ch. 2: 15.) Israel was then in a wilderness; Christ is so now; perhaps in the same wilderness. The devil would have Him question his sonship, because He is in straits. No, says He, Israel was God's son, a son whom He was very tender of, and whose manners He bore; (Acts 13: 18.) and yet He brought them into straits; (Deut. 8: 5.) As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee. Christ, being a Son, thus learns obedience. The devil would have Him distrust his Father's love. 'No,' says He, 'that would be to do as Israel did, who, when they were in want, said, Is the Lord among us, and can He furnish a table in the wilderness? Can He give bread?' The devil would have Him immediately look out for supply; but God, for holier ends, suffered them to hunger before He fed them, to humble and prove them. God would have his children not only wait on Him but for Him. The devil would have Him supply Himself; 'no' says Christ, 'what need is there of that? It is a point long since settled, that man may live without bread, as Israel did forty years upon manna.' It is true, God in his providence ordinarily maintains man by bread out of the earth; (Job 28: 5.) but He can, if He please, make use of other means; any thing that God shall order will be as good a livelihood for man as bread. As we may have bread, and yet not be nourished, if God deny his blessing, (Hag. 1: 6, 9. Mic. 6: 14. for though bread is the staff of life, it is God's blessing that is the staff of bread,) so we may want bread, and yet be nourished some other way. God sustained Moses and Elijah without bread, and Christ Himself just now for forty days. He sustained Israel with bread from heaven, angel's food, and Elijah with bread miraculously supplied by ravens, and with the widow's meal, miraculously multiplied; therefore Christ need not turn stones into bread, but trust God, as He did the forty days before He hungered. Note, As in our greatest abundance we must not live without God, so in our greatest straits we must learn to live upon God; and when the fig-tree does not blossom, and the field yields no meat, yet then we must rejoice in the Lord; we must humbly pray for what He sees fit to give us, and be thankful for our allowance, though it be short.—Let us learn of Christ to be at God's finding, rather than our own; and not take any irregular course for our supply, though our wants are ever so pressing, (Ps. 37: 3.) Some way or other the Lord will provide; it is better to live poorly on God's goodness, than plentifully upon the products of sin.

See what an unwearied adversary the devil is; he would next draw Christ to presume upon the Father's care. Note, We are in danger on the right hand and on the left, therefore we must take heed lest when we avoid one extreme, we run into another; lest by overcoming our prodigality, we run into covetousness. No extremes are more dangerous than despair and presumption, especially in affairs of the soul. Some who are persuaded that Christ can save them from their sins, then presume that He will save them in their sins. Thus when people begin to be zealous in religion, Satan hurries them into ligotry and intemperate heats.

He took Christ, not by force, but moved Him to go with him to Jerusalem. Whether Christ went up the stairs to the top, or went in the air, is uncertain; but so it was, that He was set upon a pinnacle, or spire; upon the fane, or upon the battlements, or, as the word is, upon the wing of the tem-

ple. Observe, How submissive Christ was, that He might let Satan do his worst, and yet conquer him. The patience or Christ here, as in his sufferings and death, is more wonderful than the power of Satan, and his instruments; for neither of them could have any power against Christ, but what was given them from above. How comfortable, that Christ, who let loose this power of Satan against Himself, restrains it from us, for He knows our frame! The devil, intending to solicit Christ to an ostentation of his own power, and a vain-glorious reliance upon God's providence, fixes Him on a public place, in Jerusalem, a populous city, and the joy of the whole earth; in the temple, one of the wonders of the world. There He might be taken notice of by every body, and prove Himself the Son of God; not as formerly in the obscurities of a wilderness, but upon the most eminent stage of action.

Observe, That Jerusalem is called the holy city; so it was in name and profession, and there was in it a holy seed, the substance thereof. Note, There is no city so holy as to exempt us from the devil. The first Adam was tempted in the holy garden, the second in this holy city. Let us not in any place be off our watch. Nay, the holy city is the place where, with the greatest advantage, he tempts men to pride and presumption; but, blessed be God, into the Jerusalem above, that holy city, no unclean thing shall enter; there we shall be forever out of temptation. Josephus (Antiq. bk. 15. ch. 14.) describes the pinnacle of the temple as so very high, that it would make a man's head giddy to look down to the bottom. Note, Pinnacles of the temple are places of temptation. High places are slippery places; advancement makes a man a fair mark for Satan to shoot his fiery darts at. God casts down that He may raise up; the devil raises up that he may cast down: therefore they who would take heed of falling, must take heed of climbing.—High places in the Church are specially dangerous. Men in eminent stations, and of great reputation, need to keep humble; for Satan will be sure to aim at them; to puff them up with pride, that they may fall into the condemnation of the devil. Those that stand high must stand fast.

Cast Thyself down, and then Thou wilt be admired, as under the special protection of Heaven. When they see Thee fall unhurt from such a precipice, they will say, (as the barbarous people of Paul,) 'that Thou art a God.' Tradition says, that Simon Magus by this very thing attempted to prove himself a god, but that his pretensions were disproved, for he fell, and was miserably bruised. 'Nay, all Jerusalem will see and acknowledge, not only that Thou art more than a man, but that Thou art that Messenger, that Angel of the covenant, that should suddenly come to the temple, (Mat. 3: 1.) and thence descend into the streets of the holy city; and thus the work of convincing the Jews will be cut short.'

Observe, The devil said, Cast Thyself down. He could not cast Him down, though a little thing would have done it, from the top of a spire. Note, Satan's power is limited; hitherto he shall come and no further. Yet if the devil had cast Him down, that had been his suf-

dry, barren place, consisting of high rocky mountains, so torn and disordered, as if the earth had suffered some violent convulsion.—Looking down into a steep valley as we passed along, we saw some ruins of small cells and cottages, which, we were told, were formerly the habitations of hermits retiring hither for penance and mortification; and certainly there could not be found in the whole earth a more comfortable and abandoned place for that purpose.' Ed.

Verses 5-7.

Fitting the confidence of Christ in his heavenly Father unshaken, the devil changed his mode of attack, converted Him (doubtless by his own permission) into Jerusalem, and placed Him on a pinnacle of the temple, upon the top of the high porch, or steeple, at the east end of it, which, with the other parts, was surrounded by a battlement to prevent any from falling; (Deut. 22: 8.) and then he proposed to Jesus, being the Son of God, 'to cast Himself down thence.' He might thus publicly prove Himself to be the Messiah, and also evince the highest confidence in God. The tempter endeavored to sustain this temptation by a reference to the Scripture. (Note. Ps. 91: 11, 12.) We must not suppose this passage relates to believers, or to Christ. Satan suggested that, if angels were sent, for if angels were charged to keep believers from falling, they would not be so much more would the Lord be prevented from injury by a fall. But he omitted the

words 'in all ways,' knowing that an ostentatious exposure of Himself to such injury was not a way marked out for Christ, or any believer; and that the divine protection could not be depended on in doing it.—Satan could tempt Christ to cast Himself down, but he could not cast Him down. Perhaps he expected thus to induce Jesus to terminate his own life; at least, compliance with the proposal would have been an unwarrantable demand of a miracle for his preservation. Our Lord answered him by quoting Deut. 6: 16, which forbids men to tempt God. Some contend that this expression denotes diffidence, rather than presumption, and produce texts to prove it; but the meaning in every case seems to be, 'putting the power, truth and love of God to an unnecessary trial, dictating to Him what He shall do, running into needless danger, making improper requirements, and expecting unwarranted interpositions.' If our Lord had cast Himself from the temple, He would have demanded a needless miracle publicly to prove Himself 'the Son of God,' and would have put Himself into extreme danger, in expectation of an interposition for which He had no warrant, and thus would have 'tempted the Lord.' St. Luke mentions this temptation last, but St. Matthew seems to have followed the order of time. His narration scores 'Holy city.' A phrase frequently and properly used to express Jerusalem, says Doddridge, for which comp. 1. 27: 53. Neh. 11: 1. Isa. 52: 1. Dan. 9: 24. Such also was it called by Josephus and Philo,

hands they shall hear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Jesus said unto him, 'It is written again, 'thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

[Practical Observations.]

8 Again 'the devil taketh him up into an

fering only, not his sin. Note, Whatever real mischief is done us, it is of our own doing; the devil can but persuade, he cannot compel.—Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and not forced, but enticed.—Let us not hurt ourselves, and then, blessed be God, no one else can hurt us, Prov. 9: 12.

But, is *Satan among the prophets*? Is Satan so well versed in Scripture, as to quote it so readily? Note, It is possible for a man to have his head full of Scripture notions, and his mouth full of Scripture expressions, while his heart is full of reigning enmity to God. The knowledge which devils have of the Scripture increases both their mischiefousness and their torment. Never did the devil speak with more vexation to himself than when he said to Christ, *I know thee who Thou art*. The devil would persuade Christ to throw *Himself down*, hoping that He would be his own murderer, and that there would be an end of Him and his undertaking; to encourage Him, he tells Him, there would be no danger, that the good angels would protect Him, for so was the promise, (Ps. 91: 11.) *He shall give His angels charge over Thee*. There was something right in this quotation. There is such a promise; the devil knows it by experience; for he finds his attempts against them fruitless; and he frets at it, as he did at the hedge about Job, Job 1: 10. He was also right in applying it to Christ, for to Him all the promises of the protection of the saints eminently belong, and to them, in and through Him. That promise, that *not a bone of theirs shall be broken*, (Ps. 34: 20,) was fulfilled in Christ, John 19: 36. The angels guard the saints for Christ's sake. There was also a great deal wrong in the quotation. Perhaps the devil had a particular spite against this promise, because it had often baffled his designs. Observe, how he misquoted it. *They shall keep Thee*. But how? *In all thy ways*; if we go out of our way, we forfeit the promise, and put ourselves out of God's protection. Now this made against the tempter, and he industriously left it out. If Christ had cast *Himself down*, He would have been out of his way. It is good for us, on all occasions, to consult the Scriptures for ourselves, so that we be not imposed upon by those who mangle the Word of God; we must do as the noble Bereans, who searched the Scriptures daily. How he misapplied it! Scripture is abused when it is pressed to patronize sin; when men thus wrest it to their own temptation, they do it to their own destruction, 2 Pet. 3: 16. This promise is firm, but the devil made an ill use of it, as an encouragement to presume upon the divine care. Note, It is no new thing for the grace of God to be turned into wantonness. But shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? throw ourselves down that the angels may bear us up? God forbid.

Christ overcame the temptation with, *It is written*. The devil's abusing Scripture did not prevent Christ from using it: *Thou shalt not*

tempt the Lord thy God, Deut. 6: 16. The meaning of this is not, Therefore, thou must not tempt Me, but *I must not tempt my Father*. In the place whence it is quoted it is in the plural number, *Ye shall not tempt*; here it is singular, *Thou shalt not*. Note, We are then likely to get good by the Word of God, when we receive general promises, as speaking to us in particular. Satan said, *It is written*. Christ says, *It is written*; not that one Scripture contradicts another. God is One, and His Word one, and He in one mind, but that is a promise, this a precept, and, therefore, that is to be explained and applied by this; for Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture; and they who expound it, must do it consistently with practical godliness, Rom. 12: 6.

If Christ should cast *Himself down*, it would be requiring confirmation of that, which was already so well confirmed. Christ was abundantly satisfied, that God was already His Father, and gave his angels charge concerning Him; and to put it upon a new experiment would be to tempt Him, as the Pharisees tempted Christ, demanding a sign from heaven, when they had so many on earth. This is limiting the *Holy One of Israel*. If we expect that because God has promised not to forsake us, therefore He should follow us out of the way of our duty; that because He has promised to supply our wants, therefore He should please our fancies; that we may expect the desired end, without using the appointed means; this is tempting God. It is an aggravation of the sin, that He is the Lord our God; it is an abuse of the privilege we enjoy in having Him for our God; we are very ungrateful, if we tempt Him. This is to affront Him whom we ought to honor. Note, We must never promise ourselves more than God has promised us.

He tempted Christ to the most horrid idolatry, with the proffer of the kingdoms of this world, and the glory of them. Observe, The worst temptation was reserved for the last.—Note, Sometimes the saint's last encounter is with the sons of Anak; therefore, whatever be the temptation, still we must prepare for worse; and be armed for all attacks, with the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 5-7. When Satan sees men staying their hearts on God in faith, and adhering to duty in difficulties, determined rather to suffer, than to seek relief by sin; he can tempt them to neglect proper means, or thrust themselves uncalled into dangers, expecting the Lord to help them out. Through their reverence for the Scripture, he can support his suggestions by texts, which seem, to countenance this unwarranted confidence. 'The Lord will provide,' and the believer need not defraud, or break the Sabbath, for a maintenance; but Satan will tempt him to be negligent, improvident, or extravagant; and lead him to believe, even in this case, that God has engaged to provide for him.—Christians shall be kept from final apostasy, and they need not be deterred by consciousness of their weakness, or the prospect of strong temptations. But the enemy will suggest, that they need not watch and pray; that they may venture into peril, may court difficulty, and rush into danger, and expect God to preserve them.—Satan and his instruments have an advantage, by presenting partial, or distorted quotations of Scripture, when the comfort or privilege is separated from the character or duty annexed. The believer shall be preserved in 'all his ways';

but by omitting the last words, Christians are seduced, out of their way, and still expect to be preserved. Many are deluded into a persuasion that they are believers, by mutilated quotations. But let all beware of mangling the Scripture, and guard against those who produce part of a text, and leave out words, that contradict the end for which they quote it. Godly men may do this in the heat of argument, or through inattention, but they follow a hateful precedent. It tends to mischief, and is a powerful engine in the hands of those who oppose the truth.—The tempter has no objection to holy places, as the scene of his assaults. He often chooses them: he delights in high places, and would gladly exalt those, of whose labors he is afraid, that he may cast them down with a fatal fall; and he urges men to presumption and ostentation.—The frequent perversion of Scripture should not lead us to neglect it. By texts used in their obvious meaning, we must answer temptations founded in misapplication of them. We should remember, that we trust in the Lord, when we expect protection in the path of duty, but tempt Him, when we turn from it, presuming on his care.

SCOTT.

as quoted by Eusebius, who remarks that heathens also named those statues, as where their gods were peculiarly worshipped, or which their fabulous deities were supposed to have built. On the shekel, which,

as on the other 'Shekel of Israel.' The specimen is from Bp. Walton's *Eo. Pinnace*. 'Though this word agrees with the etymology of the Greek; yet, according to its use among us, it leads the English reader to imagine, that He stood on the point of a spire. The truth is, the roof of the temple was flat, and had a kind of balustrade round it; (see Deut. 22: 8,) and somewhere on the edge of this battlement, we may suppose that Satan placed Christ when attacking Him with this temptation.' Dodds. Yet others, as Spanheim, Ireland, Beausobre and Kuinoel, consider the place as not being a part of the temple itself, but rather a wing or extremity of the pericly, that overlooked the deep valley, at a height, which, according to Josephus, rendered one dizzy to look down. It was indeed reckoned to be seven hundred feet to the bottom.

Verses 8-11.

The devil, despairing of success by covert temptation, resolved on one bold effort, in which he relied on the vastness of the reward, to induce the Savior to sin. He, therefore, took Jesus to the top of a very high mountain, and shewed Him 'all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.' This must have been an illusion of the imagination, over which Satan seems to have an influence; for it is impossible that all the kingdoms of the world should be seen at once. The greatest part of them must be below the visible horizon. They were, however, pre-



according to Fr. Robinson, (Calmet's D. art.) was not coined until the time of the Maccabees, is the inscription 'Jerusalem the holy' on one side,

exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy

He took Him to an exceeding high mountain; in hopes of prevailing, as Balak with Balaam, he changed his ground. The pinnacle of the temple is not high enough. The prince of the power of the air must have Him higher up into his territories. Some think this mountain was on the other side Jordan, because there Christ was, next after the temptation, John 1: 23, 29. Perhaps it was Mount Pisgah, whence Moses, in communion with God, had all the kingdoms of Canaan showed Him. Hither the blessed Jesus was carried for the advantage of a prospect; as if the devil could show Him more of the world than He knew, who made and governed it. Thence He might discover some of the kingdoms about Judea, though not the glory of them; but there was doubtless a delusion of Satan in it. It is probable, that what he showed Him was but a landscape, an airy representation in a cloud, such as that great deceiver could easily put together, setting forth in lively colors the splendid appearance of princes, their robes and crowns, retinue, equipage and liegwards; the pomp of courts, thrones and stately palaces; the sumptuous buildings in cities, the gardens and fields about the country-seats, with the various instances of their pleasures, wealth and gaiety, so as might be most likely to strike the fancy, or excite admiration. Such was this show, and the taking Him up into a high mountain, was but to color the thing, and the blessed Jesus saw through the cheat, only He permitted Satan to take his own way, that His victory might be more illustrious. Satan's temptations often come in at the eye, which is blinded to the things it should see, and dazzled by the things it should not. The first sin began in the eye, Gen. 3: 6. we therefore need to make a covenant with our eyes, and to pray that God would turn them away from beholding vanity. The lust of the flesh, and of the eye, with the pride of life, are the topics from which the devil takes most of his arguments. He deceives, and so destroys; he shows men the glory of the world, but conceals the sin, and sorrow, and death which stain the pride of all this glory, the cares and calamities which attend great possessions, and the thorns which crown themselves are lined with thorn. The glory of the world is that by which men are most imposed upon. Satan's sons grudge Jacob all his glory.

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Satan seems to have taken it for granted that he had proved that Christ was not the Son of God, because He had not given him those evidences of it which he demanded; so that here he looks upon Him as a mere man. 'Come,' says he, 'it seems that the God, whose Son Thou thinkest Thyself to be, starves Thee; a sign that He is not thy Father; but if Thou wilt be ruled by me, I will provide better for Thee.' Note, Satan makes an easy prey of men, when he can persuade them to think themselves abandoned of God. *All this will I give Thee*; and what was all that? A mere map, a phantasm. Note, Multitudes lose the sight of that which is, by setting their eyes on that which is not. The devil's baits are all a sham; they are shadows, with which he deceives them, or rather they deceive themselves. The nations of the earth had been long promised to the Messiah; if He be the Son of God, they belong to Him; Satan pretends now to be a good angel, probably one of those set over kingdoms, and to have received commission to deliver them to Him according to promise. Note, We must take heed of receiving even God's promise out of the devil's hands; we do so when we precipitate the performance by catching at it in a sinful way.

If thou wilt fall down and worship me. Note, The devil is fond of being worshipped. All the heathen worship was directed to him. (Deut. 32: 17.) who is therefore called the god of this world, 2 Cor. 4: 4. 1 Cor. 10: 20. Fain would he persuade Christ, now that He had set up for a teacher, to preach the Gentile idolatry, and to introduce it among the Jews, and then the nations of the earth would soon flock in to Him. What temptation could be more black? Note, The best saints may be tempted to the worst sins, especially when melancholy; as, for instance, to atheism, blasphemy, murder, self-murder, and what not? This temptation is their affliction, not their sin, while they do not consent to it. Christ was tempted to worship Satan.

Christ rejected the proposal, and came off conqueror. This was so gross a temptation as not to bear a parley. It appears abominable at first sight, and is therefore immediately rejected. If our best friend say 'Go serve other gods,' he must not be heard with patience, Deut. 13: 6, 8. Some temptations have the wickedness written in their foreheads; they are not to be disputed, but rejected; 'Get thee hence, Satan! Away with it; I cannot bear the

thought of it!' When Satan tempted Christ to do Himself a mischief, though He yielded not yet He heard it; but now that the temptation flies in the face of God, He cannot bear it.—Note, It is a just indignation that rises at any proposal that reflects on the honor of God; nay, whatever we are sure the Lord hates, we must abominate. Note, It is good to be peremptory in resisting temptation, and to stop our ears to Satan's charms.

In order to strengthen our resolutions against sins, it is good to see what reason there is for those resolutions. The argument, Deut. 6: 13 and 10: 20, is exactly to the purpose. *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.* Christ does not dispute whether he was an angel of light; but though he were, he must not be worshipped, because that honor is due to God only. Note, It is good to make our answer to temptations full and brief, so as not to leave room for objections. Our Savior refers to the fundamental law in this case, which is universally obligatory.—Note, Religious worship must not be given to any creature; it is a flower of the crown which cannot be alienated, a branch of God's glory which He will not give to another, and which He would not give to his own Son, by obazing all men to honor the Son, as they honor the Father, if He had not been God, equal to Him, and one with Him. Christ quotes this law respecting worship, to show that, in his humiliation, He was worshipped under this law. Though as God He was worshipped, yet as man He worshipped God, both privately and publicly; He obliged us to no more than He was pleased to oblige Himself to. Thus it became Him to fulfil a righteousness. He also showed that the law of religious worship is of eternal obligation; though He altered and abrogated many institutions of worship, yet this fundamental law of nature, that God only is to be worshipped, He came to ratify and enforce.

5. Though the children of God may be exercised with many and great temptations, yet God will not suffer them to be tempted above the strength which either they have, or He will give them, 1 Cor. 10: 13. It is but for a season that they are in heaviness, through manifold temptations.

Then the devil leaveth Him, forced to do so by the power that went along with that command, *get thee hence, Satan.* He made a shameful retreat; and the more daring his attempts had been, the more mortifying his repulse. Then, when he had tempted Him, by all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and found He was not influenced by that bait with which he had taken so many of the children of men, he gives Him over as more than a man. He begins to conclude that He is the Son of God, and that it is in vain to tempt Him any farther. Note, The devil will yield, if we keep our ground, as when Naomi saw that Ruth was steadfast, she left off speaking to her. When the devil left our Savior, he acknowledged himself fairly beaten; his head was broken by the attempt he made to bruise Christ's heel. He left Him because he had nothing in Him, nothing to do with him. Note, The devil is an enemy to the saints, but he is a conquered enemy; the Captain of our salvation has disarmed him; we have nothing to do but pursue the victory.

Behold, angels came and ministered unto Him, in a visible appearance, as the devil had done in the temptation. While the devil made

tempted to the mind of Christ, as if He had seen them with his eyes, and beheld the wealth, magnificence, and honor, which appear glorious to men. And Satan vowed, that all these were at his disposal; and that he was so pleased with Jesus, as to be ready to give Him the possession of them for one single prostration, one transient act of worship.—Doubtless Satan can use worldly things as baits to allure his votaries; but nothing could be more false, than to pretend that God had retired from the government of the world, in order that the devil might dispose of it as he pleased. And nothing could be more arrogant than to require the incarnate Son of God to worship him. Whatever disguise this ambition of spirit had before assumed, (for we suppose him to be the leader of the army of apostate angels,) his diabolical designs were now manifested, and Christ addressed him by his name, 'Satan,' adversary of God and men, and commanded him to depart, for it was written 'thou shalt

worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve. (Mat. 22: 37.) The Savior here spake as Man, who is forbidden to worship any other than God.—Thus the enemy was baffled, left the Redeemer, and for a time did not renew his temptations. Then angels came, as if to congratulate Him, do Him honor, and supply his wants. SCOTT.

Kingdoms of the world. (8.) If these words are taken literally, this must, of necessity, have been a visionary representation; and is so contemplated by Henry, Doddridge and Scott. Bengel remarks, that Satan 'exhibited to the eye what the horizon embraced, and probably described or indicated the rest.' But, observes Dr. A. Clarke, 'we take the word to mean only the land of Judea and some of the surrounding nations, as it appears sometimes to signify, (see on Luke 2: 1.) then the mountain described by the Abbe Martini, could have afforded the prospect.' 'Here,' says he, 'we enjoy, in the most beautiful

God, and him only shalt thou serve.

11 Then *the devil leaveth him, and, 'behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

[Practical Observations.]

12 ¶ Now *when A. D.] Jesus had heard 28.] that John was *cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

13 And, *leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim:

e Luke 4:13. 22:53. John 1:26.
2:13. 3:23. 4:11. m. 3:16. Heb. 1:5. Rev. 5:11:12. 6:17. Luke 3:20. 4:14, 31. John 4:35, 51.
* Or, delivered up.
f Luke 4:39:51.
i 11:7. 17:21. Mark 1:21. John 4:46. 6:17:21, 59.
g Josh. 19:10-16. Zebulun.
h Josh. 19:32-39. Naphtali.

them perish. *Trust in the Lord, and verily thou shalt be fed*, Ps. 37: 3.

Christ was thus succored for his encouragement, that He might see the powers of heaven siding with Him, and also for our encouragement to trust in Him; for as He knew what it was to *suffer, being tempted*, so He knew how comfortable it was to be succored; and thus we may expect that He will not only sympathize with, but relieve his tempted people; as our great Melchisedec met Abraham returning from battle, and, as the angels here, ministered to him.

Christ having been thus signalized in the invisible world by the voice of the Father, the descent of the Spirit, his victory over devils, and his dominion over angels, was doubtless qualified to appear in the visible world as the Mediator between God and man; for *consider how great this man was!*

V. 12-17. Christ came into the world to be a preacher. The great salvation which He wrought out, He Himself began to publish, (Heb. 2: 3.) to show how much his heart *was* upon it, and ours should be.

Some passages, particularly in John's Gospel, are supposed to intervene between Christ's temptation and his preaching in Galilee. His first appearance after his temptation was, when John Baptist said, *Behold the Lamb of*

his assaults, the angels stood at a distance, that it might appear that Christ vanquished Satan in his own strength, and that afterward when Michael makes use of his angels, in fighting with the dragon and his angels, it might appear that it is not because He needs them, but because He is pleased to honor, by employing, them. One angel might have served, but here are many, ready to testify their respect, and receive his commands. Observe, That as there is a world of malicious spirits fighting against Christ and his church, so there is a world of blessed spirits engaged for them. In our *war with devils*, we may have abundant comfort from our communion with angels. Christ's victories are the angel's triumphs. The angels came to congratulate Christ on his success, and to give the glory due to his name; for that was sung with a great voice in heaven when the dragon was cast out, (Rev. 12: 9, 10.) *Now is come salvation and strength*. The angels ministered not only food, but whatever else He wanted. See how Christ's humiliation was balanced with tokens of his glory, as when He was crucified in weakness, yet He *lived by the power of God*; so when He was tempted by hunger and weariness, by his divine power He commanded the ministration of angels. The Son of man did eat angel's food; thus Elias is fed by an angel in the wilderness, 1 Kings 19: 4, 7. Note, Though God may suffer his people to be brought into straits, yet He had rather send angels to feed them, than see them perish. *Trust in the Lord, and verily thou shalt be fed*, Ps. 37: 3.

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God! John 1: 29. After that, He went up to Jerusalem to the passover, (John 2.) discourse with Nicodemus, (John 3.) with the woman of Samaria, (John 4.) and then returned into Galilee, and preached. But Matthew, residing in Galilee, begins the story of his public ministry with his preaching there. Observe,

1. When Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, then He went into Galilee, v. 12.-- Note, The cry of the saints' suffering, comes up into the ears of the Lord Jesus. If John be cast into prison, Jesus hears it, takes cognizance of it, and steers his course accordingly; He remembers the bonds and afflictions that abide his people. Observe,

1. Christ did not go into the country till He heard of John's imprisonment, for he must have time given him to prepare the way of the Lord, before the Lord Himself should appear. Providence wisely ordered it that John should be eclipsed before Christ shone forth; otherwise the minds of people would have been distracted between the two; one would have said, *I am of John*, and another, *I am of Jesus*.— John must be Christ's harkener, but not his rival. The moon and stars are lost when the sun rises. John had done his work by the baptism of repentance, and then is laid aside.— The witnesses were not slain till they had finished their testimony, Rev. 11: 7. He went into the country, not only to provide for his own safety, knowing that the Pharisees in Judea were as much enemies to Him as Herod was to John, but to supply the want of John, and to build upon the good foundation, that He laid. Note, God will not leave Him without witness, nor his church without guides; when He removes one useful instrument He can raise up another, for He has the residue of the Spirit, and He will do it if He has work to do. *Moses my servant is dead*; John is cast into prison; now therefore, Joshua, arise; Jesus, arise.

2. Galilee, where he preached, lay in a remote part of the country, and was looked upon at Jerusalem with contempt. The inhabitants were stout men, reckoned to be fit for soldiers, but not for scholars. Thither Christ went, and set up the standard of the Gospel. Observe,— He did not choose Nazareth, where He had been brought up, for his residence, for the men of that city thrust Him out from among them,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 8-11. The believer should not despond, if assaulted by temptations to infidelity, blasphemy, suicide, or other dreadful crimes; for Christ was tempted to ambition, and even to worship the devil. The more painful they are, the less likely are they to defile us; as bad language fails to pollute us in proportion as it grieves our hearts. By thorough observation our enemy knows how powerfully authority, honor, and the glory of kingdoms attract the minds of men. It was vain presumption in him to suppose, that the divine Redeemer could thus be allured. We are by nature prone to seize such supposed advantages; to forget, that the Lord alone disposes of them; to mistake these illusions for real good, and to render Satan any service, which he may require as the price of them. Alas! few men in all instances indignantly silence proposals of this kind. Yet 'what is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' Conscious, then, of our weakness, we should pray not to be 'led into temptation,' and be thankful to be kept from it; for numbers, who seemed to run well, have given up religion for a little of the world; and believers have been hindered and pierced with anguish by yielding to these suggestions. (Note, 1 Tim. 6: 6-10.) Let us then beware

of covetousness and ambition; store our minds with the word of God; 'worship the Lord and serve Him alone,' and not divide our heart between Him and mammon, which will be as ruinous as gross idolatry.—Where temptations are strong and the evil evident, we must not parley at all; for he that deliberates is already vanquished.—While we admire the patience and condescension of the Son of God in suffering Himself to be conveyed from place to place by this fiend, that as our Surety He might conquer him, let us copy his example, and pursue his victories, encouraged, because our Redeemer 'knows what sore temptations mean,' and because 'He suffered being tempted, that He might be able to succor them that are tempted.' Let us observe how angels ministered to Him, *we refuse Satan's counsel to supply his own wants; and how 'all power in heaven and earth is given to Him,' who refused 'all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.'* If we resist the devil he will flee, and the Lord will give his angels charge over us; and if we refuse honors purchased by sin, we shall obtain a kingdom in heaven. Let us, then, fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life. SCOTT

"tifi view. This part of the mountain overlooks the mountains of Arabia, the country of Gilead, the country of the Amorites, the plains of Moab, the plains of Jericho, the river Jordan, and the whole extent of the Dead Sea. Here the devil said to the Son of God, 'As these kingdoms will I give Thee, &c.' What renders this more probable is, that at this time, as Rosenmüller and Kuinoel have remarked, Palestine was divided into several parts, as Judea, Idumea, Samaria, Galilee, Perea, Auranitis and Trachonitis, in which Archelaus, Antipas and Philip, sons of Herod, governed, as kings or tetrarchs. *Ec. Thou shalt worship, &c.* (10) 'These words compared with other Scriptures shew, that Christ is not a creature, for the worship and service due to God cannot be given to a creature, that being to own Him equal with God, and idolatry consists chiefly in giving to a creature the worship which is due only to God. Religious adoration and adoration cannot, then, be given without idolatry to Christ, if He be only a creature. Since then, God requires, 'that all men should worship the Son even as they worship the Father,' and 'when He

"brought the First-born into the world, said, Let all the angels of God 'worship Him;' and since Christians 'serve the Lord Christ,' He 'cannot be a creature, but must be truly God.' WHITE.

Notes 12-17. Soon after John had baptized our Lord, he offended Herod the tetrarch, was cast into prison, ended his ministry, and shortly after his useful life. It is clear, however, that Jesus began his ministry, and became eminent, some time before John was cast into prison. (Notes, John 1: 29-51, 2: 1-12, 3: 22-36, 4: 1-3.) At that time He preached more fully and openly in the northern part of the land. He had, perhaps, been at Jerusalem, at a solemn feast, when this account was brought to Him, and He departed into Galilee; then leaving his habitation at Nazareth. (Joseph perhaps being dead, as we read no more of him.) He abode in Capernaum, a city on the borders of the tribes of Zabulon and Nephthalim, on the coast of the sea of Galilee, or the Sea of Galilee. This was done to fulfil a prophecy of Isaiah. (Notes, Is. 9: 1, 2.) Thus in Galilee, bordering on the Gentiles, where such darkness had prevailed,

14 That * it might be filled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Naphthaliim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles:

16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them, which sat in the death, light is sprung up.

17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

second captivity under the Jews. 15: 29. The punishment of the Jews for rejecting the Gospel should be sorer than either, (Isa. 8: 21, 22,) for those places saw a great light again, ch. 9: 12. This is Isaiah's sense, but, as the Scripture has many fulfillings, the evangelist takes only the latter clause, which speaks of the returning prosperity of those captured countries, and applies it to the appearing of the Gospel among them.

Zebulun is rightly said to be by the seacoast, for Zebulun was a haven of ships, and rejoiced in her going out. Gen. 49: 13. Deut. 33: 13. Of Naphthali it had been said, that he should give goodly words, (Gen. 49: 21,) and should be satisfied with favor. Deut. 33: 23. For from him began the Gospel; goodly words indeed, and such as bring to a soul God's satisfying favor. The country beyond Jordan is mentioned, for there sometimes Christ preached, and Galilee of the Gentiles, the upper Galilee, to which the Gentiles resorted for traffic, where they were mingled with the Jews, intimating a kindness in reserve for the poor Gentiles. When Christ came to Capernaum, the Gospel came to all the places round about; such diffusive influence had the Son of righteousness.

The inhabitants were in darkness. Note, Those who are without Christ, are darkness itself, as the darkness that was upon the face of the deep. Nay, they were in the region and shadow of death, which denotes not only great darkness, as the grave is a land of darkness, but great danger. A man desperately sick is in the valley of the shadow of Death, though not quite dead; so the poor people were in the borders of damnation, though not yet damned, dead in law, and worst of all, they were sitting in this condition. Where we sit, we mean to stay. They were in the dark, despairing of finding the way out. And sitting is a contented posture; they chose darkness rather than light; they were willingly ignorant. Their condition was sad; it is still the condition of many great and mighty nations, which are to be thought of, and prayed for with pity. But their condition is more sad, who sit in darkness in the midst of Gospel light. He that is in the dark because it is night, may be sure that the sun will shortly arise; but he that is dark because he is blind, will not so soon have his eyes opened. We have

the light, but what will bat avail us, if we be not *in the light* in the Lord? When the Gospel came, it was a reviving as great as ever light was to a benighted traveller. Note, When the Gospel comes into any soul, it makes day there. John 3: 19. Luke 1: 78, 79. Light is discovering, it is directing; so is the Gospel. It is a great light, denoting the clearness of Gospel revelations; not like a candle, but like the sun when he goes forth in his strength. Great in comparison with the light of the law, the shadows of which were now gone away. It is great as it discovers things of vast consequence; it will last long, and spread far. It is a growing light, intimated in that text, it is springing up. It was but springing up with them; it afterwards shone more and more. The Gospel kingdom, like a grain of mustard seed, or the morning light, was small in its beginnings, gradual in its growth, but great in its perfection.

Observe, The light sprung up to them; they did not go to seek it, but were prevented with the blessings of goodness. It came, by the disposal of Him, who commandeth the morning, and caused the day-spring to appear in the morning, that it may take hold of the ends of the earth, Job 38: 12, 13.

From that time, that is, from the time of his coming into the land of Zebulun and Naphthali. He began to preach. He had been before this in Judea, and had baptized many disciples: John 4: 1. but his preaching was not so public and constant as now. The work of the ministry is so great and awful, that it is fit to be entered upon by gradual advances. The sun and substance of all Christ's preaching was the same with that of John, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*: for the Gospel is the same for substance under various denominations: an angel from heaven did not preach any other Gospel, (Gal. 1: 8,) and will preach this, for it is the everlasting Gospel. Fear God, and, by repentance, give honor to Him, Rev. 14: 6, 7. Christ put a great respect upon John's ministry when He preached in the same purport. By this He showed that John was his ambassador and messenger. Thus God confirmed the word of his messengers, Isa. 44: 26. The Son came to the same errand that the servants came on, ch. 21: 37, to seek fruit, fruits meet for repentance. Christ, from the bosom of the Father, could have preached sublime notions of heavenly things to alarm and amuse the learned world; but He pitches upon this old, plain text, *Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*. Ministers must not be ambitious of proposing new opinions, framing new schemes, or coining new expressions, but must content themselves with plain, practical things, with the Word that is *high* us, even in our mouth, and in our heart. We need not go up to heaven, nor down to the deep, for matter or language in our preaching. As John prepared Christ's way, so Christ prepared his own, and made way for the Father's assistance. He conformed with the doctrine of repentance. If any man will do this part of his will, he shall know more of his doctrine, John 7: 17. Neither He nor his followers ever reasoned it worn threadbare, as those would have done, who have nothing new, and are fond of novelty and variety more than of that which is truly edifying.

21. that it was 'in the region of the shadow of death' the light of the Gospel shone forth. 22. as Jesus began to preach, the same doctrine which He had preached in another part of the land. Stronger language could not be employed in describing the darkness of the Gentiles. This part of Galilee was not far distant from Tyre and Sidon; and had given the king of Tyre twenty cities in that time, (Isaiah 23: 15.) The evangelist here (22) The darkness was made by translating the Hebrew phrase, a place not yet lighted up, the place of darkness, and not yet lighted up for working. It differs more from the LXX, but is understood. 23. Nay, they were in the valley of the shadow of death, the region of the shadow of death, mentioned in Job 12. (These are passed over in the narrative of Matthew as observed by Henry, and to be learned by a careful examination of the other evangelists, particularly Luke and John, quoted above; see also Mark 1: 14, 15, and the Hebrews, especially of David and Melchizedek. The time that elapsed Bet Peor, the time that elapsed about a year, and Mr. Wotton's question, 'John was not passed over to Jericho, but beyond Jericho, where he was to preach. One John preached a few miles from among his followers, who went with him, Matthew 23: 12.)

Andrew, Simon, Philip, and Nathaniel (supposed the same as Bartholomew, son of Tolmai or Ptolemy) were of this number, who were witnesses of his first miracle at Cana. Thence, after visiting Capernaum, He went to James and John, to attend the Passover, and now the story of John's imprisonment, conceived again at Galilee, intent on preaching the Gospel, and tending the people. CALMET. Galilee, also. Referring to the accompanying map for the better reason of this large and populous part of what is familiarly called the Holy Land, it may yet be expedient to notice that it was so Dr. Wall's remarks, 'most famous for the Spirit's presence.' Here at Nazareth, his most sweet, yet his most glorious, cooperation was manifested. Luke 1: 26, 27. He was intimate from Egypt, whence a child, here He dwelt in the Nazareth, near at his eye, when He was conceived in John 1: 26, 27. 2: 1, 2. Luke 2: 26, 27. 2: 28. and returned to Nazareth, where He dwelt, Luke 4: 14. He dwelt in Nazareth, which was a small town, with people of those of Asher and Dan, who was divided into Upper, or mountainous, called Galilee of the Gentiles, and Lower Galilee. Es

18 ¶ And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

19 And he saith unto them, Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

20 And they straightway left their nets, and followed him.

21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their

ing. Note, That which has been preached before, may yet very profitably be preached again, but then it should be preached and heard with new affections; what Paul had said before, he said again, *weeping*, Phil. 1: 3, 18. This He preached as Gospel, Repent, review your ways, and return to yourselves. Note, The doctrine of repentance is right Gospel doctrine. Not only the austere Baptist, but the sweet and gracious Jesus, whose lips dropped as an honey-comb, preached repentance; for it is an unspeakable privilege that room is left for repentance. The reason is still the same. *The kingdom of heaven is at hand*; for it was not reckoned to be fully come, till the pouring out of the Spirit, after Christ's ascension. John had preached the kingdom of heaven at hand above a year before, but now that it was so much nearer, the argument was so much stronger. Now is the *salvation nearer*, Rom. 13: 11. We should be so much the more quickened to our duty, as we see the day approaching, Heb. 10: 25.

V. 18-22. When Christ began to preach, He began to gather disciples, now the hearers, afterwards the preachers, of his doctrine; now the witnesses of his miracles, and hereafter concerning them.

In all Christ's preaching, He gave a common call to the whole country; here He gave a special call to those who were given Him by the Father. Let us see and admire the power of Christ's grace, own his word to be the rod of his strength, and wait upon Him for the powerful and distinguishing influences of his Gospel. All the country was called, but those who were called out were redeemed from among men.—Christ was manifested to them as He was not to the world. It was an instance of ordination to the ministry. When Christ, as a Teacher, set up his great school, one of his first works was to appoint ushers, or under-masters, to be employed in the work of instruction. Now He began to give gifts unto men, to put the treasure into earthen vessels. It was an early instance of his care for his church.

Mark 1:16-18.
1:28 Num. 34:11. Dent. 3:17.
Chinnereth. Luke 5:1. Sea of Genesareth. John 6:1. 21:1. Sea of Tiberias.
1:22 Luke 6:1. John 1:10, 41. 6:8.
Ex 3:1-10. Job 1:1, 12. 1 Kings 19:1-17. Ps 75:70-72. Am 7:11, 12. 1 Cor 1:27-29.
1:22 5:9. 1:21. 19:21. Mark 2:14. Luke 5:27. 9:59. John 1:43. 12:28. 21:2.
1:27. 17:19. Mark 1:17, 13. Luke 5:10, 11.
1:28 5:3. 19:27. 1 Kings 19:21. Ps 11:59. Mark 10:23, 29. Luke 1:48. 9:1. Gal 1:1.
1:22 7:1. 26:19, 21. 26:37. Mark 1:19. 3:17. 5:27. Luke 5:10, 11. John 2:12. Acts 1:2.

employed in the work of instruction. Now He began to give gifts unto men, to put the treasure into earthen vessels. It was an early instance of his care for his church.

1. It was by the sea of Galilee. Concerning this sea, the Jews say, That of all the seven seas God made, He chose alone the sea of Genesareth, which is very applicable to Christ, who often honored it with his presence and miracles. Here, Christ was walking for contemplation, as Isaac was in the field; neither He went to call disciples; not to Herod's court; (for few mighty or noble are called; not to Jerusalem, among the chief priests and scribes, but to the sea of Galilee. Surely, Christ sees not as man sees. Not but that the same power, which effectually called Peter and Andrew, would have wrought upon Annas and Caiaphas, for with God nothing is impossible; but, as in other things, He would humble Himself, and show that God has chosen the poor of this world. Galilee was a remote part of the nation; the inhabitants were less refined; their very language was uncouth, their speech betrayed them. They, who were picked up at the sea of Galilee, had not even the improvements of the more polished Galileans; yet thither Christ went, to call his apostles, who were to be the prime ministers of state in his kingdom, for He chooses the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise.

2. We have an account of the call of two pair of brothers. Peter and Andrew, and perhaps James and John, were acquainted with Christ before, (John 1: 40, 41.) but were not, till now, called to a constant attendance on Him. Note, Christ brings poor souls by degrees into fellowship with Himself. They had been disciples of John's, and so were the better disposed to follow Christ. Note Those who have submitted to the discipline of repentance, shall be welcome to the joys of faith.

They were brothers. It is a blessed thing when they who are kinsmen according to the flesh, as the apostle speaks, (Rom. 9: 3.) are brethren in Christ Jesus. It is the honor and comfort of a house, when those of the same family are of God's family.

Being fishermen, they were poor; if they had had estates, or any considerable stock, they would not have made it their trade, but their recreation. Note, Christ does not despise the poor, and we must not; the poor are evangelized, and the Fountain of honor sometimes gives more abundant honor to that river which most lacked. They were unlearned men, not bred to literature, as Moses, who was conversant with all the learning of the Egyptians. Note, Christ sometimes endows those with gifts of grace, who have least of the gifts of nature; yet this justifies not the bold intrusion of igno-

rant men into the ministry. Extraordinary gifts of knowledge and utterance are not now to be expected, but requisite ability must be obtained in the ordinary way; and without a competent measure of it, none are to be admitted to that service. They were men of business, bred to labor. Note, Diligence in an honest calling, is pleasing to Christ, and no hindrance to a holy life. Moses and David were called from keeping sheep. Idle people lie more open to temptation than to the calls of God. They were accustomed to hardships; the fisher's trade is more perilous than any other. He must be often wet and cold, and in peril by waters, and must watch, wait, and toil. Note, Those who have learned to bear hardship, are best prepared for the discipleship of Jesus Christ. Good soldiers of Christ must endure hardness.

3. Peter and Andrew were using their nets, and James and John were mending theirs, an instance of industry and good husbandry.—They did not go to their father for new nets, but took pains to mend their old ones. It is commendable to make what we have go as far as may be. James and John were with their father Zebedee, to assist him, and make his business easy to him. Note, It is a happy presage when children are careful of their parents. Observe, They were all very busy. When Christ comes, it is good to be found doing.—'Am I in Christ?' is a very needful question for us to ask ourselves; and next to that, 'Am I in my calling?' They were differently employed. Note, Ministers should be always teaching or studying; they may always find something to do. Mending their nets is, in its season, as necessary as fishing.

4. They had followed Christ before as ordinary disciples, (John 1: 37.) They might both follow Christ and their calling. Now they must constantly attend on Him, and leave their calling. Note, Such as have been called to follow Christ need to be called to follow on, and to follow nearer, especially when designed for the ministry.

I will make you fishers of men; alluding to their former calling. Let them not now be proud; they are still but fishers. Let them not be afraid of the new work cut out for them, for they have been used to fishing, and fishers they are still. It was usual with Christ to speak of heavenly things under such allusions, as took rise from common things. David was called from feeding sheep to feed God's Israel; and when a king, is a shepherd. Note, Ministers are fishers of men, not to destroy them, but to save them by bringing them into another element. They must fish, not for wealth, honor or preferment, but to gain souls to Christ.—They watch for your souls, (Heb. 13: 17.) and seek not yours, but you, (2 Cor. 12: 14, 16.) It is Christ that makes them fishers of men. He qualifies men for this work, calls them to it, authorizes them in it, and gives them success.—He commissions them to fish for souls, and gives wisdom to win them. Such ministers are likely to have comfort in their work.

Follow Me. They must separate themselves to a diligent attendance on Him, and an humble imitation of Him. Note, Those whom Christ employs, must be fitted for it. Those who would preach Christ, must first learn Christ.—How can we expect to bring others to Christ, when we are ignorant of Him ourselves? If we would know Him, we must be diligent in attendance on Him. The apostles were prepared by accompanying Christ all the time He went in and out among them, Acts 1: 21. No learning is comparable to that which is obtained

Verses 18-22.
Jesus had already been acknowledged as the Messiah by Andrew and Peter, but they seem not to have been required to leave their employments, and accompany Him constantly, with a view to the ministry and fellowship. (Note, John 1: 35-42.) The miraculous draught of fishes, related by Luk, probably occurred either before, or soon after these events. (Marg. Ref.—Note, Luke 5: 1-11.) Scott. Every preacher commissioned of God to proclaim salvation to a lost world, begins with the doctrine of repentance. So did all the prophets. John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, all the apostles, and all their genuine successors in the Christian ministry. But why did not our Lord call some of

the eminent scribes or Pharisees to publish his Gospel, and not poor, unlearned fishermen, without credit or authority? Because they were to preach the kingdom of heaven, and their teaching must come from above; besides, though the conversion of sinners be effected instrumentally by the preaching of the Gospel, yet the great agent in it is the Spirit of God.—As the instruments were comparatively mean, and the work accomplished grand and glorious, the excellency of the power at once appeared to be of God, and not of man; and thus the glory, due alone to his name, was secured, and the great honor of his glory had the deserved praise.

Dr. A. Clarke.

father, mending their nets; and he called them.

22 And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him.

23 ¶ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people.

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

25 And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and as far beyond Jordan.

by following Christ. Joshua, by ministering to Moses, is fitted to be his successor. Those who fish for men, must do it as Christ did, with diligence, faithfulness, and tenderness. Christ is the great Pattern for preachers. They should be workers together with Him.

5. Peter and Andrew straightway left their nets, and James and John immediately left the ship and their father, and they all followed Him. Note, Those, who would follow Christ aright, must leave all to follow Him. They must hate father and mother, (Luke 14: 26,) love them less than Christ, be ready to part with their interest in them, rather than with their interest in Jesus Christ; but ministers must, in a special manner, disentangle themselves from all the affairs of this life, to give themselves wholly to that work, which requires the whole man.

We are here encouraged to depend upon the sufficiency of his grace. *He speaks and it is done.* The same power goes along with this word of Christ, *Follow me*, that went along with that word, *Lazarus, come forth*; a power to make willing, Ps. 110: 3. The disciples gave a good example of obedience. Note, It is the mark of all Christ's faithful servants to come when called. They objected not their occupations, families, the difficulties of the service, or their own unfitness. Like Abraham, being called, they obeyed, and went out, not knowing whither they went, but knowing very well whom they followed. James and John left their father; it is not said what became of him; their mother Salome was a constant follower of Christ. No doubt Zebedee was a believer, but the call to follow Christ, fastened on the young ones.— Youth is the learning and laboring age. The priests ministered in the prime of their time.

V. 23–25. 1. What an industrious preacher Christ was! Observe what He preached—the Gospel of the kingdom, the kingdom of heaven, that is, of grace and glory. It was emphatically the kingdom, which shall survive, as it doth surpass, all the kingdoms of the earth. The Gospel is the charter of that kingdom, containing the king's coronation oath, by which He has graciously obliged Himself to pardon, protect, and save the subjects of that kingdom. It contains also their oath of allegiance, by which they oblige themselves to observe his statutes, and seek his honor. This is the Gospel of the kingdom; this Christ preached, that our faith in it might be confirmed. He preached chiefly in the synagogues, because there were the places of concourse; (Prov. 1: 21.) there it was to be hoped the minds of the people would be prepared to receive the Gospel; and there the Old Testament was read, the exposition of which would easily introduce it. *He went about Galilee.* He might have issued a proclamation to summon all to come to Him; but, to show his humility, He goes to them; *He waits to be gra-*

cious, He comes to seek and save. Josephus says there were above two hundred cities and towns in Galilee, and all, or most of them, Christ visited. *He went about doing good.* Never was there such an indefatigable itinerant preacher as Christ; He went from town to town, to beseech poor sinners to be reconciled to God.— This is an example for ministers, to be instant, in season, and out of season, to preach the word.

2. What a powerful Physician! He cured all diseases without exception. There are diseases, which are called the reproach of physicians, being obstinate to all the methods they prescribe; but even those were the glory of this Physician, for *He healed them all*, however inveterate. Three general words are here used—every sickness, as blindness, fever, dropsy; every disease, as fluxes, consumptions; all torments, as gout, stone, convulsions, and such like torturing distempers; whether the disease was acute or chronic, racking or wasting, none was too bad, or hard for Him to heal with a word.

Three particular diseases are specified—palsy, the greatest weakness of the body—lunacy, the greatest malady of the mind—and possession of the devil, a greater misery and calamity than both; yet Christ healed all, for He is the sovereign Physician of soul and body. A physician so ready of access, so sure to succeed, who cured immediately, without painful suspense and expectation, or with remedies worse than the disease, and who cured gratis, could not but have many patients. Great multitudes came, not only from Galilee, and the country about, but from Jerusalem and Judea, which lay a great way off; for his fame went throughout all Syria, not only among Jews, but surrounding nations, which, by the report now spread abroad concerning Him, would be prepared to receive afterward his Gospel. Note, What we hear of Christ from others, should invite us to Him.— The Queen of Sheba was induced by the fame of Solomon to visit him. The voice of fame is, 'Come and see.' Christ both taught and healed. They who came for cures, met with spiritual instruction. It is well if any thing will bring people to Christ. They who come to Him will find more than they expected. Many of these Syrians, coming to be healed, like Naaman, became converts, (2 Kings, 5: 15, 17.)— They sought health for the body, and found the salvation of the soul; like Saul, who sought the asses, and found the kingdom; yet it appeared that many who rejoiced in Christ as a Healer, forgot Him as a Teacher.

Observe, once for all, the miracle, the mercy, and the mystery of these cures. They were so wrought, as plainly to declare them the effect of supernatural power, and were God's seal to his commission. It was not nature, but the God of nature. The cures were many, of diseases incurable by the physician's art; of strangers;

Verses 23–25.

Jesus having procured these attendants, not from the schools or palaces of Jerusalem, but from the fisher-boats of Galilee, went about preaching in the synagogues, or places of worship. A better opportunity of discussing many subjects relating to diseases, possessions, lunatics, &c. will be furnished by particular instances: only it may be objected, that this display of our Lord's divine power marked the gracious design of his undertaking, and excited attention to his doctrine. (Marg. Ref. f. g. h.—) It should, however, be noticed, that persons possessed with devils are here expressly distinguished from lunatics; they could not, then, be the same, as some learned men seem to think. 'It seems strange,' says Whitby, 'to find men now questioning that, which neither Pharisee nor Sadducee then doubted, or objected against, the pretensions of Christ and his apostles to cast out devils.' SCOTT. Synagogues. (23) This word, simply denoting assemblies, is applied to the Jewish places for divine worship. These, it is thought, were not established until after the return from captivity at Babylon. Where the Jews were willing and able to devote themselves to the service, we find a synagogue must be erected. This institution, in judgment of the learned Pridaure, followed that solemn reading of the law by Ezra, mentioned Neh. ch. 8, and was intended to multiply the copies of the Sacred Scriptures, (since every synagogue must, of course, possess one,) and to bring the people into familiar and habitual acquaintance with them, as well as to afford facilities for Divine worship. At first they were few in number, but afterwards multiplied; so that, in our Saviour's time, there was no town in Judea that had not one or more of them; until they became like parish churches.— The service consisted in, prayer, reading the Scriptures, (Acts 15: 21,) and expounding them to the people. See an example in our Lord's entering the synagogue at Nazareth, Luke 4: 16–22. (where He complied with the ordinary practice in standing to read, and sitting down, in order to

expound, or preach,) and also in Paul at Antioch, Acts 13: 14, 15. On two of the week days they assembled for this service, beside the Sabbath, and on each of these three days thrice, morning, afternoon, and at night. See Ps. 55: 17, and Dan. 6: 10. The synagogue ministrations were not confined to the sacerdotal order; 'any one,' says Pridaure, 'that by learning was qualified for it, of what tribe soever he were,' might conduct the service. Yet, for preserving order, there were fixed officers. Such were the ruler of the synagogue, and its minister, called also angel, whence 'the angels of the churches,' Rev. 1: 2: 3: then *oversers*, to manage its various necessary concerns. Each synagogue had also an ark, or chest, to contain the Pentateuch, and sections of the prophets a desk or pulpit, seats, lamps, and apartments for utensils. *Vitranga, Lightfoot* and others have exemplified the deduction of our ordinary mode of public worship in great degree from the practice of the synagogue. Ep. Syria. (24) The country so denominated was of large extent, deriving its original name from the patriarch Aram, and included Mesopotamia, as well as the territory between Cilicia, Phœnicia, Judea, Arabia, and the Euphrates. But, speaking more strictly, it denotes the country of which Antioch was the capital. CALMET. Decapolis. (25) A region containing ten cities, as its name imports. But geographers differ in the enumeration of them. Pliny and Josephus place the country next to Syria, [adjoining Galilee on the east; (see the map); Damascus, the most ancient of its cities, being the capital; Dr A. Clarke:] and it contained, along with Gentile inhabitants, very many Jews.

NOTE. The subject of demoniacal possession being in this chapter mentioned for the first time in the New Testament, it may well conform with the design of this Commentary to observe, that, as many of its readers doubtless know, there has been on this point a diversity of opinion. Now, although he feels not bound to notice every such diversity, or to present this as a controversial work to the public, yet the editor would

CHAP. V.

Christ shows who are happy, 1-12. His disciples, as 'the salt of the earth' and 'the light of the world,' and as 'a city set on a hill' and 'a candle in a room,' must be bright examples in good works, 13-16. He came not to destroy, but to fulfill and exalt, the law, 17-20. The strict commandment, violated from corrupt passions, and spiritually expounded, will be enforced, 21-26; and the seventh, 27-32; and the third, 33-37. Exhortations, to suffer wrong patiently, 38-42; to love our enemies, 43-47; and to aim at perfection, 48.

AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set,

a 4:25. 13:2. Mark 4:1.
b 10:19. Mark 3:13. John 6:23.

from God; but Christ's miracles were most of them cures, and all of them, except the cursing of the fig-tree, blessings. The Gospel dispensation is founded and built up in love, grace, and sweetness, tending not to affright, but allure us to obedience. Christ designed by his cures to draw his people with bands of love, Hos. 11: 4. The miracle of them proved his doctrine a faithful saying, and convinced men's judgments; the mercy of them proved it worthy of all acceptance, and wrought upon their affections. They were not only good works, but good works, that he showed them from his Father; (John 10: 32.) and his goodness was intended to lead men to repentance, (Rom. 2: 4.) as also to show that the utmost kindness and beneficence are essential branches of the Christian religion.

By curing bodily diseases, He intended to show, that his great errand was to

wrought openly, before many witnesses; in mixed companies of persons who would have denied the matter of fact, could they have had color for it. No cures failed or were called in question; and they were not, as natural cures, gradual; they were perfect, speedy, wrought with a word; all which proves Him a Teacher from God; for, otherwise, none could have done the works that He did, (John 3: 2.) He appeals to these as credentials, ch. 11: 4, 5. John 5: 36. It was expected that the Messiah should work miracles, (John 7: 31.) miracles of this kind; (Isa. 35: 5, 6.) and we have this indisputable proof of his being the Messiah. No man ever did thus, and therefore Christ's healing and preaching generally went together; the former confirmed the latter. Thus, He began to do and to teach; Acts 1: 1.

They were miracles of mercy. Most of Moses' miracles were plagues and judgments, intimating the terror of that dispensation, though from God; but Christ's miracles were most of them cures, and all of them, except the cursing of the fig-tree, blessings. The Gospel dispensation is founded and built up in love, grace, and sweetness, tending not to affright, but allure us to obedience. Christ designed by his cures to draw his people with bands of love, Hos. 11: 4. The miracle of them proved his doctrine a faithful saying, and convinced men's judgments; the mercy of them proved it worthy of all acceptance, and wrought upon their affections. They were not only good works, but good works, that he showed them from his Father; (John 10: 32.) and his goodness was intended to lead men to repentance, (Rom. 2: 4.) as also to show that the utmost kindness and beneficence are essential branches of the Christian religion.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 12-25. Our services and trials are short. When an instrument is laid aside, the Lord calls forth others; and when useful men are taken to their rest, we should redouble our diligence. The places where the pure Gospel is preached are highly favored. Without this blessing, the people 'sit in darkness and the shadow of death.' This was the case of the Jews, as well as of the Gentiles; and is now that of nominal Christians in many places, as well as of Jews, Pagans and Mohammedans; but when the word is fully declared, they 'see a great light.' May such walk in the light, as the children of the light; and may that blessed light be vouchsafed to the whole earth!—All who preach the Gospel must call men to repentance, that they may share the blessings and bring forth the fruits of salvation.—Next to religion, honest industry is most valuable; they are more likely to be useful ministers, who spend their youth in self-denying labor, than they, who professing to be students, waste their time in pleasures, dissipation, sloth and self-indulgence. Shepherds, husbandmen, or builders may stand as fair to take good care of the Lord's flock, husbandmen, or building, as these fishers to become 'fishers of men,' if He please to call them to it. But let none despise in-

struction, learning, or preparation for the ministry. Christ was the Tutor of those, whom He first sent to preach; and having taught them wisdom by his own lips, as well as by the Holy Spirit, He qualified them for their work by miraculously giving them the knowledge of languages.—When He speaks to the heart, men leave all and follow Him. Even the demand of parents on our services is subordinate to his right, and must be relinquished, if He command. When ministers are not employed in casting their nets, they should be mending them; and they will find work for all their time, patience, and assiduity.—Our diseases are not now cured by the miraculous power of the Savior; but if we be cured by medicine, the praise is equally his due. He is the Physician of our souls, and if we follow his directions, He will perfectly heal our maladies. We cannot draw others to the Gospel by miracles of love; but if we abound in ordinary charity, we shall recommend the truth, and perhaps induce many to attend on the Word, by which they will be healed of spiritual lunacy, and Satan be dispossessed, 'who now holds them captives at his will.' Thus our God and Savior will be glorified by us, and others will bless Him on our behalf. SCOTT.

neither be, nor appear to be, ignorant of fact, in relation to such views, when they are of essential importance. The opposition of sentiment in the present case is not a denial of the existence of miracles, wrought by Christ, for, as was observed by the late excellent Dr. Appleton, 'as to the inferences which might be made from either of these opinions, we are not to charge those who hold either one or the other as doubting the divine authority of Christ, or the integrity of the evangelists.' The difference lies between adopting the literal import of the narrative, and supposing our Lord, his disciples, and the evangelists to act and speak in compliance with popular errors. The former opinion is that, as is perceived, of Henry, Doddridge and Scott, and it may be added, of the generality of commentators. But the latter has had abettors of high reputation. They state, among their arguments, that others, beside the Jews designated certain diseased persons as affected by demons; that the doctrine has caused innumerable superstitious practices; that madness and melancholy exhibits now similar appearances, and are accounted for; and that 'in the highly figurative language of the east, almost every cause assumes a sort of personal agency.' To all this it is replied. The evangelists affirm plainly that the demoniacs were possessed with devils; that Jesus spake to the demons as to persons, and they answered as such; and that, without violence, this cannot apply to natural diseases. See Mark 1: 25. 9: 25. 5: 8. Luke 4: 35. 2. Our Lord expressly distinguished, in the charge He gave to the twelve, between the casting out of devils and the healing of diseases; which is the same distinction in the narrative, as ch. 8: 16. Mark 1: 32. 34. Luke 7: 21. Acts 10: 38, must be 'absurd,' says Dr. Macknight, 'if Demonism were only a natural distemper.' 3. The abuse of scriptural representations does not prove their falsity; nor are there many doctrines which, at times, have not been abused. Christianity, therefore, is not answerable for this. 4. Allowing that insanity and several of the diseases classed with it have natural causes, it will not follow that they might not give occasion to demoniac influence, or admit its operation, though it be granted they do not render necessary its presence now. And, as one will pretend to fix a period, 'says Hewlett, 'when the power of demons to afflict or aggravate diseases first commenced.' The malignant agency of these beings once admitted, also, who can say how far it extends? It is, indeed, matter for gratitude, that all vicious, malignant spirits are controlled by a Being wise, powerful, and benevo-

lent. But 'in fact,' to use the words of Bp. Porteus, 'it appears that, about the time of our Lord's ministry, that tremendous spirit, Satan, [as a demon figure,] sometimes called in Scripture the prince of this world, [using, it appears, the instrumentality of 'demons,' viz evil angels,] had obtained an extraordinary degree of power over the human race, inflicting upon them the cruellest pains and torments, depriving them of their senses, rendering them wretched in themselves, and terrible to all around them. To subdue this formidable and wicked being, and to destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, was one great object of our Savior's divine mission; and it seems to have been indispensably necessary for accomplishing the redemption of mankind, that the kingdom of Satan should in the first place be destroyed, and that the sons of men should be rescued from that horrible and disgraceful state of slavery in which he had long held them enthralled. One of the first steps therefore, that our Lord took before He entered on his ministry was, to establish his superiority over this great enemy of mankind: which He did in that memorable scene of the temptation in the wilderness; and among the earliest of his miracles recorded, is that of casting out devils from those who were possessed by them.' Were not all this actually true, it might well be said, as Pres. Appleton remarks, that, 'if the New Testament writers use language with such extraordinary freedom,—if they make such amazing concessions to the prejudices and errors of men, no person can have any distinct view of what was in fact their meaning,—no one can be certain when they relate things as they were in truth, and when they relate them as they appeared to vulgar and prejudiced minds.'

NOTES. Verses 1, 2.

In the last chapter it appeared that the divine Redeemer was surrounded by multitudes, whose diseases He healed. Here we find Him, instructing them in the concerns of their souls. He 'preached to them the Gospel of the kingdom: repentance was his first subject; and on the need and the effects of it He enlarged in the following sermon, which is the longest of his public discourses recorded. Though He had preached in the synagogues, yet as no building would probably contain this multitude, He ascended a mountain. Thus elevated above the people, He sat down, after the manner of the Jewish teachers, and instructed them. Those disciples, whom He had called to be his attendants, sat, as

*his disciples came unto him.

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying,

3 Blessed are the poor in spirit: for

2:15-22. 10:2-11. Luke 6:12-16.
2:23-35. Mt. 7:41,2. Prov. 2
2:36-41. A. 9:35. 10:34. 18:14
Eph. 6:18.
2:41-116. 12:16. 24:46. Ps. 1:1.
2:12. 26:12. 41:1. 84:12. 112:1.
119:12. 123:1. 146:5. Prov. 8:32.
2:42. Luke 6:21, &c. 11:28.
John 4:22. Rom. 16:9-10. Jam. 1:14.
14. Rev. 19:9. 22:14.
2:43-131. 3. Lev. 26:41, 42. Deut.
32:2. 2 Chr. 7:14. 33:12, 19, 23. 34:27.
2:48-42. Ps. 24:18. 33:17. Prov.
16:19. 29:23. 37:15. 61:1. 68:2.
Jer. 31:15-20. Dan. 5:21, 22. Mic.
6:1. 7:18. 18. 6:20. 13:14. Jam.
1:10. 4:10, 10.
2:42. 8:11. Mark 10:11. Jam. 2:5.

Christ gave this exposition of the law on a mountain, because that on a mountain, the law was given; and this was also a solemn promulgation of the Christian law. But observe, when the law was given, the Lord came down upon the mountain, now He went up; then He spake in thunder and lightning, now, in a still small voice: then the people were commanded to keep at distance, now invited to draw near; a blessed change! If God's grace and goodness are, as certainly they are, his glory, then the glory of the Gospel excels, for grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 3:7. Heb. 12:18, &c.) It was foretold of Issachar and Zebulun, two tribes of Galilee, (Deut. 33:19.) that they shall call the people to the mountain. To this mountain we are called, to learn to offer the sacrifices of righteousness. Now was this the mountain of the Lord, where He taught us his ways; Isa. 2:2, 3. Mic. 4:1, 2.

3. The auditors, his disciples, came at his call; Mark 3:13. Luke 6:13. To them He directed his speech, for they followed Him for love and learning, others only for cures. He taught them, because they were willing to be taught; the meek will He teach his way; because they would understand what He taught, which to others was foolishness; and because they were to teach others. It was therefore requisite that they should have clear knowledge themselves. The duties prescribed were to be conscientiously performed by all, who would enter into the kingdom of heaven. But though this discourse was directed to the disciples, it was in the hearing of the multitude; for it is said, (ch. 7: 28,) the people were astonished. No bounds were set about this mountain, as about Sinai, (Ex. 19:12.) for through Christ, we have access to God, not only to speak to Him, but to hear from Him. Nay, He had a eye to the multitude; He took the opportunity of so great a concourse of people to instruct them. Note, It is an encouragement to a faithful minister to cast the net among many fishes, as he may hope to obtain some of them. The sight of a multitude puts life into a preacher, which yet must arise from a desire of their profit, not his own praise.

4. The solemnity of the sermon is intimated by the phrase, when He was set. Christ preached many occasional sermons, but this was a set discourse. He sat down as a Judge or Lawgiver. It intimates with what sedateness the things of God should be spoken and heard. He sat, that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, (Mal. 3: 3.) He shall sit as a refiner, to purge away the dross, the corrupt doctrines of the sons of Levi. He sat as in the throne, judging right; (Ps. 9: 4.) for the word He spake shall judge us. The phrase, He opened his mouth, is a Hebrew periphrasis, (Job 3: 1.) yet some think

it intimates the solemnity of this discourse; the congregation being large, He spake the louder. He had spoken long by the prophets, and opened their mouths, (Ezek. 3: 27. 24: 27. 33: 22.) but now opened his own, and spake, as one having authority. One of the ancients says, Christ taught much without opening his mouth, that is, by exemplary life; nay, He taught, when, being led as a lamb to the slaughter, He opened not his mouth; but now, He opened his mouth, and taught, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Prov. 8: 1, 2, 6. Doth not wisdom cry — on the top of high places? And the opening of her lips shall be right things. He taught them, according to Isa. 64: 13. All thy children shall be taught of the Lord. For this purpose, He had the tongue of the learned, Isa. 50: 4. and the Spirit of the Lord, Isa. 61: 1. He taught them the evil they should abhor, and the good they should abound in; for Christianity is not a speculation but designed to regulate our conversation and our minds. Gospel time is a time of reformation, (Heb. 9: 10.) By the Gospel we must be made better. The truth as it is in Jesus is according to godliness, Tit. 1: 1.

V. 3-12. Christ begins his sermon with blessings; for He came into the world to bless us, (Acts 3: 26,) as the great High Priest of our profession, as the blessed Melchizedek; as He, in whom all the families of the earth should be blessed, Gen. 12: 3. He came, not only to purchase blessings for us, but to pour out blessings upon us; He is as one that can command the blessing, life forevermore; and that is the blessing again and again promised to the good. — His pronouncing them happy makes them so; for those whom He blesses are blessed indeed. Each blessing has a double intention, to show the persons truly happy and what their characters are. The Old Testament ended with a curse, (Mal. 4: 2,) the Gospel begins with a blessing; for heretofore we were called, that we should inherit the blessing.

This is designed to rectify the mistakes of a carnal world. Blessedness is the thing men mean to pursue. Who will make us good? (Ps. 4: 6.) But most mistake the end, and form a wrong notion of happiness. They choose their own delusions, and court a shadow. The general opinion is, that they are blessed, who are rich, great, and honorable, who spend their years in pleasure, eat the fat, drink the sweet, carry all before them with a high hand, and have every sheaf bowing to their sheaf. — Happy the people that is in such a case. Their purposes are accordingly; they bless the covetous, (Ps. 10: 3.) They will be rich. Now our Lord comes to correct this fundamental error, and to advance a new hypothesis, which, however paradoxical in itself, is, and appears to be to

seems, next to Him, and the multitude around them. The apostles were not at this time chosen, and they, who believed Him to be a teacher sent from God, are often called disciples: so that the interpretation must not be restricted to his constant attendants. Thus seated and surrounded, the divine Teacher solemnly and audibly taught them as follows. — The expression, 'opened his mouth,' seems to convey an idea of the gravity, deliberation and distinctness of the Speaker, and of the importance of that which was spoken. So ver. 1. 'The multitude here being those that were mentioned in v. 25. of ch. 4, this chapter ought to have commenced with that verse. Dr A. Clarke. There is, not far from the supposed site of ancient Capernaum, into which, as is stated by Luke, (7: 1.) our Lord entered immediately after uttering his discourse, an elevation still called 'the mount of the beatitudes.' Mr. Jowett visited it with peculiar sensations. 'We read aloud, as we went,' says he, 'the first 12 verses of the 5th of Matthew, and the 13th ch. of 1 Cor. Our minds were raised to the enjoyment of those heavenly truths; and we could not but feel that all the maxims of sages and philosophers are infinitely inferior to these brief and simple descriptions of the graces of humility, meekness, gentleness, purity of heart, and patience of faith, hope and love.' The flowery field brought to mind the Savior's allusion; and the view of the castle and town of Safet, as a commanding eminence in the north, presented the 'city set on a hill,' which, although without 'absolutely certain evidence' of the reality of position, 'yet,' he adds, 'we felt it heighten our interest in the scene, to trace, as nearly as might be, with the Gospels in our hand, and the very country before us, the steps of our Lord.' See note on Luke 7: 1.

Verse 3

Ed.

(Note Luke 6: 20-26.) Expositors generally say, that these beatitudes as they are called, were calculated to correct the notions and expectations of the Jews respecting the Messiah's kingdom. But, as their prejudices originated in corrupt pronouns common to all men, so these maxims of wisdom are equally adapted to remove from all men false notions of excellency, honor and felicity — All seek happiness, but

none except those who are taught by the Spirit according to the Word of God, know what it is, or how to obtain it. The 'beatitudes' may, then, be considered as the Christian paradoxes, for they place happiness in dispositions and circumstances which men generally deem incompatible with it. The declarations of Scripture, shewing who are the blessed, refer to our state and character as sinners; but some point out the benefits, which entitle us to happiness; (Note, Ps. 32: 1, 2.) and others the dispositions, or conditions, which conduce to it. (Morg. Ref.) To explain such short aphorisms, requires peculiar care. They commonly admit limitations from other parts of Scripture. In general, the beatitudes do not refer to any natural tempers, but to holy dispositions, produced by divine grace, rectifying the obliquities of fallen nature. Where one of them really exists, all the others exist, though not in equal prominence. — Christ first declares, that the 'poor in spirit' are happy. 'Poverty of spirit' is very different from external indigence. The poor are often proud, ungodly, dishonest, profligate, and far from happiness. Some of the rich are humble, holy and happy. — Voluntary poverty cannot be meant. 'It is the duty of men, who would "attain this life," in "be "poor in spirit," but it is not the duty of all Christians to turn "monks and friars mendicant to this end; for then all other Romanesque must be excluded from heaven. ... By "poor in spirit," our Savior means a true, humble, lowly spirit, this being the usual expression, by which the Scriptures describe the humble man. ... Such are blessed, for their humility makes them submissive, contented, obedient, and prepares them to enter into Christ's kingdom. And as they, who are thus holy, shall be also happy, they must be met for the kingdom of glory.' Whitty. — This is widely different from an object disposition and implies more than patience in external poverty. — We are all poor, in respect of God, destitute of holiness, wisdom, or strength; we desire without any thing to pay; condemned, helpless, polluted and vile. Few know this to be their character and condition. In this deep poverty they are of a haughty spirit, which precludes their obtaining the 'unsearchable riches of Christ.' He, then, is happy, who knows how poor he is, who feels his indigence and unworthiness; who is humbled and

theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 Blessed ^{are} they that mourn; for they shall be comforted.

1. 1a. 6:1-9. 13:1-5. 39:7-11. 32:3-7. 10:1-3. 69:29, 30. 116:3-7. 156:1-3. 18:1-3. 20:1-3. 39:1-3. 10:23-11:19. 5:11-12. 57:18. 61:2. 66:10. Jer. 31:9-19. 16:17. Ez. 7:6. 9:1. Zech. 12:10-11. 13:1. Luke 6:21-25. 7:35, 36. 16:25. John 16:22-22. 2 Cor. 1:1-7. 7:9, 10. Jam. 1:12. Rev. 7:14-17. 21:1.

which the blessings and curses of the law were read, Deut. 27:12, &c. There the curses are expressed, and the blessings implied; here the reverse; in both, *life and death are set before us*; but the law, as a ministration of death, deters from sin; the Gospel, as a dispensation of life, allures to Christ, in whom alone all good is to be had. They who saw his gracious cures, (ch. 4: 23, 24.) and now heard the gracious words proceeding out of his mouth, would say, that He was all of a piece, made up of love and sweetness.

The scope of revelation is to teach us what God expects from us, and what we may expect from Him, and no where is this more fully, briefly, and exactly set forth than here; and this is that Gospel which we are to believe: for, what is faith but a conformity to these characters, and a dependence upon these promises? The way to happiness is here opened and made a *highway*; (Isa. 35: 8.) and this coming from Jesus Christ, it is intimated that from Him, and by Him, we are to receive both the seed and the fruit, both the grace required, and the glory promised. Nothing passes between God and fallen man but through Him. Some of the wisest heathens had notions of blessedness different from the rest of mankind, and looking toward this of our Savior. Seneca, undertaking to describe a blessed man, makes it out that it is only an honest, good man that is to be so called—one, 'in whose estimation nothing is good or evil, but a good or evil heart'—whom no occurrences elate or deject—whose true pleasure consists in a contempt of pleasure—'to whom the only good is virtue, and the only evil, vice.' Our Savior gives us eight characters of blessed people, representing the principal graces. On each of them a present blessing is pronounced, and to each a future blessedness promised, variously expressed, to suit the nature of the grace or duty recommended.

1. *The poor in spirit.* There is a poor-spiritedness, which is so far from making men blessed, that it is a sin and snare—cowardice, and a willing submission to the lusts of men. But this poverty of spirit is a gracious disposition of soul, so emptied of self, as to be filled with Christ. To be *poor in spirit*, is, to be contentedly poor, if God wills, bringing our mind to our condition, when it is a low condition. Many are poor in the world who are high in spirit, poor and proud, murmuring and complaining; but we must *know how to be abased*, Phil. 4: 12. Acknowledging the wisdom of God in appointing us to poverty, we must be thankful for what we have, and make the best of it. It is to sit loose to all worldly wealth, and cheerfully to bear losses, which may befall us in the most proper state. It is not, in pride or pretence, to make ourselves poor, by throwing away God's gifts, like those in the church of Rome, who vow poverty, and yet engross the wealth of nations; but, if we be *poor in the world*, we must be *poor in spirit*, that is, condescend to the poor, sympathize with them, expect and prepare for poverty, and bid it welcome, especially when it comes on us for keeping a good conscience, Heb. 10: 34. Job was *poor in spirit*, when he blessed God in *taking away*, as well as giving. To be *poor in spirit*, is to think meanly of ourselves. The poor are often taken in the Old Testament for the self-denying and humble, as opposed to the proud, and those at ease. It is to be as little children in our opinion of ourselves, ch. 13: 4. 19: 14. Laodicea was wretchedly poor in *spirituals*, and yet rich in *spirit*, Rev. 3: 17. On the other hand, Paul excelled most in gifts and graces, and was yet *less than the least of all saints*, and *nothing in his own account*. It is, to value others and undervalue ourselves. It is,

to be willing to make ourselves cheap, *to become all things to all men*. It is, to acknowledge that God is great and we mean; that He is holy and we sinful; that He is all, and we worse than nothing. It is, to humble ourselves under his mighty hand. It is, to come off from all confidence in our own righteousness, that we may depend on the merit of Christ for justification, and on his Spirit for sanctification. The poor publican had this poverty of spirit. We must call ourselves poor, because always in want of God's grace, and always begging at God's door.

This poverty in spirit is put first among the Christian graces. The philosophers did not rest on humility among their moral virtues, but Christ puts it first. Self-denial is the first lesson in his school, and poverty of spirit entitled to the first beatitude. The foundation of all other graces is laid in humility. Those who would build high, must begin low; and it is an excellent preparative for the entrance of Gospel grace into the heart; it fits the soil to receive the seed. Those who are *weary and heavy laden* are the *poor in spirit*, and they shall find rest with Christ.—They are *blessed even in this world*. God looks graciously upon them. They are his little ones, and have their angels; to them He gives more grace; they are easy to themselves and all about them, and nothing comes amiss to them; while high spirits are always uneasy.

Theirs is the kingdom of heaven. They only are fit to be members of Christ's church, which is called the *congregation of the poor*; (Ps. 74 19.) the kingdom of glory is prepared for them. Those who thus humble themselves shall be thus exalted. The high spirits go away with the glory of the *kingdoms of the earth*; but humble, mild, yielding souls obtain the glory of the *kingdom of heaven*. We are ready to think that the rich, and those who do good with their riches are happy; for thus they can lay up in store a good security for the time to come. But what shall the poor do, who have not wherewithal to do good? Why, the same happiness is promised to the contentedly poor, as to the usefully rich. If I can but *want cheerfully* for his sake, even that will be recompensed. And do we not serve a good Master then?

2. *Blessed are they that mourn.* This is another strange blessing, and fitly follows the former. The poor are accustomed to mourn; the gracious poor mourn graciously. We are apt to think, Blessed are the merry; but Christ, Himself a great mourner, says, Blessed are the *mourners*. There is a sinful mourning, the *sorrow of the world*; despairing melancholy upon a spiritual account, and disconsolate grief upon a temporal account. There is a natural mourning, which may prove a friend to blessedness, by the grace of God sanctifying the affliction.—But there is a gracious mourning, which qualifies for blessedness, an habitual seriousness, the

ashamed before God, as a lost sinner, that cannot purchase salvation, but must be a suppliant, and a debtor to grace for it. If this man be rich, learned, or noble, his heart will not depend on such distinctions, but be lowly and contrite. If poor, he will be patient, contented, grateful. He is prepared to exercise repentance and faith, to welcome salvation, and give up every thing, that he may enter 'the kingdom of heaven.' He is also prepared for the obedience and privileges of it; and all its blessings are his certainly and eternally. For such persons they are provided; none but they value or enjoy them. They are therefore *happy*, in the earnest and in the hope of heaven. Their lowly frame of mind tends to tranquillity, confidence in God, communion with Him, and the participation of the consolations of his Holy Spirit. Scott. *Poor in spirit.* 'Though I cannot think with Mr. Mede that this refers chiefly to a disposition to part with their possessions for charitable purposes; or, as some think, with Gentius and Baxter to a disposition to bear poverty with resolution, submission, and cheerfulness; yet I doubt not but the latter of these is cor. reheaded in that humility which is here expressed by poverty of spirit; which is a temper that indeed is absolutely necessary in order to our being cordially reconciled to the Gospel method of salvation.'

Verba 4.

DODD.

The next blessing belongs not to those who have mourned, but who are mourning. The world deems the gay, the dissipated, the jovial, and the prosperous, happy; and men turn from religion because of the mourning connected with it. The Jews expected only festivity and glad rejoicing under the Messiah; but He pronounced the mourners happy.—All kinds of mourning cannot be intended, for 'the sorrow of the world worketh death'; many grow hard under affliction, spend their lives in murmurs, fits of vexation, or become their own executioners. The mourning, which springs from 'poverty of spirit,' brokenness of

heart, and tenderness of conscience, must be here meant. A readiness to remember, confess, and be sorry for sin, with the 'sorrow that worketh repentance,' watchfulness over the temper and conduct, and frequent recollection of past offences, producing remorse and self-abhorrence; a continual dependence on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus for acceptance, and an application for his sanctifying Spirit to cleanse the evil that is mourned over, seem to be primarily intended. But afflictions, and frequent mourning under the Lord's rod, as pledges of his love, and means of humiliation and sanctification, are included; which, when improved, tend to blessedness. A disposition to sympathize with our fellow Christians and sinners in their perplexities, must also be meant.—Such mourners are happy. Their tears and sighs are mingled with pleasure, and prepare them for being comforted with a sense of pardon, with peace, hope, and joy in the Holy Ghost: thus they anticipate the eternal consolation, when 'God shall wipe all tears from their eyes.' (Marg. Ref.—Note, Ps. 126: 5, 6. P. O.—Notes, Is. 25: 6. Rev. 7: 13-17. v. 17.) Scott. *They that mourn.* 'Those who, feeling their spiritual poverty, mourn after God, lamenting the iniquity that separated them from the Fountain of blessedness. Every one flies from sorrow, and seeks after joy; and yet true joy must necessarily be the fruit of sorrow. The whole need not (do not feel the need of) the physician; but they that are sick do: i. e. they who are sensible of their disease. Only such as are deeply convinced of the sinfulness of sin, feel the plague of their own heart, and turn with disgust from all worldly consolations, because insufficient to render them happy, have God's promise of solid comfort. They wait, as comforted by Christ; (intimating, in the original word, that) He will call them to Himself, and speak the words of pardon, peace, and life eternal to their hearts.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

11:22-23. Matt. 5:22-23. Ps. 22:27-28. 11:24-25. Matt. 5:24-25. Ps. 22:29-30. 11:26-27. Matt. 5:26-27. Ps. 22:31-32. 11:28-29. Matt. 5:28-29. Ps. 22:33-34. 11:30-31. Matt. 5:30-31. Ps. 22:35-36. 11:32-33. Matt. 5:32-33. Ps. 22:37-38. 11:34-35. Matt. 5:34-35. Ps. 22:39-40. 11:36-37. Matt. 5:36-37. Ps. 22:41-42. 11:38-39. Matt. 5:38-39. Ps. 22:43-44. 11:40-41. Matt. 5:40-41. Ps. 22:45-46. 11:42-43. Matt. 5:42-43. Ps. 22:47-48. 11:44-45. Matt. 5:44-45. Ps. 22:49-50. 11:46-47. Matt. 5:46-47. Ps. 22:51-52. 11:48-49. Matt. 5:48-49. Ps. 22:53-54. 11:50-51. Matt. 5:50-51. Ps. 22:55-56. 11:52-53. Matt. 5:52-53. Ps. 22:57-58. 11:54-55. Matt. 5:54-55. Ps. 22:59-60. 11:56-57. Matt. 5:56-57. Ps. 22:61-62. 11:58-59. Matt. 5:58-59. Ps. 22:63-64. 11:60-61. Matt. 5:60-61. Ps. 22:65-66. 11:62-63. Matt. 5:62-63. Ps. 22:67-68. 11:64-65. Matt. 5:64-65. Ps. 22:69-70. 11:66-67. Matt. 5:66-67. Ps. 22:71-72. 11:68-69. Matt. 5:68-69. Ps. 22:73-74. 11:70-71. Matt. 5:70-71. Ps. 22:75-76. 11:72-73. Matt. 5:72-73. 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7 Blessed *are* the merciful; *for* they shall obtain mercy.

8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart; *for* they shall see God.

9 Blessed *are* the peace-makers; *for*

The happiness of heaven will certainly fill the soul; their righteousness shall be complete, the favor of God, and his image, both in perfection.

5. The *merciful* are happy. This is, like the others, a paradox; for the merciful are not taken to be the wisest or richest, yet Christ pronounces them blessed. They are piously inclined to pity and succor the miserable. A man may be merciful who has not wherewithal to be liberal, and then God accepts the willing mind. We must not only bear our own afflictions patiently, but partake of the afflictions of our brethren; (Job 6: 14. Col 3: 12.) *bowels of mercy* must be put on, and put forth; i. e. contributing assistance to the wretched. We must compassionate the souls of men, instruct the ignorant, warn the careless, and *pluck them as brands from the burning*. We must pity and comfort the sorrowful; Job 16: 5. We must not be severe on those whom we have advantage against. We must supply such as are in want; which if we refuse to do, we *shut up the bowels of our compassion*; James 2: 15, 16.

John 3: 17, 18. *Draw out thy soul, by dealing thy bread to the hungry*; Isa. 56: 7, 10. Nay, a *merciful man is merciful to his beast*.
Blessed is he that considers the poor; Ps. 41: 1. Herein men resemble God, whose goodness is his glory. In being merciful as *He is merciful*, we are, in our measure, *perfect as He is perfect*. To benefit others is an evidence of love to God, and a satisfaction to ourselves. Doing good is one of the purest delights in this world. Herein is included that saying of Christ, not found in the Gospels, *It is more blessed to give than to receive*; Acts 20: 35. *They shall obtain mercy*; with men, when they need it; *he that watereth shall be watered also himself*; (we know not how soon we may need kindness, and therefore should be kind); but especially mercy with God, *for with the merciful He will show Himself merciful*. Ps. 18: 25. The most merciful cannot pretend to merit, but must fly to mercy. They shall find with God *sparing mercy*, (ch. 6: 14.) *supplying mercy*, (Prov. 19: 17.) *sustaining mercy*, (Ps. 41: 2.) *mercy in that day*; (2 Tim. 1: 18.) nay, *they shall inherit the kingdom prepared for them*; (ch. 25: 34, 35.) whereas they shall have judgment without mercy, (nothing less than hell-fire,) who have showed no mercy.

6. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*. This is the most comprehensive of all the beatitudes; holiness and happiness fully described, and put together. Here is the most comprehensive character of the blessed; they are the pure in heart. Note, Those who are inwardly pure, show themselves to be under the power of *pure and undefiled religion*. True

Verse 7.

Connected with the preceding holy tempers, is that of *mercy*, an aversion to every thing harsh, cruel, oppressive, or injurious; a propensity to pity, alleviate, or remove the miseries of mankind; an unwillingness to increase our ease, or emolument, by rendering others uneasy, and a willingness to forego personal interest or gratification, for the comfort and happiness of others. There is a natural propensity of this kind, which should be distinguished from the gracious disposition. This is not expansive, constant, general; but is profuse to some, cruel to others, springs not from proper motives, is not directed to proper ends, nor governed by the divine law: it is often joined with impiety, injustice, and tyranny in other parts of a man's conduct: it is a sort of *instinct*, stronger in some than others, and unconnected with true religion. But the mercy here mentioned, has respect to the authority, law and glory of God, and to the grace of the Gospel. It is learned from the cross of Christ, and the mercy of God to sinners through Him. Uniform in its exercise, it seeks the good of bodies and souls, and extends to the vile, the injurious, the obscure, and to every one who falls under its sphere of action. It is connected with humility, faith, self-denial, equity, piety and conscientiousness. It induces a man, from love to God and hope in his mercy, to compassionate all as he has opportunity, not injuring any, but wishing and praying for the happiness of those whom he cannot help.—Such are happy, for they shall *obtain mercy*. All are sinners, and need mercy; these are penitent and believing sinners, interested in the mercy and grace of the covenant. The Lord will be kind to them, as they have been to their brethren. They shall be pardoned, supported, and comforted through life and in death, and then shall enjoy the *mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*; while they have *judgment without mercy* who have showed no mercy.—In this world, the exercise of mercy is a most delightful employment, as they know who have, decidedly, made the experiment. (Marg. Ref.) *Obtain mercy*. In the original, *pity*. They *pity*, and they shall be *pitied*. They *forgive and relieve*, and they shall be *forgotten and relieved*. Scott. Far from training you up to delight in scenes of desolation and slaughter. I declare, *Happy are the merciful and compassionate*, that feel the sorrows of others as their own, and hasten to relieve them; for they shall obtain that *mercy* from God, which the best and happiest of mankind need, and on which they continually and entirely depend.

Verse 8.

Men are apt to think those happy, who can gratify every ambition, curiosity, or sensual inclination. Probably the carnal Jews expected abundant indulgences in the reign of their Messiah. But Jesus pronounces those happy, who are *pure in heart*, in whom sensual and sinful desires are so subdued, that they seek not to gratify them; who are replenished with holy inclinations and affections, and in all their words, influenced by the fear of love of God. The believer's under-

standing is in part purified from darkness, his judgment from error, his will from rebellion, his affections from avarice, enmity, pride and sensuality, his memory and imagination from depraved recollections and conceits, and his aims to glorify God, and to enjoy his favor, and to do good. He is yet imperfect, but the remainder of sin is a burden, grief, and detestation. This is a peculiar effect and evidence of purity of heart. So far as one is purified through faith, he is prepared for manifestations of God to his soul, and favored with them; and when perfected in holiness, he shall openly behold the manifested glory of God, and admire, adore, and be unspeakably happy in the view, to all eternity. (Marg. Ref.) Scott. *Pure in heart*. In opposition to the Pharisees, who affected outward purity, while their hearts were full of corruption and defilement. A principal part of the Jewish religion consisted in outward washings and cleansings: on this ground they expected to see God, or enjoy eternal glory; but Christ here shows, that a purification of the heart from all vile affections and desires, is essentially requisite, in order to enter the kingdom of God.

Dr. A. CLARKE. The laws in regard to the cleanness of the body, and even of the garments, if neglected by any person, exclude him from the temple. He was incapacitated for being so much as a spectator of the solemn service at the altar. The Jews considered the empyreal heaven as the archetype of the temple at Jerusalem. In the latter, they enjoyed the symbols of God's presence, who spoke to them by his ministers; whereas, in the former, God speaks to the blessed inhabitants face to face. Our Lord, preserving the analogy between the two dispensations, intimates that *cleanness* will be as necessary for admission into the celestial temple, as into the terrestrial. But as the privilege is inconceivably higher, the qualification is more important. The cleanness is not ceremonial, but moral; not of the outward man, but of the inward. The same idea is suggested, Ps. 24: 3, 4.

Here is the most comprehensive comfort of the blessed, *they shall see God*. Note, It is the perfection of happiness to see God. Seeing Him by faith, as we may now, is a *heaven upon earth*; and seeing Him as we shall in a future state, will be the heaven of heaven. To see Him as *He is*, face to face, not through a glass darkly; to see Him as ours, and enjoy Him; to see Him and be like Him, and *satisfied with that likeness*, (Ps. 17: 15.) and never lose the sight of Him; this is heaven's happiness. It is promised only to the *pure in heart*; and none but the *pure* are capable of seeing God. What pleasure could an unsanctified soul take in the vision of a holy God? As He cannot endure to look upon their iniquity, so neither can they on his purity. No unclean thing can enter heaven; but all the pure in heart have desires wrought in them, which nothing but the sight of God will satisfy; and divine grace will not leave those desires unsatisfied.

7. The *peace-makers* are happy, v. 9. The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable. The blessed ones are *pure* toward God, and *peaceable* toward men; for, in reference to both, conscience must be kept void of offence. *Peace-makers* have a peaceable disposition. As, to make a lie, is to be addicted to lying, so to make peace shows a hearty attachment to it. I am for peace, Ps. 120: 7. It is to love and delight in peace, as in our element; it is to have a *peaceable conversation*, industriously to preserve the peace, to hearken to proposals of it ourselves, and to make them to others; to do all we can, to be *repairers of the breaches*.

Verse 9.

The Jews expected a Messiah, who would lead them to war, revenge, victory and dominion. Conquerors have always been admired and celebrated, as honorable and happy, though their ambition has made the earth a scene of misery. But our great Peace-maker pronounces the peace-makers happy; peaceable in their own conduct, promoting peace in families and communities, and trying to prevent, or terminate, wars, law-suits, feuds, domestic broils and religious controversies; such as labor to promote the reconciliation of sinners to God, and to induce them to live in harmony with one another. These are happy, though they receive few thanks from the disputers, either of the world, or of the church. They bear the image of God, and copy his example. They are reconciled, regenerated and adopted. He owns them as his children, and before the whole world will avow their relation to Him. Many will call them the children of God here, and all will know them to be so at last. They shall have comfort in their loving endeavors to

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his truth, and those who profess it; his law, and those who obey it; his ordinances, and those who attend them. They accuse Christians of bigotry, spiritual pride, fanaticism, hypocrisy, sedition, misanthropy; they invent calumnies against them, and fasten opprobrious names on them. If we adhere to the truths, precepts and ordinances of Christ, or refuse to do what conscience forbids, we must prepare for derision, reproach, slander, or more severe treatment from ungodly men. But the kingdom of grace and glory belongs to such as thus meet and endure persecution. They suffer for the sake of Christ and righteousness, and all manner of evil is spoken of them falsely.' Instead, then, of complaining, they should count themselves happy, that the enemies of God see and hate his image in them. (*Note, 1 Pet. 4: 12-16*.) They should exult for joy at the glorious recompense prepared for them; remembering, that thus they are conformed to the most honored servants of God, in every age and place. No eminence in those dispositions, which form the Christian character, and the fruits of the Spirit, will exempt them from the persecutions of Christ. He will preserve any man from this hatred of the world. Nay, they will expose him to it, as long as men in general remain the servants of Satan. Even Christ, the only perfect character, was exposed to the contempt and enmity of the world. But these holy tempers will teach a man to bear such trials, overcome evil with good, and pass quietly on, gathering good from them all. *Falsely.* (11) *Orig. lying. Marg.* Being liars and false accusers, like Satan, 'the accuser of the brethren.' *Be exceeding glad.* (12) *Luke 1: 47. 10: 21. John 5: 35. 8: 56 1 Pet. 4: 13.* 'It signifies exceeding gladness, joy, such as we express by leaping and dancing.' *Leigh. Scott* 'Our Lord evidently meant, at the very outset of his public instructions, to mark at once, in the strongest and most decided terms, the peculiar spirit and character of his religion; and to show his disciples how completely opposite they were to all those splendid and popular qualities, which were the great objects of attraction and admiration to the ungodly, and such as were so alien to the Christian world.' There and, says Dr. Paley, 'two opposite characters under which mankind may generally be classed. The one possesses vigor, firmness, resolution, is daring and active, quick in its sensibilities, zealous of its fame, eager in its attachments, inflexible in its purposes, valiant

in heaven: "for so persecuted they the ^b prophets which were before you.

[Practical Observations.]

13 ¶ Ye are ^c the salt of the earth: but ^d if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

6:1,2,4,5,18. 10:41,42. 16:27. Gen. 15:1. Ruth 2:12. Ps. 119:1. 53:11. Prov. 11:1. 1. 3:10. Luke 6:23,33. 1 Cor. 3:8. Col. 3:24. Heb. 11:9,28. 21:31-33. 23:31-37. 1 Kings 18:1. 13. 19:2,10,14. 21:20. 22:8,26,27. 2 Kings 19,46,6. 2 Chr. 16:10. 21:20. 26:16. Neh. 9:26. Jer. 2:30. 26:8,9. 21-23. Luke 6:23. 11:17-51. 13:34. Acts 7:51,52. 1 Thes. 2:15. 1 Pet. 2:13. Col. 4:6. Mark 9:49-50. Luke 14:34,35. Heb. 6:1-2. 2 Pet. 2:20,21.

salt of the whole earth, for they must go into all the world to preach the Gospel. It was a discouragement that they were so few and weak. What could they do in the whole earth? Nothing, if they were to work with the sword; but being to work silently as salt, one handful would diffuse its savor far and wide, and work insensibly and irresistibly as leaven, ch. 13:33. The Gospel is as salt, penetrating, quick, and powerful; (Heb. 4:12.) it reaches the heart, Acts 2:37. It is cleansing, relishing, and preserves from putrefaction. We read of the savor of the knowledge of Christ; (2 Cor. 2:14.) for all other knowledge is insipid without that. An everlasting covenant is called a covenant of salt; (Num. 18:19.) and the Gospel is an everlasting Gospel. Salt was required in all the sacrifices, (Lev. 2:13.) in Ezekiel's mystical temple, Ezek. 43, 24. Now Christ's disciples, as learners and teachers, were as salt. Note, Christians and especially ministers, are the salt of the earth.

If they are such as they should be, they are as good salt, white, and broken into many grains, but very useful. Pliny says, 'without salt human life cannot be preserved.' See, They must be seasoned with the salt of grace; thoughts, affections, words, and actions, all seasoned with grace, Col. 4:6. Have salt in yourselves, else you cannot diffuse it among others,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V 1-12. The end of preaching is, that men may be made wise unto salvation. When multitudes attend, it is seasonable for a minister to preach without much regard to time, or place. A church or chapel is convenient, and the Lord's day a favorable time; but a mountain or field will be a holy place, and any day holy, if the Lord grant his blessing. Preaching was shewn to be an honorable employment by our Lord's example; and happy are they, who begin it at his call, act on his principles, and preach his doctrines. But it behooves us to speak with seriousness, a sense of the weight and difficulty of the work, and dependence on the Lord for assistance and a blessing. The true Gospel is far more practical than any other doctrine; and numbers so mistake in this matter, that they would condemn Christ himself as legal, were they to hear his sermons, without knowing who He was.—True religion is so connected with happiness, that, without it, none can ever be happy. How different the character and condition of the blessed, as stated by our Lord, from what the carnal mind would have supposed! None without faith and experience will believe, that 'the poor in spirit,' the mourners, the meek, those who long for righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, and the persecuted, are the only happy persons. Let us consider this as a description of a healthy state of mind,

and a safe condition in life; and the opposite dispositions, as distempers, spoiling enjoyment, and not counterbalanced by the friendship of the world. Let us not suppose, that some have one, some another, of these holy dispositions; but remember, that they all combine to form the image of Christ, and the temper of a Christian; and when one is wanting, the rest are counterfeit. Let us examine whether we possess these graces; let us seek them, and the increase of them, from God; let us take these promises as encouragements to aspire after higher attainments, assured of proportionate happiness, till we be admitted to his presence, 'where is fulness of joy.' Let us not envy the ambitious, the gay, the injurious, the vindictive, the avaricious, the sensual, or the unmerciful; the scourges of the earth, or any of the sons of madness. Let us not covet their prosperity in this world, nor be disquieted with reviling and persecution, while we do good to all, and evil to none. Happy will it be to suffer for Christ's sake, in the cause for which He shed his blood; for 'great will be our reward.' Let us give no just cause for revilings, and avoid all bitterness under the cross. Let us consider how prophets and apostles endured trials; and specially 'look unto Jesus,' lest we be weary, and yield to impatience and recrimination under our lighter trials.

SCOTT.

"In his resentments. The other meek, yielding, complying, forgiving; 'I am prompt to act, but willing to suffer; silent and gentle under rudeness and insult; suing for reconciliation, where others would demand satisfaction; giving way to the pushes of impudence; conceding and indulgent to the prejudices, the wrong-headedness, the intractability of those with whom he has to deal.' The former of these characters is, and ever has been, the favorite of the world; and though too stern to conciliate affection, has an appearance of dignity which too commonly commands respect. The latter is, as our Lord describes it, humble meek, lowly, devout, merciful, pure, peaceable, patient, and unresisting. The world calls it mean-spirited, tame, and abject; yet, with the divine Author of our religion, this is the favorite character; this is the constant topic of his commendation; this is the subject that runs through all the beatitudes." Bp. Porteus.

Verse 13.

Salt is the grand preservative from material corruption, and gives savor to our viands; if it lose its saltness, it is worthless, unfit even for the dunghill, as it conduces to sterility rather than fruitfulness. The disciples and ministers of Christ are scattered about in the world as salt, that their doctrine, conversation, examples, labors, and prayers may

stop the progress of sin, and be instrumental in seasoning many minds with grace. But if they be unsound in doctrine, unholily in life, or vain in conversation, they disgrace their profession, are a scandal to Christ, prejudice men against the truth, or seduce them into error, and so become the most worthless of mankind. Every approach to this unfits a Christian, or a minister, to be 'the salt of the earth,' and diminishes his usefulness. This was peculiarly applicable to the primitive Christians, sent to season the whole world with holy doctrine, lives and labors (Marg. Ref.) SCOTT. Lost his savor.] 'The original word has a peculiar strength here, and literally means "if it be infatuated," "grown foolish," alluding to the metaphor in which sense and spirit are expressed by salt, as we call a lifeless discourse insipid. (Comp. Job 6:6. and Col. 4:6.) DOODR. From the accounts of Maimonid and others, it appears, that not only on the borders of the Dead Sea, but also in other places where salt is found, the circumstance of its losing its saltness, by exposure to the sun and rain, is not at all uncommon.—That accurate traveller mentions breaking off a fragment of rock-salt, the inner surface of which had its usual taste, while the outside, though it had the sparks and particles of salt, had perfectly lost its savor.' H.

14 Ye are 'the light of the world.' A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

15 Neither 'do men light a candle, and put it under 'a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

16 Let 'your light so shine before men, 'that they may see your good works, 'and glorify 'in your Father which is in heaven.

[Practical Observations.]

17 ¶ Think not that I am come 'to destroy the law or the prophets:

• John 5:35. 12:36. Rom. 2:19, 20. 2 Cor. 6:14. Eph. 5:8-14. Phil. 2:15. 1 Thes. 5:5. Rev. 1:20. 21.
• Gen. 11:34-35. Rev. 21:14, &c.
• Mark 4:21, 22. Luke 8:16, 17. 11:33. A measure containing about a pint less than a peck.
• Ex. 25:37. Num. 8:2.
• Prov. 4:13. Is. 58:3. 60:1-3. Rom. 13:11-14. Eph. 5:8. Phil. 2:15, 16. 1 Thes. 2:12. 5:5-8. 1 Pet. 2:9. 1 John 1:5-7.
• 1-11. 5:16. 22:5. Acts 9:38. Eph. 2:10. 1 Tim. 2:10. 5:10, 25. 6:15. Tit. 2:7, 14. 3:1, 7-14. Heb. 10:24. 1 Pet. 2:12. 3:1, 16.
• 1-11. 6:13. John 15:3. 1 Cor. 14:35. 2 Cor. 9:13. Gal. 6:14. 2 Thes. 1:10-12. 1 Pet. 4:11, 14.
• 15:33. 49. 23:9. Luke 11:2.
• Luke 16:17. John 8:3. Acts 6:13. 13:15. 20:28. Rom. 3:31. 10:4. Gal. 3:17-24.

The disciples of Christ must not muffle themselves up in obscurity, under pretence of contemplation, modesty, or self-preservation: but, as they have received the gift, must minister the same; Luke 12: 3. They must be burning and shining lights; (John 5: 35.) and show, in all things, that they are indeed the followers of Christ; James 3: 13. They must instruct, direct, quicken, and comfort; Job 29: 11. Our light must shine by our doing such good works as men may see and approve; such as will cause those who are without, to think well of Christianity. Our good works must be seen for the edification of others, but not for our own ostentation. Our secret prayers lie between God and our souls, but that which is of itself open, we must study

his honor put on them. Truly the light is sweet; the light of the first day was so, when it shone out of darkness. So is the morning light of every day; so is the Gospel, and those who spread it, to all sensible people. The world sat in darkness; Christ raised up his disciples to shine in it; and that they may do so, from Him they borrow their light.

As lights of the world, they have many eyes upon them. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Zealous disciples of Christ become remarkable as beacons, for signs, (Isa. 8: 18.) wondered at, Zech. 3: 8. Some of their neighbors admire them, rejoice in them, and strive to imitate them; others hate, censure, and study to blast them. They should be circumspect, because of their observers; they are as spectacles to the world, and must avoid every thing that looks ill, they are so much looked at. Christ's disciples were obscure men, but the character He put on them dignified them, and as preachers, though reproached by some, they were respected by others, advanced to thrones and made judges; (Luke 22: 30.) for Christ will honor those who honor Him.

Christ having lighted these candles, they shall not be put under a bushel—not confined, as now, to Galilee, or the lost sheep of the house of Israel—but they shall be sent into all the world. The churches are the golden candlesticks in which they are placed, that their light may be diffused; and the Gospel carries with it so much of its own evidence, that it cannot but appear, except to the wilfully blind, to be from God. It will give light to all who will draw near, and come where it is. Those to whom it gives no light must thank themselves. They will not make a diligent inquiry into it. Again, they must shine as lights, by preaching, by communicating their knowledge to others. The talent must not be buried in a napkin, but traded with.

to make congruous to our profession; Phil. 4: 8. Those about us must not only hear of good words, but see our good works, to be convinced that religion is more than a bare profession.

Those who see your good works must be brought, not to glorify you, (which the Pharisees aimed at, and it spoiled all,) but your Father which is in heaven. Note, God's glory must be our aim in every thing; 1 Pet. 4: 11. In this centre the lines of all our actions must meet. We must not only try to glorify God ourselves, but do all we can to bring others to glorify Him also. 'Let them see your good works, that they may see the power of God's grace, and thank Him for it, who has given such power unto men;' and also, 'that they may see the power and excellency of the Christian religion, be provoked by a holy emulation to imitate your good works, and so glorify God. Note, The exemplary conversation of the saints may do much for the conversion of sinners. Examples teach. Those who are prejudiced may hereby be brought to love religion, for there is a winning virtue in a godly conversation.

V. 17-20. Christ's auditors and disciples had an eye in their religion to the Old Testament as their rule, and there Christ shows them that they are right; they had an eye to the Scribes and Pharisees as their example, and there He shows them that they were in the wrong.

1. The rule which Christ came to establish exactly agreed with the Old Testament, here called the law and the prophets. The prophets were commentators upon the law, and both made up that rule of faith, which Christ found upon the throne in the Jewish church, and here He keeps it on the throne.

'Let not the pious Jews, who have an affection for the law and the prophets, fear that I come to destroy them.' Let them not be prejudiced against Christ, from a jealousy that his kingdom would derogate from the honor of the Scriptures, which they had received as coming from God, and of which they had experienced the purity and power; no, let them be satisfied that Christ has no ill design upon the law and the prophets. 'Let not the profane Jews, who are disaffected to the Scriptures, hope that I am come to destroy them.' Let not carnal liber-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13-16. We ought carefully to consider the importance of Christian character, remembering, that we are 'the salt of the earth, and the light of the world.' Many eyes will be upon us; many will be affected by seeing our conduct. We should, then, try to resist impiety, diffuse the light of divine truth, and 'adorn the doctrine of God our Savior,' letting our 'light shine before men,' that our works, as living sermons, may convince sinners of the excellence of religion, and so conduce to the glory of God, and the benefit of man. The Christian, then, must not

conceal his sentiments; for God does not enlighten his people, that they may put the light under a bushel, but hold it forth for the benefit of others. Nor are they allowed to retire into cloisters, deserts, recesses, or to bury themselves in obscurity, but so to fill their stations in life, as to glorify God before men. We should then seek to shine, by professing and adorning the Gospel in our circle, that we may answer the end, for which God called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Scott.

Verses 14-16.

The same instruction, under another image. Christ is the true 'Light of the world;' but his disciples and ministers, shining by light derived from Him, are, in a subordinate sense, the 'light of the world,' also, and diffuse his truth and salvation where darkness and wickedness would otherwise reign. Their profession, character and doctrine, render them conspicuous as 'a city set on a hill, they cannot be hid.' Men will look at them, and observe their words and actions, to form a judgment of their religion. God intends they should be observed, that they may communicate their light. We do not light a candle to conceal it, but to lighten the world. It is, then, their duty, and should be their grand object, so to recommend the truth by pious, edifying conversation and behavior, that 'men may see their good works,' which flow from faith and love, and thus be led, to glorify their God and Father. (Notes, 1 Pet. 2: 11, 12.) The holy examples and abundant good works of Christians, often men's prejudices, win them to attend to the truth, and are instrumental to their conversion, by which they glorify God. This should be their aim in all their conduct; though they must not do any thing 'to be seen of men,' or for their own glory. (Note, 6: 1-4.)—Th—Disciples, who were to be apostles, may have been primarily meant, but every minister and Christian is concerned. (Marg. Ref.—Note, Phil. 2: 14-18.) Scott. More than a century before Mr. Jewett, in company with our lamented missionary, Flak, visited the country around Capernaum, (see Note on v. 1.) it was contemplated with emotions very similar to theirs, by Maundrell, from the top of Mount Tabor. 'A few points towards the north,' says he, 'appears that which they call the mount of the beatitudes; a small rising, from which our blessed Savior delivered his sermon in the v. vi. vii. chapters of St. Matthew. Not far from this little hill, is the city Saphet, supposed to be the ancient Bethulia. It stands upon a very eminent and commanding mountain, [glittering with its noble castle, Jewett,

'and is seen far and near. [—seeming to command all the country round to a great distance. J.] May we not suppose that Christ alludes to 'this city, (v. 14,) a conjecture which seems the more probable, because our Lord illustrates his discourses, in several places, by comparisons taken from objects then present before the eyes of his auditors?' Ep.

Candle. It is remarked by Dr. Campbell, that 'candles were not used at that time in Judea for lighting their houses; and that, therefore, the meaning of the words here employed is 'lamp' and 'lamp-stand.' Dr. Doddridge, in his translation and paraphrase, and the editor of Calmet, exhibit the passage similarly. The alteration, however, is of little importance, compared with the spirit of fervent piety in the close of Dr. Doddridge's 'Improvement' of this passage: 'Let us awaken and stir up our souls to cultivate the amiable virtues here commended to our pursuit; this humility and meekness, the penitent sense of sin, this ardent desire after righteousness, this compassion and purity, this peacefulness and fortitude, in a word, this universal goodness, which becomes those who sustain the character of the salt of the earth, and the light of the world. Is there not reason to lament, that we answer the character no more? Is there not reason to cry out, with a good man in former times, "Blessed Jesus! either these are not thy words, or I am not Christians!" Oh, season our hearts more effectually with thy grace! Pour forth that divine oil on our lamps! Then shall the flame brighten; then shall the ancient honors of thy religion be revived, and multitudes be awakened and animated by the lustre of it, to glorify our Father in heaven!' En.

Verses 17, 18.

Various opinions existed about the changes which would be made by the Messiah. Many, who supposed Jesus to be the Messiah, and heard parts of his doctrine, supposed that He meant to set aside the ancient religion, and establish a new one: which idea tended to mislead the Jews and prejudice others. But He told them that He had not 'to come to destroy

I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

18 For verily I say unto you, 'Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called 'the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

o 2:15. Ps. 40:7-8. Is. 42:21. Rom. 8:1. Gal. 4:4. Col. 2:16, 17. Heb. 10:12.

26 6:24, 16. 9:10. 10:15, 23, 42. 11:1. 13:17. 16:24. 17:20. 18:3, 13. 19:23, 18. 21:21, 31. 22:36. 24:23, 31. 27. 29:14, 40, 43. 30:15, 24. Mark 9:28. 6:11. 8:12. 9:30. 10:15, 23. 11:23. 12:13. 13:41. 11:9, 13, 25, 30. Luke 12:48. 11:35. 12:51. 13:35. 13:3. 17:28. 21:32. 23:43. John 1:51. 3:5, 11. 5:19, 21, 25. 6:25, 32, 47, 53. 8:34, 51, 58. 10:17. 12:24. 13:16, 20, 21. 14:12. 16:28. 17:23. 18:1. 21:31. 21:35. Ps. 102:25. Is. 51:6. Luke 16:17. 21:33. Heb. 11:1, 12. 2 Pet. 3:10-13. Rev. 20:11.

17 15:13, 39, 152. Is. 40:6. 1 Pet. 1:25.

Dent 27:26. Ps. 119:6, 128. Gal. 3:12.

18 1. Jam. 2:10, 11.

23:23. Dent 17:22. Luke 11:42.

153-6. 23:17-22. Mal. 2:9.

Rom. 8:9. 6:13, 15. 1 Tim. 6:3, 4.

11, 11, 15, 20.

11, 1. 1 Sam. 2:30.

29:20. Acta 1:1.

6:1, 5:11-21. Phil. 3:17, 13. 9:3.

1 Thes. 2:10. 4:1-7. 1 Tim. 4:1.

4. 6:11. 7:29-10. 3:3.

19. 3. 20:26. Dan. 12:3. Luke 1:15.

15. 4:48. 22:24-26. 1 Pet. 5:4.

times imagine that the Messiah will discharge them from the obligations of the divine precepts, secure to them the divine promises, make them happy, and yet give them leave to live as they list. Christ commands nothing new, which was forbidden either by the law of nature, or the moral law, nor forbids any thing which those laws enjoined. He here takes care to rectify the mistake; *I am not come to destroy.* The Savior of souls is the destroyer of nothing but *the works of the devil.* No, He came to fulfil the excellent dictates of Moses and the prophets. *He was made under the law,* Gal. 4: 4. He yielded obedience to the law, honored his parents, sanctified the Sabbath, prayed, gave alms, and did that which no other one ever did, obeyed the law perfectly, in every respect. He came to make good the promises and predictions of the Scriptures; which did all bear witness to Him. The covenant of grace, and Christ the Mediator of it, are the same now as then. As bishop Tillotson says, He did not make void, but made good the ceremonial law, and manifested Himself to be the substance of all those shadows. He came to fill up the defects of it. If we consider the law as a vessel, that had water in it before, He did not come to pour out the water, but to fill it to the brim; or as if a picture, that is first rough-drawn, and displays some outlines only of the piece intended, which are afterwards filled up; so Christ made an improvement of the law and the prophets. He also came to carry on the same plan. The Christian institutes are so far from thwarting the main design of the Jewish religion, that they promote it in the highest degree. The Gospel is the *time of reformation,* (Heb. 9: 10.) not the repeal of the law, but the amendment of it, and consequently its establishment.

'Verily I say unto you, I, the Amen, the faithful Witness, solemnly declare, that till heaven and earth pass, when time shall be no more, and the unchangeable state of recompenses shall supersede all laws, one of the least or most minute parts shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.' For what is God doing, both in providence and grace, but fulfilling the Scripture? The Word of the Lord endures for-

ever, both that of the Law and that of the Gospel. Observe, The care of God concerning his law, extends to the iota and the tittle; for whatever belongs to God, be it ever so little, shall be preserved. The laws of men are so imperfect that they allow the maxim, that 'the extreme points of law are not law.' But God will maintain every iota and tittle of his law.

Whosoever therefore shall break one of the least commandments of the law of Moses, much more any of the greater, as the Pharisees did who neglected the weightier matters, and made void the commandment of the Lord by their traditions, (ch. 15: 3.) *he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.* Though the Pharisees be cried up as teachers, they shall not be employed to teach in Christ's kingdom; but *whosoever shall do and teach them,* as Christ's disciples would, and thus prove themselves better friends to the Old Testament than the Pharisees were; they, though despised by men, shall be called *great in the kingdom of heaven.* Among the commands of God, there are some less than others; none absolutely little, but comparatively so. The Jews reckon the least of the commandments to be that of the bird's nest; (Deut. 22: 6, 7.) yet even that had an intention very considerable. It is dangerous, in doctrine or practice, to dissuall the least of God's commands, or to break them, that is, to *contract the extent, or weaken the obligation of them.* Whoever does so, will find it at his peril. To vacate any of the ten commandments, is making void the law, Ps. 119: 126. The farther such corruptions spread, the worse they are. It is impudence enough to break a command, but greater, to teach men so. This plainly refers to those who at this time sat in Moses' seat, and by their comments corrupted and perverted the text. Opinions that tend to the destruction of serious religion, are bad when held, but worse, when propagated as the Word of God. He that does so shall be called *least in the kingdom of heaven,* the kingdom of glory; or, perhaps in the kingdom of Gospel grace. He is so far from deserving the dignity of a teacher in it, that he shall not be accounted a member of it. The prophet that teaches these lies, shall be the

stroy the law or the prophets?' nor to teach any thing inconsistent with the true meaning of the Scriptures. His design was 'not to destroy but to fulfil.' It was plain from Moses and the prophets, that the ritual law 'a shadow of good things to come;' and Christ came to fulfil the intent of it, and hold forth the blessings typified by it, in a more intelligible manner. The moral law He came to fulfil by obeying it, as the Surety of the people; to establish its honor and authority, and make effectual provision for its being loved and obeyed by men. (Note, Rom. 2: 29-31, v. 31.) So that, to the end of the world, not a word, letter, point, or comma of the law should lose its authority, or fail to answer the end for which it was given; and the moral law would always continue the standard of sin and holiness, and the rule of duty; for Jesus came to *accomplish* the design of the first dispensation, and not to *subvert* it.—Christ came not to bring a new way of righteousness and salvation, but to fulfil that, which was shadowed by the figures of the law; by delivering men, through grace, from the curse of the law;—to teach the true use of obedience, which the law appointed, and to *grace* in our hearts the force of obedience. *Beze,*—The phrase 'till all be fulfilled' imports the performance of what was typified by the law, and foretold by the prophets, 24: 34. Mark 13: 35. Luke 21: 22. *Whitby.* The fulfilment, then, of the types and prophecies concerning the Messiah and his kingdom, as well as the establishment of the moral law in its full dignity, must be here intended. In Luke 22: 16, a more emphatical word is used in a similar connection, which confirms this interpretation. *Scott.* "I am not come to make the law of no effect—to dissolve the connection of its several parts, or the obligation of men to regulate their lives by its moral precepts—not to dissolve the connecting reference it has to the good things promised; but to complete and perfect its connection and reference, and accomplish every thing shadowed forth in the Mosaic ritual." He therefore added to it that which was necessary to make it perfect, his own sacrifice, without which it could neither satisfy God, nor sanctify men. Thus He completed it *in Himself,* by submitting to its types and exact obedience, and verifying them by his death on the cross; and as he completes this law and the sayings of the prophets, in his *members,* when He gives them grace to love the Lord supremely, and their neighbor as themselves; for this is all the law and the prophets. [Ch. 22: 36-40.]—Our Lord intimated, therefore, that the law and the prophets were still to be taught or inculcated by Him and his disciples; and these He and they have done in the most pointed manner. See the gospels and epistles: see especially this sermon on the mount, the epistle of James, and that to the Hebrews. This gives a clear sense to the apostle's words, Col. 1: 25. *Whereof* I am made a minister—to fulfil the word of God: i. e. to teach the doctrine of God. In the very commencement, also, of his ministry, Jesus Christ teaches the instability of all visible things. The heaven which you see, and which is so glorious, and the earth which you inhabit and see, shall, *without any notice,* for the things which are seen are for a time;

'but the things which are not seen are ever-during; 2 Cor. 4: 8. And 'the word of the Lord endureth forever.' [1 Pet. 1: 25.]

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 19.

The scribes and Pharisees made frivolous distinctions between great and small commandments, as papists do between mortal and venial sins; yet all the law is enacted by divine authority; no part of it, then can in this sense be of small obligation, though some parts may respect matters more important than others. But if a man, professing to be a disciple of Jesus, by misconstruction of his doctrine, encourage himself in disobedience to the law, though in a matter of the least importance; and by false doctrine, or assumed authority, teach others so; whatever his station or reputation may be, he shall be called by Christ 'the least in the kingdom of heaven;' either not a true disciple, or one of the most inconsistent and mean of the whole. But he, whose practice and doctrine tend to induce men to keep the commandments of God, shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven; however low in human esteem, the King will approve and exalt him.—This shows, that views of truth which verge in the least towards antinomianism, are utterly inconsistent with the true doctrine of Christ. These are as antichristian as papal indulgences, lead to the same place by another road, relax man's obligation to obey God, and so dishonor the law, which Jesus came into the world and died to magnify. *Scott.* 'What an awful consideration is this! He who, by his mode of acting, speaking, or explaining the words of God, sets the holy precept aside, or explains away its force and meaning, shall be called least—shall have no place in the kingdom of Christ here, nor in the kingdom of glory above. This is evident from the following verse.' Dr. A. Clarke. Such also is the opinion of *Kalaneo;* but Dr. Campbell thinks it unexampled, and restricts the same to the Gospel dispensation, and to esteem or disesteem under it. Ed.

Verse 20.

The scribes were the most learned teachers of the law, and of the traditions of the elders. Most of them were Pharisees. Their learning related mainly to those external matters, in which their righteousness consisted. The scribes and Pharisees made loud professions, and were accounted very strict in their instructions and practice. But our Lord declared, that He would not acknowledge any one as his subject, whose righteousness did not exceed their righteousness. A new creation, and its effect on the temper and conduct, constitute a righteousness far more excellent than that of the scribes and Pharisees. Without repentance and faith, we cannot enter Christ's kingdom; these produce hatred of sin, and love of God and man; the law the believer is 'taught by grace to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this world;' and without this he cannot enter heaven. How ever late in life a man is converted, he has a better personal righteousness, before he enters heaven, than any formalist.—The scribes and Pharisees 'seem to have taught, that the law related only to outward actions; that zeal in the ceremonies of religion would excuse moral

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

[Practical Observations.]

21. ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not kill;' and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment:

a 23:2-5, 25-28. Luke 11:39, 40, 44, 12:1. 16:14, 15. 18:10-14. 20:16, 47. b 9:30. 9:30-31. 10:2-3. 9 Cor. 5:17. c 3:10. 7:21. 10:23. Mark 10:12, 25. Luke 13:17, 21, 25. John 3:5. Heb. 12:14. Rev. 21:27. d 27:33, 43. 2 Sam. 20:14. Job 8:5-8. e Or, to. f 9:5, 6. Ex. 20:13. Deut. 5:17. g Ex. 21:12-14. Num. 35:12, 16-21, 30-34. Deut. 21:7-9. 1 Kings 2:25, 6:31, 32.

The scribes and Pharisees and yet there was something commendable in them. They were much in fasting, prayer, giving alms, observing ceremonial appointments, and made it their business to teach others. They had such an interest in the people, that it was thought if but two men went to heaven, one would be a Pharisee. And yet our Lord here tells his disciples, that his religion not only excluded the badness, but excelled the goodness of the scribes and Pharisees. We must do more and better than they, or we shall come short of heaven. They were *partial in the law*, and laid most stress upon the ritual part; we must be *universal*, and not think it enough to give the priest his tithe, but give God our hearts. They minded only the outside; we must cherish inward godliness. They aimed at the applause of men; we must aim at acceptance with God. They were proud of what they did in religion, and trusted to it as a *righteousness*; we, when we have done all, must say we are *unprofitable servants*, and trust only the righteousness of Christ; and thus may go beyond scribes and Pharisees.

V. 17—20. Let no man suppose that Christ allows his people to trifle with any command of God. While He fulfilled the types and prophecies, while He honored the moral law and the exhortations of the prophets, by his obedience unto death upon the cross;—how impious to suppose, that He purchased for men the license of indulging their lusts! No; till the consummation of all things, 'not one word shall pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.' No sinner receives Christ's righteousness, till he condemns himself, and repents of his evil deeds. The goodness and mercy revealed in the Gospel lead believers to deeper repentance and self abhorrence. Unbelievers will be condemned for transgressions of the law; but it is the Christian's rule of duty, written in his heart. He delights in it, and

defects; and that important privileges were connected with a descent from Abraham. ... It has been said by the Jews, that if but two were to enter heaven, one would be a Pharisee, the other a scribe. Doddridge. The zeal and strictness of the scribes and Pharisees was chiefly about their traditions, by which they made void the law of God; and about minute services, by which they concealed the neglect of judgment, mercy, and faith. In this they have been imitated by multitudes, and especially by the Roman Catholics. Here something is proposed to the Christian, to excite self inquiry. What was the righteousness he must exceed, and how did it fall short? The Pharisees were strict in observing the letter of the law. They rigorously kept the Sabbath; "fasted often;" prayed constantly; so revered the Scriptures, as to wear sentences from them about their persons; are said not to have passed a day without reading the decalogue; they never eat with unwashed hands, and so strictly gave God his due, as to bring to the sacred treasury the tithes of the cleanest herbs. Ch. 23:5. 15: 1, 2. 23:23. Such was their righteousness.

For this they are not blamed. Rather let those take warning who have not even this outward righteousness. The strict observance of the Sabbath was required by the law of Moses; and God has uniformly approved those who keep the Sabbath holy. Fasting is good, to bring the body into subjection. Prayer is the chain which connects man with God, and earth with heaven. Neither could they be blamed for exactness in paying whatever the law required. Indeed, our Lord tells them, "this ought ye to have done." What, then, was wanting to their righteousness? That, on which the whole of religion depends: the heart: the heart converted to God; the right spirit. What they did was directed by no love of God, no desire of pleasing Him, no zeal for his service, or glory. It was either hypocrisy, or self-love; and done with a desire to be thought highly of among men, to procure the honor of superior sanctity. Such is the reason, why the righteousness of those who are really the servants of God, "must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees." We must be perfect in the love of God.

4.

tial in that kingdom; Isa. 9: 15. When truth shall appear in its own evidence, such corrupt teachers shall be in no esteem with the wise and good. Nothing makes ministers more base than corrupting the law, Mal. 2: 8, 11. Those who extenuate sin are the dregs of the church; on the other hand, those are truly honorable who lay out themselves, by their doctrine and practice, for the promotion of practical religion; who both do and teach that which is good; for those who do not as they teach, pull down with one hand, what they build with the other. But those who live up to what they preach, are truly great; they honor God, and God will honor them; 1 Sam. 2: 10. Hereafter, they shall shine as stars in the kingdom of God.

2. Their righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees. Strange doctrine to those who looked upon the scribes and Pharisees as highest in religion.

The scribes were the most noted teachers of the law, and the Pharisees, the most noted professors of it; (ch. 23: 2.) They were looked upon by the people as super-conformed to the law. The people did not think themselves obliged to be as good as they; and it was a great surprise to hear that they must be even better, or they should not go to heaven; therefore Christ avers it with solemnity. I say unto you, it is so.

were enemies to Christ, and great oppressors, and yet there was something commendable in them. They were much in fasting, prayer, giving alms, observing ceremonial appointments, and made it their business to teach others. They had such an interest in the people, that it was thought if but two men went to heaven, one would be a Pharisee. And yet our Lord here tells his disciples, that his religion not only excluded the badness, but excelled the goodness of the scribes and Pharisees. We must do more and better than they, or we shall come short of heaven. They were *partial in the law*, and laid most stress upon the ritual part; we must be *universal*, and not think it enough to give the priest his tithe, but give God our hearts. They minded only the outside; we must cherish inward godliness. They aimed at the applause of men; we must aim at acceptance with God. They were proud of what they did in religion, and trusted to it as a *righteousness*; we, when we have done all, must say we are *unprofitable servants*, and trust only the righteousness of Christ; and thus may go beyond scribes and Pharisees.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

long to obey it. Let us, then, beware of antinomian licentiousness, and of pharisaical self-righteousness; these are Scylla and Charybdis, the rock and the whirlpool; and we need the 'Lord the Spirit' to pilot us between them. The clear exposition of the law of God, and the scriptural application of it to the heart and conscience, are the best preservative from these fatal extremes. Those who inculcate milder doctrines will please such as say, 'speak smooth things;' but they are the least of those who belong to the kingdom, if indeed they belong to it; while those who enforce obedience by example and doctrine, shall be great in the kingdom of God. Nor will any one enter heaven, who does not here become more holy than the scribes and Pharisees. SCOTT.

Verses 21, 22.

To illustrate his meaning, the Savior vindicated some commandments of the moral law from the corrupt and partial interpretations of the scribes; which showed, that their rule of righteousness was itself beneath the attainments of his disciples. 'It had been said by, or to, them of old time, thou shalt not kill.' (Marg.—Note, Ex. 20: 13.) God gave the law; and the elders made this gloss, 'Whoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment;' implying that nothing but actual murder was prohibited, and was to be avoided mainly from dread of capital punishment. They thus explained away the extensive spiritual import of the command; and led the people to overlook the awful curse of God against transgressors. But Christ, the great Lawgiver and Judge, speaking with less error, not less authority, than in delivering the law from Sinai, declared, that 'whoever was angry with his brother without cause, would be in danger of the judgment.' Excessive anger must be proportionally 'without cause;' and all that settles into revenge, or vents itself in words and actions contrary to the law of love. We ought to be angry at sin, and to show our disapprobation of it, according to our relation to the offender; (Note, Mark 3: 1-5) we should seek his reformation by proper means, but not his hurt, at least in our private capacity. All men are brethren in this sense; and whoever is angry at another without, or above cause, 'shall be in danger of the judgment;' it deserves a punishment more terrible than that inflicted by courts of justice on the murderer; and calls for repentance, and needs the mercy and forgiveness of the new covenant. Whoever uses opprobrious epithets in his passion, calling his brother 'an empty, worthless fellow,' or 'a wicked and abandoned profligate,' would incur a punishment more severe, according to the violence contained in his revilings. These words, *vain* and *foolish*, used by persons assisted by the Spirit, speaking by virtue of office, with charity, and a desire to make others sensible of their folly, do not make a man 'obnoxious to this guilt;' (Gal. 3: 1. Jam. 2: 20, but only when they proceed from causeless anger, or ill-will.) *Wutib* *Mueta*, in

22 But I say unto you, 'That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, *Raca, shall be in danger of a hell-fire.

23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee;

24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way: first

f 23,34. 44. 3:17. 17.5. Deut. 19:19, 19. Act. 3:20-23. 7:37. Heb. 5:9. 12:25.

g Gen. 45:6. 37:4-8. 1 Sam. 17:27-28. 18:9. 20:30-33. 22:12. &c. 1 Kings 21:1. 2 Chr. 18:10. Esth. 3:5,6. Ps. 37:3. Dan. 2:12,13. 3:15,19. Eph. 4:26,27.

h 23,24. 18:21,25. Deut. 15:11. Neh. 5:3. Job. 10:12. Rom. 12:10. 1 Cor. 13:1. 1 Thes. 4:5. 2 John 2:8. 3:10, 14,15. 4:20,21. 5:16.

i 1 Thes. 5:3. 3:15,19. 6:9,4. 10:9,3. 1 Tim. 5:22. John 15:25.

k 1. 11:18,19. 12:24. 1 Sam. 20:30. 2 Sam. 18:7. John 7:20. 8:48. Acts 17:19. 1 Cor. 2:10. 2 Thes. 4:21. 2 Tim. 3:2. 1 Pet. 4:23. 3:9.

l 1. 7:4. 23:3. 35:19. 69:4. 109:3. 1 Sam. 3:22. John 15:25.

m 1. 11:18,19. 12:24. 1 Sam. 20:30. 2 Sam. 18:7. John 7:20. 8:48. Acts 17:19. 1 Cor. 2:10. 2 Thes. 4:21. 2 Tim. 3:2. 1 Pet. 4:23. 3:9.

n 1. 7:4. 23:3. 35:19. 69:4. 109:3. 1 Sam. 3:22. John 15:25.

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x 1. 7:4. 23:3. 35:19. 69:4. 109:3. 1 Sam. 3:22. John 15:25.

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am 1. 7:4. 23:3. 35:19. 69:4. 109:3. 1 Sam. 3:22. John 15:25.

an 1. 7:4. 23:3. 35:19. 69:4. 109:3. 1 Sam. 3:22. John 15:25.

3 Christ's exposition of the law, by which we are to be judged, and by which we ought to be ruled now, is exceeding broad, and not to be limited by men. He tells them that *rash anger is heart-murder*. Our brother means any person, though inferior, as a child, or servant, for we are all made of one blood. Anger is a natural passion, and is sometimes laudable, but it is sinful when without cause, or without good effect, or moderation; when we are angry, for instance, at children or servants, for that which could not be helped, or was owing to forgetfulness or mistake, and for which, if we had been guilty, we should not have been angry at ourselves; or when we are angry upon groundless surmises or trivial affronts: or when we are angry merely to show our authority, to gratify a brutish passion, to let people know our resentments, or to excite others to revenge—in such cases it is to do hurt. If we are at any time angry, it should be to awaken the offender to repentance, and prevent his doing so again, or to clear ourselves, (2 Cor. 7:11.) and to give warning to others. It is sinful when it exceeds due bounds, when we are vehement and outrageous in our anger. This is a breach of the sixth commandment, for he that is thus angry would kill, if he could and durst. Cain's murder began in anger.

He tells them that giving opprobrious language is *longue-murder*. It is not sinful when done with mildness, and a good end, as James says, *O vain man*; and Paul, *thou fool*; and Christ, *O fools and slow of heart*. But when it comes from malice, it is the smoke of that fire which is kindled from hell. *Raca* means 'thou empty fellow'; it is the language of that which Solomon calls *proud wrath*, (Prov. 21:24.) which disdains to set our brother with the dogs of our flock. This people which *knows not the law is cursed*, is such language, John 7:49. 'Thou fool' is a spiteful word, looking upon him as mean, vile, and not to be loved. 'Thou wicked man,' speaks a man without grace; the more the reproach touches his spiritual condition, the worse it is. 'Thou fool,' is a haughty taunting of our brother; 'thou reprobate,' is a malicious censuring of him as abandoned of God. Now this is a breach of the sixth commandment; malicious censures are a *poison under the tongue*; bitter words are as *arrows*, that wound suddenly, (Ps. 64:3.) or as a sword in the bones. A his good name is thereby murdered, and it shows such ill-will to him, that, if we could, we would strike at his life.

Christ tells them, that he who is angry with his brother is in danger of the judgment of God; he who calls him *raca*, is in danger of being punished by the council, or Sanhedrim; but whosoever saith *thou fool*, *thou profane person*, shall be in danger of hell-fire, to which he condemns his brother; so the learned Dr. Whitby. Some think that Christ, in allusion to the penalties of the Jews, shows that rash anger exposes men to lower or higher punishments, according to the degree of it. The Jews had three capital punishments—beheading, inflicted by the judgment; stoning, by the council, and burning in the valley of the son of Hinnom, used only in extraordinary cases. It signifies, therefore, that the anger and reproachful words in question are damning sins, but some more sinful than others, and accordingly there is a greater damnation for them. Christ would thus show which sin was most sinful, by showing which punishment was most dreadful.

4. From all this we infer, that we ought carefully to preserve Christian love and peace, and that if a breach happens, we should labor quickly for a reconciliation, humbling ourselves, and making restitution, as the case may require. We should do this for two reasons.

Till it be done, we are utterly unfit for communion with God in holy ordinances, v. 23, 24. The case supposed is, that thou hast injured thy brother, really, or in his apprehension. If thou art the party offended, make short work of it; no more is to be done, but to forgive him, (Mark 11:25.) and forgive the injury. But if the fault was either at first or afterwards thine, go and be reconciled to him, before thou solemnly approach to God in the services of his house. Note, When coming to a religious exercise, it is good to reflect seriously, and examine ourselves. When we bring our gift to the altar, there are many things to be remembered; then, if ever, we are disposed to be serious. Religious exercises are not acceptable to God, if performed in wrath, or in any bad passion, 1 Tim. 2:8. Prayers made in wrath are written in gall, Isa. 1:15. 58:4. Love or charity is so much better than all *holocausts burnt offerings and sacrifices* that God is content to stay for the gift, rather than have it offered while we are engaged in a quarrel. But though thus unfit for communion with God, yet that can be no excuse for the neglect of duty. 'Leave there thy gift, lest, otherwise, when gone away, thou be tempted not to come again.' Many give as a reason why they do not come to church or communion, that they

'Homer, forbids Achilles to strike Agamemnon, yet counsels to reproach him.' Hammond.—This is heathen, or classical morality. Scott. 'It has been controverted whether the referring should be to the ancients, or by the ancients,' says Bloomfield. The latter was first brought forward by Beza, adopted by our English translators, and defended by several. 'But the former is supported by the Fathers, the ancient versions, by Doddridge, [after Grotius, Whitby and Hammond,] Campbell, Rosenm.' It is observable, however, that, notwithstanding the opinion of Beza, the highly valuable version of Geneva has, 'Ye have heard that it was said unto them of the old time, Thou shalt not kill: for whosoever killeth shall be culpable of judgement.' Ed. 1568. *In danger of the judgment.* 'In the Hebrew commonwealth, every city, with its elders, who formed a court of judicature, with a power of determining less matters in their respective districts. The rabbies say, there were three such elders, or judges, [described by Jahn, as simply referees, or a session of reference, allowed to the Jews by the Roman laws,] in each smaller city, and twenty-three in greater. But Joseph speaks of seven judges in each, without any such distinction of greater or less. We often read in Scripture of the elders of cities; but the number of them is not determined.' Jennings. 'This tribunal, which decided causes of less moment, is denominated in the New Testament, the judgment, Matt. 5:22.' Jahn. That there were, according to the common opinion, twenty-three judges, Rosenm. states. From Weening, to be truly a fragment of the later Jews. Yet Jahn admits that there were of a similar character, 'synagogue tribunals, mentioned in John 18:2, which merely tried questions of a religious nature, and sentence: to no other punishment than "forty stripes save one," 2 Cor. 11:24.' The next higher body was the Sanhedrim, or Council, 'instituted,' says Jahn, 'in the time of the Maccabees, and composed of seventy-two members.'—'Its power,' he adds, 'had been limited, in the time of Christ, by the interference of the Romans.' '... It still, however, retained the right of passing the sentence of condemnation, or degrading punishment; but the power of executing the sentence when passed, was taken away from it, and lodged with the Roman procurator, John 18:31.' In the opinion of Michaelis, this Council was erected, at the time specified above, 'in imitation' of that which Moses constituted in the wilderness, and which, as he supposes, 'was not of long continuance.' Ed. Hell fire. The original word is Hebrew, or Syriac, and signifies 'the valley of Hinnom.' There idolaters burned

their children to Moloch, and after this practice ceased, the valley was made as filthy and vile as possible: a fire was constantly burning, to consume the rubbish carried thither; and it is said, that it became a place for the execution of criminals.—'Hence this place, so execrable, came to signify the place of the damned, as the most accursed, execrable, and abominable of all places.' Mede.—The word is often used in the New Testament; and always for the place of final punishment. (29. 30. 10:23. 18:9. 23:35. Mark 9:43, 45, 47.) (Note. Ia. 30:33.) Scott.

Verses 23, 24.

Attention to expensive externals was used by the Jews of old, as well as by papists and others in later ages, as a compensation for injuries. This the priests encouraged, as it was profitable. But if any of Christ's disciples bring an offering to the altar, and after arriving there, remember that a brother had just cause to complain of him, he must not offer his sacrifice, but go without delay and make restitution for the injury, or acknowledgment of the offence, and by all reasonable means seek forgiveness and reconciliation. Nor may he, on this account, long postpone his sacrifice, but leaving it before the altar, return as soon as the matter is settled. This is spoken in the language of the Jewish dispensation, but is applicable to Christian ordinances, particularly to the Lord's supper. Restitution to the injured, consciousness to the injured, and forgiveness of injuries, are requisite to a proper attendance on this holy ordinance; but to neglect it for want of preparation is excusing disobedience to God, by injustice and malice towards man. 'First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' Scott. 'It is observable, that Philo. [of Alexandria, in Egypt,] who Dr. Lardner concludes to have been born at or before the Christian era, explaining the law of the trespass-offering, tells us, "That when a man had injured his brother, and repenting of his fault, voluntarily acknowledged it, (in which case, both restitution and sacrifice were required,) he was first to make restitution, and then to come in: the temple presenting his sacrifice, and asking pardon." But if any one, just and natural account of the matter, and adds a great illustration to this text; especially considering that our Lord supposes in this case "not a trespass-offering, but a voluntary gift presented before the altar; and yet declares, that this will not be accepted, while there is a consciousness of having wronged a brother, and not till after a full reparation." Doddridge.

be reconciled to thy brother, *and then come and offer thy gift.

25 Agree *with thine adversary quickly, *whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, *and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.

26 Verily I say unto thee, *Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

27 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, *Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28 But *I say unto you, *That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, *hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

29 And *if thy right eye *offend thee,

are at variance with a neighbor. But whose fault is that? One sin will never excuse another; it rather doubles the guilt. Want of charity cannot justify the want of piety. The difficulty is easily got over; those who have wronged us, we must forgive; and to those whom we have wronged, must make satisfaction, or a tender of it; so that, if a reconciliation be not made, it may not be our fault, and then come and welcome and offer thy gift. Therefore we must not let the sun go down on our wrath any day, because we must go to prayer before going to sleep; much less let the sun rise upon our wrath on a Sabbath day, because it is a day of prayer.

It is at our peril, if we do not labor quickly for an agreement, and this even on a temporal account. If our brother can recover considerable damages by prosecution, it is our wisdom, and duty to our family, to prevent that by a peaceable satisfaction; lest otherwise he put us to the extremity of a prison. Better, then, to compound, than stand it out. Many sin their estates by obstinately persisting in their offences. Solomon's advice in case of suretyship is, *Go, humble thyself, and so deliver thyself*, Prov. 6:1-5. It is good to agree, for the law is costly. Though we must be merciful to those who have injured us, we must be just to those whom we have injured. 'Compound quickly, lest he be provoked by thy stubbornness to insist upon the utmost demand, and not make the abatement he would have made at first.' A prison is uncomfortable to those who have been brought there by their own prodigality and wilfulness. It is important, too, on a spiritual account. While the quarrel continues, thou art unfit to bring thy gift to the altar, unfit to come to the table of the Lord, and so unfit to die. There is danger lest thou be suddenly snatched away by the wrath of God, and that iniquity be laid to thy charge, thou art undone forever. Hell is the prison for all who live and die in malice, for all the contentious; (Rom. 2: 8.) and out of it is no escape, to all eternity.

This is very applicable to our spiritual reconciliation to God through Christ. Agree with Him quickly, while thou art in the way. Note, The great God is an Adversary to all sinners. He has an action against them. It is our concern, so to acquaint ourselves with Him, that we may be at peace; Job 22: 21. 2 Cor. 5: 20. It is our wisdom to do this quickly. While alive, we are in the way; after death, it will be too late: therefore give not sleep to thine eyes, till it

be done. The impenitent are constantly, exposed to God's most dreadful wrath. Christ is the Judge to whom they will be delivered, for all judgment is committed to the Son. He, who was rejected as a Savior, cannot be escaped as a Judge, Rev. 6: 16, 17. It is a fearful thing to be thus turned over to the Lord Jesus, when the Lamb shall become a Lion. Angels are the officers to whom Christ will deliver them; (Rev. 13: 41, 42,) devils are so too, having the power of death, as executioners to all unbelievers, Heb. 2: 14. Darned sinners must remain in their prison (1 Pet. 2: 4.) to eternity; they shall not depart till they have paid the uttermost farthing, and that will not be to the utmost ages of eternity. Divine justice will be forever satisfying, but never satisfied.

V. 27-32. We have here the great Lawgiver's exposition of the seventh commandment. It fully follows the former; that lays restraint on our sinful passions, this on our sinful appetites.

1. Thou shalt not commit adultery. This includes a prohibition of all other acts of uncleanness, and the desire of them. The Pharisees made it consist only in the act of adultery, suggesting that, if it was but regarded in the heart, God could not hear it; (Ps. 66: 18.) and thus thought themselves able to say, that they were no adulterers, Luke 18: 11.

2. Adulterous thoughts and dispositions are declared to be adultery or fornication. Perhaps the defilement which these crimes give to the soul, was not only included in the seventh commandment, but was signified in many pollutions under the ceremonial law, for which they were to wash their clothes, and bathe their flesh in water. Whosoever looketh on a woman—not only another man's wife, as some would have it, but any woman—to lust after her, has committed adultery with her in his heart. This command forbids all appetite, all lusting after the forbidden object; this is the beginning of the sin, lust concerning; (Jam. 1: 15.) it is a bad step towards the sin; and where the lust is approved, and the wanton desire rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel, the sin is committed, so far as the heart can do it. Nothing is wanting but opportunity for the sin itself. Lust is conscience baffled or biassed; binned, if it say nothing against the sin; baffled, if it prevail not in what it says. All approaches are forbidden: not only looking that I may lust, but looking till I do. The eye is both the inlet and outlet of a great deal of wickedness of this kind;

Verses 25, 26.

The preceding verses naturally introduce the case of such as were exposed to lawsuits for injuring their neighbors. Here it would be prudent quickly to compromise the matter, though the terms be rigorous; and settle the business ere it come to a magistrate, lest a person being found culpable, be cast into prison for cost and damages, and continue there till the last farthing be paid.—But under this counsel a more important instruction is couched. Injuries done to men, as well as to our other sins, expose us to the wrath of God, our Adversary at law. We are going to the judgment. Our time is short. A way of reconciliation is revealed, and we should enter it immediately. If this be neglected, the cause will be tried, the sinner condemned, delivered to the executioner, and cast into hell. Seeing that he can never satisfy justice, nor pay his debt, (as new crimes enhance the score,) he must not expect ever to be liberated.—Here it is insinuated, how much more it concerns us in time to repent, lest we be cast into the infernal prison. Whitby, (Note, Luke 12: 58, 59.) Adversary, here, signifies properly, an opponent in a trial at law. Scott. This text has been considered a proper foundation not only for the doctrine of a purgatory, but also for that of universal restoration. But the most unwarrantable violence must be used before it can be pressed into the service of either of these unscriptural doctrines. At the most, the text can only be considered as a metaphorical representation of the procedure of the great Judge; and let it ever be remembered, that, by the general consent of all, (except the basely interested,) no metaphor is ever to be produced in proof of any doctrine. In the things that concern our eternal salvation, we need the most pointed and express evidence on which to establish the faith of our souls.

Verses 27, 28.

If a man allow himself to gaze at a woman, that thoughts of criminal intercourse may be, or till they are, excited, he is an adulterer, and deserves the punishment of adulterers. And his guilt will be aggravated, if he indulge the licentious imagination, and devise means for gratifying his desires, though he be prevented.—We cannot suppose, that this prohibits a man, on looking at a woman, whom he may lawfully marry, with such premeditation as to desire to possess her in marriage. An inclination for what is not sinful, can become sinful only by being inordinate, but it may be, and alas! commonly is attended with things greatly polluting and criminal. (Note, Ex. 20: 14.) The expositors of the law say, if a man sees a woman, whom he loves better than his wife,

'let him divorce the wife, and marry her.' Jerome. This is a specimen of Rabbinical morality! Scott. Impure thoughts are the immediate, and only sources of impure conversation, and an impure life. If the thoughts be cleansed, the man will be clean, of course. There is scarcely a more dangerous employment than the indulgence of a licentious imagination. It wanders over forbidden ground, often without thinking that it is forbidden; and has already been guilty of many and perilous transgressions, when it is scarcely aware of having transgressed at all. The mind, if it will watch its own movements, will be astonished to perceive, after a sober computation, how great a part of all its thinking is made up of licentious thoughts. Impure thoughts produce impure words; while strict and virtuous delicacy in language is not only indispensable to decency, and dignity of character, but to all purity of heart and excellency of life. But the innumerable and immense blessings of the marriage institution keep the moral world in being, and secure it from untimely and terrible dissolution. They are blessings, without which life, in instances literally innumerable, would be blasted in the bud, or its continuance prove a curse without which, natural affection and amiableness would never exist, domestic education be extinct, industry and economy never begin, and man be left to the precarious subsistence of a savage. But for this institution, learning, knowledge, and refinement would expire, government sink in the gulf of anarchy, and religion, hunted from the habitations of men, hasten back to heaven. Man, in the mean time, stripped of all that is respectable, amiable, or hopeful in his character, and degraded to all that is odious, brutal, and desperate, would prowl in solitudes and deserts to satisfy hunger and rage. The correspondence between heaven and earth would cease; and the celestial inhabitants no longer expect or find accessions to their society from this miserable world. To such evils every lewd man directly contributes. Were his principles and practices adopted universally, all these evils would universally prevail. That they actually do not, is, in no sense, owing to him. To the utmost, he labors to introduce them all.' Fr. Dwigton

Verses 29, 30.

This subjection of sensual inclinations, this victory over the most potent desires of the heart, (especially when habits have enslaved men,) is attended by painful effort, and the sacrifice of what has been highly valued. But, though painful, as 'plucking out a right eye,' or 'cutting off a right hand,' it must be done. 'The flesh, with the affections and lusts, must be crucified, corrupted, conquered and every inclination

pluck it out a .d cast
from thee: 'for it is
profitable for thee that
one of thy members
should perish, and not
that thy whole body
should be cast into hell.

30 And if thy right
hand offend thee, cut
it off, and cast it from
thee: for it is profit-
able for thee that one of
thy members should
perish, and not that thy
whole body should be
cast into hell.

31 It hath been said,
Whoever shall put
away his wife, let him
give her a writing of
divorcement:

32 But I say unto
you, That whosoever
shall put away his wife,
saying for the cause of
fornication, causeth
her to commit adul-
tery, and whosoever
shall marry her that is
divorced, committeth
adultery.

[Practical Observations.]

19:12 Rom 5:5, 13:1, 1 Cor 6:27.
6:25, 23, Col 3:5, 1 Pet 2:11.
16:2, Prov. 5:8-14, Mark 8:36.
Luke 12:25.
11:6, 12:21, 16:27, 18:6, 25:31.
1 Cor 1:2, 2 Cor 8:16, 5:33, 11:20, 21.
1:11-13, Gal 3:11, 1 Pet 2:5.
22:13, 21:30, Luke 12:5.
1:16, 7: Deut. 24:1-4, Jer. 3:1, Mark
10:2-4.
2:23 Luke 9:30, 35.
19:8, 9, Mat. 21:1-16, Mark 10:5-
12, Luke 16:13, 1 Cor. 7:4.

Witness, Joseph's mistress, (Gen. 39: 7.) Sam-
son, (Judg. 16: 1.) David, (2 Sam. 11: 2.) We
read of eyes full of adultery, that cannot cease
from sin, 2 Pet. 2: 14. What need have we,
then, with Job, to make a covenant with our
eyes, this bargain, that they might look upon the
works of God, provided they would never fasten
on any thing that would occasion impure imagi-
nations; and under this penalty, that if they did,
they must smart for it in penitential tears! Job
31: 1. Why have we the covering of our
eyes, but to keep out corrupt impressions? If
answaring looks are forbidden fruit, much more
unclean discourse, and wanton dalliance, the
fuel and bellows of this hellish fire. These
precepts are hedges about the law of heart-
purity, v. 8. They who dress, and deck, and
expose themselves, with design to be lusted af-
ter, as Jezebel, that painted her face, and tired
her head, and looked out at a window, are no less
guilty. Men sin, but devils tempt to sin.

We are here taught, that it is better to lose
the eye and the hand, than to perish eternally
in sin. Corrupt nature would soon object,
'It is a hard saying, who can bear it?' Flesh
and blood cannot but look with pleasure on a
beautiful woman, and to forbear lusting after
such an object is impossible.' Pretences like
this will scarcely be overcome with reason, and
therefore must be argued against with the ter-
rors of the Lord.

If thy right eye offend thee, or cause thee to
offend, by wanton glances upon forbidden ob-
jects; if thy right hand offend thee by wanton
dalliances; and if it were indeed impossible to
govern the eye and hand, so accustomed to
wicked practices; if there be no other way to
restrain them, which, blessed be God, through
his grace there is, it were better for us to pluck
out the right eye, and cut off the right hand,
than to indulge them in sin, to the ruin of the
soul. And if this, at which nature startles,
must be submitted to, much more must we keep
under the body, and bring it into subjection; we
must keep a constant watch over our hearts, and
suppress the first rising of corruption there.
We must avoid the beginnings of sin, and de-
cline the company of those who will be a snare
to us, though ever so pleasing. We must

abridge ourselves in the use of lawful things
when we find them temptations: we must de-
pend upon the grace of God daily; we must su-
walk in the Spirit, as not to fulfil the lusts of
the flesh; and this will be as effectual as taking
out a right eye, or cutting off a right hand, and
perhaps as much against the grain to flesh and
blood.

Perhaps this startling argument is here re-
peated, because we are loth to hear such rough
things; Isa. 30: 10. It is profitable for thee
that one of thy members should perish, though
it be as an eye or hand, which can be worst
spared, and not that thy whole body should be
cast into hell. Note, It is not unbecoming in a
minister of the Gospel to preach of hell and
damnation; nay, he must do it, for Christ Him-
self did it, and we are unfaithful, if we give no
warning of the wrath to come. We must be ex-
ercised with fear from fleshly lusts which are such
natural brute beasts: as cannot be checked, but
by being frightened, and kept from the forbidden
tree, but by cherubim and a flaming sword.
When we think it hard to deny ourselves, we
should consider how much harder it will be to
lie forever in the lake that burns with fire and
brimstone. Some, who do not know or believe
what hell is, will rather hazard their eternal
ruin in those flames, than deny themselves a
brutish lust. The whole body will be cast into
hell, and there will be torment in every part of
it; so if we care for our own bodies, we shall
possess them in sanctification and honor, and
not in the lusts of concupiscence. Our Master
requires nothing from us but what He knows to
be for our advantage.

Observe the reference to divorces. It hath
been said, (He does not say, as before, by them
of old time, because this was not a precept as
those were, though the Pharisees were willing
so to understand it, ch. 19: 7, but only a permis-
sion,) 'Whoever shall put her away, let him
give her a bill of divorce. Let him not do it by
word of mouth, as he might in a passion but
deliberately, by a legal instrument, and solemn-
ly.' Thus the law had prevented rash divorces
and, perhaps, at first, when writing was not
common, made divorces rare things; but after-
wards they became very common, and the direc-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V 2. 32. We ought to consider how important our Lord
gives a right understanding of the moral law, and how fatal
consequences result from erroneous views of it. While we see,
then, the strictness, spirituality and reasonableness of its pre-
cepts, as expounded by the divine Teacher; let us compare
our lives, tempers, affections, thoughts, words and actions, with
this rule. Then we shall plainly perceive, that 'by the works
of the law no flesh shall be justified in the sight of God,' and
Christ will be precious to our souls.—Whether we regard our
conduct towards those who have injured us, or those whom we
have offended, towards superiors, inferiors, relatives, friends,
or servants; whether we regard the state of our hearts, the
government of our passions, what we have done, or not done;
and when we consider, that, to enjoy God and heaven, we must
be holy according to this standard, we shall feel our need of the
influences of the Spirit, and learn to value the ordinances,
through which his sacred assistance is obtained. Thus it will
be evident, that justice to men, as well as humiliation before
God, is necessary to our going acceptably to the throne of

grace, or the Lord's table; and we shall be led to inquire
whether any of our brethren have cause of complaint against
us, that we may remove impediments to communion with our
heavenly Father. When we weigh the importance of eternity,
and the uncertainty of life, we shall see the necessity of making
without delay our peace with God, and shall value and imi-
tate our blessed Peacemaker, who will shortly come, as the
Judge, and avenge his cause on the impenitent workers of in-
iquity. Reflection on our situation in this world, will reconcile
us to the mortification of our evil propensities, and the govern-
ment of the bodily appetites. We shall see mercy concealed
under the apparent severity of the requirement; our safety, ad-
vantage and felicity consulted; and the grace and consolations
of the Spirit rendering our course practicable, and even cheer-
ful. To be preserved from gross iniquity, our hearts must be
kept with all diligence, and all our senses restrained from the
things that lead to sin. Rules of strict purity will be found,
most conducive to true comfort, even in the present world.

SCOTT.

submitted to the authority of God, made subservient to his glory, the
welfare of society, and the good of a man's own soul. If, then, the eye,
the hand, or any other part of the body is so necessary to him, that its
removal would certainly prevent it, and the temptation could not other-
wise be overcome, it would be duty to remove it. Whatever anguish,
or loss a man endured, it would be advantageous to lose a limb, or any
organ of sense, rather than be cast with them all into hell. But, though
the members be his instruments, yet sin proceeds from the lusts of the
heart; if these be mortified, there will be no need of injuring the body;
if not, it would be of no use.—The mortification of sinful passions may
be very painful. But if men would lose their limbs to save their lives,
ought they to shrink back, when it is requisite to the salvation of their
souls? The most watchful and self-denying government of sense and
appetite is implied in this admonition.—It is worthy of notice, that Jesus
always took for granted, that there is a future state, a resurrection, and
a hell, and he set these realities before men's minds, and called their at-
tention to them. (Marg. Ref. f-h.) Christ's hearers, for the most
part were poor, and subsisted by daily labor. To them the loss of a
right hand would be a greater calamity, than that of a right eye; so
that if there was a translation and force in this passage, not, however, of
Lidd's (Lidd.) The word literally signifies to cause to stumble,

[make thee to offend, Geneva vers.] in this and many other places
As a stone over which a man falls, or a trap in which he is taken; so
the occasion of sin is a stumbling-stone, or a trap. Scott: 'The
'right eye is especially mentioned,' says Bloomfield, 'because without
that men were rendered almost useless for the purposes of war,'
Ed.

Verses 21, 32.

It has been shewn, (Note, Deut. 24: 1-4) how the Jews perverted
the judicial law, which regulated divorces, and sought to render them
less common and injurious; so that, when Christ appeared, they were
very frequent, on the most trifling pretences. Having, therefore, men-
tioned the seventh commandment, our Lord took occasion to determine
this matter, and declared, that whosoever 'puts away his wife' except
for fornication before marriage, or adultery after it, (for the word is
thought to imply both,) would strongly expose her to the guilt of ad-
ultery by marrying another man, and would be accessory to her sin; and
the man who should marry her would commit adultery, her former
husband being alive.—It seems evident, that divorces for adultery should
be allowed to the injured, without any perplexing process. It may be
consistent with justice, that a person divorced for adultery should not be
permitted to marry again. But it can scarcely be expected, that such

33 ¶ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, ^mThou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform' unto the LORD thine oaths:

34 But I say unto you, ^a Swear not at all; neither by ^b heaven, for it is God's throne;

35 Nor by ^p the earth:
for it is his footstool;
neither by Jerusalem,
for it is ^a the city of the
great King:

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, *because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

37 But 'let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these "cometh of evil.

m Ex. 20:7. Lev. 19:12. Num. 30:2.
&c. Deut. 5:11. Ps. 50:14. 76:11
Ec. 5:4—6. Nah. 1:15.
l Dent. 23:21—23. Ec. 9:2. Jam. 5:
12.
o 23:12. Is. 57:15. 66:1.
p Ps. 99:5.
q 2 Chr. 26. Ps. 43:2. 87:2. Mal. 1:
14.
r 23:16—21.
s 6:27. Luke 13:25
l 2 Cor. 1:17—20. Col. 4:6. Jam. 5:
12.
t 13:19. 15:19. John 8:14. Eph. 4:
25 Col. 3:9.

rightly done, it is a part of the glory due to his name, Dr. Paul confirmed what he said we appeal to a greater knowledge of a righteous Judge

Now the mind of Christ is, *first*, that we swear *not at all*, except when duly called to it, and justice or charity to our brother, or respect to the commonwealth, make it necessary *for the end of strife*, (Heb. 6: 16,) of which the civil magistrate must ordinarily be the judge. We may be sworn, but may not swear. We must not thrust ourselves on it for worldly advantage. *Second.* We must not swear lightly, in common discourse. It is a very great sin, to make a ludicrous appeal to the glorious Majesty of heaven. It is a gross profanation of God's holy name, and of one of the holy things *which the children of Israel sanctify to the Lord*. It has no excuse, and is the sign of a graceless heart. *Thing enemies take thy name in vain. Third.*

persons will be scrupulous in a single state, and thus more harm than good will result from the prohibition, and it is not found in Scripture. The permission to divorce the adulteress implies, that the law for putting to death such offenders was not indispensable under the New Testament.

SCOTT.

Verses 33—37.

The scribes explained the third commandment, according to the tradition of the elders, as prohibiting merely gross perjury, especially the breach of promissory oaths, or vows to the Lord. They allowed common swearing, except by the names of God. (*Note, Ex. 20: 7*). Christ commanded his disciples not to swear at all. Many examples, however, in the New Testament, shew that swearing on important occasions is lawful. (*2 Cor. 1: 23. 1 Thes. 2: 5*) There seems, then, no reason to conclude, that oaths in courts of justice, or on occasions which fairly require them, are wrong; if taken with reverence for Jehovah, and with consistency to truth. Yet the application of oaths, and the irreverence with which they are administered, are so full of guilt and evil beyond calculation. (*P. O. Jer. 23: 9—32*). A pious man, though he disapprove of the manner of administration, need not hesitate to take an oath, if he can otherwise do it conscientiously; for he is accountable only for his own conduct. But oaths taken without necessity on trivial occasions, in common conversation, and all the expressions, which answer the purpose, and seem to evade the guilt of an oath, are inconsistent with this prohibition.—The names of God, Lord, or Christ, as expletives, notes of admiration, with bad or good wishes, prayers, as ‘God bless us,’ ‘Lord have mercy on us,’ ought not to be used in conversation, especially when there is no seriousness to be maintained, and when the words are used without any religious purpose or feeling. The writings of pagan authors are interlarded with oaths by their gods, and some professed Christians use this pagan language. If an oath be an act of worship, and the devil was worshipped under these idols; such expressions imply the worship of Satan, though they who use them mean not so. If it were to suffice a Christian to affirm, or deny, or ascribe, or to repeat, if necessary, All more than

10: *how*, was construed into a permission, *ch.*
19: 3.

Our Savior reduced marriage to its primitive institution. *They two shall be one flesh*, not easily separated, and divorce is not allowed, except for adultery, which breaks the marriage covenant; but he that puts away his wife on any other pretence, *consetteth her to commit adultery*, and him also that shall marry her when thus divorced. Note, To lead others into sin, is to make one's self guilty of their sin, and accountable for it. This is one way of being a *partaker with adulterers*, Ps. 50: 18.

V. 33—37. We have here an exposition of the third commandment, which we are the more concerned rightly to understand, because *God will not hold him guiltless, who breaks it.*

1. It forbids perjury, forswearing, and the violation of oaths and vows. *Thou shalt not use, or take up, the name of God in vain, or use it to a vanity, or a lie. He hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity* is expounded in the next words, *nor scorn deceitfully*, Ps. 24: 4. Perjury is condemned by nature, as impiety towards God, and injustice towards man. Divine wrath was always judged to follow this sin so infallibly, that the forms of swearing were commonly turned into imprecations, as, *God do so to me, and more also*; and with us, *So help me God*; wishing no help from God, if I swear falsely. Thus, by the consent of nations, have men cursed themselves not doubting but that God would curse them, if they then lied against the truth.

But thou shalt perform unto me the Lord thine oaths, (Numb. 30: 2.) meaning either vows made to God, which must be punctually paid, (Ecl. 5: 4, 5.) or promises made to our brethren, of which God is Witness. These must be performed with an eye to the Lord, and for his sake. If we break a promise, ratified with an oath, *we have not lied unto men only, but unto God.*

2. All rash, unnecessary swearing is forbidden, *Swear not at all*, v. 34. Compare James 5: 12. Not that all swearing is sinful; nay, if religious worship, and in it we *give unto God*, v. 6: 13. and 10: 20. Isa. 45: 23. Jer. 4: 2. by such solemnities, 2 Cor. 1: 23. In swearing, wedge a higher court, and imprecate the ven- if we swear deceitfully.

*first, that we swear not at all, except when duly
arity to our brother, or respect to the common
or the end of strife, (Heb. 6: 16.) of which the
ly be the judge. We may be sworn, but may
thrust ourselves on it for worldly advantage.
or lightly, in common discourse. It is a very
us appeal to the glorious Majesty of heaven.
God's holy name, and of one of the holy things
sanctify to the Lord. It has no excuse, and is
Thine enemies take thy name in vain. Third.*

We must, specially, avoid promissory oaths, *for* they are to be performed. An affirmative oath ceases, when we have faithfully discovered the whole truth; but a promissory oath binds so long, and may be broken in so many ways, by surprise, and strength of temptation, that it is not to be used, but in great necessity. The frequency of oaths among Christians is a reflection upon their fidelity. Their word should be as sacred as an oath. *Fourth.* Christ forbids us to swear by any creature. Some, as a civility, as they thought, would not swear by the name of God. Every thing is, in some way, related to God, and it is as dangerous to swear by them as by Him. It is the verity of the creature which is at stake. Now that cannot be an instrument of testimony, but as has regard to God, who is the chief Truth. *Swear not by the heaven:* 'As sure as there is a heaven, this is true.' There God specially manifests his glory, as a Prince on his throne. You cannot *swear by heaven*, but you swear by God Himself. *Nor by the earth.* He rules over the earth; it is under his feet, and stands in relation to Him as his, Ps. 24: 1. In swearing by it, you swear by its Owner. *Nor by Jerusalem,* for which the Jews had such veneration, that they could think of nothing more sacred to swear by, Jerusalem is in special relation to God, *for it is the city of the great King*, (Ps. 135: 2.) the city of God; (Ps. 46: 4.) He is therefore interested in every oath taken by it. *Neither by thy head.* Though it is an essential part of thee, it is more God's than thine. He made all its springs and powers. Thou canst not change the color of one hair; so thou canst not swear by *thine head*, but thou swearest by Him who is the Life of *thy head*, and the *Lifter up of it*, Ps. 3: 3. *Fifth.* In all your communications, then, be content with *Yea, yea, nay, nay.* Let us say *yea*, it is so; and if need be, double it, and say *yea, yea*, it is indeed so. *Verily, verily*, say our Savior's *yea, yea*. So we may use no, or no, no; and, if our fidelity is known, that will be sufficient; if it be questioned, swearing and cursing will only render it more suspicious. They who can swallow a profane oath, will not strain at a lie. Pity it is, that a form of speech which Christ intended to be common to all disciples, should be fastened as a reproach upon a religious sect, when, as Dr. Hammond says, we are in a manner directed to the use of it. *For whosoever is more than these cometh of evil*, though it do not amount to the iniquity of an oath. It comes from the devil, as an ancient copy has it; from the corruption of men's nature, from a reigning vanity in the mind. *All men are liars*, and therefore think they cannot be believed without oaths. Note, Christians should, for the cred-

his cometh of evil, *the evil one*, or the evil of our corrupt nature. Men are so deceitful, that they fear to trust each other without oaths. They suspect each other; or the speaker fears that his bare word will not be taken, or swears to conceal his bad designs. But Christians should try so to speak that their word may be as satisfactory as another man's oath. Though the necessity of oaths is found in the deceitfulness of man; yet the worse men become, the less are they restrained by them; the better they are, the less the need of them.—The term rendered 'communication' limits the prohibition to social intercourse, so that to extend it to judicial, or public doings, is unwarranted. (*Note, Jam. 5: 12*.) SCOTT. 'The clause in the thirty-seventh verse demonstrates, that the thirty-fourth is to be explained with the limitation to ordinary intercourse; for oaths were never allowed but rarely, and only in the Mosaic law. *Exod. 22: 10, 11; Num. 5: 19, 21; Deut. 29: 12.*' But, that if Christ's prohibition referred to swearing in solemn cases, He would have charized the Divine law with enjoining an immutability.' DODGE. 'In the commission of most sins, mankind usually expect and believe they shall obtain some natural good, and this is almost always the prime object of their sinful pursuit: good, forbidden, indeed, and therefore unlawful; yet apprehended as good by the sinner. But in *profaneness* there seems to be no good, either enjoyed or expected, beside that which is found in the mere love and indulgence of sin. The *sin* is the good; and not any thing peculiar to the manner in which it is committed, or the acquisition expected by it. It may be said that the profane person recommends himself to his companions. But he is *not esteemed*, even by them. They may desire him as an associate, and they may relish his wickedness; but they approve of neither. In the same manner, they may treat and converse with him, but they do not esteem him. A sin committed without motives of such magnitude as to be properly stigmatized temptations, may be justly termed *disinterested sin*, committed from love of it, with no regard to any natural good, in which it is to terminate. Undoubtedly, then, it is wickedness of a nature eminently guilty; and the author of it must be eminently odious and vile in the sight of God.' Pr. DWIGHT.

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38 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth':

39 But I say unto you, 'That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.'

40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would

of their religion, avoid that which cometh of evil, and has the appearance of it. That may be suspected as a bad thing, which comes from a bad cause. An oath is physic, which supposes a disease.

V. 38—42. The law of retaliation is expounded, and in a manner repealed. Observe, 1. What the *Old Testament* permission was in case of injury. *Ye have heard that it has been said*; not, as before, *been said by*, or *to*, them of old time. It was not a command that necessarily required satisfaction, but they might lawfully insist on it; *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*, (Ex. 21: 24. Lev. 24: 20. Deut. 19: 21.) to be done by the magistrate, who bears not the sword in vain, but is the minister of God, an avenger to execute wrath, Rom. 13: 4. The Jewish judges were directed what injuries to inflict in cases of maims, for a terror to the mischievous, and for a restraint to the injured, that they may not require a greater punishment than is proper. It is not a life, for an eye, nor a limb for a tooth, but proportionable; a commutation might also be made with money, (Numb. 35: 31.) for in providing that no ransom shall be taken for the life of a murderer, it is supposed that for maims pecuniary satisfaction was allowed.

But some Jewish teachers, not the most compassionate of men, insisted that such revenge should be taken by private persons, and that there was no room for remission or commutation. Even now, under the Romans, when the judicial law had fallen, they were still zealous for anything which looked harsh or severe. This is now in force, as a direction to magistrates, to use the sword of justice according to the good and wholesome laws of the land. That judge neither feared God nor regarded man, who would not avenge the poor widow of her adversary, Luke 18: 2, 3. And it is in force as a rule to lawyers, to provide accordingly, and apportion punishments to crimes.

2. The *New Testament* precept. As to the complainant, he must forgive the injury, as done to himself, and must insist on the punishment no farther than is necessary for the public good. This is consonant to the meekness of Christ. Two things are taught, *I say unto you that ye resist not evil*. To resist an evil, attempted on us, is here as expressly forbidden as the resisting of the higher powers is, (Rom. 13: 2.) and yet we must take care of ourselves and families. We may resist evil, so far as is necessary for our own security; but we must not render evil for evil; we must not bear a grudge, but go beyond those who have treated us unkindly, in forgiving them, Prov. 20: 22. 24: 29. 25: 21, 22. Rom. 12: 17. The law of retaliation must be consistent with the law of love. Our recompense, in case of injury, is in God's hands; and sometimes in the hands of his viceregents, where it is necessary to preserve the public peace: but it will not justify us in hurting our brother, to say that he began, for it is the second blow which makes the quarrel; and when we were injured, we had an opportunity, not to justify our injuring him, but to shew ourselves the true disciples of Christ, by forgiving.

Three things our Savior notices. Sm. ing on the cheek—not only an injury, but an affront, (2 Cor. 11: 20.) Turn to him, who smites thee, the other cheek; that is, instead of avenging that injury, prepare for another, and bear it patiently; give not the rude man as good as he brings; do not challenge him, nor enter an action against him; if he must be bound to his good behavior, leave that to the magistrate; there are no bones broken, no great harm done, forgive and forget it; and, if proud fools think the

worse of thee, and laugh at thee for it, allow wise men will honor thee, as a follower of the blessed Jesus, who, though He was the Judge of Israel, did not smite those who smote Him on the cheek, Mic. 5: 1. Perhaps, with some base spirits, it will expose us to a like affront again, and so it is, in effect, to turn the other cheek; still let us trust in God to protect us in the way of duty. Perhaps, the forgiving of one injury may prevent another, when revenge would have drawn it on. Some will be overcome by submission, whom resistance would the more exasperate. Prov. 25: 22. However, Christ will reward with eternal glory the shame thus patiently endured; and though not directly inflicted, if it be quietly borne for conscience' sake, and in conformity to Christ's example, it shall be regarded as suffering for Christ. And take away thy coat. Note, Legal processes are frequently made use of for doing the greatest injuries. Though judges be just, yet it is possible for men, who make no conscience of oaths and forgeries, by course of law, to force off the coat from a man's back. Marvel not at the matter, (Eccl. 5: 8.) but, in such a case, rather than go to the law by way of revenge, rather than exhibit a cross bill, or stand out to the utmost for thy undoubted right, let him take thy cloak also. If the matter be small, it is good to submit to it for the sake of peace. 'It will not cost thee so much to buy another cloak, as your course of law to recover that.'

Whoever shall compel thee to go a mile, grudge not at it, go with him two miles, rather than fall out with him.' Do not say, 'I would do it, if I were not forced,' but say, 'I will do it lest otherwise there be a quarrel'; and it is better to serve him than thy own pride and revenge. The Jews taught, that the students at law were not to be pressed, as others might be, to travel on the public service; but Christ will have his disciples comply, rather than offend the government. The sum of all is, Christ's disciples must not be litigious, but submit to small injuries; if they be such as require us to seek reputation, it must be for a good end, and without revenge. We must make the best of injuries. If any say, Flesh and blood cannot pass by such an affront, let them remember that *flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God*.

Give to him that asketh thee. If able, look on the request of the poor as giving thee an opportunity to be charitable.' When a real object of charity is presented, we should give at the first word. Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; yet our charity must be guided with discretion, (Ps. 112: 5.) lest we give that to the idle, which belongs to the deserving. 'We should say to the poor as God to us, Ask, and it shall be given you. We must be ready to lend. This obliges the borrower to foresight, industry, and honesty. 'From him who would borrow something to live on, or to trade on, turn not thou away. Shun not those who have a request to make of thee, nor contrive excuses to shake them off.' Be easy of access to him who would borrow. Though he be shameful, and have

Verses 33—42.

The law referred to (Ex. 21: 24, 25. Lev. 24: 19, 20.) was the magistrate's rule in deciding causes, declaring the utmost punishment which he might inflict, when nothing else would satisfy the offended. But the scribes interpreted it as authorizing private revenge, and requiring people to exact retaliation. Now Christ declared, that the moral law required the reverse of this spirit and conduct. His disciples must not resist evil, or the injurious party, by violent opposition, or litigious lawsuits; and there is little need to name exceptions and limits to these general rules; self-love will suffice. The preservation of life, liberty, or important property, authorizes, and often requires a man to defend himself at the peril of an illegal assault; commonly, however, it is better to yield to insults and injuries, than to retaliate by force or legal process; and it is not the spirit of Christianity to put the life and soul in competition with a sum of money, however great, when there is no reason to fear further violence. If a man give a disciple of Christ a contemptuous or painful blow on the cheek, it is duty and wisdom to take it patiently, not to expose himself to further insult, rather than to begin a contest by a blow, a challenge, or a lawsuit: even though he be despised for want of spirit, through obedience to his Lord.—In cases of importance, other duties may require a man to seek the protection of the law, justice by creditors, the public, or his own family, may engage him to defend his estate, and to check the exorbitancy of men; and a Christian may persecute a criminal from love to justice, but not from revenge. Yet, there are men of the world enough to deal with such depredators, and a Christian rarely needs to waste his time or try his

temper about them.—Under various pretences men may require disciples of Christ to attend them on business, public or private; but if they insist on a man's going a mile out of his way to serve them, it is better to go two than quarrel; it is expedient rather to give or lend to those who injuriously require it, than to refuse with harshness, or selfishness, and much more to give or lend where there is need, and a prospect of doing good.—It is evident that limitations must be admitted in the last instance; for no one can long give and lend to every one who asks him, but must consider his own ability, and the nature of the case, and act accordingly; hence we suppose that limitations are implied in other admonitions, and must be judged of by the law of 'loving our neighbor as ourselves.' The obvious instruction is, 'suffer any injury for the sake of peace, when no duty requires the contrary; and commit your concerns to the Lord.'—Those who were compelled by authority to accompany and convey the baggage of travellers, sustaining a public character, are supposed to be meant in our Lord's precept. Even if the case were oppressive, or the person legally exempted, compliance would be preferable to a contest. Scott. This custom, to transmit intelligence by 'couriers placed at regular distances,' was practised first, says Kuhn, by the Persians, Cyrus and his successors, from whose language, indeed, the original word is derived. They might, it appears, seize of men's horses, vessels, or themselves, at pleasure, while on their progress, for public service. The Roman, as Bloomfield remarks, continued the practice, which is still retained, as we find from travellers, by the Turks; and resistance may be punished with death. Ed.

CHAP. VI.

Causes and rules about alms-giving, 1-4. and Prayer, 5-8. The Lord's prayer, 9-13. Those who seek forgiveness must forgive, 14, 15. Causes and rules about fasting, 16-18. Treasure to be laid up in heaven, 19-21. The single eye, 21-23. God and man cannot both be served, 24. Solicitude about worldly things, being vain, need less, and injurious, should be shunned; and the kingdom of God and his righteousness sought in the first place, 25-34.

TAKE heed that ye do not your ^aalms before men, ^bto be seen of them; ^cotherwise ye have no reward ^dof your Father which is in heaven.

2 Therefore ^ewhen thou doest ^fthine alms, ^gdo not sound a trumpet before thee, ^has the hypocrites do, ⁱin the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have ^jglory of men. ^kVerily I say unto you,

^a 166. Mark 9:15. Luke 11:35. 12: 1, 15. Heb. 2:1.

^b 167. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^c 168. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^d 169. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^e 170. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^f 171. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^g 172. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^h 173. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

ⁱ 174. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^j 175. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^k 176. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^l 177. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^m 178. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

ⁿ 179. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^o 180. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^p 181. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^q 182. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^r 183. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^s 184. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^t 185. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^u 186. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^v 187. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^w 188. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^x 189. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^y 190. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^z 191. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^{aa} 192. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^{ab} 193. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^{ac} 194. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

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^{af} 197. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^{ag} 198. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

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^{bd} 221. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^{be} 222. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

^{bf} 223. Matt. 23:5-7. Deut. 24:13.

must render good for evil. It speaks a nobler principle than actuates most men; others salute their brethren, we must love our enemies; otherwise, what reward have we? Note, Those who promise themselves a reward above others, must study to do more than they.

Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father in heaven is perfect; which may be understood as including all things, wherein we must be followers of God as dear children. Note, It is the duty of Christians to desire and aim at perfection in holiness; (Phil. 3: 12-14.) and therein we must study to conform ourselves to our heavenly Father's example, (1 Pet. 1: 15, 16.) especially in doing good to enemies; Luke 6: 35. It is God's perfection to forgive injuries, to entertain strangers; and to do good to the evil and unthankful; and it will be ours to be like Him. We, that owe our all to the divine bounty, should aim to copy it.

CHAP. VI. V. 1-4. As we must do better than the scribes and Pharisees in avoiding heart-sins, so, likewise, in maintaining heart-religion, that we may be approved of God, not that we may be applauded by men. Luke 12: 1. Alms-giving, prayer, and fasting, are three great Christian duties—the three foundations of the law, say the Arabians: by them we do homage to God, with our three principal interests; by prayer, with our souls, by fasting, with our bodies, by alms-giving, with our estates. Thus we must not only depart from evil, but do good, and do it well, and so dwell for evermore.

Take heed of hypocrisy; intimating that it is a sin, of which we are in great danger. It is a subtle sin: vain-glory insinuates itself into what we do, ere we are aware. The disciples would be tempted to it by their power to work miracles, by their living with some who admired, and others who despised them. *Take heed,* for if hypocrisy reign in you, it will ruin you. The dead fly spoils the precious ointment.

Two things are supposed. 1. The giving of alms is a great duty, in which the disciples of Christ must abound. It is prescribed by the law of nature, and of Moses, and great stress is laid on it by the prophets. Some ancient copies read *righteousness*, instead of *alms*, for alms are righteousness, Ps.

112: 9. Prov. 10: 2. The Jews called the poor's box, the box of righteousness. What is given them is said to be their due, Prov. 3: 27. The duty is not the less excellent, because it is abused by hypocrites. Though superstitious Papists have made a merit of good works, that does not excuse covetous Protestants. Our alms do not deserve heaven; yet we cannot go to heaven without them. It is pure religion, Jam. 1: 27. and will be the test at the great day.

2. It has a great reward, if it be not done in hypocrisy. It is sometimes rewarded in temporal things, with plenty, (Prov. 11: 24, 25. Prov. 17: 1.) security from want, (Prov. 28: 27. Ps. 37: 21, 25.) succor in distress, (Ps. 41: 1, 2.) honor and a good name, which follow those most, who least covet them, Ps. 112: 9. However, it shall be recompensed in the resurrection of the just, with eternal riches; Luke 14: 14. 'The riches you impart form the only wealth you will always retain.'

Observe what the hypocrites did. They performed the duty indeed, but in pride and vain-glory, purely that they might be extolled for good men, and get in return much more than they gave. They accordingly gave alms in the synagogues and in the streets, where the multitude applauded their liberality, because they shared in it; but were so ignorant as not to discern their abominable pride. Probably they had collections for the poor in the synagogues, and common beggars haunted the streets, when the hypocrites chose to give their alms. Not that it is unlawful to give alms when men see us; but so that men may see us; we should rather choose those objects of charity which are less observed. If the hypocrites gave at their own houses, they sounded a trumpet, under pretence of calling the poor together, but really to proclaim their charity.

Verily, I say unto you, they have their reward. At first view this seems a promise; if they have their reward, they have enough; but two words make it a threatening. It is their reward, not the reward which God promises to those who do good, but which they promise themselves, and a poor reward it is; they did it to be seen of men, and they are seen of men: they chose their own delusions, and they shall have what they chose. Carnal professors stipulate with God for preferment, honor, wealth, and they

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 43-49. Our motives, encouragements and advantages suffice for considerable attainments in all things. More may be expected from those, who are redeemed to God by the blood of Christ, than from others, and more will be found, notwithstanding impediments. Whenever they allow themselves to be outdone in good by strangers to the Gospel, they forget their principles and degrade their character. Let us, then, ask of God to enable us to prove ourselves his children, by copying his goodness and mercy to the injurious; 'not being overcome

of evil, but overcoming evil with good.' Let us reverence an oath, as well as pay the Lord our vows. Let us establish such a reputation, that we may be believed, when our communication is yea, yea; nay, nay; that we may not be tempted to any language that cometh of evil. Let us be followers of God as dear children, and walk in love, even as Christ loved us, and gave Himself a sacrifice for our sins; and, following after many degrees of holiness, let us expect to be at length made perfect, even as our Father in heaven is perfect.' Scott.

NOTES. Verses 1-4.

The religion of the Pharisees was distinguished from that of Christ by its motives, as much as by its rule. He therefore proceeded to warn his disciples against hypocrisy and ostentation in duty, admonishing them not to perform 'their righteousness,' (Marg.) or good works, to be 'seen of men.' Some ancient copies and approved versions read it, as a general word, including the following particulars: Christians should 'let their light so shine before men, that others, seeing their good works, may glorify their Father;' yet they must not do the works to be 'seen of men.' Their conduct should be such, as to constrain others to see an excellence in their religion; but every action should spring from the fear and love of God, and regard to his acceptance and glory, and not from a desire of being commended. (Notes, 5: 14-16. 23: 5-7.) This our Lord illustrated by naming some services in which hypocrites are tempted to ostentation; and in which Christians should consult secrecy, if consistent with other duties. He taught his disciples, that, in contributions for pious or charitable objects, they should shun notoriety. The hypocrites published their liberality in public places, with as much care as if they had made it known by a trumpet. They sought first the applause of men. Not but that they made a merit of their services, as a compensation for their sins; but had not the praise of men been aimed at, they would not have been earnest to proclaim their liberality. Therefore this praise would be their reward. But the Christian must 'not let his left hand know what his right hand doeth.' He must act as secretly as the case will permit, and not indulge self-complacency. We desire that his charity should be known, but rather concealed: as

tified with acting from regard to the will of Him, 'who seeth in secret,' not from desire of human applause. And his Father, seeing the action and motive to be good, will accept and publicly recompense them, especially at the last day. Circumstances vary, and require variations in conduct; these are charities, which can hardly be promoted without notoriety; and a leading person may be called to excite the vanity by his example. No duty is more liable to be an occasion of vainglory than this; and designs, beneficial to others, are supported by liberality springing almost entirely from this principle. The heart is deceitful, and if men love to put their names among subscribers to public charities, but are not equally liberal in private; if they love to hear of their own beneficence, but are unwilling to do much without the credit of it; it is plain how the case is with them.—Private charities, if not more useful, are more unequivocal; and the less reward we receive from man, the more we may expect from a gracious God, if we act from holy principles.—Our Lord takes it for granted, that his disciples will give alms according to their ability; and that a good work done from proper motives will be rewarded by our God. (Notes, 10: 40-42. Heb. 6: 9-10.) A trumpet. 'It is not being apparent from Jewish writings, that it was customary with the Jews to sound a trumpet, when they distributed their alms: this seems only a proverbial expression, to denote the making a thing known or public, as Jews and Gentiles were wont to do, by the sound of a trumpet, in their triumphs, and before acting their tragedies.' Whitby. Theatrical exhibitions of every kind were proclaimed by sound of trumpet. Hypocrites. 'Men, who carry themselves with other faces than their own, as stage-players do.' Leigh. The word is derived from the profession of actors, who personate characters not belonging to them, and, after the public exhibition, do not sustain these characters among those who know them. This they do for profit, or honor; and hypocrites in religion publicly assume a false character for similar purposes. Scott. The Greek word signifying 'righteousness' is admitted into the text of the first verse (and

posed. This, however, was a contrivance 'to be seen of men,' that all might know their devotion, and applaud and confide in them accordingly. This reputation many of them acquired, and reaped the benefit of it. (Note 23: 14.) and they must expect no other reward. *Verily*, Christ alone used this word, as equivalent with *truly*. (5: 18, 20, 10, &c.) It is a strong affirmation, especially when doubled; and is not thus used except to confirm matters of importance, which are not to be taken for granted. (1: 5, 11; 2: 19, 24, 25; 3: 26, 32; 5: 53, &c.) and perhaps not very different from the expression in the Old Testament, 'as I live, saith the Lord.' SCOTT. The practice here intimated by our Lord may be traced in different nations. 'Such Turks,' says Hill, 'as at the common hours of prayer are on the road, or unable to attend the mosques, are still obliged to execute that duty; nor are they known to fail, however employed, but pray immediately, where they chance to be; insomuch that when a juryman, whom you see in the street, is asked how he has spent the last night, he replies, he will turn about, stand still, becket, and tell his charge he must have patience; when, spreading his handkerchief on the ground, he seats himself cross-legged upon it, and says his prayers, though in the open market; which having ended, he leaps briskly up, salutes the person he undertook to convey, and renews his journey.' This is general throughout the East. BURDER. The hypocrisy of these Pharisees was especially shown in the provision made for reciting the psalms, which they could not do, being then in the street. They were taken in their streets, to which they often added long pause, both before their prayers and after; so that usually, for three hours they were seen in a prayer habit and posture. LEE 'SCOTT

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them; for your Father knoweth what things ye have

and for thyself. Personal prayer is here supposed to be the duty and practice of all Christ's disciples. Instead of praying in the *synagogue*, and in the *corner of the streets, enter into thy closet*. Isaac went into the field, (Gen. 24: 63.) Christ to a mountain; Peter to the house-top. No place amiss, if it do but answer the end. Secret prayer is to be performed in retirement, that we may avoid ostentation, undisturbed, to avoid distraction, unheard, that we may use greater freedom; yet if circumstances are such that we cannot possibly avoid notice, we must not therefore neglect the duty, lest the omission be a greater scandal than the observance of it. But *pray to thy Father which is in secret: to Me; even to Me*, Zech. 7: 5, 6. The Pharisees prayed rather to men than to God. Their scope was, to court the applause of men. Do thou pray to God, and let that suffice thee. Pray to Him as thy Father, ready and gracious to answer, pity, and succor thee. Note, in secret prayer we must regard God as omnipresent. He is there, in thy closet, when no one else is. By secret prayer we give God the glory of his universal presence, (Acts 17: 24.) and may comfort ourselves with it.

As an encouragement, *thy Father seeth in secret*, when the eye of no man is on thee to applaud thee. *Under the fig-tree I saw thee*, said Christ to Nathaniel, John 1: 48. He saw Paul at prayer, in such a street, at such a house, Acts 9: 11. There is not a secret, sudden breathing after God, but He observes it.

He will reward thee openly. It is called a reward, but it is of grace, not of debt. What merit can there be in begging? The reward will be open; they shall not only have it, but have it honorably. The open reward is that which hypocrites are fond of, but have not patience to stay for. Sometimes secret prayers are answered openly, in a signal manner, manifesting God's praying people in the consciences of their adversaries. However, at the great day, all praying people shall appear in glory with the great Intercessor. The Pharisees had their reward before all the town, and it was a mere shadow. True Christians shall have theirs before the world, and it shall be a *weight of glory*.

2. We must not use vain repetitions in prayer, p. 7, 8. Though the life of it lies in *lifting up the soul, and pouring out the heart*, yet words have some interest in prayer, especially in joint prayer, for our Savior here speaks of that; for before He said, *when thou prayest*, here, *when ye pray*. And the Lord's prayer is a joint prayer, and that is the mouth of others in that, is most tempted to an ostentatious language and expression. Use not vain repetitions, either alone or in company. Observe, the fault here reproved is making a mere lip-labor of the duty of prayer. This is expressed by two words, *vain repetitions*; tautology, battology, idle babbling over the same words again and again, to no purpose, like that imitation of the wordiness of a fool, Eccl. 10: 14. *A man cannot tell what shall be; and what shall be after him, who can tell?* That which is indecent and nauseous in any discourse, must be still more so to God. Not all repetition is here condemned, but vain repetition. Christ Himself prayed, saying the same words, (ch. 26: 44.) viz. of more than ordinary fervor, Luke 22: 44. So Daniel 9: 18, 19. and there is a very elegant repetition of the same words, Ps. 136. It may be of use, both to express our own affections, and to excite the af-

fections of others. But the superstitious rehearsing of a tale of words, as the Papists, in their *ave-Mary's* and *paternosters*, the dry going over the same things again and again, to make a show of affection when there is really none; these are vain repetitions, here condemned. When we would fain say much, and cannot say much to the purpose, this is displeasing to God and to wise men. Affectation of prolixity in prayer, either out of pride, superstition, or an opinion that God needs either to be informed or argued with, or because men love to hear themselves talk—all this is forbidden. But all long prayers are not forbidden. Christ prayed all night, Luke 6: 12. Solomon's was a long prayer. When our errands and affections are extraordinary, there is need of long prayers. It is not much praying that is condemned, but much speaking. The danger is, when we only say our prayers, not when we pray them. (Eccl. 5: 2.) *Let thy words be few, considerate, and well weighed; take with you words*, (Hos. 14: 2.) *choose out words*, (Job 9: 14.) and say not every thing that comes uppermost.

This is the way of the heathen; it ill becomes Christians to do as they do. The heathen were taught by the light of nature to worship God; but becoming vain in their imaginations, concerning the object of their worship, no wonder they did concerning the manner of it. Thinking God to be like themselves, they thought He needed many words to make Him understand what was said to Him, or to bring Him to comply with their requests. Thus Baal's priests were hard at it from morning almost till night. *O Baal, hear us, O Baal, hear us*; but Elijah, in a composed frame, with a very concise prayer, prevailed for fire from heaven first, and then water; 1 Kings 18: 26, 36. *Lip-labor*, though ever so well labored, if it be all, is *lost labor*.

Your Father in heaven knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him; therefore there is no occasion for such an abundance of words. It does not follow that you need not pray; for God requires you by prayer to own your need of Him, and dependence on Him; and therefore you are to pour out your hearts before Him, and leave the event to Him. Consider, He is our Father by creation, by covenant, and our addresses to Him should be easy, unaffected. Children do not make long speeches to their parents, when they want any thing; it is enough to say, *my head, my head*, (2 Kings 4: 19.) Let us come with the disposition of children, with love, reverence, and dependence. They need not use many words, who are taught to say that one right, *Abba, Father*. He is a Father that knows our wants better than we. His eyes run to and fro through the earth to observe the necessities of his people, (2 Chron.

Verse 6.

Such prayer God will accept and answer. It shall be declared before men and angels, as evidence of humility, faith and piety, and rewarded accordingly.—Circumstances may demand a different course. Daniel saw it right to be open in his devotions, as no afraid, nor ashamed in peril, of being known to pray to God. This may expose a man to contempt, which it is his duty to bear for the Lord's sake. They who are constant in private devotions, cannot conceal it entirely from their families, and should not studiously desire it.—A field, a garden, or a mountain, may be as retired as a closet. They are consecrated by Christ's example. Wherever the heart can be lifted up to God without being observed, the Christian may offer his prayers, though in the concourse of cities, camps, or courts. (Note, Neh. 2: 4.) Scott. (This is a very impressive and emphatic address. But now! whosoever thou art, Jew Pharisee, Christian—enter into thy closet. Prayer is the most secret in discourse of the soul with God, and as it were the conversation of one heart with another. The world is too profane and treacherous to be of the secret. We must shut the door against it—endeavor to forget it, with all the affairs which busy and amuse it. Prayer requires retirement, at least of the heart; and this may be fitly termed the closet of that house of God, which the body of every real Christian is, 1 Cor. 3: 16. And what goodness equals that of God! to give not only what we ask, and more, but to reward even prayer itself! How great advantage is 'to serve a King, who places prayers in the number of services, and reckons to his subjects' account even their trust and confidence in begging all things of Him!')

Verse 7, 8.

This rule is not trasgressed by repetitions from the fulness of the heart. Men earnestly craving mercy know not how to give over, or to proceed to another subject. (Note, 2 Cor. 12: 7—10.) These are not vain repetitions, but like those which Christ used in the garden; both He and his servants have used many repetitions. (Marg. Ref. u.) It is not uncommon for men to use most words, when they have least meaning; and waste the time in repetitions, when the affections and

perhaps the thoughts are otherwise employed. This is an imitation of the heathen, who thought to excite their deities to help them by the multiplicity of their words. But Christians should have more honorable thoughts of their omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent and merciful Father, who is ready to give them all they want. He requires his children to pray, that they may sensibly feel their indigence and dependence; that their desires and expectations may be excited; and that they may be brought into a proper state to receive the blessing and render Him the praise. All copiousness must no more be condemned, than all repetitions; for Christ prayed whole nights; and there are so many things to be asked, that, if our hearts be in a spiritual frame, we may pray long without unmeaning repetition. But where this begins, devotion ends.—Cicero denies God's omniscience, declaring, that he did not think God could know things casual, or fortuitous. The heathen did not think it fit to allow of a God so envious as to attend to all things 'take care of them, or think they belonged to Him: and they thought 'it as well impossible as unsufferable in the God of the Christians, that He should diligently inspect the manners, actions, words, and secret thoughts, of all men, and be every where present with them.' *Whitby*.—This observation illustrates the instruction given in these verses. If philosophical heathens entertained such thoughts of God, what must have been the delusion of the multitude, when they incessantly exclaimed, 'great is Diana of the Ephesians!' or 'C Baal, hear us!' Use not vain repetitions. Words without ideas. In a popish Father, an address to Jesus, uses the word *Jesu* fifteen times, with only *have mercy upon us, help us, intercede*; and ending thus, 'Give me here my purgatory.' Scott. 'The Jews were guilty of the same practice, with whom it is an axiom, that every one that multiplies prayer is heard: also, whoever prolongs his prayer, his prayer does not return empty; and he that is long in prayer, his days shall be prolonged. According to their canons, a man ought every day to pray eighteen prayers. Their prayer-books abound in tautologies, expressing the same things in different words, and by a multiplicity of terms.'

Guz.

need of before ye ask him.

[Practical Observations.]

9 After this manner therefore pray ye: ^aOur Father ^bwhich art in heaven, ^cHallowed be thy name.

^a Luke 11:1, 2.

^b 16:14, 15. 5:16, 45. 7:11. 10:39.

^c 26:23, 33, 42. Ps. 48:16. Ps. 8:1. 1:6.

^d 15:11, 12. 1 John 20:1. Rom. 1:7.

^e 8:15. Gal. 1:1. 4:6. 1 Pet. 1:17.

^f 26:23. 2 Cor. 20:6. Ps. 115:3. Is. 57:15.

^g 13:66:1.

^h Lev. 10:3. 2 Sam. 7:25. 1 Kings 8:43.

ⁱ 1 Chr. 17:24. Neh. 9:5. Ps. 72:1, 19.

^j 10:29. 10:29-32. 11:23, 25. Is. 63:37:20.

^k Zech. 14:9. Mal. 1:11, 14. Luke 2:14.

^l 11:12. 1 Tim. 6:16. Rev. 4:11.

^m 5:12-14.

mouths; after this manner, therefore, pray ye. The Jews had so corrupted this duty, that Christ saw it needful to show what must ordinarily be the matter and method of their prayers, which He gives in words that may be used, as the summary or contents of the several particulars of our prayers. Not that we are tied to the use of this form only, or always, as if this were necessary to the consecrating of our other prayers; we are led to pray after this manner, or to this effect. That in Luke differs from this; we do not find it used by the apostles; we are not here taught to pray in the name of Christ as afterwards; we are here taught to pray, that the kingdom might come, which did come when the Spirit was poured out; yet, without doubt, it is very good to use it as a form, and it is a pledge of the communion of saints, having been used by the church in all ages, at least, says Dr. Whitby, from the third century. It is our Lord's prayer, of his composing and appointing; it is very compendious, and yet very comprehensive. The matter is choice, the method instructive, and the expression very concise. We must acquaint ourselves with it, for it is used acceptably, no further than it is used with understanding.

Practical Observations.

V. 1-8. In various ways the evil of our hearts leads us aside from 'simplicity and godly sincerity.' Hypocrites corrupt their duties by selfish motives, whence the wicked excuse their own neglect of religion. But Christians must attend on every work and all means of grace, from right principles and holy intentions. The less they seek rewards and honor from men, the more may they expect them from God.—What discoveries will be made at the last day! Many now admired for charity, devotion and austerity, will appear as vain-glorious hypocrites. But, at that solemn period, the secret charities, and fervent prayers of believers, who seek the good of even their bitterest enemies, and their secret mortification of sinful propensities,

Verse 9.

The prayer which Christ taught his disciples contains, perhaps, more important instruction than can elsewhere be found in so few words. Some argue that it was intended only for the disciples before the introduction of the Christian dispensation. But neither Matthew nor Luke, who recorded it after that dispensation was fully opened, give any such intimation. We are not in this prayer to present our petitions in the name of Christ, and through his intercession; for it was not proper to declare this at that time.—No doubt the form has been misused, by unmeaning repetitions, to the exclusion of real prayer, and is repeated even by Protestants with little understanding, and with some superstition. Perceiving this mistake, some pious persons have gone to the opposite extreme, and have objected to the use of it, and in a measure overlooked the instruction contained in it.—Our Lord introduced the prayer by saying, 'After this manner pray ye.' In Luke we read, 'When ye pray, say.' It may be proper to use the very words, but not always necessary; for we do not find that the apostles thus used it. But we ought to pray after the manner of it; with that endearing familiarity, confidence in God, zeal for his glory, love to mankind, submission, moderation in temporal and earnestness in spiritual things, which it inculcates; avoiding vain repetitions, and using grave and significant expressions. Nor can we offer a petition warranted by God, which is not virtually comprised in these instructions.—Christ taught his disciples, though in the hearing of the multitude; and He had before spoken to them of God as their 'Father in heaven,' whom they were to glorify, from whom they were to expect their reward, and who knew what things they needed. In this endearing character He teaches us to address Him in prayer. He is the Father of all creatures, as the Author and Preserver of their existence; of all rational creatures, as the Father of spirits; especially of men, for whom He continues to provide, and to whom He does good, notwithstanding their transgressions. But though a Father to us, we have rebelled against Him; and by joining the arch-apostate, and being like him, we are 'the children of the wicked one.' Yet, through the divine Mediator, God is revealed as a reconciled Father, ready to receive his rebellious offspring, whenever they are willing to return to his service. When the sinner 'comes to himself,' and purposes to return to God by faith and prayer, he is taught to approach Him as a kind Father, 'not an inexorable Judge and Avenger, but he may come with encouragement. So that this endearing appellation teaches the penitent to pray with hope, and the established believer with confidence; as well as to regard the glory of his Father, and seek the disposition of dutiful children.—The expression, 'which art in heaven,' reminds us of the sovereign and universal authority, power,

This prayer, as indeed every prayer, is a letter sent from earth to heaven. Here is the inscription, *Our Father*; the place, *in heaven*; the contents, *in the several errands*; the close, *for thine is the kingdom*; the seal, *Amen*; and, if you will, the date too, *this day*.

There are specially three parts of the prayer: 1. THE PREFACE. *Our Father*; which art in heaven. Before we come to our business, there must be a solemn address to Him, with whom our business lies. *Our Father*; intimating that we are to pray for others; that we are members one of another. We are taught to *thine to pray*—not to saints and angels, who are ignorant of us, are not to have the honors we give in prayer, and cannot grant our requests. We are taught what title to give to God, *that which speaks Him rather beneficent than magnificently* for we are to come boldly to the throne of grace.

We must call him our Father. He is a common Father to all mankind by creation, Mai. 2:10. Acts 17:23. To the saints He is in a special manner a Father, by adoption and regeneration; Eph. 1:5. Gal. 4:6. and an unspeakable privilege it is. Thus we must eye Him in prayer, maintain good thoughts of Him, such as are encouraging and not affrighting; nothing more pleasing to God, or pleasant to ourselves, than to call God, *Father*. If He be our Father, He will pity our weaknesses and infirmities, (Ps. 103:13.) will spare us, (Mal. 3:17.) will make the best of our services, though very defective, will deny no good thing to us, Luke 11:11, 13. We have access with boldness to Him, as to a father, and we have an Advocate with the Father, and the Spirit of adoption. When we come repenting of our sins, we must eye God as a Father, as the prodigal did, (Luke 15:

from love to God and holiness, will be openly rewarded. Whilst the specious part of an ungodly man's character is shown, and his crimes and motives studiously concealed, and whilst the infirmities of a pious man are seen, but his good works and holy affections are veiled by humility, the difference may be scarcely discernible: but when the whole shall be known, the world will see the one to be meet for heaven, and the other deserving his doom. Let us, then, always act as before 'our Father who seeth in secret,' and as desiring no reward but what He will bestow on his children, for 'their work and labor of love.' (Note, 1 Cor. 4:3-5. v. 5.) SCOTT.

and majesty of God, his justice, holiness and felicity, for heaven is the high and holy place, the throne of God, and region of pure delight. This, then, instructs us to come before God with humility and reverence of his majesty; with abstraction from external objects and carnal imaginations; with spiritual desires and aspirations to the purity and felicity of his heavenly worshippers.—The first petition is, 'Hallowed be thy name,' or, 'Let it be sanctified, and had in honor.' The name of God signifies his being and perfections, and all that is implied in the appellations by which He is known. (Note, Ex. 34:5-7.) We are taught to pray, in the first place, that this name may be known, loved, and glorified. We desire in this petition the happiness produced by the service and favor of God; that we may so behold his glory, as to love, adore and honor Him, and that He may be glorified by us. We pray the Lord to make Himself known to others, till all nations 'worship Him in spirit and in truth,' as the God of salvation, and as revealed in His Word.—So that this is a prayer, that all atheism, infidelity, idolatry, impiety, superstition, ignorance, and false religion, may be banished from the earth; that God 'will make Himself known in his mysterious name, glory and grace, to all nations; that He, as one God in three persons, may be worshipped spiritually and acceptably by every one of the human species. (Marg. Ref. c.—Note, 28:19, 20. Hallowed. John 17:17, 19. 1 Cor. 7:14. Heb. 10:29.—Gen. 2:3. Ex. 20:8. Lxx. 10:3.) SCOTT. The admirable form of prayer which our Lord gave to his disciples, after cautioning them against all ostentation in their devotions, stands unrivalled in every thing that constitutes the perfection of prayer. It is concise, perspicuous, solemn and comprehensive; adapted to all conditions and classes of men; it fixes our thoughts on a few great, important points, and impresses on our minds a deep sense of the goodness and greatness of that Almighty Being to whom it is addressed. It begins with acknowledging Him to be our most gracious and merciful Father; it begs that his name may every where be revered, that his religion may spread over the earth, and that his will may be obeyed by men with the same ardor, alacrity and constancy that it is by the angels in heaven. It next entreats the supply of all our essential wants, temporal and spiritual; a sufficiency of the things absolutely necessary for our subsistence; the forgiveness of our transgressions, on condition that we forgive our brethren; and, finally, support under the temptations that assault our virtue, and deliverance from the evils and calamities that everywhere surround us; expressing at the same time the utmost trust and confidence in the power of God, to grant whatever He sees it expedient and proper for his creatures to receive.

Ed. Partridge

10. ^a Thy kingdom come. ^b Thy will be done in earth, ^c as it is in heaven.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

d 2:2. 4:17. 16:28. Ps. 26:12-12. Is. 40:3-4. Jer. 23:5-6. Dan. 2:44. 7:11,12. Zech. 8:9. Mark 11:10. Luke 19:11,28. Col. 1:15. Rev. 11:12. 18:10. 19:6. 20:4.
e 7:21. 12:50. 26:42. Ps. 40:8. Mark 8:38. John 4:34. 5:30. 7:17. 14:20. 15:22. 22:14. Rom. 12:2. Eph. 6:6. 1:9. 1:10. 1:11. 1:12. 1:13. Heb. 10:7. 12:21. 1:21. 2:15. 4:2. 1:14. 2:6. Ps. 103:19-21. Dan. 4:34. Heb. 11:16-35. Job 23:12. Ps. 33:19-19. 31:10. Prov. 30:5. Luke 11:3. John 5:31. Eccl. 2:12. 3:12. 1 Tim. 6:8.

holds ^a children of men, Ps. 33:13, 14. and we must in prayer see his eye on us. Thence He has a clear view of all our wants, burdens, desires, and infirmities. It is the firmament of his power likewise, as well as of his prospect, Ps. 150:1. As a heavenly Father, He is able to do great things for us, more than we ask or think. He has wherewith to supply our needs, for every good gift is from above. He is a Father, and we may come to Him with boldness, but a Father in heaven, and we must come with reverence, Eccl. 7:2. Thus all our prayers should correspond with that which is our great aim as Christians, to be with God in heaven. God and heaven must be particularly eyed in every thing. By prayer we send before us thither, where we profess to be going.

2. PETITIONS. They are six, the first three relating more particularly to God, the last three to our own concerns, both temporal and spiritual; as in the ten commandments, the first four teach us our duty toward God, and the last six our duty to our neighbor. We are taught to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and then to hope that other things shall be added.

Hallowed be thy name. Elsewhere translated sanctified; here hallowed, because people were used to it in the Lord's prayer. Thus we give glory to God. It may be taken in adoration; as, that the Lord be magnified; for God's holiness is the glory of all his perfections. We must begin our prayers with praising God. It is very fit we should give Him glory, before we receive mercy from Him. Let Him have the praise of his perfections, and then let us have the benefit of them. It ought to be our chief and ultimate end in all our prayers, that God may be glorified. 'Father, glorify Thyself in giving me daily bread, and pardoning all my sins.' Since all is of Him and through Him, all must be to Him and for Him. In prayer, our thoughts and affections, unlike the Pharisees', must be directed to make of God our chief end. 'Do thus and thus for me, for the glory of thy name, and so far as is for the glory of it.' We desire that God may be glorified, both by us and others, and especially by Himself. 'Let thy name be glorified, as a Father, and as a Father in heaven. Let thy name be sanctified, for it is a holy name; no matter what becomes of our polluted names; but, Lord, what wilt thou do to thy great name?' When we so pray, we make a virtue of necessity; for God will sanctify his own name, whether we desire it or not; & will be exalted among the heathen, Ps. 46:10. When

our Savior prayed, Father, glorify thy name, it was immediately answered, I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.

Thy kingdom come. This plainly has reference to the doctrine which Christ at this time, John the Baptist previously, and the disciples of Christ afterwards preached—the kingdom of heaven is at hand. The kingdom of your heavenly Father, the kingdom of the Messiah, is at hand; pray that it may come. Note. We should turn the Word we hear into prayer. Does Christ promise, surely I come quickly, our hearts should answer, even so, come. Ministers should pray over the Word; when the y preach, the kingdom of God is at hand, they should pray, Father, thy kingdom come. What God has promised, we must pray for. Promises are given, not to supersede, but to encourage prayer; and when the accomplishment of a promise is near, we should pray for it the more earnestly, as Daniel for the deliverance of Israel, when he understood that the time of it was near at hand; Dan. 9:2. See Luke 19:11. It was the Jews' daily prayer to God, Let Him make his kingdom reign, let his redemption flourish, and let his Messiah come and deliver his people, says Dr. Whitby, from Vitrina. Let thy kingdom come, let the Gospel be preached to all, and embraced by all; let all be brought to subscribe to the record God has given in his Word concerning his Son, and to embrace Him as their Savior and Sovereign. Let the bounds of the Gospel church be enlarged, the kingdoms of the world be made Christ's kingdom, and all men become subjects to it and live as befits their character.

Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. We pray that God's kingdom being come, we and others may be brought into obedience to all its laws and ordinances. By this let it appear Christ's kingdom is come, let God's will be done; and let it appear as a kingdom of heaven, by introducing a heaven upon earth. We make Christ but a titular Prince, if we call Him King, and do not his will. Having prayed that He may rule us, we pray that we may in every thing be ruled by Him. Observe, the thing prayed for, thy will be done; Lord, do what Thine pleasest with me and mine; 1 Sam. 3:18. In this sense, Christ prayed, not my will, but thine be done. 'Enable me to do what is pleasing to Thee; give me the grace necessary to the right knowledge of thy will, and acceptable obedience to it. Let thy will be done conscientiously by me and others, not our own will, the will of the

Verse 10.

The next petition has given rise to the opinion, that this prayer was suited only to the opening of the Christian dispensation, called 'the kingdom of God,' and 'kingdom of heaven.' (Note, 3:2.) But while any part of the earth remains subject to sin and Satan, and till the kingdom of grace be swallowed up in that of glory, this petition will be proper. That 'the name of God may be hallowed,' the kingdom of the Messiah must be established in its efficacy. In this petition, then, we ask, that this kingdom may be set up in our hearts, subjecting all within us to Christ our King; next, that it may be set up in the hearts of our children, relatives, servants, friends and neighbors; that 'all who are called Christians' may be led into the way of truth and holiness; the true Gospel be everywhere preached 'with the Holy Spirit sent' to render it efficacious; and 'all kings fall down before' the Redeemer, 'all nations do Him service'; in short, that sin, and Satan, and his party be banished out of the world, and confined to hell, never more to disturb the creation of God. Whatever pertains to the qualifying, sending, or success of ministers, conversion of sinners, peace and purity of the church, the subversion of anti-christian powers, and the bringing of Jews, Pagans and Mohammedans into the church, is implied in this petition—

We here pray, that all may become subjects to the kingdom of God, 'erected by Christ, that the knowledge of Christianity may go to all nations'; that 'the kingdoms of this world may be the kingdoms of our Lord,' all 'people and languages doing Him service'; that his 'kingdom may be advanced by the 'coming in of the Jews,' and 'fulness of the Gentiles,' the minds of all men being subdued to 'the obedience of faith,' and they shewing forth the virtues of it in their 'lives.' *Whitby.*—To this is annexed, 'Thy will be done in earth, even as it is in heaven.' The will of God may be considered with reference to his commandments, or his providence: strictly speaking, his providential will is done in earth equally as in heaven: but submission, and satisfaction in it, may be intended. The use of this clause, so meaning exclusively resignation to the will of God, limits and enervates its weighty and extensive import. The inhabitants of heaven do the will of God universally, perfectly, harmoniously, and with ineffable delight. And we are taught to pray, that all mankind may imitate their example; that the whole race of men, becoming subjects of Christ, may renounce all sin and wickedness, and obey God's commands, as the angels obey them; that there may be an end of injustice, oppression, fraud, violence, bloodshed, interperence, licentiousness, ungodliness, selfishness, malice

and contention; and that righteousness, truth, goodness, mercy, purity, love of God and of each other, may fill the earth as they fill heaven. What a change would this be! What an extensive petition!—We should pray too, that all may rejoice in the sovereignty and glory of God, be satisfied with his arrangements respecting themselves, and rejoice to see others honored and happy. While requesting such blessings for others, we are taught to ask this submissive frame for ourselves, and aim at it in all our conduct. (Note Rev. 19:4-6.)

Verse 11.

Having, 'first sought' the things, which pertain to the 'kingdom of God and his righteousness,' prayed for the display of his glory, and the good of all men, we are then directed to ask the things which pertain to our bodies in this life. Many suppose this petition to mean spiritual blessings, even the 'bread of life, which came down from heaven, to give life unto the world.' Some interpret it of the bread in the Lord's supper. But the supply of temporal wants seems to be meant. Bread is the principal thing needful for the body, and is often put for the whole. The use of this word, then, teaches us to ask only what is necessary, without craving superfluities,—referring it to our heavenly Father to determine what things are necessary to our station in life, families, and other circumstances. Christians, rich or poor, are taught to ask this provision of God for all depend on Him, and should receive it as his gift, give Him thanks for it, and use it to his glory, whether it come from their estates, or personal industry, or the liberality of others. We are taught to ask for the day; (with reference perhaps to the Manna.) and this instructs us to beware of covetousness, to be contented with a slender provision, and trust God from day to day. While we seek our daily bread from God, we must diligently use the means of obtaining it, and be provident, industrious and frugal. We must reject every thing gotten by means inconsistent with integrity; and not expect to be supported in sloth, or extravagance. (Note, Prov. 30:7-9.) *Daily.*—The original signifies, that which is fitting to our subsistence. That for every day. *Suidas.* 'Bread sufficient for our subsistence.' *Theophylact.* *Scott.*—'I can see no reason for changing our received translation, and cannot but acquiesce in Mr. Mede's remark, that the original signifies what is sufficient for our present support and subsistence: so that this petition is nearly parallel to that of Agur, and a most excellent lesson to teach us, on the one hand, moderation in our desires, and on the other, an humble dependence on Divine Providence for the most necessary supplies, be our possessions or abilities ever so great.' *Unon.*

12 And *forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*

13 And *lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the king-*

h Ex. 34:7. 1 Kings 8:30, 54, 59, 50. Ps. 32:1-2. 130:3-4. Is. 1:18. Dan. 9:19. Acts 13:35. Eph. 1:7. 1 Th. 5:17-9.
1:19-25. 27-34. Luke 7:40-42. 11:4. 14:15. 18:21, 22, 28-35. Neh. 5:12. 13. Mark 11:25-26. Luke 6:37. 17:1-6. Eph. 4:32. Col. 3:13.
1:26-41. Gen. 22:1. Deut. 8:2-16. Prov. 30:7-9. Luke 22:31, 32, 40, 46. 1 Cor. 10:13. 2 Cor. 12:9. Heb. 11:35. 17:3. Pet. 5:7. 2 Pet. 2:9. Rev. 2:10. 3:10.
1 Chr. 4:10. Ps. 121:7, 8. Jer. 15:21. 17:17, 18. Gal. 1:4. 1 Th. 5:13-14. 2 Tim. 4:17-18. Heb. 2:14-15. 1 John 3:1. 5:18-19. Rev. 7:14-17. 21:4.
h Ex. 15:13. 1 Chr. 28:11, 12. Ps. 116:15. 47:2-7. 149:4-9. Dan. 4:35, 36. 5:19. 7:19. 1 Tim. 1:17. 6:15-17. Rev. 5:13. 19:1.

We do not ask the *bread of deceit*, or other people's bread, (Prov. 20: 13, 17.) not the *bread of idleness*; (Prov. 31: 27.) but the bread honestly gotten; *daily bread*, teaching us not to *take thought for the morrow*, (ch. 6: 34.) but constantly to depend on Divine Providence, as those who live from hand to mouth. We beg of God to *give* it us, not *sell* or *lend*. The greatest of men must be beholden to God for their *daily bread*. To us, not me only, but others also. We must have a compassionate concern for the poor. It intimates, likewise, that we ought to *pray* with our families. We eat together, and therefore ought to *pray* together. *This day*; as duly as the day comes, we must *pray* to our heavenly Father, and reckon we should as well go a day without meat, as without prayer.

And *forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* And *forgive* intimates that, unless our sins be pardoned, we can have no comfort in life, or the supports of it. Our daily bread does but feed us as lambs for the slaughter, if our sins be not pardoned. It intimates that we must *pray* for daily *pardon*, as duly as for daily *bread*. *He that is washed needeth but to wash his feet.*

A petition: *Father in heaven, forgive us our debts, our debts to Thee.* Note, Our sins are our debts. There is a debt of duty, which, as creatures, we owe to our Creator. We do not *pray* to be discharged from that; but, on the non-payment of that, arises a debt of punishment. In default of obedience to the will of God, we become obnoxious to the *wrath of God*; and for not observing the precept of the law, we stand obliged to the penalty. A debtor is liable to process, so are we; a malefactor is debtor to the law, so are we. Our heart's desire should be, that our heavenly Father would *forgive us our debts*, that the obligation to punishment may be vacated, that we may *not come into condemnation*. In suing out the pardon of our sins, the great plea we must rely on, is the satisfaction made to the justice of God for the sin of man, by the dying of the Lord Jesus, our Surety, or rather

Verse 12.

Whilst we daily seek from God such blessings, we must not forget, that we have no claim to them, but deserve his heavy indignation. Yet 'there is forgiveness with him'; and we are taught to *pray* for it, as often as for bread; not only forgiveness of former sins, but of late offences, in thought, word and deed, of omission and commission, in our conduct towards God and man. By these we contract debts continually. We receive existence, and all that we possess, from God; and to him they ought to be devoted; by failure to do we contract a debt, which we cannot pay, but which needs remission. (Note, Luke 7: 40-43.)—Being taught to ask forgiveness every time we *pray*, we are thus reminded to exercise watchfulness, self-examination, humiliation, faith, and hope in the mercy of God; and to forgive others, being required to add, 'as we forgive our debtors.' We ought to forgive others, as we expect forgiveness. Their failures in duty to us, are a small debt in comparison with our failures of duty to God. (Marg. Ref. Notes, 18: 23-35.) True repentance and faith always produce forgiveness of others. Malice and revenge are proofs of impenitence. If a believer be betrayed into this uncharitable spirit, he must not expect communion with God, but frowns and corrections, till reduced to a better temper. We are thus reminded often to examine ourselves impartially in this respect, least, in *praying* for pardon, we should call for wrath; and we are taught to ask for the humble, forgiving spirit required of us. 'The word *debts* is not to be interpreted of pecuniary obligations, which the debtor can pay; and the creditor cannot conveniently lose; yet when debtors are in the same condition in respect to us, as we are in respect to God, when they cannot pay us, and would be distressed, or ruined, if we insisted on it; they must remit the debt, as we hope God to remit ours. SCOTT. This petition supposes, that we are sinners, and need God's pardon. 'Of our offences' that these sins, should God deal with us according to them, would bring down his displeasure. Seeing every sin is a transgression of his law, it must make us guilty, till, by an act of grace, we have obtained remission. And this being the first spiritual petition we make for ourselves, it shows how much we are concerned to obtain it, our happiness entirely depending on the favor of God, and our misery on his displeasure.' WATSON. 'It is hard to imagine a more effectual expedient to promote forgiveness of injuries, than making it a part of our daily prayer, to ask such pardon from God, as we impart to our offending brethren. For, that every malicious purpose against him, we add turn, this petition into an imprecation, by which we should, as it were, bind down the wrath of God upon ourselves.' DODD.

flesh, or the mind, nor the will of men, (1 Pet. 4: 2.) much less Satan's will, (John 8: 44.) that we may not displease God, nor be displeased at what He does. Let it be done on earth, in this place of our probation, (where our work must be done, if ever it be done,) as it is done in heaven, that place of rest and joy. We *pray* that earth, now so akin to hell, may be made, by the observance of God's will, more like heaven; and that saints may be made more like the holy angels. We are on earth, blessed be God, not yet under the earth, and *pray* for the living; not the dead.

Give us this day our daily bread. Because our natural being is necessary to our spiritual well-being in this world, next after God's glory, we *pray* for the necessities of this life. *Bread for the day approaching*, for the remainder of our lives—*bread for our subsistence*, that which is agreeable to our condition in the world, (Prov. 30: 8.) *food convenient for us*, and our families, according to our stations. Every word has a lesson: *bread*, not dainties, or superfluities; that which is wholesome, though it be not nice; our bread, teaching us honesty and industry.

Bail to the action, who undertook our discharge.

As we *forgive our debtors*. This is not a plea of merit, but of grace. Note, Those who come to God for forgiveness, must make conscience of forgiving such as have offended them; else they curse themselves, when they say the Lord's prayer. Our duty is to *forgive our debtors*. As to debts of money, we must not be severe in exacting them from those who cannot pay them, without ruining themselves and their families. But this means debts of injury. Our debtors are those that *trespass against us*, that *smite us*, (ch. 5: 39, 40.) and, in strictness of law, might be prosecuted for it; but we must forgive and forget, and this is a moral qualification for pardon and peace. It encourages hope that God will *forgive us*; for, if there be in us this gracious disposition, it is wrought of God; and, therefore, as a perfection transcendently in Himself, it will be an evidence that He has forgiven, having wrought in us the condition of forgiveness.

And *lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil*. Expressed negatively. Having *prayed* that the guilt of sin may be removed, we *pray*, as is fit, that we may never return again to folly, and not be tempted to it. It is not as if God tempted any to sin; but 'Lord, let not Satan loose on us. Lord, leave us not to ourselves, (Ps. 19: 13.) for we are very weak; Lord, do not lay stumbling blocks before us, such circumstances as may be an occasion of falling.' Temptations are to be *prayed* against, both because of the trouble and danger of them, and the guilt and grief that may follow.

But *deliver us from evil*; the evil one, the devil; keep us that we be not assaulted, or that we be not overcome by those assaults; or from an evil thing, sin, which God hates, and by which Satan destroys men. 'Lord, deliver us from the corruption that is in the world through lust, from the evil of every condition in the world, from the *strg of death which is sin*; deliver us from ourselves, from our own evil hearts, from evil men, that they may not be a snare to us, or we a prey to them.'

3. CONCLUSION. *For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.* Some refer this to David's doxology, 1 Chron. 29: 11. *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness.*

1. It is a plea to enforce the foregoing petition. It is our duty to plead with God in prayer, to fill our mouth with arguments, (Job 23: 4.)

Verse 13.

The disciples are next taught to *pray*, 'lead us not into temptation.' (Note, Gen. 22: 1.) God never puts evil into the heart, nor stirs it up there by a positive influence. In the former case, 'a man is tempted by his own lust, and enticed'; in the latter, by Satan or wicked men. (Note, Jam. 1: 13-15.) Providence may lead us into circumstances, which give to our inward corruptions and the temptations of Satan advantages against us. This the Lord does to try the reality of our grace, the character of our profession, or the remaining power of sin. But conscious of our weakness, fearing to offend God, dishonor the Gospel, stumble others, or wound our consciences, we ought to *pray* earnestly, 'not to be led into temptation'; beseeching God to mortify our propensities, to restrain the malice and power of the tempter, to keep us out of trying circumstances, and never permit us to be tempted above what we are able.' Thus we are taught to dread sin, hope for mercy, distrust ourselves, rely on the providence, as well as grace of God, to keep us from it; to shun temptation, watch our hearts, be habitually prepared to repel the assaults of the tempter, and take care not to tempt others. Immense harm often comes by overlooking this request. (Note, 26: 40, 41.)—The last petition is, 'but deliver us from evil.' Some translate it, 'from the evil one,' which is a literal rendering; but why limit the interpretation? We are taught to *pray* for deliverance from all kinds of evil, from the powers of darkness, from the evil world, from the evil of our hearts, from the evil of suffering, from the final wrath of God, from terrible or injurious temporal calamities, from the terror and sting of death, from the power of death by a glorious resurrection, from all evil, natural and moral, and from sin and all its consequences, by the restoration of the body and soul to holiness, glory and immortality, is the enjoyment of the divine favor forever. It is a prayer, that whoever evil may overtake us, we may be preserved through all, and obtain eternal life by the mercy of God in Christ. This is concluded by a doxology, 'for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever, Amen.' The kingdom, for the coming of which we *pray*, is the Lord's. His power and authority are his, and He can set it up in defiance of opposition, and his will be the glory; so that this may be considered a reason why our prayers will be answered—or it may be an expression of joy, that the kingdom, power, and glory are the Lord's forever; and a purpose to give Him honor, worship, love and obedience forever; and a desire, that all others may do the same.—To this we are taught to set, 'Amen.' So be it: Let all this be done by the glory of God, and we desire no more.' (Marg. Ref. o.)—What now is there is

dom and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen.

14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you:

15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

16 ¶ Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the

28:20. Num. 5:22. Deut. 27:15, &c.
1 Kings 1:36. 1 Chr. 16:36. Ps. 41:
13. 72:18. 89:22. 106:48. Jer. 29:12.
1 Cor. 14:16. 2 Cor. 1:20. Rev. 1:18.
3:14. 19:4. 22:20.
¶ 12. 18:21-35. Prov. 21:13.
Mark 11:25, 26. Jam. 2:13. 1 John
3:10.
q 14:15. 2 Sam. 12:16, 21. Neh. 1:4.
Ezra 7:16. Ps. 35:1. 69:1.
24. Dan. 9:3. Luke 2:37. Acts 10:
30. 13:23. 14:23. 1 Cor. 7:5. 2
Cor. 6:5. 11:27.
¶ 25. 1 Kings 21:27. Is. 59:3-5.
Zech. 7:3-5. Mal. 3:14. Mark 2:
18. Luke 13:12.

sign in revealing Himself to heaven, and all that would go to observe how full this doxology is. Here there should be a gracious fluency, and this forever. Ascribing glory to God forever, intimates an acknowledgment, that it is eternally due, and an earnest desire to be eternally doing it, with saints and angels above, Ps. 71:14. We are taught to affix our Amen. God's Amen is a grant, it shall be so; our Amen is only a summary desire, let it be so. It is a token of our desire and assurance to be heard. It refers to every petition going before, and thus, in compassion to our infirmities, we are taught to knit up in one word, what we have lost in the particulars. It is good to conclude religious duties with some warmth, that we may go from them with a sweet favor on our spirits. Good people formerly said Amen at the end of every prayer, and it is commendable, provided it be done with understanding, as the apostle directs, (1 Cor. 14:16.) and uprightly, with inward impressions corresponding to the outward utterance.

The clause in the fifth petition, as we forgive our debtors, was perfectly new to the Jews. The others were not so, and our Savior here adds the reason, not with any personal reflection upon the peevishness and litigiousness of that generation, though there was cause enough for it, but only from the necessity and importance of the thing itself. God, in forgiving us, has a peculiar respect to our forgiving those who have injured us. When we pray, we must not only remind ourselves of it, but bind ourselves to it, ch. 18: 23-35. Selfish nature is loth to comply with it, and therefore it is here inculcated.

Your heavenly Father will also forgive. Not as if this were the only condition required; there must be repentance, and faith, and new obedience; but where other graces are, this will be, and this is a proof of the existence of others. Those, which in the prayer are called debts, are here called trespasses. It is an extenuating term for offences—slips, falls. It is a good evidence and help of our forgiving others, to call the injuries done to us by a

not to move God, but to affect ourselves, to encourage our faith, excite our fervency, and evidence both. Now the best pleas in prayer are taken from God Himself. We must wrestle with God in his own strength, both as to the matter of our pleas, and the urging of them. It has reference to the first three petitions, 'Father in heaven, thy kingdom come, for thine is the kingdom; thy will be done, for thine is the power; hallowed be thy name, for thine is the glory.' And as to our own particular errands, these are encouraging. 'Thine is the kingdom; Thou hast the government of the world, and the protection of the saints, thy willing subjects in it.' Thine is the power, to maintain that kingdom, and to make good all thy engagements to thy people. Thine is the glory, as the end of all that which is done for the saints, in answer to their prayers; for thy sake waiteth for Thee; Ps. 65: 1.

It is a form of thanksgiving. The best pleading with God is praising Him: it is the way to obtain further mercy, as it qualifies us to receive it. In all our addresses to God, it is fit that praise should have a considerable share, for praise becometh the saints; they are to be to our God for a name and a praise. We and a world of angels praise God, not because He needs it, but because He deserves it; and it is our duty to give Him glory, in compliance with his desire. Praise is the work and happiness of heaven, and all that would go to heaven hereafter, must begin their heaven now.

The kingdom, and the power, and the glory, it is all thine. Note, It becomes us to be copious in praising God. Here there should be a gracious fluency, and this forever. Ascribing glory to God forever, intimates an acknowledgment, that it is eternally due, and an earnest desire to be eternally doing it, with saints and angels above, Ps. 71:14. We are taught to affix our Amen. God's Amen is a grant, it shall be so; our Amen is only a summary desire, let it be so. It is a token of our desire and assurance to be heard. It refers to every petition going before, and thus, in compassion to our infirmities, we are taught to knit up in one word, what we have lost in the particulars. It is good to conclude religious duties with some warmth, that we may go from them with a sweet favor on our spirits. Good people formerly said Amen at the end of every prayer, and it is commendable, provided it be done with understanding, as the apostle directs, (1 Cor. 14:16.) and uprightly, with inward impressions corresponding to the outward utterance.

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mollifying name. Cal. them not treasurers, but trespassers, not wilful injuries but casual inadvertencies. Peradventure it was an oversight (Gen. 43: 12.) therefore make the best of it. We must not only bear no malice, nor meditate revenge, but we must not upbraid our brother with the injuries he has done us, and must be ready to help him; and if he repent and desire to be friends again, we must be familiar with him as before.

But if you forgive not, it is a bad sign; you are altogether unqualified for pardon. He, whom you call Father, though his grace is offered on reasonable terms, will, nevertheless, not forgive you. And if other graces be sincere, and yet you be defective in this, you cannot expect the comfort of your pardon. Note, Those who would find mercy of God, must show mercy to their brethren. We cannot expect that He will stretch out the arms of his mercy towards us, unless we lift up to Him pure hands, without wrath, 1 Tim. 2: 8. If we pray in anger, we have reason to fear that God will answer in anger. Prayers made in wrath, are written in gall, as has been said. What reason is it that God should forgive us the talents we owe Him, if we do not forgive our brethren the pence they owe us? Our great Peace-Maker came into the world, not only to reconcile us to God, but one to another. It is great presumption to make a light matter of that, on which Christ lays so much stress. Men's passions shall not frustrate God's word.

V. 16-18. It is here supposed that religious fasting is a duty required of Christ's disciples, when God in his providence calls to it, and their own souls require it. When the bridegroom is taken away, then shall they fast, ch. 9: 15. Fasting is here put last, not because it is so much a duty for its own sake, as that it disposes us for other duties. Prayer comes in between almsgiving and fasting, as the life of both. Christ here speaks especially of private fasts, commonly used among the pious Jews. Some fasted one day, some two, every week; others more seldom. On those days they did not eat till sun-set, and then sparingly. It was not the Pharisee's fasting twice in the week, but his boasting of it, that Christ condemned, Luke 18: 12. It is a laudable practice, and we have reason to lament that it is so generally neglected among Christians. Anna was much in fasting, Luke 2: 37. Cornelius fasted and prayed, Acts 10: 30. The primitive Christians were much in it, Acts 13: 3; 14: 23. Private fasting is supposed, 1 Cor. 7: 5. It is an act of self-denial, a holy revenge on ourselves, and humiliation under the hand of God. The most grown Christians must hereby own, they are so far from having any thing to be proud of, that they are unworthy of their daily bread. It tends to curb the flesh,

this prayer that is not evangelical, and suited to the wants of every Christian and every congregation? What can be more spiritual, comprehensive, or energetic? What is wanting? What redundant? What more fraught with zeal for God, love for man, and thirstings for the blessings of salvation? What more replete with instruction? It needs only to be understood and used with correspondent feelings, to constitute devotion, which would almost emulate heaven. 'This clause (the doxology) is not in Luke, nor in many copies of Matthew; yet there are sufficient reasons for receiving it as a part of the Lord's prayer; for it is in the Syriac version, in the Greek Liturgies, and in most ancient copies; and it is not likely, that the fathers would add to a form of our Lord's compassing. It is probable, that our Lord, delivering the form twice upon different occasions, might use this clause at one time, and leave it out at another: and the Latin copies, full of errors, left it out of both. lest the evangelists should appear to differ.' Whitby. It is so scriptural and replete with instruction, that the internal evidence of its authenticity is unanswerable. (Notes, 1 Chron. 29: 10-19. Ps. 21: 13. Rev 11: 15-18.) Scott. Notwithstanding the remark of Dr. Scott on the internal evidence for the continuance of the 'doxology' in this verse, and its truly 'scriptural' character, yet the external evidence of its authenticity is by no means clear. 'I am sensible,' says Dr. Doddridge, 'that there is reason to doubt of its genuineness, yet it is certainly very ancient; and, as some excellent writers have very well observed, so admirably suits and enforces every preceding petition, that I could not persuade myself to omit it.' Dr. A. Clarke also, after noticing its entire rejection by Griesbach, Wetstein, and the most eminent critics, its being variously written in several MSS. and omitted by most of the fathers, both Greek and Latin, observes nevertheless, 'being ancient, and read among the Jews, it should not, in my opinion, be left out of the text. merely because some MSS. have omitted it, and it has been variously written in others.' See the passages of Scripture quoted above by Dr. Scott especially 1 Chron. 29: 11, and in addition Dan. 9: 7, 9, 16-19. Ed.

Verses 14, 15.

Our Lord here directs the attention powerfully to the clause, 'as we forgive our debtors,' and further illustrates his meaning by the word 'trespasses.' Forgiveness of those who injure us cannot, we know, merit the forgiveness of God; nor will He pardon the impenitent and unbelieving, because, from natural facility of temper, without regard to Him, they forgive others. Professed disciples are addressed, who, when their 'hearts do not' in this respect 'condemn them, have confidence toward God,' though consciously unworthy; but if their hearts condemn them, their confidence abates; (Note, 1 John 3: 18-24.) and if they utterly fail, in this, it manifests their hypocrisy. (Notes 18: 21-35.) 'To this true remission it is requisite, that our minds be freed from the desire of revenge; that we rejoice in no evil that befalls our brother: (Prov. 24: 17.) that we do not upbraid him with the evil done us but incline to show him kindness, and to help and do him good. So far must we forgive all, though they ask it not. When this is sincerely done, we are to admit our offending brother into friendship again, as formerly. This remission must be without delay, as we pray for present forgiveness. It must be entire, even in great crimes, else we pray that 'our greatest crimes may not be forgiven. It must be often done, if a brother offend frequently, (Luke 17: 3, 4.) for we pray that our daily sins may be remitted.' Whitby. The term brother occurs here frequently; but it is evident, that we are so to forgive not only our brethren in Christ, but our bitterest persecutors, for Christ's sake. Scott.

Verses 16-18.

Our Lord proceeds to caution his disciples against ostentation in fasting. The Pharisees fasted often, but in a hypocritical manner, appearing abroad even in their private fasts, with gloomy countenances, and such sordid neglect of their persons, as to inform all of their employment. They assumed this appearance to keep up their credit, and to gain applause for sanctity: and this would be their only reward, for God would not accept these services. But Christ's disciple should avoid ostentation, when thus humbling himself before God; and at home, or

hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. ^aVerily I say unto you, They have their reward.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, ^aanoint thine head, and wash thy face;

18 That thou ^aappear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, ^ashall reward thee openly.

[Practical Observations.]

19 ¶ Lay ^anot up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where

a 2.5.
t Ruth 3:2. 2 Sam. 14:2. Ec. 9:8.
t Job 10:23.
u 2 Cor. 5:9. 10:18. Col. 3:22-24. 1 Pet. 2:13.
v 4.6.
1 Rom. 2:6,7. 1 Pet. 1:7.
y Job 31:24,25. Ps. 39:6. 62:10. Prov. 11:4. 16:16. 23:5. Ec. 2:26. 5:10.
11. Zeph. 1:18. Luke 12:21. 18:24.
12. 1 Tim. 6:8-10. Heb. 13:5. Jam. 5:2,3. 1 John 2:15,16.

of men. Christ does not direct to abate any of the reality of a fast. He does not say, 'Take a little meat, or a little drink, or a little cordial.' No, 'let the body suffer, but lay aside the show of it; appear with thy ordinary countenance and dress; deny thyself bodily refreshments, not that it may be noticed, no, not by the nearest to thee; look pleasant, *anoint thine head, and wash thy face*, as in ordinary days, to conceal thy devotion; and thou shalt be *in the praise of it at the last*.' Fasting is the humbling of the soul; (Ps. 35:13,) that is the inside of the duty. Let that, therefore, be thy principal care. If we be sincere in our solemn fasts, and trust God's omniscience for our witness, and his goodness for our reward, we shall find that He *did see in secret*, and will reward openly. Religious fasts, rightly kept, will shortly be recompensed with an everlasting feast. Our acceptance with God should make us dead both to the censure and applause of men. David's fasting was turned to his reproach, Ps. 69:10., and yet, v. 13. *As for me, let them speak as they will of me, my prayer is unto Thee in an acceptable time*.

V. 19-24. Wordly-mindedness is a symptom of hypocrisy as common and fatal as any other; for by no sin can Satan have a surer and faster hold of the soul, under the cloak of a passable profession of religion, than by this; and therefore Christ, having warned us against coveting the praise of men, proceeds to warn against coveting the wealth of the world.

1. Every man has something which he makes his treasure, which he sets his heart upon, to which he carries all he can get. It is that chief good which Solomon so emphatically speaks of, Eccl. 2:3. The soul will have

and make us more lively in religious exercises; as fulness of bread is apt to make drowsy. Paul was in *fastings often*, and so kept under his body, and brought it into subjection.

We are cautioned not to do this, as did the hypocrites. They pretended fasting, with nothing of that contrition and humiliation which is the soul of the duty. Theirs were mock-fasts, show and shadow, without substance; they took on them to be more humbled than they really were, and so endeavored to put a cheat on God, when they could not insult Him more. The fast God has chosen is to *afflict the soul, not to hang down the head, like a bulrush*, nor for a man to spread sackcloth and ashes under him, Isa. 58:5. Bodily exercise, if that be all, profits little, since that is not fasting to God.

They proclaimed their fasting, and so managed, that all who saw them might notice it was a fasting day with them. Even on these days they appeared in the streets, whereas they should have been in their closets; and affected a melancholy countenance, and slow pace, and perfectly disfigured themselves, that men might see how often they fasted. Note, It is sad that men, who have, in some measure, mastered their pleasure, or sensual wickedness, should be ruined by pride, which is their spiritual wickedness. Here *they have their reward*—the applause of men, and that is all.

Our Lord tells us how to keep a private fast. He does not tell us how often we must fast: circumstances vary, and wisdom is profitable therein to direct; the Spirit in the Word leaves that to the Spirit in the heart; but take this for a rule, study to approve yourselves to God, and not to recommend yourselves to the good opinion

something, which it looks upon as the best thing. Christ does not design to deprive us of our treasure, but to direct us in the choice of it.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth. Christ's disciples had left all to follow Him. Let them still keep the same good mind. Treasure is an abundance of something we esteem precious, and likely to be serviceable hereafter. Now we must not count earthly treasures the best things; we must not call them *glory* as Laban's sons did; we must own that they have no glory in comparison with the *glory that excelleth*. We must not be grasping at more and more of them, as never knowing when we have enough; we must not confide in them for our supply in time to come; we must not say to gold, *thou art my hope*; we must be contented with little for our passage, but not with all for our portion; these must not be our *consolation* (Luke 6:24), our *good things*, Luke 16:25. Let us consider we are not laying up for our posterity in this world, but for ourselves in the other. We are, in a manner, made our own carvers. It concerns thee to choose wisely, for it is for thyself, and thou shalt have as thou chooseth. If we know what we are, how large our capacities and how long our continuance, and that our souls are ourselves, we shall see it a very foolish thing to *lay up our treasure on earth*.

A treasure on earth is liable to loss and decay, from corruption within, *moth and rust doth corrupt it*. If the treasure be laid up in fine clothes, the moth frets them, and they are spoiled insensibly. If it be in corn or other estates, as his was, who had his barns full, (Luke 12:16, 17.) rust corrupts that: and if goods are increased, they are increased that eat them, Eccl. 5:11. Manna itself bred worms, and fruits soon rot. If we understand it of silver and gold, they tarnish, grow less with using, and worse with keeping, Jam. 5:2, 3. The rust and the moth breed in the metal and garment. Note, Worldly riches have within them a principle of corruption; they wither of themselves, and make themselves wings. *Thieves break through and steal*. Every hand of violence will aim where the treasure is.

It is good counsel to make that which is eternal and unseen our treasure. *Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven*. Note, There are treasures in heaven as surely as on earth, and the only true treasures. These riches and glories are at God's right hand; those that are sanctified truly obtain them, when they come to be fully sanctified. It is our wisdom, to give all diligence to make our salvation sure through Jesus Christ, and to look upon all things here below with holy contempt. We must firmly believe there is such a happiness, and resolve to be content with nothing short of it. If we make those treasures ours, God will keep them safe

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9-18. It is important to examine in what spirit our prayers are offered; and daily to learn from Christ how to pray with acceptance. If we desire above all things the favor and glory of God, deliverance from guilt, temptations, and sin; we may be sure that He will answer us. If He have taught us to forgive our brethren for his sake, we may be sure of his forgiveness of our sins, though many and aggravated. If we desire Him for our Father, in Christ Jesus, and to possess the spirit and character of his children, we may call upon and confide in Him as our Father: and those who refuse will soon be con-

spelled to appear before Him as their Judge. Whatever a man may profess, if he do not forgive his implacable enemies, God has not forgiven him, and will not forgive him, while he retains his rancorous disposition.—A morose countenance is no part of religion, nor ornament to the profession of it, and often covers a hypocritical heart: but humility, sorrow for sin, and deadness to the world, should be accompanied by decent and unaffected cheerfulness in the sight of men, springing from gratitude to God *rejoice on Him*, and the hope of heavenly glory.

SCOTT. J

embroid. be as cheerful as at other times, not appearing unto men to fast, but satisfied with the acceptance of God, who is present in the chambers, as well as the assemblies of his worshippers, and will openly reward humiliation for sin, mortification of the flesh, and desires for holiness for the sake of communion with Him. 'The word translated "sad countenance," denotes the look of a wild beast: a lion or bear rebbed of her whelps, grim, ghastly.' Leigh. That rendered "disfigured," seems to imply the neglect of usual attentions to the hair and the covering of the face, as mourners used to do. (2 Sam. 19: 4, 24.)

Thus the usual form of the face disappeared. SCOTT. Disfigure. Or, emaciate, contract, and deform. I know not any word in our language exactly answering the original here. It is rendered corrupt in 20) and properly signifies to change, spoil, and consume; and is with secular elegance applied to such an alteration of the natural countenance as proceeded from their emaciating themselves, and contracting their faces into a dismal form. DOBSON. Fasting means not eating; or, a total abstinence from food for a certain time. To abstain from flesh, and live on fish, vegetables, &c. is no fast. Many pretend to take Isa. 58:3. as the definition of a fast, and say it means a fast

from sin—as if sin were daily food! In the fast mentioned by the prophet, the people were to divide their bread with the hungry, &c. 7. but could they eat the bread and give it too? No man should save by a fast, but give to the poor what he might have eaten. He who saves day's expense by a fast, commits an abomination before God.—A hypocrite has always a very difficult part to act: when he wishes to appear a penitent, he is obliged, having at heart no godly sorrow, to counterfeit it by a gloomy and austere look!

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 19-21. The Pharisees aimed not only to secure reputation, but gratify a covetousness, and our Lord warned his disciples against this evil. As the Christian is a pilgrim on earth, he wants merely subsistence here, but needs treasure in heaven. He ought not, then, to lay up for himself a treasure on earth, for all things here must be soon left to others, or are liable to decay. Moths spoil rich garments, rust corrodes metals. Thieves seize the treasures and often attempt the lives of the wealthy. (Note, Jam. 5: 1-6, &c. 2, 3.) Property, however secured in money, is but a source of vexation, than of comfort. (Note, 1 Tim. 6: 6-16.) This is not the Christian's treasure, and its acquisition is of no

moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal:

21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

22 ¶ The light of the body is the eye; if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

z 19:21. Luke 12:33. 16:9. 1 Tim. 6:17-19. Heb. 10:34. 11:26. Jam. 2:15. 1 Pet. 1:4. 14. 22. 2 Cor. 4:18. 12:34, 35. Prov. 4:23. Jer. 4:14. 22:17. Acts 8:21. Rom. 7:5-7. Phil. 3:19, 20. Col. 3:1-3. Heb. 3:12. e Luke 11:33-36. d Acts 2:16. 2 Cor. 11:3. Eph. 6:5. C. 1:3-22.

not to do what we do in religion, to be seen of men. Our treasure is our alms, prayers, fastings, and the reward of them. If we have done these, only to gain the applause of men, we have lodged our treasure only in the hands of men, and must never expect to hear further of it. This it is folly to do, for the praise of men will corrupt, and be moth-eaten. A little folly, like a dead fly, will spoil it all. Eccl. 10: 1. Slander and calumny are thieves that break through and steal it. We have run in vain, because we have misplaced our intentions. Hypocritical services lay up nothing in heaven. (Isa. 58: 3.) The gain is gone when the soul is called for, Job 27: 8. But if we have prayed, fasted, and given alms in uprightness, and have approved ourselves to God, we have laid up that treasure in heaven. A book of remembrance is written there, (Mal. 3: 16.) and being there recorded, they shall be there rewarded graciously. We shall meet them with comfort on the other side of the sea. Hypocrites are written in the earth; (Jer. 17: 13.) but God's faithful ones have their names written in heaven, Luke 10: 20. God's well done shall stand forever; and if we have laid up our treasure with Him, with Him our hearts will be; and where can they be better?

2. We must take heed of hypocrisy in choosing the end we look at. It is represented by two sorts of eyes, a single eye, and an evil eye. The expressions are somewhat dark, because concise; we shall therefore take them in some variety of interpretation. The eye is the light of the body, discovering and directing. The light of the world would avail us but little, without this light of the body. It is the light of the eye which rejoiceth the heart, (Prov. 15: 30.) but what is that which is here compared to the eye in the body?

The eye, that is the heart, as some have it, if that be free, (so the word is frequently rendered, Rom. 12: 8. 2 Cor. 2: 8. 9: 11, 13. Jam. 1: 5. and we read of a bountiful eye, Prov. 22: 9.) if the heart be inclined to goodness, it will direct the man to Christian actions. The whole conversation will be full of light, full of the evidences and instances of true Christianity, that pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, (Jam. 1: 27.) full of light, of good works, which are light shining before men. But, if the heart be evil, covetous, envious, grinding, (expressed by an evil eye, ch. 20: 16. Mark 7: 22. Prov. 23: 6, 7.) the body will be full of darkness, the whole conversation will be heathenish. The instruments of the churl are and always will be evil, but the liberal deviseth liberal things, Isa. 32: 5-8. If the light that is in us, those affections which should guide us, be darkness; if there be not so much as a kind disposition in man, how great is the corruption of the man, and the darkness in which he sits! This agrees with the context; we must lay up treasure in heaven, by liberality in giving alms, and that not grudging-

for us. Thither, then, let us refer all our designs and affections. Let us not burden ourselves with the cash of this world, which will but load, and defile, and sink us. The promises are bills of exchange, by which all true believers return their treasure to heaven, payable in a future state. It is a great encouragement to lay up our treasure in heaven, that it is safe there. It will not decay of itself; no moth will corrupt it, no thief will break through and steal it. It is a happiness above and beyond the changes and chances of time, an inheritance incorruptible.

Where your treasure is, on earth or in heaven, there will your heart be. We are therefore concerned to be wise in the choice of our treasure, because the temper of our minds, and consequently, the tenor of our lives, will be either earthly or heavenly. The heart follows the treasure, as the needle the loadstone, or the sunflower the sun. Where the treasure is, there the love and esteem are, (Col. 3: 2.) there our cares and fears are, lest we come short of it; there our hope is; (Prov. 18: 10, 11.) there our joy will be, (Ps. 119: 111.) there the inward thought will be; the first thought, the free and fixed thought, the frequent and familiar thought. The heart is God's due, (Prov. 23: 26.) and if our treasure is with Him, our hearts will be lifted up to Him.

This direction about laying up our treasure, may be fitly applied to the foregoing caution, to be seen of men.

Our treasure is our alms, prayers, fastings, and the reward of them. If we have done these, only to gain the applause of men, we have lodged our treasure only in the hands of men, and must never expect to hear further of it. This it is folly to do, for the praise of men will corrupt, and be moth-eaten. A little folly, like a dead fly, will spoil it all. Eccl. 10: 1. Slander and calumny are thieves that break through and steal it. We have run in vain, because we have misplaced our intentions. Hypocritical services lay up nothing in heaven. (Isa. 58: 3.) The gain is gone when the soul is called for, Job 27: 8. But if we have prayed, fasted, and given alms in uprightness, and have approved ourselves to God, we have laid up that treasure in heaven. A book of remembrance is written there, (Mal. 3: 16.) and being there recorded, they shall be there rewarded graciously. We shall meet them with comfort on the other side of the sea. Hypocrites are written in the earth; (Jer. 17: 13.) but God's faithful ones have their names written in heaven, Luke 10: 20. God's well done shall stand forever; and if we have laid up our treasure with Him, with Him our hearts will be; and where can they be better?

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ly, but cheerfully, Luke 12: 33. 2 Cor. 9: 7. But the parallel place does not come in on any such occasion, Luke 11: 34. and therefore the coherence here does not determine that to be the sense of the words.

The eye, that is, the understanding, as some think, the practical judgment, the conscience, which is to the other faculties of the soul, as the eye is to the body, to guide their motions: now, if the eye be single, and discern things that differ, especially so as to choose aright in laying up the treasure, it will rightly guide the affections and actions, which will be full of the light of grace and comfort; but if this be evil, or erroneous, and is led and biased by the inferior faculties, the heart and life must be full of darkness. They that will not understand, are said to walk on in darkness, Ps. 82: 5. It is said when the spirit of a man, that should be the candle of the Lord, is an ignis fatuus; when the leaders of the people, the leaders of the faculties, cause them to err; for then they that are led of them are destroyed, Isa. 9: 16. An error in the practical judgment is fatal; it is that which calls evil good, and good evil, (Isa. 5: 20.) therefore it concerns us to get our eyes anointed with eye-salve.

The eye, that is, the aims, or intentions; by the eye, we set our end before us, the mark we shoot at, and direct our motion accordingly. In every thing we do in religion, there is something or other, on which we have our eye; now, if we fix right ends, and steadily pursue them, if we aim only at the glory of God, then the eye is single. Paul's was so when he said, to me to live is Christ; and if we are right here, the whole body will be full of light; all the actions will be regular and gracious, pleasing to God, and comfortable to ourselves: but if this eye be evil, if we look aside to our own applause, under color of seeking the things of Christ, this spoils all; the whole conversation will be perverse; the foundations being thus out of course, there can be nothing but confusion and every evil work, in the superstructure. Draw the line from the circumference to any other point but the centre, and they will cross. If the light in thee be darkness itself, it is a fundamental error. The end specifies the action. It is of the last importance in religion, that we make eternal things, not temporal, our scope, 2 Cor. 4: 13. The hypocrite is like the waterman, that looks one way and rows another; the true Christian, like the traveller, that has his journey's end in his eye. The hypocrite soars like the kite, with his eye on the prey below; the Christian soars like the lark, higher and higher, forgetting the things beneath.

3. No man can serve two masters. Serving two masters will be contrary to the single eye; for the eye will be to the master's hand, Ps. 123: 1, 2. Our Lord here exposes the cheat of those, who think to divide between God and the world; to have a treasure on earth and a treasure in heaven also; please God and please men too. 'Why not?' says the hypocrite, 'it is good to have two strings to one's bow. They hope to make their religion serve their secular interest, and so turn to account both ways. The pretending mother was for dividing the child; the Samaritans will compound between God and

without it he should be contented, and if intrusted to him, he is not wiser or safer. So, himself but lay it out in doing good. (Notes, Luke 12: 15-21. 16: 1-13. 19-26.) Heavenly things are his treasure. There he should seek in faith and prayer, and the use of all his faculties. They are not liable to decay, nor can he be robbed of them. This is of the greatest importance: for if a man's treasure be on earth, his heart, his conduct and conversation will be earthly; but if it be in heaven, his heart will be heavenly, his thoughts will be on spiritual matters, and his soul, as it were, in heaven. This will give him heavenly savor to his discourse and his life. (Note, Phil. 3: 20, 21.) preserve him from temptation, and quicken him to duty.—Wardrobes were once a considerable part of the riches laid up by worldly men, and left to their heirs. This is still the case, in the East. Scott. Treasures.] The illustrious and opulent among the ancients, accumulated not merely silver and gold, but a prodigious number of sumptuous and magnificent habits, which were regarded as a necessary and indispensable part of their treasures. Hence in the detail of a great man's wealth, are recorded the numerous and superb suits of apparel he possessed. Thus, after the destruction of Jerusalem, distributed, says Josephus, to those who had distinguished themselves by their valor, gold, silver and garments. How difficult it is to preserve these in warm countries, appears from Bartolo-

mo, 'I had put my effects into a chest, and, opening it afterwards, I discovered an innumerable multitude of vermin. They had perforated my linen in a thousand places, and gnawed my books, my girdle, my amice and my shoes; and my effects were more than half destroyed.'

VERSES 22, 23.

The preceding truths are here illustrated by an apt similitude. The actions of the whole body are directed by the light of the eye. When this is single, or clear, and perceives objects as they are, the whole body has light, and the man moves with safety; but if the eye see things confusedly, he stumbles, is liable to lose his way, or run into injury. Thus the understanding, perceiving objects according to their nature, enables a man to form a proper judgment, make a wise choice, and act aright. But a darkened mind, falsely estimating things, produces a erroneous choice and a corrupt life. If then, that which a man regards as wisdom, be folly; if the first principle be an error;—the light that is in him is darkness, and how intense and fatal must that darkness be!—This relates to men's practical judgment of earthly and heavenly things. The worldly man mistakes in his first principle, and so all his calculations must be erroneous; the further he goes the more he is bewildered. But it is equally applicable to religion. When that which a man deems

23 But if ^{thine} eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. 'If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!

24 ¶ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and ^{the} Mammon.

[Practical Observations.]

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

e 20:15. Is 44:18-20. Mark 7:22. Eph. 4:18. 5:3. 1 John 2:11. 23:16, &c. Prov. 26:12. Is. 50:21. 8:20. Jer. 4:22. 8:3,9. Luke 3:10. John 9:39-41. Rom. 1:22. 2:17-23. 1 Cor. 1:18-20. 2:14. 3:13,19. Rev. 3:17,18. f 1 John 2:15. 2:19. 1 Sam. 7:2. 1 Kings 18:21. 2 Kings 17:33,34. 1. Es. 20:39. Zeph. 1:5. Luke 16:13. Rom. 8:16-22. Gal. 1:10. Jam. 4:4. 1 John 2:15. 2 Tim. 6:9,10,17. 3:22,28. Luke 12:15, 22, 29, 32. g 3:24. 10:19. 13:22. Mt. 5:32. h Mark 4:19. 13:17. Luke 9:11. 10: 4:41. 12:22,25,26,29. 1 Cor. 7:32. Phil. 4:6. 2 Tim. 2:4. Heb. 13:5,6. 1 Pet. 5:7. i Luke 12:23. Rom. 9:32.

idols. No, says Christ, it will not do. It is but a supposition that *gain is godliness*, 1 Tim. 6: 5. It is likely it was a proverb, *no man can serve two masters*, much less two gods; for their commands will sometimes contr^adict one another. While *two masters* go together, a servant may follow them both; but when they part, you will see to which he belongs. Either this or that, it is plain, must be left, or comparatively hated and despised.

Mammon is a Syriac word, which signifies gain, so that whatever we account in this world to be our gain, (Phil. 3: 7.) is *mammon*. *Whatever is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is mammon*. To some, their belly is their *mammon*, (Phil. 3: 19.) to others, their ease, sleep, pastimes, (Prov. 6: 9.) worldly riches, honors. The applause of men was the Pharisees' *mammon*. In a word, self, the unity in which the world's trinity centres, sensual, secular self, is the *mammon* which cannot be served in connection with God. He does not say, *We must not, or should not, but we cannot; we cannot love both*, (1 John 2: 15. Jam. 4: 4.) or hold to both in obedience, trust, and dependence; for they are contrary the one to the other. God says, '*My son, give me thy heart*,' Mammon says, '*No, give it me.*' God says, '*Be content with such things as ye have*,' Mammon says, '*Grasp at all thou canst*. Money, money, by fair means, or by foul, money,' God says, '*Be honest, be just in all thy dealings*,' Mammon says, '*Cheat thy own father, if thou canst gain by it*.' God says, '*Be charitable*,' Mammon says, '*Hold thy own, this giving undoes us all*.' God says, '*Be careful for nothing*,' Mammon says, '*Be careful for every thing*.' God says, '*Keep holy the Sabbath day*,' Mammon says, '*Make use of that day as well as any other for the world*.' Thus inconsistent are the commands of God and Mammon; *we cannot serve both*. Let us not then halt between God and Baal, but, *choose ye this day whom ye will serve*, and abide by your choice.

V. 25-34. There is scarcely one thing, about which our Lord warns his disciples more frequently and earnestly, than the sin of distract- ing, distrustful cares about the things of this

life, which is a bad sign that both the *treasure* and the heart are on the earth.

1. It is the counsel and command of our Lord, that *we take no thought about the things of this world*. *I say unto you*. He says it as our Lawgiver, as the Sovereign of our hearts, as our Comforter, and as the Helper of our joy. And he that has ears to hear, let him hear. *Take no thought for your life, nor yet for your bodies*. *Take no thought, saying, what shall we eat?* And again, *Take no thought—Be not in care*. The caution is thrice repeated. *Precept must be upon precept, line upon line*; all is little enough, it is a sin, which doth so easily beset us. It intimates how pleasing it is to Christ, and of how much concern it is to ourselves, that we should live without carelessness. He repeatedly commands that we should not pull our minds in pieces with worldly care. There is a *thought* concerning things of this life, which is not only lawful, but a duty, such as is commended in the virtuous woman, Prov. 27: 23. The word is used concerning Paul's care of the churches, and Timothy's for the state of souls, 2 Cor. 11: 28. Phil. 2: 20. But the care here forbidden is a disquieting, tormenting care, which hurries the mind hither and thither, which is a damp upon our hope in God, which breaks our sleep, and hinders our enjoyment of what God has given us. It forbids unbelieving thoughts. God has promised to provide for his own all things needful for the life that *now is*, food and a covering, not dainties, but necessities. He never said, *They shall be feasted, but Verily, they shall be fed*. Now, a fear of wanting those supplies springs from a disbelief of the promises of God, and of the wisdom and goodness of his providence; and that is the evil of it. As to present sustenance, we must use lawful means to get it, else we tempt God; we must be diligent in our callings, and prudent in proportioning our expenses to what we have, and must pray for *daily bread*; and if all other means fail, we may and must ask relief from those who are able to give it. He was none of the best of men who said, *to beg I am ashamed*, (Luke 16: 3.) as he was, who *desired to be fed with the crumbs*; but for the future we must *cast our care upon God*, and

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 19-24. We should watch and pray against covetousness. 'Treasures on earth' can little profit dying creatures. We may lose them before we die, and they are certain only as sources of anxiety, snares and vexation. But there is an inheritance 'incorruptible, undefiled, that fadeeth not away, reserved in heaven for believers. This let us labor, with all diligence, to secure, whatever else be renounced for its sake. Anxiety for the world is not consistent with a heavenly mind; for

'where the treasure is, there the heart will be also.' Multitudes fatally err in this matter; they see things through a vitiated eye; phantoms appear realities; and realities, phantoms. Thus they wander in darkness, and know not at what they stumble. After all the warnings of Christ, they through unbelief, persist in attempting to 'serve God and Mammon.' May the Lord preserve us from such principles and mistakes!

SCOTT.

traordinary illumination is a delusion, his light is darkness from the bottomless pit; his inferences lead him further from God, and plunge him deeper into error, prejudice, pride, and the snare of the devil. This is an awful yet common case: how carefully then should we examine our principles by the Word of God, with prayer for the teaching of the Spirit! (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Isa. 8: 20. Luke 11: 33—36.) SCOTT.

Verse 24.

A man may do some service to two masters, but he cannot devote himself to more than one. When the two masters are in full opposition, the impossibility of serving both is evident. God and the world are two opposites. He, who loves and holds to the world as his master, will be an enemy and despiser of God; and he who loves and serves God, will renounce the world, and despise its frown. So that we cannot 'serve God and Mammon.' (Note, Luke 16: 9—13.) *Mammon* is the Syriac word for riches, and seems here to be the name of an idol; the covetous man is an idolater, and therefore no true servant of God. By making worldly concerns subservient to religion, we may render them a part of God's service; as worldly men make their religion a part of the service of Mammon; but the two opposite services cannot be performed. 'We love Mammon more than God, when we pursue it by a lie, as Ziba and Gehazi, by violence, theft, or false testimony; for thus we despise God's authority to obtain Mammon.' When our concern in temporals 'causes us to neglect God, and choose rather to quit spiritual than temporal blessings, then we cleave to them more than to God, whom we hate to despise.' *Whitby*. (Marg. Ref. g—Notes, Rom. 6: 16—23.) SCOTT. 'The master of our heart may be fully termed the love that reigns in it. We serve that only which we love supremely. A man cannot be in perfect indifference between two objects that are incompatible: he is inclined to despise and hate what he does not love supremely, when the necessity of a choice presents itself.'—*Hate* has the same sense here, as in many places of Scripture, meaning to love less—so Jacob loved Rachel, but hated Leah, i. e. loved Leah much less than Rachel. So God declares, 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated:' having given the Jews, in the course of his providence, greater earthly privileges than he gave to the Gentiles. (Mal. 1: 2, 3.) Dr. L. L. L. 'When it is said, *ye cannot serve God and mammon*, the

point contended for in respect to God is not exclusive possession, but exclusive dominion. Other things may occasionally, for a certain time, and to a certain degree, have possession of our minds, but they must not rule, must not reign over them. We can serve but one master faithfully and effectually, and that one must be God. The concerns and comforts of this life may have their due place in our hearts, but they must not aspire to the first; this is the prerogative of religion alone; religion must be supreme and paramount over all. Every one, it has been often said, has his ruling passion. That of the Christian must be the love of his Maker and Redeemer. This must principally occupy his thoughts, time, attention, and heart. If there be any thing else which has gained ascendancy over our souls, on which our desires, wishes, hopes or fears are chiefly fixed, God is then dispossessed of his rightful domain over us; we have another master, and shall think but little of our Maker, or any thing belonging to Him.' Bp. PORTER.

Verse 25.

Solicitude about a future support often as much ensnares the poor, as the love of wealth does the rich. Therefore Christ required his disciples to 'take no thought for their lives.' There is a care about temporal things which is a duty, according to a man's station. He should diligently contrive his proper business, provide for himself and family, as far as honest industry will go; calculate his income and live within the bounds of it, so as not to be needlessly embarrassed, and see that no bounty of Providence be wasted; he should make arrangements for the demands which must be made on him, spare expense that he may not want, or beg in sickness, or age; and he ought in some cases to make provision for his family, if he can, consistently with justice, piety and charity: yet there is danger lest these cares be extended beyond due bounds. No one ought, however, to be anxious how he shall be provided for in future. This is the Lord's part, and when any take it on themselves they dishonor Him, become their own tormentors, and are often tempted to sinful methods of obtaining provision for coming time. This solicitude is prohibited. The Christian must not be anxious about the continuance of support of his life, he should not be greatly concerned about the measure of his supplies, nor the manner of obtaining them. The Author of his life, the Former of his body, he—ing none greater

26 Behold ^m the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet ⁿ your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

27 Which of you ^o by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

28 And ^p why take ye thought for raiment? Consider ^q the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin:

m 10:29-31. Gen. 1:29-31. Job 35:11.
28:41. Ps. 101:11, 27, 28. 145:15, 16.
1:7-9. Luke 12:67, 74.
n 32. 7:9-11. Luke 12:32.
o 3:9. Ps. 35:5. Ec. 3:14. Luke 12:25, 26. 1 Cor. 12:14.
p 25:31. 10:10. Luke 3:11. 22:35, 36.
q Luke 12:27.

sufficient to restrain from this disquieting care; but to show what *pleasure* Christ takes in those that *hope in his mercy*, the command is backed with the most powerful arguments. To free us from anxious thoughts, Christ here suggests to us *comforting* thoughts. It will be worth while for us to argue ourselves out of our disquieting cares. They may be weakened by right reason, but it is by an active faith only, that they can be overcome.

Is not this life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Yes, doubtless. So He says, who understands the true value of present things, for He made them, and supports them, and supports us by them. Note, our life is a greater blessing than our livelihood. It is true, life cannot subsist without a livelihood; but the meat and raiment, represented as inferior to the life and body, are such as are for ornament and delight; for about such we are apt to be solicitous. Meat and raiment are in order to life, and the end is more noble than the means. The daintiest food and the finest raiment are from the earth, but life from the *breath of God*. Life is the light of men, meat is but the oil to feed that light; so that the difference between rich and poor is very inconsiderable, since, in the greatest things, they stand on the same level, and differ only in the less. This is an encouragement to trust God for food and raiment, and so relieve ourselves of perplexity about them. God has given us life and the body; it was an act of power and favor, and done without our care. What cannot He do for us who did that? What will He not? If we take care about our souls and eternity, which are more than the body, we may leave it to God to provide for us food and raiment, which are less. God has maintained our lives hitherto; if sometimes with pulse and water, that has answered the end. He that guards us against the evils we are exposed to, will supply the good things we need. If He has been pleased to kill us, to starve us, He would not so often have given his angels a charge concerning us.

Behold the fowls of the air, and consider the lilies of the field. Here is an argument from God's common providence towards the inferior creatures. A fine pass fallen man is come to, that he must be sent to school to the fowls of the air, and that they shall teach him! Job 12:7, 8.

Observe the providence of God concerning the fowls, and learn to trust Him for food. There are various sorts, they are numerous, some of them ravenous, but all are fed, and with food convenient for them; it is rare that any of them perish for want of food, even in winter, and there goes no little to feed them all the year round. The fowls, as they are least servicable to man, so they are least within his care. Men often feed on them, but seldom feed them, yet they are fed, we know not how, and some of them fed best in the hardest weather; and it is your heavenly Father that feeds them. He knows all the wild fowls of the mountains, better than you know the tame ones at your own barn-door, Ps. 50: 11. Not a sparrow lights to the ground, to pick up a grain of corn, but by the providence of God, which extends itself to the meanest creatures. But, specially, they are fed without any care of their own; they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns. The ant in-

take no thought; because it looks like a jealousy of God, who knows how to give what we want, when we know not how to get it. Let our souls rest in Him! This gracious carelessness is the same with that sleep which God gives his beloved, in opposition to the worldling's toil, Ps. 127: 2.

Take no thought for your life. Life is our greatest concern for this world; all that a man hath will he give for his life; yet take no thought about it; not about the continuance of it. Refer that to God, to lengthen it or to shorten it as He pleases. My times are in thy hand, and they are in a good hand. Nor be solicitous about the comforts of this life. Refer it to Him to enbitter or to sweeten it as He pleases. God has promised the necessary support of this life, food and raiment; therefore we may more confidently expect it. Say not, what shall we eat? It is the language of one almost despairing; whereas, though there be many that have prospect of little, yet there are few but have present support.

Take no thought for the morrow. Be not solicitous about the future, how you shall live next year, or when you are old, or what you shall leave behind you. As we must not boast of to-morrow, so we must not care for it, or its events.

2. One would think the command of Christ sufficient to restrain from this disquieting care; but to show what *pleasure* Christ takes in those that *hope in his mercy*, the command is backed with the most powerful arguments. To free us from anxious thoughts, Christ here suggests to us *comforting* thoughts. It will be worth while for us to argue ourselves out of our disquieting cares. They may be weakened by right reason, but it is by an active faith only, that they can be overcome.

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deed does, and the bee, and they are set before us as examples of prudence and industry; but the fowls of the air do not; they make no provision for the future themselves, and yet, every day, provision is made for them. Their eyes wait on God, that great and good House-keeper, who provides food for all flesh.

Are ye not much better than they? Yes, certainly, you are. Note, the heirs of heaven are much better than the fowls of heaven, nobler beings, and by faith soar higher; they are of a better nature and nature; wiser than the fowls of heaven, (Job 35: 11.) though the children of this world, that know not the judgment of the Lord, are not so wise as the stork, the crane, and the swallow, Jer. 8: 7. You are dearer to God, and nearer, though they fly in the open firmament of heaven. He is their Maker, Lord, Owner, and Master, but besides all this, He is your Father, and in his account ye are of more value than many sparrows. You are his children, his first-born; now He that feeds his birds, surely will not starve his babes. They trust your Father's providence, and will not you trust it? In dependence on that, they are careless for the morrow, and being so, live the most cheerfully of all creatures, they sing among the branches, (Ps. 104: 12.) and, to the best of their power, praise their Creator. If we were by faith as unconcerned about the morrow as they, we should sing as merrily; for it is worldly care that mars our cheerfulness, and as much as any thing, silences our praise.

Look on the lilies, and learn to trust God for raiment. We ask, What shall we put on; for decency, for defence, and, with many, for dignity and ornament; and so much concerned are they for variety and gaiety in their clothing, that this care returns almost as often as that for their daily bread. Now not only look on the lilies, (every one does it with pleasure,) but consider them. Note, there is a great deal of good to be learned from what we see every day, if we did but consider it, Prov. 6: 6. 24: 32.

Consider how frail lilies are. Though distinguished by colors, they are still but grass. Thus all flesh is grass; though some in mind and body are as lilies, much admired, still they are grass; in nature and constitution, they stand on the same level with others. Man's days, at best, are as grass, as the flower of the grass, 1 Pet. 1: 24. This grass to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; in a little while the place that knows us will know us no more. The grave is the oven into which we shall be cast, and in which we shall be consumed as grass in the fire, Ps. 49: 14. This intimates a reason why we should not take thought for the morrow, for then we may have occasion for our grave-clothes.

Consider how free from care the lilies are. They toil not as men do, to earn clothing; as servants, to earn livery; neither do they spin, as women do, to make clothing. It does not follow that we must neglect or do business carelessly. It is the praise of the virtuous women, that she lays her hand to the spindle, makes fine linen, and sells it, Prov. 31: 19, 24. Idleness tempts God, instead of trusting Him; but He who provides for the inferior creatures, without their labor, will much more provide for us, by blessing our labor, which He has made our duty. And, if we, through sickness, should be unable to toil and spin, God can furnish us.

Consider how fair, how fine the lilies are.

things for him, should be depended on for the less; and food and raiment should be expected from Him, in the use of only lawful means. Scott. Take no thought.] 'It is evident that the original word signifies an excessive anxiety, as in almost every other place where it is used, agreeably to the derivation of it. It need not be considered, therefore, as addressed only to the apostles, who were to cast themselves on an extraordinary providence, without being concerned for support. The arguments our Lord urges contain nothing peculiar to their case, but are built on considerations applicable to all Christians. Compare Phil. 4: 6. 1 Pet. 5: 7. Luke 22: 35, 36, and Acts 20: 34, from which it appears that the apostles themselves were not aptly to neglect a prudent care for their own subsistence, in dependence on miraculous provisions.' Dodd. The use of the phrase, take no thought, in our translation, where the Geneva version had be not careful, has often rendered explanation necessary. But it is to be remarked, as often learned friend many years since to the editor, that the word thought, at the time of our translation, was equivalent to anxiety; in proof of

which he referred to Dr. P. Holland, who in his translation of Ammianus Marcellinus, anno 1609, says of the emperor Tacitus, 'his heart was broken, and so, for thought, he died;' plainly meaning excessive anxiety.

Verses 26-32.

The Householder of the universe openeth his hand and filleth his creatures with his bounty. The birds are provided for without any care of their own, being unable to use means for their sustenance. And surely the believer, as a rational creature and a spiritual worshipper, is more valuable in the sight of God, than the birds of the air! Such cares are vain. No man can add a cubit to his height, however solicitous, and hence no man thinks of it. No anxious care can add to the length of life, or to health, comfort, or prosperity. It is absurd to be anxious about raiment. The lilies, though incapable of adorning themselves, are more beautifully decorated, than Solomon in royal robes. And has the Lord adorned the vegetables, which are as soon to perish and will He not clothe the Christian? Should he desire adornings which are sur-

The blessings of Christ's kingdom, the righteousness in which his subjects are justified, the grace by which they are sanctified, and the *good works* in which they should walk, are intended by the kingdom of God and his righteousness. Our Lord, therefore, calls his disciples to *seek admission* to this kingdom, by repentance and faith, and to press on to the full enjoyment of its privileges, and conformity to the law and exhortations.

CHAP. VII.

Caution against rash judgment, 1-5.
 1-5. *Thy eye* holy are not to be cast to dogs, 6. Encouragement to prayer, 7-11. The rule of doing as we would be done to, 12. The straight gate and narrow way, 13. 14. A warning against false prophets, who may be known by their fruits, 15-20. No gifts or miracles will avail the workers of iniquity at the day of judgment, 21-23. The parable of the house built on a rock, 24, 25; and that on the sand, 26, 27. Christ concludes; and the people are astonished at his doctrine, 28, 29.

JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.

Mat. 6:45. Ez. 16:32-36. Luke 6:37.
 Rom. 2:1, 2. 14:13, 10-13. 1 Cor. 4:3-5. Jam. 3:1. 4:11, 12.

covenant in it. *Though we have not attained*, yet sincere seeking and an earnest endeavor are accepted. Now observe the object: *the kingdom of God, and his righteousness*. We must mind heaven as our end, holiness as our way. 'Seek the comforts of the kingdom of grace and glory as your felicity. Resolve not to take up short of the kingdom of heaven. Seek for this glory, honor, and immortality. Prefer heavenly blessings far before earthly delights.' We make nothing of our religion, if we do not make heaven of it. And with the happiness of this kingdom, seek the righteousness of it, God's righteousness, which He requires to be wrought in and by us, such as exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees. We must *follow peace and holiness*, Heb. 12:14. *Seek first the kingdom of God*. Let your care for another world take place of all other cares. We must seek the things of Christ more than our own things. If they ever come in competition, we must remember to which to give the preference. Let the morning of youth be dedicated to God. Wisdom must be sought early; it is good to begin *betimes*, in being religious. Seek this first every day. Let waking thoughts be of God. Let Him that is the First, have the first.

The necessary supports of life shall be added unto you, given over and above, as it is in the margin. You shall have what you seek, the kingdom of God and his righteousness, for never any sought in vain, that sought in earnest: and besides that, you shall have food and raiment by way of over-plus, as he that buys goods has paper and parchment into the bargain. *Godliness has the promise of the life that now is*, 1 Tim. 4:8. Solomon asked wisdom, and had that, and other things beside, 2 Chron. 1:11, 12. O what a blessed change would it make in our hearts and lives, did we firmly believe, that the best way to be comfortably provided for in this world, is to be intent on another world! We begin at the right end of our work, when we begin with God. If we give diligence to make sure of the things of God, He will provide as much of the things of this life as He sees will be good for us, and we should not wish for more. Have we trusted Him for the *portion of our inheritance* at the end, and shall we not trust Him for the *portion of our cup* in our way to it? God's Israel were not only brought to Canaan at last, but had their charges borne in the wilderness. Oh that we were more thoughtful about the things that are not seen and eternal, and then the less thoughtful we should be, and need to be about the things seen and temporal! Also regard not your stuff, Gen. 45:20, 23.

The morrow shall take thought for the things of itself; sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof. We must not perplex ourselves about future events, because every day brings along cares enough with it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7. 34. While we are careful to choose the good part, know the right way, and attend to present duty, let us not be anxious about consequences. Let us rely on our heavenly Father to support the lives and nourish the bodies, which He has given, and not be in trouble, whether our provision be plentiful or scanty. Our lives are more than meat, our bodies than raiment. What, then, are our souls, which the divine Savior redeemed with his blood? While we feast on his spiritual provisions, and are adorned with the robes of righteousness and salvation, we cannot doubt his truth and love, which are engaged to feed and clothe us. Will He provide for fowls, adorn the flowers, and yet starve his children? How unreasonable our unbelief! We need rebuke, and should pray to Him, 'increase our faith,' and leave it to Gentiles and unbelievers to perplex

of their king; to seek the peace, purity and enlargement of the kingdom, the honor of the prince, and the good of their fellow subjects. These must be sought in the *first place*; first as to the object, affections, and time; beginning each portion of existence with it, and making all things subservient to it. Then their Father will add whatever pertains to this life without their anxiety. They, who reverse this order, run themselves for this world and the next.—The Christian should not be *careless* for even the next day: it may not arrive to him; if it do, it will bring its supplies, and thus 'take thought for itself.' This should be regarded as a merciful appointment of his Father. He knows, that every day brings more evil than his children can well bear, and hence He commends them 'to cast all their care for the future on Him. And if any are still so absurd, as to load themselves with a burden, which does not belong to them, they torment themselves, and dishonor God, by their unbelief.—This is applicable to spiritual things. The Christian, doing his duty, is authorized to trust in the Lord for grace in trials, as well as for food in want. In both, 'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.' SCOTT. *Advised unto you.* That is, *over and above*,

Thoughtfulness for the morrow is needed. *Let the morrow take care for the thing of itself*. If wants and troubles are renewed with a day's aids and provisions are likewise; *compassions* that are *new every morning*, Lam. 3: 22, 23. The saints have a Friend that is *their arm every morning*, and gives out fresh supply daily, (Isa. 33: 2.) *as the business of every day requires*. (Ez. 3: 4.) so keeping his people constantly dependent on Him. Let us therefore refer it to the morrow's strength, to do the morrow's work, and bear the morrow's burden. To-morrow will be provided for without us; why need we so anxiously care for that, which is so wisely cared for already? This does not forbid foresight, and preparation accordingly, but a perplexing solicitude respecting difficulties, which, perhaps, may never come, or, if they do, may be easily borne. The meaning is, let us *mix a present duty*, and leave events to God. *Do the work of the day in its day*, and let the morrow bring its work along with it.

This thoughtfulness for the morrow is one of the *foolish and hurtful lusts*, which they that will be rich fall into; one of the *many errors* wherewith they *pierce themselves through*. *Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof*. The present day has troubles enough; we need not borrow perplexities from to-morrow's evils. It is uncertain what the morrow's evils may be, but it is time enough to take thought about them when they come. Let us not pull that upon ourselves all together at once, which Providence has wisely ordered to be borne by parcels. The conclusion of the whole matter is, that it is the will and command of the Lord Jesus, that his disciples be not their own tormentors, nor make their passage through this world more unpleasant, by their apprehensions of trouble, than God has made it by the troubles themselves. By daily prayer we may procure strength to bear trouble, and to arm us against the temptations that attend our daily troubles, and then let none of these things move us.

CHAP. VII. V. 1-6. Our Savior here shows us how to conduct in reference to the faults of others; and his expressions seem intended as a reproof to the scribes and Pharisees, who were very rigid in condemning all about them, as those commonly are, who are conceited in justifying themselves.

1. A caution against judging. It is the office of magistrates and ministers to judge. Christ, though He made not Himself a Judge, yet came not to unmake them, for by Him *princes decree justice*; but this is directed to private persons, who shall hereafter sit on thrones

themselves about concerns so inferior. Let us 'seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,' assured, that 'all things else shall be added to us;' for our Father knows our wants. Thus we shall be encouraged in duty, and relieved from anxiety. We shall indeed find, that 'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof;' and have no need to anticipate pains and sorrow. We shall also find, that the day will bring its comforts and supports with it.—These rules and precepts of our Lord will be known by our experience, if true believers, to conduce to present comfort, as well as to future benefit; when we shall have done with temptation, be delivered from evil, and employed in praising Him whose is 'the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.'

which seems the exact import of the original; than which expression nothing could be more proper: for these *temporal blessings* are by no means essential to the *covenant of grace*, but are entirely to be referred to the Divine good pleasure, to add or withhold, as God shall see fit. DODDGE.

NOTES. Verses 1, 2.

These verses do not forbid the magistrate to judge and sentence criminals; nor the rulers of the church to censure and exclude such as disgrace their profession, nor Christians to 'withdraw from every brother that walks disorderly,' for this is expressly enjoined. (Notes, 2 Thes. 3: 6-15.) Nor did Christ intend to prevent his disciples from forming a judgment of men's characters according to their principles and conduct, for He directs us so to judge. (Note, 15-20.) Many duties require us to form a judgment both in respect to the state and actions of men; but we should not be rash, or severe in forming, nor hasty in declaring it. We are not bound to believe an infidel or a profligate to be a true Christian; but should judge as favorably as we can, where the fundamentals of Christianity are professed, and not degraded by immo-

For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see

judging, but not now; judge not. We must judge ourselves, and our own acts, but not our brother, magisterially assuming such an authority over others, as we allow not them over us; since our rule is to be *subject to one another*. *Be not many masters*, Jam. 3: 1. We must not make our word a law to every body. We must not judge our brother, that is, must not speak evil of him, as it is explained, Jam. 4: 11. We must not despise him, nor set him at naught, Rom. 14: 10. We must not judge rashly or groundlessly of our brother, making the worst of people, and inferring such invidious things from their words and actions as they will not bear. We must not judge unmercifully, with revenge, or maliciously. We must not judge of a man's state by a single act, nor of what he is in himself, by what he is to us, for in our own cause we are apt to be partial. We must not assume God's prerogative to try the heart. We must not judge of men's eternal state, nor call them hypocrites, reprobates, and castaways. What have we to do, thus to judge another man's servant? Counsel and help him, but judge him not.

That ye be not judged. He, who usurps the bench, shall be called to the bar. Commonly none are more censured, than those who are most censorious; every one will have a stone to throw at them; he, who, like Ishmael, has his hand, his tongue, against every man, shall like him, have every man's hand and tongue against him, Gen. 16: 12. No mercy shall be shown to the reputation of those who show no mercy to the reputation of others. Yet that is not the worst of it; they shall be judged of God; from

b. Judg. 1: 7. Ps. 145: 26. 137: 7. Jer. 51: 21. Ob. 13. Mark 4: 21. Luke 6: 37. 2 Cor. 9: 6. 2 Thes. 1: 6. 7. Jam. 2: 13. Rev. 18: 6. c. 1 Sam. 1: 12. 1: 11. d. 2 Sam. 1: 15. 2 Chr. 28: 10. Ps. 50: 21. 21. John 8: 7-9. Gal. 6: 1. e. 22: 15. 22: 14. e. Luke 12: 55. 13: 15. f. Ps. 51: 13. Luke 4: 23. 6: 12. Acts 19: 15.

greater condemnation, Jam. 3: 1. Both parties must appear before Him, who, while He relieves the humble sufferer, will also resist the haughty scorner, and give him enough of judging. If we are charitable, modest, and judge ourselves rather, *we shall not be judged of the Lord*. As God will forgive those that forgive their brethren, so He will not judge those that will not judge their brethren; the merciful shall find mercy, Rom. 14: 10.

The judging of those who judge others is according to the law of retaliation: *with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged*. God often observes a rule of proportion, as in the case of Adonibezek, Judg. 1: 7. Rev. 13: 10. 18: 6. Thus He will be both justified and magnified in his judgments, and all flesh will be silenced before Him. *With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again*; perhaps in this world, so that men may read their sin in their punishment. *What then shall we do when God rises up?* Job 31: 14. What would become of us, if God should be as severe in judging us, as we are in judging our brethren, and should weigh us in the same balance? We may justly expect it if we be extreme to mark what our brethren do amiss. In this, as in other things, the violent dealings of men return on their own heads.

2. Some cautions about reproving. Because we must not judge others, which is a great sin, it does not, therefore, follow, that we must not reprove others, which is a great duty, and may conduce to saving a soul from death; however, it will conduce to saving our souls from sharing in their guilt. Observe, it is not every one who is fit to reprove. Those who are themselves guilty of the faults of which they accuse others, or of worse, bring shame on themselves, and are not likely to do good to those whom they reprove. Here is a just reproof to the censorious, who quarrel with their brother for small faults, while they allow themselves in great ones; who are quick-sighted to spy a mote in his eye, but are not sensible of a beam in

their own. Note. There are degrees in sin. Some sins are comparatively but as *motes*, while others are as *beams*; some as *gnats*, others as a *camel*; not 't'at there is any sin little, for there is no little good to sin against; if it be a *mote* (or *spintler*, for so it might better be reul.), it is in the eye; if a *gnat*, it is in the throat, both *unl* and perilous; and we cannot be easy or well, till they are got out. Our own sins ought to appear greater to us than the same sins in others. That which charity teaches us to call but a *spintler* in our brother's eye, true repentance will teach us to call a *beam* in our own; for the sin of others must be extenuated, but our own aggravated. Many are under the guilt and dominion of very great sins, and yet are not aware of it, but justify themselves, as if they needed no repentance. It is as strange that a man can be in such a sinful condition, and not be aware of it, as that a man should have a beam in his eye, and not consider it; but the god of this world so artfully blinds them, that they say, with great assurance, *we see*. It is common for those who are most sinful themselves, and least sensible of it, to be most free in judging others. The Pharisees, who were most haughty in justifying themselves, were most scornful in condemning others. They were severe on Christ's disciples for eating with *unclean hands*, which was scarcely a *mote*, while they encouraged men in a contempt of their parents, which was a *beam*: Pride and uncharitableness are commonly *beams* in the eyes of those, who pretend to be nice in their censures of others. Nay, many are guilty of that in secret, which they have the face to punish in others when discovered. *Refract*, says Seneca, *that, perhaps, the fault of which you complain, may, on examination, be found in yourself*. Will you be publicly severe against your own crime? Men's being so severe on the faults of others, and indulgent to their own, is a mark of hypocrisy. *Thou hypocrite*, v. 5. Whatever such an one pretends, it is certain he is no enemy to sin; if he were, he would be an enemy to his own sin; therefore, he is not worthy of praise, nay, he is an enemy to his brother, and, therefore, worthy of blame. This spiritual clarity must begin at home; *for how canst thou, for shame, say to thy brother, let me help to reform thee, and takest no care to reform thyself?* Thou wilt do it with an ill grace, and expect every one to tell thee, *that vice corrects sin*. *Physician, heal thyself*, see Rom. 2: 21. The consideration of what is amiss in ourselves, though it ought not to keep us from administering reproof, ought to make us candid and charitable in judging others. Therefore, restore with the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, (Gal. 6: 1.) what thou hast been, what thou art, and must be, if God leave thee to thyself.

First cast the beam out of thine own eye. Our own badness is so far from excusing us in not reproofing, that our being by it rendered un-

ality. We should put the best construction on doubtful actions, and never without proof ascribe good ones to bad motives; shun curious inquiries and injurious suspicions respecting men's conduct; and avoid giving our opinion to any one's disadvantage, unless duty requires it. We should not anathematize those who differ from us, nor condemn sects and societies, except as the Scripture condemns them. As far as we can, we should shun whatever savors of malevolence or spiritual pride; for the opinion, which a Christian is compelled to form of the heart of man and the state of the world, will give sufficient offence, and ought not to be increased by harsh judgments in particular cases.—He, who is habitually inclined to a presumptuous and censorious judging of others, gives them cause to suspect, that he is devoid of true grace, and is exposed to judgment without mercy. If a Christian yield to such an evil, he may expect sharp corrections. Nay, all will commonly judge of men, as they judge others.—Thus it is verified, that 'with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.' (Marg. Ref.—Note, Jam. 4: 11, 12.) Scott. 'The original word may signify to judge with severity, or injustice. Our Lord does not forbid all judgments of the words and actions of others, but those which are formed with malignity, self-interest, rashness and pride.' ROSEN. 'The Jews,' says Dr. A. Clarke, 'were highly criminal here, and yet had very excellent maxims against it.' Their unjust censures of Christ are the strongest instances of it,' observes Doddridge, 'that can be conceived.' Hence he paraphrases thus: 'the scribes and Pharisees—place a great part of their own religion in condemning others; but see to it that you do not judge those about you in this rigorous and severe manner, nor pass such unnecessary or uncharitable censures upon them, that you may not yourselves be judged with the like severity.' God and man will make great allowances to the character of the candid and benevolent; but those must expect

'judgment without mercy, who have shewed no mercy;' (Jam. 2: 13.) nor can they deny the equity of such treatment.—'The evil of judging does not consist in seeing things and persons as they are, or fancying them to be good against plain evidence, but in imputing worse motives to the persons, or putting a worse construction upon their actions, than is necessary, in scorn and the pride of self-preference, without pity, prayer, or endeavor for their amendment.'

ADAM.

Verses 3-5.

This section shews, that though Christ addressed the disciples as children of God, yet He warned them, that some of them might be hypocrites. If one, whose eyes were closed by an obstruction, (which like a beam, was seen by all, and yet prevented him from seeing any object distinctly) should pretend to see a particle in another's eye, and offer to remove it, he would be ridiculous. He ought to be directed to the disease of his own eyes, and endeavor to remedy it, before offering to assist his brother. Thus, while Christians should watch over one another and point out and remedy even small mistakes, he, who undertakes to reprove every defect in others, while his own spirit and conduct are wrong, proves his own hypocrisy. A wise reproof, or minister, must begin at home, and 'take heed to himself and his doctrine, temper and conduct. When these are unexceptionable, he may offer to help his brethren in promoting their sanctification; yet he will do it with humility, tenderness and candor.—Alas! in spiritual optics, a beam in the eye renders a man quick in discerning the faults of others, and 'blind' to his own.—Our Lord probably alluded to some proverbial expressions, the knowledge of which would now throw more light on the subject than any criticism can do. 'There was a proverb,' says Dr. Hammond 'among the Jews, at the coming of Christ,' afterwards, and with some variation, put in the Talmud. They, &c. say to others, 'take out the

clearly to cast out of thy brother's eye.

¶ Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

[Practical Observations.]

7 ¶ Ask, *and it

11:14, 15. 15:26. Prov. 9:7, 8. 23:9.
20:11 Acts 13:45-47. Phil. 3:2.
Heb. 6:4. 10:29. 2 Pet. 2:22.
1 Tim. 11:22.
12:5, 6. 24:10. 2 Cor. 11:36. 2 Tim. 4:14, 15.
11:21, 22. 1 Kings 3:5. Ps. 10:17.
15:19, 13. Ec. 5:3, 7.
Jer. 29:12, 13. 33:3. Mark 11:34.
Luke 11:9, 13. 18:1. John 4:10.
14:13. 15:16. 16:34. Jam. 5:15, 16.
15:1 John 3:22. 5:14, 15. Rev. 3:17, 18.

go about to give instructions and rebukes, much less, comforts to hardened sinners, to whom it will do no good, but who will be exasperated at us. Throw a pearl to a swine, and he will resent it, as if you threw a stone at him. Reproofs will be called *reproaches*, as they were, Luke 11:45. Jer. 6:9. Note, Good counsel and reproof are a holy thing, and a pearl; *as an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold*, so is the wise reproof, (Prov. 25:12.) and a wise reproof is like an excellent oil, (Ps. 141:5.) it is a *tree of life*, (Prov. 3:18.) Some of the wicked are arrived at such a pitch of wickedness, that they are looked upon as dogs and swine; they have so long walked in the way of sinners, that they have sat down in the seat of the scornful. They professedly set instruction at defiance, so that they are irreclaimably wicked; they return with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow to her wallowing in the mire. One can expect nothing, but that they will trample the reproofs under their feet, in scorn and in rage, for they are impatient of control, and will turn again and rend the good names of their reprovers, with their revilings; returning them wounding for healing words, and rendering them with persecution. Herod rent John Baptist for his faithfulness. See here what is the evidence of men's being dogs and swine. They are to be reckoned such, who *hate reproofs* and reprovers, and fly in the face of those who, in kindness show them their sin and danger. These sin against the remedy; who shall help those, who will not be helped? It is plain that God is determined to destroy such, 2 Chron. 25:16. This rule applies to the sealing ordinances of the Gospel, which must not be prostituted to the openly wicked, lest holy things be rendered contemptible, and unholy persons be hardened. *It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.* Yet we must be very cautious whom we condemn as dogs and swine, nor do it but on full evidence. Many a patient is lost by being thought to be so, who, if means had been used, might have been saved. We must take heed

fit to reprove, is an aggravation of our badness. I must not say, 'I have a beam in my own eye, and, therefore, will not help my brother take the mote out of his.' A man's crime can never be his defence; but I must first reform myself, that I may thereby reform my brother. Note, those who blame others ought to be blameless themselves; those who are reprovers in the gate, such as magistrates and ministers, ought to walk circumspectly; *an elder must have a good report*, 1 Tim. 3:2, 7. The snuffers of the sanctuary were to be of pure gold.

Further, not every one is fit to be reproved; *give not that which is holy unto dogs*, v. 9. This may be considered as a rule to the disciples in preaching the Gospel; not that they must not preach it to any wicked men; Christ himself preached to publicans and sinners; but the reference is to those whom they found obstinate, after the Gospel was preached to them, as blasphemers and persecutors. Let them not spend much time among such, for it would be lost labor, Acts 13:41. Or it may be taken as a rule to all in giving reproof. Our zeal against sin must be guided by discretion; we must not spend much time among such, for it would be lost labor, Acts 13:41. Or it may be taken as a rule to all in giving reproof. Our zeal against sin must be guided by discretion; we must not

of calling the *good bad*, by judging all professors to be hypocrites; so we must take heed of calling the *bad desperate*, by judging them to be dogs and swine. Our Lord Jesus is very tender of the safety of his people, and would not have them needlessly expose themselves to the fury of those who would turn again and rend them. Let them not be *righteous overmuch*, so as to destroy themselves. Christ makes the law of self-preservation one of his own laws and precious is the blood of his subjects to Him.

V. 7-11. Christ here speaks of prayer, as the appointed means of obtaining what we need.

1. Here is a precept in three words to the same purport. *Ask, Seek, Knock*; that is, in one word, pray, pray often, and with sincerity and seriousness; pray, and pray again; make conscience of prayer, and be constant in it; make a business of it, and be earnest. *Ask*, as a beggar asks alms. They that would be rich in grace, must betake themselves to the poor trade of begging, and they shall find it a thriving trade. *Ask*; represent your wants and burdens to God; *ask*, as a traveller asks the way. To pray, is to *inquire of God*, Ezek. 36:37. *Seek*, as for a lost thing of value; or as the merchantman, *seeking goodly pearls*. *Seek by prayer*; Dan. 9. 3. *Knock*, as he that desires to enter the house knocks at the door. We would be admitted to converse with God and taken into his love and kingdom; sin has barred the door against us; *pray*, we knock, *Lord, Lord, open to us*. Christ knocks at our door, (Rev. 3:20. Cant. 5:2.) and allows us to knock at his, which is a favor we do not allow to common beggars. Seeking and knocking, imply something more than asking and saying. We must not only ask, but seek; we must second our prayers with our endeavors. We must, in the use of appointed means, seek for that we ask for, else we tempt God. When the dresser of the vineyard asked a year's respite for the vineyard, he added, *I will dig about it*, Luke 13:7, 8. God gives knowledge and grace to those who search the Scriptures, and wait at wisdom's gates, and power against sin to those who watch the occasions of it. We must not only ask, but knock; we must come to God's door, must ask importunately, not only pray, but plead and wrestle with God. We must seek diligently and continue knocking, and endure in the duty to the end.

2. Our labor in prayer shall not be in vain.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-6. While we are careful not to 'call evil good,' or darkness light, we should guard against a censorious spirit, or we shall prepare bitterness for ourselves, and may expect rebukes from God, and censures from man. But why should we, who have so many sins, expose our brother's faults, which perhaps are far less heinous than our own? Let us rather seek for more self-knowledge, deeper humility, and grace to walk circumspectly, that if we have the opportunity, we may counsel and reprove our brethren with efficacy. How unfit must unconverted men be for the ministry! Yet how many enter on the arduous office, and attempt to take notes out of the eyes of others, without 'considering the beam in their own eye!' The minister of Christ is indeed by office a reproof, and must 'rebuke with all authority.' It is, then, needful for all who aspire to the office, to 'cast the beam out of their own eye'; that they may see clearly to cast out the mote from their

brother's eye.' They should be careful not to expose themselves to the retort, 'Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam from thine own eye.' But a mote in one's eye does not disqualify him from casting out a beam from another's eye; yet many neglect reproof, and harden themselves in sin, because ministers are liable to imperfections! In giving reproof, we shall meet with men, who will scoff at precious truths, and rage at just and friendly warnings, and hence we should be ready to endure contempt and persecution with firmness; and we shall often be constrained to let the scorner alone, lest we drive him to madness or blasphemy. But, if efforts should not be thrown away on such offenders, how deplorable is it, that the sacred offices and ordinances of the church are open to their profanation, if they choose, 'for filthy lucre's sake!' This is to give that which is holy to dogs, and to cast pearls before swine!

SCOTT.

small piece of wood from thy eye, are answered, *take the beam out of thine own eyes*. 'I check those who condemn others for small matters, when they are guilty of things far more reprehensible.' SCOTT. By these expressions of our Lord it is plainly intimated, that men, who themselves are grievous sinners, are by no means proper persons to be cast and severe in reproving those who, at the worst, are but their own resemblance; and that the true way to reform mankind is for each to look at home, and begin with reforming himself. How much better were it to employ ourselves in publishing the praises of God, and vindicating the innocence of our abused brethren; in setting every action in its most advantageous light, and pouring balm into bleeding reputations, wounded by artificial malice, and words which are 'very swords!'

STANHOPE.

Verse 6.

As every man is not an authorized reproof, so every offender is not the subject of reproofs. (Note, Prov. 9:7-9. 23:9.) To persevere in giving instruction to some, would be as improper, as to throw the holy things, which were the food of the priests, to unclean dogs, or to cast a pearl before swine.' The emblems here used, may be supposed to denote hardened scorners, licentious or covetous professors, untractable op-

posers, or manifest apostates. (Murg. Ref.) Many instances of the Lord's goodness, though precious to the humble, are not to be told to scoffers, or those, who pervert sacred things. They would only be emboldened to greater ungodliness, and more impious rage. Such persons will disdain all experimental religion, or communion with God; as swine would tread pearls in the mire; and they will be so enraged at holy warnings, that, like fierce dogs, they will turn and tear their reproofers.—The rule may extend to preaching among those who obstinately contradict and blaspheme; and the admission of openly wicked persons to the Lord's supper, and to the Christian ministry. See next grievous violation of it. SCOTT. 'Obstinate contemners of Divine truth not unusually conceive great hatred against its professors, as opposed to their gains or reputation, and as casting reproach on their vices by a total difference of conduct; hence they labor to excite the people and government against Christians. Christ and his apostles experienced this among the Jews. Justin [Martyr] found Crescens, the Cynic philosopher, such an enemy, and not without reason anticipated his own death, as the result. Nevertheless, as Christ would not allow his holy doctrine to be thrown away on the one class, He would not have it concealed on account of the other.'

SCOTT.

61.

shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:

8 For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him!

1: 6:33. Ps. 140: 27-9. 69:32-70:4. 105:34. 119:2. Prov. 8:17. Cant. 5:2. Am. 3:4. Rom. 2:7. 3:11. Heb. 11:6.

10 Luke 13:25. 15:22-24. 2 Chr. 33:1-2. John 2:9. 2:33-40. Luke 12:42-43. Act. 9:11.

10 Luke 11:11-13.

1 Gen. 3:3. 4:21. Job 15:16. Jer. 17:9. Rom. 9:3-19. Gal. 3:22. Eph. 2:1-3. Tit. 3:3.

1 Ex. 34:6-7. 2 Sam. 7:1. Ps. 88:5. 103:11-13. Ps. 49:15. 55:9-13. Hos. 11:9-13. Mic. 7:18. Mal. 1:4.

John 3:16. Rom. 5:8-10. 8:32. Eph. 2:4-5. 1 John 3:1. 4:10. Ps. 84:11. 85:12. Jer. 33:4. Hos. 14:2. marg. Luke 2:10, 11. 11:13.

2 Cor. 9:8-15. Tit. 3:4-7.

the promise, as is sure, and should be as sweet, as what we have in hand. *God hath spoken in his holiness, and then Gilead is mine, Manasseh is mine; (Ps. 103: 7, 8.)* all mine own, if I can but make it so by believing it so. Conditional grants become absolute on the performance of the condition; so here, *he that asketh receiveth.* Christ puts his *fiat* to the petition; and He having all power, that is enough.

It is illustrated by a similitude taken from earthly parents, and their innate readiness to give their children what they ask. Christ appeals to his hearers, *What man is there of you, though never so ill-humored, who, if his son ask bread, will give him a stone? Whence he infers, If*

Where God finds a praying heart, He will be found a prayer-hearing God. *He shall give thee an answer of peace.* The precept is three fold, *ask, seek, knock.* There is *precept upon precept*; but the promise is six fold, *line upon line*, for our encouragement; because a firm belief of the promise will make us constant in obedience. Now the promise is made so as exactly to answer the precept. God will meet those that attend on Him. *Ask, and it shall be given you, not lent, nor sold, but given; and what is more free than gift?* Whatever you pray for, according to the promise, shall be given you, if God see it fit for you; and what would you have more? It is but *ask, and have.* *Ye have not, because ye ask not, or ask not aright.* What is not worth asking, is not worth having, therefore worth nothing. God is Himself found of those that seek Him, and if we find Him, we have enough. *Knock and it shall be opened*; the door of mercy and grace shall no longer be shut against you as enemies and intruders, but open to you as friends and children. It will be asked, 'who is at the door?' If you be able to say, a friend, and have the ticket of promise ready in the hand of faith, doubt not of admission. If the door be not opened at the first knock, continue instant in prayer; it is an affront to a friend to knock at his door, and then go away; *though He tarry, yet wait.* It is made to extend to all that pray aright. 'Not only you, my disciples, shall receive what you pray for, but every one that asketh receiveth, Jew or Gentile, young or old, bond or free, high or low, rich or poor, they are all alike welcome to the throne of grace, if they come in faith, for God is no respecter of persons.' It is made a grant in the present tense, which is more than a promise for the future; not only shall receive, but *receiveth*; by faith applying and appropriating the promise, we are actually interested in the good promised. So sure and inviolable are the promises of God, that they do, in effect, give present possession. An active believer enters immediately, and makes the promised blessings his own. What we have in hope, according to

ye then being evil, yet grant your children's request, much more will your heavenly Father give you the good things ye ask.

Now this man, direct our prayers. We must come to God, as children to a Father in heaven, with reverence and confidence. How naturally does a child in distress run to its Father; *My head, my head!* thus should the new nature send us to God for supplies. We must come to Him for good things, which teaches us to rely on ourselves to Him; we know not what is good for ourselves, (Eccl. 6: 12.) but He does, and we must leave it with Him; *Father, thy will be done.* The child is here supposed to ask bread, that is necessary, and a fish that is wholesome, but if the child should foolishly ask for a stone, or a serpent, for unripe fruit to eat, or a sharp knife to play with, the father, though kind, is so wise as to deny him. We often ask that of God which would do us hurt, if we had it; He knows it, and therefore does not give it to us. Denials in love are better than grants in anger. We had been undone ere this, if we had had all we desired.

It is of use, to encourage our prayers and exhortations. We may hope that we shall not be disappointed. We shall not have a stone for bread to break our teeth, though we have a hard crust to employ them; nor a serpent for a fish to sting us. We have reason indeed to fear it, for we deserve it; but God will be better to us than the desert of our sins. The world often gives stones for bread, and serpents for fish, but God never does: nay, we shall be heard and answered, for children are by their parents. God has put into the hearts of parents a compassionate inclination to succor their children. They who have little conscience of duty, do it as by instinct. No law was ever thought necessary to oblige parents to maintain their legitimate children, nor, in Solomon's time, their illegitimate ones. God owns us for his children, that, from the readiness we find in ourselves to relieve our children, we may be encouraged to apply to Him for relief. What tenderness fathers have is from Him; not from nature, but from the God of nature; and therefore it must needs be infinitely greater in Himself. He compares his concern for his people to that of a father for his children, (Ps. 103: 13.) nay, to that of a mother, which is usually more tender, Isa. 66: 13. 49: 14, 15. But it is here supposed that his love and tenderness far excel that of any earthly parent; and therefore it is argued with a 'much more,' and it is grounded on this undoubted truth, that God is a better Father, infinitely bet-

Verses 7-11.

(Note, Luke 11: 5-13.) Many importunities have been inculcated, and wisdom and grace are requisite for the practice of them, without running into extremes on the right hand or the left. Our Lord, therefore, next encouraged his hearers to seek help and every blessing by prayer, and other means of grace, assuring them that whoever thus asked, sought, and knocked at mercy's gate would be successful. But is there no asking without receiving? Undoubtedly there is. A man will ask in vain if he ask of an idol, or saint, instead of God: he may ask what the Lord never promised, or without feeling any need of the mercy; he may offer hypocritical prayers; he may pray for exemption from punishment, while he cleaves to sin; he may ask for blessings, without using the means of obtaining them; or, in contempt of the appointed Mediator, he may make in his own name, or in that of imaginary mediators. He may seek the world, and then attend to religion so far as it consists with his worldly view; he may seek salvation in a more smooth method than that of the Gospel, or when 'the master of the house hath risen up and shut to the door;' (Note, Luke 13: 22-30, v. 25) nay, a man may knock in a fright, and leave off when his fears subside. But the sinner who comes to God, through the divine Advocate, for salvation, in sincere and earnest prayer, persevering, as having hope in this way only; who seeks spiritual blessings first, in the use of all appointed means, and he who knocks, resolved to find admission, will be sure at length to succeed. The promise is absolute. 'Every one that asketh shall receive, and he that seeketh shall find, and he that knocketh shall be opened unto him.' Such a promise sometimes finds ready admission; always in due time; nor will their previous character, however bad, preclude them; for He who opened the way, has taught them to come, and He giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not. (Note, Jam. 1: 5-8, v. 6.) It would be dishonorable to God to suppose the contrary, after the displays of his compassion to sinners. What man would put off his hungry child, when asking food, with a useless stone instead of a loaf, or a noxious serpent instead of a fish? Such a parent would not deserve the name of a father, or even of a man. If, therefore, men, corrupt and selfish, who cannot give without lessening their own store, and often betraying themselves, are moved by natural affection to give salutary gifts to their children; how much more shall our heavenly Father give good things, even all things pertaining to salvation, to all who humbly seek them? Christ does not say, 'to his children,' lest the suppliant should be hindered by the fear of not being one of them, but to 'them'

that ask Him; thus asking may give assurance of being heard, and of receiving mercy. Our Lord assumed it as a principle, that the disciples, as well as others, were evil. 'What man is there among you, (in all this assembly,) who, if his son, &c.' 'Young preachers,' says Dr. Doddridge, 'are desired to consider how much force it adds to these discourses of our Lord, that they are an immediate address to his hearers, and not general harangues, like the *Essays* now so fashionable in pulpits.' 'Being evil.' An energetic attestation of the Truth Himself to man's natural depravity and wickedness. SCOTT. *Ask, seek, knock.* 'These words include the ideas of want, loss, and earnestness. Ask: beg at the door of mercy: thou art destitute of all spiritual good, and God alone can give it thee; and thou hast no claim but what his mercy has given thee on itself. Seek: thou hast lost thy God, thy paradise, thy soul. Look about thee: leave no stone unturned; there is no salvation nor peace for thee, till thou get thy soul restored to the favor and image of God. Knock: be in earnest—be importunate. Eternity is at hand! and if thou die in thy sin, where God is thou shalt never come. DR. A. CLARKE. 'The multiplying of terms in the precept is not superfluous, as it exhibits our aversion in reference to prayer and God's requirement of faith, constancy, and importunity. The promise that we "shall have" signifies an answer, either in kind or value. Asking is but the verbal expression of desire. No man desires what is evil, but that which he believes good, or suitable to his wants. As earthly parents will not give their children what is really hurtful, though they conclude that, though we thought what we asked was bread, yet indeed it was a stone; though we thought it a fish, God saw it was a scorpion, and answered our general desires of good by denying us specific request.'

12 Therefore 'all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: 'for this is the law and the prophets.

[*Practical Observations.*]

13 ¶ Enter ye in ^a at
the strait gate: ^z for
wide is the gate, and
broad is the way, ^y that
leadeth to destruction,
and many there be
which go in thereat:

t. 18:40-63:1.
 t. 22:39-40. Lev. 19:7-8. Is. 1:17, 18.
 Jer. 7:5, 6. Ec. 19:7-8, 10. Am. 5:1, 2.
 Mic. 6:8. Zech. 7:7-10. 8:16, 17.
 13:3-10. Gal. 5:13-14. 1 Tim. 1:5.
 Jam. 2:10-13.
 u. 3:2, 3. 18:2, 3. 23:13. Prov. 9:6. Is.
 57:7. Ec. 18:27-32. Luke 9:23. 13:3.
 21:45. 14:39. John 10:9. 14:6. Act.
 2:42. Rom. 2 Cor. 6:17. Gal. 5:
 24.
 v. Gen. 6:5, 12. Ps. 14:2, 3. Is. 1:9.
 Rom. 3:9-19. 2 Cor. 4:4. Eph. 2:
 2, 3. 1 John 5:19. Rev. 12:9. 13:3.
 20:3.
 w. 14:48. Prov. 7:27. 16:25. Rom.
 9:22. Phil. 3:19. 2 Thes. 1:9, 10.
 1 Pet. 4:17, 13. Rev. 20:15.

sured, therefore, do not censure. Or, that you may have the benefit of the foregoing promises, fitly is the law of justice subjoined to the law of prayer; for, unless we be honest in our conversation, God will not hear our prayers. Isa. 1: 15-17. 58: 6, 9. Zech. 7: 9, 13. We cannot expect to receive good things from God, if we do not *do* fair things, and that which is *honest*, and *lovely*, and of *good report* among men. We must not only be devout, but honest, else our devotion is but hypocrisy.

The rule of justice is laid down; *Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* Christ came to teach us, not only what we are to know and believe, but what we are to do, not only towards God but towards men also. Not our fellow-disciples only, those of our party and persuasion, but all with whom we have to do. Alexander Severus, a heathen emperor, was a great admirer of this rule, had it written on the walls of his closet, often quoted it in giving judgment, honored Christ, and favored Christians for the sake of it. Take the rule negatively or positively, it comes to the same. We must not do to others he evil they

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7-12. Amidst evils, wants, weakness, and folly, let us give ourselves unto prayer. Thus let the sinner seek reconciliation to God, and the believer, all that he needs for his comfortable walk with Him. But let us pray with earnestness, perseverance, and expectation of success; for 'every one that asketh receiveth.' If any say *they ask, seek, knock*, and yet obtain not, but are still enslaved to their sins, we must conclude, that they deceive themselves, or others. 'Let God be true, and every man a liar;' if men have not, it is either because they ask not, or ask amiss. Let us never suppose, that God would erect a throne of grace, appoint a mediator, command us

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 at. Therefore,

This is the law and the prophets. It is the summary of the second great command, that is one of the two on which hang all the law and the prophets, (ch. 21: 40.) being their concurrent language. Every thing said in them about our duty to our neighbor may be reduced to this rule. Christ here adopts it, so that both the Old and New Testaments agree in prescribing it to us. By this rule is the law of Christ commanded, but the lives of Christians are censured by comparing them with it.

2. We must make religion our business, and be interested in it. We must be strict in our conversation, which is here represented as entering a *strait gate*, and walking in a *narrow way*. Observe the account here given of the bad way of sin, and the good way of holiness. There are only two ways, the good or bad, right or wrong, to heaven or to hell ; in one of which we all are walking ; no middle place hereafter no middle way now. The distinction of men

to pray, incline your hearts to it; and then refuse to hear; or give us what would be pernicious, instead of 'the bread of life' and the blessings of salvation. Far be it from us to listen to the adversary, or suspect God of what would disgrace one of the sinful race of man! Assured, then, that He will give good things to all that ask Him, let us copy his equity, truth, and goodness. Whatever we desire men to do unto us, let us study to do the same unto them; 'not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but 'doing good against evil, and overcoming evil with good.' SCOTT.

SCOTT.

Verse 12.

The example of God, and his readiness to pardon and accept us, are the primary argument, which enforces this rule, and connects it with the preceding verses. It is not only enacted as a strict and holy law, but is proposed to believers as a rule of duty, with abundant motives and encouragements: that by observing it they may glorify God, and show their gratitude for his mercy. Moral precepts, thus enforced, differ widely from the same rules of action prescribed by human moralists, without *authority or sanction*.—This precept is often called the *'golden rule'*, and is equivalent to that of 'loving our neighbor as ourselves,' containing the substance of the second table of the law. It is a rule which is not only *easy* to be observed, but it would be absurd to suppose our Lord meant that it contains all that has been written of the love of God. 'This rule, the sum of the law and the prophets,' can never be justly so construed, as to subvert any law established by 'him. Therefore it admits limitation. What I desire according to the principles of Christianity should be done, or not done to me, that I must do, or not do to others. It would not hence follow, that if Socrates would lend his wife to a friend, the friend should do the same; for 'it is contrary to "the law and the prophets." A criminal would not have the judge condemn him, yet the judge must condemn; since otherwise offenders would go unpunished. A master is not to obey his servants, because he wishes for obedience in them; but he must be as obedient to his own master, as he can reasonably expect they should be to him; and treat his servants as kindly, as he could reasonably expect they should do to him. And a poor man may desire that one who is wealthy should give enough to make him rich; yet though, were the rich man poor, he also might desire the same kindness, he is not required by this rule, though he might lawfully do so, to make his poor man rich.' *Whitby*. We are not required to do to

others, whatever we might *unreasonably* desire them to do for us. Judging by the rule of duty, and by the feelings of our own minds, we should suppose ourselves to be in the situation of another; and then inquire how they might *reasonably* expect him to behave toward us, if *he* were in our situation. Every man must perceive, that this would lead to universal justice, goodness, compassion, forgiveness and candor, and exclude every thing of an opposite character. If we proceed in this manner, we shall find that the only *right* conduct in the world is that which is *right*. But alas! professed Christians are willing to do to others, as they *are done by*; instead of doing to others what they *would* that others should do to them.—‘This maxim,’ says Dr. Evans, in his ‘Christian Temper,’ will be a monitor in conversation, in negotiation and commerce, in ‘cases where others need compassion, in censures, in provocations, ‘in the several relations of life, in religious differences, and the use of ‘such words as Schismatics and Heretics.’ SCOTT. ‘None but whose heart is filled with love to God and all mankind, can keep this precept, *as it is written*, and who will feel itself creep out, and be brought within its limits, but God hath spoken it, and it is the design of the *law* and the *prophets*: the sum of all that is laid down in the Sacred Writings, relative to men’s conduct towards each other. It seems as if God had written it upon the hearts of all men, for saying, ‘This kind may be found among all nations, Jewish, Christian, and Heathen.’ Dr. A. CLARKE. ‘This precept is, in effect, a summary and abstract of all the humane and social virtues recommended in the moral precepts of the *law* and the *prophets*; and it was one of the greatest ends of both to bring men to this equitable and amiable temper.—I say *one* of the greatest ends, because it is not the *only* end, but it is *the first and great commandment*: (Matt. 22: 38.) and it is a most absurd and fatal error to imagine that the regulation of social life is the only end of religion.—I fear many good-natured deists will perish by adopting this error, and my heart is wounded at the thought.’ DONNA.

14 * Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

15 ¶ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Or, How.

16:14, 25. Prov. 4:26, 27. 8:20. 1a. 20:21. 35:8. 57:14. Jer. 6:16. Mark 8:24. John 15:1-30. 16:2, 33. Acts 11:22. 1 Thea. 3:2-5. 2a. 16:16. 22:14. Luke 12:32. 13:23. 24: 30. Rom. 7:27-32. Gal. 11:5, 6. 12: 2. Eph. 2:2, 3. 1 Pet. 3:20, 21. b. 17: 16:11. Mark 12:35. Luke 12:15. Acts 13:40. Phil. 3:2. C. 2: 2:8. 2 Pet. 3:17. d. 24: 5:11, 24, 25. Deut. 13:1-3. 1a. 15:15. Jer. 14:11-16. 29:15-17. 29:21-32. Ez. 13:16-22. Mic. 3:2-7. 11. Mark 13:22, 33. 2 Pet. 2:1-3. 1 John 4:1. Rev. 19:20. e. 24: 13:4. Mark 12:40-40. Rom. 16:17, 18. 2 Cor. 11:13-15. Gal. 2:4. Eph. 4:14. 5:6. Col. 2:8. 1 Tim. 4: 3, 5. 2 Tim. 3:3-5. 13: 1, 4, 5. 2 Pet. 2:19. Jude 4. Rev. 13:17. f. 1a. 55:10, 11. Ez. 22:25. Mic. 3:5. Zeph. 3:3, 4. Acts 20:29-31. Rev. 17:5. g. 20. 2 Pet. 2:10-13. Jude 10-13. h. Luke 6:43-45. Jam. 3:12. i. Pa. 13: 22, 13, 14. Is. 53-5. 61:3. Jer. 17:8. Luke 13:9-9. Gal. 5:22-24. Eph. 5:8. Phil. 1:11. Col. 1: 10. Jam. 3:17, 13. j. 12:33-35. Jude 12.

be brought down; nay, we must be willing to deny ourselves and forsake all for Christ. *The gate is strait* to all, but to some straiter than to others; as to the rich, and some that have been long prejudiced against religion. *The gate is strait*, but blessed be God, not shut up, nor locked, nor kept with a flaming sword, as it will be shortly, ch. 25: 10.

Secondly, *the way is narrow*. We are not in heaven as soon as we get through the *strait gate*; not in Canaan, as soon as we are through

into saints and sinners will swallow up all to eternity.

That which allures multitudes into the way, keeps them in it; abundant liberty is offered, the *gate is wide*, and *the way broad*, and there are many travellers. The gate is wide open, to tempt those that go right on their way. You may go in with all your lusts about you; it gives no check to your appetites. *You may walk in the way of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes*, with room enough. It is a *broad way*. No hedge. There are many paths in it. There is choice of sinful ways, contrary to each other, but all paths in this *broad way*. You will have abundance of company. *Many there be that go in thereat*. If we follow the multitude, it will be to do evil. It is natural for us to go down stream; but it is too great a compliment to be willing to be damned for company, and to go to hell with them, because they will not go to heaven with us. If many perish, we should be the more cautious.

It leads to destruction. Eternal death is at the end, (and the way of sin tends to it),—everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Whether it be the high way of open profaneness, or the back way of close hypocrisy, sin will be our ruin if we repent not.

We have an account of the way of holiness, that frightens so many. Let us know the worst of it, and sit down and count the cost. Christ tells us first, that *the gate is strait*. Conversion and regeneration are the gate by which we enter into this way, and begin a life of faith and godliness. Out of a state of sin into a state of grace, we must pass by the new birth, John 3: 3, 5. This is a *strait gate*, hard to find, and hard to get through, like a passage between two rocks, 1 Sam. 14: 4. There must be a *new heart and a new spirit, and old things must pass away*. The bent of the soul must be changed, corrupt habits broken off; what we have been doing all our days must be undone again. We must swim against the stream, and struggle with much opposition from within and from without. It is easier to set a man against all the world, than against himself, and yet this must be in conversion. It is a *strait gate*, for we must stoop, or we cannot enter. We must become as little children; high thoughts must

the Red sea; no, we must go through a wilderness, must travel a *narrow way*, hedged in by the divine law, which is *exceeding broad*, and that makes *the way narrow*. Self must be denied, corruptions mortified, daily temptations resisted, and duties done, though against our inclination. We must endure hardships, wrestle, and be in an agony; we must go through much tribulation. It is a afflicted way; but though hedged about, blessed be God, it is not hedged up. Our bodies and the corruptions remaining in us, make the way of duty difficult; but as the understanding and will grow more and more sound, it will open and enlarge, and become more pleasant.

Thirdly, *The gate being so strait, and the way so narrow*, it is not strange that so few find it. Many pass it by through carelessness. They are well as they are, and see no need to change; others look upon it, but shun it; they do not like to be so restrained. They that are going to heaven are few, compared with those who are going to hell. A little flock, a remnant, like the grape-gleanings of the vintage, as the eight that were saved in the ark, 1 Kings 20: 27. This discourages many, they are loth to be singular; but instead of stumbling at this, say rather, if so few are going to heaven, there shall be one more for me.

This is the way to life, to present comfort in the favor of God, and to eternal bliss; the hope of which, at the end of our way, should reconcile us to all the difficulties of the road. Life and godliness are put together; (2 Pet. 1: 3.) *the gate is strait, and the way narrow*, and uphill, but one hour in heaven will make amends for all.

Our great concern and duty is, *Enter ye in at the strait gate*. The matter is fairly stated; life and death are set before us. Let it be considered impartially, and this day choose you in which you will walk. The matter determines itself, and will not admit of debate. No man in his wits would choose to go to the gallows because it is a smooth way, nor refuse the offer of a throne, because the way to it is rough and dirty. Yet such absurdities as these are men guilty of in matters relating to their souls. Deliberate not then any longer, but enter ye in at the strait gate. Knock at it, by sincere and constant prayer and endeavor, and it shall be opened; nay, a wide door, and an effectual one, shall be opened. It is true we cannot go in without divine grace; but it is as true that grace is freely offered, and shall not be wanting to those that seek it. Conversion is hard work, but it is needful; and blessed be God, it is not impossible, if we strive.

Verses 13, 14.

Our Lord's audience consisted of unestablished disciples, and the multitude. Both needed to be excited to earnestness in the concerns of their souls; for which purpose He gave them this exhortation and warning.—Our life is represented as a journey to eternity. As there are two places to which men go at death, so there are two roads; one to destruction, the other to happiness. The gate at which men enter 'the broad road' is wide, even as wide as the race of Adam; for we enter it when we are born sinners in a sinful world, and proceed in it as long as we live unconverted. As it is *broad*, it has paths suited to various inclinations. The covetous and the envenomed, the infidel, prodigal, and hypocrite; the antinomians and the Pharisees, the children of levity and dissipation, grave politicians, and proud philosophers, decent moralists and infamous debauchees, all have select paths and companies. Each despises the other, and yet they countenance one another in opposing the holy ways of the Lord. Here they walk without trouble, contrivance, or intention, and while pleasing or forgetting themselves, or even wasting their time in sleep, they make progress. As it is thronged by many, especially of the rich, wise, noble, and honorable, and many of its paths are fashionable, numbers have no suspicion whether it leads, as he is highly incensed at those who warn them, and so fall into destruction. But when a man believes Christ, he discovers the end of his way, feels the necessity of turning, and determines to proceed no further. He learns, that, by repentance, faith, conversion to God and holiness, he may enter another way which leads to life. But the gate is strait.—He must deny himself, take up his cross, resist temptation, mortify the flesh, endure reproach, use all the means of grace, and cordially accept Christ in all his offices, or he cannot get in. 'The way is narrow.' It is the direct way of implicit faith and obedience. A Christian cannot choose his path, as men do in the broad road. He must go straight forward. If he turn aside, he will be scourged back into the narrow path. If he meet an enemy, he must overcome him; if he come to a mountainous difficulty, he must climb over it; if the road be rough, he must still keep in it, and suffer no tribulation to drive him from it. Therefore, 'few there be, that find' this way to life. Most men either neglect religion, or rest in forms or notions; or are deluded into a foolish and fashionable religion, which 'Satan, transformed into an angel of light, and his ministers transformed into ministers of righteousness, pro-

pose to them, when uneasy about their souls. They are deterred by difficulties from entering the strait gate, and treading the narrow way; and they hope to get to heaven at an easier rate. They do not know that this narrow way has joys and consolations, which compensate for its difficulties and trials. Therefore Christ warned all to 'enter in at the strait gate' without delay, and with all earnestness; and to fear nothing so much as to be left without. For if the entrance be difficult, and found only by few, yet all, who resolutely attempt it, will succeed; and it leads to eternal life, while all others lead to destruction.—It is surprising how little satisfaction of Christ has been overlooked by his professed disciples, and how much pains have been taken to soften its asperity and explain away its meaning. It is not inconsistent with the rule of judging, to suppose most men in the way to destruction, and to exhort them to 'enter in at the strait gate'; when words like these are in the Scripture, and commented on by the ungodly lives of multitudes around us. (Notes, 1, 2. Luke 13: 22-30.)—The real disciple of Christ has always been an unfashionable character; and all, who have sided with the majority have gone in the broad road. (Notes, Eph. 2: 1-3.) *Broad*. Spacious, affording room. *Narrow*, not spacious, straitened. *Scorn*.

Our Savior seems here to allude to the distinction of public and private ways made by Jewish lawyers: with whom a private way was four cubits in breadth, a public way sixteen. Lightfoot. 'The strait gate' signifies literally what it called a *tricket*, or little door in a large gate. By gate, among the Jews, was signified metaphorically the introduction to or means of acquiring any thing. So they speak of the gate of repentance, the gate of prayers, and of tears. *The way* to the kingdom of God is made sufficiently manifest—the clearest assistance promised in the way—and nothing renders it either *narrow*, or difficult, but sin. Let all the world leave their sins, and all the world may walk in it. A. A. CLARKE. 'The way of life which our blessed Redeemer has marked out for us in such precepts as these, may indeed to corrupt nature appear rugged and narrow, and the gate strait through which we are to pass; but let us encourage ourselves against all these difficulties, by considering the eternal life and glory to which they infallibly lead. Then shall we prefer the most painful path of piety and virtue, though with fewer companions than we might reasonably expect, to all those flowery and frequented ways of vice which go down to the chambers of death. DODGE.

18 A good tree ^{can} not bring forth evil fruit, neither ^{can} a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

20 Wherefore ^{men} by their fruits ye shall know them.

[Practical Observations.]

Gal. 5:17 1 John 3:9, 10.
1 Pet. 2:19, 20. 1 Cor. 13:1-3. 2 Tim. 3:1-5. Luke 12:1-3. 1 John 13:1-5. Heb. 5:6. Jude 12.
1 Pet. 2:1. Acts 5:33.

out false colors, but with design more successfully to attack the truth? 'Well, beware, try them, and if you discover falsehood, have nothing to do with them. Guard against this temptation, which commonly attends a revival of religion.' When God's work revives, Satan and his agents are most busy.

1. Beware; they are wolves in sheep's clothing. They come in the habit of prophets, which was coarse and unwrought. They wear a rough garment to deceive, Zech. 13:4. The Septuagint calls Elijah's mantle a sheepskin mantle. Beware of being deceived by men's dress, as by that of the scribes, who desired to walk in long robes, Luke 20:46. Or it may be taken figuratively. They pretend to be sheep; and outwardly appear so, harmless and useful. They feign themselves to be just men; and, because of their clothing, are admitted among the sheep, which gives them an opportunity of doing mischief. 'Satan turns himself into an angel of light,' 2 Cor. 11:13, 14. The enemy has horns like a lamb, (Rev. 13:11.) Faces of men, Rev. 9:7, 8. Seducers in language and carriage are soft as wool, Rom. 16:18. Isa. 30:10.

2. Carefully they are ravening wolves. Every hypocrite is a goat in sheep's clothing, but the false prophet a wolf; not only not a sheep, but the worst enemy the sheep has; that comes only to tear and scatter them, (John 10:12.) to drive them from God and each other into crooked paths. Paul calls them grievous wolves, Acts 20:29. They raven for themselves, and serve their own belly, Rom. 16:18.

3. The good rule is, prove all things; (1 Thess. 5:21.) try the spirits; (1 John 4:1.) the touchstone is, ye shall know them by their fruits, v. 16-20. You cannot always distinguish trees by the bark, leaves, or boughs, but by their fruits ye shall know them. The fruit is according to the tree. Men may, in their professions, contradict their inward principles, but their practices will agree with them. Never expect to gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles; it is not in their nature to produce such fruits. An apple may be stuck, or a bunch of grapes may hang upon a thorn; so may a good truth, word, or action, be found in an ill man, but never grow there. Note, Corrupt hearts are like thorns and thistles, which are worthless, vexing, and for the fire at last. Good works are like grapes and figs, pleasing to God, and profitable to men. This good fruit is no more to be expected from bad men, than a clean thing out of an unclean. They want an influence

ing principle; out of an evil treasure will be brought forth evil things. On the other hand, if you know what the fruit is, you may know what the tree is. A good tree cannot but bring forth good fruit; a corrupt tree cannot but bring forth evil fruit; that being reckoned the fruit of a tree, which it brings forth naturally, plentifully, and constantly. Men are known by the tenor of their conversation, and by the acts that are most their own, and least under the influence of external motives.

Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down. This very saying, John the Baptist had used, ch. 3:10. Christ could have spoken the same sense in other words, but He thought it no disparagement to Him to use the same words John had used. Let not ministers be anxious to coin new expressions, nor people's ears itch for novelties. To write and speak the same things, must not be grievous, for it is safe. Barren trees are they that bring not forth good fruit; though there be fruit, if it be not good fruit, the tree is accounted barren. Barren trees shall certainly be hewn down and cast into the fire. God will deal with them, as men do with dry trees; He will place on them some sign, token of his displeasure; He will hark them by stripping them of their parts and gifts; will cut them down by death, and cast them into the fire of hell; a fire kindled by God's wrath, and fed with the wood of barren trees, Ezek. 31:12, 13. Dan. 4:14. John 15:16.

Would you know whether they be right or not, see how men live. The scribes and Pharisees sat in Moses' chair, and taught the law. But they were proud, false, and oppressive; therefore, Christ warned his disciples to beware of them, Mark 12:38. If men pretend to be prophets, and are immoral, they are no true friends to the cross of Christ, whatever they profess; whose god is their belly, whose glory is their shame, who mind earthly things, Phil. 3:18, 19. Those are not sent by the holy God, whose lives show that they are led by the unclean spirit. God, indeed, puts treasure into earthen vessels, but not into vessels so corrupt. They may declare God's statutes, but what have they to do to declare them?

By the fruits of their doctrine, you may know men. What do they tend to, and to what affections and practices will they lead? If the doctrine be of God, it will tend to promote piety, humility, holiness, and other Christian graces; but, if the doctrines of these prophets manifestly tend to make people proud, worldly and contentious, to make them loose in their conversation, uncharitable, factious; if it take people off from governing themselves and their

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13-20. We ought constantly to remember, that 'wide is the gate, and broad the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many go in theret.' If we would serve God, we must be singular, as well as resolute, in religion. We 'must be born again, or we cannot see the kingdom of God.' We must believe in Christ, and be in Him new creatures, and lead godly lives; or we cannot be saved. Facts demonstrate, that so 'straight is this gate, and so narrow the way,' that 'few find it.' Yet 'every one that seeketh, findeth, and to him that knocketh, the gate shall be opened.' Though the way has difficulties, and is painful to the flesh, yet it has comforts with which a stranger intermeddeth not. The entrance is more difficult, than the further progress, and the hope of heaven, and 'joy in the Holy Ghost' render it 'the way of pleasantness and the path of peace.' But let all beware of those, who 'prophecy smooth things,' and invent easier ways to heaven. Such are 'ministers of Satan, transformed into ministers of righteousness;' they beguile unstable souls, and prejudice them against the religion of Christ, and its

teachers. Whatever appearances they assume they are actuated by some corrupt principle, and are wolves in sheep's clothing. The disciple who takes Christ's character and precepts as the standard of his judgment, will generally see through them. By their fruits he will distinguish them from the servants of the Lord, and will not expect to 'gather grapes, or figs, from thorns or thistles.' He is aware, that a good tree cannot habitually bring forth evil fruit, nor a corrupt tree good fruit; and looking on to the time when 'every tree, that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down and cast into the fire,' he will take care not to be deceived by them.—Alas! most men have other rules of judgment than the Scriptures; and a confident tone, a voluble tongue, and zeal for some parts of religion in opposition to others, or new notions plausibly defended, go further than a Christian spirit and conversation, and the preaching of the whole doctrine of the Gospel; so that many follow the way of deceivers, whom the way of truth is evil spoken of. (Note, 2 Pet. 2:1.) SCOTT.

Verses 15-20

Before the coming of Christ, false prophets were the most dangerous enemies to religion, and false teachers have been so ever since. (Marg. Ref. b. c.) Nothing so prevents men from becoming true Christians, as the flattering doctrines of those who pervert the truth. (Note, 23:13.) Hence Christ warned the people to 'beware of false prophets,' who might be 'known by their fruits,' by the effects of their doctrine as exemplified in their own spirit and conduct; for they would betray themselves by their arrogance, ambition, eagerness for disputation, vehement passions, bitter resentment, or some part of their habitual temper and conduct: being contrary to the mind of Christ, and the humility, meekness and love, which characterize his ministers.—He who re-

gards Christ's words, will no more expect good from unchristian teachers, than 'grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles.' They commonly infect all, over whom they have influence, with corrupt principles, pride, selfishness, wrath and malignity. A good tree will yield a good fruit, but a corrupt tree must bring forth evil fruit. The habit of conduct of a pious man must be good, and the tendency of his example beneficial. But the tenor of an unconverted man's actions must be evil, and the effect of his life and doctrine pernicious. As the Judge will decide upon professed Christians by this rule; and 'every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire,' (Note, 3:7-10.) so we should judge by the same rule. By the 'fruits,' and not 'fair speeches,' we must know them: nor can we see

21 ¶ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have we cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

25-11, 12. Hos. 8:2, 3. Luke 6:46. 13: 25. Acts 19:13, &c. Tit. 1:16. Jam. 2:20-26.
9:13. 19:21. 21:31. 25:21. Mark 9:7. 10:23, 24. Luke 18:25. John 8:5. Acts 1:22. Heb. 4:6.
12:50. 21:22-31. Mark 3:35. Luke 11:24. John 6:40. 7:17. Rom. 12:2. Eph. 6:6. Col. 4:12. 1 Thes. 3:3. 5: 18. Heb. 13:24. 1 Pet. 2:15. 4:2. 1 John 3:21-24. Rev. 22:1.
10:42, 43. 16:17. 18:10, 19, 35. 26:39, 42. John 5:17. 10:29, 30. 14:7. 15:23. Rev. 2:7. 3:5.
9:13 or 21—42:31. 1 Thes. 1:17. Mat. 3:17, 18. Luke 10:12. 1 Thes. 5:4. 2 Thes. 1:10. 2 Tim. 1:12, 18. 4:8.
10:5-8. Num. 24:4. 31:8. Luke 13:26. John 11:51. 1 Cor. 13:12. Heb. 6:4-6.

call Christ, *Lord, Lord*; we say well, for so He is; (John 13:13.) but can we imagine this to be enough to show for us to heaven; or that He who knows and requires the heart, should he so put off with show for substance? Compliments among men are paid with compliments, but they are never paid as real services; and can they be of any account with Christ? There may be a seeming importunity in prayer, *Lord, Lord*; but if inward impressions be not answerable to the outward language, we are but as *sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal*. This is not to take us off from earnestness in prayer, but from resting in the form of godliness without the power.

To be happy, we must do the will of Christ. *The will of God as Christ's Father*, is his will in the gospel; for there He is made known as the *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, and in Him our Father. It is his will that we repent, believe in Christ, live a holy life, and love one another. *This is his will, even our sanctification*. If we do not comply, we mock Christ in calling Him, *Lord, Lord*, as they did, who put on Him a gorgeous robe, and said, *Hail, King of the Jews*. Saying and doing are two things. He that said, *I go, sir*, stirred never a step; (ch. 21:30.) but these two things God has joined in his commands, and let no man that puts them asunder think to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

possess those who will lead men to heaven, who are going the contrary way.—The fascinating manner of some, who teach contrary to Scripture, is regarded by an objection to teachers, as the cause of the curse, 'by their fruits ye shall know them,' of the actions of false teachers. For the credit of his cause, Satan, no doubt, will try to give energy to the delusion, that his ministers are the ministers of righteousness. Yet in the passage, to which allusion is here made, the apostle declares 'their end shall be according to their works.' (Note, 2 Cor. 11:13-15.) The virtue or amiableness of many heresiarchs will not bear examination by the law of God. It consists principally of such 'things, as are highly esteemed among men;' and is plainly connected with habitual disregard of many duties, and indulgence in many evils, when viewed in the light of the Word of God. The Christian, thus enlightened, will see through the 'sheep's clothing,' and detect the wolf. SCOTT. 'The great purpose of our Lord's coming was to "redeem men from all iniquity, and to purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Every teacher who does not exhibit that character in himself, and study to produce it in others, is a false teacher. Every doctrine which does not tend to promote individual righteousness and holiness, is false doctrine. Therefore by their fruits ye shall know them. We are not to expect a good life from unsound doctrine, or the work of an effective ministry from a corrupt teacher. "He that winneth souls" must himself be first won by "the wisdom which is from above," Bp. SUMNER. *False prophets*!—Or false teachers; for the Hebrews called those persons prophets who addressed the people for their instruction. But the Pharisees chiefly are intended, whose moral doctrines were in many things directly opposite to those of Christ, austere, indeed, in appearance, but in reality lax, and opening a door to all wickedness. Yet false teachers in general, who resemble the Pharisees, though they profess themselves followers of Christ, are meant.' ROSENM. (V. 19.) *Is heven down*, &c.] 'What a terrible sentence against Christless pastors and Christless hearers! Every tree that produces not good fruit is to be now cut down; the act of excision is now taking place: even now the curse of the Lord is on the head and heart of every false teacher and impatient hearer.' (V. 20.) *By their fruits, &c.*] 'This truth is often repeated, because our eternal interests depend so much on it. Not to have good fruit, is to have evil; there can be no innocent sterility in the invisible tree of the heart. He that brings forth no fruit, and he that brings forth bad fruit, are both only fit for the

The hypocrite offers things in lieu of obedience, v. 22. His plea is supposed to be in that day, that great day, when every man shall appear in his own colors; when the secrets of all hearts shall be manifest, and, among the rest the vain supports of sinners. Christ knows the strength of their cause, and it is but weakness. They put in their plea with great importunity, *Lord, Lord*; and with great confidence, appealing to Christ concerning it; *Lord, dost not Thou know*—that we have prophesied in thy name? Yes, it may be so; Balaam and Caiaphas were overruled to prophesy; and Saul was, against his will, among the prophets, yet that did not save them. These prophesied in his name, but He did not send them; they used his name but to serve a turn. Note, A man may be a preacher, have external gifts, and a external call; and perhaps some success in it, and yet be a wicked man; may help others to heaven, and yet come short himself.—*That is thy name we have cast out devils?* That may be, too. Judas cast out devils, and was yet a son of perdition. Origen says, that in his time, so prevalent was the name of Christ to cast out devils, that it sometimes availed when named by wicked Christians. A man might cast devils out of others, and yet have a devil, nay, be a devil himself.—*That in thy name we have done many wonderful works?* There may be a faith of miracles where there is no justifying faith; none of that faith which works by love and obedience. Gifts of tongues and healing would recommend men to the world, but it is only real holiness that is accepted of God. Grace and love are a more excellent way than removing mountains, or speaking with the tongues of men and angels, 1 Cor. 13: 1, 2. Grace will bring a man to heaven without working miracles; but working miracles will never bring a man to heaven without grace. Observe, That on which their hearts were set in working miracles, was the wonderfulness of them. Simon Magus wondered at the miracles, (Acts 8: 13.) and therefore would give any money for power to do the like. Observe, They had not many good works to plead. They could not pretend to gracious works of piety. One such would have passed better in their account than many wonderful works, which availed not at all, while they continued in disobedience. Miracles have ceased, and with them, this plea; but do not carnal hearts still encourage themselves in groundless hopes, with the like vain supports? They think they shall go to heaven,

fire.' Dr. A. CLARKE. 'Hence we may learn, that our Lord expects from his people such knowledge of the Scriptures, that they can discern truth from falsehood; and such diligence, as to search the Scriptures, whether the things their teachers utter be according to them or not; Acts 17: 11. not taking Divine truths on trust, nor believing on the mere word of a teacher; using teachers not as dictators, but only as helpers of their faith.'

Verses 21-23.

Christ here spake not only as the Messiah, but with the authority of the Judge, and the Arbitrator of every man's eternal state, from whom there could be no appeal; and if we compare this language of majesty with his lowly appearance, the neglect and contempt to which He was exposed,—the contrast is striking.—It is implied that they, who do so acknowledge Him as their Lord, are not even *professing* in the way to heaven; and it is declared, that of those who openly acknowledge Him as their Savior, some will be excluded from glory; and that those who 'do the will' of God shall be saved.—It is here necessary to distinguish between the will of God, as Creator and Lawgiver, concerning his rational creatures, and his will concerning fallen and condemned sinners. The law requiring us to love Him with all our hearts, and our neighbor as ourselves, without allowance for failure, and sustained by an awful curse, is in the former sense the will of God. This 'shuts up all men under sin.' But God is now the Savior of sinners. What, then, as a God of salvation, is his will concerning sinners? It is his will that we should repent, forsake and hate all sin, believe, love and obey his Son, love one another, and walk according to all his commandments. His first requirement in this view is, 'this is my beloved Son, hear ye Him.'—When this is done, all else follows. Without it, all else is vain. Obedience in all things is sincerely attempted, and habitually performed, in the tenor of the believer's life, from his first acceptance of salvation. In this sense, he does the will of God, though far from doing his will, as Governor of the world, in such manner as to be justified by the law. Hypocrites do not sincerely attend to this will of God, and so cannot enter heaven. The Lord declares, that 'in that day,' even of such as have preached the Gospel, prophesied in his name, and wrought miracles, shall be rejected, because they are workers of iniquity. Not one Balaam only, or one Judas, will be thus condemned, but many will plead in vain their professions, gifts, services and miracles. He will then disavow all; & probation of them. He knew

be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

28 And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine;

29 For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Practical Observations.

1243-45. 13:19-22. Ex. 13:10-16. Heb. 10:26-31. 2 Pet. 2:20-92.
13:34. Ps. 45:2. Mark 1:22. 8:2. Luke 4:22. 13:18. John 7:15-16. 28:19.
5:20. 23:23-24. 21:23-27. 28:19.
Deut. 18:18. Ex. 8:4. Is. 50:4.
Jer. 23:28-33. Mic. 3:8. Luke 21:15. Acts 5:22-23. 6:10. Heb. 4:12, 13.
E 15:1-9. 23:4-6. 15:24. Mark 7:5-13. Luke 20:8, 46, 47.

rein Christ, and be found in Him. Building upon a rock requires care and pains. They who would do it, must give diligence. They are wise builders who begin so to build that they may be able to finish, (Luke 14:30.) and therefore lay a firm foundation.

There are many who think they shall go to heaven, but despise this Rock, and build their hopes upon the sand. Every thing besides Christ is sand. Some build their hopes on worldly prosperity, as if that were a sure token of God's favor; (Hos. 12:8.) others, upon their profession, privileges, or reputation. They are called Christians, were baptized, say their prayers, go to church, and do nobody harm, and if they perish, God help a great many. This is the light of their own fire, which they walk in. That upon which they venture, though with great assurance, is all sand.

A storm is coming that will try what our hopes are bottomed on, and every man's work; (1 Cor. 3:13,) that will discover the foundation, Hab. 3:13. Rain, and floods, and wind, will beat upon the house. The trial is sometimes in this world, when tribulation and persecution arise because of the word. Then it will be seen who but heard the word, and who practised it.

Our hopes will then be tried. When death and judgment come, then the storm comes, however calm it may be now. Then our hopes, if ever, will be turned into everlasting fruition.

Those hopes which are built on Christ, will stand the builder in stead,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 21-29. Our future Judge assures us, that 'not every one who calls Him Lord, shall enter heaven, but only they, that doeth the will of God.' Let us remember, that grace is more valuable than splendid accomplishments, and even prophecy and miracles. If an admired and useful minister had no better evidence of his conversion, than his success as a preacher, he would 'preach to others and be a castaway'; while the meanest believer among his hearers would be received into heaven. Let us, then, be warned by Christ's admonitions, examine whether we be in the faith, and have that love, without which our attainments are nothing. (Notes, 1 Cor. 13:) Let us beware of profligacy, infidelity, and self-righteousness; of a dead faith, a formal profession, and a perversion of the Gospel. Let no one imagine, that he builds on the tried Foundation, who hears the words of Christ, but obeys them not. He

when the storm comes; his profession will not wither, his comforts will not fail. They will be his strength and song, as an anchor of the soul! sure and steadfast.

When he comes to the last encounter, those hopes will take off the terror of death, will carry him cheerfully through that dark valley, will be approved by the Judge, stand the test of the great day, and will be crowned with endless glory, 2 Cor. 1:12. 2 Tim. 4:7, 8. Blessed is that servant, whom, when his Lord cometh, He shall find so doing, so hoping.

The hopes which the foolish builders indulge, will yield no comfort in the hour of trouble, in death, or in the day of judgment; will be no fence against temptations to apostasy, in a time of persecution. When God takes away the soul, where is the hope of the hypocrite? Job 27:8. It is as the spider's web, and as the giving up of the ghost. He shall lean upon his house, but it shall not stand, Job 8:14, 15. It fell when the builder most needed it, and expected it would be a shelter to him. It fell, when it was too late to build another. When a wicked man dies, his expectation perishes. It was a great disappointment to the builder; the shame and loss were great. The higher men's hopes have been raised, the lower they fall. It is the sorest ruin of all that attends formal professors; witness Capernaum's doom.

3. We are here told the effect of Christ's discourse. It was an excellent sermon; and it is probable that He said more than is here recorded. Doubtless the delivery of it from Him, into whose lips grace was poured, did mightily set it off. They were astonished at his doctrine, though it is to be feared that few were brought to follow Him. For the present, they were filled with wonder. Note, it is possible for people to admire good preaching, and remain in ignorance and unbelief; to be astonished, and yet not sanctified. The reason was, because He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. The scribes pretended to as much authority as any teachers - whatever, and were supported by all external advantages that could be obtained; but their preaching was mean, flat, and jejune. They spake as those that were not masters themselves of what they preached. The word did not come from them with life or force, but they delivered it as a school-boy says his lessons. Christ delivered his discourse, as a judge gives his charge; his lessons were laws, his word commands. Christ, on the mountain, showed more authority, than the scribes in Moses' seat. Thus when Christ teaches by his Spirit in the soul, He teaches with authority. He says, let there be light, and there is light.

SCOTT.

confounded all worldly schemes of happiness, binds the law upon us, in its spirituality and extent, as reaching the heart and all its motives, and lays us, as guilty and condemned sinners, at his feet; one end of his interpretation being to define sin and promote conviction of it. Then the necessity and great blessing of the Gospel, in its capital points of forgiveness and supernatural aid, open upon us. For Christ convinces of sin, to bring us to faith - and thence back to the law, with all advantage for performance; that is, under a sense of God's love to us, and with hearts warmed with redeeming mercy. And woe to him who does not here follow Christ, in taking the law, as He expounds it, for the rule of his conscience and guide to perfection. Christ does indeed preach morality, and just such a pure morality as we need, for the recovery and happiness of our natures. But all our endeavours will be frustrated, if we do not comply with his method of attaining it, by first believing in Him for the remission of sin and sanctification by the Spirit. ADAM.

V. 26, &c. Burder illustrates this passage by the devastations attending the overflow of the Nile, as described by Belzoni; thers, by

the mountain torrents common in Syria and Palestine, which, swollen by rain, sweep away the slightly built dwellings. Ed.

Verses 23, 29.

Those who heard this discourse, were astonished at the wisdom and energy of the doctrine of Christ, and the authority with which He enforced it. They perceived that his instructions had an influence on their understandings, consciences, and affections, which compelled conviction and approbation; and that He spoke very differently from their scribes, who inculcated ceremonial observances, external duties and their own traditions, or those of some rabbi, in a disputatious and uninteresting manner. SCOTT. 'If we may judge of the teachings of the scribes in Christ's day, by the Jewish traditions, or even by their Mishnah, this was so eminently the character of it, (as described above,) that nothing could be more justly contemptible; and their frigid and insipid comments and lessons could no more be compared with the strains of divine eloquence, with which our Lord's discourses abound, than a glow-worm can be compared to the sun.' DOUGL.

CHAP. VIII.

Christ cleanses a leper, 1-4; heals a centurion's servant, 5-13; rebukes the calling of the Gentiles and rejection of the Jews, 5-13; heals Peter's wife's mother, 14, 15, and many others, fulfilling a prophecy of Isaiah, 16, 17; shows in what spirit he ought to be followed, 18-22; calms the tempestuous sea by his word, 23-27; and casts out devils from two possessed men suffering from them to go into the swine, 28-32. The Gentiles desire him to leave them, 33, 34.

WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

3 And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

a 5.
b 13. 4, 25. 12. 5. 15, 30. 19, 2. 20, 29.
c Mark 8, 7. Luke 5, 15. 14, 25-27.
d Mark 1, 40. Luke 5, 12.
e 18, 4. 26, 5. Luke 13, 44-46. Nam. 22, 3. 12, 10. Deut. 24, 8, 9. 2 Sam. 3, 33. 2 Kings 5, 27. 7, 34. 15, 2. 19, 10. 26, 19. Luke 4, 27. 17, 12-13.
f 2, 11. 4, 9. 14, 33. 15, 25. 18, 26. 28, 17. Mark 1, 40. 5, 6, 7. Luke 5, 12. John 5, 9, 10. 1 Cor. 14, 25. Rev. 19, 10. 22, 5.
g 2, 23. 29. 15, 38. Mark 9, 22-24.
h 2 Kings 5, 11.
i Gen. 13, 34. 35, 9. Mark 1, 41. 4. Gen. 5, 61. 7, 3. 9, 25. Luke 5, 13. 7, 14. John 5, 21. 11, 43. 15, 24.
j 11, 4, 5. 2 Kings 5, 14. Mark 17, 14, 15.

for Christ, as the *High Priest of our profession*. He comes to do that which the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, Rom. 8: 3. The law discovered sin, and pronounced sinners unclean; it shut them up, (Gal. 3: 23.) as the priest did the leper, but could go no further; it could not make the corner thereunto perfect. But Christ cleanses us from sin, and so perfects forever them that are sanctified.

1. The leper came and worshipped Christ, as one clothed with divine power. *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.* It was a great temporal mercy. It teaches us not only to apply to Christ for the cure of bodily diseases, but in what manner to apply, assured of his power, but with submission to his will. *Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst.* As to temporal mercies, we cannot be so sure of God's willingness, as of his power. His promise of them is limited to his glory and our good. When we cannot be sure of his will, we may be of his wisdom and mercy, to which we may cheerfully refer ourselves; *Thy will be done*; and this makes the expectation easy, and the event comfortable. It was a typical mercy. Sin is the

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. V. 1-4. In commenting on the miracles, parables or discourses recorded by more than one evangelist, it is proposed to be particular where they first occur, and to reserve slight variations for consideration in the other gospels; except where the narrative in other evangelists is more full. The harmony of the evangelists has troubled expositors, and many things still remain in uncertainty. As it is a matter of more difficulty than importance to us, I shall not perplex the reader with conjectures, nor attempt exactness in this respect; for we need to know the things Christ said and did, rather than the time or order of them. Matthew is supposed to regard the order of time more than Mark or Luke. John, perhaps, more than the other evangelists, observed the regular succession, in his history, and chiefly wrote things which they had omitted.—Matthew, however, seems to fix the date of this miracle immediately after the sermon, while Christ was surrounded by the multitude.—Lepers, and the laws concerning them, have been considered. (Notes, Lev. 13: 14.)—This poor leper was probably, by what he had heard of Jesus, convinced He was the promised Messiah; and, believing that He could heal him, hoped He would. Hence his reverential application on, and its immediate answer. Holy men and holy angels declined such worship as not their due; (Marg. Ref. c.) but Christ intimated no disapprobation of any who rendered it Him. On the contrary, He approved, expressing decisively that He was conscious of having undeniable right to divine honor.—From the charge of secrecy, it is probable Jesus took the man aside from the multitude to cleanse him. He would avoid ostentation in his miracles; or, perhaps, would not exasperate his enemies, and hasten too early their designs against his life. Witzgen, quoted by Whitty, says, on the Savior's expres-

CHAP. VIII. V. 1-4.—Though Christ was a lawgiver so strict, and so faithful a re-prover, the people diligently attended on Him. Note, Those to whom Christ has manifested Himself, cannot but desire a better acquaintance with Him. Those who know much of Christ, should covet to know more. It is pleasing to see people so well affected to the best things as thus to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. Now was Jacob's prophecy fulfilled, *unto Him shall the gathering of the people be*; yet they who gathered to Him did not cleave closely to Him. He had but few constant followers.

By comparing Mark 1: 40. and Luke 5: 12. it would seem that this miracle of cleansing the leper happened some time before. But it is not at all material. This miracle is fitly recorded first. The leprosy was looked upon, among the Jews, as a particular mark of God's displeasure; hence we find Miriam, Gehazi, and Uria smitten with leprosy for some particular sin, and thus Christ, to show that He came to turn away the wrath of God, began with the cure of a leper. As it was supposed that God alone caused this disease, so was it supposed that He alone could take it away; its cure was not attempted by physicians, but it was submitted to the inspection of the priests, the Lord's ministers, who waited to see what God would do. And its being in a garment, or in the walls of a house, was altogether supernatural; seeming to be a disease very different from what we call the leprosy. The king of Israel said, *Am I God that I am sent to recover a man of a leprosy?* 2 Kings, 5: 7. Christ proved Himself to be God, by recovering many from the leprosy, and by authorizing his disciples, in his name, to do so too, ch. 10: 8. and it is put among the proofs of his being the Messiah, ch. 11: 5. He also showed Himself to be the Savior of his people from their sins. The leprosy was specially the fruit of sin, and a figure of a disorder in the soul; for it contracted such a pollution, and obliged to such a separation, as no other disorder did. In the laws, (Lev. 13: and 14:) it is treated not as a sickness, but as a pollution; the priest was to pronounce the party clean or unclean, according to the indications; but the honor of making the lepers clean, was reserved

leprosy of the soul; it shuts us out from communion with God; to which that we may be restored, it is necessary that we be cleansed from this leprosy, and this ought to be our great concern. Observe, It is our comfort when we apply ourselves to Christ, as the great Physician, that if He will, He can make us clean; and we should, with an humble boldness, go, and tell Him so. That is, we must rest on his power, must believe that Christ can make us clean, that there is no guilt so great, but He can atone for it; no corruption so strong, but his grace can subdue it. God would not appoint a physician to his hospital that is not every way qualified for the undertaking. We must commend ourselves to his pity; we cannot certain as a debt, but may humbly ask it as a favor. *Lord, if Thou wilt. I throw myself at thy feet, and if I perish, I will perish there.*

2. *He put forth his hand and touched him.* The leprosy was a loathsome disease, yet Christ touched the leper. There was a ceremonial uncleanness contracted by touching a leper; but Christ would show that when He conversed with sinners, He was in no danger of being infected by them, for the price of this world had nothing in Him. If we touch pitch, we are defiled; but Christ was separate from sinners, even when He lived among them.

I will, be thou clean. He did not say, as Elisha to Naaman, 'Go wash in Jordan,' nor put him on a tedious course of physic; but spake the word, and healed him. Here is a word of kindness, *I will*; I am as willing to help thee, as thou art to be helped. Those who apply to Christ by faith, may be sure that He is ready to give them freely the help they need. Christ is a physician that does not need to be urged, but while we are speaking He hears. Nor needs He to be fed; He heals not for price or reward. *Be thou clean.* Authority and energy are exerted in this word; 'Be willing to be clean, and use the means; cleanse thyself from all filthiness.' But with this goes a word of command concerning us, *I will that thou be clean.* The Almighty grace that thus speaks, shall not be wanting to those who truly desire it.

3. *Immediately his leprosy was cleansed.* Nature works gradually, but the God of nature immediately; and yet He works effectually; *He commands and it stands fast.* One of the first miracles Moses wrought, was to cure himself of leprosy, (Exod. 4: 7.) for the priests offered sacrifice first for their own sin; but one of Christ's first miracles was curing another of leprosy; for He had no sin to atone for.

4. *See thou tell no man.* 'Tell no man till thou hast showed thyself to the priest, and hast leaved proof that thou wast a leper, and art now thoroughly cleansed.' Christ would have his miracles appear in their full evidence, and not be published till they could so appear. Note, Those who preach truths should be able to prove them, to defend what they say, and convince gainsay-

ers. 'I will,' &c. 'Here shines the divine power of Christ; that He could do so great things only by his command.' So also Moses writes 'that the world was created by God, saying "Let there be light; and there was light." And Beza remarks that 'Christ, in healing the leprosy with the touching of his hand, sheweth that He abhorreth no sinners who come to Him, be they never so unclean.' Scott. Although Mr. Henry, as appears above, was led to question the identity of the ancient and modern leprosy, yet the account given by Jarrin, and inserted in the valuable American edition of Calmet, is so terrific and distressing, that we can hardly doubt they are the same. Bp. Porteus remarks, 'The leprosy is a disorder of the most malignant and disgusting nature. It was once common in Europe. Such as had it were called Lazars, and separated from all human society, (the disease being highly contagious,) being confined in hospitals called lazarettos, of which it is said there were in Europe at one time no less than nine thousand. For two hundred years it has almost vanished from European countries, and an instance is now seldom met. In the East it extends to a certain degree; and there had its origin, raging violently a great length of time.' How medical gentlemen regard the following observations of Dr. A. Clarke, whose attention to nosology was considerable, the editor is not fully aware, but transfers them into these notes as an incitement to inquiry. 'Probably,' he remarks, 'on account of its tendency to produce this disorder in that warm climate, I forbade the use of swine's flesh to the Jews.' 'The use of this bad animal,' he adds, 'in union with ardent spirits, is, in all likelihood, the grand cause of the scurvy, which is so common in the British nations, and which would probably assume the form and virulence of a leprosy, were the climate hot as that of Judea. See notes Ex. 16 and Lev. 13: and 14. For

4 And Jesus saith unto him, 'See thou tell no man; but go thy way, 'show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

[Practical Observations.]

5 And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

7 And Jesus saith unto him, 'I will come and heal him.

k 6:1. 9:30. 12:16-19. 16:20. 6:1. 17:9. Mark 1:43, 44. 7:36. Luke 5:14. John 5:41. 7:15. 8:50. 9:19. 5:17. Lev. 13:2, &c. 14:2, &c. Isa. 42:21. Luke 17:14. m 10:37. 2 Kings 9:7, 8. Mark 1:44. 4:1. 13:19. Luke 5:14. 21:13. John 10:37, 38. n 4:13. 9:1. 11:23. Mark 2:1. Luke 7:1. o 27:34. Mark 15:39. Luke 7:2. &c. &c. p 1:1, &c. 24:25. 23:17, 23. 27:13, 43. q Job 31:13, 14. Acts 10:7. Col. 3:11. 4:1. 1 Tim. 6:2. Philim. 16. r 4:24. 9:2. Mark 2:3, &c. Acts 8:7. 9:33. s 9:18, 19. Mark 5:23, 24. Luke 7:6.

and sometimes where grace quor. This soldier, who was good, was very good. Though a Roman, and his very dwelling among the Jews a badge of their subjection to the Roman yoke; yet Christ, who was King of the Jews, favored him: teaching us to do good to our enemies, and not needlessly to interest ourselves in national enities. It is true, Christ went not to any Gentile towns; the land of Canaan being *Immanuel's land*; Isa. 8: 8. yet he received addresses from the Gentiles. Now good old Simeon's word began to be fulfilled, that He should be a light to lighten the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people Israel. The leper Christ touched, and cured, for He preached personally to the Jews, but the paralytic Gentiles, He cured at a distance: for He did not go in person to them, but sent his word and healed them. The centurion's servant was the potent, and herein it appears that Christ had no respect for persons. For, in Christ Jesus, there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision, bond nor free.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-4. The diseases of our bodies, which entered by sin and end in death, are emblems of those, which infect our souls, and issue in final misery, unless cured by the heavenly Physician. Other help is unavailing. Sick men willingly incur expense, and use means for deliverance, while but few know their misery as sinners, or take pains to be cured.—Were the Savior to return, and renew his miracles, He would find multitudes asking relief from their pains; but He is always present, ready to save us from sin; yet few come to Him for it, though his benefits are 'without money or price.' And all are healed, who wait on Him. Those are blessed afflictions, which bring us to know Christ, and to seek salvation from Him. If we see, that we are polluted with spiritual leprosy, and are humbled on that account, we need not fear disappointment in seeking to Christ to cleanse us, however inveterate our maladies. He did not take our nature on purpose to cleanse leprous

Christ took upon Him the form of a servant, to show his regard to the meanest.

Observe first, the grace of the centurion working towards Christ. Can any good thing come out of a Roman soldier, or any thing laudable? Come and see; and you will find abundance of good in this centurion. Observe his affectionate address to Christ, as able and willing to relieve him; *beseeching Him*, not as Naaman the Syrian came to Elisha, demanding a cure, but as an humble suitor. By this it seems he saw more in Christ than appeared at first view; though, to those who looked no further, his visage was marred more than any man's. The officers of the army, being controllers of the town, made, no doubt, a great figure; yet the centurion comes *beseeching Him*. Note, The greatest men must turn beggars when they have to do with Christ. The centurion owns Christ's sovereignty, in calling Him Lord, referring the case to Him. He knew he had to do with a most wise and gracious Physician, to whom the opening of the malady was equivalent to the most earnest request. Pour out thy complaint, and mercy shall be poured out.

We read of many that came to Christ for their children, but this is the only instance of any one's coming to Christ for a servant. Note, It is the duty of masters to concern themselves for their servants, when they are in affliction. The palsy made the servant troublesome as any distemper could, yet did not his master turn him away when sick, as that Amalekite did his servant, 1 Sam. 30: 13. nor send him to his friends, nor let him lie by neglected, but he sought out the best relief. The servant could not have done more for the master, than the master did for the servant. The centurion's servants were very dutiful to him, and we here see the reason. He was very kind to them, hence were they the more cheerfully obedient to him. As we must not despise the cause of our servants when they contend with us, (Job 31: 13, 15.) so we must not despise their case when God contends with them; for we are made in the same mould, and stand on the same level with them before God, and must not set them *with the dogs of our flock*. The centurion applies, not to witches or wizards, but to Christ. The palsy commonly mocks the physician's skill. It was therefore great evidence of his faith in Christ, to come to Him for a cure. How pathetically he represents the case:—*sick of the palsy*, which commonly makes the patient senseless; but this

bodies, but leprous souls: we need not say, 'if Thou wilt,' for we may rely on his willingness. Let us, then, confess how vile we are, and adore his power and grace. In due time He will say, 'be thou cleansed,' and the effect will be as certain as when He said, 'Let there be light.' Now should we conceal our obligations to his cleansing power, but proclaim them to his glory, that others may hear and apply for cure. We should also copy his humility, and learn to do good to the wretched without ostentation.—But if men would honor their Benefactor, let them attend on the ordinances of God. When, in the judgment of faithful ministers, they are cleansed from sin, they should, at the Lord's table, offer a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and join themselves to his people. This will be a testimony for the instruction of their neighbors, and the edification and encouragement of the ministers of Christ.

SCOTT.

Verses 5-7.

A centurion was the captain of a hundred men in the Roman legions. These were not composed of the lowest of the people, but reputable citizens; and so a centurion was higher in rank than a captain in our armies. It is probable, that he was of good family and fortune. He was a soldier, and educated a heathen. His countrymen exceedingly despised the Jews and their religion. Yet, his lot being cast in Judea, his prejudices had been overruled, he had learned the Scriptures, and was a spiritual worshiper of God, though not a proselyte to the Mosaic law. He esteemed and loved the people of God, and by good conduct had overcome his prejudices against him as a Gentile, and an officer of the army which had subjected their nation. His tenderness for his languishing servant should be considered as the effect of his religion. This palsy had won some of his domestics to the worship of God. He had probably heard of the miracles and doctrine of Christ, and perhaps of a similar miracle on the nobleman's son: (Notes, John 4: 46-51.) He had formed exalted ideas of his excellency as the promised Messiah; so that when his servant was seized with a palsy, disabled from business, and filled with pain, the centurion hoped for a cure by him, and applied to Jesus for that purpose.—We learn from Luke,

that he did not go in person, at least at the first, but humbly sent elders of the Jews, and then his friends: some suppose, he at last went himself. Nothing is more common than for men to be described as doing the things, which are done at their instance. Palsy is a disease not mentioned in the Old Testament. SCOTT. Fritzsche maintains that this centurion was not of the Roman army, (because at that time the Romans had no forces in Galilee,) but belonged to the troops maintained by Herod Antipas, who, although a Jew, yet, according to Josephus, had Gentiles in his army. He cites Webster, who alleges Mark 6: 21. as proving the sway of Herod in Galilee. But Dr. Willoughby, quoted by Hewlett, asserts that the 'Romans' had soldiers stationed in the principal cities of Judea, as well as in other parts of their empire, in order to keep those whom they had subjected from making any attempt to recover their liberties.' This, indeed, might not necessarily have affected Galilee, but Grotius, from whom the remark is made, specially mentions Capernaum. Dr. Hales, likewise, simply styles the officer, 'the Roman centurion stationed at Capernaum.' The matter is of little moment, for it may well be granted that Herod, in his military arrangements and designations, conformed not inexactly to the Roman standard.

Ed.

8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, 'Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, 'Do this, and he doeth it.

10 When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to them that fol-

lowed him, *person was grievously tormented.* Being young, nature was strong to struggle with the disease. We should thus concern ourselves for the souls of our children and servants, spiritually sick of palsy,—a dead-palsy,—a dumb-palsy; and bring them to Christ by faith and prayer.

Observe the centurion's great humility. After Christ had intimated his readiness to heal the servant, he expressed more humbleness. Note, Humble souls are made more humble by Christ's gracious condescensions to them. *Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst come under my roof.* He does not say, 'My servant is not worthy that thou shouldst come into his chamber, because it is in the garret,' but *I am not worthy that thou shouldst come into my house.* Note, Humility very well becomes persons of quality. Christ now made but a mean figure in the world, yet the centurion looked upon Him as more than a prophet. Note, We should have a value for what we see of God in others, who, in outward condition, are our inferiors. In all our approaches to Christ, and to God through Christ, we must come as mean creatures, and vile sinners, to do any thing for God, or to receive any thing from Him.

Note his great faith. The more humility, the more faith. The more diffident we are of ourselves, the stronger will be our confidence in Christ. He believed that Christ could cure his servant at a distance. There needed not any physical contact, as in natural operations, nor any application to the part affected, but he wrought without bringing the physician and patient together. We afterwards read of those who brought the *man sick of the palsy* to Christ, though with great difficulty, and Christ commended their faith for a *working* faith. This centurion did not bring his man sick of the palsy, and Christ commended his faith for a *trusting* faith. Christ puts the best construction on the different methods of religion that people take. The power of Christ knows no limits, and therefore nearness and distance are alike to Him. *He fills all places.* *Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off?* Jer. 23: 23.

Speak the word only, not send medicine, much less a charm, and my servant shall be healed. He thus owns Him to have a command over all the powers of nature, as at first He raised that kingdom by an almighty word, when He said, *Let there be light.* With men, saying and doing are two things; but not so with Christ, who is therefore the *Arm of the Lord* because He is the *Eternal Word*. His saying, *Be ye warmed and filled,* (Jam. 2: 16.) and healed, warmed, and fills and heats.

The centurion illustrates his faith by his own authority over his servants. They were all at his beck; his word at a distance was a law to them. Well disciplined soldiers know that the commands of their officers are to be obeyed. Thus could Christ speak, and it is done; such a power had He over all diseases. Though the centurion was a *man under authority*, not absolutely a commander-in-chief; much more had Christ this power, *who is God over all.* The centurion's servants were very obsequious, would come and go instantly. Such servants we should all be to God: come and go at his bidding, by his word and providence; run where He sends us, and return when He remands us. *What saith my Lord unto his servant?* When his will crosses ours, his must be done. Such servants bodily diseases are to Christ. They seize us when He sends them; they leave us when He calls them back. It is a matter of comfort to Christians, that every disease has Christ's commission, and is made to serve the intentions of his grace. They need not fear sickness, who see it in the hands of such a Friend.

2. To the gracious, Christ shows Himself gracious. The centurion did but tell Him his servant's case, when Christ anticipated his request. *I will come and heal him;* not I will come and see him. That would have been kind, but will heal him. This shows Him an almighty Savior. It was a great word, but no more than He could make good. For He has heal-

ing under his wings. Those who wrought miracles by a derived power, did not speak thus freely. When a minister is sent for to a sick friend, he can but say, 'I will come and pray for him;' but Christ says, *I will come and heal him.* The centurion desired He would heal him; He says, *I will come, and heal him;* thus expressing more favor than he asked. Note, Christ often outdoes the expectations of poor supplicants. See an instance of Christ's humility, that He would make a visit to a poor soldier. He would not go to see a nobleman's sick child, who insisted on his coming down (John 4: 47—49.) but He proffers to go and see a sick servant; thus does He regard the low estate of his people, and give more abundant honor to the part which lacked. Note, Christ's gracious condescensions to us should make us the more humble before Him.

He commends his faith, and takes occasion to speak a word for the poor Gentiles. See what great things, even of public concern, a strong faith can obtain from Christ! He not only approved the centurion, but applauded him; that honor great believers have, as Job; *there is none like him in the earth.* Christ admired him, not for his greatness, but for his grace. *He marvelled,* not as if surprised; He knew the centurion's faith, for He wrought it; but it was great, excellent and rare. Christ spoke of it thus, to teach us what to admire; not worldly pomps, but the ornaments which, in the sight of God, are of great price. Note, The wonders of grace should affect us more than the wonders of nature or providence. Of those that are *rich in faith*, not of those that are *rich in gold and silver*, we should say that they have *gotten all this glory*, Gen. 31: 1. But, whatever is admirable in the faith of any, it must redound to the glory of Christ, who will shortly be *admired in all them that believe*, as having done in and for them *marvellous things.* He applauded the centurion in what He said to them that followed. All believers shall be, in the other world, but some believers are, in this world, acknowledged by Christ before men, in his eminent appearances for them, and with them. *Verily, I have not found so great faith, no not in Israel.* This speaks honor to the centurion, who, though not a son of Abraham, was an heir of Abraham's faith. Note, The thing that Christ seeks is *faith*, and wherever it is, He finds it, though but as a grain of mustard seed. He had not found so great faith, all things considered, and in proportion to the means; as the poor widow cast in more than they all, Luke 21: 3. Though the centurion was a Gentile, yet he was thus commended. Note, We must be forward to give those their due praise, who are not within our denomination or pale. Again, it speaks shame to Israel, to whom pertained the adoption, the glory, the covenants, and all the assistances of faith. Note, When the Son of Man comes, He finds little faith, and, therefore, so little fruit. Note, The attainments of some, who have not but little helps for their souls, will aggravate the ruin and sin of many, who have had great means of grace, and made no good improvement of them. Christ said this to those that followed

Verses 8, 9.

The centurion, surprised perhaps at Christ's condescension and ready attention to his request, and conscious of his own sinfulness, regarded himself as unworthy of a visit from a person so holy—and his house (the abode of a Gentile) an improper place for Christ to enter.—When we remember, that our Lord appeared like a poor Jew, and had not 'where to lay his head,' and that this man was one of the victorious Romans, to whom the Jews were subject, and lived in affluence; we shall see, that his reverence for Christ was extraordinary.—He added, that it was unnecessary for Jesus to degrade Himself by coming, as He could cure the disease by a word spoken at a distance; and illustrated his meaning by the fact, that he, a Roman officer, accomplished what he desired by ordering his soldiers, who readily obeyed his commands. We can hardly conceive of higher confidence, than this in the power and authority of the 'Son of God.' If, subject to the control of another, as Woltzen, quoted by Whitby, paraphrases, 'I have such power over my servants, that they do whatever I say; much more shall all things be done at thy command, who art subject to the power of none! How can we deny Him to be God, in whom shaltest forth the power which God exerted in creating the world, and at whose word all things must be done, and who is subject to the power of none.' Scott. 'Being a Gentile, the centurion thought it too great a favor, that Christ should visit him in person; the Jews not holding it lawful to keep company with, or go in unto even those who

were at most proselytes of the gate, as appears to have been his standing. See Acts 10: 28, and 11: 3. The Jews called such persons, half-converts; they are named *devout men* in Acts 15: 5. 10: 2. &c.' Ep. Pearce. 'Pagans who embraced Judaism are mentioned in the New Testament as "proselytes," and of two kinds, either wholly, or in part such. The former, or proselytes of the covenant, (or righteousness, says JAHN,) were circumcised, and obliged to keep the whole law: the latter were called proselytes of the gate, as having a dwelling in the cities (or gate-) of Israel, and were not compelled to observe the ceremonial law, but to renounce idolatry, and keep certain general precepts.'

BEAUSOBRE.

Verses 10—12.

'Christ, by setting before them the uncircumcised centurion, of excellent faith, exciteth the Jews to emulation, and warneth them of being cast off, and of the calling of the Gentiles.' Beza.—Our Lord might have commended many things in the centurion's character, but He especially expressed his approbation of his faith, as surpassing, considering the disadvantages under which, as a Gentile, he had labored. Thus He instructed the people, that He best approved of those, who formed exalted apprehensions of Him, and that they could not honour Him more than was right. He said, He had not found such faith in Israel, where it might have been expected; not even among his disciples. Hence He declared, that many Gentiles, from distant parts of the earth, would, by faith in Him, become heirs with the patriarchs of the heaven-

lowed, Verily, I say unto you, 'I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

11 And I say unto you, 'That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

12 But 'the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, 'Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.

[Practical Observations.]

- a 15:28, Luke 5:20, 7:50.
- b 24:31, Gen. 12:3, 22:18, 28:14, 49:10, Ps. 22:27, 33:3, Is. 52:1, 31:1, 49:6, 52:10, 60:1—6, Jer. 16:19, Dan. 2:44, Mic. 4:1, 2, Zech. 8:23—23, Mal. 1:1, Luke 13:29, 14:23—24, Acts 1:8, Rom. 15:13, Gal. 3:28, 29, Eph. 2:11—14, 3:6, Col. 3:11.
- c Luke 12:37, 13:29, 16:22, Rev. 3:20, 21.
- d 3:2, Luke 13:28, Acts 14:22, 1 Cor. 6:9, 15:50, 2 Thes. 1:3.
- e 3:9, 10, 21:43, Acts 3:25, Rom. 9:13.
- f 13:42—50, 22:12, 13, 24:51, 25:30, 2 Pet. 2:17, Jude 13.
- g 4: Ec. 9:7, Mark 7:29, John 4:50, 8:28, 50, 15:28, 17:30, Mark 9:23, John 4:52, 53.

V. 5.—13. True piety is connected with humility. The more we know of God, his law and truth, and the more we examine ourselves according to this rule, the deeper will be our abasement, and the more unreservedly shall we 'sit in the lowest place,' and subscribe even the degrading opinions, which others, by prejudice or mistake, have formed of us. But if we thus 'know the grace of Christ,' we shall not be discouraged; for we shall see that He is ready to help the most unworthy. He is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.' He is ready to hear our petitions; and though unworthy that He should come under our roof, or dwell in our hearts, yet, at our desire, He will come and bring salvation. At his word, the strongest evil tendencies are subdued, as palsies and fevers of old; and then, strength, liberty, victory, peace and holiness succeed.

felicity, to which they had attained; while the Jews, who had long enjoyed the privileges of 'the kingdom;' to whom the Gospel was first to be preached; and who supposed themselves solely entitled to the blessings of the Messiah's reign, would be excluded from the church, and left in a wretched condition. Numbers of them would be consigned to final despair, where they would weep, and gnash their teeth in anguish, at the happiness lost, and the ruin incurred, by their unbelief. The future state must exclusively be meant. 'It cannot be said,' observes Doddridge, 'either that the patriarchs share with Christians in the present privileges of the Gospel on earth; or that the Jews weep and wail, on account of being excluded from them.' Scott. 'In this centurion, we have an illustrious example of the eminent Christian virtues, humanity, piety, generosity, humility, and faith. His *humanity* appears more strikingly, because in general the treatment servants experienced from their Roman masters was very different indeed. Being mostly slaves, extreme rigor and cruelty were used toward them. They were strained in labor beyond their strength, confined to dungeons, chained, scourged, tortured without reason, died in sickness and old age, and put to death on slight suspicions, or for trivial faults. Barbarity of this kind, which shows the danger of trusting absolute power to such a creature as man, is a striking contrast to the conduct of the centurion. His *piety and generosity* appear, (Luke 7:5.) in his building for the Jewish people a place of worship at his own expense. Let this be compared with the history of Verres, in his government of Sicily, which is but a specimen of the Roman management, and we see a gallant soldier, in the midst of the brutality and insolence of power, stand up to patronize and assist a distressed, injured people. His *humility*, a virtue with which the ancients, and more particularly the Romans, were unacquainted, yet in which, more perhaps than in any other, consists the vital principle of the Christian temper, is evident from the manner of his soliciting our Savior. How cautious, how modest, how careful of offending! Of his *faith* our Lord Himself pronounced his

Him, if by any means He might provoke them to a holy emulation, as Paul speaks, Rom. 11:14. They were Abraham's seed, jealous for their honor; let them not be outstripped by a Gentile, especially in that grace for which Abraham was eminent.

Christ takes occasion to say, that a great many of the Gentiles should be saved. The faith of the centurion was but a specimen of the conversion of the Gentiles. Christ often speaks upon this topic and with assurance; 'I say unto you, I, who know all men;' and He could not say any thing more pleasing to Himself, or more displeasing to the Jews. An intimation of this kind enraged the Nazarenes, Luke 4:27. Christ here gives us an idea of the persons that shall be saved; many from the east and the west. He had said, (ch. 7:14.) *Few there be that find the way to life;* and yet here, *many shall come.* Few at one time, and in one place, yet, all together, a great many. We shall shortly see the Captain of our salvation bringing many sons unto glory, Heb. 2:10. He will come with ten thousands of his saints, (Jude, 14.) with such a company as no man can number, (Rev. 17:9.) with nations of them that are saved, Rev. 21:24. They shall come from the east and from the west; yet they shall all meet at the right hand of God, the centre of their unity. Note, God has his remnant in all places: from the rising of the sun, to the going down of the same, Mat. 1:1. The elect will be gathered from the four winds, ch. 24:31. They are sown in the earth, some scattered in every corner of the field. The Gentile world lay from east to west, and they are especially meant here; though strangers to the covenant of promise then and after, yet who knows what hidden ones God had among them? So in Elijah's time in Israel, (1 Kings, 19:14.) Soon after which, they flocked into the church in great multitudes, Isa. 60:3, 4. Note, when we come to heaven, as we shall miss a great many there that we thought had been going thither, so shall we meet many whom we did not expect. They shall come together to Christ, 2 Thess. 2:1. They shall be admitted into the

kingdom of grace on earth, into the covenant made with Abraham; they shall be blessed with *faithful Abraham*, whose blessing comes upon the Gentiles, Gal. 3:14. This makes Zaccheus a son of Abraham, Luke 19:9. They shall be admitted into the kingdom of glory in heaven. They shall come cheerfully, flying as doves to their windows. They shall sit down to rest from their labor. Sitting denotes continuance. Heaven is a remaining rest, it is a continuing city. They shall sit down, as on a throne, Rev. 3:21.) as at a table, that is the metaphor here. They shall sit down to be feasted, which denotes both fullness of communication, and freedom of communion, Luke 22:30. With Abraham. They who, in this world, were ever so far distant from each other, in time, place, or outward condition, shall all meet together in heaven, ancients and moderns, Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor. The rich man in hell sees Abraham, but Lazarus sits down with him, leaning on his breast. Note, Holy society is a part of the happiness of heaven. They on whom the ends of the world are come, and who are most obscure, shall share in glory with renowned patriarchs.

The children of the kingdom shall be cast out. The Jews, who persist in unbelief, though they were, by birth, children of the kingdom, yet shall be cut off from being members of the visible church. The kingdom of God shall be taken from them, and they shall become, not a people, not obtaining mercy, Rom. 9:31, 11:20. In the great day, it will not avail men to have been children of the kingdom; for men will be judged not by what they were called, but by what they were. If children, indeed, then heirs. But many are children in profession, who will come short of the inheritance. To be born of professing parents may denominate us children of the kingdom; yet, if this be all our claim on heaven, we shall be cast out.

They shall be cast into outer darkness, the darkness of those that are without. Into the darkness of the Gentiles were the Jews cast, and into worse. They were blinded and hardened, and filled with terrors, Rom. 11:8—10. A peo-

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The more we honor his power and grace, the clearer will our tokens be of his approbation; and the answer of prayer will bear some proportion to the degree of our faith.—What cause have we, in these distant regions, to rejoice, that by the Gospel we are invited to enter into his family, and ere long 'sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in heaven!' Let us also remember, that we now are 'the children of the kingdom,' and be warned by the example of the wretched Jews. Let us fear lest any of us fall from our height of privilege, through unbelief, and be cast into outer darkness, where there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; while the Lord shall replenish his church by the conversion of the heathen, or of the most abject sinners in our land.

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high estimate; because, being bred up in heathenism, he yet frankly submitted himself to sufficient evidence. This is the disposition we ought more particularly to cultivate—a freedom from self-sufficiency, pride and prejudice, a simplicity of heart open to conviction, which receives, without resistance, the sacred impressions of truth. Want of this makes infidels now as it did at first. Operating variously, it induces to fraud and collusion the miracles which Jews ascribed to Beelzebub, and rejects all human testimony, as it formerly did the very perceptions of sense.' Bp. PORTERUS. 'The kingdom of God is here and elsewhere represented as a nuptial feast, or banquet, at which the guests sit down, [or rather, recline, the recumbent posture, used in the East at meals, being alluded to in the original,] with the master of the feast. These banquets were commonly at night, and continued long. See Luke 14:16. Matt. 25:6. Hence, the house of reception was filled with various lights, and those who attended the banquet had benefit of the light; while those who were shut out were in darkness. Thus the unhappy state of such, as are excluded from the kingdom of God, or from future happiness, is expressed by being cast out into outer darkness, ch. 22:13. And, as those, who were thus shut out from the marriage feast, were exposed not to shame only, but to cold and hunger, it is added, *there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* Oh, how contrary is our Lord's prediction to the vain expectation of the Jews, who were wont to say, that *all Israel shall have a portion in the world to come, but heathens be fuel for hell!*' WHITNEY. 'This [prediction, v. 11.] was spoken, to soften the unreasonable prejudices of the Jews, entertained against the Gentiles, and to prepare them to receive their brethren of mankind into religious fellowship with themselves, under the Christian dispensation.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

The centurion seems now to have paid, in company, and Jesus addressed him. The servant was cured at the same time. He spak
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14 ¶ And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

16 ¶ When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 'Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.'

18 ¶ Now when Jesus saw great multi-

ple so unchurched, are in utter darkness already, but it looks further, to the state of damned sinners in hell, to which the other is a dismal preface. They shall be cast out from the favor of God. In hell is fire, but not light; it is *utter darkness*; darkness in extremity, the highest degree of darkness, without any remainder, or mixture, or hope of light; it is darkness that results from their being shut out of heaven. Yet this is not the worst. *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* There will be great grief, floods of tears shed to no purpose; anguish of spirit, preying eternally on the vitals, in the sense of the wrath of God, is the torment of the damned. Great indignation; damned sinners will gnash their teeth for spite and vexation, full of the fury of the Lord; seeing with envy the happiness of others, and reflecting with horror on the former possibility of their being happy themselves, which is now past.

Our Lord cures the servant. *As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.* The servant got a cure, but the master a confirmation of his faith. Note, Christ often gives encouraging answers to his praying people, when they are interceding for others. It is a kindness to us to be heard for others. God turned the captivity of Job when he prayed for his friends, Job 42: 10. *Be it done as thou believest*; a great honor to the centurion. Yea, what is said to him is said to us all. *Believe, and ye shall receive; only believe.* See the power of Christ and the power of faith. As Christ can do what He will, so an active believer may have what he will from Christ. The oil of grace multiplies, till the vessels of faith fail.

The prayer of faith was a prevailing prayer; it ever was so, and ever will be so. The suddenness of the cure, showed that it was miraculous. *Christ spake, and it was done.* A learned physician says, that the diseases Christ cured were chiefly if the most obstinate and hopeless kind.

V. 14—17. Critics place this passage before the sermon on the mount, according to the order which Mark and Luke observe.

1. The case was not extraordinary, as fevers are the most common of distempers; but the person being a relative of Peter's, the case is recorded as an instance of Christ's peculiar attention to the families of his disciples. Here we find that Peter had a wife, and yet was called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ. The church of Rome, therefore, which forbids ministers to marry, goes contrary to the example of that apostle, from whom they pretend to derive infallibility. Peter had a house, though Christ had not; thus was the disciple better provided for than his Lord. It seems he had a house at Capernaum, though he was originally of Bethsaida. It is probable that he removed to Capernaum when Christ went thither, and made that his principal residence. Note, It is worth while to change our quarters, that we may be near to Christ. When the ark removes, Israel must remove. It seems he had his wife's mother with him; an example to yoke fellows, to be kind to each other's relations. Probably she was old, but was taken care of with all possible tenderness, as all the old should be. She was ill of a fever. Neither the strength of youth, nor the feebleness of age, are a defence against such diseases. The palsy was a chronic complaint, the fever an acute one; yet both were brought to Christ, and healed.

He touched her hand, not as physicians do the pulse, but to heal her. This intimated his tenderness. He is *Himself touched with the feeling of our infirmities*; it also shows the way of spiritual healing by the exerting of the power of Christ with his word, and the application of Christ to ourselves. The Scripture speaks the word, the Spirit gives the touch. The fever left

her, she arose and ministered to them. It appears that the mercy was perfected. Those who recover from fevers, by the power of nature, are commonly feeble a great while after to show, therefore, that the cure was above the power of nature, she was able to enter at once on the business of the house. The mercy was sanctified, and so perfected; yet, though dignified by so peculiar favor, she did not assume particular importance, but was ready to wait at table. Those must be humble whom Christ has honored. Being thus delivered, she studies what she shall render.

2. The cure of Peter's mother-in-law brought Christ many patients. 'He healed such a one, why not me? such a one's friend, why not mine?' He cast out the evil spirits with his word. There may be much of Satan's agency, by the divine permission, in those diseases for which natural causes may be assigned, as in Job's boils, especially in diseases of the mind. But about the time of Christ's coming into the world, there seems to have been more than an ordinary letting loose of the devil, to possess the bodies of people. *He came having great wrath, for he knew that his time was short,* and Christ wisely ordered that it should be so, that He might the better show his power over Satan, and his design in coming into the world, which was to destroy the works of Satan. His success was as glorious as his design was gracious. *He healed all that were sick*, without exception; though the person were ever so mean, or the case ever so bad.

The accomplishment of the Old Testament prophecies was the thing Christ had in his eye, and the great proof of his being the Messiah. Among other predictions, it was written of Him, (Isa. 53: 4.) *Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.* It is referred to 1 Pet. 2: 24; and is there construed, *He hath borne our sins.* Here it is construed, *He hath borne our sicknesses.* Our sins make our sicknesses. Christ bore away sin by the merit of his death, and sickness by the merit of his life; nay, though those miracles have ceased, we may say, that He bore our sins then, when He bore our sicknesses on the tree; for sin is the cause and the sting of sickness. We have many diseases and calamities, and there is more in this one line to support us under them, than in all the writings of philosophers—that Jesus Christ bore our sicknesses, and carried our sorrows. Though He was never sick, yet He was hungry, thirsty, and weary, troubled in spirit, sorrowful, and very heavy. He bore them for us in his sufferings, and in compassion bears them with us, being *touched with the feeling of our infirmities*; and thus He bears them off from us, and makes them sit light, except by our own fault. Observe how emphatically it is expressed. *Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses.* He was both able to bear with our infirmities, and deal with our sicknesses as our Physician. That part of the calamity of human nature was his particular care, and He is no less powerful, no less tender now; for we are sure that never were any the worse for going to heaven.

Verses 14, 15.

This miracle was wrought on the Sabbath, after the return from the synagogue. (Mark 1: 29—31. Luke 4: 38, 39.) It seems, that Peter and Andrew had a house at Capernaum; that Peter's wife's mother was there; and Christ lodged in the house, when in that city. She had been seized with a fever, which confined her to the bed. But Jesus rebuked the fever. (as a servant, going beyond orders), and it immediately left her. Thus without delay, she rose and waited upon them. This is wholly different from the ordinary way of recovering from violent fevers; for extreme debility succeeds the proxyen of the disease. Scott. "Learn hence," says Theophylact, "that marriage is no hindrance to virtue, since the chief of the apostles had a wife." Marriage was one of the first of Divine institutions, and a positive command of God, who declared the state of celibacy not good, Gen. 2: 18. Those who pretend that the single state is more holy than the other, slander their Maker, and say in effect, "we are too holy to keep the commands of God." Dr. A. CLARKE. Basil and Ambrose, as quoted by Dr. Whitby, mention others of the apostles, who were married men; and the latter father asserts that they all were, 'excepting John and Paul.' An interesting account is given from Eusebius by Gibbon, the historian, of the appearance of two grandsons of Jude, the brother of James, before a Roman tribunal, during the reign of Domitian.

Verses 16, 17.

(Marg. Ref.) The Jews began their Sabbath at sunset, and ended again at the same time the next day. The people were restrained by

regard for the Sabbath from bringing the sick and demoniacs, but the miracles which Christ had done, being known, may have led them in the evening to throng to him; and Jesus did not complain of weariness, or of the unseasonableness of the hour, but restored all demoniacs to the use of their faculties, and healed all the other sick persons. Thus the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, (Isa. 53: 4—6) though the prophet more directly predicted in this passage the sufferings of Christ on the cross for our sins. Scott. 'Our Lord's sympathy with the distressed was a part of his suffering; and his removal of diseases was the fruit of his bearing our sins, and the punishment of them.' Brown.

Verses 18—20.

When multitudes were gathered to Jesus, and He might have been expected to instruct them, He either perceived, that He had taught them as much as they could receive and digest at that time, or intended to try their sincerity, and to procure leisure for relaxation. He gave orders therefore to his disciples to cross the sea of Tiberias. Here an interpreter of the law and traditions, (Marg. Ref.) a scribe, came and offered to be his follower. He seems to have regarded Jesus as the Messiah, admired his discourses, and having a confused idea of his dignity, probably built his hopes of preferment on joining Him at an early period; expecting Christ to accede to his proposal, seeing his followers were untried fishermen, or of low rank. But our Lord saw his carnal motives, knew that he had not counted the cost, and discouraged his proposal by intimating, that it would not answer his expectations; for though the beasts and birds had an abode, yet He, 'the Son of man, in

tudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side

19 And ^aa certain scribe came and said unto him, Master, ^bI will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, ^cand the birds of the air have nests; but ^dthe Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

21 And ^eanother of his disciples said unto him, Lord, ^fsuffer me first to go and bury my father.

22 But Jesus said unto him, ^gFollow me; ^hand let the dead bury their dead.

[Practical Observations.]

- a 14:22. Mark 4:35. 5:21. 6:45. 8:13. Luke 8:22.
- b First 7:6. Mark 12:32-34. Luke 9:57, 58. 1 Cor. 1:90.
- c Luke 14:25-27, 33. 22:33, 34. John 13:35-38.
- d Ps. xlii. 104:17.
- e Ps. 40:17. 69:29. 109:22. Is. 53:2. 3. Luke 2:7, 12, 16. 8:3. 2 Cor. 8:9.
- f Luke 9:59-62.
- g 19:29. Lev. 21:11, 12. Num. 6:6, 7. Deut. 33:9, 10. 1 Kings 19:20, 21. Hag. 1:2. 2 Cor. 5:16.
- h 4:18-22. 9:5. John 1:43.
- i Luke 15:32. Eph. 2:1, 5. 5:14. Col. 2:12. 1 Tim. 5:8.

goest; not only to the other side of the country, but if it were to the utmost regions of the earth. Now we should think ourselves sure of such a man as this; and yet it appears by Christ's answer, that his resolution was rash, his ends carnal. Either he did not consider at all, or not that which was to be considered. Note, There are many resolutions for religion, produced by some sudden pangs of conviction, that come to nothing: soon ripe, soon rotten.

Christ informed him, that this Son of man, whom he is so anxious to serve, has not where to lay his head. Observe, how strange it is in itself, that the Son of God, when He came into the world, should put Himself into to such a very low condition, as to want the convenience of a certain

V. 18-22. 1. The influences of this Sun of Righteousness were not to be confined to one place, but diffused all the country over. The necessities of souls called to Him, *Come over, and help us*, Acts 16: 9. He removed *when He saw great multitudes about Him*. He knew there were others as desirous to have Him with them, and they must have their share. His being acceptable and useful in one place, was no objection against, but a reason for, his going to another. Thus He would try the multitudes that were about Him, whether they would follow Him when his preaching was at some distance. Many will not be at the pains to go the other side; and thus Christ shook off those who were less zealous, and the perfect were made manifest.

2. Here is an account of two persons who desired to come into communion, and yet were not right, given here as a specimen of the hindrances by which many are kept from closing with Christ, and cleaving to Him, and a warning to us, so to set out in following Christ, that we may not come short; to lay such a foundation, that our building may stand.

Here was one too hasty in promising, and he was a certain scribe, a learned man, one of those that expounded the law. We generally find them in the gospels to be men of no good character, usually coupled with the Pharisees, as enemies to Christ. *Where is the scribe?* 1 Cor. 1: 20. He is very seldom following Christ; yet here was one who did pretty fair for discipleship, a Saul among the prophets.

Master, I will follow thee whithersoever Thou goest. I know not how any man could have spoken better. His profession seems to have been by his unbiassed inclination. He is not called to it by Christ, nor urged by any of his disciples, but, of his own accord, he professes himself to be a close follower of Christ; he is not a pressed man, but a volunteer. He does not say, I have a mind to follow thee, but I am determined, *I will do it*. *Whithersoever Thou*

resting-place, which the necessities of the creatures have. If He would take *our nature upon Him*, one would think He should have taken it in its best estate; no, He takes it in its worst. *The foxes have holes*; though they are not only not useful, but hurtful to man, yet God provides holes for them. Man tries to destroy them, but they are sheltered. *The birds of the air*, though they take no care of themselves, yet have nests; (Ps. 104: 17.) nests in the field some of them nests in the house. In God's courts, Ps 81: 3. How poorly Christ was provided for! It may encourage us to trust God for necessities, when the birds and beasts have such good provisions. If we want necessities our Master did before us. Note, *For our sakes He became poor*, very poor. He had not a place of repose, not a house of his own, to put his head in; not a pillow of his own to lay his head on. He and his disciples lived on the charity of people, *who ministered to Him of their substance*, Luke 8: 2. Christ did this, not only to humble Himself, and fulfil the Scriptures, but to show us the vanity of worldly wealth, and that He might purchase better things for us, and so make us rich, 2 Cor. 8: 9.

When a scribe offered to come to Christ, one would think it strange that he was not encouraged. One scribe might do Christ more credit than twelve fishermen; but Christ saw his heart, and answered to the thoughts of that. The scribe's resolve seems to have been sudden, and Christ would have us, when we make a profession of religion, count the cost, (Luke 14: 28.) to do it intelligently, and with consideration, not because we know no other way, but because we know no better. It is no advantage to religion to take men by surprise. Those who take up a profession in a pang, will throw it off again in a fret; let them, therefore, take time, and they will have done the sooner. Let him that will follow Christ, know the worst of it, and expect to lie hard, and fare hard. His resolve seems to have been from a worldly principle. He saw what abundance of cures Christ wrought and concluded that He had large fees, and would get an estate quickly, and therefore he would follow Him in hopes of growing rich with Him, but Christ rectifies his mistake. Note, Christ will accept none for his followers that aim at worldly advantages in following Him, or design to make any thing but heaven of their religion. We have reason to think that this scribe, therefore, went away sorrowful, being disappointed

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14-22. Persons detained from public ordinances by sickness, or any other real hindrance, may expect the Savior's presence in retirement, soothing their sorrows and abating their pains.—When our maladies are cured by ordinary methods, we should minister to Christ and his people, praising Him as our Healer, and dedicating ourselves to his service; and when He removes the fever of sinful passion, we shall delight to do his will. He deems no hour unreasonable, for an application to deliver us from temptation; nor should we excuse ourselves from helping others because it is late, or we fatigued, when the case is urgent.—While we rejoice in the salvation of Christ, let us remember what He endured in taking 'our infirmities' and bearing 'our sicknesses' and sins, that we may not dread the toil necessary in doing good to others.—Let us contrast the divine majesty of Christ with the external poverty to which He submitted. Was He weary, and without a place to recline his head? Was He more destitute than the 'foxes or the birds?'

and shall we try to make religion subserve our interests, and preach or profess it merely to grow rich or great? Shall we deem honor, or happiness, to be connected with affluence, or indulgence? Shall we court the wealthy, because of their wealth, or despise the poor for his poverty? Shall we seek great things for ourselves, or be uneasy with accommodations far better than those of Christ? God forbid! His disciples must not only profess a readiness to follow Him 'whithersoever He goeth'; but must be ready to go by sea and land through storms, tempests, poverty, hardship, reproach, and persecution; otherwise they will not 'endure to the end.' If He require our service, the tender affections must give place. Enough will take care of ordinary affairs, but he who is called to follow Christ, and preach his Gospel, must leave 'the dead to bury their dead; and not allow secular affairs to take him from his work.

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'his humiliation, had not where to lay his head,' even when wearied by labor, and needing sleep. His disciples, then, must expect to be destitute, to endure hardship, and be rewarded by spiritual good. —It is likely, that this intimation induced the scribe to abandon his design. (Note Luke 9: 57-62.) SCOTT. *I will follow Thee.* 'The natural man thinks himself capable of any thing; he alone who is divinely taught, knows he can do nothing but through Christ's strengthening him. Every teacher among the Jews had, of his disciples, some that followed & accompanied him wherever he went, that he might have some at hand to converse with, concerning the divine law.' —*'Foxes have holes.'* Reader, art thou a poor man, fearing God? Then, what comfort must thou derive from so nearly resembling the Lord Jesus? But how unlike is the rich vanity of pleasure, and slave of sin, to this heavenly pattern! —*'Son of man.'* A Hebrew phrase, expressive of humiliation and abasement; and on that account applied to Himself, by the meek and lowly Jesus. It seems also to be used here to point out the incarnation of the Son of God, according to the predictions of the prophets, Ps. 8: 5. Dan. 7: 13. And as our Lord was now showing forth his eternal divinity in the miracles He wrought, He seems studious to prove

to them the certainty of his incarnation, because on this depended the atonement for sin. Indeed, our Lord seems more intent on giving the proofs of his humanity, than of his divinity, the latter being necessarily manifested by the miracles He was continually working.' Dr. A. CLARKE. It is observable, however, that, with the exception of the first martyr, Stephen, Acts 7: 56. [and John, Rev. 1: 13.] no one, as is said by Beausobre, uses this epithet concerning our Lord, beside Himself. 'This title,' continues that estimable writer, 'our Lord employed, to counteract the false opinions of the Jews respecting the nature of his reign, [for kingdom,] and to intimate to them, that He was to attain his glory only through humiliation and suffering.' Dr. Paley remarks, that, though the title be used sixty-one times in the gospels, it is always with the restriction of being applied by our Lord to Himself, and 'never used of Him, or towards Him, by any other person.' Ep. Verses 21, 22.

Another person, who had followed Christ as his disciple, was called constantly to attend Him, that he might be sent to preach the Gospel, but he excused himself to attend the funeral of his father, who had just died: for Christ's answer implies that this was his request, and not that

23 ¶ And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep.

25 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us; we perish.

in a batga'n, while he thought would turn to account; he is not following Christ, unless he can get by Him.

Here is another hat was too slow in performing. Delay in execution is as bad, on the one hand, as precipitancy of resolution on the other. This candidate for the ministry was one of Christ's disciples already; a follower of Him at large. Clement of Alexandria tells us, from an ancient tradition, it was Philip. He seems to be better disposed than the former, because not so presumptuous; a bold temper is not the most promising in religion; sometimes the last are first, and the first last. *Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father, before I come to be a follower of Thee.* Let it suffice to hear Thee now and then, when I can spare time. His father was now sick, or dying, or dead, or some thing aged, and not likely to live long. He desired to attend upon him in his sickness, at his death, and to his grave, and then would follow Christ. This seemed a reasonable request, and yet it was not right. He had not the zeal necessary, and therefore pleaded this, because it seemed a plausible plea. Note, An unwilling mind never wants an excuse. Suppose it to have proceeded from a filial affection for his father, yet he ought to have given the preference to Christ. Note, Many are hindered from godliness, by an over-concern for their families; and duty to God is postponed, under color of discharging our debts to the world. Here we need to have a double guard.

Jesus said unto him, Follow Me; and no doubt power accompanied this word, and he did follow Christ and clave to Him, as Ruth to Naomi; when the scribe, like Orpah, took leave of him. That said, I will follow Thee. To this, Christ said, Follow Me. Comparing them together, it is intimated that we are brought to Christ by the force of his call to us, not of our promise to Him; it is not of him that willetth nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. He calls whom He will, Rom. 9: 16. Note, Though chosen vessels may make excuses, yet Christ will conquer their unwillingness. When Christ calls, He will make the call effectual, 1 Sam. 3: 10. *Let the dead bury their dead.* It is a proverbial saying, 'Let one dead man bury another; let the dead lie unburied, rather than the service of Christ should be neglected. Let the spiritually dead bury the corporally dead. Burying the dead, especially a father, is a good work, but not the work at this time. It may be done as well by others, not called and qualified as thou art, to preach the Gospel.' Note, Piety to God must be preferred before piety to parents, though that is a needful part of our religion. The Nazarites, under the law, were not to mourn for their own parents, because they were *holy unto the Lord*. Num. 6: 6-8. Nor was the high priest to defile himself for the dead, no, not for his own father, Lev. 21: 11, 12. Christ requires of those who would follow Him, that they hate father and mother, (Luke 14: 26.) love them less than God. We must comparatively neglect our nearest relatives, when they come in competition with Christ.

V. 23-27. Christ had given sailing orders to his disciples, that they should depart to the other side of the sea of Tiberias, into the country of Gadara, in the tribe of Gad, which lay east of the Jordan; thither He would go to rescue a poor creature that was possessed with a legion of devils, though He saw how He should be affronted there. He chose to cross the lake, that He might have occasion to manifest Himself the God of the sea, as well as of the dry land, and to show that all power is his, both in heaven and in earth. It is a comfort to those who go down to the sea in ships, to know that they have a Savior

whom to trust, who knows what it is to be a sea, and to be in storms there. But observe, He had no yacht, or pleasure-boat, to attend Him, but made use of his disciples' fishing boats. The twelve kept close to Him, while others staid on firm land. Note, Those alone are the true disciples of Christ, who are willing to go to sea with Him, to follow Him into dangers and difficulties. Many would be content, to go the land-way to heaven, and will rather stand still, or go back, than venture on a dangerous sea; but those who would rest with Christ hereafter, must follow Him now, into a ship, or into a prison, as well as into a palace.

1. There arose a very great storm. Christ could have ordered a pleasant passage, but that would not have been so much for his glory, and the confirmation of their faith, as their deliverance was; this storm was for their sakes, John 11: 4. One would expect that, having Christ with them, they would have had a favorable gale; but it is quite otherwise. Christ would show that they who are passing with Him over the ocean of this world, must expect storms by the way. The church is tossed with tempests, (Isa. 54: 11.) Only the upper region enjoys a perpetual calm.

Christ was asleep. We never read of his sleeping but at this time. He was, n watchings often, and continued all night in prayer to God. It was not like Jonah's sleep in a storm; it was a sleep of holy serenity and dependence on God: He slept to show that He was truly man subject to the sinless infirmities of our nature. His work made Him weary; He had no guilt, or fear within, to disturb His repose. Those who can lay their heads on the pillow of a clear conscience, may sleep sweetly in a storm, (Ps. 4: 8.) as Peter, Acts 12: 6. He slept to try the faith of his disciples, whether they could trust Him when He seemed to slight them. He slept not so much with a desire to be refreshed, as with the design to be awakened.

The poor disciples, though used to the sea came to Him in a great fright. Whither else should they go? *Lord, save us, we perish.* They believed He could save them; they begged He would. His errand into the world was to save, but those only are saved who call on the name of the Lord, Acts 2: 21. They who, by faith, are interested in Christ's salvation, may with humble confidence apply themselves to Him for temporal deliverances. *Lord, save us.* Note, Christ will save none but those who are willing to take Him for their Lord; for He is a Prince and a Savior. *We perish:* the language of their fear. They gave up all for lost. *We perish,* if thou dost not save us: look on us, therefore, with pity. They pray as men in earnest, that beg for their lives; it becomes us

he might say with an aged father till his death, as some explain it. But Jesus perceived reluctance to the service appointed him, which might have increased by his going to bury his father, and associating with his relations. He also would shew, that personal and relative concerns must yield to his command. Refusing the request, He ordered him to leave this care to his relatives, who were dead in sin and incapable of spiritual services. (*Marg. Ref. c.*) but could provide for the burial of the dead, and would attend to it. *Scorr.* 'The dead, in Scripture, often signify those, who are "alienated from the life of God." Here, then, Christ teaches, that when we are called by Him to the profession of the Gospel, we must not suffer that, which may be done by others unfit to be employed in spirituals, to hinder us from instant obedience.' *Whitney.* 'Here was a plausible reason; but this doing something else first, ruins us: and if we have an excuse for not coming to Christ now, it is to be feared we shall die with one in our mouths.'

ADAM.

Verses 23-27.

Mark and Luke relate this and what follows, in a different connection. Christ, however, having entered the ship, or fisher-boat, which the disciples provided, set sail, in company with other small vessels. (*Note, Mark 4: 35-41.*) Instead of a fair voyage, they were overtaken by a storm; so that the ship was covered with waves, and apparently ready to sink. But, in this distress, Jesus lay asleep. His human nature, like ours, was wearied with incessant fatigue, and he yielded to sleep, foreseeing the storm, that his power might thus be more noticed. But the disciples trembling lest they should be swallowed up, and having no resource but in his power, awoke Him, saying, 'Lord, save us, we perish!' Consider what they had seen of his power, this faith was comparatively weak, and their fears were evidences of remaining unbelief. It was impossible for the vessel, which bore Him, to sink; and in his divine nature He was as able to restrain the winds and waves, when his human nature lay asleep, as to cure the paralytic by a word spoken at a distance. Having rebuked them, as men of little faith, He, as I ord

of creation, rebuked the winds and the waves; (just as a master his unruly servants;) and at his word the winds ceased, the tempestuous sea became smooth, and a calm succeeded. The disciples were astonished, and asked, 'what manner of person is this? He is more than man; for with authority He commands the winds and waves, and they obey Him.' Thus the tempest was overruled to the increase of their faith and admiration of his majesty and power. (*Marg. Ref. m.*) 'It being so often made the property of God,' says *Whitney*, 'to still the raging of the sea, it is not wonderful, that Christ's disciples should conceive a divine power to be in Him, who could perform such things.' *Scorr.* *Lord, save us, we perish.* 'One advantage of trials is, to make us know our weakness, so that we shall apply to God by faith in Christ. It is by faith alone that we may be said to approach Him; by love we are united to Him, and by prayer we awake Him. All good perishes in us without Christ: without his grace we are in momentary danger of utter ruin. How proper, then, is this short prayer for us, and how familiar should it be to us! Taken in an extensive sense, it is exceedingly expressive; comprehending the power of our Lord's might, the merit of his atonement, and the depth of our misery and danger.' *Dr. A. Clarke.* 'The inland sea, or lake, which is called indifferently the sea of Tiberias, Galilee, Gennesareth or Chinnereth, from cities or territories on its shores,' lies, says *Mr. Buckingham*, 'in a deep basin, surrounded on all sides with lofty hills, excepting only the narrow entrance and outlet of the Jordan at each extreme.' It is in length about seventeen, in breadth nearly six miles, and 'affords,' says *Dr. E. D. Clarke*, 'one of the most striking prospects in the Holy Land.' He adds, 'The river Jordan maintains its course through the middle of the lake, causing a strong current; and when this is opposed by contrary winds, which blow here with the force of a hurricane from the south-east, sweeping from the mountains into the lake, it may be conceived that a boisterous sea is instantly raised: thus the small vessels of this country are ill qualified to resist.' *Ed.*

20 And he said unto them, 'Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm.

27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him? [Practical Observations.]

28 ¶ And when he was come to the other side, into the country of the ⁹Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

16:30, 14:30-31, 16:8, 14:10-14, Mark 4:40, Luke 8:25, Rom. 4:20, m 27, Job 38:8-11, Ps. 65:7, 89:9, 93:3, 4, 104:6, 107:28-30, 114:2-7, Prov. 8:28, 29, Is. 50:2-4, 63:12, Nah. 1:4, Hab. 3:8, Mark 4:39, 41, 6:48-51, Luke 8:24, 25, Rev. 10:2
14:33, 15:31, Mark 1:27, 6:51, 7:37
2 Mark 4:41, &c. Luke 8:26, &c. Acts 10:38
3 Gen. 10:16, 15:21, Deut. 7:1, 9 Mark 5:2-5, Luke 8:27, 29, 1 Judg. 5:8,

happiness of those who have Him on their side. *There was a great calm.* Ordinarily, after a storm, there is such a fret of the waters, that it is long ere they can settle; but if Christ speak the word, not only the storm ceases, but all the remains of it. Great storms of doubt sometimes end in a wonderful calm, created by the spirit of adoption.

The men marvelled. Though long acquainted with the sea, they never before saw a storm so immediately turned into a calm. It has all the marks of a miracle on it. *It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in their eyes.* What manner of man is this? Note, Christ is a Nonesuch; every thing in Him is admirable; none so mighty, none so amiable. *Even the winds and seas obey Him.* Others pretend to cure diseases, but He only undertook to command the winds. We know not the way of the wind, John 3:8, but He that bringeth forth the wind out of his treasury, (Ps. 135: 7.) when

thus to wrestle in prayer. Christ slept that He might draw out this importunity.

2. The Lord Jesus awakened, as one refreshed, Ps. 78: 15. Christ may sleep when his church is in a storm, but He will not outsleep Himself. The set time to favor his distressed church will come. Ps. 102: 13. *Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?* He does not chide them for disturbing Him with their prayers, but for disturbing themselves with their fears. Christ reproved them first, and then delivered them. He prepares us for mercy, and then gives it to us. *Why are ye, my disciples, fearful?* Let the sinners in Zion be afraid; let heathen mariners tremble in a storm, but ye shall not be so. *O ye of little faith.* Many that have true faith, are weak in it. Note, Christ's disciples are apt to be disquieted with fears in a stormy day, to torment themselves with jealousies that things are bad with them, and dismal conclusions that they will be worse. Inordinate fears in a stormy day are owing to the weakness of our faith, which should be as an anchor to the soul, and ply the oar of prayer. By faith, we might see through the storm to the quiet shore. Their fearfulness is very displeasing to the Lord Jesus, for it reflects dishonor on Him, and creates disturbance to themselves. *He rebuked the wind.* The former He did as the God of grace, who can do what He pleases in us: this He did as the Sovereign of nature, who can do what he pleases for us. It is the same power that stills the noise of the sea, and the tumult of fear. Ps. 65: 7. See how easily it was done. Moses commanded the waters with a rod: Joshua with the ark of the covenant; Elisha, with the prophet's mantle; but Christ, with a word. See his absolute dominion over all the creatures, which bespeaks both the honor and the

it is out, gathers it into his fists, Prov. 30: 4. He that can do this, can do any thing; can do enough to encourage our confidence in Him in the most stormy period, within or without, Isa. 25: 4. *The Lord sitteth on the flood, and is mightier than the noise of many waters.* Christ, by commanding the seas, showed Himself to be the same that made the world, when, at his rebuke, the waters fled, (Ps. 104: 7, 6.) as now, at his rebuke, they fell.

V. 28-30. The scope of this chapter shows the divine power of Christ, by his dominion over bodily diseases, to us irresistible; over winds and waves yet more uncontrollable; over devils more formidable than all. Christ has not only all power in heaven and earth, and all deep places, but in hell, too. *Principalities and powers were made subject to Him*, even while in a state of humiliation, as an earnest of what should be in his glory, Eph. 1: 21. *He spoiled them*, Col. 2: 15. Christ, in general, cast out the spirits with his word; here we have a particular instance of it. It was wrought in the country of the Gergesenes. Some think they were the remnant of the Girgathites, Deut. 7: 1. Though Christ was sent chiefly to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, yet some saith He made among the borderers. Besides this general instance, which Christ gives us of his power over Satan, we have especially discovered to us the manner of evil spirits in their enmity to man. Observe, concerning this legion of devils,

1. What work they made where they were, which appears in the miserable condition of these two persons. They dwelt among the tombs. The devil, having the power of death, not as judge, but as executioner, delights to hold converse among the trophies of his victory; but there, where he thought himself in the place of his greatest triumph, as in Golgotha, the place of a skull, did Christ subdue him. Conversing among graves, increased the frenzy of the poor possessed creatures, strengthening the hold he had of them by their bodily distemper; and made them more formidable to the people, who generally startle, if any thing stirs among tombs. They were exceedingly fierce; not only ungovernable, but mischievous; so that no man durst pass that way. Note, The devil bears malice to mankind, and shows it by making them malicious towards one another. Mutual enmity, where there should be mutual endearment, is an

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 23-27. When following Christ, we may expect tribulations. Satan will endeavor to obstruct our course, or dismay our souls, by raising a storm; and the Lord may suffer him, for our humiliation and the trial of our faith. Though the Savior seems to disregard his church, when conflicting with the winds and waves of temptation, or persecution, and ready to be overwhelmed; yet his presence secures their safety, and He purposes to excite more earnest prayer for deliverance, and more simple and entire dependence on Him for it. Weak

faith will call forth the cry, 'Lord, save us, we perish.' Terrors often prove our faith to be small, though it had seemed to be strong. But Christ regards that faith as 'little,' of which we have a high opinion. He will not leave the weak believer to perish, but rebuke him for his fears, and openly disapprove every suspicion of his truth and love. He leads men into peril, to detect the weakness of their faith, and to shew the power of Him whom winds and waves and all things obey; and thus invigorates their faith, and excites their adoring love. Scott.

Verses 23, 29.

The country of the Gergesenes included the region of Gadara. It seems to have been inhabited chiefly by Jews, but surrounded by Gentiles who mingled with the inhabitants.—The other evangelists mention one demoniac, because one perhaps was more remarkable than the other, but they do not say there was only one; this, then, is no real disagreement. (Notes, Mark 5: 1-20. Luke 8: 26-39.)—The circumstances of this narration, like those of several others, prove the reality of possessions by evil spirits; for things were said and done by demons, and events occurred in consequence of dispossession, which, one would think, cannot be ascribed to lunacy. But one point of modern madducism denies the existence and agency of apostate spirits; and they maintain their empire more successfully for this species of infidelity. Some, not skeptical in other respects, will not admit the reality of these possessions. It cannot be, that evil spirits want power or malice to torment men's bodies and minds, as well as tempt them to sin, if God permit them; nor can it be known how far they have influence in diseases, which affect both body and mind. If they do not immediately cause lunacies, or other maladies, it cannot be denied, that they may take advantage of the disordered state of the body to disturb the mind. (Notes, Job 1: 6, 7. 2: 6.) But when Christ was 'manifested to destroy the works of the devil,' there was wisdom in leaving the enemy of God and man at liberty to shew his power, malice, and the tendency of his efforts to injure and destroy mankind; that Christ might have opportunity to shew his superior authority, give evidence of the existence of these spirits, in opposition to the infidelity of the Sadducees, and evince the beneficence of the Gospel. 'Some suppose, that these persons were only afflicted by strange diseases; but the Scriptures make a distinction between curing diseases and casting out devils. (4: 24.) This will be more evident from circumstances relating to the devils

'being cast out. (Mark 1: 34. Luke 4: 41. & 27, 33.) Now to make this says the effects of disease, or to conceive that Christ spoke 'this to a disease, is evidence of being diseased. Christ purposed to show these demons; asks their names, and the demons were so strong, that chains and fetters could not bind them. Diseased persons could not fear being tormented, sent out of the country, or into the abyss, by 'Christ.' Whithy. Some argue as if the evangelists, and even the Savior, acted with some regard to Jewish prejudices. But this subverts the authority of inspired writers, and reflects on the conduct of Christ. Where Jewish opinions were the effect of prejudice, He never failed to oppose them. (Notes, 16: 3-6. Acts 16: 16-18.) The fierceness of the demons was such, that they could not be confined, but wandered in tombs, or solitary places, and were the terror of the country, so that 'no man could pass by that way.' yet they knew and dreaded Christ; and, using the men's organs of speech, they cried aloud, 'What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God?' They expected no benefit, they declined all contest, and desired to have nothing to do with Him. 'O Jesus, Son of the ever-living God, it is our misery, that we are fallen into thy hands. What wilt Thou now do with us? We do not mean to torment us before the day of judgment?' Bp. Hall. Thus they own their doom fixed, but desire liberty for further mischief. Scott.

The evangelists, Mark (5: 1.) and Luke, (8: 26 Gr.) say that our Savior, having passed over the sea of Tiberias, came into the district of the Gadarenes. Matthew here, v. 28, calls it Gergesenes; for ancient Girgathites, mentioned Gen. 10: 16, 15: 21. Dent. 7: 1, and Josh. 3: 10. Doddridge, but as the lands belonging to one of these cities were contained within the limits of the other, [Gadara the capital, according to Josephus, of Perea, or the region beyond Jordan, with its villages, lying in the country of the Gergesenes, Whithy,] one evangelist might say 'the country of the Gergesenes,' another 'the

29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, 'What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?'

30 And there was a good way off from them, an herd of many swine, feeding.

31 So the devils besought him, saying, 'If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.'

32 And he said unto them, 'Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.'

33 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.

34 And, behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought him that he would depart out of their coasts.

2 Sam. 16:10, 19:22, Joel 3:4, Mark 1:24, 5:7, Luke 4:34, 9:28, John 2:4, Mark 3:11, Luke 4:41, Acts 16:17, Jam. 2:19.
2 Pet. 2:4, Jude 6.
u Luke 9:35, Dent. 14:8, Is. 65:4, 65:3, Mark 3:11, Luke 8:32, 15:16.
y Mark 6:57, 12, Luke 8:30-33, Rev. 12:12.
z 1 Kings 22:32, Job 1:10-12, 2:3-6, Acts 2:22, 4:28, Rev. 20:7.
a Job 1:13-14, 27:8, Mark 5:13, Luke 8:33.
b Mark 5:14-16, Luke 8:34-36, Acts 19:15-17.
c 29, Dent., 5:25, 1 Sam. 16:4, 1 Kings 18:7, Job 21:14, 22:17, Mark 5:17, 18, Luke 9:23, 37-39, Acts 16:39.

evidence of Satan's enmity to the whole race. He makes one man a bear, a wolf, a devil to another. Where Satan rules in a man by the lusts that war in: the members, pride, malice, revenge, these make him as unfit for society, as unworthy of it, and as much an enemy to the comfort of it, as were these poor possessed creatures.

It is an instance of God's power over the devils, that, notwithstanding the mischief they did by and to these poor men, yet they could not keep them from meeting Jesus Christ. It was his overpowering hand that dragged these unclean spirits into his presence, which they dreaded more than any thing else. His chains could hold them, when the chains men made for them could not. Being brought before Him, they protested against his jurisdiction, and broke out in rage, *What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God?* One word the devil spoke like a saint: he addressed Jesus as the *Son of God*. A good word, and at this time, a great word, and what flesh and blood did not reveal to Peter, *ch. 16:16*. Even the devils confess Christ to be the *Son of God*, and yet are devils still; which makes their enmity to Christ so much the more wicked, and indeed, a perfect torment to themselves; for how can it be otherwise, to oppose one they know to be the *Son of God*? Note, It is not knowledge, but love, that distinguishes saints from devils. He is the first-born of hell that knows Christ, and hates Him, and will not be subject to Him. Not long since the devil doubted if Christ were the Son of God or not, and would have persuaded Him to question it; (*ch. 4:3*), but now he readily owns it. Note, Though God's children may be greatly disquieted by Satan's questioning their relation to God as a Father, yet the spirit of adoption shall at length so clear it up to them, as to set it above the devil's contradiction.

Two words he said like a devil. *What have we to do with Thee?* It is true that the devils have nothing to do with Christ, as a Savior; for He took not on Him the nature of the angels who fell, nor laid hold on them, *Heb. 2:16*. They are in no relation to Him, nor have no hope or any benefit by Him. Oh, the depth of this mystery, that fallen man has so much to do with Christ, when fallen angels have nothing to do with Him! Surely here was torment before the time, to be forced to own the excellency there was in Christ, and yet, that he has no interest in Him. It is possible for men to call Jesus the *Son of God*, and yet have nothing to do with Him. It is true that the devils hate Christ, reject Him as Ruler, and are in open rebellion against his crown. See whose language those speak, who will have nothing to do with the Gospel of Christ, who break his hands in sunder, and say to the almighty Jesus, *depart from us!* They are of their father the devil. They do his lusts, and speak his language. It is not true that the devils have nothing

to do with Christ, as a Judge. These devils could not deny, that the *Son of God* is to be their Judge. To his judgment they are bound over, in chains of darkness.

'Art Thou come hither to torment us, and restrain us from doing the hurt we would do?' Note, To be tied up from doing mischief, is a torment to the devil, all whose comfort is in man's misery. Should we not then count it our heaven to be doing well, and reckon that our torment which hinders us? There is a time when devils will be more tormented than they are, and they know it. The great assize at the last day, is the time fixed for their complete torture, in that Tophet which is ordained of old, *for the king, for the prince of the devils, and his angels*; Isa. 30:33, *Matth. 25:41*. For the judgment of that day, they are reserved, *2 Pet. 2:4*. They are now prisoners at large, *Job 1:7*. They will then be made close prisoners; they now have some ease, they will then be in torment. Despair of relief is the misery of their case. They have apprehension of that fiery indignation, on every approach of Christ. *Thus the devils believe and tremble*, Jam. 2:19. The most desperate sinners, whose damnation is sealed, yet cannot quite harden their hearts, when they see the day approaching.

2. The evil spirits went into a herd of swine, which was a good way off. These Gergesenes, though living on the other side Jordan, were Jews. What had they to do with swine, which by the law, were not to be eaten or touched? Probably, lying on the outskirts of the land, there were many Gentiles among them, to whom the herd belonged; or they kept them to be bartered or sold to the Romans, who were admirers of swine's flesh. Though the swine were good way off, yet the devils had an eye upon them to do them mischief; for they go up and down, seeking whom they may devour.

If Thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. See their inclination to mischief. They resemble those whose sleep departeth from them, except they cause some to fall, *Prov. 4:16*. Let us go any where to do mischief. They would hurt men in their goods and hurt their souls, by making Christ a burden to them. They own that, without Christ's permission, they could not so much as hurt swine. This is comfortable to all God's people, that, although Satan's power is great, it is limited. What would become of us, were it not? His power is under the control of our Lord Jesus our most faithful friend and Savior.

Christ said unto them, Go, as God did to Satan, when he desired leave to afflict Job. Note, God often, for wise reasons, permits the efforts of Satan's power. The devils are not only Christ's captives, but his vassals. Their wrath shall praise Him, and the remainder of it He will restrain. Christ permitted this, for the conviction of the Sadducees, who denied the existence of spirits. He brought as near as might be, to ocular demonstration, the number,

country of the Gadarenes, each being as correct as the other.' CALMET. *Out of the tombs.* 'The tombs, not only among the Jews, but Gentiles also, were often spacious subterranean caves excavated from the living rock. Hence they not unfrequently served as places of abode to such as were expelled from human habitations, or desolate of them. And indeed at the present day they are often used for that purpose in the East.' BLOOMFIELD. 'Along the borders of this lake, [of Gennesareth, or Tiberias,] may still be seen the remains of those ancient tombs, hewn by the earliest inhabitants of Galilee, [see, however, Judg. 6:2.] in the rocks which face the water.'—These are alluded to in the account of the cure wrought by our Savior in the country of the Gadarenes, and their existence to this day offers strong internal evidence of the accuracy of the evangelist.'

Dr. E. D. CLARKE.

Verses 30-32.

By the law of Moses swine were unclean, and the touch of them, when dead, defiled a man; (*Note, Lev. 11:31-33, v. 31*) yet the Gadarenes fed them, to sell to their Gentile neighbors. The evil spirits formed a subtle plan of prejudicing the inhabitants against Jesus, and inducing them to reject his instructions. Aware of the gain arising from the sale of swine, they desired permission to possess these animals. And He, probably to punish the avarice of the Gadarenes, gave proof of the reality of possessions, and shew the destructive power as well as the limits assigned to evil spirits, permitted them. Immediately they impelled the swine to such fury, that the herd rushed from a precipice into the sea, and were 'drowned.'—It is surprising, that this permission should be regarded as a ground of objection to our Lord's conduct, or as needing a labored vindication. Had not He restrained the evil spirit

they would have also destroyed the demoniacs, and the owners and feeders of the swine; so that his mercy protected the Gadarenes, and permitted the destruction only of that property, which tempted them almost constantly to violate the law, and contract ceremonial uncleanness. But the objection reminds us, that the enemies of Christianity always blame religion for the mischief, which Satan and evil men take occasion from it to perpetrate; forgetting that they would have done vastly more mischief had his restraints been removed. If permitting be not distinguished from causing, it will be impossible not to impute to God the sins of all his rebellious creatures, which is detestable blasphemy. (*Marg. Ref.*) SCOTT. 'Christ, who sometimes, and in some things, denieth our petitions, here granteth that of the devils; to teach us to submit our wills wholly to his, who sometimes granteth justice, [for punishment,] and sometimes denieth in mercy.' ASSEMA LXX. 'We are commonly punished in the thing wherein we offend; and need not more than our ordinary wishes and prayers to rid us.' FOOT. 'As pretended dispossession is very suspicious, because there is so much room for collusion, our Lord permitted the evil spirits here to "enter into the swine;" it being self-evident that the swine could not be confederates in any fraud. Thus, partly to punish those who dealt in a commodity so infamous, and to display the malice of those evil spirits, the death of these swine was made instructive and convincing, and thus rendered a blessing to mankind: and I doubt not but this extraordinary occurrence was permitted, chiefly to prove the reality of diabolical possessions.'

DODD.

Verses 33, 34.

The keepers, undoubtedly, were afflicted as well as astonished at this event, and having told it in Gadara, the inhabitants came to Jesus.

CHAP. IX.

Jesus returning to Capernaum, 1; sends out twelve of the Disciples, 2-10; calls Matthew from the receipt, 10-11; justifies himself for eating with publicans and sinners, 10-12; an his disciples are not fasting, 13-15; the Pharisees, 14-17; is entranced by a girl who had lost her daughter, 18-19; heals a woman of an inveterate issue of blood, 20-22; raises the ruler's daughter, 23-24; gives sight to two blind men, 27-31; and casts a devil out of a dumb man, 32. The people wonder, but the Pharisees ascribe it to the prince of the devils, 33-34. Jesus compassionates the multitudes, and preaches to them; and charges his disciples to pray that laborers might be sent forth into the harvest, 35-38.

AND he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.

2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

a 7-8. 8:18, 23. Mark 5:21. Luke 8:37. Rev. 22:11.
b 4:13.
c 4:24. 8:16. Mark 1:9, 21-23. Luke 8:18, 19. Acts 5:10, 18. 19:12.
d 8:10. Mark 24:5. Luke 5:19, 20. John 2:25. Acts 14:9. Jam. 1:23.
e Mark 5:34. John 21:5.
f Ps. 32:1, 2. Rev. 9:7. Is. 40:1, 2. 44:22. Jer. 31:33, 34. Luke 5:20. 7:47-50. Acts 13:38, 39. Rom. 4:8. 8:5:11. Col. 1:12-14.

lost. The curiosity of the people brought them out to see Jesus. *The whole city came out to meet Him*, that they might be able to say, they had seen a Man who did such wonderful works. Thus many go out in profession to meet Christ, that have no real affection for Him. Their covetousness made them *willing to be rid of Him*. Instead of inviting Him into their city, or bringing their sick to Him to be healed, they desired Him to *depart out of their coasts*, as if they had borrowed the words of the devils,

power, and malice of evil spirits. If the Sadducees were not hereby convinced, they would be left inexcusable. We see not the wind, but it would be absurd to deny its existence.

Christ permitted the loss of the swine for the punishment of the Gadarenes, who, perhaps, though Jews, indulged in eating swine's flesh; and Christ would also show what a bellicious crew they were delivered from, which, if He had permitted it, would soon have choked them, as they did their *swine*. The devils, in obedience to Christ's command, came out of the men, and *went into the herd of swine*. See what an industrious enemy Satan is, and how expeditious!

They were not hid to *save their lives*, and they were therefore made to *run violently down a steep place into the sea*, and were drowned, in number about two thousand, Mark 5:13. Note. The possession which the devil gets is for destruction. He hurries people to sin, to that which they have resolved against, and which they know will be a shame and grief to them. With what a force does the evil spirit work in the children of disobedience, when, by so many foolish and hurtful lusts, they are brought to act in direct contradiction, not only to religion, but to right reason, and their interest in this world! Thus, likewise, he hurries them to ruin, for he is Apollyon and Abaddon, the great destroyer. By his lusts, which men do, they are *drowned in destruction and perdition*. This is Satan's plan, to swallow up and to drown. Miserable, then, is the condition of those that are led *captively by him at his will*. They are hurried into a worse lake than this, a *lake that burns with fire and brimstone*.

The report of it was soon brought to the owners by these winherders, who seemed more concerned for the loss of the swine than any thing else; for they went not to tell *what was befallen to the possessed of the devils*, till the swine were brought them out to see Jesus. *The whole city came out to meet Him*, that they might be able to say, they had seen a Man who did such wonderful works. Thus many go out in profession to meet Christ, that have no real affection for Him. Their covetousness made them *willing to be rid of Him*. Instead of inviting Him into their city, or bringing their sick to Him to be healed, they desired Him to *depart out of their coasts*, as if they had borrowed the words of the devils,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 23-34. Apostate spirits might justly terrify us, were it not for the power and grace of Christ. We bar our doors against ruffians; but rarely consider that legions of devils have access to us, against whom we have no defence, and whilstable, if permitted, to distract our minds, injure our bodies, or ruin our possessions, they delight only in misery and destruction. In what an awful situation, then, are they, who, listening to their temptations, provoke God to give them up to their power and malice! What cause have we to be grateful for preservation during the unconverted portion of our lives! But the believer, doing his duty, need not fear these roaring lions. His Shepherd is watchful and almighty: They cannot break the hedge, which protects his people, nor enter even swine without permission. (Note, Job 1:9-16.) They can tempt sinners to destroy themselves, but cannot destroy them. Spiritual possession by these 'unclean spirits' is, however, most to be dreaded. Their influence leads men to be mischievous, miserable, a burden of their families, a nuisance, or terror of society.

Under their delusions, the sinner supposes, that religion can only make him uneasy. And if he have the truth, and regard 'Jesus as the Son of God,' if he even dread future torment, he will yet have nothing to do with the Savior, nor with the Gospel, lest he be 'tormented before the time.' But Jesus gives deliverance to such slaves, and makes them his willing servants, whenever He sees good, in defiance of evil spirits. (Note, Ps. 110:3.)—Even 'devils believe and tremble;' nay, they supplicate Christ to be exempted from torments, or suffered to do mischief. Let none, then, trust in notions, dead faith, selfish prayers, but in 'faith that worketh by love.'—There is nothing, which men will not do for money; (Note, 1 Tim. 6:6-10. vv. 8-10.) and nothing prejudices the mind more against the Gospel, than its interference with the unrighteous pursuit of riches. The covetous shew themselves to be enemies to Christ, and possessed by Satan, equally with plunderers and debauchees. Avarice is, perhaps, more rarely extirpated, than any other distemper of the mind. SCOTT.

but not to receive instruction, or ask assistance. Probably their consciences inside them dread his power, and the loss of the swine disconcerted them. Not daring to attack his person, they requested Him to depart, which was to say, 'What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God?' This shewed the power of Satan over them, as really as over the demonsiacs, but in a more criminal sense. 'Where men live,' says Beza, 'like swine, there doth not Christ tarry, but devils.' SCOTT. *They that kept them fled*. 'Partly from fear, being terrified with the sight; partly to tell the news in the city, and possibly to excuse themselves to their masters, lest they should think the negligence of their servants the cause of their loss.' Yet God's providence so wrought, that Satan, who would have destroyed or hinder the propagation of the truth of Christ, was foiled by his own endeavor, and the power and goodness of Christ made more public by this miracle. ASSEMB. ANN.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. v. 1. This verse should have been at the end of the last chapter, being the conclusion of the narrative there begun. (Note, Mark 2:1, 2. Capernaum was now Christ's 'own city.' (Note, 4:12-17. 'Bethlehem brought Him forth, Nazareth brought Him up, and Capernaum was his abode.' Theophilact.—The next miracle was wrought at Capernaum, but seems from other evangelists to have been done before our Lord's voyage to Galilee. SCOTT. Lenny supposes that our Lord chose Capernaum for his ordinary residence, because of the city it afforded for visiting the neighboring cities and regions by wa-

What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? And now the devils had what they aimed at, in *drowning the swine*. They did it and then made the people believe that Christ had done it, and so prejudiced them against Him. The devil seduced our first parents, by possessing them with bad thoughts of God, and kept the Gadarenes from Christ, by suggesting that He came into their country to destroy their cattle, and that He would do more hurt than good; for though He had cured two men, yet He had drowned two thousand swine. Thus the devil sows tares in God's field, lays the blame on Christianity, and incenses men against that. They besought Him that He would depart, lest, like Moses in Egypt, He should proceed to some other plague. Note. A great many prefer their swine before their Savior, and so come short of salvation. They desire Christ to depart out of their hearts, and will not suffer his Word to have a place in them, because He and his Word will be the destruction of their brutish lusts. Justly will Christ say to them hereafter, who are thus weary of Him here, *Depart, ye cursed*.

CHAP. IX. v. 1-8. We have, in this chapter, remarkable instances of the power and pity of the Lord Jesus, sufficient to convince us that He is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by Him, and as willing as able, proving Himself to be the skilful, faithful Physician of soul and body, who has sufficient remedies for all the maladies of both. We must therefore apply to Him, and glorify Him both with our bodies, and with our spirits, which are his.

The first verse looks back to the close of the preceding chapter, where the Gadarenes, resenting the loss of their swine, besought Christ to *depart out of their coasts*. Here it follows, *He entered into a ship, and passed over*. Observe, his justice—that He left them. Christ will not tarry long where He is not welcome. In righteous judgment, He forsakes those who are weary of Him. *If the unbeliever will depart from Christ, let him depart*, it is at his peril, 1 Cor. 7:15. See his patience—that He did not punish them as they deserved, for their contempt and contumacy. The provocation, indeed, was very great; but He passed it by;

ter, in order to preach the Gospel. 'He dwelt there, it seems,' observed Dr. A. Clarke, 'at the house of Peter.' See ch. 4:13 and 8:5, 14. Pd.

Verses 2-8.

(Notes, Mark 2:3-12. Luke 5:17-26.) This miracle is more fully recorded by other evangelists, and the particular consideration of it is therefore postponed. Mark records several miracles more circumstantially than Matthew, and hence did not extract his Gospel from Matthew, as some suppose. (Preface to Mark.) Matthew seems here to record in continuation miracles wrought at various times; as he relates several without mentioning the miracles which Christ wrought at the same time.

SON-1 'Son is a title of tenderness, by which superiors address their inferiors.' Dodd. (Marg. Ref. e.) 'Thou art come in desire and confidence of cure. I will give thee more than thou askest; restoration to a good state of soul; thy palsy is healed, thy sins (the cause) are forgiven.' Bp. Hall. Some think, that Christ remitted only the temporal punishment of his sins; and their main argument is, that the apostles cured diseases, so that this is no proof of authority to forgive sin, as to eternal punishment: but the apostles healed diseases in the name of Christ, and forgave sins by his authority. (16:19. John 20:23.) He did both in his own name. If *palsy* was the temporal punishment of this man's sin, the healing of it was the remission of the punishment, and the language which offended the Pharisees was not

2 And behold, 'certain of the scribes said within themselves, 'This man blasphemeth

4 And Jesus, 'knowing their thoughts, said, 'Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

5 For 'whether is it easier to say, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, 'Arise, and walk?

6 But that ye may know 'that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), 'Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

7 And he arose, and departed to his house.

8 But 'when the multitudes saw it, they marvelled, 'and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

[Practical Observations.]

7:20. Mark 2:8, 7. 21. Luke 5: 21. 7:29, 49.
26:65. Lev. 24:16. Mark 14:64.
10:33-35. Acts 9:1-17.
12:22. 16:7-8. 24: 44-21. 129:2.
Mark 2:8. 8:16, 17. 12:15. Luke 6:8. 7:40. 9:45, 47. 11:17. John 2: 24, 25. 6:51, 64. 16:19, 20. 21:17.
Heb. 4:12, 13. Rev. 3:23.
1 Ex. 38:10. Acts 5:3, 4, 9. 8:20-22.
1 Mark 2:9, 12. Luke 5:22-25.
11. 35:3, 5. John 5:8-11, 17, 18. Acts 3:6-11. 16. 49. 10. 9:34. 14:8-11.
11. 43-45. Mic. 7:18. Mark 27:10.
Luke 5:21. John 5:21-23. 10:28.
17:4. 21:21-22. Acts 5:31. 7:38.
60. 2 Cor. 2:10. 5:20. Eph. 4:32.
Col. 3:13.
5. Luke 13:11-13. Acts 9:34.
12:23. 19:31. Mark 2:12. 7:37.
Luke 5:23. 7:16.
13:31. Luke 8:25. 17:15. 23:47.
Acts 4:21.

He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them; not to kill, but to cure. Spiritual judgments agree more with the constitution of Gospel-times; yet some observe, that in those wars which the Romans made on the Jews, not many years after this, they first besieged the town of Gadara, where these Gadarenes dwelt. Those that drive Christ from them, draw on themselves all miseries. Woe unto us, if God depart from us.

He came into Capernaum, the principal place of his residence at present, (Mark 2:1.) and therefore called *his own city*. There, all the circumstances recorded in this chapter happened, and are, therefore, put together here, though, in the harmony of the evangelists, other events intervened. When the Gadarenes desired Christ to depart, they of Capernaum received Him. If Christ be affronted by some, there are others in whom He will be glorious.

The first occurrence after Christ's return to Capernaum, as here recorded, was the cure of the man sick of the palsy. In which we observe,

I. *The faith of his friends* in bringing him to Christ. His distemper was such that he could not come himself; but even the halt and the lame may be brought, and if we do as well as we can, He will accept us. Christ had an eye to their faith. Little children cannot go to Christ themselves, but He will have an eye to the faith of those that bring them, and it shall not be in vain. *Jesus saw their faith*, the faith of the paralytic himself, as well as of them that brought him. Now their faith was strong; they firmly believed that Jesus Christ both could and would heal him. It was humble; they would not ask Christ to make him a visit, but brought him to attend on Christ. It was active; in the belief of Christ's power and goodness, they brought the sick man to Him. Note, A strong faith regards no obstacles in pressing after Christ.

II. *The favor of Christ*, in what He said to him, v. 2. This was a sovereign cordial, enough to make all his bed in his sickness. We read not of any thing said to Christ; probably the sick man could not speak for himself, and they that brought him thought it enough to set him before Christ. It is not in vain to present ourselves and friends to Christ, as objects of pity; mercy is no less quick of hearing than justice. Herein what Christ said is, 1. A kind compellation; *Son*: afflictions are fatherly discipline, Heb. 12: 5. 2. A gracious encouragement;

'*Be of good cheer. Have a good heart on it.* Probably the poor man, when let down among them all in his bed, was afraid of a rebuke for being brought in so rudely; but Christ bids him be of good cheer, and then cures him. He would have those, to whom He deals his gifts, be cheerful in seeking and trusting Him; to be of good courage. 3. A good reason for that encouragement; *Thy sins are forgiven thee*. This may be considered an introduction to the cure. 'Thy sins are pardoned, therefore thou shalt be healed.' Note, Though sin is the cause of sickness, sin may be pardoned, and yet the sickness not removed; or the sickness may be removed, and yet the sin not pardoned; but if we have the comfort of our reconciliation to God, with the comfort of our recovery from sickness, this makes it a mercy indeed, as Hezekiah, Isa. 38: 17. Or it may be a reason of the command, whether he were cured of his disease or not; 'Though I should not heal thee, thou hast not sought in vain, if I assure thee that thy sins are pardoned.' Note, those who, through grace, have evidence of the forgiveness of their sins, have reason to be of good cheer, whatever troubles or afflictions they are under; see Isa. 33: 24.

III. *The cavil of the scribes* at what Christ said; (v. 3.) See how the greatest instance of Heaven's power and grace is branded with the blackest note of hell's enmity; Christ's pardoning sin is termed blasphemy. They, therefore are guilty of blasphemy, that have no commission for it, and yet pretend to pardon sin.

IV. The conviction Christ gave them of the unreasonableness of this cavil.

He charged them with it. Though they did but say it within themselves, *He knew their thoughts*. Thoughts are secret and sudden, yet naked and open before Christ; (Heb. 4: 12, 13.) *He understands them afar off*, Ps. 139: 2. He could say (what no mere man could), *Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?* Note, Sinful thoughts are very offensive to the Lord Jesus. He being the sovereign of the heart, they invade his right, therefore He takes notice of them, and is much displeased with them. In them lies the root of bitterness, Gen. 6: 5. The sins that begin and end in the heart, are as dangerous as any other.

He argued them out of it, v. 5, 6. He asserts his authority in the kingdom of grace. He shows that the Son of man, the Mediator, has power on earth to forgive sins, because He is the Son of man, (John 5: 22, 27.) If He has power

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CHAP. IX. v. 1-8. Christ will not continue his presence or ordinances with those who are weary of them; for He has abundant opportunities for showing mercy.—They who feel themselves to be miserable through sin, and believe that He only can deliver them, will submit to any inconvenience in applying to Him: and, as they are glad of assistance from stronger brethren, these should help them according to their ability and opportunity. Christ can see faith in the heart; yet He loves to point it out in the effects by which it is manifested to us; and when the most sinful and afflicted press through difficulties to seek his salvation, they should be 'of good cheer'; for He addresses them as his children, and forgives their sins.—It would be better to have a pardon, and be left to languish under disease till death, than to be cured of sickness, and left under the power of sin, 'to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath.' Yet, if the sin be forgiven, we shall at length be delivered from pain, and in the mean time enjoy consolation.—Jesus could not so do good, that proud scribes would not censure Him, and accuse Him of blas-

phemy; let us, then, never expect to escape calumny, or be deterred by the fear of it.—The Lord often hears men say such things within themselves of Him, his Gospel, and service, as they would be ashamed to avow, but He will as certainly call them to an account for evil surmises, as for wicked words and works.—When, at Christ's command, the paralytic arose and carried home the bed on which he was brought, the authority of Christ to pardon, and the man's forgiveness, were both demonstrated: and when sinners, at his word, are enabled to renounce iniquities, and to delight in obeying God, they too may know, that their crimes are blotted out. Thus men burdened by sin come to Christ; but when He enables them to walk in newness of life, all who see and love the change are led to adore his grace, and to glorify God on their account.—But as Jesus, in his humiliation, had power to forgive sins on earth, so now that He reigns in glory, his mediatorial commission reaches no further [than while men remain on earth,] and they who die unpardoned must sink into condemnation forever.

SCOTT.

Joseph. But if his sin in every sense was forgiven, his cure sealed the pardon, and gave him the comfort of it. It also proved the point in contest, namely, that Christ was the Son of God; and that as the Son of man in his humiliation, all judgment was committed to Him; and He was authorized immediately to pardon any sinner, even as He pardoned the dyablic thief. 'By remitting the sin,' says *Irenaeus*, 'He showed who He was; for if none can remit but God, and yet Christ did remit them, He was both the Word of God, and the Son of man, receiving power to remit sins from his Father as God and Man.' 'The Jews say,' observes *Whitby*, 'it was proper for God to forgive sins; and this Christ denies; not; but proves that the Son had this power also, leaving them to make the inference.' SCOTT. *Bed.* A couch, or sofa, (like the modern Turkish *divan*, or *mattress*, Calmet.) such as they reclined on at meals.' Dr. A. CLARKE. 'Thy sins be forgiven.' 'The words are an affirmative, not a prayer or wish. As a prayer, the scribes would

not have objected to them. When the common version was made *be* was often used for *are*.' CAMPELLE. 'Moral evil has been the cause of all the natural evil in the world. Our Lord goes to the source of the malady, which is sin; and to that, as the procuring cause, we should refer in all our afflictions.' Among the Jews it was a maxim, that 'no diseased person can be healed till all his sins are blotted out. Christ here first forgives the sins, and then heals the body of the paralytic. See Ps. 103: 3. [25: 18.] 4: 3, 4. Dr. A. CLARKE. *This man blasphemeth.* 'See, in this instance, how the best are sometimes accused of saying and doing the worst things. To do well and suffer ill, was the portion of Christ Himself, and may be the portion of the holiest of those who belong to Christ. Even Jesus was charged with blasphemy and sorcery; and innocence itself can protect no man from slander and false accusation.'

BURKITT.

9 ¶ And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, 'Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

10 And it came to pass, 'as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, "many publicans at 'sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

11 And when the Pharisees saw it, 'they said unto his disciples, "Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

† 21-31, 32. Mark 2:14, &c. Luke 5: 27-28. Lev. 15:1, 2. 19:2-10. ‡ 1:19-22. 1 Kings 19:13-21. Gal. 1:16.

† Mark 2:15, 16. Luke 5:29. ‡ 5:46, 47. John 9:31. 1 Tim. 1:13-16.

‡ Mark 2:16. Luke 14:1-16. † 11:19. 1s. 65:5. Luke 5:30. 15:1, 2. 1 Cor. 5:9-11. Gal. 2:15. 2 John 10.

ing power accompanied his word; (p. 7.) Now Christ bid him take up his bed, to show that he was perfectly cured. He sent him to his house, to be a blessing to his family, where he had been so long a burden.

VI. The impression which this made on the multitude, (p. 8.) Note, All our wonder should help to enlarge our hearts in glorifying God, who alone does marvellous things. They glorified God for what He had done for this poor man. Note, Others' mercies should be our praises, for we are members one of another. Though few of this multitude were so convinced, as to be brought to believe in Christ, as God, or the Son of God, yet they admired Him as a man to whom God had given such power. Note, God must be glorified in all the power that is given to men to do good. For all power is originally in Him, as the fountain, in men as cisterns.

Observe here,

V. 9-13. I. The call of Matthew, the penman of this Gospel. Mark and Luke call him Levi; it was common for the same person to have two names: perhaps Matthew was the name he was most known by as a publican. Some think Christ gave him the name of Matthew when He called him to be an apostle; as Simon, He surnamed Peter. Matthew signifies, the gift of God. Ministers are God's gifts to the church; their ministry, and their ability.

Observe, The posture Christ's call found Matthew in. He was sitting at the receipt of custom, as a publican, (Luke 5:27,) or a custom-house officer

Verse 9.

(Marg. Ref. Note, Mark 2:13-17.) The Jews deemed it criminal for their countrymen to be publicans, (or collectors of taxes,) so that the love of gain only could induce them to engage in it. The publicans from among the Jews were generally immoral, and increased the odium against the order by exacting more than their due, and enforcing the collection by military violence, having aid, when necessary, from the Roman soldiery. The office rendered men infamous, though all were not so iniquitous as this opinion of them implies. Thus occupied, Matthew was sitting in his office, when Jesus spoke to him; his hands full of business, his head, perhaps, of calculations, and his heart of covetousness: for it is not certain, that he had paid any previous regard to the teaching of Christ. But, when commanded to follow Jesus, such a power attended the word, as led him to renounce his employment, immediately to become an attendant on the Savior, that he might be a preacher of the Gospel. So he arose, left his business to his assistants, went after Jesus, and never returned to his occupation. SCOTT. Receipt of custom—publicans, p. 9, 10.] Among the Romans there were receivers-general of the taxes, men of rank, and high consideration, to whom they were farmed or let, for a certain sum. [By auction, in general, as Adam remarks, Rom. Ant.] But these had their deputies in the provinces, who were either freed-men, slaves, or provincials of the lowest order. The original word here used signifies not principal, but inferior collectors. These were odious, especially among the Jews, as has been mentioned, and are chiefly the persons called publicans in the Gospels. They were, in fact, servants of those who farmed the revenue; and, being often guilty of extortion, were usually coupled with such as the Jews termed sinners, meaning, peculiarly, as is thought, heathens. The Jews, therefore, abstained from their society, as if they were such. Some assert: that they were not allowed to enter the temple, or a synagogue, to partake in the public prayers, or offices of judicature. ¶ I give testimony in a court of justice,' CALMET. BLOOMFIELD. 'In Persia,' says Mr. Morier, 'the collections of the toll are farmed; consequently extortion ensues. A station of rahdars, or toll-gatherers, is appointed, who levy tolls on kafilahs, or caravans of merchants; and so exercise their office, as to be execrated by all travellers. As most of the rahdars receive no emolument but what they exact over

to give eternal life, as He certainly has, (John 17:2.) He must have power to forgive sin; for guilt is a bar that must be removed, or we can never get to heaven. What an encouragement to poor sinners to repent, that the power of pardoning sin is in the hands of the Son of man, who is Bone of our bone! And if He had this power on earth, how much more has He it now that He is exalted to the Father's right hand, to give repentance and remission of sins, and so to be both a Prince and a Savior, Acts 5:31.

He proves it, by his power in the kingdom of nature; his power to cure diseases. He that can cure the disease, whether declaratively as a Prophet, or authoritatively as a God, can, in like manner, forgive the sin. Now this is a general argument to prove that Christ had a divine mission. The God of truth would not set his seal to a lie. It had a particular cogency in this case. The palsy was but a symptom of the disease of sin; now He made it appear that He could effectually cure the original disease, by the immediate removal of that symptom. He that had power to remove the punishment, no doubt had power to remit sin. The scribes placed their confidence in legal righteousness, and made no great matter of the forgiveness of sins; but Christ hereby designed to honor that doctrine, and to show that his great errand to the world was, to save his people from their sins.

V. The immediate cure of the sick man. The most necessary arguments must not divert us from doing good. He saith to the sick of the palsy, Arise, take up thy bed, and go to thine house; and a healing, quickening, strengthening; but Christ bid him take up his bed, to show that he was perfectly cured. He sent him to his house, to be a blessing to his family, where he had been so long a burden.

VI. The impression which this made on the multitude, (p. 8.) Note, All our wonder should help to enlarge our hearts in glorifying God, who alone does marvellous things. They glorified God for what He had done for this poor man. Note, Others' mercies should be our praises, for we are members one of another. Though few of this multitude were so convinced, as to be brought to believe in Christ, as God, or the Son of God, yet they admired Him as a man to whom God had given such power. Note, God must be glorified in all the power that is given to men to do good. For all power is originally in Him, as the fountain, in men as cisterns.

Observe here,

Verse 9.

(Marg. Ref. Note, Mark 2:13-17.) The Jews deemed it criminal for their countrymen to be publicans, (or collectors of taxes,) so that the love of gain only could induce them to engage in it. The publicans from among the Jews were generally immoral, and increased the odium against the order by exacting more than their due, and enforcing the collection by military violence, having aid, when necessary, from the Roman soldiery. The office rendered men infamous, though all were not so iniquitous as this opinion of them implies. Thus occupied, Matthew was sitting in his office, when Jesus spoke to him; his hands full of business, his head, perhaps, of calculations, and his heart of covetousness: for it is not certain, that he had paid any previous regard to the teaching of Christ. But, when commanded to follow Jesus, such a power attended the word, as led him to renounce his employment, immediately to become an attendant on the Savior, that he might be a preacher of the Gospel. So he arose, left his business to his assistants, went after Jesus, and never returned to his occupation. SCOTT. Receipt of custom—publicans, p. 9, 10.] Among the Romans there were receivers-general of the taxes, men of rank, and high consideration, to whom they were farmed or let, for a certain sum. [By auction, in general, as Adam remarks, Rom. Ant.] But these had their deputies in the provinces, who were either freed-men, slaves, or provincials of the lowest order. The original word here used signifies not principal, but inferior collectors. These were odious, especially among the Jews, as has been mentioned, and are chiefly the persons called publicans in the Gospels. They were, in fact, servants of those who farmed the revenue; and, being often guilty of extortion, were usually coupled with such as the Jews termed sinners, meaning, peculiarly, as is thought, heathens. The Jews, therefore, abstained from their society, as if they were such. Some assert: that they were not allowed to enter the temple, or a synagogue, to partake in the public prayers, or offices of judicature. ¶ I give testimony in a court of justice,' CALMET. BLOOMFIELD. 'In Persia,' says Mr. Morier, 'the collections of the toll are farmed; consequently extortion ensues. A station of rahdars, or toll-gatherers, is appointed, who levy tolls on kafilahs, or caravans of merchants; and so exercise their office, as to be execrated by all travellers. As most of the rahdars receive no emolument but what they exact over

at the port of Capernaum, an exciseman, or collector of the land-tax. He was in his calling, as the rest of them whom Christ called, ch. 4: 18. But it was a calling of ill fame among serious people; because it was attended with so much corruption and temptation, and there were few in that business that were honest men. Matthew himself owns what he was, before his conversion, as does Paul, (1 Tim. 1: 13,) that the grace of Christ in calling him might be the more magnified, and to show that God has his remnant among all sorts of people. None can justify themselves in their unbelief, by their calling in the world; for there is no sinful calling, but some have been saved out of it, and no lawful calling, but some have been saved in it.

See the power of this call. We find that Matthew had any inclination to follow Christ, though some of his kindred were already his disciples, but Christ 'prevented him with the blessings of his goodness.' He is found of those that seek Him not. We have not chosen Him, but He hath chosen us. He said, follow Me; and the same power accompanied this word to convert Matthew, which attended that word, (p. 6.) to cure the man sick of the palsy. Note, A saving change is wrought in the soul by Christ as the Author, and his Word as the means. His Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1: 16. The call was effectual, for he came at the call. The power of divine grace soon answers and overcomes all objections. Neither his commission, nor his gains could detain him, when Christ called. He conferred not with flesh and blood, Gal. 1: 15, 16. He quitted his post, and his hopes of preferment in that way; and we never find him at the receipt of custom again.

II. Christ's converse with publicans and sinners on this occasion; Christ called Matthew, to introduce Himself into an acquaintance with the people of that profession, p. 10. The other evangelists tell us, that Matthew made a great feast. But when he comes to speak of it him self, he neither tells us that it was his own house, nor that it was a feast, but only that he sat at meat in the house; preserving the remembrance of Christ's favor to the publicans, rather than of the respect he had paid to Christ. Note It well becomes us to speak sparingly of our own good deeds.

Now observe, when Matthew invited Christ, he invited his disciples with Him. Note, They that welcome Christ, must welcome all that are his, for his sake. He invited many publicans and sinners to meet Him. This was the chief thing Matthew aimed at, to bring his old associates acquainted with Christ. Note,

and above prescribed dues, their insolence is accounted for, as well as the detestation in which they are held. Their station is called, 'the place of tribute:' it may also be rendered, 'the receipt of custom;' and, perhaps, from a place like this our Savior called Matthew. BREDER. He arose and followed.] 'How blessed it is, to be obedient to the first call of Christ! How much of both happiness and glory is lost by delay, though conversion at last should have taken place.' Dr. A. CLARKE. 'Immediately, consigning his affairs to some careful hand, he left all the care and profits of his employment to follow Christ. And let us view with humble wonder and pleasure the Redeemer's condescending grace, in the call of Matthew—condescension, in calling to an attendance so near, and a friendship so intimate, one who was a publican, disreputable as was that employment—grace, which could immediately inspire him with firm resolution to quit all its advantages, and reduce himself to circumstances of life as precarious as those of his Divine Master. Many, no doubt, censured him as a rash enthusiast, or a lunatic, rather than a sober convert; but he now reaps the abundant reward: his loss is gain, and his contempt glory.' DOUGLASS. 'Lord, speak thy word with power into the depth of our souls, and we shall follow Thee. Farewell all such love of the world, as would keep us from Christ.'

Verse 10.

Sat at meat.] 'I do not find where Jesus was bidden to any table, and refused. If a Pharisee, if a publican invited Him, he went. Matthew, probably, made an entertainment, after a final settlement of his concerns, inviting Jesus, and his disciples, with many publicans, and others, his former friends. See Luke 5: 29. This he seems to have done, hoping they too might derive benefit from our Lord's discourse, and accordingly, Christ, without hesitation, sat down with the company. SCOTT.] If he sat with sinners, He converted them; if with converts, He confirmed and instructed them; if with the poor, He fed them; if with the rich, He made them richer in grace. At whose board did He ever sit, and left not his host a gainer?' Bp. HALL. 'Publicans and sinners sat with Him.' He is still the same condescending Jesus, and sinners as we are, always ready to admit us into his presence. If men do not think themselves too good to come to Him, He thinks none too bad.'

ADAM.

12 But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, 'They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.'

13 But 'go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.'

14 ¶ Then came to him 'the disciples of

They who are effectually brought to Christ themselves, cannot but be desirous that others also may be brought to Him. True grace will invite others. When, by the conversion of Matthew, the fraternity was broken, presently his house was filled with publicans, and surely some of them will follow him, as he followed Christ. Thus did Andrew and Philip, John 1: 41, 4: 39. See Judges 14: 9.

III. The displeasure of the Pharisees. V. 11. They cavilled at it. Here observe, Christ was quarrelled with; *He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself*; for though He never spoke or did any thing amiss, every thing He said and did was found fault with. Thus He taught us to expect and prepare for reproach, and so bear it patiently. They that quarrelled with Him were the Pharisees; a proud generation of men, conceited and censorious; of the same temper with those in the prophet's time, who said, *Stand by thyself; I am holier than thou*: very strict in avoiding sinners, but not in avoiding sin; none greater zealots than they, for the form of godliness, nor greater enemies to the power of it; keeping up the traditions of the elders to a nicety, and so propagating the same spirit they were themselves governed by. They brought their cavil, not to Christ Himself; they had not courage to face Him with it, but to his disciples. Note, It concerns Christians to be able to vindicate and justify Christ and his doctrines and laws, and to be ready al-

30 Ps. 62. 41-4. 147:3. Jer. 17:34.
31 13:13. Hos. 12:3. Mark 2: 14-17.
17 Luke 5:31. 8:43. 9:11. 18:11
-13. Rom. 7:9-21. Rev. 3:17,18.
412:5,7. 19:4. 21:42. 22:31,32.
10:12,16. Luke 10:29. John 10:34.
Prov. 21:3. Hos. 6:6. Mic. 6:6-8.
15:2-13. Mark 2:17. Luke 5:29.
15:2-10. 19:10. Rom. 3:10-24.
1 Cor. 6:9-11. 1 Tim. 1:13-16.
43:2,8. 4:17. 11:20-21. 21:28-32.
15:35,6,7. Luke 13:7. 24:47. Acts
2:38. 3:19. 5:31. 11:18. 17:30,31.
20:21. 26:18-20. Rom. 2:4-6. 2
Tim. 2:25,26. 2 Pet. 3:9.
41:2. John 3:35. 4:1.

ways to give an answer to those that ask them a reason of the hope that is in them, 1 Pet. 3: 15. While He is an advocate for us in heaven, let us be advocates for Him on earth. The complaint was, his eating with publicans and sinners: to be intimate with wicked people, is against the law of God; (Ps. 119: 115. 1: 1.) and perhaps by accusing Christ of this to his disciples, they hoped to tempt them from Him, and bring them over to be their disciples; for they compassed sea and land to make proselytes. To be intimate with publicans, was against the tradition of the elders, and, therefore, they looked on it as a heinous thing. They were angry with Christ for this, because they wished ill to Him, and sought occasion to misrepresent Him. Note, It is an easy and very common thing to put the worst constructions on the best words and actions. Because they wished no good to publicans and sinners, but envied Christ's favor to them, they were grieved to see them brought to repentance. Note, It may justly be suspected, that those have not the grace of God themselves, who grudge others a share in that grace.

IV. The defence Christ made in justification of converse with publicans and sinners. Two things He urges in his defence. 1. The exigence of the case of the publicans. It was the extreme necessity of poor, lost sinners, that brought Christ from the pure regions above, to these impure ones; and the same was it, that brought Him into this company which was thought impure. Now He proves the necessity of the case of the publicans, z. 12. The publicans are sick, and need one to help and heal them, which the Pharisees think they do not. Note, Sin is the sickness of the soul. It is deforming, weakening, disquieting, wasting, killing, but, blessed be God, not incurable. Jesus Christ is the great Physician of souls. He is a skilful, faithful, compassionate Physician. Wise and good men should be as physicians to all about them; Christ was so. Sin-sick souls have need of this Physician; nature will not help itself; no man can help us; such need have we of Christ, that we are eternally undone without Him. Awakened sinners see their need, and apply themselves to Him accordingly. There are multitudes who fancy themselves sound, and think they have no need of Christ, as Laodiceans, Rev. 3: 17. Thus the Pharisees desired not the knowledge of Christ's word and ways, because they thought they had no need of Him. See John 9: 40, 41.

He proves that their necessity did sufficiently justify his conduct; for that necessity made it an act of charity, which ought always to be preferred before the formalities of a religious profession. The duties which are of moral and natural obligation, are to take place even of those divine laws, which are positive and ritual; much more of those impositions of men, and traditions of the elders, which make God's law stricter than He has made it. This He proves, (v. 3.) by a passage quoted out of Hos. 6: 6. *I will have mercy and not sacrifice.* Christ's conversing with sinners is here called mercy. Observe how Christ quotes this, *Go ye and learn what that meaneth.* Note It is not enough to be acquainted with the letter of Scripture; we must understand the meaning of it. And they have

best learned the meaning of the Scriptures that have learned how to apply them as a reproof to their own faults, and a rule for their own practice. This Scripture which Christ quoted, served not only to vindicate Him, but to show wherein the religion consists; not in external observances and shows of sanctity; not in little particular opinions and doubtful disputations, but in doing all the good we can to the bodies and souls of others. It condemned the Pharisaical hypocrisy of those who played religion in rituals, more than in morals, ch. 23: 23. They espouse those forms of godliness which may be made consistent with, and perhaps subservient to, their pride, covetousness, ambition and malice; while they hate that power of it which is mortifying to those lusts.

2. He urges the nature and end of his own commission, (v. 13.) and that, therefore, He must converse with publicans. Observe, His errand; it was to call to repentance. This was his first text, (ch. 4: 17.) and the tendency of all his sermons. Note, The Gospel-call is a call to repentance. See with whom his errand lay; not with the righteous, but with sinners. That is, if men had not been sinners, there had been no occasion for Christ's coming among them. He is the Savior, not of man as man, but of man as fallen. Had the first Adam continued in his original righteousness, we had not needed a second Adam. Therefore his greatest business lies with the greatest sinners. Christ came into the world to save sinners, but especially the chief, (1 Tim. 1: 15.) The more sensible any sinners are of their sinfulness, the more welcome will Christ and his Gospel be to them. Christ came not with an expectation of succeeding among those who think themselves righteous, who will sooner be sick of their Savior, than sick of their sins; but among convinced, humble sinners; to them Christ will come, for to them He will be welcome.

V. 14-17. The objections made against Christ and his disciples, gave occasion to some of his most profitable discourses. His discourse of his power to forgive sin, and readiness to receive sinners, was occasioned by the cavils of scribes and Pharisees; so here, from a reflection on the conduct of his family, arose a discourse concerning a tenderness for it. Observe,

I. The objection John's disciples made against Christ's disciples for not fasting so often as they did, in which, as appears by the other evangelists, (Mark 2: 18. and Luke 5: 33.) the disciples of the Pharisees joined with them, and we have reason to suspect instigated them, making use of John's disciples as their spokesmen, because they, being more in favor with Christ and his disciples, could do it more plausibly. Note, It is no new thing for bad men to set good men at variance; if the people of God differ in their sentiments, designing men will take that occasion to sow discord, incense them one against another, alienate them one from another, and so make an easy prey of them. It is pity the duties of religion, which ought to be the confirmations of holy love, should be made the occasion of strife and contention; but they often are so, as here; where we may observe,

1. How they boasted of their own fasting, z. 14. Fasting has in all ages been consecrated, on special occasions, to the service of religion; many of the Pharisees kept two fast-days in a week, and yet the generality of them were hypocrites. Note, False and formal professors

Verse 12.

They that be whole need not a physician.) 'A common proverb, which none could either misunderstand or misapply. Of it the reader may learn: 1. Jesus Christ represents Himself here as the sovereign Physician of souls. 2. That all need his healing power. 3. That men must acknowledge their spiritual maladies, and the need they have of his mercies, in order to be healed by Him. 4. That it is the most dangerous disease of the soul, to imagine itself whole, when the sting of death, which is sin, has pierced it through.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 13.

The compassion of our Lord led Him among those who needed instruction and amendment. He therefore directed the objectors to go and learn from their Scriptures, that God preferred acts of mercy to their brethren, even above the external worship prescribed in the law.

world, to call the righteous to the privileges of his kingdom: if any were truly righteous of themselves, they would not want his salvation; and they, who proudly thought themselves to be so, would not accept it. But He came to call sinners to participate its blessings: not by encouraging them in sin; but by exhorting, encouraging, and inducing them to repent, and forsake it. SCOTT. 'Compassionate Redeemer! Thou didst, as the great Physician of souls, willingly converse with objects that must have been hateful to thy pure and holy nature! May each of us have a due sense of the malignity of sin, that fatal disease of the soul, that we may with a becoming temper apply to Thee for cure. May we also, like Thee, condescend to the meanest and vieni if it may win them to true religion and happiness.—even preferring mercy to sacrifice, and choosing rather to be governed by the dictates of a benevolent heart, than the maxims of proud and censorious men.' BODLEY.

John, saying, 'Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?'

15 And Jesus said unto them, 'Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them; and then shall they fast.'

16 No man putteth a piece of *new cloth upon an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up, taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

f 6:14. 11:18, 19. Prov. 20:6. Mark 2:18-22. Luke 5:33-39. 18:9-12. 23:1-10. Jude 14:11, &c. Ps. 45:14, 15. John 8:59. Rev. 19:9. 21:2. Luke 21:21-21. John 16:5, 20-22. Acts 13:10. Acts 13:1-3. 14:23. 1 Cor. 7:5. 2 Cor. 11:27. *Or, rent, or, unthought cloth. Gen. 35:14. Ps. 125:3. 14:40.11. John 16:12. 1 Cor. 31:2. 15:13.

fence, Christ himself will be Jesus, are these thy Christians? Therefore, as we tender the honor of Christ, we are concerned to conduct ourselves well. Observe, The quarrel with Christ was brought to the disciples, (v. 14.) the quarrel with the disciples to Christ; (v. 14.) this is the way of sowing discord and killing love, to set people against ministers, ministers against people, and one friend against another.

11. The apology Christ made for his disciples. He might have upbraided John's disciples with the former part of their question, *Why do ye fast often?* But He only vindicates his disciples. Note, As it is Wisdom's honor to be justified of all her children, so it is her children's happiness to be all justified of Wisdom. In what we do according to the precept and pattern of Christ, He will be sure to bear us out, and we may with confidence leave it to Him to clear up our integrity.

Two things Christ mentions in defence of their *not fasting*.

1. It was not a season proper for that duty: (v. 15.) Observe, Christ's answer is so framed that it might sufficiently justify the practice of his own disciples, and yet not condemn the institution of John, or the practice of his disciples. When the Pharisees fomented this dispute, they hoped Christ would cast blame, either on his own disciples, or on John's; but He did neither. Note, When we are unjustly censured, our care must be only to clear ourselves, not to recriminate; such a variety may there be of circumstances, as may justify us in our practice, without condemning those that practise otherwise. His argument is taken from the common usage of joy and rejoicing during the continuance of marriage solemnities, as at Samson's wedding, Judges 14: 17. Now the disciples of Christ were

Verses 14, 15.

(Marg. R.) John was at this time in prison; and his affliction, as well as the nature of his introductory dispensation, led such as were attached to him, and unwilling to become Christ's disciples, frequently and strictly to fast as the Pharisees professed to do: and when they saw Jesus and his followers go to feasts, (though in general living in a very frugal manner) they concluded that his disciples never fasted; and they asked Jesus why his disciples neglected this part of religion. But He, referring them to John's testimony of Him as 'the Bridegroom' of the church, told them that it would be unsuitable to their present state. (Note, John 3: 27-36, v. 29.) It would be unreasonable for the companions of a bridegroom to fast during the festival of his nuptials. But if any calamity tore him from them, their fasting would be turned into fasting. So, it would be improper for his disciples to fast in his presence; but He should soon be taken away by crucifixion, and at length by ascension; and then they would be subjected to such trials, as to render fasting seasonsable, and cause them to join it with other religious exercises. Scott

The question from the disciples of the Baptist was not so much 'of inquiry, as of reproof; and their sense is, that Christ's disciples ought to fast, as well as themselves and the Pharisees, with whom they agreed on that subject; and not fast, as they had just done, for instance, at Matthew's house. The fastings here referred to are not the public fasts enjoined by the law of Moses, or otherwise in the Old Testament, but private, enjoined by John on his disciples, and by the Pharisees on their; and which were exceedingly frequent. Luke represents the Pharisees as asking this question, here put by the disciples of John. Doubtless as they both agreed, John's disciples were obligated to it by the Pharisees, who sought to sow discord, and to bring Christ and his disciples into contempt with them. To both the parties our Lord gives a full answer. John has already acknowledged Him as the Bridegroom, (John 3: 29) and so John's disciples should. Now, the young men who attended a marriage as 'friends of the

the children of the bride-chamber; the disciples of the Pharisees were not so, but *children of the bond-woman*, Gal. 4: 25, 31. Note The faithful followers of Christ, who have the spirit of adoption, have a continual feast, while they who have the spirit of bondage are barren of joy. The disciples of Christ had the *Bridegroom with them*, which the disciples of John had not; their master was now in prison, in continual danger of his life; therefore, it was seasonable for them to *fast often*. Such a day would come on the disciples of Christ, when the Bridegroom should be taken from them, and then should they fast. The thoughts of parting grieved them when He was going, John 16: 6. Tribulation and affliction befall them when He was gone, and gave them occasion of *mourning and praying*, that is, of religious fasting. Note, Jesus Christ is the Bridegroom of his Church, and his disciples the *children of the bride-chamber*. Christ speaks of Himself to John's disciples under this similitude, because John had used it, when he called himself a friend of the bridegroom, John 3: 29. The condition of those who are the children of the bride-chamber is liable to many changes and alterations in this world; they sing of mercy and judgment. It is merry or melancholy with the children of the bride-chamber, according as they have more or less of the bridegroom's presence. The presence and nearness of the sun makes day and summer, his absence and distance, night and winter. Christ is all in all to the church's joy. Every duty is to be done in its proper season, Eccles. 7: 14. Jan. 5: 13. There is a time to mourn and a time to laugh; to each of which we should accommodate ourselves, and bring forth fruit in due season. In fasts, regard is to be had to the methods of God's grace towards us; also to the dispensations of his providence concerning us; or to any special work before us, ch. 17: 21. Acts 13: 2.

2. They had not strength sufficient for that duty. This is set forth in two similitudes, (v. 16, 17.) Christ's disciples were not able to hear these severe exercises so well as those of John and of the Pharisees, for which Whithy gives this reason: There were among the Jews not only sects of the Pharisees and Essenes, who led an austere life, but also *schools of the prophets*, who frequently lived in mountains and deserts, and were many of them Nazarites; also private academies to train men up in a strict discipline; and possibly from these many of John's disciples might come, and many of the Pharisees; whereas Christ's disciples, being taken immediately from their callings, had not been used to such religious austerities. Note Some duties of religion are harder, and more difficult than others, (like *new cloth*, and *new wine*), which require most intenseness of mind and are most displeasing to flesh and blood.

bridegroom," and were called "children of the bride-chamber," were fed, according to the Jewish canons, from many things as they were otherwise obliged to—specially fasting and mourning. The time of Christ's being with his disciples, between his entrance on his public ministry and his death, is here referred to; and his disciples had then very little care and trouble; it was a season of rejoicing, and that justly. Indeed, the Jew themselves say that "all fasts shall cease in the days of the Messiah," as in Zech. 8: 19.

Christ here referred to some rules of prudence. It was not usual to take a piece of woollen cloth, which had not been scoured and prepared, and join it to an old garment. Nor was it usual to put new wine into leathern bottles going to decay; for the fermenting wine would burst the bottles, and so both be wasted; whereas, by putting new wine into new or strong bottles, both would be preserved. Thus, in duties not essential to religion, but which are helps to excellent things, discretion should be used; and the self-denial required of a man should be proportionate to his knowledge, experience and stability. Else they may tend to discouragement and fatal mistakes. Hopeful persons might be hindered by premature burthens, or rest in them, and make a self-righteousness of them, and that be fatally deluded. So that prudence and tenderness were necessary in dealing with young converts about matters, which, though useful, are not indispensable: that habits and sentiments might not be too violently crossed; and they not receive forbidding ideas of the service their Lord; but opportunities should be waited for, and duties of this kind inculcated, as they were able to bear them. Scott. *New cloth*. A patch of undressed cloth, rough from the weaver, and which has not passed through the hands of the fuller, or cleaner, shrinks on rubbing wet, and thereby draws up with it something of the old material; and even if not wet, at the two substances never wear well together, one being rigid, and the other supple. BLOOMFIELD. *Bottles*. Goat-skins, as is well known, are full and

17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

[Practical Observations.]

18 ¶ While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live.

19 And Jesus arose and followed him, and so did his disciples.

20 And, behold, a woman which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment:

J Josh. 9:4. Job 32:19. Ps. 119:83.
m Mark 5:22, &c. Luke 8:41, &c.
n Luke 8:49. 13:14. 18:18. Acts 13:15.
o 8:2. 14:33. 15:25. 17:14. 20:20.
28:17. Mark 5:22. Luke 17:15, 16.
Acts 10:25, &c.
p 24. Mark 5:23. Luke 7:2. 8:49, 39.
John 4:47-49.
q 8:8, 9. 2 Kings 5:11. John 11:21, 34.
8:67. John 4:34. Acts 10:38. Gal. 6:9, 10.
r Mark 5:25, &c. Luke 8:43, &c.
s Lev. 15:25, &c.
t 14:35. Mark 5:23. 6:56. 8:22. Acts 5:18. 19:12.
u 29:5. Num. 15:38, 39. Deut. 22:12. Luke 8:44.

V. 9-17. Many eminent servants of God have been called not only from low occupations, but from gross iniquity.—Christ appears as powerful in overcoming avarice, as in rebuking tempests, or casting out devils.—Those who have experienced his grace, will pity their former companions in sin, and devise means, and incur expense, to bring them to instruction. We must not associate with ungodly men, from love to their rain conversation; but we may, from good-will to their souls. We should remember that our Physician had the power of healing, and was not liable to infection; not so with us: and we should consider our constitution, and not needlessly go into unwholesome air, lest in doing good to others we receive injury. Let us rather inquire whether we have discovered our sickness, valued our Physician, and followed his directions. For there are yet Pharisees, whole in their own estimation, more disposed to carp at his words and works, than to wait on Him for the healing of their souls. But, if we be humble, and desire salvation, let

such are renegous fastings, and the duties that attend it. The best of Christ's disciples pass through a state of infancy; all the trees in his garden are not of a growth; some are *babes in Christ*, others grown men. In enjoining religious exercises, the weakness and infirmity of young Christians ought to be considered, (1 Cor. 3: 2. Heb. 5: 12.) Christ would not speak to his disciples that which they could not then bear, John 16: 12. Young be sinners in religion must not be put to the hardest duties at first, lest they be discouraged. Such was God's care of his Israel, when He brought them out of Egypt, not to lead them by the way of the Philistines, (Exod. 13: 17, 18.) and such as was Jacob's care of his children and cattle, not to overdrive them; (Gen. 33: 13.) such is Christ's care of the little ones of his family, and the lambs of his flock; He gently leads them. For want of this care, many times, the bottles break, and the wine is spilled; the profession of many comes to nothing, through indiscretion at first. Note, There may be over-doing even in well-doing, such as may prove ruinous, through the subtlety of Satan.

V. 18-26. We have here the raising of Jairus' daughter to life, and the curing of the woman that had the bloody issue, as our Lord was going to Jairus' house. He was called to do these good works in answer to the cavils of the Pharisees, v. 18, and we may suppose it a pleasing interruption given to that unpleasant work of disputation, which, though sometimes needful, a good man will gladly leave, to go about a work of devotion or charity. Here is,

I. The ruler's address to Christ, v. 18.; a ruler of the synagogue. *Have any of the rulers believed on Him?* Yes, here was one. This ruler had a little daughter, of twelve years old, just dead, and this breach made on his family comforts was the occasion of his coming to Christ. Note, In trouble, we should visit God: the death of our relations should drive us to Christ, who is our life; it is well if any thing will do it. When affliction is in our families, we must not sit down astonished, but, as Job, *fall down and worship*. Now, observe his humility. He himself came with his errand to Christ, and did not send a servant. Note, It is

no disparagement to the greatest rulers personally to attend on the Lord Jesus. He bowed the knee to Him, and gave Him all imaginable respect. Note, They that would receive mercy from Christ must give honor to Christ. See his faith; *'My daughter is even now dead, and though any other physician would now come too late, (nothing more absurd than medicine after death,) yet Christ comes not too late. He is a Physician after death, for He is the resurrection and the life; O come then, and lay thy hand on her, and she shall live.'* This was quite above the power of nature, yet within the power of Christ, who has life in Himself; and quickeneth whom He will. Christ now works in an ordinary way, by nature and not against it, and, therefore, we cannot in faith bring Him such a request as this; while there is life there is hope, and room for prayer; but when our friends are dead, the case is determined; *we shall go to them, but they shall not return to us*. But while Christ was here on earth, such confidence as this was not only allowable, but very commendable.

II. The readiness of Christ to comply with his address, v. 19. He was not only willing to grant him what he desired, in raising his daughter to life, but to gratify him so far as to come to his house. Surely, *He never said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye Me in vain*. He denied to go along with the nobleman, who said, *Sir, come down ere my child die*, (John 4: 48, 49, 50) yet went with the ruler of the synagogue, who said, *Sir, come down, and my child shall live*. The variety of methods Christ took in his miracles, is perhaps to be attributed to the different frame and temper of mind, which they were in who applied to Him, which He who searcheth the heart, perfectly knew. He knows what is in man, and what course to take with him. And observe, when *Jesus followed him, so did his disciples*, not for state, or that He might come with observation, but He took them with Him, that they might be witnesses of his miracles, who were hereafter to be the preachers of his doctrine.

III. The healing of the poor woman's bloody issue. It was a double aggravation of the misery of her condition, that she had impoverished herself for the recovery of her health, and yet

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us remember, that He delights in mercy, and came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance; and let us copy his mercy, and use means to bring the vilest of sinners to repentance and faith.—How prone is man to self-preference and censoriousness! Let us beware of this leaven, which corrupts things otherwise good, and turns devotion into abomination. While we judge, as before God, at what seasons the presence of the heavenly Bridegroom calls us to joy and praise, and when his absence requires us to fast and confess our sins, let us not prescribe to others, or prefer ourselves to them on such accounts. There are matters in religion so indispensable, that sinners must be urged to them without delay; and there are others which in due time and manner may be inculcated, but are not needful, and might now prove injurious. Much mischief has been done, in regard to doctrines, observances and austerities, by 'putting new wine into old bottles'; but wisdom is profitable to direct, and should be sought from God. SCOTT.

played to retain and transport liquids in most eastern countries, as also in some parts of Europe. This was usual among the ancients, both Jews and Gentiles. The annexed drawing, which is copied from Cal-

been used, as Rosenmüller remarks, from travellers, with the hair inward, and the outside smeared with pitch. These are for wine, says Niebuhr; such as are for water have the hair outside. Eo.

Verses 15-26.

Notes, Mark 5: 21-43. Luke 8: 40-56. Ruler. (18.) The superintendent of the synagogue and director of the worship. In some synagogues there were several rulers, but one was chief. Some think, that these rulers were magistrates, and presided in the courts of their cities, which were subordinate to the sanhedrim, or great council at Jerusalem. SCOTT. "In the Jewish synagogues, there were no regular teachers, officially qualified to pronounce discourses before the people; at least, none are mentioned in the New Testament. A synagogue preacher has been introduced since. In the time of our Lord, the person who read the section for the Sabbath, or any other who was respectable for learning, and who had a readiness of speech, addressed the people. Anciently, the Jews called those who, from their superior erudition, were capable of teaching in the synagogue, *shepherds or pastors*. But among those who, in addition to the reader of the Scriptures, were employed in the services and government of the synagogues, was the ruler, who presided over the assembly, and invited readers and speakers, unless some who were acceptable voluntarily offered themselves." JAHN. "Laying hands on, or touching, was indeed an act appropriate to physicians, but it was also the custom of prophets and holy men, who prayed for good on any one, to put their hands on him." BLOOMFIELD. *Worshipped*. 1. other gospels 4. 2. Fell down at



met, being taken originally from the Antiquities of Herculaneum, at such external such descriptions and allusions as occur in Josh. 9: 4. v. 22: 19. and Ps 119: 83. as well as in the text. These vessels have

21 For she said with herself, 'If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole.'

22 But Jesus turned him about, and when he saw her, he said,

Daughter, be of good comfort; ^athy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole ^bfrom that hour.

23 And when Jesus came ^cinto the ruler's house, and saw ^dthe minstrels and the people making a noise;

^a Mark 5:26-33. Luke 8:45-47.
^b 2. Mark 5:34. Luke 8:48.
^c 2. Mark 10:52. Luke 7:50. 17: 19. 18:42. Acts 14:9. Heb. 4:2.
^d 47:18. John 4:53. Acts 16:18.
^e 18:19. Mark 8:35-37. Luke 8:49-50.
^f 11:17. 2 Chr. 35:25. Jer. 9:17-20. Mark 5:38-40. Luke 7:39. Acts 9:39.

Such a fulness of grace is there in Christ, that *from it we may all receive*, John 1: 16.

2. Christ's great favor to this woman. He did not suspend his healing influences, and now she was well content to be gone; but He will magnify not only his power in her cure, but his grace in her comfort and commendation: the triumphs of her faith must be to her praise and honor. He *turned about*, (v. 22.) and soon discovered her. Note, It is great encouragement to humble Christians, that they who hide themselves from men, are known to Christ. Now here.

He puts gladness in her heart. She feared being chidden for coming clandestinely, but she is encouraged. He calls her *daughter*, and speaks with the tenderness of a father, as He did to the *man sick of the palsy*, (v. 2.) whom He called *son*. Note, Christ has comforts for daughters of Zion, that are of a sorrowful spirit, as Hannah was, 1 Sam. 1: 15. Believing women are Christ's daughters, and He will own them as such. He bids her *be of good comfort*: she has reason to be so, if Christ own her for a daughter; the saints' consolation is founded in their adoption. His bidding *her be comforted*, brought comfort with it, as his saying *Be ye whole*, brought health with it. It is his will that his people should be comforted, and his prerogative to command comfort to troubled spirits. He *creates the fruit of the lips, peace*, Isa. 57: 19.

Christ honors her faith, v. 22. That grace most honors Christ, and therefore He most honors that. And as, of all graces, Christ puts the greatest honor on faith, so, of all believers, He puts the greatest honor on those that are most humble. This woman has reason to be of good comfort, not only because she was made whole, but because her faith had made her whole. That cure was wrought in her which is the proper fruit and effect of faith, the pardon of sin and the work of grace. Note, We may then be comforted in our temporal mercies, when they are accompanied with those spiritual blessings that resemble them: in our food and raiment, when by faith we are fed with the bread of life, and clothed with the righteousness of Jesus Christ: in our rest and sleep, when, by faith, we repose in God, and dwell at ease in Him: in our health and prosperity, when, by faith, our souls prosper and are in health. See Isa. 38: 16, 17. Her bodily cure was the fruit of her faith, and that made it a happy, comfortable cure indeed. Those out of whom the devils were cast, were helped by Christ's sovereign power; some by the faith of others; (as v. 2.) but it is *thy faith that has made thee whole*. Note, Temporal mercies are comforts indeed when received by faith. If, when in pursuit of mercy, we prayed for it in faith, with an eye to the promise, and in dependence on that, if we desired it for the sake of God's glory, and with a resignation to God's will, and had our hearts enlarged by it in faith, love, and obedience, we may say, it was received by faith.

IV. The posture in which he found the ruler's house, v. 23. The house was in a hurry; such work does death make, and, perhaps, the ne-

cessary cares that arise when our dead is to be buried out of our sight, give some useful diversion to that grief which is apt to prevail. The people in the neighborhood came together to comfort the parents, and attend the funeral, which the Jews were not wont to defer long. Among them were the musicians, according to the custom of the Gentiles, with ^atheir doleful, melancholy tunes, to increase the grief, and stir up lamentation. Heathenism aggravates that grief which Christianity studies to assuage. Or perhaps these musicians endeavored, on the other hand, to divert the grief and exhilarate the family; but as *vinegar upon nitre*, so is *that singeth songs to a heavy heart*. Observe, The parents, who were immediately touched with the affliction, were silent, while the people and minstrels, whose lamentations were forced, made such a noise. The loudest grief is not always the greatest; rivers are most noisy where they run shallow. That grief is most sincere which shuns observation. But notice is taken of this, to show that the girl was really dead, in the undoubted apprehension of all about her.

V. The rebuke Christ gave to this hurry and noise, v. 24. They that harden themselves in sorrow, and, like Rachel, *refuse to be comforted*, should think they hear Christ saying to their disquieting thoughts, *Give place*: 'Make room for Him who is the consolation of Israel.' He gives a good reason why they should not thus disquiet themselves; *The maid is not dead, but sleeth*. 1. This was eminently true of this maid; she was really dead, but not so to Christ, who knew within Himself what He would do, and had determined to make her death but as a sleep. There is little difference between sleep and death, but in continuance. This death must be but of short continuance, and therefore is but a sleep, like one night's rest. He that quickens the dead, may well call the things which be not as though they were. Rom. 4: 17. 2. It is in a sense true of all that die, chiefly of them that die in the Lord. Note, Death is a sleep. All nations and languages have agreed to call it so. It is said, even of the wicked kings, that they *sleep with their fathers*; and of those that shall arise to everlasting contempt, that they *sleep in the dust*, Dan. 12: 2. It is not the sleep of the soul, but of the body. Sleep is a short death, and death a long sleep: the death of the righteous is in a special manner to be looked upon as a sleep, Isa. 57: 2. They sleep in Jesus; (1 Thess. 4: 14.) they not only rest from toil and labor, but *rest in hope of a joyful resurrection*, when they shall wake to a new life, to sleep no more. The consideration of this should moderate our grief at the death of our dear relations: 'say not, they are lost; they are but gone before: say not, they are slain; they are but fallen asleep; and the apostle speaks of it as an absurd thing to imagine that they that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished; (1 Cor. 15: 18.) give place, therefore, to those comforts which the covenant of grace ministers, fetched from the future state, and the glory to be revealed.'

Now, could it be thought that such a comfortable word as this, from the mouth of our Lord Jesus, should be ridiculed as it was? v. 24. These people lived in Capernaum, knew Christ's character, that He never spake a rash or foolish word; they knew what mighty works He had

his rest. (Marg. Ref.) Even now dead. 'She lieth at the point of death.' Mark. 'She lay a dying.' Luke.—The ruler's daughter was not dead when he left her, but he feared she would die before Jesus could come. SCOTT. Jesus arose, v. 19.—'No delay in Jesus. He is always thus ready, and waits only for the call of our faith.' ADAM. 'Our blessed Lord could have acted as well at a distance, as present; but He goes to the place, to teach his ministers not to spare either their steps or their pains when the salvation of a soul is in question. Let them not think it sufficient to pray for the sick in their closets, but go to their bedside also, that they may instruct and comfort them.' Dr. A. CLARK.

Hem, (20) or fringe. Note, Num. 15: 33-40. SCOTT. 'The Jewish mantle, or upper garment, [cloak, Calmet.] had four corners, at each of which was suspended a tuft [or tassell] of threads or strings. See Deut. 22: 12. The supposed sacredness of this, from its use, [Numb. 15: 39] probably led the woman to think of touching that part of the garment rather than any other.' CAMPBELL. Touched the hem. 'An usual mark of profound respect in the East, both then and at the present day, of which there is an example in Evelyn's Memoirs: The Turk would bring us presents when he met us, kneeling and

kissing the hem of our cloaks.' BLOOMFIELD. If I may but touch, v. 21.—'Observe, for it is of great moment to our peace, comfort, and restoration, what faith is; it is a sense of want, earnest desire of help, and application to Jesus for it, with a firm trust in his grace and power. As the ruler and this woman believed in Him, and came to Him for relief in their distress, so must we for our souls. And when we do thus come to Him, we have no more reason to doubt of our faith and all its saving effects, than we have of our wants.'

'Thy faith hath made thee whole' (22) or, 'Thy faith hath saved thee' and the woman was saved, &c. (Luke 7: 50. Acts 4: 12. 16: 30, 31).—The word signifies deliverance from temporal or eternal suffering or danger, to health, peace, or life, according to the context. The power of Christ was the cause of her recovery but faith, by inducing her to apply to Him, secured the benefit, from which unbelievers excluded others. SCOTT. Be of good comfort. 'To one He says, "Son, be of good cheer;" to another, "Daughter, be of good comfort;" what gracious, endearing language! Yes, Lord, thy forgiveness is cheering; thy healing is comfort; thy word assures it to us; thy Spirit settles us in it, and I without it we shall never know peace.' ADAM.

24 He said unto them, 'Give place; for the maid is 'not dead, but sleepeth. 'And they laughed him to scorn.

25 But when 'the people were put forth, he went in, 'and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

26 And *the *fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

[Poetical Observations.]

27 ¶ And when Jesus departed thence, 'two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, 'Thou Son of David, 'have mercy on us.

1 Kings 17:14-24. Acts 9:40. 20:10. John 11:4, 11-12. 27:39-43. Ps. 22:6, 7. Is. 49:7, 13, 9.

2 Kings 4:32-34. Acts 9:40, 41. 1 Cor. 1:8. 5:41. 8:23. 9:27. Luke 8:4.

O. This fame. 4:24. 14:1, 2. Mark 1:45. 6:14. Acts 26:26.

11:5. 12:22. 20:29. Mark 8:22, 23. 10:46. Luke 7:31. John 9:1, &c. 12:25. 15:22. 20:30, 31. 21:9, 15. 22:41-45. Mark 10:47-48. 11:10. 12:33-37. Luke 18:38-39. 20:41. John 7:42. Rom. 13. 9:5. 1:15. Mark 9:22. Luke 17:13.

done; so that if they did not understand what He meant by this, they might at least have been silent in expectation of the issue. Note, The words and works of Christ which cannot be understood, are not therefore to be despised. We must adore the mystery of divine sayings, even when they seem to contradict what we think ourselves most confident of. Yet even this tended to the confirmation of the miracle: for it seems she was so apparently dead, that it was thought ridiculous to say otherwise.

VI. The raising of the damsel to life by the power of Christ, v. 25. Note, Scorners are not proper witnesses of the wonderful works of Christ. The widow's son, at Nain, and Lazarus, were raised from the dead openly, but this damsel privately; for Capernaum, that had slighted the less miracles of restoring health, was unworthy to see the greater, of restoring life.

Christ went in, as it were, to awake her, prosecuting his own metaphor of her being asleep. The high priest, that typified Christ, was not to come near the dead; (Lev. 21:10, 11.) The Levitical priesthood leaves the dead in their uncleanness, because it cannot remedy them; but Christ, having power to raise the dead, is above infection, and therefore not shy of touching them. He took her by the hand, and the maid arose. The miracle was wrought, not by prayer, as Elijah's (1 Kings 17:21.) and Elisha's, (2 Kings 4:33.) but by a touch. They did it as servants. He as a Son, as God, to whom belong the issues from death. Note, Jesus Christ is the Lord of souls, and commands them as He pleases. Dead souls are not raised to spiritual life, unless Christ take them by the hand: it is done in the day of his power. He helps us up, or we lie still.

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V. 18-26. Superior persons are sometimes brought to Christ by afflictions, which admit no remedy from their distinctions and possessions. When the greatest feel their need of Him, and know his power, they will abase themselves, as much as the meanest, before Him.—Even dutiful children are often a great care to their parents, and the best remedy both for their lives and souls is to apply to Christ; as life and health, spiritual, temporal and eternal, are at his disposal.—How various are the distresses and diseases to which sin has subjected our race! and in how many ways does faith operate amidst the infirmities of those, who are partakers of it! Yet if we, as it were, touch the hem of Christ's garment by faith, our maladies will be healed; but there is no other remedy. We need not fear his knowing those things, concerning us, which are our burden, and which we do not wish to disclose to any friend. We must not, however, desire to conceal our obligations to Him. Our comfort and his glory are concerned in

their being known, and when He sees the believer ready to sink with shame and terror, He will, by some token, show us special love. But He often delays to bring intended relief, till affairs come to an extremity; thus proving us, and rendering his mercy more welcome, and our gratitude more abundant.—They, who treat his words with contempt, and expect nothing from Him, are not meet to see his glory.—Even death, to those whom He loves, is only a sleep. They will shortly awake, and share with us in a joyful resurrection. We should not, then, 'sorrow as without hope,' though we expect not their return to us here. And if this instance of Christ's raising one newly dead so increased his fame, what will be his glory, when 'all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation!'

SCOTT

'Minstrels. (23) 'The use of instruments at funerals,' says Hammond, 'was heathen, and came late among the Jews. Their custom was not to begin the lamentation with instruments, but only voices of old women, who in sad modulation strove to extort lamentation from those, who were present.' (Marg. Ref. d.) [Jer. 48:26. Amos 5:16.]

Scott. 'These minstrels were the flute players,' as was usual on such occasions; for musical instruments were employed by the Jews, as well as heathens, in their lamentations for the dead; to soothe the melancholy of surviving friends by soft and solemn notes. There were persons who made it their business to perform this office, and to sing to their music. Many have observed, that, on the death of children, flutes were used, but larger and louder instruments on the death of an adult.' Dodd.

'At the funeral of a wife, "even the poorest among the Israelites," as their writers declare, "will afford not less than two pipes and one woman to make lamentation." LIGHTFOOT. Not dead, &c. (24) 'The words of Christ were spoken to those who were present, first, for her interment, and performing the funeral rites; and only intimate, that she was not so dead as to need their assistance, since He had come, as though to awake her out of sleep.' Whitby. (Marg. Ref. e-g.) 'They laughed Him to scorn,' or derided Him. Scott. 'Not understanding the meaning of our Lord, the people derided Him, as if his assertion had been altogether absurd; but He, not deigning to enter into a clamorous debate, desired them to withdraw, or put them all out; and then, approaching the bed, took her by the hand, and the maid arose.' Dodd.

'The Fountain of life thus communicating vital energy to the dead body. The dead has at last, really occurred, no power but that of God can restore to life. So the evil that is dead in trespasses and sins, that is, sentenced to death because of transgression, and thus dead in law, can be restored to spiritual life by the power of the Lord Jesus only; because He has made the atonement, and He alone can pardon transgression. If the spiritually dead be unconcerned for his soul, let a converted relative either bring him to Christ, by leading him to hear the unadulterated Gospel; or bring Christ to him, by fervent, faithful, persevering prayer.' Dr. A. CLARKE. 'Our Savior, in this passage, seems to allude to the triumph of Christianity over the grave, by calling death, sleep. He used similar language in the case of Lazarus.' His disciples, after Him,

adopted the idea, as, they who sleep in Jesus,—first fruits of them that slept, &c. The ancient Christians, still improving on this idea, called a church-yard, a sleeping-place; which we retain in the word, cemetery.' GULPIN. 'The fame thereof went abroad.' (26.) 'It was so great, because her death was publicly known, the minstrels were assembled, every preparation was made for the funeral, the assertion of our Lord was treated with scorn, and the people were convinced of her actual decease.'

VERSES 27-29.

The power of Christ was displayed in various ways of beneficence, but not of vengeance; for the destruction of the swine merely by permission was doubtless conducive to good. His miracles were emblematic of the salutary influence of his truth and grace on the souls of men, and nothing is more descriptive of our natural state than blindness. The mind, involved in error by Satan and corrupt passions, continues impotent. But if the understanding be enlightened to see things as they are, the sinner returns to God, and accepts salvation.—Prophets foretold that the Messiah should open the eyes of the blind. (Marg. Ref. a.) and by fulfilling these predictions, Christ first proved Himself to be the Messiah.—It appears, that these blind men met Him immediately after He came out of the ruler's house, and by addressing Him as the 'Son of David,' they acknowledged Him to be the Savior: thus shewing that they understood the Scriptures. Probably they rested their hope of regaining their sight on this prophecy, as well as on the report of his extraordinary miracles. He did not, however, publicly attend to their cries, having already much excited the astonishment of the multitude. But they followed Him into the house, (probably that of Andrew and Peter,) and there He drew from them a confession, of faith in his power to perform the miracle, and then answered their believing expectations. No one but Jesus ever performed a miracle of this kind. (Marg. Ref.)

SCOTT. Son of David. (27.) 'This is the first time we read of this title being given to Jesus, except by the angel Gabriel before his birth, Luke 1:32. By this title He was acknowledged to be the Messiah, or Christ, who, as all Jews agreed, was to be the Son of David; (ch. 23:42. and John 7:42.) and by being the Son of David, Jesus had a right to the title of Messiah, 2 Sam. 7:13, 16.'

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28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* They said unto him, Yea, Lord.

29 Then *he* touched he their eyes, saying, *According to your faith be it unto you.*

30 And *their* eyes were opened; and Jesus *straitly* charged them, saying, *See that no man know it.*

31 But they, when they were departed, "spread abroad his fame in all that country."

32 ¶ As they went out, behold, they

o 8:14, 13:39.
p 22, 8:32, 13:58, Mark 9:23, 24.
John 4:38-50, 11:26, 40.
q 20:34, John 5:6, 7.
r 8:6, 7, 13, 15:28, Mark 10:52.
s Ps. 146:8, 1s. 35:5, 42:7, John 9:7-26.
t 8:4, 12:16, 17:9, Mark 5:43, Luke 5:11, 8:56.
u Mark 1:44, 45, 7:36.

we would have Him do for us, we must be fully assured He is able to do. The great question is, *Do ye believe?* Nature may work fervency, but only grace can work faith. They had intimated their faith in his mercy; but Christ demands it likewise in his power. *Believe ye that I am able to give sight to the blind?* Note, It is good to be particular in the exercise of faith, and to apply general assurances of God's power and good-will to our special exigencies. *All shall work for good, and if all, then this.* *Believe ye that I am able, not only to prevail with God for it, as a prophet, but to do it by my own power?* This will amount to their belief of his being, not only the Son of David, but the Son of God; for it is God's prerogative to open the eyes of the blind; (Ps. 146:8.) He makes the seeing eye, Exod. 4:11. Job was eyes to the blind; (Job 29:15.) that is, instead of eyes; but he could not give eyes to them. Still it is put to us, *Believe ye that Christ is able, by his merit and intercession in heaven, his spirit and grace in the heart, and his providence and dominion in the world?* To believe the power of Christ, is not only to assure ourselves of it, but to commit ourselves to it, and encourage ourselves in it.

To this question they answer without hesitation: *Yea, Lord.* He had kept them in suspense awhile, but they honestly imputed that to his wisdom, not weakness, and were still confident of his ability. Note, The treasures of mercy laid up in the power of Christ, are laid out and wrought for those that trust in Him, Ps. 31:19.

The cure, that Christ wrought on them, (v. 29.) He did to encourage their faith, and to show that He gives sight to blind souls by the operations of his grace accompanying the Word, anointing the eyes with eye-salve: and He put the cure on their faith, *According to your faith be it unto you;* He inquired into their faith, (v. 28.) not into their wealth, whether they were able to pay Him for a cure; nor into their reputation, should He get credit by curing them; but into their faith; and now they had professed their faith, He referred the matter to that. This speaks, 1. His knowledge of the sincerity of their faith, and his acceptance and approbation of it. Note, It is a great comfort to true believers, that Jesus Christ knows their faith, and is well pleased with it. 2. His insisting on their faith as necessary; 'If you believe, take what you come for.' Note, They who apply themselves to Jesus Christ, shall be dealt with, not according to their fancies, or professions, but according to their faith; that is, unbelievers cannot expect to find any favor with God, but true believers may find all favor; and our comforts ebb or flow, according as our faith is stronger or weaker; we are not straitened in Christ, let us not then be straitened in ourselves.

Verse 30.

Our Lord gave this strict charge, not only to avoid the appearance of temptation, but also not needlessly to excite the opposition of enemies, or furnish plausible accusations against Himself; and that the people might not make commotions, as owning Him to be the Messiah and desirous to make Him a king. *Straitly charged.* Mark 1: 43, 14: 5, John 1: 33, 38. A vehement commotion of mind is implied in this expression, which is often anger; but frequently pity, or earnest persuasion. 'The original word,' observes Hammond, 'is rendered by Pharisaeus, to charge, command, appoint with authority. By Hebraeans, to command, charge with a threat.' It is not passionate, but rational earnestness and vehemence. Note, Mark 1: 40-44.' Scott. The reason has been given, why our Lord would have his miracles not public, but the case is altered now. What we know of Christ must not be lost, as it is.

ADAM.

great things of God, which are hid from the wise and prudent.

Notice their petition, *Have mercy on us.* They did not each say for himself, *Have mercy on me*, but both for one another, *Have mercy on us*. Note, It becomes those that are under the same affliction, to concur in the same prayers for relief. Fellow-sufferers should be joint petitioners. In Christ there is enough for all.

It was foretold that the Son of David should be merciful, (Ps. 72: 12, 13,) and in Him shines the tender mercy of our God, Luke 1: 78. Note, Whatever our necessities and burdens are, we need no more for supply and support, than a share in the mercy of our Lord Jesus. Whether He heal us or no, if He have mercy on us, we have enough; as to the particular instances and methods of mercy, we may safely and wisely refer ourselves to the wisdom of Christ.

See their importunity in this request; they followed Him, crying. It seems He took no notice of them at first, to try their faith, quicken their prayers, and make his cures the more valued when they did come; and He would hereby teach us *always to pray, and not to faint*; and, though the answer do not come presently, yet to wait for it, and to follow providence, even in those steps and outgoings of it, which seem to neglect or contradict our prayers. Christ would not heal them publicly in the streets, for this was a cure He would have kept private, (v. 30.) but when He came into the house, they followed thither, and came to Him. Note, Christ's doors are always open to believing and importunate petitioners.

When they came to Him He asked them, *Believe ye that I am able to do this?* Note, Faith is the great condition of Christ's favors. What

He gave them charge to keep it private, (v. 30.) and this, 1. To set us an example of humility and lowliness of mind. Note, In the good we do, we must not seek our own praise, but only the glory of God: It must be more our care and endeavor to be useful, than to be known and observed to be so, Prov. 20: 6, 25: 27. Thus Christ seconded the rule He had given, *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.* 2. Some think that Christ, in keeping it private, showed his displeasure against the people of Capernaum, who had seen so many miracles, and yet believed not. Note, The silencing of those who should proclaim the works of Christ, is a judgment to any place or people: and it is just with Christ, to deny the means of conviction to those who are obstinate in their infidelity. 3. He did it in discretion for his own preservation; because the more He was proclaimed, the more jealous would the rulers of the Jews be of his growing interest among the people. 4. Whithy gives another reason, which is very considerable, why Christ sometimes concealed his miracles, and afterwards forbid the publishing of his transfiguration; because He would not indulge that pernicious conceit which obtained among the Jews, that their Messiah should be a temporal prince, and so give occasion to the people to attempt the setting up of his kingdom, by tumults and seditions, as they offered to do, John 6: 15. But when, after his resurrection, (the full proof of his mission,) his spiritual kingdom was set up, then that danger was over, and they must be published to all nations. And he observes, that the miracles which Christ wrought among the Gentiles and the Gadarenes, were ordered to be published, because with them there was not that danger.

But honor is like the shadow, which, as it flows from those that follow it, follows those that flee from it; *They spread abroad his fame.* This was more an act of zeal, than prudence; and though it may be excused, as honestly meant for the honor of Christ, yet it cannot be justified, being done against a particular charge. Whenever we profess to direct our attention to the glory of God, we must see to it that the action be according to the will of God.

II. The healing of a dumb man, possessed with a devil. And here observe,

1. His case, which was very sad, v. 22. How various the afflictions of the afflicted! We have no sooner dismissed two blind men; but we meet a dumb man. How thankful should we be to God for our sight and speech! This man's dumbness was the effect of his being possessed with a devil. When the devil gets possession of a soul, it is made silent as to any thing good. This poor creature they brought to Christ; for though the just shall live eternally by his faith, yet temporal mercies may be bestowed on us through their faith, who are intercessors on our behalf. They brought him in just as the blind men went out. See how unwearied Christ was in doing good; how closely one good work followed another! Treasures of mercy are hid in Him, which may be continually communicated, but can never be exhausted.

2. His cure, which was very sudden, (v. 33.) Note, Christ's cures remove the effect by taking away the cause; they open the lips by breaking Satan's power in the soul. In sanctification He heals the waters, by casting salt into the spring. When Paul was converted, behold he prays; then the dumb spake.

3. The consequences of this cure.

Verse 31.

Their joy, gratitude and amazement rendered them incapable of silence, and regardless of the injunction respecting it. Their motives were doubtless good, but their conduct unjustifiable. Scott. They should have held their peace: for to obey is better than sacrifice; (1 Sam. 15: 22.) but man would be wiser than God. However, it may be profitable to remark, 1. That 'one pursues those who do not do it.' 2. He who is thoroughly sensible of God's mercies cannot long withhold his acknowledgments. 3. God in general requires that what a man has received, for his own salvation, shall be made subservient to the salvation of others; ch. 5: 16. God choosing to help man by man, that all may be knit together in brotherly love. Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 32, 33.

This man, it seems, was dumb, not from any natural defect, but by the power of an evil spirit. When the evil spirit was cast out, it spoke

brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, "It was never so seen in Israel"

34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

35 ¶ And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

z 12:23. Mark 9:17-27.
y 15:40. Ez. 4:11,12. Is. 35:6.
Mat. k 7:32-37. Luke 11:14.
g Kings 5:8. Ps. 76:1. Jer. 32:20.
Luke 7:9.
a 12:23,34. Mark 3:22. Luke 11:15.
b 12:20.
c 4:23,24. 11:1-5. Mark 1:32-39.
d 5:5,56. Luke 4:43,44. 13:22. Acts 2:22. 10:38.

stances, as the point to be proved, that Christ preached and healed. Some think this was a second perambulation in Galilee, like the former. Though the Pharisees cavilled and opposed, He went on with his work; *He preached the Gospel of the kingdom.* He told them of a kingdom of grace and glory, now to be set up under the government of a Mediator: this was Gospel indeed, good news, glad tidings of great joy.

Observe how Christ in his preaching had respect to private towns. He visited the poor, obscure villages. The souls of those that are meanest in the world are as precious to Christ, and should be to us, as the souls of those that make the greatest figure. *Rich and poor meet together* in Him: his righteous acts towards the inhabitants of his villages must be rehearsed, Judg. 5: 11.

Christ regarded also the public worship. *He taught in their synagogues;* that He might bear a testimony to solemn assemblies, even then when there were corruptions in them; and that He might have an opportunity of preaching where people were gathered together, with an expectation to hear. Thus, even where the Gospel church was founded, and Christian meet-

The multitudes marvelled: though few believed, many wondered. The admiration of the common people is sooner raised than any other affection. It was foretold, that the New Testament song should be sung for marvellous works, Ps. 93: 1. Rev. 15: 3. They said, *It was never so seen in Israel.* There had been those in Israel that were famous for working miracles, but Christ excelled them all. Moses' miracles had reference to Israel as a people, but Christ's were brought home to particular persons.

The Pharisees blasphemed. When they could not gainsay the evidence of these miracles, they fathered them on the devil, as if they had been wrought by compact and collusion: v. 34. a suggestion horrid beyond expression; we shall hear more of it afterwards, and Christ's answer to it; (ch. 12: 25.) only observe here, how evil men and seducers were worse and worse, (2 Tim. 3: 13.) and it is both their sin and their punishment. Their quarrels with Christ for taking on Him to forgive sin, (v. 3.) for conversing with publicans and sinners, (v. 11.) for not fasting, (v. 14.) though spiteful enough, yet had some color of piety, purity, and devotion in them; but this breathes nothing but malice and falsehood, and hellish enmity; it is diabolism all over, and therefore justly pronounced unpardonable. Because the people marvelled, they must say something to diminish the miracle.

V. 35-38. Here is,

I. A conclusion of the foregoing account of Christ's preaching and miracles; (v. 35.) as in ch. 4: 23. There it ushers in the more particular record of Christ's preaching, (ch. 5, 6, and 7.) and of his cures, (ch. 8 and 9.) and here it is elegantly repeated in the close of these instances, as the point to be proved, that Christ preached and healed. Some think this was a second perambulation in Galilee, like the former. Though the Pharisees cavilled and opposed, He went on with his work; *He preached the Gospel of the kingdom.* He told them of a kingdom of grace and glory, now to be set up under the government of a Mediator: this was Gospel indeed, good news, glad tidings of great joy.

The spectators of these stupendous miracles said, "It was never so seen in Israel," even where prophets had wrought great miracles.—"This relation was just; for no prophet appears to have wrought so many beneficent miracles in his life, as our Lord in one afternoon." This may admit doubt, but is worthy of attention. It is not recorded, that either prophet or apostle ever enabled the dumb to speak. It was predicted that the Messiah would do this, and it was performed by Jesus only; as showing Him exclusively to be the Messiah. (Note, Is. 35: 6-7.) Scott. "From the circumstance of this demoniac's being dumb, Erasmus conjectured that he was also deprived of the use of reason." As if, so being insensible of his own misery, he had as little inclination as ability to apply for a cure: and needed to be brought to the Savior by others. But, when cured, he spoke both rationally and fluently, to the astonishment of all who heard him; so that they extolled the Author of the miracle above all the prophets who had ever appeared.

Verse 34.

The Pharisees, unable to deny the reality of the miracle, and fearing, lest the people should conclude, that Jesus was the Messiah, declared, that it was wrought by the power of the prince of the devils: for Jesus, being in league with the master and leader of fallen spirits, availed Himself of this authority to cast out evil spirits, that He might give a sanction to his false doctrine. What answer Christ now made to this charge, is unknown, but on another occasion He confuted and exposed it fully. (Notes, 12: 22-37.) Scott. "Those who beheld our Savior's miracles admitted, it appears, that they were performed; though on such evidence they would not embrace the Gospel, conceiving it contrary to the Mosaic law, whose obligation their carnal views led them to believe was eternal. They therefore ascribed these miracles to magical and diabolical agency. Their hostility, indeed, gives confirmation to the truth. Had the Jews been universally or even generally converted by the Gospel miracles, the skeptic might argue, with some plausibility, that the facts had been invented or exaggerated to gratify the rational propensity, and had been credited without examination or proof. On the contrary, we are now certain the Gospel miracles were wrought in the presence of enemies, and thus subjected to the severest scrutiny; and that they carried with them conviction to multitudes, notwithstanding the fierce opposition of national prejudice, ignorant vice, and the strictest research of the most vigilant hostility."

GRAVES

ings erected, the apostles often preached in the synagogues of the Jews. It is the wisdom of the prudent to make the best of that which is.

II. A preface, or introduction, to the account in the following chapter, of sending forth his apostles. He took notice of the multitudes, (v. 36.) not only of the crowds that followed him, but what abundance of people there were in every synagogue, and what places of concourse the openings of the gates were: so very populous was that nation now grown; and it was the effect of God's blessing on Abraham. Seeing this,

1. He pitied them, and was concerned for them; (v. 36.) not as He pitied the blind, and lame, and sick; but to see them ignorant and careless, and ready to perish for lack of vision. Note, Jesus Christ is a very compassionate Friend to precious souls. It was pity to souls that brought Him from heaven to earth, and to the cross. Misery is the object of mercy; and the miseries of sinful, self-destroying souls, are the greatest miseries: Christ pities those most that pity themselves least; so should we. The most Christian compassion is compassion to souls; it is most Christ-like. See what moved this pity. *They fainted;* they were destitute, vexed, wearied. *They strayed;* so some; were loosed one from another; *The staff of bands was broken,* Zech. 11: 14. They wanted help for their souls. The scribes and Pharisees filled them with vain notions, burdened them with the traditions of the elders, deluded them into many mistakes, but they were not instructed in their duty, nor acquainted with the extent and spiritual nature of the divine law; therefore *they fainted.* Precious souls faint when duty is to be done, temptations to be resisted, afflictions to be borne, being not nourished up with the word of truth. *They were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.* That expression is borrowed from 1 Kings 22: 17. and it sets forth the sad condition of those that are destitute of faithful guides to go before them in the things of God. No creature is more apt to go astray than a sheep, and when gone astray, none more helpless, and exposed, or more unapt to find the way home: sinful souls are as lost sheep; they need the care of shepherds. The teachers the Jews then had, pretended to be shepherds, yet Christ says they had no shepherds, for these were worse than none; idol-shepherds, that led them away, instead of leading them back,

Verse 35.

Synagogues. The temple was the centre of life worship appointed for Israel by the law, and no sacrifices might be offered elsewhere: but in times it was found necessary to have other places for public prayer and instruction. Hence synagogues were built, and, after the captivity, became general in the cities and villages. They were very numerous, in proportion, than churches and chapels with us. Learned men think, the forms of worship were used on certain days in the week, as well as on the Sabbath, and portions of Scripture read in them; so that they were useful in keeping the people from idolatry. The Levites and scribes might commonly officiate, but the service was not restricted to them: they had rulers, but no regular pastors, or teachers so that competent persons exhorted, if disposed, or desired to do it; and so each other, when the Jews resided. Christ taught in these synagogues, and none hindered Him.—It was common for divines to expound the lesson which was read. This belonged ordinarily to sons of the prophets, brought up in learning the law: at thirty years old they might be made doctors, and continue under that name, or that of scribes, till they obtained the spirit of prophecy; in proportion to which was the difference in the Christian church betwixt the evangelist and the doctor or teacher; the first, planting the Gospel, and telling them good news; the other, watering, or instructing them further in it. Hammond.—But it is plain that others than scribes or doctors were allowed to expound the Scriptures, and give exhortations in the synagogues, [see the benefit of many and the glory of God.] He goes about, not doing for himself, but to diffuse his benefactions. For He is not by and not by inferior ministers. The word *synagogue*, was first used by the LXX for the congregation, or company assembled; (Ex. 12: 6, 19, 47.) but was at length appropriated to the place of meeting. Thus church, a word of similar import, first meant the assembly, but gradually was used for the building in which there was an assembly. Scott. *Teaching—healing, &c.* ¶ Let us observe how Jesus, on all occasions, discovers Himself to be, what his name implies, the Savior: leaving behind Him, wherever He goes, the warmth of fervent charity, the light of evangelical truth, and the fragrance of a good report of something done for the benefit of man and the glory of God. He goes about, not doing for himself, but to diffuse his benefactions. For He is not by and not by inferior ministers. The word *synagogue*, was first used by the LXX for the congregation, or company assembled; (Ex. 12: 6, 19, 47.) but was at length appropriated to the place of meeting. Thus church, a word of similar import, first meant the assembly, but gradually was used for the building in which there was an assembly. 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36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they ^afainted, and were scattered abroad, ^aas sheep having no shepherd.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, ^aThe harvest truly is plentiful, ^abut the laborers are few:

38 ^aPray ye therefore ^athe Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest.

^a14. 15. 32. Mark 6:34. Heb. 4: 15. 5. 52.

^aOr, were tired and lay down.

^a10. 15. 34. Num. 27:17. 1 Kings 22:17. 2 Chr. 18:16. Is. 56:9-11. Jer. 50:6. Ez. 34:3-6. Zech. 10:2.

^a11. 16. 137. 3.

^a28. 13. Mark 16:5. Luke 10:2. 24: 47. John 4:35. 38. Acts 16:9, 10. 18:10.

^a1 Cor. 3:9. 2 Cor. 6:1. Phil. 2:19-21. Col. 4:11. 1 Thes. 5:12, 13. 1 Tim. 5:17.

^aLuke 6:12, 13. Acts 13:2. 2 Thes. 3:1.

^a10:1-3. John 20:21. Eph. 4:11.

^a1 Pe. 18:11. 18. Jer. 3:15. Mic. 5:7.

^aLuke 10:1, 2. Acts 9:4. 1 Cor. 12:28.

look discouraging, we should pray more, and then we should complain and fear less. And such an understanding we ought to have of the times, as to know, not only what Israel ought to do, but what Israel ought to pray for. Note, God is the Lord of the harvest; my Father is the husbandman, John 15: --. It is the vineyard of the Lord of hosts, Isa. 5: 7. It is for Him and to Him, and to his service and honor, that the harvest is gathered in. Ye are God's hus-

band and feed the flock instead of feeding it: such shepherds as were described, Jer. 23: 1, &c. Ezek. 34: 2, &c. Note, The case of those people is very pitiable, who either have no ministers at all, or those that are as bad as none; that seek their own things, not the things of Christ and souls.

2. He excited his disciples to pray for them. It appears, (Luke 6: 12, 13.) that on this occasion, before He sent them out, He Himself spent a great deal of time in prayer. Note, Those we pity we should pray for. Having spoken to God for them, He turns to his disciples, and tells them how the case stood; (v. 37.) There was a great deal of work to be done, but hands were wanting to do it. It was an encouragement, that the harvest was so plentiful. It was not strange that there were multitudes needing instruction, but that they who needed it, desired it, and were forward to receive it. Note, It is a blessed thing, to see people in love with good preaching. The valleys are then covered with corn, and there are hopes it may be well gathered in. That is a gale of opportunity, that calls for double care and diligence: a harvest day should be a busy day. It was pity that the laborers should be so few, that the corn should shed and spoil, and rot on the ground for want of reapers: loiterers many, but laborers very few. Note, It is ill with the church, when good work stands still, or goes slowly on, for want of good workmen.

He tells them their duty in this case, (v. 38.) Note, The melancholy aspect of the times, and the deplorable state of precious souls, should much excite and quicken prayer. When things

bandry; (1 Cor. 3: 9.) *has threshing, and the corn of his floor*, Isa. 21: 10. He orders every thing concerning the harvest: as He pleases, when and where the laborers shall work, and how long; and it comforts those who wish well to the harvest work, that God Himself presides in it, who will be sure to order all for the best. Ministers are, and should be, laborers in God's harvest; the ministry is a work, and must be attended to accordingly; a work that requires every thing to be done in its season, and diligence to do it thoroughly; but it is pleasant work; they reap in joy, and the joy of the preachers of the Gospel is likened to the joy of harvest; (Isa. 9: 2, 3.) and he that reapeth, receiveth wages; the hire of the laborers that reap under God's field, shall not be kept back, as theirs was, Jam. 5: 4. It is God's work to send forth laborers; Christ makes ministers; (Eph. 4: 11.) the office is of his appointing; the qualifications, of his working; the call, of his giving. They will not be owned nor paid as laborers, that run without errand, unqualified, uncalled. *How shall they preach except they be sent?* All that love Christ and souls, should show it by earnest prayers to God, especially when the harvest is plentiful, that He would send forth more skilful, faithful, wise, and industrious laborers into his harvest; would raise up such as He will own in the conversion of sinners and edification of saints; would give them a spirit for the work, call them to it, and succeed them in it; that He would give them wisdom to win souls; that He would thrust forth laborers, so some; intimating unwillingness in them to go forth, because of their own weakness and the people's badness, and opposition from men who endeavor to thrust them out of the harvest; but we should pray that all contradiction from within and from without may be conquered. Christ puts his friends on praying this, just before He sends apostles forth to

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 27-39. Still we are astonished with the Redeemer's power and love. Let sinners, then, copy the example of these blind men; let them stand before Christ; let them beseech Him to have mercy on them, and open their eyes to behold his glory; let them persist in their entreaties, and in due time He will help them. In every respect, we need to cry unto Him daily to 'increase our faith'; that we may believe Him to be able and willing to do for us whatever pertains to our salvation. If faith be in us, love and power will be in Him.' He will say, 'according to your faith be it unto you,' and, instead of being deprived of so great pleasure, we shall be sent to proclaim 'his praises, who called us from darkness to light.' While sinners are under the power of Satan, they cannot speak to any good purpose; but, when Christ delivers them, their 'mouths are opened to shew forth his praise.' We ought, then, to bring to Him those, who are unwilling to come, and

entreat Him for those, whom Satan so possesses that they will not pray.—Nothing can convince the proud and malicious, that the humbling doctrines of Scripture are the truth of God. They will believe any absurdity rather than his divinely authenticated Word: and the injurious reflections, which they cast on those who diligently do good to men, shew their enmity against a holy God. We should, then, go on in our work without regarding them. And, since multitudes now are as 'sheep without a shepherd,' we should pity and help them. The harvest yet to be reaped (and soon, according to prophecy,) is plentiful. The laborers are very few. We should earnestly pray the Lord to send forth many, who will gather souls to Christ. When God shall stir up Christians to attend to this neglected duty, we may expect the dawning of those days, in which the Gospel shall be known and believed all over the earth. SCOTT.

his steps," and not suffer any outward circumstances to make us forget our Christian profession." Bp. HORNE.

Verses 36-38.

Multitudes came from distant places to hear Christ's instructions, and appeared not only languishing in soul, for want of better teaching, but also ready to faint with hunger and fatigue. In both senses they were as 'sheep having no shepherd.' There were priests, Levites, and scribes all over the land, but they were idol shepherds. (Note, Zech. 11: 15-17.) and Christ pitied the people, as 'perishing for lack of knowledge.' In the prospect of the vast multitude, which would be gathered from Jews and Gentiles into the church, He declared, that a plentiful harvest was growing, which it would require many laborers to reap; but that few deserved this character. It was, therefore, the duty of the disciples, to pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers, that is, able, faithful, diligent, and effective ministers.—Christ Himself is the 'Lord of the harvest,' and in the next chapter we read that He sent forth laborers; but the disciples apparently did not understand Him to speak of Himself.—The expression translated 'send forth,' signifies, 'thrust forth,' and implies the impulse of God necessary to overcome the diffidence and reluctance of humble and able men, to enter on that important work, especially when it would expose them to peril and hardship.—Cast them out; for men are very slow in a work so holy. *Herz.* 'From this discourse, we learn things to be regarded by the pastors of Christ's flock. (1.) He who does not feed his flock with "the sincere milk of the Word," and teach them the things that belong to their eternal peace, from a heart of love to God, and to the souls of his charge, deserves not the name of a true shepherd: for the want of these in the scribes and Pharisees, made Christ say that the Jews were "as sheep without a shepherd." (2.) When the harvest is great, and many ready to receive instruction, we should be more diligent to afford it them. (3.) When either we are not called to the work or placed in another station, we should pray fervently that God would raise up men fit to instruct them, zealous for his glory, and "of the good of souls." *Whitby.* This last remark is applicable to the

present times, and the efforts made to send the Gospel to the heathen (See Miss Ser. 1804.)* *Fainted.* (36.) 15: 32. Mark 8: 3. Gal 6: 9. Heb. 12: 3, 5.—2 Sam. 4: 1. Is. 13: 7. Jer. 12: 5. Sept. They were sinking under fatigue and want of food, as a man under a burden, or worn down with labor.—*Scattered.* 27: 5. Luke 4: 35. 17: 2. Acts 27: 29.—Men are here said to be scattered,' remarks *Schleuser*, 'who are neglected by their teachers, and not imbued with a suitable knowledge of divine instruction.' SCOTT. *It is deeply interesting to those who in our day contemplate the still ripening field of the world, and especially to American Christians, to find the venerable Dr. Scott, in his sermon alluded to above, making the following remarks:—"It is my decided opinion, that nothing could more effectually promote the cause, not only of missions, but of Christianity in all respects, than a general concern among all Christians, when they pray, to remember the case of unconverted sinners, the heathen, and the poor Jews, with that of missions and missionaries, and the sending forth of laborers; and also the raising up of missionaries and ministers among the natives of the countries we attempt to evangelize. This would excite a missionary spirit, but is especially urged from a full conviction, that it will be the introduction, when God is about to "fill the earth with his glory, as the waters cover the sea." An early acquaintance with the writings of President Edwards, Brainerd, and the New England divines, gave my mind," he adds, "a peculiar turn to this subject. The nations unacquainted with Christ have ever since lain near my heart; and I never thought a prayer complete in which they were wholly forgotten. This was several years before the new societies in England for missions were established: but I could do no more than offer my feeble prayers. New and animating scenes have since opened to our view, and I live to recommend again the missionary cause, and that with most unreserved cordiality. It ought to be dearer a concern to us than our lives. Oh, may we pour out for its success our "silly, fervent prayers, and beseech the Lord of the harvest Himself to send forth laborers into his harvest."

CHAP. X.

Christ sends out twelve apostles with power to work miracles. 1. Their names 2-4. They must not go to Gen. use of Samaritans, but to Israel. 5, 6. He instructs them both as to their preaching and conduct. 7-13. He forewarns them of persecutions, and suggests motives of courage and constancy. 14-39. He promises blessings to those who should receive them, 40-42.

AND when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power ^{*} against unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; the first ^a Simon, who is called Peter, and ^a Andrew his brother; ^a James the son of Zebedee, ^a and John his brother;

3 ^b Philip, and Bartholomew; ^c Thomas, and ^b Matthew the publican; ^c James the son of Alphaeus, ^a and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddeus.

- ^a 19-23. 26-40. 27. Mark 3:13, 14. 6: 7. Luke 6:13. John 6:70. Rev. 12: 1. 1:12-14. 6:13. 28:18-19. Mark 3:15, 16:17, 18. Luke 9:1. 10:19. 21:15 24: 9. Luke 9:27-33. 17:2. 20:21-43. A. 1:18. 3:15, 16. 19:15.
^b Or, *son*.
^c Luke 6:13. 9:10. 11:49. 22:14. Acts 1:26. Eph 4:11. Heb. 3:1. Rev. 18:20. 16:16-18. Mark 1:16, 17. 3: 15. Luke 6:14. John 1:40-42. Acts 1:13. 1 Pet. 1:1. 2 Pet. 1:1.
^d Mark 1:29. 3:18. 13:3. John 6:8. 12:22.
^e 1:21. 1:7. 1:11. 30:20. 36:37. Mark 3: 17. Luke 9:1. John 21:2. Acts 12: 2. 1 Cor. 15:7.
^f Luke 22:8. John 13:23. 20:2. 21: 20, 24. Acts 9:1. 1 John 1:3, 4. 2 John 1. 3 John 1. Rev. 15:9. 22:8.
^g Mark 3:18. Luke 6:14. John 14:3- 6:5-7. 12:22. 13:3. 14:9.
^h Luke 6:15. John 11:16. 20:24-29. 21:2.
ⁱ 9:9. Mark 2:14. Luke 5:27. Levi. 6:1. Acts 1:13.
^j 27:58. Mark 3:18. Luke 6:15, 16. Acts 1:13. 12:17. 15:13. 21:18. 24:1. 11:9. 2:9. 28:1. Jam. 1:17.
^k Mark 3:18. Luke 6:16. Judas the brother of James. John 14:22. Judas, not Iscariot. Acts 1:13. Jude 1.

committed to them, before they were commissioned to be Gospel ministers. To give men authority to teach, who have not ability, is but a mockery to God and the church: it is sending a message by the hand of a fool, Prov. 26: 6. Christ taught his disciples before He sent them forth; (ch. 5: 2.) and afterwards, enlarging their commission, gave them more ample instructions, Acts 1: 3.

NOTES

CHAP. X. v. 1-4. It is generally supposed that the apostles had been called to a constant attendance on Christ some time before, as candidates for important service. (Notes, Mark 3: 13-19. 6: 7-12.) At length they were solemnly appointed, and endowed by their Lord with power to cast out unclean spirits and heal diseases in his name, to confirm their doctrine; and sent forth, two and two, into the land, to prepare the people to receive Him.—Our Lord's 'giving power' to his apostles to work miracles, and the Holy Ghost communicating the same powers to those or whom they laid their hands, was justly considered by the fathers as a proof of his Deity, and as absolutely unparalleled in the order or course of history. God put of his Spirit on those, whom Moses ^{was} appointed, but Moses did not give them power. The spirit of Elijah, in answer to his own prayer, rested on Elisha; Elijah did not give him power. (Notes, Num. 11: 16. 17: 25. 2 Kings 2: 9-11.) Scott. In this first call to the Christian ministry, the end proposed appears by the commission given. To call persons to the ministry, belongs only to Him, who can give them power to cast out unclean spirits. He whose ministry is not accompanied with healing to diseased souls, was never called of God. But though the requisite spiritual gifts for the ministry must be supplied by God Himself, this does not preclude the importance of human learning. The influence of the Spirit no more renders human learning needless, than human learning supercedes the necessity of divine inspiration.

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labor in the harvest. Note, It is a sign God is about to bestow some special mercy on a people, when He stirs up those that have an interest at the throne of grace, to pray for it, Ps. 10: 17. Further observe, Christ said this to his disciples, who were to be employed as laborers. They must pray, first, That God would send them forth. Here *am I, send me*, Isa. 6: 8. Note, Commissions, given in answer to prayer, are most likely to be successful; Paul is a chosen vessel, for behold he prays, Acts 9: 11, 15. Secondly, That He would send others forth. Note, Not the people only, but those who are themselves ministers, should pray for the increase of ministers. Though self-interest makes those who seek their own things desirous to be placed alone, (the fewer ministers the more preferences,) yet those who seek the things of Christ, desire more workmen, that more work may be done, though they be eclipsed.

CHAP. X. v. 1-4. Observe,

I. The persons Christ ordained as his apostles or ambassadors. He had called them, some time before, to be disciples, his followers and constant attendants; and now fulfils his promise, that they should become fishers of men. Note, Christ commonly confers honors and graces by degrees; the light of both, like that of the morning, shines more and more. Hitherto He had kept them, in a state of probation, though He knew them from the first, (John 6: 70.) to give an example to his church. Note, The ministry being a great trust, it is fit men should, before they are intrusted with it, first be proved, 1 Tim. 3: 10. Hands must not be laid suddenly on any man; but let him first be observed as a candidate and probationer, a propositant, (so the French churches,) because some men's sins go before, others follow, 1 Tim. 5: 22, 24. He had also kept them in a state of preparation for this great work. Note, Those whom Christ intends for, and calls to, any work, He first prepares and qualifies for it. He prepared them, by taking them to be with Him. Note, The best preparation for the work of the ministry, is acquaintance and communion with Christ. Those who would serve Christ, must first be with Him, (John 12: 26.) Paul had Christ revealed, not only to Him, but in Him, before he went to preach Him among the Gentiles, Gal. 1: 16. By lively acts of faith, and frequent prayer and meditation, that fellowship with Christ must be maintained. He also prepared by his teaching. They were with Him as pupils; besides the benefit derived from his public preaching. He taught them privately; He opened the Scriptures to them and opened their minds to understand the Scriptures: to them it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and to them they were made plain. Note, They that design to be teachers, must first be learners; they must receive, that they may give; they must be able to teach others, 2 Tim. 2: 2. Gospel truths must be

II. Their commission. Our Lord called them to Him, v. 1. He now admits them to greater familiarity. They that humble themselves shall be exalted. The priests under the law were said to draw near unto God, nearer than the people. The same may be said of Gospel ministers. They are called to draw near to Christ and should remember that He will be sanctified in those that come nigh unto Him. When the disciples were to be instructed, they came unto Him of their own accord, ch. 5: 1. Now they are to be ordained, Christ calls them. Note, It becomes the disciples of Christ to be more forward to learn, than to teach. In the sense of our own ignorance, we must seek opportunities to be taught; and must wait for a call, ere we take it upon us to teach others. He gave them authority, in his name, to command men to obedience; and, for confirming that authority, to command devils also into subjection. Note, All rightful authority is derived from Jesus Christ. All power is given to Him; and subordinate powers are ordained of Him. Some of his honor He put on his ministers, as Moses did on Joshua. Note, It is an undeniable proof of the fulness of Christ's power as Mediator, that He could enable those He employed to work, in his name, the same miracles that He wrought. He gave them power over unclean spirits, and all manner of sickness. Note, The design of the Gospel was to conquer the devil, and to cure the world. These preachers were sent out destitute of external advantages; having no wealth, learning, or titles of honor: it was therefore requisite that they should have some extraordinary power, to advance them above the scribes.

He gave them power against unclean spirits, to cast them out. Note, The power committed to Christ's ministers, is directed against the devil and his kingdom. This unclean spirit is working both in doctrinal errors, (Rev. 16: 13.) and practical debauchery; (2 Pet. 2: 10.) in both which ministers have a charge against him. Christ gave them power to cast him out of the bodies of the people; but it signified the destruction of his spiritual kingdom, and all his works; for which purpose the Son of God was manifested.

He gave them power to heal all manner of sickness; authorizing them to work miracles, to prove that their doctrine was of God; and useful miracles, to prove it not only faithful but worthy of all acceptance; and that the design of the Gospel is to heal and save. Many of Moses' miracles were for destruction; the pretended miracles of Mahomet, for ostentation; but those of Christ and his apostles were all for edification, and evince Him to be, not only the great Teacher and Ruler, but Redeemer of the world. Observe the emphasis laid on the extent of their power, to all manner of sickness and all manner of disease, without exception. Note, There is balm for every wound, in the grace of the Gospel. No spiritual disease is so malignant, none so inveterate, but Christ can cure it. Let none therefore say, there is no hope.

III. Their number and names. They are made apostles, that is, messengers, or those that are sent on an errand, ambassadors. [2 Cor. 5:

(2.) Peter was named first, as being one of the earliest followers of Christ, and first called to a stated attendance on Him, and whose remarkable zeal and piety rendered him a kind of leader among them. This text, however, does not prove the authority of Peter over his brethren, which we never find declared by Christ, or claimed by Peter, or owned by any of the rest of the apostles; but rather find many Scriptures which appear to look a contrary way. See Matt. 23: 8-12. Acts 15: 13, &c. 2 Cor. 12: 11. and Gal. 2: 11. Doddridge. 'It is worthy of notice, that those who were Christ's apostles were first his disciples; to intimate that men must be taught of God before they are sent of God.'

Dr. A. CLARKE, mentioned John 1: 46, whose name was probably Nathanael, Bar Talmai—Nathaniel, the son of Talmai; here his own name is repressed, and he is called Bar Talmai, or Bartholomew, from his father. Dr. A. CLARKE. James. [Author of the catholic epistle bearing his name.] BEAUFORT. Jude. [Also called Jude at the end of his short epistle. Probably Judas, as Thaddeus, or Theodas, were one and the same name.] BP. PEARCE. Of Alphaeus. [The Hebrew word may be pronounced 'Alphai or Iephi.' Hence that Alphaeus, who was the father of four apostles, is also called, 'Cleopas,' Luke 24 which sufficiently appears from this, that she who is called 'Mary, the mother of James the Less and Joses,' Mark 15: 40, is called by John, 'Mary the wife of Cleopas,' John 19: 25.] LIGHTFOOT.

4 = Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying (Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

[Practical Observations.]

1. Mark 3:18. Luke 6:15. Simon called Peter. Acts 1:15.
2. 23-24. 47. 27-29. Mark 3:19. 14:10, 42. Luke 6:16. 22:3, 47. John 6:71. 15:22-26. 30. 18:2-6. Acts 1:15-20, 22-23.
3. 22-23. Luke 9:2. 10:1. John 20:21.
4. John 7:53. Acts 10:45-48. 11:18. 13:22-23. Rom. 15:9. 1 Theas. 2:15.
5. 1 Kings 17:24, &c. Luke 9:52-54. John 4:9, 24. Acts 18. 8:15, &c.
6. 15:24-26. Luke 24:47. Acts 3:25. 13:46. 19:8. 26:20. 28:23-28. Rom. 11:11-15.
7. Matt. 12. Ps. 119:175. Is. 53:5. Ez. 24:5, 8, 16. Luke 15:3-10. 1 Pet. 2:25.

ones of the earth are buried in the dust. Observe, Of some of the twelve we know from Scripture no more than the names, as Bartholomew and Simon the Canaanite; yet were they faithful servants to Christ and his church. Note, All good ministers of Christ are not alike famous, nor their actions alike celebrated.

They are named by couples; for at first they were sent out two and two, because two are better than one; they would be serviceable to each other, and the more so to Christ and souls; what one forgot, the other would remember, and out of the mouth of two witnesses every word would be established. Three couples of them were brethren; Peter and Andrew, James and John, and the other James and Lebbeus. Note, Friendship and fellowship should be preserved among relations, and made serviceable to religion. It is happy when brethren by nature are brethren by grace, and those two bonds strengthen each other.

Peter is named first, either as first called; or as the most forward man among them, who on all occasions made himself the mouth of the rest; and who was to be the apostle of the circumcision; but that gave him no power over the other apostles; nor is there the least mark of any supremacy given to him, or claimed by him.

Matthew, the penman of this Gospel, is here joined with Thomas, (v. 3.) but in two things his account differs from that of Mark, and (1 Luke, Mark 3: 18. Luke 6: 15. There, Matthew is first; in that order it appears he was ordained; but here, in his own catalogue, Thomas is put first. Note, It becomes Christ's disciples in honor to prefer one another. There, he is only called Matthew; here Matthew, the publican, toll-gatherer, or collector of the customs, who was called from that infamous employment to be an apostle. Note, It is good for such as are advanced to honor with Christ, often to look unto the rock whence they were hewn, and remember what they were before Christ called them; that thereby they may be kept humble, and divine grace be glorified.

Simon is called the Canaanite; or rather Cananite, from Cana of Galilee, where probably he was born; or Simon the Zealot, which some think to be meant.

Judas Iscariot is always named last, and with that black brand, who also betrayed Him: intimating that, from the first, Christ knew what a wretch he was, that he had a devil, and would prove a traitor; yet our Lord took him among the apostles, that it might not surprise and discourage his church, if, at any time, the vilest scandals should break out in the best societies. Such spots there have been in our feasts of charity, tares among the wheat, wolves among the sheep: but a day of discovery and separation is coming, when hypocrites shall be unmasked and discarded. Neither the apostleship, nor the rest of the apostles, were the worse for Judas' being one of the twelve, while his wickedness had not broken out.

V. 5-15. Christ instructed his disciples,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-6. The Lord does not encourage us to pray for any thing, which He is not ready to bestow. 'From his fulness' ministers receive their qualifications, even as the apostles received their miraculous powers. He is our Head of authority, the Fountain of honor, wisdom and holiness, and all true ministers receive their commission and instructions from Him, in whatever way they obtain their outward designation to that office. Though they cannot cure men's bodies, yet, by the power of Christ, they are healers of souls, and deliverers from the possession of the devil.—Whatever the world may think, the names of the apostles are far more justly honorable, than those of monarchs, conquerors, philosophers and legislators, who are renowned in human records; and from this nothing should be deducted, because one of them had been a publican, and others fishermen. They all were sinners saved by grace;

and they spake and acted as if conscious of it: and having been deeply humbled for their sins, and joyful in God's salvation, they were full of love to their Savior, and longed to recommend Him to sinners on every side. This is the peculiarity of the minister, who is 'moved by the Holy Ghost to take this office'; but many have the outward appointment, who are strangers to this inward desire.—There was a traitor, of indelible infamy, among the apostles; and this will be proportionately so with all in this office, who seek their own, not the things of Christ.—Providence must direct us where to minister, as we are now authorized to preach the Gospel to every creature. There are 'lost sheep' in every land, and we must seek them wherever scattered, that they may be brought home to 'the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.'

SCOTT.

(4.) Who also betrayed.] 'Rather, even he who betrayed, or delivered Him up. The common translation, also, is exceptionable, as seeming to imply, that He was betrayed by others as well as Judas.' Luke 6: 15. Dr. A. CLARKE. 'Canaanite.' 'The same as Zelotes,' observes Rosenmüller, the Hebrew word translated Canaanite, or rather Canite, signifying zealous; and, as Doddridge remarks, 'given possibly on account of personal zeal for the law; for, as he notices, the sect of Zelotes did not arise until afterward, 'a little before the destruction of Jerusalem.' Edw. Betsey.] Such was the wise counsel of Christ in admitting Judas among his disciples, that the great purpose might be accomplished of redeeming the human race by his sufferings and death, and that the Scriptures might be fulfilled, Acts 1: 16.

WHITBY.

Verses 5, 6.

When Christ sent forth the apostles. He gave them special warnings and instructions, many of which regarded their whole future ministry. He forbade them, at that time, to go to the Gentiles, or into any city of the Samaritans. He had once indeed preached with success in a city of Samaria; (John 4: 23-42.) yet his ministry and that of his apostles before his ascension were chiefly confined to the Jews, that they might not be prejudiced, or have a pretence for rejecting the Gospel: for the change was to be gradual, and the unbelief of the Jews to make way for calling the Gentiles. The apostles therefore were commanded, to 'go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.' The term 'lost sheep,' intimated that the Israelites, though by profession the flock of Christ, had in general wandered from Him, were destitute of faithful shepherds, and in danger of perishing; even as the Samaritans and Gentiles. (Marg. Ref.—Note 9: 33-35.) SCOTT. 'Properly speaking, the inhabitants of the city of Samaria should be termed Samaritans; but this epithet belongs chiefly to the people sent into that part

of the promised land by Salmanaizer, king of Assyria. A. M. 3283, when he carried the Israelites who dwell there captives beyond the Euphrates, and sent a mixed people, principally Chaldees, to dwell in their place. These were altogether heathens at first; but afterwards incorporated the worship of the true God with that of their idols. See the whole account, 2 Kings 17: 5. &c. From this time they 'feared Jehovah and served other gods,' till after the Babylonish captivity. From Alexander the Great, Sanballat, their governor, obtained permission to build a temple upon mount Gerizim, which the Jews conceiving to be in opposition to their temple at Jerusalem, hated them with a perfect hatred, and would have no fellowship with them. The Samaritans acknowledge the divine authority of the law of Moses, and carefully preserve it in their own characters, probably genuine, ancient Hebrew character now called Hebrew being that of the Chaldeans. The Samaritan Pentateuch is printed in the London Polyglot, and is an undeniable record. A poor remnant of this people is found still at Naplouse, the ancient Shechem; but they exist in a state of very great poverty, and probably will soon become extinct.' Dr. A. CLARKE. 'By an usual historical anticipation, Matthew connects the mission of the twelve apostles with their selection and appointment, as if it followed immediately. There was probably, however, an interval of half a year or more from their appointment, before they were sent forth, and accordingly Mark and Luke separate these two events, and interpose several occurrences between them.' Dr. HALS. 'Lost sheep, &c. The Jewish church was the ancient fold of God; but the sheep had strayed from their Shepherd, and were lost. Our blessed Lord sends these under-shepherd, to seek, find, and bring them back to the Shepherd and Overseer of their souls.'

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7 And as ye go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

8 'Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

9 *Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,

10 Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

u 4:17. 11:1. Is. 61:1. Jon. 3:2.
 1 Sam. 6:12. Luke 9:60. 16:16. Acts 4:2.
 v 3:2. 11:1,12. 21:31,43. 23:13.
 Luke 9:2,8. 10:9-11. Acts 20:25, 29:21.
 v 1. Mark 16:18. Luke 10:9. Acts 4:9,10,30. 5:12-15.
 2 Kings 5:15,16,20-27. Acts 3:8. 8:19-23. 9:35-37.
 * Or, Get.
 v Mark 6:8. Luke 9:3. 10:4. 22:35.
 1 Sam. 9:7. 17:40.
 Luke 3:11. 2 Tim. 4:13.
 f Gr. a sloop.
 Luke 10:7. 1 Cor. 9:4-14. Gal. 6:6,7. 1 Tim. 5:17,18.

would wander endlessly; Jer. 1:6. The Gentiles also had been as lost sheep. 1 Pet. 2:25. Christ gives this description of those to whom they were sent, to quicken their diligence in the work.

11. The work He appointed them. He sent them not without an errand; no: *As ye go, preach, v. 7.* They were to be itinerant preachers: wherever they go, they must proclaim the beginning of the Gospel, saying, *the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Not that they must say nothing else, but this must be their text, on which they must enlarge; letting the people know that the Messiah, the Lord from heaven, was now to set up his kingdom, according to the Scriptures; and that therefore they must repent and forsake their sins, to be admitted to its privileges. It is said, (Mark 6:12.) they went out and preached that men should *repent*; which was the proper use and application of the doctrine concerning the approach of the kingdom of heaven. They must expect therefore to hear more of this long-looked-for Messiah shortly, and be ready to receive Him, and submit to his authority. The preaching of this was like the morning light, to give notice of the approach of the rising sun. How unlike to the preaching of Jonah, which proclaimed ruin at hand! Jonah 3:4. This proclaims salvation, as *nigh* them that *fear God; mercy and truth meet together*; (Ps. 85:9,10.) that is the kingdom of heaven at hand: not so much the personal presence of the King; which must not be doated on; but a spiritual kingdom to be set up,

Verses 7, 8.

(Note 3:2.) The apostles were ordered in every place to *proclaim*, as heralds, privately and publicly, the grand doctrine which John and Christ himself had preached: for their ministry was introductory to the open establishment of the Messiah's kingdom. To confirm their mission, they were to work miracles, and even raise the dead. This latter clause is not in some manuscripts, but is in the earliest. Yet it is not recorded that they raised any dead before the descent of the Holy Spirit; but this clause is referred to the subsequent as well as the introductory part of their ministry. They were prohibited to make any personal advantage of miraculous powers, as selling the gift of God for money; (Note, Acts 8:13-24.) but must confer the benefit freely as they received it. They who urge this text against preachers receiving a maintenance for their labor, pervert it, and set it against plain declarations of the New Testament. It is however desirable, that a decided superiority to 'the love of filthy lucre' be observable in ministers.—Doubtless, Judas preached and wrought miracles, as the other apostles; and probably, for credit's sake, neglected to make any gain of his miraculous gifts; at least he was not suspected by the other apostles. (Note 7:21-25.)

Freely. (3.) John 15:25. Rom. 3:24. 2 Cor. 11:7. Gal. 2:21. These. 3. Rev. 21:6. 22:17.—Gen. 29:15. Is. 52:3. Sept. 'This particle is used,' says Leigh, 'of a benefit conferred by mere liberality; and of an injury inflicted by iniquity, either for no cause, or no just cause.' Scott. Preach—the kingdom, &c.) 'Not God's kingdom of glory in heaven, for as to us it is not come yet; but that kingdom, in which He reigns over us by Jesus Christ, forgives our sins, adopts us into his family, and prepares us for his everlasting kingdom in heaven; and if we do not enter into it now, we shall not hereafter.'

The power He gave them to *heal*, He has super-abundantly in Himself for our healing; and He is our Jesus only so far as we own Him for that end.

Verses 9, 10.

The command 'freely to give,' and the prohibition 'to provide' should be compared together. The apostles (and all ministers) were required to be eminently disinterested; yet they must trust God for support even where they were strangers. They were not to carry money or provisions in a scrip, or bag; or clothes, or shoes; or any extraneous staff: for the Lord engaged to provide for them, by disposing those

when He gave them their commission; whether in a continued discourse or otherwise, is not material. Here He *commanded them*. Jacob's blessing his sons, is called his commanding them, and with these commands, Christ *commanded a blessing*. Observe,

1. To what people He sent them. They must not go into the way of the Gentiles. The Gospel must not be given to them, till the Jews have first refused it. Nor to the Samaritans, who were the posterity of that mongrel people which the king of Assyria planted about Samaria. Their country lay between Judea and Galilee; so that they could not avoid going into the way of the Samaritans, but they must not enter into any of their cities. Christ had declined manifesting Himself to the Gentiles or Samaritans, and therefore the apostles must not preach to them. If the Gospel be hid from any place, Christ thereby hides Himself from it. The restraint was on them only in their first mission; after that, they were appointed to go into all the world, and teach all nations.

But Christ now sent them to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. To them He appropriated his own ministry, (ch. 15:24.) for He was a minister of the circumcision; (Rom. 15:8.) to them therefore his attendants must be confined. The first offer of salvation must be made to the Jews, Acts 3:26. Note, Christ had a particular and very tender concern for the house of Israel; they were beloved, for the fathers' sakes, Rom. 11:28. He looked with compassion on them, as lost sheep, whom He, as Shepherd, was to gather from their wanderings, or they would wander endlessly; Jer. 1:6. The Gentiles also had been as lost sheep.

1 Pet. 2:25. Christ gives this description of those to whom they were sent, to quicken their diligence in the work.

11. The work He appointed them. He sent them not without an errand; no: *As ye go, preach, v. 7.* They were to be itinerant preachers: wherever they go, they must proclaim the beginning of the Gospel, saying, *the kingdom of heaven is at hand.* Not that they must say nothing else, but this must be their text, on which they must enlarge; letting the people know that the Messiah, the Lord from heaven, was now to set up his kingdom, according to the Scriptures; and that therefore they must repent and forsake their sins, to be admitted to its privileges. It is said, (Mark 6:12.) they went out and preached that men should *repent*; which was the proper use and application of the doctrine concerning the approach of the kingdom of heaven. They must expect therefore to hear more of this long-looked-for Messiah shortly, and be ready to receive Him, and submit to his authority. The preaching of this was like the morning light, to give notice of the approach of the rising sun. How unlike to the preaching of Jonah, which proclaimed ruin at hand! Jonah 3:4. This proclaims salvation, as *nigh* them that *fear God; mercy and truth meet together*; (Ps. 85:9,10.) that is the kingdom of heaven at hand: not so much the personal presence of the King; which must not be doated on; but a spiritual kingdom to be set up,

when his bodily presence is removed, in the hearts of men. This was the same that John the Baptist and Christ had preached before. Note, People need to have good truths pressed again and again upon them: and if they be preached and heard with new affections, they are as if they were fresh. Christ in the Gospel is the same yesterday, to-day and forever Heb. 13:8. When the Spirit was poured out, and the Christian church formed, *this kingdom of heaven came*: but it must still be the subject of preaching: now it is come, we must tell the people it is come to them, and lay before them its precepts and privileges; and speak of the kingdom of glory yet to come, as at hand, and quicken people to diligence, from the consideration of that.

III. Their power to work miracles, v. 8. Sending them to preach the same doctrine He had preached, our Lord empowered them to confirm it by the same divine seals, which would never be set to a lie. But miracles are not necessary, since the kingdom has come. To call for them now, is to lay again the foundation when the building is reared, and would be to tempt God.

The apostles are directed to use their power in doing good, not, 'Go, and remove mountains,' or 'fetch fire from heaven,' but *heal the sick, cleanse the lepers*. They are sent abroad as public blessings, to intimate that love and goodness are the spirit and genius of that Gospel which they came to preach, and of that kingdom they were employed to set up. By this it would appear, that they were the servants of that God who is good and doeth good, and whose mercy is over all his works; and that the design of the Gospel is to heal sick souls, and raise those that are dead in sin. This is the reason, perhaps, why raising the dead is spoken of; for we read not of their raising any to life before the resurrection of Christ, though they were instrumental in raising many to spiritual life.

Christ directs them to do good, freely: *freely ye have received, freely give*. Having power to heal all diseases, they might enrich themselves. Therefore they are cautioned not to make use of their power to that end: they must cure gratis, further to exemplify the nature of the Gospel of free grace. (Rom. 3:24.) *Freely by his grace*. Let medicines be bought without money and without price, (Isa. 55:1.) because, *freely, ye have received*. Their power to heal the sick cost them nothing, and therefore they must not make any secular advantage to themselves of

to supply them among whom they went. This supply they might conscientiously take, as the laborer is worthy of maintenance.—The word rendered 'purses' signifies girdles; travellers carried money for use in a pocket or fold of their girdles.—Ministers must cast away all cares that hinder them.—'Provide neither gold,' &c. that is, for this journey, that they might trust God's providence; for at their return the Lord asked them whether they lacked any thing. Luke 22:35. Beza. "He is worthy of his food," not, says Theophylact, 'of delicias; for 'it becomes not a teacher to fare deliciously.' (Note, 1 Tim. 5:17,18.) Scott. Nor scrip.] 'To carry provisions. It was a leathern pouch hung about the neck, in which they put their victuals. This was, properly, the shepherd's bag.' The workman is worthy, &c.) 'It is the workman, he who labors in the word and doctrine, who is to get a maintenance. How contrary to Christ, for a man to have vast resources as a minister of the Gospel, who ministers no Gospel, and who spends the revenues of the church to its disgrace and ruin!' Dr. A. CLARKE. Coats.] 'A piece of cloth commonly linen, which encircled the whole body, was bound with a girdle, and descended to the knees. At first it only covered the body, but afterwards was extended up round the neck, was supplied with short sleeves, and eventually with long ones covering the whole arm.' JAHN. A similar garment is worn, it appears, at the present day, by the Egyptian Arabs. See. Shoes.] 'The Jews commonly went without covering for the feet; but on a journey it became necessary: so, however, that sandals were used in summer



[consisting, as Niebuhr describes them, only of a sole, with one or two straps over the foot, and one around the ankle, sometimes with heels, as in the drawing.] but in winter, or for long journeys, a kind of soft boots, or strong shoes. The apostles were, then, to take no *forththought* or be solicitous, even in providing necessaries.

11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

12 And when ye come into an house, salute it.

13 And if the house be ^hworthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

^e Gen. 19: 1-3. Judg. 19: 16-21. 1 Kings 17: 9, &c. Job 31: 32. Luke 7: 28-42. 19: 7. Acts 16: 15. 18: 1-2. 3 John 7: 8.
^f Mark 8: 10. Luke 9: 4. 10: 7, 8.
^g Luke 10: 5, 6. Acts 10: 36. 2 Cor. 5: 20. 3 John 14.
^h Ps. 35: 13. Luke 10: 6. 2 Cor. 2: 16.

taken under special protection, and entitled to special provisions. Christ's hired servants shall have *bread enough and to spare*: while we are careful to maintain fidelity to God and our duty, we may cast all our other care on God: the Lord will provide for us and ours, as He thinks fit. They might expect necessary provision from those to whom they were sent, v. 10. The *workman is worthy of his meat*. They must not look to be fed, as Elijah was, but might depend on God to incline the hearts of those among whom they went to provide for them. Those who *serve at the altar* may not expect to grow rich, but to live comfortably, 1 Cor. 9: 13, 14. It is fit they should have their maintenance for their work. Ministers are and must be workmen, laborers; and such are *worthy of their meat*, so as not to be forced to any other labor to earn it. Christ would have his disciples distrust neither God nor their fellow-men. If you preach to them, and endeavor to do them good, surely they will provide enough for your necessities; and if they do, never desire dainties. God will pay you wages hereafter.

V. Their directions in dealing with any place, v. 11-15. Our Lord taught them how to conduct themselves toward *strangers*. When you come to a town, *inquire who in it is worthy*. It is supposed there would be some in every place better disposed than others, to receive them and their message, though it was a time of general corruption and apostasy. Note, In the worst times and places, we may charitably hope there are some who oppose vice and error. There were saints in Nero's household. Inquire who is worthy, who fear God, and have improved their light and knowledge. The best are far from meriting the Gospel offer; but some would be more likely than others to give it a favorable reception. Note, Previous dispositions to that which is good may both direct and encourage ministers in dealing with people. There is most hope where the world is most acceptable. Such persons they must inquire out, not the best inns; public houses were no proper places for them that neither took money with them, (p. 9.) nor expected to receive any; (p. 8.) but they must look for accommodations in private houses, with those that would entertain them well, and expect no other recompense but a prophet and an apostle's reward, their praying and preaching. Note, They that would entertain the Gospel, must neither grudge the expense of it, nor promise themselves gain by it in this world. Christ's disciples, wherever they come, should ask for, not the rich and genteel, but the good people of the place, and be acquainted with them. When we took God for our God, we took his people for our people; and like will rejoice in its like. Paul in all his travels found out the brethren, if there were any. Acts 28: 14. It is implied, that if they inquired *who was worthy*, they might find. The character of the good man, like the ointment of the right hand, betrays itself. Every body knew where the seer's house was, 1 Sam. 9: 18. In the house of such as they found worthy, they must continue till they left town; which intimates that they were to make so short a stay, that no change would be necessary. Those

Verses 11-15.

The apostles were to inquire, on arriving at any place, what persons of repute for integrity and piety resided there, and address them with the first proposal of the Gospel; and, if received, to abide with them till they left the place; so as not to appear capricious, dissatisfied with accommodations, or desirous of entertainments. On entering a house, they must salute its inhabitants in the customary way, wishing the blessing of God to be communicated to them, and proposing the Gospel of peace and salvation; and if they were disposed to welcome it, the blessing would rest on them, and the messengers of Christ would instruct and pray for them. But if not, the labors of the apostles would return in blessings on themselves.—It is said, that the *imperative* is here used for the future tense; and it seems to direct ministers how to act in such cases. When the proposal was obstinately rejected, they must, in leaving the place, 'shake off the dust of their feet.' (Marg. Ref. k.) It recorded, that the Jews, in coming from heathen lands, thus shook off the dust that clung to them as afraid of polluting the holy land, and renouncing connection with idolaters; so that the apostles would be understood as decidedly protesting against the conduct of these persons, and declaring, that they regarded them equally criminal with the Gentiles themselves.—To this injunction, our Lord solemnly added, 'it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment,' than for those of such a city. Their obstinate unbelief, and such opportunities of conviction, would evince greater enmity against God, than all the abominations of Sodom, and though they might

are justly suspected, as having no good design, that are often changing their quarters. Note, It becomes the disciples of Christ to make the best of that which is, to abide by it, and not stand on every dislike or inconvenience.

Where they found the house of one they thought worthy, they were to salute it. In common civilities, be beforehand with people, in token of your humility. Think it not a disparagement, to invite yourselves into a house, nor stand on the *punctilio* of being invited. Salute the family, to draw on further discourse, and introduce your message, and to try whether you are welcome or not. Take notice if the salutation be received with shyness and coldness, or with a ready return. He that will not receive your salutation kindly, will not receive kindly your message; for he that is unfaithful in little, will also be in much, Luke 16: 10. To obtain their good opinion, *salute the family*, and let them see, that, though you are serious, you are not morose. Note, Religion teaches us to be courteous and obliging to all with whom we have to do. Though the apostles went out under the authority of the Son of God himself, yet, when they came into a house, they were not to *command it*, but to *salute it*; for *love's sake rather to beseech*, is the evangelical way, Phil. 4: 9. Souls are first drawn to Christ with the *cords of a man*, then kept to Him by the *bands of love*. Hos. 11: 4. When Peter made the first offer of the Gospel to Cornelius, a Gentile, Peter was first saluted; Acts 10: 25. For Gentiles courted that to which Jews were courted.

After saluting the family in a godly manner, they must, by the return, judge *concerning it*, and proceed accordingly. Note, God notices what entertainment we give good people and good ministers. *If the house be worthy*, let your peace come and rest upon it; if not, let it return to you, v. 13. Though the most worthy were inquired for, they might light on the most unworthy. Note, It is wisdom to hearken to, but folly to rely on, common report: we are to practise discretion, and see for ourselves. *The wisdom of the prudent is, himself to understand his own way*. This rule is intended,

First, For satisfaction to the apostles. The common salutation was, *Peace be unto you*; which, as they used it, was turned into Gospel, the *peace of God*, or of the kingdom of heaven. Now, lest they should scruple to pronounce it on all promiscuously, many being utterly unworthy, this is to clear them of that scruple. Christ tells them that this Gospel-prayer should be put up for all, as the Gospel-proffer was made to all, indefinitely; and that they should leave it to God, who knows the heart, to determine the issue. If the house be worthy, it will reap the benefit; if not, no harm is done; the benefit shall return to you, as David's prayers for his enemies did, Ps. 35: 13. Note, It becomes us to judge charitably of all, to pray heartily for all, and to conduct courteously to all, and leave it for God to determine the effect.

Secondly, For direction to them. If, on your salutation, they appear indeed worthy, let

escape punishment here, yet in the day of judgment their doom would be more intolerable. (Marg. Ref.) Scott. 'In the commencement of Christianity,' observes Dr. A. Clarke, 'Christ and his ministers were all itinerant,' and he takes occasion from our Lord's direction, 'There abide,' &c. to paraphrase thus: 'Stay in your lodging as much as possible, that you may have time for prayer and study. He who knows the value of time, and will redeem it from useless conversation and trifling visits, will find enough for all the purposes of his own salvation, the cultivation of his mind, and the work of the ministry. As to whom it is not precious, and who live not by rule, never finds time sufficient for any thing; is always embarrassed—always in a hurry, and never capable of bringing one good purpose to effect.' This, if not specially contemplated in our Lord's direction, of which the comment of Dr. Scott above appears to give the true scope, is yet excellent advice, and worthy the serious regard of ministers and missionaries; still, the friend of the Redeemer must be ever 'zealous of good works'; and, like the philosopher of whom La Bruyere writes, 'ready to lay aside his pen, and interrupt a sentence, whenever a benefit may be conferred on such as need it.'

(12.) *Peace be, &c.* 'The custom of saluting friends after this manner is still retained among the Turks, and other eastern nations.' Doorn. 'Hence that saying of the rabbins, "Great is peace" for all other blessings are comprehended in it.' Dr. A. Clarke

(13.) *Your peace shall come.* Or, 'Let it come—the imperative for the future, as 1 Cor. 16: 22. At 1 perhaps many seem to use it

14 And 'whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words; when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

15 'Verily I say unto you, 'It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city.

[Practical Observations.]

16 ¶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in

40.41. 18:5. Mark 6:11. 9:37. Luke 9:5, 48. 10:10, 11. John 13:20. 1 Thes. 4:8.

1 Neh. 5:13. Acts 13:51. 18:6. 20:26, 27.

5:13. 9:43, 45.

11:22. 24. Eccl. 15:48-56. Mark 6:11. Luke 9:11, 12. John 15:22-24.

11. 12:36. 2 Pet. 2:9. 3:7. 1 John 4:19.

o Luke 10:9. Acts 20:29.

In this case, our Lord directs that they must depart out of that house or city. Note, The Gospel will not tarry long with those that put it away from them. At their departure, they must shake off the dust of their feet, in detestation of their wickedness; which even polluted the ground they went on. They must have no fellowship or communion with them; nor carry away so much as the dust of their city with them. The work of them that turn aside shall not cleave to me, Ps. 101: 3. The prophet was not to eat or drink in Bethel, 1 Kings 13: 9. This would be as a denunciation of wrath against them. It was to signify that they were base and vile as dust, and that God would shake them off. The dust of the apostles' feet would witness against them, Mark 6: 11. Compare James 5: 3. See this practised, Acts 13: 51.

18: 6. Note, Those who despise God and his Gospel shall be lightly esteemed. Christ passes a doom on such wretched recusants, v. 15. It shall be more tolerable, in the day of judgment, for the land of Sodom, wicked as it was. Note, A day of judgment is coming, when all who refuse the Gospel will be called to account, however they may now make it a jest. They that would not hear the doctrine that would save, shall hear the sentence that will ruin them. Their judgment is respited till that day. There are different degrees of punishment. All pains of hell will be intolerable, but some more so than others. Some sinners sink deeper into hell than others, and are beaten with more stripes. The condemnation of those that reject the Gospel will in that day be

them have more of your company, and so let your peace come upon them; preach the Gospel to them, peace by Jesus Christ: but if otherwise, and they be rude, and shut their doors against you, let your peace, as much as in you lies, return to you. Retract what you have said, and turn your backs upon them; by slighting this, they have made themselves unworthy of the rest of your favors.' Note, Great blessings are often lost by a seemingly small neglect. Thus Esau lost his birthright, (Gen. 25: 34.) and Saul his kingdom, 1 Sam. 13: 13, 14. The case is put, (v. 14.) of those that would not receive them, nor hear their words. The apostles might think that now they had such doctrine to preach, and power to work miracles, no doubt they should be universally made welcome: they are therefore told before, that there would be those who would slight them, and condemn their message. Note, The best preachers of the Gospel must expect that some will neither hear nor respect them. Many turn a deaf ear, even to the joyful sound, and will not hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely. Observe, 'they will not receive you, and will not hear your words.' Note, Contempt of the Gospel, and contempt of Gospel-ministers, commonly go together, and will either of them be construed into a contempt of Christ, and reckoned for accordingly.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7-15. It is needful to introduce the Gospel by 'preaching repentance towards God,' as well as 'faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;' for his kingdom cannot be set up in an impenitent heart. Nothing is more important to usefulness than to avoid the appearance of being mercenary. Many, who profess great things, with some ambiguous reference to the power of Christ, and faith in Him, stand detected, in the view of antient inquirers, by this mark: 'They make their pretensions a lucrative trade, and turn their apparent gifts into money.' Of employments by which men grow rich, or aggrandize their families, none is more infamous, than that of a hireling minister; and it is honorable for such as have the means of subsistence, to preach the Gospel to the poor as freely, as they received it; yet those who have not, may receive a maintenance, 'for the laborer is worthy of his meat.' And if they have but little prospect of support, they should labor with diligence, casting all their care on the Lord. He will provide what is needful: and they will see his hand, and taste his love in their temporal provision, more than those who have abundance: nor need they scruple to receive what is thus conferred; as it will not deduct from the true dignity of the ministerial character.—The preacher is an ambassador of peace, and his commission reaches the vilest sinners; yet he should associate

tion in the Old Testament may most easily be accounted for, by such an explanation—as prophetic predictions of what should happen to the enemies of God and his people. *Domus. Return to you.* 1. La. Henniker, in his Travels into Egypt, says, that if a Mussulman salutes a Christian, by mistake, with the usual phrase, 'peace be unto you,' on discovering his mistake, he insists on the other's revoking or returning his peace.

Verses 14, 15.

'We should be grateful, that ambassadors of Christ have proclaimed the Gospel, with an enlarged commission, extending to the end of the world, Ps. 19: 4. May they, who have, as ministers, succeeded to the honor, speak and act as messengers of peace, and friends of mankind, who cordially wish well to all.' Let them show true greatness of mind, in superiority to mere temporal interests, and present gratifications; forgetting themselves to remember their Master, and the souls He commits to their care. Let them faithfully warn men of their eternal condemnation, and of the unutterable danger of receiving the grace of God in

earlier than that of Sodom and Gomorrah. Sodom is said to suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, Jude 7. But that vengeance will come with aggravation on despisers of the salvation of the Gospel. Sodom and Gomorrah were exceedingly wicked, (Gen. 13: 13, and what filled up the measure of their iniquity was that, they received not the angels sent to them, but abused them, (Gen. 19: 4, 5.) and hardened not to their words, v. 14. And yet it will be more tolerable for them than for such as reject Christ's ministers, and hearer not to their words. God's wrath against them will be more flaming, and their own reflections more cutting. *Son, remember,* will sound most dreadfully in the ears of those, who had fallen from the measure of eternal life, and chose death. The iniquity of Israel, when God sent them his servants the prophets, is represented as, on that account, more heinous than the iniquity of Sodom; (Ezek. 16: 48, 49.) much more now He sent them his Son, the great Prophet.

V. 16-42. Christ's ministers are here taught, not only to expect and prepare for sufferings, but how to bear them, and go on with their work in the midst of them. This looks beyond their present mission; for we find not that they met any great hardships or persecutions, while Christ was with them; but they are here forewarned of the troubles they should meet, when, after Christ's resurrection, their commission should be enlarged and the kingdom of heaven, now at hand, be actually set up; when, though they dreamed of pomp and power they must expect greater sufferings than they yet had felt; and should there be prisoners where they hoped to be princes. It is good to be told what troubles we may meet, that we may provide accordingly, and not boast as if we had put off the harness, when we are yet but girding it on.

We have here,

1. Predictions of trouble. Christ foretold the sufferings of his disciples, as well as his own, and yet He would have them go on as He went on: He foretold them also, not only that troubles might not surprise and shock them, but that, as accomplishing a prediction, they might confirm their faith.

He tells them what they shall suffer, and from whom. Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves, v. 16. And what may

with the pious; for though self-righteousness indisposes men to receive the Gospel, yet the fear of God is a preparation for it.—Ministers should be manifestly consistent in their conduct, and indifferent to outward accommodations. Their demeanor should be expressive of benevolence; their friendly language, fervent prayers, and pious discourse, should be substituted for the compliments and flatteries by which many hide their selfishness.—Labor in the cause of Christ is never in vain, and the prayers of his servants will bring blessings on themselves. Their good-will must not turn into timidity: the whole counsel of God must be declared: and they who do not attend to the message, must be shewn decidedly, by words and deeds, that their conduct is abhorred and their state dangerous. This will be done with better effect by declining to associate with them, and having no fellowship in their pursuits.—The Gospel is so authenticated by external and internal evidence, and so manifests its authority to every man's conscience, that all who reject it 'hate the light, because their deeds are evil.' So that, even when enemies of the truth are free from enormities in their conduct, their doom will be more dreadful in a future state, than that of the people of Sodom. This should be laid to heart by those who hear the Gospel, lest their privileges increase their future condemnation.

SCOTT.

vain. And may all such have this token, that God will take care of their interests; even the consciousness of being engaged to promote his glory and the welfare of souls. (2 Cor. 12: 15.) *Domus. Day of judgment.* If men are thus treated for not seeing the preachers of the Gospel, what will it be to despise the Gospel itself—to deny it—to preach the contrary—to hinder the preaching of it—to abuse those who do preach it in purity—or to render it fruitless by calumnies and lies? Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 16-18.

It was needful for the apostles to count their cost, and 'prepare for affliction; for they would be apprehended, delivered up, as criminals, to the councils of the nation, and condemned to be scourged in the synagogues, where consociations in ecclesiastical affairs were held; nay, they would be brought before the Roman governors for their attachment to Christ, and thus have an opportunity of declaring his Gospel to them, which, if neglected, would be a testimony against them.

SCOTT.

As sheep, &c.] 'On an employment,' says Whitty, 'full of peril from the men of the world.' The character of the Christian mission

the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

17 But beware of men; for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

Gen. 31, 13. Luke 21:15. 1 Cor. 14: 2 Cor. 11:3, 4. Eph. 6:15-17. Col. 1:9, 4:5.
2 Cor. 8:20. Phil. 2:15. 1 Thea. 2: 7, 5:22.
Or. *simile*. Rom. 16:18, 19. 2 Cor. 2:12. 11:3.
Mic. 7:5. Mark 13:9, 12. Acts 14:5, 6. 17:14. 23:29-32. 2 Cor. 12:13-26. 2 Tim. 4:15.
24:9-10. Mark 13:9. Luke 21:12, 13. John 16:2. Acts 4:5, 6. 5:26, 8. 26:1, 6:22. 28:59. John 11:47.
29:19. 23:34. Dent. 25:2-3. Acts 6:40. 22:19. 26:11. 2 Cor. 11:24. 5. Heb. 11:37. 12:1-6.
Ps. 21-6. Acts 5:25-27. 12:1-6. 23:33-34. 24-26. 2 Tim. 4:16, 7:9-14. Mark 13:9. 2 Tim. 1:8. Rev. 1:9. 6:9. 11:7.

malefactors. They will deliver you up to the councils, (v. 17, 18.) that take care of the public peace. Note, Much mischief is often done to good men, under color of law and justice. In the place of judgment there is wickedness, persecuting wickedness, Eccl. 3:16. They must look for trouble, not only from inferior, but superior magistrates, from governors and kings. To be brought before them, under such black representations as were commonly made of Christ's disciples, was dreadful and dangerous: for the wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion. We find this often fulfilled in the Acts of the Apostles.

They must expect to be put death; (v. 21.) They shall deliver them to death; death, in its most dreadful forms. It is the blood of the saints that their enemies thirst after; whose faith and patience stand firm to expect it: Neither count I my life dear to myself: the wisdom of Christ permits it, knowing how to make the blood of the martyrs the seed of the church. By this noble army's not loving their lives to the death, Satan has been vanquished, and the kingdom of Christ and its interests greatly advanced. Rev. 11:11. They were put to death as criminals; so the enemies meant it, but really as sacrifices, (Phil. 2:17. 2 Tim. 4:6.) as burnt-offerings, sacrifices of acknowledgment to the honor of God, and in his truth and cause. In their sufferings, they would be branded with most odious and ignominious names and characters. Persecutors would be ashamed in this world, did they not first represent as monsters those they worry, in order to justify their cruelties. The blackest of all the ill characters they give them is here stated, Beelzebub, the name of the prince of the devils, v. 25. They represent them as ringleaders under him; and since every one thinks he hates the devil, they thus endeavor to make them odious to mankind. See, and be amazed to see, how this world is imposed on. Satan's sworn enemies are represented as his friends; the apostles who pulled down the devil's kingdom, were called devils. Thus men laid to their charge, not only things which they knew not, but things which they abhorred. Satan's sworn servants would be thought his enemies; and never more effectually do his work,

a flock of poor, helpless, unguarded sheep expect, in the midst of a herd of ravenous wolves, but to be worried and torn? Note, Wicked men are like wolves, whose nature it is to devour and destroy. God's people, and specially his ministers, are like sheep, of a contrary nature, exposed, and commonly an easy prey. It looked unkind in Christ to expose to so much danger those who had left all to follow Him; but He knew that the glory reserved for his sheep at his right hand, would be a recompense sufficient for sufferings as well as services. They are as sheep among wolves; a frightful thing! but it is comforting, that Christ sends them forth: for He that sends will protect them, and bear them out. Yet, that they might know the worst, He tells them particularly what they must expect. Ye shall be hated for my name's sake: that is the bitter root of all the rest. Note, Those whom Christ loves, the world hates: as whom the court blesses, the country will curse. If the world hated Christ without cause, (John 15:25.) no marvel if it hate those who bear his image, and serve his interests. We hate what is nauseous; and they are counted as the scourging of all things, 1 Cor. 4:13. We hate what is noxious; and they are counted troublers of the land, (1 Kings 18:17.) and tormentors of their neighbors, Rev. 11:10. It is grievous to be hated; but it is for thy name's sake; which, as it speaks the true reason of the hatred, whatever is pretended, speaks also comfort to the sufferers. It is for a good cause; and they have a good Friend who shares it, and takes it to Himself.

They would be apprehended and arraigned as malefactors. They will deliver you up to the councils, (v. 17, 18.) that take care of the public peace. Note, Much mischief is often done to good men, under color of law and justice. In the place of judgment there is wickedness, persecuting wickedness, Eccl. 3:16. They must look for trouble, not only from inferior, but superior magistrates, from governors and kings. To be brought before them, under such black representations as were commonly made of Christ's disciples, was dreadful and dangerous: for the wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion. We find this often fulfilled in the Acts of the Apostles.

is denoted in the words, "I send you as sheep," and the condition of an unbelieving world by these, "in the midst of wolves." Though the faith was to be propagated only by the mild measures of persuasion, yet even this would provoke the wolfish dispositions of the powers of darkness, to employ all the iniquitous contrivances of fraud and violence for its suppression.

So frankly did our Lord warn his apostles of the hardships and dangers that would surround them. Nothing could be more fair, nothing more generous. Peculiar dangers and trials awaited them. But all that will tell us godly in Christ Jesus must expect some degree of persecution; (2 Tim. 3:12.) let us therefore arm ourselves with the same mind.—"Be prudent as serpents," said our Lord, "in avoiding unnecessary dangers; though far from imitating their malignity and revenge, and by no inadvertency give your opponents advantage against you; but maintain at all times a holy simplicity of soul, and be harmless and offensive as doves." Serpents were, by the ancients, considered remarkable for sagacity. There is peculiar vivacity in their eyes; so that to be sharp-sighted as a serpent, was a proverb among the Greeks and Romans.

The wisdom of the serpent might seem to include guile, the simplicity of the dove to intimate a defect of wariness. Our Savior requires such a temper of both, that from the union might result a perfect wisdom, free from all subtlety, and a well-guarded innocence, without any indiscretion.

Innocence without prudence, will not do for this world; but prudence without innocence will not do for the next; nor always even for

than when they pretend to be fighting against him. Many times they who are nearest akin to the devil are most apt to father others upon him; and those that paint him on others' clothes have him reigning in their own hearts. It is well, there is a day coming, when (as in 26.) that which is hid shall be brought to light.

These sufferings are represented by a sword and division, v. 34, 35. Think not I am come to send peace: they thought Christ came to give his followers wealth and power in the world; 'no,' says our Lord, 'I did not come to give them peace; peace in heaven they may be sure of, but not peace on earth.' Christ gives peace with God, peace in our consciences, peace with our brethren, but, in the world ye shall have tribulation. Note, Those mistake the design of the Gospel, who think their profession of it will secure them from trouble; it will certainly expose them to it in this world. If the world would receive Christ, universal peace would follow; but while so many reject Him, the children of God, who are called out of the world, must expect its enemy.

Look not for peace, but a sword. Christ gives the sword of the Word, with which his disciples fight against the world; and conquering work it has made: (Rev. 9:4. 19:21.) by sending the Gospel, He has given occasion also for drawing the sword of persecution, with which the world fights against his disciples, being cut to the heart, (Acts 7:54.) and tormented by the testimony of his witnesses; (Rev. 11:10.) and cruel work this sword has made. Christ orders his church into a suffering state, for the trial and praise of his people's graces, and the filling up of the measure of their enemies' sins.

Look not for peace but division. (v. 35.) I am come to set men at variance. This effect is not the fault of the Gospel, but of those who will not receive it. When some believe the things that are spoken, and others believe not, the faith of those that believe condemns the unbelievers, and they hate the believing. Note, The most violent and implacable of feuds have arisen from difference in religion: no enmity like that of the persecutors, no resolution like that of the persecuted. Thus Christ tells his disciples what they should suffer, and these were hard sayings; if they could bear these, they could bear any thing. Note, Christ has dealt fairly and faithfully with us, in telling us the worst we can meet in his service; and He would have us deal so with ourselves, in counting the cost.

They are here told from whom, and by whom, they should suffer these hard things. Surely hell itself must be let loose, and devils, those desperate and despairing spirits, that have no part nor lot in the great salvation, must become incarnate, ere such spiteful enemies could be found to a doctrine, the substance of which was good will towards men, and the reconciling of the world to God: no; would you think it? all this mischief arises to the preachers of the Gospel, from those to whom they came to preach salvation. Thus the blood-thirsty hate the upright, but just seek his soul; (Prov. 29:10.)

this: in which, probably, more men of abilities have ruined themselves, by adventuring into crooked paths, than weak men have by keeping the straight one.

(17.) Councils.] 'Meaning not only the great sanhedrim, but inferior tribunals.'

Scourge you in the synagogues.] 'It appears that the Jews caused to be chastised in some part of the synagogue those whom they judged guilty of heresy.' See Acts 23:19. [Matt. 23:34.] According to some learned men, among whom is the eminent Lightfoot, there was in every synagogue a council, consisting of three judges, who had the power of ordering the punishment of scourging.

'This is a sort of discipline which has long since been used in their synagogues, where they kept their courts, and which Acosta tells us to be himself underwent.'

Beware of men.] 'Rather "Beware of these men;" meaning the priests and rulers, the scribes and Pharisees.'

(18.) Before governors and kings.] 'Accordingly the apostles were several of them, obliged to appear before princes, and were severely persecuted by their malicious enemies before Herod Agrippa, Felix, Festus, Nero, Domitian, &c. as we learn from sacred or profane history.'

For a testimony against them.] 'That they, hearing your doctrines and miracles, and seeing your simplicity and innocence, may either embrace the truth, or be left without excuse.'

Or, perhaps to them, meaning that this shall proclaim and testify the Gospel to Gentiles and Jews.'

HAMMOND. W. LITBY

19 But *when they deliver you up, *take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

20 For it is not ye that speak, *but the Spirit of *your Father which speaketh in you.

21 And *the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death.

■ Mark 13:11. Luke 12:11, 21-14.
■ 6:25, 31, 34. Phil. 4:6. Jam. 1:5.
■ Ex. 41:15. Jer. 17-9. Dan. 3:4.
■ 19. Acts 4:8-14. 5:29-33. 6:10.
■ 22. 2 Tim. 4:4.
■ 2 Sam. 23:2. Luke 12:26. Luke 11:13. 21:5. Acts 24: 4, 8. 7:55, 56.
■ 28:25. 1 Pet. 1:12. 2 Pet. 1:21.
■ 6:32. 1 Lk 12:31-32.
■ 34, 35. 4:10. Mic. 7:5, 6. Zech. 13:3. Mark 13:12, 13. Luke 12:51-53. 21:17.
■ 2 Sam. 12:11. 17:1-4. Job 19:19.

mond; the men of the Jewish Sanhedrim, which disallowed Christ, 1 Pet. 2: 4.
2. From professing men, who have a form of godliness, and make a show of religion. *They will scourge you in their synagogues, or places of meeting to worship God, and exercise church-discipline: so that they looked on the scourging of Christ's ministers as part of their religion.* Paul was *five times scourged in their synagogues*, 2 Cor. 11: 24. The Jews, under color of real for Moses, were the most bitter persecutors of Christ and Christianity, and reckoned it to the score of their religion. Note, Christ's disciples have suffered much from such as *think they do God service* in persecuting them, (John 16: 2.) and say, *Let the Lord be glorified*, Isa. 66: 5. Zech. 11: 4, 5. But so far is the synagogue from consecrating the persecution, that the persecution, doubtless, profanes and desecrates the synagogue.

3. From great men, men in authority. The Jews not only scourged them, which was all their remaining power extended to; but, when they could go no further, delivered them up to the Romans, as they did Christ, John 18: 30. *Ye shall be brought before governors and kings*, (v. 18.) who, having more power, can do more mischief. *Governors and kings* receive their power from Christ; (Prov. 8: 15.) but, instead of serving Him, and protecting his church, often use their power against Him, and oppress his church. *The kings of the earth set themselves against his kingdom*, Ps. 2: 1, 2. Acts 4: 25, 26. Note, It has often been the lot of good men, to have great men for their enemies. [1 Kings 22: 8.]

4. From all men, (v. 22.) *Ye shall be hated of all men, all wicked men; and these are the generality of men, for the whole world lieth in wickedness.* So few favor the cause of Christ, that we may say, the friends of it are *hated of all men; they are all gone astray*, and, therefore, *eat up my people as bread*, Ps. 14: 3. As far as the apostasy from God goes, so far goes the enmity against the saints; more appears at one time than at others, but there is something of it ever lurking in the hearts of all the children of disobedience. *The world hates you, for it wonders after the beast*, (Rev. 13: 3.) *Every man is a liar*, therefore a hater of the truth.

Verses 19, 20.

The apostles were brought up in obscurity, unlearned, and not used to speak before assemblies, or potentates; and so might fear lest they should dishonor the cause, by impropriety of language. But they had no need to be solicitous for as they had not to plead their own cause, but that of Christ. He would suggest what they should speak; and thus their answers would not be so much their own, as those of the Holy Spirit speaking by them. (Marg. Ref. c.)—The case was extraordinary; neither the direction, nor the promise is applicable to common cases; yet every minister and Christian is authorized to expect adequate assistance. *Take no thought*. (19.) Note, 6: 25.

SCOTT.
‘This assurance and assistance was needful to the first preachers of the Gospel, who would otherwise have been dismayed, when brought before governors and kings. In Acts 4: 18. is an example of the accomplishment of both the prophecy and promise. Christians now, when placed in trying circumstances, ought certainly to prepare themselves, and provide beforehand what they should speak. Yet in this, as in other things, they should not be anxious, but “cast their care upon God,” and rely on the aid of his Holy Spirit, that with all “boldness” they shall be enabled to “speak the word;” that utterance shall be given them, and the grace of Him whom they serve prove “sufficient for the occasion.” This reliance will do more for them than much solicitude.’

Verses 21, 22.

The apostles might suppose that harmless conduct, beneficent miracles, and the glad tidings of the Messiah's coming, would conciliate favor. But Christ told them, that they would experience rancorous enmity from near relations: for the Gospel being contrary to the preju-

and therefore heavier is so much opposed on earth, because earth is, so much under the power of hell, Eph. 2: 2.

These hard things Christ's disciples must suffer.

1. From men, (v. 17.) ‘*Beware of men.* You must stand on your guard, even against those who are of the same nature with you—such is the depravity and degeneracy of that nature—*man is a wolf to man*,’ crafty and politic as men, but cruel and barbarous as beasts, and wholly divested of humanity. Note, Persecuting rage and enmity turn men into brutes, into devils: Paul at Ephesus fought with beasts in the shape of men, 1 Cor. 15: 32. Sad is it for the world, when the best friends it has had need *beware of men*. It aggravates the Christian's sufferings that they arise from those who are *bone of his bone*, made of the same blood. *Even savage bears agree among themselves.* It is very grievous to have men rise up against us, (Ps. 124.) from whom we might expect protection and sympathy; men, and no more: mere men, not saints; natural men, (1 Cor. 12: 14.) men of this world, Ps. 17: 14. Saints are more than men, redeemed from among men, and therefore hated by them. The nature of man, if it be not sanctified, is the worst nature in the world, next to that of devils. *They are men*, and therefore subordinate, dependent, dying creatures; *they are men*, yet they are but men, (Ps. 9: 20.) and who art thou that thou shouldst be afraid of a man that shall die? Isa. 51: 12. *Beware of the men*, so Dr. Ham-

mond; the men of the Jewish Sanhedrim, which disallowed Christ, 1 Pet. 2: 4.

2. From professing men, who have a form of godliness, and make a show of religion. *They will scourge you in their synagogues, or places of meeting to worship God, and exercise church-discipline: so that they looked on the scourging of Christ's ministers as part of their religion.* Paul was *five times scourged in their synagogues*, 2 Cor. 11: 24. The Jews, under color of real for Moses, were the most bitter persecutors of Christ and Christianity, and reckoned it to the score of their religion. Note, Christ's disciples have suffered much from such as *think they do God service* in persecuting them, (John 16: 2.) and say, *Let the Lord be glorified*, Isa. 66: 5. Zech. 11: 4, 5. But so far is the synagogue from consecrating the persecution, that the persecution, doubtless, profanes and desecrates the synagogue.

3. From great men, men in authority. The Jews not only scourged them, which was all their remaining power extended to; but, when they could go no further, delivered them up to the Romans, as they did Christ, John 18: 30. *Ye shall be brought before governors and kings*, (v. 18.) who, having more power, can do more mischief. *Governors and kings* receive their power from Christ; (Prov. 8: 15.) but, instead of serving Him, and protecting his church, often use their power against Him, and oppress his church. *The kings of the earth set themselves against his kingdom*, Ps. 2: 1, 2. Acts 4: 25, 26. Note, It has often been the lot of good men, to have great men for their enemies. [1 Kings 22: 8.]

4. From all men, (v. 22.) *Ye shall be hated of all men, all wicked men; and these are the generality of men, for the whole world lieth in wickedness.* So few favor the cause of Christ, that we may say, the friends of it are *hated of all men; they are all gone astray*, and, therefore, *eat up my people as bread*, Ps. 14: 3. As far as the apostasy from God goes, so far goes the enmity against the saints; more appears at one time than at others, but there is something of it ever lurking in the hearts of all the children of disobedience. *The world hates you, for it wonders after the beast*, (Rev. 13: 3.) *Every man is a liar*, therefore a hater of the truth.

5. From their own kindred. *The brother shall deliver up the brother to death*, v. 21. *A man shall be, on this account, at variance with his own father*; nay, those of the weaker and tenderer sex shall become persecutors and persecuted, and that where natural affection, one would think, should prevent or soon extinguish the quarrel; and no marvel, if the daughter-in-law be against the mother-in-law, where too often the coldness of love seeks occasion, if contention, v. 35. In general, (v. 36.) *a man's foes shall be they of his own household*. Those who should be his friends will be incensed against him for embracing Christianity, and join his persecutors. Note, Enmity against Christ and his doctrine has often broken the strongest bonds of relative love and duty. Such has been the prejudice against true religion and zeal for false, that all other regards have been sacrificed to these Molochs. *They who rage against the Lord and his anointed ones, break even their bands asunder, and cast away even these cords from them*. Ps. 2: 2, 3. Christ's spouse suffers hard things from the anger of her own mother's children, Cant. 1: 6. Sufferings from such are more grievous; nothing cuts in it as this, *It was thou, a man, mine equal*: (Ps. 55: 12, 13.) and the enmity of such is commonly most implacable: *a brother offended is harder to be won than a strong city*, Prov. 18: 19. The martyrologies, ancient and modern, abound with instances of this. On the whole, it appears, that all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution; and through many tribulations we must expect to enter into the kingdom of God.

II. With these predictions of trouble, we have counsels and comforts prescribed. Our Lord sends them out exposed, indeed, but well armed. He counsels and directs them,

1. *Be wise as serpents*, v. 16. ‘You may be so,’ as some take it; ‘be wary as you please, provided you be harmless as doves.’ But it is rather to be taken as a precept, recommending that wisdom of the prudent, which is to understand his way, and useful at all times, but especially in suffering times. *Therefore*, because you are exposed as sheep among wolves *be ye wise as serpents*; not as foxes, whose cunning is to deceive others, but as serpents; whose policy is to defend themselves, and shift for their own safety.’ The disciples of Christ are hated and persecuted as serpents, therefore they need the serpent's wisdom. Note, Christ's will is, that his people and ministers, exposed as they usually are, should not needlessly expose themselves, but use all proper means for their preservation. Christ gave us an example of this, ch. 21: 24, 25. 22: 17, 18, 19. John 8: 6, 7, besides the many escapes He made from his enemies, till his hour was come. See an instance of Paul's wisdom, Acts 23: 6, 7. In the cause of Christ, we must sit loose to life and its comforts, but not be prodigal of them. It is the wisdom of the serpent, to secure his head,

dices and lusts of men, interfering with their projects, and opposed by the evil spirit which ‘work in the children of disobedience,’ would cause convulsions in cities and nations, and excite the jealousy of rulers: it would throw men into parties, and produce controversies and furious persecutions. Then the enemies of the truth would forget the ties of consanguinity and alliance; brethren would accuse one another, and procure each other's death: parents would prosecute their children to death, and even children would rise against their parents to procure their execution: nay, Christians would be hated for the sake of Christ by all, except such as embraced the Gospel. This would expose them, to sufferings that might tempt them to apostatize. But they who would cleave to the Lord should be preserved, and recompensed with eternal felicity; while apostates would be finally lost. (Marg. Ref.)

Cause to be put to death. (21.) Rom. 8: 13.—‘Kill them.’ For the iniquitous persecutor is the real murderer. *He that endureth* (22.) Note, Heb. 12: 2, 3, v. 3.—Note, Jam. 1: 12. The word implies not only suffering, but being tried, and standing the trial. This hypotheses cannot endure—Judas did not endure unto the end. ‘He that endureth to the end of the persecution from the Jews shall be saved from the destruction coming on them.’ Whitty. This may be implied: but surely, endurance to the end of life, and final salvation, are mainly intended.

SCOTT.
Brother shall deliver up the brother. [‘Religious quarrels, to the shame of mankind, are the fiercest of all others, so as to counteract some of the strongest workings of nature, and dissolve the ties of nearest kindred. Christendom has had its full share in the guilt of a persecuting spirit, and it is hardly ever enough abhorred.’

22 And ye shall be ⁿated of all men ^b for my name's sake; ⁱ but he that enureth to the end shall be saved.

23 But ^k when they persecute you in this city, flee ^y into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not ^{*} have gone over the cities of Israel, 'till the Son of man be come.

24 The ^mdisciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.

25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. ⁿ If they have called the Master of the house ^{*} Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household!

24:9. 1a. 69.56. Luke 6:22. John 7:7. 15:18,19. 17:14. 1 John 3:13. b 30. 5:11. 1 John 15:21. Acts 9:16. c 2 Cor. 4:11. Rev. 2:23. d 24:13. Dan. 12:13,13. Mark 13:9. Luke 8:15. Rom. 2:7. Gal. 6:9. Heb. 3:14. 6:11. Jam. 1:12. Jude 1:24. Rev. 2:7,10,17,38. 3:21. e 24:13. 12:14,15. Luke 4:22-31. John 7:1. 10:29-42. 11:53,54. Acts 8:1. 9:24,25. 13:50,51. 14:9,7,19,20. 17:14. 20:1. f Dr. end. or Anti-ch. 11:62a. 24:27,30,48. 25:18. 26:54. Mark 13:36. Luke 12:41. 24:42,43. m 2 Sam. 11:1. Luke 6:40. John 13:16. 15:20,41. Heb. 12:2-4. n 9:34. 12:24. Mark 3:22. Luke 11:15. John 7:20. 8:48,52. 10:20. o Gr. Beelzebub.

that it may not be broken; to stop his ear to the voice of the charmer, (Ps. 58: 4, 5.) and take shelter in the clefts of the rocks; and herein we may be wise as serpents. We must be wise, not to pull trouble on our heads; wise to keep silence in an evil time, and not to give offence, if we can avoid it.

2. Be ye harmless as doves. 'Be mild, meek, dispassionate; not only do no one hurt, but bear no one ill-will; be without gall, as doves.' They are sent forth among wolves, therefore must be wise as serpents; but sent forth as sheep, therefore must be harmless as doves. We must be wise, not to wrong ourselves, but rather so than wrong another; must bear twenty injuries rather than offer or return one. Note, It must be the continual care of all Christ's disciples, to be innocent and inoffensive in word and deed, especially considering the enemies who surround them. We have need of a dove-like spirit, when beset with birds of prey, that we neither provoke them, nor be provoked by them. David coveted the wings of a dove, on which to fly away and be at rest, rather than those of a hawk. The Spirit descended on Christ as a dove; and all believers partake of the Spirit of Christ, a dove-like spirit, made for love, not war.

3. Beware of men, v. 17. Be always on your guard, avoid dangerous company, and presume not too far on any man's fidelity; be jealous of the most plausible pretensions: trust not in a friend, nor, not in the wife of thy bosom, Micah 7: 5. Note, It becomes those who are gracious to be cautious, for we are to cease from man. We live in such a world that we know not whom to trust. Ever since our Master was betrayed with a kiss, by one of his disciples, we have need to beware of men, of false brethren.

4. Take no thought how or what ye shall speak, v. 19. 'When brought before magistrates, be prudent and respectful, but not anxious, perplexed or disquieted. As in relation to support, so here, cast all your care on God. Do not study by fine speeches to ingratiate yourselves; elegant expressions, flourishes of wit and labored periods only gild a bad cause; the

gold of a good one needs them not. To be solicitous, argues distrust, as if your cause did not speak for itself. You know on what grounds you go, and suitable expressions will readily occur.' Never any spoke better before governors and kings, than those three champions who took no thought before, what they should speak: O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter, Dan. 3: 16. See Ps. 119: 46. The disciples of Christ must be more thoughtful how to do well, than how to speak well; how to keep their integrity, than how to vindicate it. Our lives, not boasting words, form the best apology.

5. When they persecute you in this city, flee ye to another, v. 23. 'Thus reject those who reject you and your doctrine, and try others. Thus shift for your own safety.' Note, In imminent peril, when God opens a door of escape, Christ's disciples may and must secure themselves by flight. He that flies may hereafter fight. It is no inglorious thing for Christ's soldiers to quit their ground, provided they quit not their colors. They may go out of the way of danger, though not out of the way of duty. Observe Christ's care of his disciples, in providing for their safety; ordering it so, that persecution rages not in all places at the same time; but when one city is made too hot for them, a cooler is in reserve; yet always with this proviso, that no sinful, unlawful means be used to make an escape, for then it is not a door of God's opening. We have many examples in the history both of Christ and his apostles; in the application of which to particular cases, wisdom and integrity are profitable to direct.

6. Fear them not, (v. 26.) for they can but kill the body, v. 23. Note, It is the duty and interest of Christ's disciples not to fear the greatest of their adversaries. They who truly fear God, need not fear man: and they who are afraid of the least sin, need not be afraid of the greatest trouble. The fear of man bringeth a snare; it must therefore be carefully watched and striven and prayed against. Be the times never so difficult, enemies never so outrageous,

The apostles are informed beforehand, that they were to experience persecution and hatred, and be exposed to evils and dangers. Can we then conceive it possible that any men in their senses should, without some very powerful and extraordinary motive, voluntarily undertake a commission like this, in which the only recompense was to be affliction, misery, pain and death; in which all the natural affections of the human heart were to be extinguished or inverted, and their nearest relations, their parents, children, or brethren, become their persecutors and executioners? And this too, when, instead of employing any art, or making any attempt to deceive his followers, our Savior plainly tells them they are to expect nothing but what is most dreadful to human nature? Yet the apostles actually and cheerfully did expose themselves to all this evil, at the command of their Lord. Is there any instance upon record before this, in the annals of the world, where twelve men, without any reason, and without being led by any artifice or delusion, voluntarily exposed themselves, at the desire of another person, to persecution, torment and destruction? There must have been some forcible reason for such conduct as this; and that reason could be nothing less than a full conviction, arising from the miracles which they saw with their own eyes, and which they themselves were enabled to perform, that Christ was what He professed to be, the Son of God; that all power was given Him in heaven and earth; and that He was able to fulfil the promises He had made them of a recompense in a future life, infinitely surpassing, in magnitude and duration, all the sufferings they could experience in the present.

Hated of all.' They who believed the testimony of the apostles, as multitudes did, could not but love them as fathers in Christ: (See Gal. 4: 15.) This, therefore, is plainly one of those many Scriptures, in which the universal term *all* is to be taken with great restrictions. See John 12: 32. Phil. 2: 21. and Rom. 5: 15.

Verse 23.

The openness with which Christ warned his apostles of coming persecutions, evinced a consciousness of influence over their hearts, and of power to support and reward them.—They must not conceal, or palliate their message, to avoid persecution; yet they ought not to rush into danger, but when persecuted in one city to flee to another, and preach the Gospel. This would drive them from scenes of apparent usefulness, yet it would not injure the cause; for they would not have gone through the cities of Israel, till the Son of man should come.—This phrase signifies either his coming with the Romans to destroy the Jews; or 'his rise to the judgment: and seeing the apostles were not to live till the judgment, it is necessary to understand this of his coming to avenge himself on the Jews.' Whittby. The apostles were not persecuted till after the day of Pentecost; so that, the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans seems especially pointed out.—Persecution prevented the apostles from preaching through the land as fully, as they might otherwise have done. The conversion of the Gentiles, after a time, furnished many of them with employment; and, when judgments came on the Jews, several cities of Israel had not been instructed by the preachers of the Gospel.

Persecute you.] 'It is prudence and humility, when charity or righteousness oblige us not to the contrary, to avoid persecution. To deprive those who are disposed to do evil, of the opportunities of doing it; to convey the grace which they despise, to others; to accomplish God's designs of justice on the former, and of mercy on the latter, are consequences of the flight of a persecuted preacher. This flight is a proper one to those who are highly necessary to the church of Christ, and advice to those who might imprudently draw upon themselves persecution, and of indulgence for those who are weak. But this flight is highly criminal in those mercenary preachers, who through love to their flesh and their property, abandon the flock of Christ to the wolf.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Until the Son of man shall come.] 'I do not find that the apostles were persecuted in this first progress, from which they soon returned to Christ, and told Him all they had done; (See Mark 6: 30. and Luke 9: 10.) and therefore, as well as for many other reasons, I cannot understand the coming of the Son of man to signify his overtaking them in this journey, before they came to the end of it: nor does it appear natural, with Dr. Sykes, to refer it to Christ's coming to judgment. It is rather, as Mr. Whiston observes, to be explained of their being driven out of Judea by persecutions, so that they had not time to visit all the parts of it before the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, which is often called the coming of the Son of man. See Matt. 24: 27, 37, 39, 44, and Luke 18: 8.'

DODD.

'We shall not have travelled through the cities of Israel, preaching the Gospel, before the Son of man is revealed by his resurrection.' Rom. 1: 4. Lay to this Acts 3: 15, 26, and verse 26. 'The first God, raising up His Son, Him Jesus, blessed with power.' &c. The epoch of the Messiah is stated from the resurrection of Christ. LIGHTFOOT.

'Others understand this coming of Christ of the effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, grounding the opinion on John 14: 17, 18. In the general, our Savior means, till the time accomplished, when, leaving the Jews, you shall preach to the Gentiles: a dispensation which may be called a coming of Christ, for ought I know; being an eminent act of God's Providence, in which Christ was shewed to the world.'

POOLS.

These are some of the many interpretations of our Lord's words; but that of Doddridge and Scott above is most generally followed, referring them to the demolition of the city and economy of the Jews, about thirty years after; as in Matt. 24: 30. Mark 13:26. Luke 21: 27, 32. Ed. Verse 24-26.

The disciple is not generally regarded as of greater excellence than his teacher, nor the servant than his master; nor ought he to expect greater deference and honor. Never were servants so inferior to their Lord as Christ's were. If then they met with injurious usage in their ministry, they should remember, that the Master of the family, though wise, holy, excellent, and beneficent, had been called Beelzebub, 'the prince of devils'; and it ought to satisfy his domestics, to be treated as their Lord, considering their inferiority and unworthiness; and they were exhorted not to fear those who might falsely accuse them, or

SCOTT.

26 * Fear them not therefore: * for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

27 What * I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light; and what ye hear in the ear, * that preach ye upon the house-tops.

28 And * fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to

and events never so threatening, yet need we not fear, even though the earth be removed, while we have a God so good, and a cause and hope through grace so good, besides.

Yes, this is soon said; but when it comes to trial, racks and tortures, dungeons and galleys, axes, and gibbets, fire and faggot, are terrible enough to make the stoutest tremble, and start back, especially when they may be avoided by a few declining steps; therefore, to fortify us against temptation, we have

A good reason against this fear, taken from the limited power of the enemies: they kill the body, but this is all: they are not able to kill the soul. Hence the soul does not (as some dream) fall asleep at death, for then the killing of the body would be the killing of the soul too. The soul is killed when separated from God and his love, (which is his life), and made a vessel of wrath: but this is out of the reach of their power. Tribulation, distress, and persecution may separate us from all the world, but not from God; they cannot cause us either not to love Him, or not to be beloved by Him, Rom. 8: 35, 37. If, therefore, we were more concerned about our souls as our jewels, we should be less afraid of men, who cannot rob us of them. They can but crush the cabinet; as a heathen intimated, in saying to the tyrant, 'You may abuse

the case of Ananias, but cannot injure Ananias himself.' The pearl of price is untouched. Seneca undertakes to prove, that you cannot hurt a wise and good man, because even death is no real evil to him.

Our Lord prescribes a good remedy against the fear of man, and that is, *Fear Him, who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.* Note, First, *Hell* is the destruction of both soul and body; not of the being of either, but of the well being of both, the ruin of the whole man, soul and body. They sinned together; the body was the soul's tempter and tool in sin, and they must eternally suffer together. Secondly, This destruction is from God: *He is able to destroy*; it is a destruction from his glorious power; (2 Thess. 1: 9.) in it *He will make his power known*; his authority to sentence, and his ability to execute the sentence, Rom. 9: 22. Thirdly, *God is therefore to be feared*, even by the saints in this world. *Knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men to stand in awe of Him.* If, according to his fear, so is his wrath, then according to his wrath so should his fear be, especially because none knoweth the power of his anger, Ps. 90: 11. If Adam, in innocence, must be awed by threatening, let no disciples of Christ think they need not the restraint of holy fear. *Happy is the man that feareth always.* The God of Abraham, then dead, is called the fear of Isaac, who was yet alive, Gen. 31: 42, 53. Fourthly, The fear of God and of his power, reigning in the soul, will be a sovereign antidote against the fear of man. It is better to fall under the frowns of all the world, than under God's frowns; therefore, as

it is most right in itself, so is it most safe for us, to obey God rather than man, Acts 4: 19. They who are afraid of a man that shall die, forget the Lord their Maker, Isa. 51: 12, 13. Neh. 4: 14.

7. *What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light* (v. 27.) 'whatever hazards ye run, go on with your work, proclaiming the everlasting Gospel; that is your special business. The design of the enemies is, not merely to destroy you, but to suppress that; therefore, whatever be the consequence, publish that.' *What tell you, speak ye.* Note, What the apostles have delivered to us, they received from Jesus Christ. Heb. 2: 3. They spake what He told them—all that, and nothing but that. They received their instructions in private, in darkness, in the ear, in corners, in parables. *Many things Christ spake openly, and nothing in secret* varying from what He preached in public, John 18: 20. But the particular instructions He gave his disciples after his resurrection, concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, were 'whispered in the ear,' (Acts 1: 3.) for then He never shrouded Himself openly. But they must deliver their embassy publicly, in the light, and on the house-tops, as being of universal concernment; (Prov. 1: 20, 21. 8: 2, 3.) therefore he that hath ears to hear, let him hear. The first indication of the reception of Gentiles into the church, was upon the house-top, Acts 16: 9. Note, No part of Christ's Gospel needs concealment; the whole counsel of God must be revealed, Acts 20: 27. In a multitude never so mixed, let it be plainly and fully delivered.

To comfort and encourage them, much is said, and all little enough, considering the hardships before them, and their present weakness. Christ therefore shows them why they should be of good cheer. One word is peculiar to their present mission, v. 23. *Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.* They were to preach that his kingdom was at hand, and pray, *thy kingdom come*; now they should not have thus gone over all Israel, before that kingdom should come, in the exaltation of Christ, and the pouring out of the Spirit. It was a comfort, that what they said should be made good; for Christ will confirm the word of his messengers, Isa. 44: 26. and that it

charge them with base designs, for all secrets would soon be disclosed, and then their characters, principles, and intentions, would be fully justified, and the wickedness of their accusations put to shame. * These words (26.) are capable, says Whitby, of two good senses. Let not the dread of persecutors hinder us from preaching the gospel, in despite of success; for if now it be hidden from the world, and is to be obscured awhile, by the calumnies of Jews and others; I will cause it to shine over the world, and break through all obstacles, and make it mighty to cast down every high thought, &c. (2 Cor. 10: 5.) 'Or thus: fear not their calumnies, for I will make the excellence of your doctrine clear as the light; and your integrity in dispensing it, and patience in suffering for it, to be your praise in all ages, and at the revelation of the Lord from heaven.'

Master, (24.) Luke 2: 46. 6: 40. John 3: 2. 1 Cor. 12: 23. Eph. 4: 11. 2 Tim. 1: 11. It signifies a teacher, rather than a commander. As used by Christ, it means the Teacher.—Them of his household.

(25.) Domestic servants, as distinguished from servants abroad.

(24.) 'This saying, of itself, requires no comment, being self-evident; but we must regard its spirit and design. Jesus is the great Teacher; we profess to be his scholars. He who keeps the saying in his heart, will not complain of suffering. How many irregular thoughts and affections is this maxim capable of restraining! A man is not a scholar of Christ unless he learn his doctrine; and does not learn it as he ought, unless he put it in practice.'

(25.) Beelzebub. 'Among all the devils, many of whom are named in the Talmud, the Jews esteemed this the worst and foulest, as it were, the prince of the rest, who ruled over the idols of the heathens. This demon they called Beelzebub, i. e. lord of idolatry: the worst devil and worst thing. Matthew doubtless wrote Beelzebub, and the Pharisees so pronounced it: which idol is supposed to be the same as Beelzebub, the god-fly, worshipped at Ekron, 2 Kings 1: 2. &c. as among the ignominious names bestowed upon idols, the general and common one was zebul, ordure or a dunghill (also idolatry); thus Beelzebub, the god of ordure, was used by the Jews as a term of the utmost contempt.' But see at ch. 12: 24. LIGHTFOOT. Dr. A. CLARKE.

(26.) Nothing hid which shall not be known. 'A proverbial expression, like "time brings all things to light." Since therefore you have my example before you, and suffer in my cause, fear them not, but sustain the utmost efforts of their rage; and assure yourselves that I will support you, till you have finished your testimony; for there is nothing now hid which shall not be revealed; nor does any thing passed in secret between us, which shall not be universally made known.'

DODD.

Verse 27, 28.

The apostles could not be cut off till they had finished their testimony: they ought, therefore to be zealous in publicly declaring the truths which Christ had privately taught them, and even to proclaim from the tops of the houses, according to the usage of the Jews, respecting houses which they desired to make known to a neighborhood. This would expose them to enmity, and the loss of life; but were persecutors to proceed as far as possible, they could kill only the body, a little before it would otherwise die; for they could not destroy the soul either by terminating its existence, or preventing its felicity. The tortures thus endured would be dreadful, yet far short of the misery which God can inflict on body and soul in hell. The servants of Christ ought not then to fear the malice of man, but the omnipotent, eternal, and righteous displeasure of God; which they would incur, if for fear of persecution, they apostatized, or failed to fulfil their ministry.—These words contain proof that the soul dies not with the body. What men can do to the body, they cannot do to the soul. They who, by killing the body, render the soul insensate, do also kill the soul; for it is not easy to see how a thinking and perceiving being can be more killed, than by depriving it of sensation, thought and perception; the body being killed by privation of sense and motion. It remains, that the soul does not perish with the body, nor is reduced to insensibility by the death of it.' Whitby. The language exposes the impotent rage of those, who, by brutal treatment of the lifeless body, try to do more than merely kill the hated object; for this does nothing, nor should the apprehension of it cause any uneasiness.

(27.) Hear in the ear. 'Allusion is here made to the manner of the schools, where the doctor whispered out of the chair into the ear of the interpreter, and he, with a loud voice, repeated to the whole school what, which was spoken in the ear.'

Preach (i. e. proclaim) ye upon the house-tops. 'Perhaps this alludes to the custom, that the minister of the synagogue, on the sabbath-even, sounded with a trumpet six times, on the roof of an exceeding high house, that thence all might have notice of the coming in of the sabbath. The first sound was, that they should come in from their work in the fields; the second, that they should cease from it in the city; the third, that they should light the sabbath candle, &c.'

The houses of Judea were flat roofed, with a balustrade round about. As there are no bells among the Turks, a cry proclaims even now at times of public worship from the house-tops.

(28.) Kill the soul. 'There is here such an opposition between the soul and the body, as clearly proves the former to be immaterial; what does not and cannot perish with the body. The soul exists separate from

will the soul. But rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

29 ¶ Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, I will confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, I will also

1. Ps. 119:20. Ec. 5:7. 8:12, 13. Is. 66:2. Jer. 5:22. Heb. 12:24, 29. 25:46. Mark 9:43-48. Luke 16:22-26. John 5:29. 2 Thes. 1:8-10. Rev. 20:11-15.

x. Luke 12:8, 9.

1. Halfpenny farthing, the tenth of the Roman penny.

1 Sam. 14:45. 2 Sam. 14:11. 1 Kings 19:2. Luke 12:7. 21:18. Acts 27:31. 6:28. 12:11, 13. Ps. 9:5. Luke 12:24. 13:15, 16. 1 Cor. 9:9, 10.

b. Ps. 119:46. Luke 12:8, 9. John 9:22. Rom. 10:9, 10. 1 Tim. 6:12, 13. 2 Tim. 1:18. 1 John 4:15. Rev. 2:13.

2 Thes. 1 Sam. 2:30. Rev. 3:5. 21:7-75. Mark 8:38. Luke 9:26. 12:9. 2 Tim. 2:14, 13. 2 Pet. 2:1. 1 John 2:55.

kinge. It shall be given you (said Christ) in that same hour what ye shall speak.

Christ's disciples being from among the foolish of the world, unlearned and ignorant, might justly distrust their own abilities, especially when called before great men; as Moses, when sent to Pharaoh, I am not eloquent, (Exod. 4:10.) and Jeremiah, when set over the kingdoms, I am but a child, Jer. 1:6, 10. Hence, they are promised, that it should be given them, in that same hour, what they should speak. They shall speak extempore, and yet as much to the purpose, as if it had been never so well studied. Note, When God calls us to speak for Him, we may, even though under the greatest disadvantages and discouragements, depend on Him to teach us. They are also assured that the blessed Spirit should draw up their plea for them. It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you, &c. 20. They were then not left to themselves, but God undertook for them; his Spirit of wisdom spoke in them, as sometimes his providence spoke for them,

should be made good quickly. It is a comfort to Christ's laborers, that their working time will be short, and soon over, as the hiring has his day; and that then they shall be advanced to a higher station. When the Son of man comes, they shall be endued with great power from on high. Now they are sent forth as agents; soon their commission shall be enlarged, and they be sent forth as plenipotentiaries into all the world.

Many words relate to their work in general, and the troubles they were to meet in it; and they are good words and comfortable.

1. That their sufferings were for a testimony against them and the Gentiles, v. 18. When the Jews transfer you to the Romans, to put you to death, your being hurried from one judgment-seat to another, will help to make your testimony the more public, and give you opportunity to bring the Gospel to Gentiles, as well as Jews; nay, you will testify to them and against them, by the very troubles you undergo. Note, God's people, and especially his ministers, are his witnesses, (Isa. 43:10.) not only in what they do, but in what they suffer. Hence they are called martyrs—witnesses for Christ, that his truths are of undoubted certainty and value; and being witnesses for Him, they are witnesses against those who oppose Him and his Gospel. The sufferings of the martyrs, as they witness the truth of the Gospel they profess, so are they a proof of the enmity of their persecutors, and a testimony against them; and will be so produced in the great day, when the saints shall judge the world; then the reason of the sentence will be, Inasmuch as ye did it unto these, ye did it unto me. Now if their sufferings be a testimony, how cheerfully should they be borne: for the testimony is not finished till those come, Rev. 11:7. If they be Christ's witnesses, they shall be sure to have their charges borne.

2. That on all occasions they should have God's special presence, and the immediate assistance of his Holy Spirit, particularly when called to bear testimony before governors and kings. It shall be given you (said Christ) in that same hour what ye shall speak. Christ's disciples being from among the foolish of the world, unlearned and ignorant, might justly distrust their own abilities, especially when called before great men; as Moses, when sent to Pharaoh, I am not eloquent, (Exod. 4:10.) and Jeremiah, when set over the kingdoms, I am but a child, Jer. 1:6, 10. Hence, they are promised, that it should be given them, in that same hour, what they should speak. They shall speak extempore, and yet as much to the purpose, as if it had been never so well studied. Note, When God calls us to speak for Him, we may, even though under the greatest disadvantages and discouragements, depend on Him to teach us. They are also assured that the blessed Spirit should draw up their plea for them. It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you, &c. 20. They were then not left to themselves, but God undertook for them; his Spirit of wisdom spoke in them, as sometimes his providence spoke for them,

and by both they were manifested in the consciences even of their persecutors. God gave ability then to speak to the purpose, and with holy zeal. The same Spirit assisted them in the pulpit and at the bar. They cannot but come off well, who have such an Advocate: to whom God says, as to Moses, Go, and I will be with thy mouth, and will teach thee what thou shalt say.

3. That he who endures to the end shall be saved, v. 22. Here it is comforting to consider that there will be an end of these troubles. Christ comforted Himself with this, and so may his followers: The things concerning me have an end, Luke 22:37. A believing prospect of the period of our troubles, will greatly aid in supporting us under them. The weary will be at rest when the wicked cease from troubling, Job 3:17. Troubles may seem tedious, like the days of an hireling, but, blessed be God, they are not everlasting: He will bring an expected end, Jer. 29:11. While they continue, it is comforting that they may be endured: as they are not eternal, so they are not intolerable; they may be borne, even to the end, because the sufferers shall be borne up under them in everlasting arms: The strength shall be according to the day, 1 Cor. 10:13. Salvation, too, will be the eternal recompense of all that endure to the end. The weather is stormy, the way foul; but the pleasure of home will make amends for all. A believing regard to the crown of glory has been in all ages the cordial and support of suffering saints, 2 Cor. 4:16-18. Heb. 10:34. This is both an encouragement to endure, and an engagement to endure to the end. They who endure but a while, and in time of temptation fall away, run in vain, and lose all their attainments; but they who persevere are sure of the prize, and they only. Be faithful death, and thou shalt have the crown of life.

4. That whatever hard usage the disciples of Christ meet, it is no more than their Master suffered before, (v. 24, 25.) the disciple is not above his master; a reason this, why they should not hesitate to perform the meanest duties; no, not to wash one another's feet, John 13:16. Here, it is a reason why they should not stumble at the hardest sufferings. They are reminded of this saying, John 16:20. Note, Jesus Christ is our Master, our teaching Master, our ruling Master, whose servants we are; He is Master of the house. Further, Jesus Christ, our Lord and Master, had very hard usage from the world. They called Him Beelzebub, the god of flies, a name of the chief of devils, with whom they said He was in league. It is hard to say which is most to be wondered at, the wickedness of men in thus

the body, and must be conscious of that existence; else the soul would be as properly killed as the body. The latter clause proves that the soul may perish, by being subject to future misery; but it does not cease to exist.

Verse 29.

A farthing.] 'Equal to four grains of silver, and used among the rabbins to express a thing of the lowest, or almost no value.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Without your Father.] 'Without the knowledge and consent of God.'

BLOOMFIELD.

'Without the will (or counsel) of your Father; by whose counsel all things are ordered; a great consolation to the afflicted and tried; for the belief of an all-wise, all-directing Providence is a powerful support under even the most grievous.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

One of them shall not fall, &c.] 'These words are a full proof of the universality of a divine providence; but the singular interposition of it in favor of good men, may in a much more convincing manner be argued, from the prayers and praises offered in Scripture with regard to particular events, and the promise of temporal blessings made to those that fear and serve God. Nor can I think we are much concerned to determine how far any of these are miraculous, and how far the result of general laws settled in exact congruity to the temper and conduct of every individual affected by them, which an omniscient God foresees, and which his excellent schemes might easily provide for, by methods to us unsearchable.'

DODDRIDGE.

Verse 30.

Hairs of your head,] 'Signifying that the very smallest of our concerns are watched over by God; an expression used in the rabbinic writings.'

BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 31.

Ye are of more value.] 'None can estimate the value of a soul, for which Christ has given his blood and life.' Did the poet intend to contradict Christ? &c. &c.

CLARKE.

"He sees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall!"

'How cold and meagre is this shallow delinquent saying! That is, a sparrow is of as much worth in the sight of God, who regards, (if we may believe the poet) things only in general, as an immortal soul, purchased by the sacrifice of Christ!'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'These very strong instances are plainly chosen on purpose to quiet all our fears, and to banish from our minds every idea of our being too small and insignificant for the care and protection of Almighty God. Here we have that most important and consolatory doctrine of a particular providence plainly and clearly laid down. It is Scripture only which on this momentous point can give rest to our souls.'

Ep. PORTER.

Verse 32.

Confess me.] 'Profess my doctrine, or be on my part.' BLOOMFIELD. 'It signifies, whoever shall acknowledge Me to be the Messiah, and have his heart and life regulated by my Spirit and doctrine. It is not sufficient merely to have the heart right toward God; there must be a firm, manly, and public profession of Christ before men, if we would not be renounced by Him before God.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'Whoever is unwilling to be taken for a pious and good man, runs a great risk of soon becoming a profane and bad one.'

Abp. SECKER.

Verse 33.

Deny me.] 'Reject, cast off.'

BLOOMFIELD.

'Whoever professes his worldly interests to his duty to God, sets a greater value on earthly than on heavenly things; and prefers the friendship of men to the approbation of God.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'As the great, comprehensive gospel-duty is the denial of self, so the grand gospel sin that confronts it, is the denial of Christ. These two are both the commanding and the dividing principles of all our actions; for whoever acts in opposition to one, does it always in behalf of the other. None ever opposed Christ, but to gratify self and none ever renounced an interest in self, but from a partiality to the interest of Christ.'

CLARKE.

deny before my Father which is in heaven.

[Practical Observations.]

34 ¶ Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

36 And as a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

37 He that loveth father or mother more than me, is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me, is not worthy of me.

38 And he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and

abusing Christ, or the patience of Christ in suffering their abuse: that He who was the Prince of light and life, should be stigmatized as the prince of the powers of death and darkness: that Satan's greatest Enemy and Destroyer should be run down as his confederate, and yet endure such contradiction of sinners. The consideration also of the ill treatment which Christ met in the world, should lead us to expect and prepare for the like, and bear it patiently. Let us not think it strange, if they who hate Him, hate his followers for his sake: nor if they, who shortly are to be made like Him in glory, be now made like Him in sufferings.

5. That there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, v. 26. We understand this, first, of the revealing of the Gospel to all the world. 'Do you publish it, (v. 27.) for it shall be published. The truths now hid as mysteries, shall be made known to all nations in their own language,' Acts 2: 11. The ends of the earth must see his salvation. Note, The certainty that it shall be done, is a great encouragement in doing Christ's work. It is a plough which God will speed. Or, secondly, of clearing up the character of Christ's servants, who are called Beelzebub: their true character is now invidiously disguised and covered, but its innocence and excellence shall be revealed; perhaps in this world: certainly in the world to come: then their glory shall be manifested to all men and angels, to whom they are now made a spectacle, 1 Cor. 4: 9. All their reproach shall be rolled away, and their graces and services, now covered, be revealed, 1 Cor. 4: 5. Note, It is a comfort to the people of God, under all the calumnies and censure of men, that there will be a resurrection of names as well as bodies, when the righteous shall shine forth as the sun. Let Christ's ministers faithfully reveal his truth, and leave it for Him, in due time, to reveal their integrity.

6. That the providence of God is especially conversant about the saints in their sufferings, v. 29—31. It is good to have recourse to first principles, and particularly to the doctrine of God's universal providence, extended to all creatures and their actions, even the most minute. The light of nature teaches this, and all good men, who can in faith call God their Father, find comfort in it. See here,

First, the extension of providence to all crea-

tures, even the least considerable as to sparrows, v. 29. These are of so small account, that one of them is not valued: there must go two for a farthing, (nay you shall have five for half a penny, Luke 12: 6.) and yet they are not shut out of the divine care: One of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father: that is light on the ground to pick a grain of corn but your heavenly Father, by his providence laid it ready for them. In the parallel place, Luke 12: 6. it is said, not one of them is forgotten before God, forgotten to be provided for: He feedeth them, ch. 6: 26. Now He that feeds the sparrows, will not starve the saints. Or, they fall not to the ground by death, without the notice of God: though they are a part of the creation so small, yet even their death comes within the notice of the divine providence: much more does the death of these disciples. Observe, The birds that soar above, when they die, fall to the ground; death brings the highest to the earth. Some think that Christ here alludes to the two sparrows used in cleansing the leper: (Lev. 14: 4—6.) of which one was killed, and fell to the ground, the other was let go. Now it seemed a casual thing which of the two was killed; the persons employed took which they pleased, but God's providence designed and determined which. God, who has such an eye to the sparrows, best sees they are his creatures, will much more have an eye to you, who are his children. If a sparrow die not without your Father, surely a man does not,—a Christian,—a minister,—my friend, my child. A bird is not caught, nor shot, and comes not into market, but according to the direction of providence: your enemies may lay snares for you, and privily snarl at you, but they cannot take or hit you, unless God give leave. Therefore be not afraid of death, for your enemies have no power against you, but what is given them from above. God can break their bows and snares, (Ps. 37: 14, 15: 64: 4, 7.) and make our souls to escape as a bird; (Ps. 124: 7.) Fear ye not therefore, v. 31. Note, The doctrine of God's providence is enough to silence all the fears of God's people: Ye are of more value than many sparrows. All men are so, other creatures being made for man, and put under his feet: (Ps. 8: 4, 5, 8.) much more the disciples of Jesus Christ, who are the excellent of the earth, however contemned.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16—33. Ministers should advert to their character and situation, and count their cost. They are sent as 'sheep' among 'wolves'; let them remember to be like lambs and doves; not resisting evil, nor retorting reproaches and injuries. Let them temper zeal and boldness with discretion, and so act as to furnish their enemies with no plausible pretext for their malignity. This 'wisdom is from above,' and must be sought by prayer, or it will be a time-serving caution. Yet, if they united the 'wisdom of the serpent with the harmlessness of the dove,' they could not escape hatred and contempt.—Those who take the Lord's part against the ungodly, will be opposed, reviled, and evil treated. The excellent servants of Christ in all ages hitherto have been imprisoned, scourged and put to death as malefactors. They have been brought before kings for no other crime, than bearing the name and preaching the Gospel of Christ! Thus the Lord brings truth to those, who would else have been strangers to it; yet this testimony turns against them.—The work of the ministry requires study and preparation; but should the minister be suddenly called to declare his message even before princes, he need not be anxious how or what to speak, but rely on Him, who has promised to give his people 'a mouth and wisdom,' which their enemies cannot 'gainsay or resist.'—Opportunities of doing good may be expected in every place; and hence we are not required to stay among per-

secutors; yet we must not neglect our work, or conceal our relation to Christ. If, then, we are ready to faint under the difficulties we meet, we should look to our Lord; for we should be willing to bear the same treatment from the world, which He bore. Yet none of us is made to suffer as He was. Let us, then, pray to be free from the fear of man; and if falsely accused, let us wait for the Lord to 'bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and make manifest the counsels of all hearts,' and then every faithful servant 'shall have praise of God.' Let us openly profess and plainly declare his truth, and if we be called to seal our testimony with our blood, we should fear apostasy more than tortures; for 'man can only kill the body,' but the Lord is able to 'destroy both body and soul in hell.' 'If any man draw back, He will have no pleasure in him,' and he only 'that endureth unto the end, shall be saved. The Savior is able to comfort us under the sharpest sufferings, and protect us in extreme perils; and without Him the most trivial event cannot occur. Let us, then, confess Christ and obey Him before men, assured, that He will own poor sinners as his brethren before his Father. But woe be to them, who are ashamed of Him at his words among men; or deny Him before his enemies; for Christ will disown them in that day when eternal happiness or misery will be awarded by his word.

SCOTT.

Verse 34.

Think not.] This is a forcible and oriental mode of expressing the certainty of a foreseen consequence of any measure, by representing it as the purpose for which the measure was adopted.

WEISTEIN, CAMPBELL.

Peace on the earth.] 'On the land, namely of Judea,' DODD. 'The meaning will be plain when we consider the import of the word peace, which was used among the Hebrews to express all possible blessings, temporal and spiritual; but especially the former. The expectation of the Jews was, that when the Messiah should come, all temporal prosperity would be accumulated on the land of Judea. The import of our Lord's teaching here is this, "Do not imagine, as the Jews in general vainly do, that I am come to send forth, by forcing out the Roman yoke, that temporal prosperity which they long for; I am not

come for this purpose, but to send forth the Roman sword, to cut off a disobedient and rebellious nation, the cup of whose iniquity is already full, and whose crimes cry aloud for speedy vengeance." See also on Luke 12: 43. From the time they rejected the Messiah, they were a prey to the most cruel and destructive factions; they employed their time in butchering one another, till the Roman sword was unsheathed against them and desolated the land.'

Verse 35.

'It was long ago truly observed by Democrats, that the enemies of kindred are much more bitter than those between other persons.'

BLOOMFIELD

Verse 36.

'The Gospel has indeed been the occasion of much contention and persecution, not only in Judea, but elsewhere: yet is, and was not charge to

he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

40 ¶ He that receiveth you, receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me.

41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, He shall in no wise lose his reward.

m 19:5. Luke 9:48. 10:16. John 13:20, 20:21, 2 Cor. 5:20. Gal 4:14.
1 Thee. 4:8
a John 5:23 12:44-49 Phil. 2:10-11.
1 John 12:22, 23, 2 John 9
b Gen. 20:7. 1 Kings 17:5-15, 20-24.
18:3, 4. 2 Kings 4:8-10, 16, 17, 32-37.
Acta 16:15 Rom. 16:1-4, 23. 2 Tim. 1:16-18. 2 John 2, 3.
c 6:1, 6, 13. 16-27. 29-34. 40. Is. 3:10.
Luke 14:13, 14. 1 Cor. 9:17. 2 Thee. 1:5, 7. 2 John 13.
d 16:5-6, 10, 14. Zech. 13:7. Mark 9:42. Luke 17:2. 1 Cor. 8:10-13.
e Mark 9:41. 12:42, 43. 14:7, 8. 2 Cor. 8:12.
f Prov. 21:14. Luke 6:35. 2 Cor. 9:8-15. Phil. 4:15-19. Heb. 6:10.

He will honor them before his Father. It is a dangerous thing for any to deny and disown Christ before men, for such He will disown in the great day, when they most need Him. *I tell you, I know you not, ch. 7:23.* In the first ages of Christianity, when to confess Christ was to venture all that was dear in this world, it was more a trial of sincerity, than afterwards, when secular advantages attended it.

8. That the foundation of their discipleship was laid in a temper and disposition of such kind, as would make sufferings light and easy to them: and that on condition of preparedness to suffer, Christ took them to be his followers, v. 37-39. He told them at first, that they were not worthy of Him, if they were not willing to part with all for Him. In any profession, men neitate not at expected difficulties, necessarily attendant on it, but cheerfully submit to them, or disclaim its privileges and advantages. So in the Christian profession, they are reckoned unworthy of its dignity and felicity, who put not such value on their interest in Christ, as to prefer it before any other interests. For the gains of a bargain, we must come up to its terms. Now the terms are settled. If religion be worth any thing, it is

upon any malignity, or any deficiency in that, but on the lusts and corruptions of men, who have either directly opposed or grossly perverted it.

A man's foes, &c. Our Lord refers here to their own traditions, which were near by in the very words He used; and the apostles, who were memorable, especially since they professedly point at the time of the Messiah's coming. Let any one also read the terrible account given by Josephus of their crimes and sufferings. In rejecting Christ, they were abandoned of God.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 37.

He that loveth. That is, when our nearest and dearest relations come in competition with our belief in Christ, our affection to them and our deference to their opinions must give way to our love of the Redeemer, and our attachment to our Maker.

Bp. PORTER.

Worthy of me. That is, worthy of being my disciple.

BLOOMF.

Verse 38.

His cross. This alludes to the custom of causing the criminal to bear his own cross to the place of execution, and means, who is not ready to suffer death in the cause of religion.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

As crucifixion was not a Jewish punishment, this mention of it may seem prophetic, and to have alluded to his own crucifixion.

BLOOMF.

When we are commanded in Scripture "to take up our cross and follow Christ," to "deny ourselves," to "mortify our members," &c. these expressions by no means imply, what some have chosen to infer from them, that we are to renounce the world and all its pleasures, employments, connections and concerns; to forego every thing that is cheerful and agreeable to our nature, and to consume our whole life in abstinence and austerity. According to the fairest and most established

Secondly, the particular cognizance which Providence takes of Christ's disciples, especially in their sufferings, (v. 30.) But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. This is a proverbial expression, denoting God's regard to the concerns of his people, even the most minute. This is not to be made a matter of curious inquiry, but of encouragement to live in continual dependence on God's providential care, which extends to all occurrences, yet without disparagement to the infinite glory, or disturbance to the infinite rest of the Eternal Mind. If God numbers their hairs, much more their heads, and He takes care of their lives, their comforts, their souls. It intimates, that God takes more care of them than they do of themselves. Those who are solicitous to number their money, and goods, and cattle, were yet never careful to number their hairs; but God numbers the hairs of his people, and not a hair of their head shall perish: (Luke 21:18.) no hurt be done them, but on a valuable consideration: so precious to God are his saints, and their lives and deaths!

7. That He will shortly, in the day of triumph, own those who now, in the day of trial, own Him; when those who deny Him, shall be forever disowned and rejected, v. 32, 33. Note, It is our duty, and if we do it, it will be hereafter our unspeakable honor and happiness, to confess Christ before men; not to believe in Christ only, but to profess our faith in suffering for Him, when called to it, as well as in serving Him. We must never be ashamed of our relation to Him, our attendance on Him, or our expectations from Him: hereby our sincerity is evinced, his name honored, and others edified. However this may expose us to trouble now, we shall be abundantly recompensed in the resurrection of the just, when it will be our unspeakable happiness and honor that Christ shall fulfil his promise. *'Him will I confess before my Father,* as the purchase of my blood, and the workmanship of my Spirit, a friend, and beloved by me, though a worm of the earth.' Those who honor Christ He will thus honor. They honor Him before men, but

worth every thing; then, *'one all who receive his truth will come up to the price of it: and they who make it their business and bliss, will make every thing else yield to it. Those who like not Christ on these terms, may leave Him—at their peril. Note, It is very encouraging to think, that whatever we leave, lose, or suffer for Christ, we make no hard bargain for ourselves. The pearl of price is worth what we give for it. The terms are, that we must prefer Christ, First, Before our nearest and dearest relations, father or mother, son or daughter. Between these relations, as there is less room for envy, so there is commonly more for love; therefore these are instanced, as most likely to have effect. Children must love their parents, and parents their children; but if they love them better than Christ, they are unworthy of Him. As we must not be deterred from Christ by the hatred of our relations. v. 25, 36.) so we must not be drawn from Him by their love. Christians must be as *'one who said to his father, I have not seen him. Dent 33 9.**

Secondly, Before our ease and safety. We must take up our cross and follow Him, else we are not worthy of Him. Here observe, that they who would follow Christ, must expect their cross, and take it up. In taking it up, we must follow Christ's example, and bear it as He did. In bearing crosses, it is also a great encouragement that we follow Christ, who has showed us the way; and that if we follow Him faithfully, through suffering, He will lead us to glory with Himself.

Thirdly, Before even life, v. 39. *He that findeth his life shall lose it:* he who thinks he has found it, when he has saved it by denying Christ, shall lose it in an eternal death: but *he who loseth his life for Christ's sake, or rather than deny Christ, shall find it, to his unspeakable advantage, in an eternal life.* They are best prepared for the life to come, that are most loose to this present life.

9. That Christ Himself would so heartily espouse their cause, as to show Himself a friend to all their friends, and repay the kindness bestowed on them, v. 40-42.

First, It is here implied, that though the generality would reject them, some would receive them and welcome their message. Why was the gospel-market made, but that if some will not, others will? In the worst times there is a remnant, according to the election of grace. Christ's ministers shall not labor in vain.

Secondly, Jesus Christ takes what is done to his faithful ministers, whether kind or unkind, as done to Himself. *He that receiveth you receiveth me.* Honor or contempt put on an ambassador, reflects the same on the prince that sends him; and ministers are ambassadors for Christ. See how Christ may still be entertained by those who would testify their respects to Him; his people and ministers we have always with us; and He is with them always,

rules of interpretation, these, and other similar phrases, enjoin but a constant habit of vigilance and self-government, a cautious and jealous attention to the movements of our minds and the progress of our passions, a strict abstinence from all irregular and immoral gratifications; without either declining any of the duties, or sullenly withdrawing from the harmless enjoyments, conveniences, and comforts of social life.

Bp. PORTER.

Verse 39.

'For he that finds and saves his life, by deserting my cause, shall lose it on the whole; as he will thus incur a sentence of final condemnation and destruction; but he that out of faithfulness to Me loses his life, and lays it down for my sake, shall find it in a far more noble state of being, which infinitely better deserves the name of life.'

DODD.

Verse 41.

He that receiveth. He that hospitably entertains a prophet, in the name of a prophet, or with a pious regard to the office he bears, shall receive the reward of a prophet himself, or a reward proportionable to the worth of the person he shelters and accommodates in time of danger and difficulty; and he that entertains any righteous man, in the name of a righteous man, or with a cordial regard to the virtues of his character, shall himself receive the reward of a righteous man.

DODD.

'Similar proverbs are found among the Jewish rabbins.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 42.

A cup of cold water only. Let not the poorest be discouraged then, from some charitable attempt for the good of others. *DODD.*
Little ones. An Hebraism denoting disciples as represented to masters.

WESTMAN, BLOOMFIELD

CHAP. XI.

Jesus continues to preach in the cities, John the Baptist sends his disciples to inquire of Him, whether He is the Messiah, or whether another were to be expected; whom Jesus sends to the miracles wrought by Him, 28-36. His testimony to John, 7-15. The perverseness of the people concerning both John and Jesus illustrated, 16-19. He upbraids the impetuosity of those, who had witnessed most of his mighty works; and denounces woes against Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, 20-24. He addresses the wise and holy sovereignty of the Father, in revealing the truth; and declares his own personal and mediatorial power and majesty, 25-27. He invites and instructs the weary to come unto Him for rest, 28-30.

AND it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of ^acommanding his twelve disciples, ^bhe departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

2 ¶ Now ^cwhen John had heard ^din the prison the works of Christ, ^ehe sent two of his disciples,

^a 28:30. John 15:10-14. Acts 1:2, 10:42. 1 Thes. 4:2. 2 Thes. 3:5, 10. 1 Tim. 6:14.
^b 4:23. 9:35. Is. 61:1-3. Mark 3:13, 33. Luke 4:15-21. Sil. Acts 10:38.
^c Luke 7:18-23.
^d 16:14. Mark 6:17, 18. Luke 3:19, 20. John 3:24.
^e 9:14. John 3:25-28. 4:1. Acts 19:1-3.

and ministers, shall not only be accepted, but suitably and richly rewarded. Much is to be gained by doing good offices to Christ's disciples. If done ^aof the Lord, He will repay them with interest; for He is *not unrighteous to forget any labor of love*, (Heb. 6:10.) They shall receive a reward, and in no wise lose it. He does not say, they deserve a reward: we cannot merit any thing as wages from God: but they shall receive a reward from the free gift of God: and shall in no wise lose it, as, through falsehood or forgetfulness, is often the case among men. The reward may be deferred,—the full reward will be deferred till the resurrection of the just; but it shall ^bin no wise be lost, nor shall they be losers by delay. A prophet's or a righteous man's reward is, either the reward that God gives to righteous men and prophets; (the blessings conferred on them shall distil on their friends;) or it is the reward He gives by prophets and righteous men, in answer to their prayers, (Gen. 20: 7.) *He is a prophet, and shall pray for thee*, that is a prophet's reward: and by their ministry; when He gives the instructions and comforts of the Word to those, who are kind to the preachers of the Word, then He sends a prophet's reward. Prophets' rewards are blessings in heavenly things; and if we know how to value them, we shall reckon them good payment.

CHAP. XI. v. 1-6. Some join the first verse of this to the foregoing chapter, as its proper close. Christ's ordination sermon to his disciples, in the last chapter, is here called his *commanding* them. Note, Christ's commis-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 34-42. The enmity of the carnal heart against God must be desperate, when the Gospel of peace excites, in those who hear it, rancorous malice, dissolving the bonds of relative and social life, and prompting to unnatural murders and massacres; and when they, who deserve to be revered and loved, become objects of contempt and hatred! Even now the believer's inveterate foes are often 'they of his own household.' But we should remember, that 'we are by nature children of wrath even as others,' and if we now love the truth, cause, and servants of Christ, the praise is due to Him, who by his grace 'hath made us to differ.' This should teach us to bear our cross patiently, and meekly, and to pity and pray for our adversaries. No human regards must interfere with our love to Christ; or to expression of it; for He will not endure a rival. And let us ask, can father or mother, son, or daughter

NOTES.

CHAP. XI v. 1. When the apostles were gone forth, our Lord did not remit his labor, but continued to go from place to place, to instruct the people, and perform beneficent miracles among them. SCOTT. To teach and to preach. 'To give private instructions, and to proclaim publicly: two grand parts of the duty of a Gospel minister.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Their cities. By this title, Dr. A. Clarke understands simply 'the cities of the Jews;' Campbell considers it as referring to the Gallileans, 'in whose cities they then were;' but Bp. Pearce regards it as designating 'the cities of the Jews in Galilee,' an opinion reconciling both the views.

Ed.

sions imply commands. Their preaching of the Gospel was not only permitted, but enjoined. *Necessity was laid upon them*, 1 Cor. 9: 16. His promises to them are included in these commands, for the covenant of grace is a word which He hath commanded. Ps. 135: 8. He made an end of commanding. Note, Christ's instructions are ever full, thorough. When Christ had said to his disciples what was needful, He departed thence. It would seem they were very loath to leave their Master, till He departed, and separated Himself from them, as the nurse withdraws the hand, that the child may learn to go by itself. He would now teach them how to live and work without his bodily presence. It was expedient for them that He should thus go away, that they might be prepared for his long departure; and that, by the help of the Spirit, their own hands might be sufficient for them, (Deut. 33: 7.) and they not be always children. We have little account of what they did now; but they went abroad, probably into Judea, (for the Gospel had been preached hitherto mostly in Galilee,) publishing the doctrine of Christ, and working miracles in his name; though in more immediate dependence on Him, and not being long from Him, thus they were trained up by degrees for their great work.

Christ departed to teach and preach in the cities whither He sent disciples before Him to work miracles, (ch. 10: 1, 8.) and raise public expectation preparatory to his coming. Thus was the way of the Lord prepared. John prepared it by bringing people to repentance, but did no miracles. The disciples go further, and work miracles for confirmation. Note, Repentance and faith prepare people for the blessings of the kingdom of heaven, which Christ gives. When Christ empowered them to work miracles, He was Himself teaching and preaching, as it was that were the more honorable of the two. Healing the sick was the saving of bodies, but preaching the Gospel was the saving of souls. Christ had directed his disciples to preach, (ch. 10: 7.) yet did not Himself leave off preaching. He set them to work, not for his own sake, but for the common welfare, and was no less busy Himself. How unlike Christ are those, who yoke others only that they may themselves be idle. Note, The increase of labors in the Lord's work should not excuse our negligence, but encourage our diligence. The more busy others are, the more so should we be; and all is little enough, so much work is there to be done. Observe, He went to preach in their cities—populous places; He cast the net of the Gospel where there were most fish to be inclosed. Wisdom cries in the cities, (Prov. 1: 21.) at the entry of the city, (Prov. 8: 3.) in the cities of the Jews, even of them who made light of Him, notwithstanding they had the first offer.

Here is next a message to Christ from John

do us the service in that awful period, which He can do? Have they done as much to deserve our love? Are they so worthy of it? Surely we are unworthy of Him, if we prefer an earthly object to Him! Surely we ought readily to bear our cross, and to be crucified for Him, as He was for our sins. How, then, can we expect his friendship, if we refuse to bear our lighter tribulations for his sake? He can compensate our losses for his cause, so that if we suffer death by cleaving to Him, we shall not perish, but have eternal life. Let us, then, abide in Him, and show our love to Him by kindness to his people and ministers, welcoming their message, and esteeming them highly in love for their work's sake; satisfied that whatever is done from right principles and motives to the least of his disciples will be rewarded.

SCOTT.

Verses 2-6.

Some have supposed that the faith of John in Jesus as the Messiah, was wavering; but this is not probable. His disciples, however, were evidently far from being satisfied. They were jealous for their master's honor, and did not clearly apprehend the nature of the Messiah's kingdom; objecting to the unreserved and social manner in which Jesus and his disciples lived. John seems, therefore, desirous to procure them some decisive testimony from Christ himself, to terminate their hesitation. Hearing of his miracles, he now sends two of his own disciples to inquire if He were the Messiah, or not. The question shows, that the Jews generally considered the Messiah as at hand; and if Jesus were not He, another must be expected. Eighteen hundred years have

3 And said unto him, 'Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?'

4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and shew John again these things which ye do hear and see:

22-6. 21:5,9. Gen. 3:15. 12:3. 13:10. Num. 24:17. Deut. 18:15-18. Ps. 2-22. 110:1-5. Is. 7:14. 9:6,7. Jer. 23:5,6. Ez. 34:23. 34. Dan. 9:24-26. Hos. 3:5. Joel 2:28-32. Am. 9:11,12. Ob. 21. 'Mic. 5:2. Zeph. 3:14-17. Hag. 2:7. Zech. 9:9. Mal. 3:1. 4:2. John 4:27. 6:14. 7:31,41,42.

two of his question to Him, and of their interview we have here an account.

I. The question they proposed: *Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?* A serious and important question: *Art Thou the Messiah promised?—the Christ? Tell us.* It is taken for granted, that the Messiah should come. One of the names by which He was known to the Old Testament saints was, *He that cometh, or shall come*, Ps. 118: 26. He is now come, but we still expect his other coming. The disciples intimate, that, if this be not *He*, they would look for another. Note, We must not be weary of looking for a promised blessing; nor ever say we will no more expect it till it come. Though it tarry, wait for it; for *He that shall come will come*. They intimate likewise, that if they be convinced that this is *He*, they will not be sceptics, but will look for no other. They therefore ask, *Art Thou He?* John had said for his part, *I am not the Christ*. John 1: 20. Some think John's object was his own satisfaction. He had borne testimony to Christ, and declared Him to be the *Son of God*, (John 1: 34.) the *Lamb of God*, (v. 29.) He that should baptize with the *Holy Ghost*, (v. 33.) and the *Sent of God*, (John 3: 34.) but he desired greater proof that He was the long-promised and expected Messiah. Note, In things relating to Christ, and our salvation by Him, it is good to be sure. Christ appeared not in that external pomp and power which was expected of Him. His own disciples stumbled at this and perhaps John also. Christ saw in the inquiry something of this nature, when He said, *blessed is he, who shall not be offended in Me*. Note, It is hard, even for good men, to bear up against vulgar errors. John's doubts might arise from his own circumstances. He was a prisoner, and might think, if Jesus be indeed the Messiah, whence is it that I, his friend and forerunner, am in this trouble, and left so long in it; never looked after, never visited, nor sent to, nor inquired for by Him, having nothing done for me, either to sweeten my imprisonment, or hasten my enlargement? Doubtless Christ, for a good reason, did not go to John in prison, lest there should seem to be collusion between them: but, John, perhaps, thought it neglect, and it shocked his faith. Note, True faith may have a mixture of unbelief. The best are not always alike strong. Troubles for Christ, if long unrelieved, sometimes prove too severe for our faith. The remaining unbelief of good men may sometimes strike at the root, and call in question the most fundamental truths. *Will the Lord cast off forever?* But we will hope John's faith did not fail; he only desired to have it strengthened. Note, The best saints have need of the best helps to confirm their faith, and arm them against temptations to unbelief. Abraham believed, and yet desired a sign; (Gen. 15: 6, 8.) so Gideon, Judg. 6: 36, 37. Others think John's object was not so much his own satisfaction, as that of his disciples. Observe, Though he was a prisoner, they adhered to him, and were ready to receive his instructions: they loved him, and would not leave him. Now, they were weak in knowledge, and wavering in faith, and needed instruction and confirmation. They were jealous for their Master, and of our Master: loath to acknowledge Jesus to be the Messiah, because He eclipsed John, and loath to believe their own master, when they think he speaks against himself and

Barth, and his reply, v. 2-6. It was said before that Jesus heard of John's sufferings, ch. 4: 12. Now we are told that John, in prison, hears of Christ's doings, which, no doubt, he was glad to hear, as a true friend of the Bridegroom, John 3: 29. Note, When one useful instrument is laid aside, God knows how to raise up others. The work went on, though John was in prison, and it was a comfort to him, not a grief. Nothing comforts God's people in distress more, than to hear of the works of Christ, and experience them in their own souls. This turns a prison into a palace. In one way or other, Christ will convey the notices of his love to such as are in trouble for conscience's sake. John could not see the works of Christ, but he could hear of them with pleasure. And blessed are they who have not seen, but only heard, and yet have believed.

John Baptist, hearing of Christ's works, sent

them. Good men may have their judgments biased by their interest. John would have their views rectified, and wished them to be as well satisfied as he himself was. Note, The strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and do what they can to help them. *When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren*. John was industrious to turn over his disciples to Christ, as from the school to the academy. Perhaps he anticipated his death, and wished his disciples to be better acquainted with Christ, with whom he must leave them. Note, Ministers must direct every one to Christ. And those who would know the certainty of his doctrine must apply to Him: He is come to give understanding. Those who would grow in grace must be inquisitive.

II. Christ's answer, v. 4-6. It was not so direct and express, as when He said, *I that speak unto thee am He*; but it was a real answer, an answer in fact. Christ would have us studious of the evidences of the Gospel.

1. He directs them to report to John what they heard and saw, that he might thence more fully instruct and convince them. Note, Our senses are to be appealed to in things that are their proper objects. Therefore the popish doctrine of the real presence agrees not with the real truth as it is in Jesus: for Christ refers us to the things we hear and see.

Tell John what you see of the power of Christ's miracles; how, by the word of Jesus, the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, &c. Christ's miracles were done in the view of all; for they feared not the strictest and most impartial scrutiny. Truth seeks no concealment. They are to be considered as the acts of a divine power. Only the God of nature could thus overrule and outdo the course of nature. It is particularly spoken of as God's prerogative to open the eyes of the blind, Ps. 146: 8. Miracles are therefore the broad seal of heaven, and the doctrine to which they are affixed must be of God, for his power will never contradict his truth; nor can it be imagined that He should seal a lie. However lying wonders may be brought in proof of false doctrines, true miracles evince a divine commission. Such were Christ's, and they leave no room to doubt, that He was sent of God, and his doctrine that of Him who sent Him. His miracles are the accomplishment of a divine prediction. It was foretold, (Isa. 35: 5, 6,) that our God should come, and the eyes of the blind be opened. If Christ's works agree, as they plainly do, with the words of the prophet, no doubt this is our God, whom we have waited for, who shall come with a recompense.

Tell John what you hear of the preaching of his Gospel, accompanying his miracles. Faith, though confirmed by seeing, comes by hearing. Tell him, 1. That the poor preach the gospel: so some. It proves Christ's divine mission, that those whom He employed in founding his kingdom were poor men, destitute of all secular advantages, who therefore could never have

elapsed, and no other has come, Jews themselves being judges. How thin can they evade the inference, that Jesus of Nazareth was the promised Messiah?—Our Lord answered rather by actions than words; probably, lest an explicit reply should expose Him to enemies. He wrought miracles, therefore, in presence of John's messengers, requiring them to report to John what they saw and heard; specially, that, while the rich, learned, and powerful rejected Christ and his doctrine, the poor and lowly heard and received the Gospel. This accorded to the prophecies of the Messiah; but was contrary to the conduct of deceivers, who from carnal policy, address, in general, the great and powerful. John had wrought no miracle, and this rendered the miracles of Christ more decisive evidence. *The dead are raised*, (5.) The widow's son at Nain had been raised just before; (Luke 7: 11-21.) *Have the Gospel preached unto them*.] This use of the original word seems to imply both the imparting and the reception of the glad tidings. The poor were preached unto, and they heard gladly that Gospel, which superior persons rejected.

SCOTT.

(2) *Prison*.] 'John was cast into prison by order of Herod Antipas, chap. 14: 3. &c., a little after our Lord began his public ministry, chap. 4: 12, and after the first passover, John 3: 24.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'This prison, according to Josephus, was at Macheronte or Misachrus, a city and fort beyond Jordan, in the tribe of Reuben, north and east of the lake Asphaltites, or Dead Sea, where the Jordan discharges itself into the sea.'

Works of Christ.] 'Deeds such as the Jews expected the Messiah would perform; 2 Tim. 4: 5.'

(3) *Art Thou He*.] 'Mr L'Efant, with some others, thinks, (as Justin Martyr and Tertullian did,) that John was so discouraged by his own

long imprisonment, that he began himself to doubt whether Jesus was the Messiah; and supposes that when our Lord afterwards said, *Happy is he that is not offended in me*, He meant it as a caution to John, that he should be on his guard against a temptation so dangerous. But, considering what clear evidence John had before received by a miraculous sign from heaven, and what express and repeated testimonies he himself had borne to Jesus, I cannot imagine this possible; especially as he foresaw and foretold, that he must himself quickly be laid aside, (John 3: 30.) But he might think it necessary to put his disciples in the way of farther satisfaction: not to say that the warmth of John's temper might render him something uneasy at the reserve which Christ maintained; and that he might imagine it agreeable to the general design of his own office, as his forerunner, thus to urge a more express declaration.'

DODD.

He that cometh.] 'By speaking of the Messiah thus, the pious Jews, it seems, expressed in the most lively manner their expectation of Him, and eager longing for his approach, as the greatest and most welcome messenger of God to man, that ever did or should come into the world; (See Mark 11: 9, 10. comp. Ps. 118: 26. Hab. 2: 3. Sept. Isa. 62: 11. and Zech. 9: 9.) Bp. Pearson justly observes that this, among many arguments, proves that the notion of two Messiahs, one sufferer, the other triumphant, is a vain dream of modern Jews, and unknown to the ancients.'

(4) *Go and shew John*.] 'Was it for an impostor, or a enthusiast, to refer messengers who came to him, to miraculous works, performed before their eyes to things done on the spot, to the test run by of their own senses?'

Id.

5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

6 And "blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

[Practical Observations.]

7 ¶ And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, "What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

g 9.30. Ps. 146.8. Is. 29.18. 35:4-6. 42:26.7. Luke 4:18. 7:21, 22. John 2:23. 3:2. 5:36. 10:25, 38. 14:11. 16:7. Acts 2:22. 19:13. 22:14. 26:6. b 15:30, 31. 21:14. Acts 3:2-8. 14:8-10. 10:9. 2 Kings 5:7, 14.

1 1:1-9. Mark 7:37. 9:35. l 9:24, 25. Luke 7:14-16, 22. John 11:43, 44.

m 5:3. Ps. 22:26. 72:13. Is. 61:1-3. 68:2. Zech. 11:7. Luke 4:18. Jan. 2:5.

n 5:3-12. Ps. 1:1, 2. 32:1, 2. 119:1. Luke 11:27, 28.

o 13:35-37. 15:12-14. 18:7. 24:10. 26:31. Is. 8:14, 15. Luke 2:34. 4:23-29. John 8:50, 61, 66. 7:41, 42. Rom. 9:29, 33. 1 Cor. 1:23. 2:14. Gal. 5:11. 1 Pet. 2:8.

p Luke 7:24-30. q 34-45. 5:1, 25. Mark 1:3-5. Luke 3:4-7. 8:18. John 1:38. 5:35. R Gen. 4:9. 2 Cor. 1:17, 18. Eph. 4:14. Jan. 1:9.

Nazareth, the poverty of his life, the low condition of his followers, the slights put on Him by great men, the strictness of his doctrine, contradicting flesh and blood, and the sufferings that attend the profession of his name; these are things that keep many from Him, who otherwise cannot but see in Him much of God. Thus He is set for the fall of many, even in Israel, (Luke 2:34.) a rock of offence, 1 Pet. 2:8. They are happy who get over these offences, and conquer their prejudices. Blessed are they. The expression intimates, that it is a difficult thing to do, and dangerous not to do it; but as to those, who, notwithstanding, do believe in Christ, their faith will be found to be much the more to praise, and honor, and glory.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-6. Our Redeemer was unwearied in his labor of love: We, then, 'should not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.' The laying aside, and removing eminent ministers, at the time when they seem to be peculiarly need, appears very mysterious. But God will not permit any serv. ant to interfere with the glory of his Son; and He will show all, that though He may employ them, He can do without them. Patience in a prison, or sick room, glorifies the Lord, as well as active services. But if we cannot do what we wish, we should attempt, as we can, to direct the judgment and confirm the faith of such as regard our words; and Christ will honor those, who humbly serve and honor Him. What multitudes allow, that the Savior is already come, and look for no other, and yet, alas! how few bow to the sceptre of his grace! The things which men see and hear, if compared diligently with the Scriptures, direct them to religion, and show in what way it is to be found. Though miracles are no longer

V. 7-15. We have here our Lord's high encomium of John Baptist, to revive his honor and his work. From John's question, some of Christ's disciples might regard him as weak, wavering, and inconsistent with himself. To prevent this, Christ gives him this character. Note, We ought to consult the reputation of our brethren, and not only remove, but prevent jealousies and ill thoughts of them; and we must take every occasion, especially of infirmity, to speak well of the praise-worthy, and give them the fruit of their hands. John, when he was on the stage, and Christ in retirement, bore testimony to Christ; and now that Christ appeared publicly, and John was under a cloud, He bore testimony to John. Note, Those who have a confirmed interest themselves, should aid the credit and reputation of others, whose character claims it, but whose temper or present circumstances deprive them of it. This honors those to whom honor is due. John had abased himself to honor Christ, (John 3:29, 30. Ch. 3:11.) had made himself nothing, that Christ might be All, and now Christ dignifies him with this character. Note, Those who humble themselves shall be exalted, and those who honor Christ, He will honor; those that confess Him before men, He will confess, and sometimes before men too, even in this world. John had finished his testimony, and now Christ commends him. Note, Christ reserves honor for his servants when they have done their work. John 12:26.

Concerning this commendation, observe,

I. Christ spoke thus honorably of John, not till after the departure of John's disciples; as they departed; just after they had gone, Luke 7:24. He would not even seem to flatter him, nor have these praises reported to him. Note, Though forward to give all due praise for encouragement, we must avoid all flattery, and whatever may puff up. Those who in other things are mortified to the world, yet cannot well bear their own praise. Pride is a corrupt humor, which we must not feed in others or in ourselves.

II. What Christ said concerning John, was intended not only for his praise, but for the people's profit, who for a season, and but for a season, rejoiced in his light, John 5:35. 'Now consider, what went ye out into the wilderness to see?' John preached in the wilderness, where people flocked to him, though in a remote and

(5.) The blind, &c. [These miracles were not only the most convincing proofs of the supreme power of Christ, but were also emblematic of that work of salvation which He effects in the souls of men. Sinners are blind; their understanding is so darkened by sin, that they see not the way of truth and salvation. They are lame; not able to walk in the path of righteousness. They are leprovous; their souls are defiled with sin, the most loathsome and inveterate disease; despoiling in themselves, and infecting others. They are deaf; to the voice of God, his word, and their own conscience. They are dead; in trespasses and sins; God, who is the life of the soul, being separated from it by iniquity.]

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(6.) Offended in. [Scandalized, or stumbled at; for he must be singularly wise and religious, who is not shocked by the strong popular prejudices which lie against Me.]

Christ's doctrines have been complained of, as laying too great a restraint on human nature; as hard and impracticable sayings. His mysteries have been doubted of, disputed against, and ridiculed by men of perverse and proud minds, who are resolved to believe nothing farther than they can thoroughly and clearly comprehend.

Bp. ATTERBURY.

Verses 7-11.

John came as Christ's forerunner, and multitudes attended his ministry, and received his baptism; yet few gave due attention to the great object of his preaching. His testimony was, therefore, very important with those who believed him to be a prophet; and Christ's inquiry was suited to excite them to consideration. Surely they had not come into the wilderness to see the reeds shaken by the wind, or to hear a man preach, who was as easily shaken as they, by every rumor, prejudice, or change in circumstances. John was a man of different spirit. He acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah, and persisted in his testimony. Why, then, did they not regard him? They had gone forth, as men thought to gaze on a royal procession, but they could not expect to see in the desert a man clothed in delicate and sumptuous raiment. Such persons were found in places, and the people knew John to be a plain, rough man, meanly clad. (Note 3:4.) What, then, was their object? They would answer, to see and hear a prophet, sent by God to instruct and reform them; and John was a prophet, and more than a prophet, the person of whom Malachi had prophesied; and not predicting the Messiah, but pointing Him out as come. In the passage referred to JERONIMUS says, "my face" and "I bore Me" in a

8 But what went ye out for to see? ^a A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses.

9 But what went ye out for to see? ^a A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

10 For this is he, ^a of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

11 Verily, I say unto you, Among them that are ^a born of women there hath not risen ^a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding, ^a he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is ^a greater than he.

34. 2 Kings 1:8. Is. 26:2. Zech. 13:4. 1 Cor. 4:11. 2 Cor. 11:27. Rev. 11:5.
13:14. 14:5. 17:12. 12. 21:24. 26:5.
Mark 9:11-13. Luke 1:15-17, 78.
8:3. Is. 40:3. Mal. 3:1. 4:5. Mark 1:2. Luke 7:26. 27. Luke 1:23.
Job 14:14. 15:14. 25:4. Ps. 51:5.
Eph. 2:3.
3:11. 1 Sam. 2:30. Luke 1:15. 7:28. John 5:35.
5:19. Is. 30:26. Zech. 12:8. Luke 3:48. 1 Cor. 6:4. 15:3. Eph. 3:8.
John 7:39. 10:41. Rom. 16:25, 26.
Col. 1:26, 27. 2 Tim. 1:10. Heb. 11:40. 1 Pet. 1:10.

people flocked to him, because he was not a reed. Note, There is nothing lost, in the end, by an unshaken resolution in our work, neither courting the smiles, nor fearing the frowns of men.

2. He was a *self-denying* man, and *mortified* to this world. 'Was he a man clothed in soft raiment? Then you would not have gone to the wilderness to see him, but to the court. You went to see one that had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; which showed him dead to the pomps of the world, and pleasures of sense: his clothing agreed with the wilderness he lived in, and his doctrine of repentance. Now you cannot think that he, who was such a stranger to the pleasures of a court, should be brought to change his mind by the terrors of a prison, and to question whether Jesus be the Messiah or not?' Note, Those who have lived a life of mortification are least likely to be driven from their religion by persecution. He was not a man of *soft raiment*; such there are, but they are in *kings' houses*. Note, It becomes people in all things to be consistent with their character and situation. Preachers must not affect to look like courtiers; nor those whose lot is cast in common dwellings, be ambitious of princely and royal apparel. Prudence teaches us to be of a piece. John appeared rough and unpleasant, yet they flocked after him. Note, The remembrance of former zeal should quicken us in our present work: let it not be said that we have done and suffered so many things *in vain, run in vain, and labored in vain*.

3. Here quoted as the Father saying to the Son, 'before thy face,' and the way before. *Thee*; so that the way of Christ was the way of the Lord, of Jehovah, for 'He and the Father are One.'—Our Lord said, 'All born of women,' (of all men) there had not arisen a greater than John the Baptist; none more holy, faithful, and humble; none who was in a more honorable service; none favored with clearer views of evangelical truth, and none who had personally seen the subject of prophecy. Yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. The least of the apostles, or New Testament prophets, who were called to establish the Messiah's kingdom, would know more of the person, obedience, atonement, and mediation of Christ, and be in a more distinguished service, and endowed with more of the Holy Spirit, than John had been, and would possess miraculous powers, which he did not. If we extend the passage to all faithful ministers, or believers, it can relate only to the excellence of the Gospel, and the more distinct views of its nature and glory with which they are favored; for, in personal excellence, few have been greater than John, or indeed equal to him. (Murg. *He*.) But the first interpretation is most satisfactory.

(7) 'Christ designs here to convince the scribes and Pharisees of the inconsistency of their conduct, in acknowledging John Baptist for a divinely authorized teacher, and not believing in the very Christ he pointed out to them. He also shows, from the excellencies of John's character, that their confidence in him was not misplaced.'

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'Our Lord meant by this praise, to avert from John any suspicion of

inconvenient place. It is better to retire into obscurity, with teachers, than be without them. Now if his preaching was worth taking so much pains to hear, surely it was worth the care of recollecting. The greater the difficulties we have broken through to hear the Word, the more we are concerned to profit by it. They went out to see him; rather for curiosity than conscience. Note, Many attend on the Word rather to see and be seen, than to learn and be taught; to have something to talk of, than be made wise to salvation. Christ inquires, *What went ye out to see?* Note, We shall be called to account as to our intentions and improvements in hearing the Word. We think that, when the sermon is done, the care is over; no, then the greatest care begins. It will shortly be asked, 'What business had you at such a time, at such an ordinance? What brought you thither? Custom, company, or a desire to honor God, and get good? What have you brought thence? What knowledge, grace, or comfort? What went you to see?' Note, When we go to read and hear the Word, we should see that our aim is right.

III. The commendation of John. They knew not how to answer our Lord's question: He therefore tells them what a man John Baptist was. 1. 'He was a firm, resolute man, and not a reed shaken with the wind: as you have been in your thoughts of him. He was not wavering in principle, not uneven in conversation, but remarkable for steadiness and uniform consistency.' He was strong in spirit. Eph. 4:14. When the wind of popular applause, on the one hand, blew fresh and fair, and the storm of Herod's rage, on the other, grew fierce and blustering, he was still the same. His testimony to Christ was not that of a reed, of a man who was of one mind to-day, and of another to-morrow: not a weather-cock testimony; no, his constancy in it is intimated, (John 1:20.) *he confessed, and denied not, but confessed and maintained it afterwards*, John 3:23. The question, therefore, sent by his disciples was not to be construed into any suspicion of the truth of what he had formerly said: Hence the

3. His office and ministry. This was more his honor, than any personal endowments or qualifications could be.

He was a prophet, yea, and more than a prophet: (v. 9.) so said He who was the great Prophet, to whom all the prophets bear witness, John said of himself, he was not that Prophet, that great Prophet, the Messiah; and now Christ: (the most competent judge) says of him, that he was more than a prophet. He owned himself inferior to Christ, and Christ owned him superior to all other prophets. Observe, Christ's forerunner was not a king, but a prophet, lest his kingdom should seem to be laid in earthly power; yet, his forerunner, as such, was a transcendent prophet, more than an Old-Testament prophet: they did virtuously, but John excelled them all: they saw Christ's day at a distance; their vision was yet for a great while to come; but John saw the day dawn, he saw the sun arise, and told the people of the Messiah, as One that stood among them. They spake of Christ, but he pointed Him out: they said, A virgin shall conceive; he said, Behold the Lamb of God!

He was the same that was predicted to be his forerunner, (v. 10.) This is he of whom it is written. He was prophesied of by the other prophets, and therefore was greater than they. Malachi prophesied concerning him, Behold I send my messenger before thy face. Herein some of Christ's honor was put on him, and this honor have all the saints, that their names are written in the Lamb's book of life. It was great preferment to John above all prophets, that he was Christ's harbinger. He was a messenger sent on a great errand; one of a thousand, deriving his honor from Him, whose messenger he was: he is his messenger, sent of God, and sent before the Son of God. His business was, to prepare Christ's way, disposing the people to receive the Savior, by showing them their sin and misery, and need of Him. This he had said of himself, (John 1:23;) and now Christ said it of him, intending not only to honor John's ministry, but revive people's regard to it, as making way for the Messiah. Note, Much of the beauty of God's dispensations lies in their mutual connection and reciprocal concurrence. John was above the Old-Testament prophets, as coming immediately before Christ. Note, The nearer any are to Christ, the more truly honorable are they.

There was not a greater born of women than John the Baptist, v. 11. Christ knew how to value persons according to their worth, and He prefers John before all that went before him, all that had been born. John is the most eminent of all whom God had raised up for service in his church, more so than Moses; for he began to preach the gospel-doctrine of remission of sin to those who are truly penitent, and had more signal revelations from heaven than any, for he saw heaven opened, and the Holy Ghost descend. He also had great success in his ministry: almost the whole nation flocked to him: none rose on a design so great, or came

levity, and inconstancy, to which the words of the message interpreted literally might lead.] BLOOMF.

(8) *Soft raiment*.] 'Any soft and fine vestments, whether of wool silk, or cotton.' WESTLEY.

Soft. (8.) Luke 7:25. 'The apostle, 1 Cor. 6:9., transfers it to the mind. Leigh: where it is rendered "effeminate." SCOTT.

(10) *Before thy face*.] 'From this application, then, it appears, that Christ is one with God the Father, and that this coming of Christ into the world, is the coming of God Himself.' DR. HAMMOND.

(11) *He that is least, &c.*] 'Nevertheless, there is a sense in which he that is least in the kingdom of heaven, not only in its final glories but even here on earth, is greater than he; for his ministers, and people in general, shall receive superior supplies of the Spirit, and know many important truths relating to my Gospel, which have not been revealed to John himself.' DODD.

'By the kingdom of heaven in this verse, is meant the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel of peace; which fulness was not known till after Christ had been crucified, and had risen from the dead. It does not mean the state of future glory.—See chap. 3:2. It is not in holiness or devotedness to God, that the least in this kingdom, is greater than John; but merely in the difference of the ministry. The prophets pointed out a Christ that was coming. John showed that the Christ was then among them; and the preachers of the Gospel prove that this Christ has suffered, and entered into his glory, and that repentance and remission of sins are proclaimed through his blood.

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12 And ^bfrom the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven ^csuffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

13 For ^dall the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

14 And ^eif ye will receive it, ^fthis is Elias which was for to come.

15 He ^gthat hath

b 21:23-32, Luke 7:29-30, 13:24, 16:16, John 6:27, Phil. 2:12.
c Or, is gotten by force, and they shall thrust men into it.
d 5:17, 18, Mal. 4:5, Luke 24:27, 41, John 5:46, 47, Acts 3:22-24, 13:27, Rom. 3:21.
e Ez. 2:5, 3:10, 11, John 16:12, 1 Cor. 3:2.
f 17:10-13, Mal. 4:5, Mark 9:11-12, Luke 1:17, John 1:21-23, Rev. 20:7.
g 13:49, 43, Mark 4:9, 23, 7:16, Luke 8:8, Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 23, 3:5, 13, 22.

the perfection of its power and purity. He that is less in that, is greater than John. Some understand it of Christ Himself, who was younger, and, as some think, less than John; who always spoke diminishingly of Himself: *I am a worm, and no man, yet greater than John*. So it agrees with what John said, (John 1: 15.) *He that cometh after me is preferred before me*. But it is rather to be understood of the apostles, and ministers of the New Testament, the evangelical prophets: and the comparison between them and John respects office, not character. He preached Christ coming, but they Christ come, nay, crucified and glorified. John came in the gospel-dawn, and therein excelled foregoing prophets; but he was taken off ere the noon, before the rending of the veil, before Christ's death and resurrection, and the pouring out of the Spirit; hence the least of the apostles and evangelists, having greater discoveries made them, and being on a greater embassy, is greater than John. He did no miracles; the apostles wrought many. The ground of this preference is the preference of the New-Testament dispensation to that of the Old. Ministers of the New Testament excel, because their dispensation excels, 2 Cor. 3: 6, &c. John was the greatest of his order; but the least of the highest order is superior to the first of the lowest: a dwarf on a mountain sees further than a giant in the valley. Note, All true greatness is derived from and denominated by the gracious manifestation of Christ. The best are no better than He pleases to make them. What reason for thankfulness have we, that our lot is cast in the days of the kingdom of heaven, under such advantages of light and love! But the greater the advantages, the greater will be the account, if we receive the grace of God in vain.

The great commendation of John the Baptist was, that God owned his ministry, and made it wonderfully successful in preparing the way for the kingdom of heaven. From the days of his first appearing until now, (not much above two years,) great good was done; so quick was the motion when it came near to Christ, the Centre. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence—like that of an army storming a city, or of a crowd bursting into a house. We have the meaning in a parallel phrase, (Luke 16: 16.) *Every man presseth into it*. Multitudes are wrought upon.

1. *Improbable multitudes*: such, one would think, as had no right or title to the kingdom, and so seemed intruders, making a wrongful and forcible entry. When the children of the kingdom are excluded, and many come from the east

Verse 12.

With the ministry of John, the new dispensation began to be introduced, and the kingdom of heaven to be preached; and while generally disregarded, persons of the worst character, (who might rather have been expected to plunder houses,) earnestly sought admission into it, and it seemed to suffer violence, and the violent seized it by force; and they, who were supposed to have no right in these blessings, obtained them, while scribes, Pharisees, priests, and rulers, who regarded these benefits as their unalienable inheritance, were excluded, and publicans and harlots entered before them. *Presseth into it*, Luke 16: 16. In Luke, the middle verb is used actively, but here it is translated passively, and the context confirms the translation. These persons were so convinced and excited by our Lord's preaching 'the kingdom of God,' that they broke through whatever hindered their entrance into it. [The violent, (not used elsewhere in the New Testament,) take it by force.] John 6: 15, 10: 28, 29.

Scott. The violent.] 'Either publicans, sinners, &c. or else those who press with ardent desire to be partakers of it.'

W. H. W. In the margin, "they that thrust men;" they that crowd and press one another in their endeavor to get in.

Bp. Pearson.

Verse 13—15.

Moses, and all the prophets, by types and predictions, foretold the coming of the Messiah as a future event; but John declared Him to be at hand, and pointed Him out as come; and if the people would believe this declaration, John was the person, predicted under the name of Elias, as sent to prepare the way for the Messiah. This information

on an errand so noble, or had such claims to a welcome reception. Many born of women had made a great figure in the world, but Christ preferred John before them. Note, Greatness is not to be measured by appearances and outward splendor: but they are the greatest men who are the greatest saints, and the greatest blessings; who are, as John was, great in the sight of the Lord, Luke 1: 15.

Yet this high encomium of John has a surprising limitation; notwithstanding, he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he; that is, the kingdom of glory. John was a great and good man, but imperfect; he therefore came short of glorified saints, and the spirits of just men made perfect. Note, First, There are degrees of glory in heaven; though every vessel is alike full, all are not alike capacious. Secondly, The least saint in heaven is greater, and knows more, loves more, and does more in praising God, and receives more from Him, than the greatest in this world. The saints on earth are excellent ones, (Ps. 16: 3,) but those in heaven are more excellent: the best in this world are lower than the angels, (Ps. 8: 5,) the least are there equal with angels: hence we should long for that blessed state, where the weak shall be as David, Zech. 12: 8. 2. But by the kingdom of heaven here, is rather to be understood the kingdom of grace, the gospel-dispensation

the perfection of its power and purity. He that is less in that, is greater than John. Some understand it of Christ Himself, who was younger, and, as some think, less than John; who always spoke diminishingly of Himself: *I am a worm, and no man, yet greater than John*. So it agrees with what John said, (John 1: 15.) *He that cometh after me is preferred before me*. But it is rather to be understood of the apostles, and ministers of the New Testament, the evangelical prophets: and the comparison between them and John respects office, not character. He preached Christ coming, but they Christ come, nay, crucified and glorified. John came in the gospel-dawn, and therein excelled foregoing prophets; but he was taken off ere the noon, before the rending of the veil, before Christ's death and resurrection, and the pouring out of the Spirit; hence the least of the apostles and evangelists, having greater discoveries made them, and being on a greater embassy, is greater than John. He did no miracles; the apostles wrought many. The ground of this preference is the preference of the New-Testament dispensation to that of the Old. Ministers of the New Testament excel, because their dispensation excels, 2 Cor. 3: 6, &c. John was the greatest of his order; but the least of the highest order is superior to the first of the lowest: a dwarf on a mountain sees further than a giant in the valley. Note, All true greatness is derived from and denominated by the gracious manifestation of Christ. The best are no better than He pleases to make them. What reason for thankfulness have we, that our lot is cast in the days of the kingdom of heaven, under such advantages of light and love! But the greater the advantages, the greater will be the account, if we receive the grace of God in vain.

The great commendation of John the Baptist was, that God owned his ministry, and made it wonderfully successful in preparing the way for the kingdom of heaven. From the days of his first appearing until now, (not much above two years,) great good was done; so quick was the motion when it came near to Christ, the Centre. The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence—like that of an army storming a city, or of a crowd bursting into a house. We have the meaning in a parallel phrase, (Luke 16: 16.) *Every man presseth into it*. Multitudes are wrought upon.

1. *Improbable multitudes*: such, one would think, as had no right or title to the kingdom, and so seemed intruders, making a wrongful and forcible entry. When the children of the kingdom are excluded, and many come from the east

and the west, then it suffers violence. Compare this with ch. 21: 31, 32. The publicans and harlots believed John, whom the scribes and Pharisees rejected, and so went into the kingdom of God before them; took it over their heads while they trifled. Note, It is no breach of civility to go to heaven before men of higher rank; and it commends the Gospel greatly, that it has brought many to holiness who were very unlikely.

2. *Importunate multitudes*. This violence denotes a vigor and earnestness of desire and endeavor. It shows also what fervency and zeal are required in those who mean to make heaven of their religion. Note, Those who would enter the kingdom of heaven, must strive to enter: self must be denied, the bias, frame, temper of the mind must be altered; hard services are to be performed, and sufferings to be undergone—a force is to be put on corrupt nature; we must run, wrestle, fight, and be in an agony; and all little enough to win such a prize, and overcome such opposition from without and within. The violent take it by force. Those who determine on the great salvation, are carried out towards it with a strong desire; will have it on any terms, and not think them hard, nor quit their hold without a blessing, Gen. 32: 26. Such as will make their calling and election sure, must give diligence. The kingdom of heaven was never intended to include the ease of triflers, but to be the rest of them that labor. It is a blessed sight,—Oh that we could see a greater number,—not with an angry contention, thrusting others out, but with a holy contention, thrusting themselves into the kingdom of heaven!

The ministry of John was the beginning of the Gospel, as it is reckoned, Mark 1: 1. Acts 1: 22. This is shown here in two things:

1. In John, the Old-Testament dispensation began to die, v. 13. The obligation of the law of Moses was not removed till Christ's death, but the discoveries of the Old Testament began to be superseded by the more clear manifestation of the kingdom of heaven at hand. The light of the Gospel (as that of nature) was to precede and make way for its law; therefore the prophecies of the Old Testament came to an end; (an end of completion, not of duration,) before the precepts of it; so when Christ says, *all the prophets and the law prophesied until John*. He shows us, First, How the light of the Old Testament was set up, even in the law and the prophets, who spoke, though darkly, of Christ and his kingdom. Observe, The law is said to prophesy as well as the prophets, concerning Him that was to come. Christ began it Moses, (Luke 24: 27.) Christ was foretold by the dumb signs of Mosaic work, as well as by the more articulate voices of the prophets; was exhibited not only in personal and real types, but in verbal predictions. Blessed be God, that we have both the New-Testament doctrine, to explain the Old-Testament prophecies, and the Old-Testament prophecies

concerned all men; and every one capable of hearing, ought to listen to it as a truth connected with his duty and happiness. (Marg. Ref. 1.) This is the meaning of the concluding sentence, and is often repeated. The limitation of it to an 'inward hearing ear' tends to prevent the effect designed, which is to excite universal attention. Scott.

(13.) *Prophesied until John*.] 'Continued to instruct concerning the Christ.'

Dr. A. CLARKE. 'Till the time of John, men had only the guidance of the law and the prophets.'

Dr. S. CLARKE. (14.) *If ye will receive it*.] 'The words hint some suspicion, that they would not receive his doctrine: which the obstinate expectation of that nation unto this very day, that Elias is personally to come, witnesses also.'

Lightfoot. Elias.] 'More properly Elijah. The prophet Malachi, who predicted the coming of the Baptist in the spirit and power of Elijah, gave the three following distinct characteristics of him: First, that he should be the forerunner and messenger of the Messiah: Behold, I send my messenger before me, Mal. 3: 1. Secondly, that he should appear before the destruction of the second temple. Even the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, ibid. Thirdly, that he should preach repentance to the Jews, and that some time after, the great and terrible day of the Lord should come, and the Jewish land be smitten with a curse, chap. 4: 5, 6. Now these three characters agree perfectly with the conduct of the Baptist, and what shortly followed his preaching, and have not been found in any one else; which is a convincing proof, that Jesus was the promised Messiah.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

ears to hear of him hear.

[Practical Observations.]

16 ¶ But, whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, 17 And saying, 'We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.'

¶ Lam. 2:13. Mark 4:20. Luke 13:18. 19:24. 23:35. 24:34. 1 Luke 7:31-35. 1 La. 2:9-13. 1 Cor. 9-19-23. 9:15, 23. 1 Kings 1:40. 1a. 30:29. Jer. 9:17-20. 31:54. Luke 15:25.

two Testaments, as Noah was the link connecting both worlds. The concluding prophecy was, *Behold, I will send you Elijah*, Mal. 4: 5, 6. Those words prophesied until John, when they became history, and prophesied no longer. First, Christ speaks of it as a great truth, that John the Baptist is the Elias of the New Testament: not in person, as the Jews expected: he denied that, (John 1: 21.) but in the spirit and power of Elias. (Luke 1: 17.) like him in temper and conversation, pressing repentance with terrors, and, as in the prophecy, *turning the hearts of the fathers to the children*. Secondly, He speaks of it as a truth, which would not be easily apprehended by those, whose expectations fastened on the temporal kingdom of the Messiah. Christ suspects the welcome of it; *If ye will receive it*. Not but that it was true, whether received by them or not, but He reproves their backwardness to receive truths so favorable to their interests, only because they were opposed to their sentiments. Or, 'If you will receive him as the promised Elias, he will be an Elias to you, to turn you, and prepare you for the Lord.' Note, Gospel truths are, as they are received, a savor of life, or death.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7-15. Alas! how unsatisfactory an account can many give of what they go to see or hear, in places of public worship! They go to satisfy curiosity, or to trifle away time. Instead of meeting to see the shaking of a reed, or 'a man clothed in soft raiment,' they mean to exhibit their own apparel, or compare it with that of their neighbors!—For 'soft raiment' is not now confined to kings, but all endeavor to wear it, whatever their ability; and more of it appears in worshipping assemblies, than consists with the precepts and glory of God, the interests of families, the good of the poor, or prosperity of souls. But the Lord will call those, who go to hear his Word, to an account of their motives, as well as those who do not go, for their neglect. We should, then, attend to hear his messengers, who come to prepare the way, that his kingdom may be set up. And as the least of faithful ministers, who now preach the Gospel, is greater, in some respects, than all, who lived before that dispensation, it behoves us 'to give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest at any time we should let

them slip.' (Note, Heb. 2: 1-4.) Considering our light and information, 'what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!' In every age, 'the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.' Most atrocious transgressors, who 'strive to enter in at the strait gate,' who wrestle in prayer, and are in earnest about their souls, outstrip their more moral, decent neighbors, who are supine, dilatory, and lukewarm. They who are resolved, at all adventures, to find admission, succeed; but such as postpone the concerns of their souls to worldly interest, pleasures and diversions, will come short; as well as those who seek salvation in any other way than by 'repentance towards God and faith' in his beloved Son. To Him, 'Moses and all the prophets,' John the Baptist, and the apostles and evangelists bear witness, that whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.' This we must attest, whether men will receive it or not, and call on all, 'who have ears to hear,' seriously to regard it.

SCOTT.

(15.) *He that hath ears, &c.* 'A proverbial expression.' BLOOMER. 'These things are so clear and manifest, that a man has only to hear them, to be convinced, and fully satisfied of their truth.'

DR. A. CLARKE.

Let him hear. 'For, to understand and regard the character and mission of John aright, will have a most happy tendency to promote your receiving Him, whom John was sent to introduce.' DODD.

VERSES 16-19.

Our Lord next exposed the perverseness of the Jews by an apt similitude. They were like sullen children, who quarrel on every attempt of their fellows to please them, or induce them to join in the diversions, for which they met in market-places. Their companions piped a cheerful tune to engage them, but they refused to dance to it: they represented the mournful strains of the funeral, but they refused to lament. Such a capricious disposition is often observed in children, and is ought to deserve correction. Yet, in a matter of infinite importance, the people of that generation copied it. The Lord used means to prepare them for the blessings of the Gospel, but they objected to all. John came, abstinence and austere, and they said, 'he is a melancholy lunatic, and possessed with a devil.' The Son of man came free, and social, eating and drinking without austerity: He partook of entertainments as circumstances required; but instead of being pleased at his courteous and social demeanor, they malevolently and absurdly called Him a 'glutton,' and 'wine-bibber,' and because He went among notorious sinners, to reform them, they accused Him of loving their characters and company. But the divine wisdom in these and all appointments will be perceived, approved, and adored by those, who are born and taught of God, and thus made wise unto salvation. All these are taught by grace to adore the depth of the riches both of the knowledge and wisdom of God, in dispensations, which they do not understand, and give Him credit for wisdom, justice and goodness, where they do not perceive them; and to understand many designs and appointments, which

to others appear perplexed. (Notes. Rom. 11: 33-36. 1 Cor. 2: 14-16.) *Gluttonous*. This is stronger than the original, 'an eater, and a drinker of wine.'

SCOTT.

(16.) *Like unto children.* 'Like the children complained of, and not like those that made the complaint: but, more especially in Matthew's style, the phrase, it is like, often signifies only in general, that the thing spoken of may be illustrated by the following similitude.' And so the phrase must be understood, Matt. 13. 24, and 45. 18: 23. 1. and 22: 2.

DODD.

'Children, among the Jews, imitated in their sports what they saw done by others on great occasions, and particularly the customs in festivities, wherein the musician beginning a tune on his instrument, the company danced to his pipe. So also, in funerals, wherein the women beginning the mournful song, (as the *præfixa* of the Romans,) the rest followed, lamenting and beating their breasts. These things the children acted and personated in the streets in play, and the rest, not following the leader as usual, gave occasion to the speech ascribed to them.'

Markets. 'The forum, or market-place, was usually a public market, on one side only, the other sides of the area being occupied by temples, theatres, courts of justice, and other public buildings. Here the philosophers met, and taught; here laws were promulgated; and here devotions, as well as amusements, occupied the populace. These places, in ancient times, were generally at the gate of the city, and were used for judicial trials, as places of business, and to accommodate those who were assembled merely to pass away time. Acts 16: 19. 17. Matt. 20: 3. Gen. 23: 10. aty. Deut. 21: 19. 25: 6. 7. Ruth 4: 1. ed. seq. Ps. 127: 6. Prov. 22: 22. 24: 7. Zech. 8: 16. Here the Pharisees, who desired salvation, (Mark 12: 38.) might meet with the people, judges, magistrates, dignitaries, &c.'

CALDER. JAHN.

(17.) *Not lamented.* 'Or beaten the breast with the Jews in lamentation.'

DR. A. CLARKE.

13 For " John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, ' He hath a devil. "

19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. ^a But wisdom is justified of her children.

m 34 Jer. 15:17, 16:9, 9. Luke 1:15 1 Cor. 9:27.
l 10:25, 2 Kings 9:11. Jer. 29:26. Hos 9:7. John 7:20, 8:43. 10:20.
Acts 29:24.
c Luke 8:23, 30, 7:34, 38. 14:1. John 12:2, &c. Rom. 15:2.
p 9:10, 11. Luke 15:12 19:7.
q Luke 7:29, 35. 1 Cor. 1:24-29. Eph. 3:8-10. Rev. 5:11-14. 7:12.

Note, 1. God uses a variety of proper means and methods for the conversion and salvation of men. He would have all men to be saved, and therefore leaves no stone unturned in order to it. The great thing He aims at is to melt our wills into a compliance with his will, by affecting us with discoveries of Himself. As there are various affections to be wrought on, He uses various ways, which, though differing one from another, all tend to the same thing; and God is in them carrying on the same design. In the parable, this is called his *pipino* to us, and his *mourning* to us; the former in his promises, working on our hopes, the latter, in his threatenings, working on our fears, that thus He might alarm us out of our sins, and allure us to Himself. He has piped to us in gracious and merciful providences, *mourning* to us in calamities and afflictions, and has set the one over against the other. He has taught his ministers to change their voice: (Gal. 4: 20.) sometimes to speak in thunder from mount Sinai, sometimes in a still small voice from mount Zion.

In the explanation of the parable is shown the different temper of John's ministry and of Christ's, the great lights of that generation.

On the one hand, John came *mourning* to them, *neither eating nor drinking*; not being familiar with the people, nor ordinarily eating with them, but alone, in his cell in the wilderness, where his meat was locusts and wild honey. Now this, one would think, should work on them; for such an austere, mortified life, was agreeable to his doctrine, and that minister is most likely to do good, whose life accords with his instructions; and yet the preaching even of such a minister is not always effectual.

On the other hand, the Son of man came *eating and drinking*, and thus *pipino* unto them. Christ was familiar with all sorts of persons, affecting no peculiar austerity, but being often at feasts with Pharisees and publicans, to win those whom John's severity had not awed. So Paul learned to become all things to all men, 1 Cor. 9: 22. Not that, by this freedom, Christ would condemn John, any more than John, by his reserve, would have condemned Christ; but so different were their manners. Note, Though never so clear in the goodness of our own practice, we must not judge of others by it. There may be a great diversity of operations, where it is the same God that worketh all in all, (1 Cor. 12: 6.) and this various manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal, v. 7. Observe especially, that God's ministers are variously gifted: the ability and genius of some lie one way, of others, another; one is a Boanerges—a son of thunder; another a Barnabas—a son of consolation; yet all these worketh that One and the self-same Spirit; (1 Cor. 12: 11.) and therefore we ought not to condemn either, but praise both, and praise God for both, who thus deals variously with persons of various tempers, that they may be either made piable, or left inexcusable; so that whatever be the issue, God may be glorified.

Note, 2. The various methods God takes for the conversion of sinners, are with many fruitless and ineffectual; ' Ye have not danced, ye have not lamented: ' you have not been suitably affected either with the one or the other.' Particular means are designed, as in medicine, for particular ends, in order to the great and general result: now if people will be neither bound by laws nor invited by promises, nor alarmed by threatenings, will neither be awakened by the greatest things, nor allured by the sweetest, nor startled by the most terrible, nor be made sensible by the plainest; if they will hearken to the voice neither of Scripture, nor reason, nor experience, nor providence, conscience, or interest, what more can be done? The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed, the founder melteth in vain: reprobate silver shall men call them, Jer. 6: 25. Ministers' labor is bestowed in vain, (Isa. 49: 4.) and, a much greater loss, the grace of God received in vain, 2 Cor. 6: 1. Note, It is some comfort to faithful ministers, when unsuccessful, that it is no new thing for the best preachers and best preaching to come short of the desired end. Who

has believed our report? If the bow of great commanders, of Christ and John, so often *turned empty*, (2 Sam. 1: 22.) no marvel if ours do so, and we prophesy to little purpose upon dry bones.

Note, 3. Those who do not profit by the means of grace, are commonly perverse and reflect on the ministers by whom they possess these means: and because they get no good themselves, prejudice others against the Word, and the faithful preachers of it, and do what hurt they can. Those who will not comply with God, and walk after Him, confront Him, and walk contrary to Him. So this generation did: unwilling to believe Christ and John, and to own them for the best of men, as they ought, they abused them, and represented them as the worst. As for John the Baptist, they say, *He has a devil*. They imputed his manner of life to melancholy, or to some Satanic influence. ' Why should we heed him! He is a poor hypochondriac man, full of fancies, and under the power of a crazed imagination.' As for Christ, they imputed his free and obliging conversation to habits of luxury and animal indolence. *Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber*. No reflection could be more foul and invidious: it is the charge against the rebellious son, (Deut. 21: 20.) *He is a glutton and a drunkard*, yet none could be more false and unjust; for Christ pleased not Himself, (Rom. 15: 3.) nor did any man ever live a life of such real mortification to the world, as Christ lived. He that was *undefiled and separate from sinners*, is here represented as in league with them, and polluted by them. No degree of innocence, or of excellence, will always be a defence against the reproach of *tongues*: nay, a man's best gifts and best actions may be made his reproach. Our best actions indeed may become our worst accusations, as David's fasting, Ps. 69: 19. It was true, in some sense, that Christ was a *Friend of publicans and sinners*, the best Friend they ever had; who came into the world to save them, even the chief of sinners; so he said very feelingly who had himself been, not a *publican and sinner*, but a Pharisee and sinner; but this is, and will be to eternity, Christ's praise; and they forfeited the benefit of it who thus turned it to his reproach.

Note, 4. The cause of the great unfruitfulness and perverseness of people under the means of grace, is, that they are like children sitting in the markets—foolish as children, forward as children, mindless and playful as children. Would they but *show themselves men* in understanding, there might be hope of them. The market-place is to some a place of idleness (ch. 20: 3.) to others, a place of worldly business: (James 4: 13.) to all, a place of noise or diversion: so if you ask why people get little good by the means of grace, you will find it is because they are slothful and trifling, and take no pains; or because their heads, hands, and hearts are full of the world, the cares of which *choke the word*, and their souls at last, (Ezek. 33: 31. Amos 8: 5.) and they study to divert their thoughts from every thing serious. Thus in the markets they are, and there they sit; in these things their hearts rest, and by them they abide.

Note, 5. Though many abuse, yet a remnant improve, the means of grace, to the glory of God, and the good of their own souls. *But wisdom is justified of her children*. Christ is Wisdom: in Him are hid the treasures of wisdom: the saints are the children God has given Him, Heb. 2: 13. The Gospel is wisdom, it is the wisdom from above: true believers are *begotten* again by it, and born from above: they are wise children, wise for themselves and their

(18.) *Neither eating nor drinking*.] That is, neither with the same freedom, nor of the same delicacies, as men in general: he was abstemious in both.

(19.) *Wisdom is justified*. &c.] ' They who are truly wise and religious must approve this beautiful variety in the conduct of Providence; and see that the difference in our manner of living suits the purposes of our respective appearances, and is adapted to promote the general design of God's glory and man's salvation.'

Her children.] ' Christ's disciples, and those of John.'

ED. PEARCE.

' By children, our Lord may simply mean the fruits or effects of wisdom, according to the Hebrew idiom, which denominates the fruits or effects of a thing, its children. So in Job, chap. 5: 7, sparks emitted by coals are termed, the children of the coal.'

Dr. A. CLARK
' It should be observed, that our Lord enjoined no austerities as absolute duties, nor even recommended any as carrying men to a higher degree of Divine favor. The religion of Christ stands eminently distinguished in this respect, when compared with other religions which have been founded in the fanaticism, either of their authors, or their first followers.'

PALEY

20 ¶ Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not;

21 "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

22 But I say unto you, "It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you."

Luke 10:13-15. Is. 1:2-5. Mic. 6:1-5. Mark 9:19. 16:14. Jam. 1:5.
12:41. 21:29-32. Jer. 8:6. Acts 17:30. 2 Tim. 2:25, 26. Rev. 22:1. 9:20, 21. 16:9, 11.
18:7. 23:13-29. 29:24. Jer. 13:27. Luke 11:42-52. Jude 11. Mark 8:45. 8:32. Luke 9:10. John 1:44. 12:21.
12:41, 42. Ez. 3:6, 7. Acts 13:44-48. 28:25-28.
Job 42:8. Jon. 3:5-10.
24. Luke 10:14. 12:47, 48. Heb. 2:3. 6:4-8. 10:26-31.
1:1. 2:3. Jer. 25:22. 27:3. Ez. 29:23-24. Am. 1:9, 10. Zech. 8:2, 3.
c 12:38. 2 Pet. 2:9. 3:7. 1 John 4:17.

ticular to those places, to affect them. Then began He to upbraid them, v. 20. He began to preach to them long before, (ch. 4: 17.) but did not begin to upbraid till now. Gentle means must be used first. Christ is not apt to upbraid. He gives liberally, and upbraideth not, till sinners, by their obstinacy, extort it from Him. Wisdom first invites, but when slighted, then she upbraids, Prov. 1:20, 24. Those are unlike Christ who begin with upbraidings. Now observe

The sin charged on them; not any against the moral law: then an appeal would have lain to the Gospel, which would have relieved; but impenitence, a sin against the Gospel, the remedial law itself, this was it He upbraided them with, that they repented not. Note, Wilful impenitence is the great, damning sin of multitudes that enjoy the Gospel, with which (more than any other,) sinners will be upbraided to eternity. The great doctrine not only of John, but of Christ and his apostles, was repentance; their uniform design being, to prevail with people to change their minds and ways, to leave their sins and turn to God; and to this they would not be brought. He does not say, because they believed not; for some kind of faith many of them had, as that Christ was a Teacher come from God: but, because they repented not: that faith did not prevail to the transforming of their hearts, and the reformation of their lives. Christ reproved them for their other sins, that He might lead them to repentance; but when they repented not, He upbraided them with that, as their refusal to be healed: He did so, that they might upbraid themselves, and see their folly. Consider

The aggravation of the sin: they were the cities in which most of his mighty works were done. Note, Some places enjoy the means of grace in a higher degree than others. God is a free Agent, and so acts in all his dispensations, both as the God of nature and God of grace, common and distinguishing grace. By Christ's mighty works they should have been prevailed with, not only to receive his doctrine, but to obey his law: the curing of bodily diseases should have been the healing of their souls, but had not that effect. Note, The stronger the inducements to repent, the more heinous the impenitence, and the more severe the reckoning: for Christ remembers the mighty works done among us, and the gracious works done for us, too, by which also, we should be led to repentance, Rom. 2:4.

1. Chorazin and Bethsaida are here instanced; (v. 21, 22.) they have each their woe. Woe unto thee, Chorazin; woe unto thee, Beth-

true interests; not like the foolish children that sit in the markets. These children of wisdom justify wisdom: they comply with the designs of Christ's grace, answer the intentions of it, and so evince the wisdom of Christ in it. This is explained, Luke 7: 29. The publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John, and afterwards embracing the Gospel of Christ. Note, The success of the means of grace justifies the wisdom of God in the choice of them, as the cure of the patient justifies the wisdom of the physician in his prescription: therefore Paul is not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, because, whatever it is to others, to them that believe it is the power of God unto salvation, Rom. 1: 16. When the cross of Christ, which to others is foolishness and a stumbling block, is to them that are called the wisdom of God, and the power of God, (1 Cor. 1: 23, 24.) so that they make the knowledge of it the summit of their ambition, (1 Cor. 2: 2.) and the efficacy of it the crown of their glorying, (Gal. 6: 14.) here is wisdom justified of her children. Wisdom's children are wisdom's witnesses in the world, (Isa. 43: 10.) and shall be produced as such in that day, when Wisdom, now justified by the saints, shall be glorified in the saints, and admired in all them that believe, 2 Thess. 1: 10. If the unbelief of some reproach Christ, and give Him the lie; the faith of others shall honor Him; by setting to its seal that He is true, and that He also is wise; 1 Cor. 1: 25. Whether we do it or not, it will be done; not only God's equity, but his wisdom will be justified, when He speaks, when He judges.

This, then, is the account Christ gives of that generation; and as it was then, it has been since, and is still: some believe the things which are spoken, and some believe not, Acts 23: 24.

II. As to the particular places in which Christ was most conversant. What He said in general of that generation. He applied in particular to those places.

He began to preach to them long before, (ch. 4: 17.) but did not begin to upbraid till now. Gentle means must be used first. Christ is not apt to upbraid. He gives liberally, and upbraideth not, till sinners, by their obstinacy, extort it from Him. Wisdom first invites, but when slighted, then she upbraids, Prov. 1:20, 24. Those are unlike Christ who begin with upbraidings. Now observe

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Verse 20-24.

We are not competent to solve every difficulty in this subject, or fully to understand it. It suffices that Christ knew the impenitent Jews to be more hardened, and less susceptible of suitable impressions from his doctrine and miracles, than the inhabitants of Tyre and Sidon would have been; and, therefore, their condemnation would be proportionately tolerable. It is possible, that inhabitants of these cities professed to believe in Christ, yet did not repent; and our Lord, by upbraiding them, not repenting, emphatically showed the inefficacy of an impenitent faith.

(21.) Woe to thee. Better, alas for thee; an exclamation of pity, rather than a denunciation of wrath.

Chorazin! About two miles from Caesarea, of Galilee.

Bethsaida! On the lake of Gennesareth, at the north end, where the

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said. Christ came to bless, but if slighted He has woes in reserve, woes most terrible. These two cities were situate on the sea of Galilee, the former on the east side, the latter on the west, rich and populous places; Bethsaida was lately advanced to a city by Philip, the tetrarch; out of it Christ took at least three of his apostles: thus highly were those places favored! Yet, because they knew not the day of their visitation, they fell under these woes and soon dwindled into mean, obscure villages. So fatally does sin ruin cities, and so certainly does the word of Christ take place!

These places are compared with Tyre and Sidon, two maritime cities of Old-Testament report, just beginning to flourish again from previous ruin. These cities bordered on Galilee but were of ill fame among the Jews for idolatry, and other wickedness. Christ sometimes went into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, (ch. 16: 21.) but never thither: the Jews would have taken it as a great offence; therefore, to convince and humble them, He here shows,

That Tyre and Sidon would not have been so bad as Chorazin and Bethsaida. If they had had the same Word preached, and the same miracles wrought among them, they would have repented long ago, as Nineveh did, in sackcloth and ashes. Christ, who knows all hearts, knew that, if He had gone, and lived, and preached among them, He would have done more good, than where He was; yet he continued where He was for a time, to encourage his ministers to do so, though they see not the success they desire. Note, Some are more easily wrought on than others, and it is an aggravation of the impenitence of those who have plentiful means of grace, not only that many who enjoy the same are wrought on, but that many more who enjoy less, would be wrought on if they enjoyed the same means. Ezek. 3: 6, 7. Our repentance is slow and delayed, but theirs would have been speedy; they would have repented long ago. Ours has been slight and superficial; theirs would have been deep and serious, in sackcloth and ashes. Yet we must observe, with an awful adoration of the divine sovereignty, that the Syrians and Sidonians will justly perish in their sin, though if they had had the means of grace, they would have repented: for God is a debtor to no man. Therefore Tyre and Sidon shall not be so miserable as Chorazin and Bethsaida, but it shall be more tolerable for them in the day of judgment, (v. 22.) Note, First, At the day of judgment, the everlasting state of men will, by an unerring and unalterable doom, be determined; happiness or misery, and the several degrees of each. Therefore it is called the eternal judgment, (Heb. 6: 2.) because decisive of the eternal state. Secondly, In that judgment, all the means of grace enjoyed in the state of probation, will certainly come into the account: and it will be inquired, not only how bad we were, but how much better we might have been, Isa. 6: 3, 4. Thirdly, Though the damnation of all that perish will be intolerable, yet that of those who had the fullest and clearest discoveries made them of the power and grace of Christ, will be most intolerable. The Gospel prepares all who become acquainted with it, either for higher happiness, or deeper damnation. "If self-reproach be the torture of hell, it must be hell indeed to those, who had fair opportunity of getting to heaven, and yet did not improve it. Son, remember that."

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He began to preach to them long before, (ch. 4: 17.) but did not begin to upbraid till now. Gentle means must be used first. Christ is not apt to upbraid. He gives liberally, and upbraideth not, till sinners, by their obstinacy, extort it from Him. Wisdom first invites, but when slighted, then she upbraids, Prov. 1:20, 24. Those are unlike Christ who begin with upbraidings. Now observe

The sin charged on them; not any against the moral law: then an appeal would have lain to the Gospel, which would have relieved; but impenitence, a sin against the Gospel, the remedial law itself, this was it He upbraided them with, that they repented not. Note, Wilful impenitence is the great, damning sin of multitudes that enjoy the Gospel, with which (more than any other,) sinners will be upbraided to eternity. The great doctrine not only of John, but of Christ and his apostles, was repentance; their uniform design being, to prevail with people to change their minds and ways, to leave their sins and turn to God; and to this they would not be brought. He does not say, because they believed not; for some kind of faith many of them had, as that Christ was a Teacher come from God: but, because they repented not: that faith did not prevail to the transforming of their hearts, and the reformation of their lives. Christ reproved them for their other sins, that He might lead them to repentance; but when they repented not, He upbraided them with that, as their refusal to be healed: He did so, that they might upbraid themselves, and see their folly. Consider

The aggravation of the sin: they were the cities in which most of his mighty works were done. Note, Some places enjoy the means of grace in a higher degree than others. God is a free Agent, and so acts in all his dispensations, both as the God of nature and God of grace, common and distinguishing grace. By Christ's mighty works they should have been prevailed with, not only to receive his doctrine, but to obey his law: the curing of bodily diseases should have been the healing of their souls, but had not that effect. Note, The stronger the inducements to repent, the more heinous the impenitence, and the more severe the reckoning: for Christ remembers the mighty works done among us, and the gracious works done for us, too, by which also, we should be led to repentance, Rom. 2:4.

1. Chorazin and Bethsaida are here instanced; (v. 21, 22.) they have each their woe. Woe unto thee, Chorazin; woe unto thee, Beth-

river Jordan flows into it. The name imports "a place of hunting and fishing;" for the latter of which, especially, its situation was very convenient. Three of the apostles, Peter, Andrew, and Philip, belonged to this city. It is reduced to the state of a very poor village, consisting of only five or six miserable cottages.

Tyre and Sidon.] Places remarkable for their luxury, pride, and contempt for religion. This is frequently the case with rich trading cities: and that it was so with these in particular, may be learned from many passages in the Old Testament, as well as from profane writers. See Judg. 18: 7. Isa. 23: 9. Ezek. 26: 2, 5, 17, 22. and Amos 1: 9, 10.

(22.) Day of judgment.] Final and universal judgment. Our Lord plainly speaks of a judgment "at was yet to come on all these places that He mentions."

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23 And thou^d Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day.

24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

[Practical Observations.]

25 ¶ At that time, Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, ^kLord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid

sis, (v. 23.) 'And thou, Capernaum, hold up thy hand and hear thy doom.' Capernaum was honored above all the cities of Israel, in being Christ's most usual residence: it was like Shiloh of old, the place He chose to put his name there; and it shared the fate of Shiloh, Jer. 7: 12, 14. Christ's miracles here were as *daily bread*, and, therefore, as the manna of old, despised, and called light bread. Many a sweet and comfortable lecture of grace had Christ read them to little purpose; now, therefore, He reads them a dreadful lecture of wrath: those who will not hear the former, shall be made to feel the latter.

1. Her doom is put absolutely: Thou which art exalted to heaven, shalt be brought down to hell. 'Note, Such as enjoy the Gospel in power and purity, are exalted to heaven—have great honor for the present, and great advantage for eternity; they are lifted up toward heaven: but if, notwithstanding, they still cleave to the earth, they may thank themselves that they are not lifted into heaven. Gospel advantages abused will also sink sinners so much the lower in hell. Our external privileges will be so far from saving us, that, if our hearts and lives be not agreeable to them, they will but inflame the reckoning: the higher the precipice, the more fatal the fall from it. Let us not therefore be high-minded, but fear: not slothful, but diligent. Job 20: 6, 7.

2. In comparison with the doom of Sodom, a place more remarkable both for sin and ruin, than perhaps any other.

First, Capernaum's means would have saved Sodom. If these miracles had been done among the Sodomites, had as they were, they would have repented, and their city would have remained to this day, a monument of sparing mercy, as it now is of destroying justice, Jude 7. Note, Upon true repentance through Christ, even the greatest sin shall be pardoned, and the greatest ruin prevented, that of Sodom not excepted. Angels were sent to Sodom, and yet remained

not; but if Christ had been sent thither, it would have remained: how well for us, then, that the world to come is put in subjection to Christ, and not to angels! Heb. 2: 5. It would not have seemed as one that mocked, if he had wrought miracles.

Secondly, Sodom's ruin will therefore be less at the great day than Capernaum's. Sodom will have many sins to answer for, but not the sin of neglecting Christ. If the Gospel prove a savor of death, it is doubly so: it is of death unto death, so great a death: (2 Cor. 2: 16.) Christ had said the same of all other places that receive not his ministers and Gospel: (ch. 10: 15.) It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for that city. We that have the Bible, and the preaching of the Gospel, and the administration of its ordinances, and live under the dispensation of the Spirit, have advantages not inferior to those of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, and the account in the great day will be accordingly. It has therefore justly been said, that professors of this age, whether they go to heaven or hell, will be the greatest debtors in either of these places: if to heaven, the greatest debtors to divine mercy for the rich means that brought them thither: if to hell, the greatest debtors to divine justice, for those rich means that might have kept them thence.

V. 25—30. In these verses, we have Christ's thanksgiving to his Father for the sovereignty and security of the covenant of redemption, and his offer to all men of the privileges and benefits of the covenant of grace.

I. Christ's thanksgiving: *Jesus answered and said.* It is called an answer, though no other words are recorded but his own, because it is so comfortable a reply to the melancholy considerations preceding. The sin and ruin of those cities was, no doubt, a grief to the Lord Jesus: He could not but weep over them, as over Jerusalem: (Luke 19: 41.) With this thought, therefore, and in the form of thanksgiving, that it may be more refreshing, He

4:13. 8:5. 17:24. Luke 4:23. John 4:45, &c.
17:13—15. Lam. 2:1, Ez. 28: 12—19, 31:16, 17. Ob. 4. Luke 14:11. 2 Pet. 2:4—9.
Gen. 2:12. 19:24, 25. Ez. 16:48—50. Jude 7. Rev. 11:8.
10:15. Lam. 4:6. Mark 6:11. Luke 10:12.
10:1. 20:21.
1 Chr. 28:13. Dan. 2:23. John 11: 41. 2 Thes. 2:13, 14.
1 Gen. 1:12. Deut. 10:14, 15. 2 Kings 19:15. Is. 56:1. Dan. 4:35. Acts 17:24.
13:1—16. Is. 52:1. 29:10—14, 18, 19. Mark 4:10. Job 7:48. 49. 2. 3. 82—41. 12:38—40. Rom. 11:8—10.
1 Cor. 1:18—29. 2:8—8. 3:18—20. 2 Cor. 4:3—6.

V. 16—24. Natural depravity causes sensible men to act with folly in the concerns of their souls. Their cavils are often futile and malignant. Their dislike to the message dictates objections to the messengers, and they urge something against every one, however holy. Determined to be displeased, they misconstrue their best actions. Their self-denial arises from melancholy; their cheerfulness from levity; their socialness from intemperance; their endeavors to reform the profligate are ascribed to a congeniality of disposition, and to dislike of goodness; their methods of doing good are but varied modes of mischief. In short, men will censure every thing to excuse themselves from joining Christians in mourning for sin, and seeking happiness from God, glorifying Him, and doing good to mankind. In vain may we hope to escape the calumnies of such men, as said that John the Baptist was a demoniac, and the Holy One of God, a 'gluttonous man,' and 'a wine bibber,' a companion of publicans and sinners. These are children of mischief, but wisdom's children welcome the messen-

gers of God, and bless Him for their gifts and endowments, and they adore the divine wisdom in the things at which he ungodly cavil, to their eternal ruin. Our Lord will never upbraid the trembling penitent with his iniquities, but will awfully condemn such as continue impenitent under the means of grace. He knows the different degrees of enmity and obduracy, which possess the hearts of unbelievers, and will proportion their punishment accordingly. But it will be more tolerable for pagans in the judgment, than for wicked professors of Christianity. The Lord sends the Gospel to whom He pleases. He punishes none more than they deserve, and rejects none who seek salvation from Him. But those who have been exalted to heaven with outward advantages, should fear lest, by abusing them, they sink the deeper in hell: and many who dwell in this favored land will, undoubtedly, perish with a condemnation deeper than those of Tyre, Sodom, or Gomorrah.

SCOTT.

(23.) *Exalted unto heaven, &c.* A Hebrew metaphor, expressive of the utmost prosperity, and possession of the greatest privileges. It is a prophetic word of this city, because that in it our Lord dwelt, and wrought many of his miraculous works.

Hell. If, as Bp. Pearce suggests, is meant here not the place of torment, but rather a state of desolation, this prediction of our Lord was literally fulfilled; for, in the wars between the Romans and the Jews, these cities were totally destroyed, so that no traces are now found of Bethsaida, Chorazin or Capernaum.

IB.

The sovereignty of God, in giving more means of instruction to one city, or region, than to another which was better disposed to attend to them, might excite objections; to which perhaps Jesus answered by glorifying the divine conduct in a similar concern. He addressed the Father as the Governor of the universe, who doeth whatever pleases Him, and thanked, or *adored* Him, and professed acquiescence in his wisdom, equity, and goodness, in that He concealed the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven from the scribes and wise men of the nation, and revealed them to the poor and unlearned, to men of limited capacities, as education; despised for their ignorance and inexperience, but number as teachable as children: and this, for wise and gracious reasons, which He did not assign. (Note, Eph. 1: 9—12.) God did not, by positive influence, hide the proofs of Christ's mission from the wise and prudent. They had the Scriptures. They saw, or heard, his miracles, and had opportunity to know his doctrine. But they were blinded by pride and prejudice; and He gave them up to be judicially blinded, perhaps, among other reasons, that the success of the Gospel might appear to be the effect of divine power, and not of human wisdom and sagacity. (Note, 2 Cor. 4: 7.) But there was a positive influence in making known the truth to the apostles and disciples.

(Note, 18: 17.) The "wise and prudent" here are not men spiritually wise, but men of carnal, worldly wisdom, and swelling conceit of their proficiency; which indisposes men to spiritual wisdom. And our Lord's God is said to have hid the wisdom of the Gospel, because He permitted them to continue in the conceit and worldly mindedness, which caused them to reject it as disagreeable to their inclinations and sentiments. The "babes" are the humble, meek persons, who, with a low esteem of their own wisdom, give themselves up to the divine wisdom, and, being free from carnal affections, embrace it when revealed. It being suitable to the wisdom of God, who "resists the proud, but giveth grace to the humble," to make known his will to persons so prepared to receive it, our Lord adds, "for so it seemed good in thy sight." *Whitby* (Note, 6: 3.) *I thank Thee.* (25.) *I confess to Thee.* (3: 6; Luke 10: 21. Rom. 14: 11. 15: 9. Rev. 3: 5. 2 Sam. 22: 50. 1 Chr. 16: 4. Sept. It seemed good, Luke 2: 14. 10: 21. 12: 32. Eph. 1: 5, 9. Phil. 2: 13. 2 Thess. 1: 11.

(25.) *Jesus answered.* 'Jesus took occasion to say.' *DODD.* *I thank Thee.* 'I ascribe glory to Thee, O Father! Heb. 13: 15 *DODD.* *I fully agree with Thee.* 'I am perfectly of the same mind Thou hast acted in all things with strict holiness, justice, equity and truth.' *Dr. A. CLARKE.*

Hast hid, &c. 'That is, not having revealed, &c. We have the same idiom, Rom. 6: 17. The thanks are not given for their having been formerly the servants of sin, but for their being then obedient.' *CAMPBELL.*

Thou hast hid. 'God is often said, in Scripture, to do those things which He determines to permit, and which, He foresees, will be in fact the consequence of those circumstances in which his creatures are

these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.

26 Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.

16:17. 18:34. 21:16. 1 Sam. 2:19. 8:4-21. Ps. 82. Jer. 1:5-7. Mark 10:14-16.
1 Job 38:13. Is. 46:10. Rom. 9:18. 11:33-36. Eph. 1:9, 11. 3:11. 2 Tim. 1:9.
22:18. John 3:35. 5:21-29. 13:3. 17:1. 1 Cor. 15:25-27. Eph. 1:20. 1:23. Phil. 2:10, 11. Heb. 2:8-10. 1 Pet. 3:22.
1 Luke 10:22. John 10:15.
John 1:13. 5:46. 14:6-9. 17:23. 6:35, 36. 1 John 2:23. 5:19, 20. 2 John 9.

be grateful, and to say, *Thank you, father, as readily as, Pray, father.* When, also, we come to God as a Father, we must remember that He is *Lord of heaven and earth*: we must come to Him with reverence, as to the sovereign Lord of all; with confidence, likewise, as to One able to do for us whatever we need or desire; to defend us from all evil, and to supply us with all good. Christ, in Melchizedec, has long since *blessed God* as the Possessor, or *Lord of heaven and earth*; and in all our thanksgivings for mercies in the stream, we must give Him the glory of the all-sufficiency that is in the fountain.

2. The thing for which He gives thanks: *Because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.* These things: He does not say what things, but means the great things of the Gospel, the things that belong to our peace, Luke 19:42. He speaks emphatically of them, *these things*, because they were things that filled Him, and should fill us, all other things are 'as nothing to these.

Note, The great things of the everlasting Gospel have been and are hid from many *wise and prudent*, eminent for learning and worldly policy; some of the greatest scholars and greatest statesmen have been great strangers to gospel mysteries. *The world by wisdom knew not God*, 1 Cor. 1:21. Nay, there is a science falsely so called, (1 Tim. 6:20) opposed to the Gospel. The most expert in things sensible and secular, are commonly least experienced in spiritual things, not feeling the power of them.

While the *wise and prudent* of the world are in the dark about Gospel mysteries, even *babes in Christ* have the sanctifying, saving knowledge of them: *Thou hast revealed them unto babes*: such Christ's disciples were: men of mean birth and education; no scholars, no artists, no politicians; unlearned and ignorant men, Acts 4:13. Thus are the secrets of wisdom made known to *babes and sucklings*, that out of their mouths might be ordained strength,

refreshes Himself, that, for all this, *there is a remnant, though but babes*, to whom the things of the Gospel are revealed: *though Israel be not gathered, yet shall He be glorious.* Note, We may take great encouragement in looking up to God, when round about us we see nothing but discouragement. It is sad to see how regardless most men are of their own happiness, but comfortable to think, that the wise and faithful God will, however, effectually secure the interests of his own glory. *Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee.* Note, Thanksgiving is a proper, and may be an effectual remedy for dark and disquieting thoughts. Songs of praise are sovereign cordials for the desponding and melancholy. When we have no other answer to the suggestions of grief and fear, we may have recourse to this, *I thank Thee, O Father*: let us bless God that it is not worse with us than it is.

In this thanksgiving of Christ, we may observe,

1. The titles He gives to God: *O Father, Lord of heaven and earth.* Note, In all our approaches to God, it is good to eye Him as a Father, and to fasten on that relation, whether we ask for needed mercies, or give thanks for mercies received. Mercies are doubly sweet, and powerful to enlarge the heart in praise, when received as tokens of a father's love, and gifts of a father's hand: *Giving thanks to the Father*: Col. 1:12. It becomes children to

and God's praise be perfected. Choice was not made of the learned men of the world, to be the preachers of the Gospel, but of the foolish things of the world, 1 Cor. 2:6, 8, 10.

This difference between the *prudent and babes* is of God's own making. [1.] It is He that has hid these things from the wise and prudent; He gave them parts, and learning, and understanding above others, and they were proud of that, rested in it, and looked no further: therefore God justly denies them the Spirit of wisdom and revelation; and though they hear the sound of the Gospel tidings, they are to them a strange thing. God is not the author of their ignorance and error, but He leaves them to themselves, and their sin becomes their punishment, and the Lord is righteous in it. See John 12:39, 40. Rom. 11:7, 8. Acts 28:26, 27. Had they honored God with their wisdom and prudence, He would have given them the knowledge of these better things; but because they served their lusts with them, he has hid their hearts from this understanding. It is God who has revealed them unto babes. Things revealed belong to our children, (Deut. 29:29.) and to them He gives understanding to receive these things, and the impressions of them. Thus He resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble, Jam. 4:6.

All this must be resolved into the divine sovereignty; Christ Himself referred it to that; *Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.* Christ here subscribes to the will of his Father in this matter: *Even so.* Let God glorify Himself in what way, and by what instruments He pleases: his grace is his own to give, or to withhold. We can give no reason why Peter, and not Nicodemus, should be made an apostle; but so it seemed good in God's sight. Christ said this in the hearing of his disciples, to show them that it was not for any merit of their own, that they were thus dignified and distinguished, but purely from the good pleasure of God, who had made them to differ.

This way of dispensing divine grace is to be acknowledged by us, as it was by our Lord Jesus, with all thankfulness. We must thank God, 1. That these things are revealed; the mystery hid from ages and generations manifested; that they are revealed, not to a few, but to be published, to all the world. 2. That they are revealed to babes, that the meek and humble are beautified with this salvation: and those are thus honored whom the world contemns. 3. It magnifies the mercy to them, that these things are hid from the wise and prudent: distinguishing favors are most obliging. As Job adored the name of the Lord, in taking away as well as in giving; so may we, in hiding these things from the wise and prudent, as well as in reveal-

placed, though their wills are laid under no constraint. (Compare Exod. 7:3, 4. 2 Sam. 12:11, 12. 24:1. and 1 Kings 22:22, 23.) In this sense alone did He say to *hide those things* from the learned and well-disposed persons, though children in understanding, might come to the knowledge of them. Compare Matt. 10:34, 35.

There is a remarkable saying in the Talmudists, which casts light upon this. Rab. Johanan said, "From the time in which the temple was destroyed, wisdom was taken away from the prophets, and given to fools and children." Again, "In the days of the Messiah, every species of wisdom, even the most profound, shall be revealed; and this even to children."

Wise and prudent. [Sages, and the learned.] CAMPBELL (1863). "To all the bold and presumptuous reasonings of the human mind, which have been, or may be hereafter brought forward, against the exercise of JEHOVAH'S sovereignty, the answer is direct. *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* Surely the LORD is not called to give account of the motives of his holy will and pleasure to any of his creatures. One thing we know, that his counsel and purpose must stand, and He will do all his pleasure; and that all He doeth is right. His conduct towards his creatures is by an unerring standard. His mercy is not moved by any good in us, nor kept back by our undeservings; for neither our merit, nor our misery, can be said to have disposed the purposes of his sovereign will towards us. That the Lord hath taken occasion, from our misery, to magnify the abounding riches of his mercy, is true; but his mercy was before our misery, and his own everlasting love the sole cause of our blessedness in Christ. Our LORD'S own words are, therefore, most apposite: *even so, Father! for so it seemed good in thy sight!*" HAWKER.

This verse contains a declaration of our Lord's personal and mediatorial dignity. The Father had delivered all things into his hands, all power, authority, and judgment. (Notes, 28:18. John 3:27-36. rev. 5:5, 20-29.) None knew Jesus as the Son of God, but the Father;

none knew the Father except the Son; neither could any truly know the Father except as the Son revealed his nature and glory: for this was committed to Him, as Mediator in respect to all our race. This represents the Son as co-equal with the Father, and incomprehensible; and it demonstrates, that those, who reject the teaching of Jesus as the Son of God, and do not depend on Him 'to reveal the Father' to them, cannot rightly know the one, true and living God, whom they profess to worship. 'There is no true knowledge of God, nor quietness of mind, but in Christ alone,' Beza. The worship of the Jews, since the nation rejected their Messiah, of Mohammedans, of deists, and all unbelievers, is rendered to an imaginary deity: 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ' being to them 'the unknown God.' (Marg. Rev. g. Note, Luke 10:21, 22.)

Delivered.] 27:2. Rom. 4:25. 6:17, rendered betrayed; 14:4. 26:45, delivered up. 24:9. Rom. 8:32, committed himself; 1 Pet. 2:23, give. Eph. 5:25—Will reveal.] [Willeth to reveal. 1 Cor. 12:11. 1 Tim. 2:6. Tit. 3:8—Reveal.] Comp. 16:17. 1 Cor. 2:10. Eph. 1:17.

Scott. All things are delivered.] 'This is a great truth, and the key of the science of salvation. The man Christ Jesus receives from the Father, and in consequence of his union with the eternal Godhead, becomes the Lord and sovereign Dispenser of all things. All the springs of the Divine favor are in the hands of Christ, as Priest of God, and atoning sacrifice for men; all good proceeds from Him, as Savior, Mediator, Head, Pattern, Pastor, and sovereign Judge of the world.'

Dr. A. CLARKE. No one knoweth the Son but the Father.] 'These words evidently declare that there is something inexplicably mysterious in the nature and person of Christ; which indeed appears in the most convincing manner from the account elsewhere given of his Divine Scripture.'

The full comprehension and acknowledgment of the Godhead, and the mystery of the Trinity, belong to God alone.

Dr. A. CLARKE

28 'Come unto me,
all ye that labor and
are heavy laden, and
I will give you rest.

29 Take "my yoke
upon you, and learn
of me: for I am meek

and lowly.

28. 43-52—55. 1-3. John 6-37.
7:37. Rev. 22:17.
23:4. Gen. 3:17-19. Job 5:7. 14:
1. Ps. 32:4. 38:24. 90:7-10. Ec.
5:2. 2:22-23. 2:16. Is. 1:4. 9:1.
62:2. Mic. 6:8-9. Acts 15:10.
Röm. 7:22-25. Gal. 5:1.
58. Ps. 34:13. 118:27. Is. 11:10.
58:12. 48:17-18. Jer. 6:16. 2 Thess.
1:7. Heb. 4:1.
7:31. 17:5. John 13:17. 14:21-24.
51:0-14. 1 Cor. 9:21. 2 Cor. 10:5.
1 Thess. 4:2. 2 Thess. 1:8. Heb. 5:9.
37. 22:20. Luke 6:45-48. 8:35.
10:39-42. John 15:15. Acts 9:22.
12:737. Eph. 4:20-21. Phil. 2:12.
9:12-19. 21:5. Num. 12:3. Ps.
131:1. Is. 42:1-2. Zech. 9:9. Luke
9:51-59. 2 Cor. 10:1. Phil. 2:7, 8.
1 Pet. 2:21-23.

sanctified and sealed to be the sole Plenipotentiary, to concert and establish this great affair. In order to this, He has all power, both in heaven and in earth; (ch. 23: 18.) power over all flesh; (John 17: 2.) authority to execute judgment, John 5: 22, 27. This encourages us to come to Christ, that He is commissioned to receive us, and to give us what we come for, having all things delivered to Him for that purpose, by Him who is Lord of all. All powers, all treasures, are in his hand. Observe, The Father has delivered his all into the hands of the Lord Jesus; let us but deliver our all into his hand, and the work is done. God has made Him the great Referee, the blessed Days-man, to lay his hand upon us both: what we have to do, is, to agree to the reference, to submit to the arbitration of the Lord Jesus, and enter into bonds to stand to his award. He exhilits,

Secondly, His intimacy with the Father: *No man knoweth the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son.* This gives us further and abundant satisfaction. Ambassadors have not only their public commissions, but their private instructions, to be made use of as there is occasion in their negotiations. Our Lord Jesus had both, not only authority but ability, for his undertaking. In transacting the great business of our redemption, the Father and the Son are the parties principally concerned; the counsel of peace is between them, Zech. 6: 13. We have the encouraging assurance therefore, that they each understood one the other in this concern: that the Father knew the Son, and the Son knew the Father, and both perfectly, (a mutual consciousness, we may call it, between the Father and the Son,) so that there could be no mistake, as there often is among men, to the overthrow of contracts, and breaking of the measures taken. The Son had lain in the bosom of the Father from eternity; John 1: 18. He was by Him, as one brought up with Him, (Prov. 8: 30.) so that none knows the Father, save the Son; He adds, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him. Note, The happiness of men lies in an acquaintance with God: it is life eternal, the perfection of rational beings. Those, also, who would have an acquaintance with God, must apply to Jesus Christ, in the face of whom shines the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, 2 Cor. 4: 6. We are indebted to Christ for all the revelation we have of God, the Father's will and love, ever since Adam sinned: There is no comfortable intercourse between a holy God and sinful man, but in and by a Mediator, John 14: 6.

2. The offer itself, and an invitation to accept it. After so solemn a preface, we may well expect something great: and it is so, a faithful

ing them unto babes; not as it is their misery, but as it is a method by which self is abased, proud thoughts brought down, all flesh silenced, and divine power and wisdom made to shine the more brightly. See 1 Cor. 1: 27, 31.

II. Christ's gracious offer of the benefits of the Gospel. Observe, 1. The solemn preface, which, both to command attention and encourage compliance, ushers in this call or invitation. That we might have strong consolation, in lying for refuge to this hope set before us, Christ prefixes his authority, or produces credentials, showing that He is empowered to make this offer.

Two things He here lays before us, v. 27. First, His commission from the Father: *All things are delivered unto me of my Father.* Christ, as God, is equal in power and glory with the Father; but, as Mediator, receives his power and glory from the Father; has all judgment committed to Him. He is authorized to settle a new covenant between God and man, and to offer peace and happiness to the apostate world, on such terms as He should think fit: He was

saying, and well worthy of all acceptance, words whereby we may be saved. We are here invited to Christ, as our Priest, Prince, and Prophet, to be saved, and in order to that, to be ruled and taught by Him.

We must come to Christ as our Rest, (v. 28.) *Come unto Me, all ye that labor.* Observe, 1. The character of the persons invited; all that labor, and are heavy laden. This is a word in season to him that is weary, Isa. 50: 4. Those who complain of the burden of the ceremonial law, a yoke intolerable by itself, and much more so by the tradition of the elders, (Luke 11: 46.) let them come to Christ, and they shall be made easy; He came to free his church from the yoke, (of carnal ordinances,) and to introduce a purer and more spiritual worship; but it is rather to be understood of the burden of the guilt and power of sin. Note, All those, and those only, are invited to rest in Christ, that are sensible of sin as a burden, and groan under it, that are not only convinced of the evil of sin, of their own sin, but are contrite in soul for it; that are really sick of their sins, weary of the service of the world and of the flesh; that see their state and danger by reason of sin, and are in fear and pain about it, as Ephraim, (Jer. 31: 18-20,) the prodigal, (Luke 15: 17,) the publican, (Luke 18: 13,) Peter's hearers, (Acts 2: 37,) Paul, (Acts 9: 4, 6, 9,) the jailor, (Acts 16: 29, 30.) This is a necessary preparation for pardon and peace. The Comforter must first convince; (John 16: 8.) I have torn, and I will heal.

Consider, 2. The invitation itself: *Come unto Me.* That glorious display of the greatness of Christ, in v. 27, as Lord of all, might frighten us from Him, but here He holds out the golden sceptre, that we may touch and live. Note, It is the duty and interest of weary and heavy laden sinners, to come to Jesus Christ. Renouncing whatever stands in opposition to Him, or comes in competition with Him, we must accept of Him as our Physician and Advocate, and give up ourselves to his conduct and government: choosing to be saved by Him in his own way, and on his own terms. *Come and cast that burden upon Him,* under which thou art heavy laden. This is the gospel-call. The Spirit saith, *Come;* and the Bride saith, *Come;* let him that is athirst, come: whosoever will, let him come.

Observe, 3. The blessing promised to those that do come: *I will give you rest.* Christ is our Noah, whose name signifies rest, for this same shall give us rest; Gen. 5: 29. 8: 9. Truly, rest is good, (Gen. 49: 15.) especially to those that labor and are heavy laden, Eccl. 5: 12. Note, Jesus Christ will give assured rest to weary souls, that, by a lively faith, come to Him for it: rest from the terror of sin, in a well-grounded peace of conscience; rest from

Verses 28—30.

The Divine Savior, having declared his dignity and authority, invited 'all who labored and were heavy laden' to come to Him. In some sense this included all, for worldly men labor like slaves, and burden themselves with cares to increase wealth, or acquire honor. The dissipated labor hard, and are heavy laden with pleasures and diversions. The slave of Satan and his own lusts is a drudge, and if he attempt, by his own strength, to break loose, he labors in vain. The superstitious labor in the fire, and are heavy laden with self-imposed burdens. The ceremonial law laid heavy burdens on the people compared with the Gospel. They, who try to establish their own righteousness, are wearied in vain. The convinced, trembling sinner is heavy laden with guilt and terror; and the tempted believer has his labors too. Every heart knows its own bitterness, but Christ invites all, who in any respect 'labor and are heavy laden,' to come to Him for rest: though such as labored under a sense of guilt, or were heavy laden with burdens imposed by scribes and Pharisees, seem specially intended. Christ alone gives this invitation. Others direct men to go to the Savior. The Father and the Spirit concur in the instruction.—Men come to Jesus, when feeling their guilt, misery, and inability to help themselves; and, believing his love and power to help them, they seek Him in fervent prayer and rely on Him for salvation. All, who thus come to Him, receive rest, are released from condemnation, relieved from anxious cares, fears, and superstitious, and obtain peace, satisfaction, and comfort. (Note, Jer. 6: 16, 17.) But, coming to Him, they must take his yoke upon them, and submit to his authority as their Lord. (Note, 7: 24—25.) They must learn of Him, as their teacher, whatever relates to their acceptance, comfort, or obedience, especially the true knowledge of God. (Notes, 27. John 17: 1—3.) For their encouragement, He assures them that He is 'meek and lowly in heart.' Some explain this of what He teaches, even the imitation of his meekness and lowliness. This is necessary, and leads to inward peace; for the storm

which rends the cedar on the mountain, leaves the lily unmolested in the valley. But it is to be understood of our Lord, as a Teacher and Ruler. He does not treat his scholars with harshness; but deals gently with them, bears with their ignorance, condescends to their infirmity, rejects no willing scholar, and accepts the willing servant, notwithstanding his mistakes, defects, and incidental faults. In his service, men find rest, and there only. Nor need they fear his yoke. Most of his commandments are the same with the moral law, and all coincide with it; but that law is holy, just, and good, and obedience tends to proportionate felicity. As the Savior puts it as his yoke on the believer, it is deprived of its condemning power, enforced by evangelical motives, encouragements, and promises, made easy by love and divine consolations; and a correspondent disposition is wrought by regenerating grace. This obedience requires self denial, and exposes to difficulties; but it is compensated, even in this world, by inward peace and joy. So that Christ's yoke is easy in itself, as well as when compared with that of Satan and sin, which those, who reject the former, must bear. The burden of corrections, temptations, and tribulations, to which Christ's service exposes us, would sink us, if left to ourselves; but being counterpoised with internal supports, it proves 'light, is but for a moment, and works out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; (2 Cor 4 17, Gr.) so that every way his 'yoke is easy and his burden light.'

(28.) 'Come unto Me, then, by faith, all ye that labor and are heavy burdened, whether with the distresses of life, or with the sense of guilt. (See Psalm 23: 4. 38: 4.) or with the load of ceremonial observances, which your unmerciful teachers are so ready to impose (Matt. 23: 4.) and I will ease you of the grievous burdens under which you sink.'

(29.) 'Be instructed by Me, whom ye will find a meek and condescending Teacher, not rough, haughty, and impatient, but one who can bear with the infirmities of the weak; and who, more desirous to edify

lowly in heart: 'and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

50 For *my yoke* is easy, and *my burden* is light.

23. Jer. 6:16, Heb. 4:2-11.
1. Prov. 2:17, Mic. 6:8, Acts 15:10,
29. Gal. 5:18, 1 John 5:2.
2. John 16:23, 2 Cor. 1:4, 5, 4:17, 12:
9, 10. Phil. 4:13.

service of God, but an obligation to the duty we owe to Him. Note, Christ has a *yoke* for our necks, as well as a *crozier* for our heads, and this *yoke* He expects we should take upon us, and draw in it. To call those that are weary and heavy laden, to take a *yoke* upon them, looks like adding affliction to the afflicted; but the pertinence of it lies in the word, *my*. 'You are under a yoke which wears you; shake that off and try mine, which will make you easy.' Servants are said to be *under the yoke*, (1 Tim. 6:1.) and subjects, 1 Kings 12:10. To take Christ's *yoke* upon us, is to put ourselves into the relation of servants and subjects to Him, and then to conduct ourselves accordingly, in a conscientious obedience to all his commands, and a cheerful submission to all his disposals; it is to *obey the Gospel of Christ*, to yield ourselves to the Lord: it is Christ's *yoke*: the *yoke* He has appointed; a *yoke* He has Himself drawn in before us, for he learned obedience; and which He does, by his Spirit, draw in with us, for *He helpeth our infirmities*. Rom. 8:26. A *yoke* speaks some hardship, but if the beast must draw, the *yoke* helps him. Christ's commands are all in our favor; we must take his *yoke* upon us, to draw in it. We are yoked to work, and therefore must be diligent; we are yoked to submit, and therefore must be humble and patient; we are yoked together with our fellow servants, and therefore must keep the communion of the saints; and the words of the wise are as goads to those who are thus yoked.

Now this is the hardest part of our lesson; therefore it is qualified, (v. 30.) *my yoke is easy, and my burden light*; you need not fear it.

1. The *yoke* of Christ's commands is an *easy yoke*—not only *easy*, but *gracious*, so the word signifies: it is sweet and pleasant: there is nothing in it to gall the yielding neck, nothing to hurt us, but on the contrary, much to refresh us. It is a *yoke* that is lined with love. Such is the nature of all Christ's commands, so reasonable, so profitable, and all summed up in one word, and that a sweet word, love. So powerful are the assistances He gives, so suitable the encouragements, and so strong the consolations attending the discharge of duty, that we may truly say, it is a yoke of pleasantness. It is easy to the new nature, very easy to him that understandeth, Prov. 14:6. It may be a little hard at first, but it is easy afterward: the love of God, and the hope of heaven, will make it *easy*.

2. The burden of Christ's cross is a *light burden*, very light; afflictions from Christ, which befall us as men: afflictions for Christ, which befall us as Christians: the latter are especially meant. This burden in itself is not joyous, but grievous; yet, as it is Christ's, it is light. Paul knew as much of it as any man, and he calls it a *light affliction*, 2 Cor. 4:17. God's presence, (Isa. 43:2.) Christ's sympathy, (Isa. 63:9.) Dan. 3:25.) and especially the Spirit's aids and comforts, (2 Cor. 1:5.) make suffering for Christ *light and easy*. As afflictions abound, and are prolonged, consolations abound and are prolonged too. Let this, therefore, reconcile us to the difficulties, and help us over the discouragements, we may meet, both in labor and suffering: though we may lose for Christ, we shall not lose by Him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 25—30. While the Son, with his angels and redeemed people, adores the Father for hiding the mysteries of his redeeming love from the wise and prudent, and revealing them to the unlearned, 'even to babes,' because 'it seemeth good in his sight,' the proud and impenitent scorn, detest, and blaspheme such declarations. The wise of this world often demonstrate and illustrate the truth which they oppose. They show, that divine teaching only can make known divine things in their nature and glory; and they evince the propriety of our Lord's leaving them to be blinded by prejudices, seeing their arrogance more than equals their superior sagacity. But all things are committed to our Redeemer. We cannot know either the Father, or the Son, except by the holy Word and Spirit: we can know nothing of the one apart from the other. And as

none can 'know the Father but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him,' so he must know most in this matter, who with docility and simplicity hears and believes his words. The Redeemer's condescension and mercy equal his majesty. And He invites the laboring, burdened sinner to Him for rest. Why, then, should any labor for what is not bread? Let us come to Him daily for deliverance from wrath and guilt, from sin and Satan, and from all perplexities. As our Prophet, let us learn of Him: as our Priest, rely on Him; and, as our King, obey Him; copy his meekness and lowliness; and, whatever impurity may object, or the world, the flesh, or devil suggest, we shall find his yoke easy and his burden light; his service, freedom and rest, and that 'in keeping his commandments, there is great reward.'

SCOTT.

others than to please Himself, will not disdain to adapt his lessons to the capacities of the learners.

CAMPBELL.

(30.) *Yoke*. This word is applied by the Jews to the following things:—1. The yoke of the dominion of heaven—obedience to the revealed will of God. 2. The yoke of the law—the necessity of obeying all the precepts of the Law of Moses. 3. The yoke of the receipt—the necessity of performing that particular obligation, by which any person had bound himself, such as that of the Nazarite, &c. 4. The yoke of REPENTANCE—without which, they knew, they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven. With the Jews, repentance was only implied forsaking sin, but fasting, mortification, &c.

5. The yoke of FAITH—the necessity of believing in the promised Messiah. 6. The DIVINE yoke—the obligation to live a spiritual life; a life of thanksgiving and gratitude to God.

Dr. A. CLARK.

Easy. 'Rather, says Schleusner, "useful, salutary, beneficial." *Freely*. 'As our Savior's discourses were often suggested by the objects which offered themselves to his view, it is not improbable that, while speaking these words, He was looking on the concourse of travellers coming up to Jerusalem, at one of the great *festivals*, some of them

loaded with burdens, and all fatigued with the journey. Hence He might take occasion to speak of things spiritual, of the easy yoke of religion, and the true rest of the soul. The things He requires He calls a yoke, and burden; that is, as matters of duty and obligation, with which we must needs comply. But it is only with respect to the perverse inclinations of men, that the religion of Christ may be called a yoke and burden: for it is easy and light compared with what men often lay on themselves and others, and the aids of the Gospel can remove all difficulties of which men complain in the practice of duty.'

JURIN.

'The word translated *light* properly signifies both *light and pleasant*; and that translated *easy*, may be also rendered *gentle and agreeable*; and so with great propriety may express that true pleasure and cheerfulness that are the genuine result of a sincere subjection to Christ's government, which is plainly the meaning of taking his yoke. (Compare Deut. 27:47, 48; 1 Kings 12:4; and Isa. 10:27.) It is observable that the word *yoke* is particularly used for ceremonial impositions. Acts 15:10; and 1 Gal. 5:1; and the word *burden* is used in the same sense. Matt. 23:4. Compare Matt. 46:19.'

DODGE.

CHAP. XII.

The disciples pluck ears of corn to eat, on the sabbath. 1. Christ vindicates them from the charge of breaking the sabbath, 2-8; heals the withered hand of one in the synagogue; and sheweth lawful to do good on the sabbath, 9-13. The Pharisees seek to kill him; He draws, yet works miracles, and so fulfils a prophecy of Isaiah, 14-21. He casts out 'devils' from a dumb and blind man, 22, 23; confutes the charge of the Pharisees, of casting out devils by Beelzebub, 24-30; and sheweth the sin against the Holy Ghost to be unforgivable and that every idle word must be accounted for, 31-37. He invites those who sought a sign, and will give none but that of Jonah, 38-40. The Ninivites, and the queen of the south, will condemn that generation, 41, 42. By a parable He sheweth their awful state, 43-45. His disciples are his most endeared relations, 46-50.

AT went on the sabbath-day through the corn; and his disciples were an hungered, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

2 But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto him, 'Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath-day!'

3 But he said unto them, 'Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungered, and they that were with him?'

4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat of the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests?

a Mark 2:23-28, Luke 6:1-5.
b Deut. 23:25.
c 10. 29-11. 23-12. 31-15.
d 10. 35-36, Num 15:23-36, Is 58:13. Mark 3:2-5, Luke 6:6-11.
e 13:10-17, 23:56. John 5:9-11, 16, 17:21-24, 24:14-16.
f 5. 19-4. 21-16, 22:31, Mark 12:10, 12:35, Luke 6:3, 10:36.
g 1 Sam. 21:3-6, Mark 2:25, 26.
h Ex. 25:30. Lev. 24:5-9.

rest in the love of God and Christ, and here obtain that which gives abundant satisfaction; quietness and assurance forever. And this satisfaction will be perfected and perpetuated in heaven, where we shall see and enjoy God immediately, shall see Him as He is, and enjoy, as He is ours. This rest is to be had with Christ for all who learn of Him.

Such, then, is the sun and substance of the gospel and offer: we are told, in few words, that the Lord Jesus requires of us, which agrees with what God said of Him once and again: *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him.*

CHAP. XII. v. 1-13. The Jewish teachers had corrupted many of the commandments, by interpreting them too loosely; a mistake which Christ noticed and rectified, (ch. 5.) in his sermon on the mount; but as to the fourth commandment, they had erred in the other extreme. It is common for men of corrupt minds, by their zeal in the externals of religion, to think to avenge the looseness of their morals. But they are cursed who add to, as well as they who take from, the words of this book, Rev. 22:16, 19. Prov. 30:6.

Now, what our Lord here lays down, is, that the works of necessity and mercy are lawful on the Sabbath day, which the Jews, in many instances, were taught to scruple. Christ's explanation of the fourth commandment intimates our perpetual obligation to observe religiously *one day in seven, as a holy Sabbath.* He would not expound a law that was immediately to expire, but doubtless intended hereby to settle a point, which would be of use to the church in all ages: so He teaches us, that our Christian Sabbath, though under the direction of the fourth commandment, is not under the injunctions of the Jewish elders.

It is usual to settle the meaning of a law by judgments given on cases that happen in fact, and so is settled the meaning of this law: in order to which, two incidents, both answering this design, but differing in date and nature, are here brought together.

1. Christ, by justifying his disciples in plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, shows that *works of necessity are lawful* on that day. Observe,

1. What it was the disciples did. Following their Master one Sabbath day through a cornfield, and going, as is likely, to the synagogue, (v. 29, for it becomes not Christ's disciples to take idle walks on that day,) they were hungry; because, intent on Sabbath-work, they forgot to eat bread, or spent so much time in morning worship, that they had no time for their morning meal, but came out fasting, because they would not come late. Providence ordered it, that they went through the corn, and there they

were supplied. Note, God has many ways of bringing suitable provision to his people when they need it, and will take particular care of them when going to worship, as, of old, of them that went up to Jerusalem to worship, (Ps. 84 6, 7,) for whose use the rain filled the pools while in the way of duty, *Jehovah jireh, God will provide* for us. Being in the corn-fields, they began to pluck the ears of corn; the law of God allowed this, (Deut. 23:25,) to teach the people to be kind, and not to insist on property in a small matter, whereby another may be benefitted. This was but a slender provision for Christ and his disciples, but it was the best they had, and they were contented.

2. The offence taken by the Pharisees at this. It was but a dry breakfast, yet the Pharisees would not let them eat in quietness. They did not quarrel with them for taking another man's corn, (being no great zealots for justice,) but for doing it on the Sabbath day; plucking and rubbing the ears of corn on that day being expressly forbidden by the tradition of the elders, because it was a *kind of reaping*. It is no new thing for those, especially, who are zealous of their own inventions and impositions, to reflect on the most innocent and harmless actions of Christ's disciples, as unlawful. The Pharisees complained of them for doing that which it was not lawful to do. Note, Those are no friends to Christ and his disciples, who make that to be unlawful which God has not made so.

3. Christ's answer to this cavil. The disciples could say little for themselves, inasmuch as the strictness of the Sabbath-sanctification seemed to be on the Pharisees' side; and it is better to be too strict than too loose: but Christ came to free his followers, not only from Pharisaic corruptions, but unscriptural impositions: therefore, He speaks for them, and justifies what they did, though a transgression of the canon. He justifies them by precedents, allowed to be good by the Pharisees themselves.

He urges an ancient instance of David, who, in a case of necessity did that, which otherwise he ought not to have done; (v. 3, 4.) 'Have ye not read (1 Sam. 21:6.) of David's eating the shewbread, which by the law was appropriated to the priest? (Lev. 24:5-9.) It is most holy to Aaron and his sons; and (Exod. 29:33.) a stranger shall not eat of it: yet the priest gave it to David and his men;' for the exception of a case of necessity, though not expressed, was implied in that and all other ritual institutions: nor was it David's dignity that justified him, (for Uzziah, though a king, was struck with the leprosy for invading the priest's office, 2 Chron. 26:16, &c.) but his hunger. The greatest shall not have their lusts indulged, but the meanest shall have their wants considered. Hunger is a natural appetite, which can-

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. v. 1, 2. Matthew seems to fix the date of this transaction, manifestly after the events mentioned in the last chapter: but other evangelists record it earlier in our Lord's history. (Notes, Mark 2:23-28. Luke 6:1-11.) Jewish writers say it was not customary to taste food till after the service at the synagogue: but this must be a 'tradition of the elders;' for the Scripture never mentions, nor hints it. In going on the Sabbath to the synagogue, or in returning from it, the disciples, being hungry, plucked the ears of corn, rubbed them in their hands, and ate. The law allowed them to take of the produce of any field or vineyard, in this manner, in passing through it. (Notes, Lev. 23:24, 25.) But the Pharisees, who, as has been supposed, were deputed by the chief priests and rulers, to watch Jesus and his disciples, condemned this as a profanation of the Sabbath, considering it equivalent to reaping and threshing the grain, and intending to involve Jesus also in the same accusation.

On the Sabbath day.] On the Sabbaths. By comparing verses 2, 5, 8, 12, in the original, with the parallel passages in Mark and Luke, it appears, that the plural and singular are used indiscriminately for the seventh day of the week. Luke mentions the Sabbath on which this event occurred. (Luke 6:1-5.)

(1.) Corn.] The original word means any kind of grain, as barley, rye, wheat, according to the present meaning of 'corn' in England. The passage is generally translated ears of barley, which was early ripe; the time is determined by Luke. See Luke 6:1. In America, the word is appropriated to maize, or Indian corn, an indigenous plant. Bloomfield, from a rabbinic authority, shows that there were paths leading through the fields of corn.

Were an hungered.] The custom of the nation had, as yet, held them fasting—'We' suffered none, unless he were sick, to taste any thing on the Sabbath, before the morning prayers of the synagogue were begun.

(2.) 'The Jews were so superstitious concerning the observation of the Sabbath, that, in their wars with Antiochus and the Romans, they thought it criminal to defend themselves on that day; to which, therefore, on observing it, their enemies deferred their operations. Thus Pompey took Jerusalem.'

'Those who know not the spirit and design of the divine law, are of ten superstitious to inhumanity, and indulgent to impiety. An intolerant and censorious spirit in religion is one of the greatest curses a man can well fall under.'

Dr. A. CLARKE. The fathers of the Traditions write thus: 'He that reaps on the Sabbath, though never so little, is guilty. To pluck the ears of corn is a kind of reaping,' &c. The canons of the scribes adjudged to stoning one who transgressed this law.'

VERSES 3, 4.

David had been blamed, and had condemned himself for other parts of his conduct: yet this was never deemed criminal, the necessity of the case being a sufficient reason for dispensing with a ceremonial institution. Why then should Christ's disciples be condemned, even if they deviated from the letter of the law, to satisfy hunger? (Notes, Ex. 20:8-11.) 'It is a small thing to say, it is lawful for us to eat the bread removed from the table. It would be lawful, in extreme hunger, to eat the bread now sanctified on the table, if there were no other.' Kimchi, in Whitley. Mark 2:26. Luke 6:4. Heb. 9:2. Lev. 24:5-9.

(4.) House of God.] 'Viz., the house of Ahimelech the priest, who dwelt at Nob, with whom the tabernacle then was, wherein the Divine presence was manifested.'

Shewbread.] In Hebrew, 'bread of the presence,' or faces; because this bread was to be set continually 'before the face of Jehovah.' See Exod. 25:23 and 30.

(Since part of the frankincense put upon the bread was to be burnt on the altar, for a memorial, Lev. 24:7, and since Aaron, and his sons

5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that, on the sabbath-days the priests in the temple ^hprofane the sabbath, and are blameless?

6 But I say unto you, That in this place is one greater than the temple.

7 But ^kif ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have ^lcondemned the guiltless.

8 For ^mthe Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath-day.

9 ¶ And when he was departed thence, ⁿhe went into their synagogue:

10 And, behold, there was a man ^owhich had his hand withered. And they asked him, saying, ^pIs it lawful to heal on the sabbath-days? ^qthat they might accuse him.

f Num. 28:9-10. John 7:22-23.
g Neh. 13:17. Ez. 34:21.
h 14:2. 2 Chr. 6:18. Hag. 2:7-9.
i Mal. 3:1. John 2:19-21. Epn. 2:20-22. Col. 2:9. 1 Pet. 2:4,5.
j 18:11-17. Hos. 6:6. Mic. 6:6-8.
k Job 28:3. Ps. 94:21. 109:31. Prov. 17:15. Jam. 5:6.
l 9:6. Mark 2:28. 9:4-7. Luke 6:5.
m John 5:17-23. 1 Cor. 9:21. 16:2. Rev. 1:10.
n Mark 3:1-5. Luke 6:6-11.
o 1 Kings 13:4-6. Zech. 11:17. John 8:3.
p 19:3. 22:17, 18. Luke 14:3-6. 20:22. John 5:10.
q 1:29. 6:13-13. Luke 6:7. 11:54. 23:2,14. John 8:6.

were to eat it is the holy place, it is evident that this bread typified CHRIST, first presented as a sacrifice to, or in presence of JEHOVAH, and thus becoming spiritual food to such as, *in and through Him*, are spiritual priests to God.

Verses 5, 6.

(5) *of ane.* 'Put to what might be called a common use, by *slaying and offering up sacrifices*, and by doing the service of the temple, as on common days. Exod. 29:38. Num. 28:9.'

(6) *A greater.* 'Our Lord might, perhaps, point to his own body, the noblest temple of the Deity; (compare John 2:21.) or it might refer to the work then going on; but the former sense is much more natural.'

Does not our Lord refer here to Mal. 3:1? Compare Heb. 8:3. The Jews esteemed nothing greater than the temple, except the God who was worshipped in it. Christ, by asserting He was greater than the temple, asserts that He was God; and this He does in still more direct terms, v. 8. Compare Gen. 2:3.'

Verses 7, 9

The passage here referred to has been considered. (Notes, 9:10-13. Hos. 6:6.) Had the Pharisees understood the declaration, that God required mercy rather than sacrifice, they would not have condemned the guiltless. Relieving the hunger of disciples attending on Jesus in his labors of love, was an act of mercy, sufficient to justify so trivial a deviation from the exact rest of the Sabbath. And He added, 'the Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath.' He was Ruler of his church. Thus He intimated, that, as 'Son of God,' He instituted the Sabbath, gave the law from Sinai, and had lost none of his authority by his humiliation, but should make such alterations respecting the time and circumstances of observing this sacred rest, as it became Him. It cannot be, that Christ would have so often discussed this subject, and shown what is lawful on the Sabbath, without allowing exceptions, if He had not intended, that the institution substantially should continue in full force under the Christian dispensation.

SCOTT.

(7) *Mercy, and not sacrifice.* 'That is; I always prefer acts of charity to matters of positive institution, when in any instance they interfere with each other. It is plain, our Lord's argument here is intended to prove, that circumstances of necessity dispense with some ceremonial observances, which were, in the general, commended by God, and manifestly go upon this foundation, that ceremonial institu-

tion, being the means of religion, if circumstances occurred in which they interfered with the end of it, were suspended of course; and when this is the case, the conscience of particular persons is to judge, as in the sight of God.'

He urges a daily instance of the priests, v. 5. The priests in the temple did a great deal of servile work on the Sabbath day; killing, flaying, burning the sacrificed beasts, which, in a common case, would have been profaning the Sabbath; and yet it was never reckoned any transgression of the fourth commandment, because the temple service required and justified it. This intimates, that those labors are lawful on the Sabbath day, which are necessary, not only to the support of life, but to the service of the day; as tolling a bell to call the congregation together, travelling to church, and the like. Sabbath rest is to promote, not to hinder, Sabbath worship.

Our Lord justifies his disciples by three cogent arguments.

1. In this place, is One greater than the temple. v. 6. If the temple-service would justify the priests, much more would the service of Christ the disciples. The Jews had an extreme veneration for the temple, it sanctified the gold: Stephen was accused for blaspheming that holy place; (Acts 6:13.) but Christ, in a corn-field, was greater than the temple, for in Him dwelt, not the presence of God symbolically, but all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. Note, If, whatever we do, we do it in the name of Christ and as unto Him, it shall be graciously accepted of God, however it may be censured and cavilled at by men.

2. God will have mercy and not sacrifice, v. 7. Ceremonial duties must give way to moral; and the natural, royal law of love and self-preservation must take place of ritual observances. This is quoted from Hosea 6:6. It was used before, ch. 9:13. in vindication of mercy to the souls of men; here, of mercy to their bodies. The rest of the Sabbath was ordained for man's good, in favor of the body, Deut. 5:14. Now no law must be construed so as to contradict its own end. If you had known what this means, — what it is to be of a merciful disposition, — you

would have been sorry that they were forced to do this to satisfy hunger, and would not have condemned the guiltless. Note, First, Ignorance is the cause of rash and uncharitable censures. Secondly, It is not enough to read the Scriptures. Let him that readeth understand them. Thirdly, Ignorance of the meaning of the Scripture is specially shameful, in those who take on them to teach others.

3. The Son of man is Lord, even of the Sabbath day, v. 8. The law respecting that, as all other laws, being put into Christ's hands to be altered, enforced, or dispensed with, as He saw good. By the Son, God made the world, and instituted the Sabbath, in innocency: by Him He gave the ten commandments at Sinai; and the Son, as Mediator, was intrusted with the institution of ordinances, to make what changes He thought fit; and particularly as being Lord of the Sabbath, He was authorized so to alter that day, that it should become the Lord's day, the Lord Christ's day. And if Christ be the Lord of the Sabbath, it is fit the day, and all the work of it, should be dedicated to Him. By virtue of this power, Christ here enacts, that works of necessity, if really such, and not pretended, are lawful on the Sabbath day; and this explication of the law plainly shows that it was to be perpetual. The exception confirms the rule.

Christ having thus silenced the Pharisees, (v. 9.) departed, and went into their synagogue, the synagogue of these same Pharisees. Note, First, We must take heed that nothing unfit us for, or divert us from, a due attendance on holy ordinances. Let us proceed in the way of our duty, however by the perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, or other ways, Satan may seek to ruffle and discompose us. Secondly, Private feuds and personal piques must not keep us back from public worship. The Pharisees had maliciously cavilled at Christ, yet He went into their synagogue. Satan gains his point, if, by sowing discord among brethren, he prevail to drive any of them from the synagogue and the communion of the faithful.

II. Christ, by healing the man that had the withered hand on the Sabbath day, shows that works of mercy are lawful and proper on that day. The work of necessity was done by the disciples, and justified by Him; the work of mercy was done by Himself: works of mercy were his works of necessity; it was his *merit and drink to do good*. I must preach, says He,

in four ways, positive laws may cease to oblige: by "a natural law of necessity; by a particular law, which is superior; by the law of charity and mercy; and by the dispensation and authority of the Lawgiver. These cases are all exemplified from verse 4, to verse 6."

DODD.

'Profanations of the Sabbath have sometimes been defended on the ground of this passage. Since our Lord reproves the Jews for too rigorously exacting the rest of the Sabbath, it intimates, as is alleged, that we ought not to be scrupulous; and that many things may be allowable, which timid minds consider unlawful. But Jesus condemns nothing in the Jews which was not plainly absurd and superstitious; and He allows no exceptions to that rest from labor which they observed on the Sabbath, except for works of necessity and charity. It is lawful, in short, as our Savior expresses it, to do well on the Sabbath day; to preserve ourselves, and to benefit our fellow-creatures: with these exceptions, and these only, we should consecrate the Sabbath, as a holy rest unto the Lord.'

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(8) *Even of the Sabbath.* 'This certainly implies, that the Sabbath was an institution of great and distinguished importance; and may perhaps refer also to that signal authority which Christ, by the ministry of his apostles, should exert over it, in changing it from the seventh to the first day of the week.'

Bp. PORTER.

Verses 9-13.

On another Sabbath, He entered a synagogue, and the same subject was again introduced. (Notes, Mark 3:1-5. Luke 13:10-17.) As a man, whose hand had withered, attended the synagogue, the Pharisees, watching to find matter of accusation, asked our Lord, whether it was lawful to heal on the Sabbath. If this was meant to include the inquiry, how far the labor of curing by medicine is consistent with hal- lowing the Sabbath, it was not without difficulty; for many things of this sort are works of necessity and mercy, and others might very well be postponed. It seems from the other evangelists, that Jesus answered first by another and more simple question: 'Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day?' He would not be diverted by their objections from his purpose of mercy, nor give them the ground of accusation for which they sought; and He asked them, whether, if a single sheep should fall into a pit, on the Sabbath, any one of their company

11 And he said unto them, 'What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath-day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out?'

12 How much then is a man better than a sheep! Wherefore 'it is lawful to do well on the sabbath-days.'

13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole like as the other.

[Practical Observations.]

Luke 13:15-17, 14:5.
 4 Pg. 23:4, 5; Dent. 22:4.
 5 6:28. Luke 12:24.
 6 Mark 3:4. Luke 6:9.
 7 Luke 13:16. Acts 3:7, 8.

never made under the precepts of the elders. *Is it lawful to heal?* To inquire into the lawfulness and unlawfulness of actions, is very good, and we can apply to none, in reference to them, more fully than to Christ: but they asked here, not that they might be instructed by Him, but that they might accuse Him. If He should answer in the affirmative, they would accuse Him of contradicting the fourth commandment; to so great a degree of superstition had they brought the Sabbath rest, that, unless in peril of life, they allowed not any medical operations on the Sabbath day. If He should say it was not lawful, they would accuse Him of partiality, having lately justified his disciples in plucking the ears of corn on that day.

3. Christ's answer to this question, v. 11, 12. In case a sheep, (though but one, of which the loss would be great,) should fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, would they not lift it out? No doubt, they might do it; the fourth commandment allows it: they must do it, for a merciful man regardeth the life of his

Luke 4: 43. This cure is recorded for the sake of the time when it was wrought.

Here is, 1. This poor man's affliction; his hand was withered, so that he could no longer get his living by working with his hands. This poor man was in the synagogue. Note, Those who can do but little, or have but little to do for the world, must do so much the more for their souls; as the rich, the aged, and the infirm.

2. A spiteful question of the Pharisees put to Christ on the sight of this man. They asked Him, saying, *Is it lawful to heal?* We read not of any address of the poor man to Christ for a cure, but they observed Christ began to notice him, and knew it was usual for Him to be found of those that sought Him not; therefore, with their badness, they anticipated his goodness, and started this case as a stumbling-block in the way of doing good: *Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?* Whether it was lawful for physicians or not, which was disputed in their books, one would think it past dispute, that it is lawful for prophets, for Him who discovered a divine power and goodness in all He did, and manifested Himself to be the Sent of God. Did ever any one ask, whether it is lawful for God to heal; to send his word and heal?

It is true, Christ was now made under the law, by a voluntary submission to it, but He was

beast, and for their parts they would do it, rather than lose a sheep. Does Christ take care for sheep? Yes, He does: He preserves and provides for both man and beast. But here He says it for our own sakes, (1 Cor. 9: 9, 10,) and hence argues, *How much then is a man better than a sheep?* Sheep are useful and highly valued, yet man is preferred before them, being a creature of more value than any of the brute animals: a reasonable creature, capable of knowing, loving, and glorifying God. The sacrifice of a sheep could therefore not atone for the sin of a soul. They do not consider this, who are more solicitous for their horses and dogs than for God's poor, or perhaps their own household.

Hence Christ infers a truth, which, even at first sight, appears very reasonable: that it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days; they had asked, *'Is it lawful to heal?'* Christ proves it is lawful to do well; and let any judge whether healing, as Christ healed, was not doing well. The duties of God's immediate worship are not the only way of doing well on Sabbath days; attending the sick, relieving the poor, helping those who are fallen into sudden distress; this is doing good: and this must be done from a principle of love, with humility and self-denial, and a heavenly frame of spirit, and this is doing well, and it shall be accepted, Gen. 4: 7.

4. Christ's curing of the man, v. 13. The Pharisees, though unable to answer Christ's arguments, persisted in their prejudice and enmity; but Christ went on with his work notwithstanding. Note, Duty is not to be left undone, nor opportunities of doing good, neglected, for fear of giving offence. Observe the manner of the cure: He said to the man, *'stretch forth thy hand; exert thyself as well as thou canst;'* and he did so, and it was restored whole. This, as other cures Christ wrought, had a spiritual significance. By nature, our hands are withered, we are utterly unable of ourselves, to do any thing that is good. It is Christ only, by the power of his grace, that cures us; He

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-13. They who follow Christ must be ready, when called to it, to endure hunger, or submit to mean fare; and to be reproached, and falsely accused, for their close attendance on Him and his ordinances: but they should leave the Lord to plead in their behalf, and He will do it effectually.—Such professed Christians, as are most destitute of the power of godliness, are often most tenacious of forms, even to a scrupulous minuteness; especially when they can make use of them to support their credit or authority, to cloak iniquity, or oppose the upright servants of the Lord. Many of this description seem never to have read the Scriptures; for they severely censure, in living disciples, the very things, for which holy men of old were not blamed: and at the same time they profess to hold the latter in high estimation; because they have the sanction of general opinion, are no longer the subjects of envy or competition, and give them no opposition or uneasiness in their ungodly practices. They will also condemn those things in persons of another party, which they overlook or excuse in those of their own.—Whilst 'the Lord of the Sabbath,' who is far greater than the temple, and all external institutions, authorizes those labors on his holy day, which are necessary, and conducive to the real good of ourselves or others, or subservient to piety and charity, He doubtless most strictly binds us from all other secular employments. The exercise of mercy, rather than sacrifice, allows us, on some occasions, to omit attendance on public ordinances, and to make needful provision for our health and food: yet, surely, when domestics

are confined at home, and families rendered a scene of hurry and confusion 'on the Lord's day,' in order to furnish a fast for visitants, who can then spare their time, more conveniently than on other days, for social indulgence, the case is very different! In censuring things of this kind, we need not fear 'condemning the guiltless.'—They, who are unable to labor for their bread, are sometimes capable of attending on the ordinances of God; and, in this way, may expect comfort under their calamities, or deliverance from them. But, alas! there are numbers, who frequent places of worship in order to start objections, or find matter of accusation, against the servants of God; and many a good question is proposed from very base motives. We cannot, like our Lord, discern the thoughts of such objectors: yet we must go on with our duty; endeavoring by meekness, benevolence, an irreproachable conduct, and unanswerable arguments, to obviate or silence their malicious insinuations.—Men will do more to save a trifle of their own property, than to relieve their neighbors: and some will even refuse to infringe the rest of the Lord's day, by visiting the afflicted, who would not decline labor if they were likely to lose the lives of their cattle! The Lord's day, however, is especially the time for healing the souls of men: and whilst the helpless sinner hears the voice of Christ, and endeavors to obey it; he feels and manifests, that he has received power to do those things, of which before, he was utterly incapable; and becomes, by his holy example, a witness of the Savior's power and love, and of the blessed effects of his Gospel. SCOTT.

would omit to pull it out, either from regard to his property, or compassion to the animal. Yet this would be labor, while his miracles were performed without any. But how much more valuable is a rational and immortal being, than a mere animal! How much more requisite, by the law of love, to bring immediate relief to the one than the other! It must, then, be consistent with the law, to perform actions of mercy on the Sabbath, which are good in themselves, and ornamental to piety, having thus silenced them. He ordered the man to stretch forth his hand, and it was immediately restored. SCOTT.

(10.) *Withered hand.* 'An atrophy, (of the limb,) and an inability to move the nerves and muscles, which would cause the limb to be rigid, was what the Jews understood by a "withered limb."'

BLOOMFIELD.
 (11.) It appears from authors quoted by Lightfoot, Clarke, and Bloomfield, that, however the glosses of rabbis might alter the precept forward, as mentioned by Buxtorf, yet, in the time of our Lord, full permission was allowed to rescue 'a beast fallen into a ditch on a holy day,' as in the Mishna. But we may assure ourselves that our Lord,

to use the language of Dr. Gill, 'well knew their usages and customs, which He was able to object to them; in which, through covetousness, they showed more regard to their beasts, than humanity to their fellow-creatures.'

Ed.
 (13.) *Stretch forth.* 'The bare command of God is a sufficient reason of obedience. It might appear reasonable, had the man said, "Lord, my hand is withered; how can I stretch it out? Make it whole, and I will then do as Thou commandest." But this, in his case, would have been foolishness. At the command of the Lord he made the effort, and in making it the cure was effected! Faith disregards apparent impossibilities, where there is a command and promise of God. The effort to believe, is often that, faith by which the soul is healed. A little before (v. 6-8) Jesus Christ had asserted his Godhead, in this verse he proves it. It is worthy of remark, that as the man was healed with a word, without even a touch the Sabbath was unbroken, even according to the Jews' most rigid interpretation of the letter of the law.'

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14 ¶ **T**hen the Pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

15 But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

16 And charged them, that they should not make him known:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying,

z 27:1. Mark 3:6. Luke 6:11. John 6:34. 10:39. 11:33, 37.
 Or, took counsel.
 e 10:23. Luke 6:12. John 7:1. 10:40-42. 11:54.
 f 14:23. 19:2. Mark 3:7-12. 6:56. Luke 6:17-19. John 8:4. Gal. 6:9. 1 Pet. 2:21.
 c 9:30. 17:9. Mark 7:36. Luke 5:14. 15.
 d 9:17. 13:35. 21:4. Is. 41:22 have.
 e 22:9. 44:28. Luke 21:22. 24:44.
 f John 10:35. 12:37. 19:28. Acts 1:27.
 e Is. 42:1-4.

theirs, but that his doctrine directly opposed their pride, hypocrisy, and worldly interest: yet they pretended to be displeased at his breaking the Sabbath day, which was by the law a capital crime, Exod. 35: 2. Note, It is no new thing to see vile practices cloaked with specious pretences. Observe their policy; they took counsel about it. Observe their cruelty; they took counsel, not to imprison or banish, but to destroy Him. What an indignity, to run Him down as an outlaw and the plague of his country, who was the greatest blessing of it, the glory of his people Israel!

II. Christ's absconding on this occasion, (p. 15.) He could have secured Himself by miracle, but chose to do it by the ordinary means; because in this, as in other things, He would submit to the sinless infirmities of our nature. Herein He humbled Himself; thus also, He would give an example to his own rule. *When they persecute you in one city, flee to another.* Christ had said and done enough to convince those Pharisees, if reason or miracles would have done it; but instead of yielding to the conviction, they were hardened and enraged, and therefore, He left them as incurable, Jer. 51: 9.

Christ did not retire for his own ease, and was even then doing good, when He was forced to flee. Thus He gave an example to his ministers, to do what they can, when they cannot do what they would, and to continue teaching, even when removed into corners. When the Pharisees forced Him to withdraw, the common people crowded after Him, (p. 15.) This some would turn to his reproach, and call Him the ringleader of the mob; but it was really his honor; as it was also, that the poor were evangelized. Christ came into the world to be Physician-general, as the sun to the lower world, *with healing under his wings.* Though the Pharisees persecuted Him for doing good, yet He went on in it, and suffered not the people to fare worse for the wickedness of their rulers. Note, Though some are unkind to us, we must not on that account be unkind to others.

Christ studied to reconcile usefulness and privacy: He healed them all, and yet (p. 16.) charged them that they should not make Him known; which may be regarded, 1. as an act of prudence. Note, Wise and good men, though they covet to do good, are far from coveting to have it talked of when it is done: because it is God's acceptance, not men's applause, they aim at. And in suffering times, though we must holdly go on in the way of duty, yet we must contrive the circumstances of it so as not to exasperate, more than is necessary, those who seek occasion against us; *Be ye wise as serpents, ch. 10: 16.* 2. As an act of righteous judgment on the Pharisees, who were unworthy of any more of his miracles, having made so light of those they had seen. 3. As an act of humility and self-denial. Christ's intention in his miracles was to prove Himself the Messiah, and so bring men to believe on Him, yet sometimes he charged the people to conceal them, to set us an example of humility, and teach us not to proclaim our own goodness or usefulness, or desire to have it proclaimed. Christ would have his disciples be the reverse of those who did all their works to be seen of men.

Verse 14.

Took counsel together, by what means they might destroy Him, or find some plausible accusation against him, that He might be condemned to death as a deceiver or blasphemer.

This is the first time mention is made of a design on our Savior's life.

Held a council.] 'Rather, consulted together; for, as in Mark, the phrase implies not the calling of a council, but "taking counsel." The Pharisee had no privilege of a council by themselves.' GROTIUS.

Verse 15.

Withdrew.] 'It is the part of prudence and Christian charity not to provoke, if possible, the blind and the hardened; and to take from them the occasion of sin.'

Our Savior, instead of affliction on the Pharisees a punishment

heals the withered hand, and by putting life into the dead soul, works in us both to will and to do. In order to our cure, He commands us to stretch forth our hands, to improve our natural powers, and do as well as we can to stretch them out in prayer to God, to stretch them out to lay hold on Christ by faith, to stretch them out in holy endeavors. Now this man could not stretch forth his withered hand of himself, any more than the impotent man could rise and carry his bed, or Lazarus come forth out of his grave: yet Christ bid him do it. God's commands to us, to do the duty which of ourselves we are not able to do, are no more absurd or unjust, than this command to the man with the withered hand, to stretch it forth; for, with the command, there is a promise of grace which is given by the word. Turn you at my reproof, and I will pour out my Spirit, Prov. 1: 23. Those who perish, are as incurable as this man would have been, had he not attempted to stretch forth his hand, and so had not been healed. But those who are saved have no more to boast of than this man had of contributing to his own cure, by stretching forth his hand; but are, as much as he, indebted to the power and grace of Christ.

V. 14-21. As in the midst of Christ's greatest humiliations, there were proofs of his dignity, so he gave proofs of his humility, in the midst of his greatest honors. Here we have,

I. The cursed malice of the Pharisees against Christ; (p. 14.) What vexed them was, not only that by his miracles his honor eclipsed

III. The fulfilling of the Scriptures in all this, p. 17. Christ retired into obscurity, that the Word of God might be fulfilled, and so illustrated and glorified. The Scripture here said to be fulfilled is Isa. 42: 1-4. which is quoted at large, p. 18-21. The scope of it is to show how mild and quiet, and yet how successful, our Lord Jesus should be in his undertaking; instances of both which we have in the foregoing passages. Observe here,

1. The pleasure of the Father in Christ; (p. 18.) Hence we may learn,

(1.) That our Savior was God's Servant in the great work of our redemption. He therein submitted Himself to the Father's will, (Heb. 10: 7.) and set Himself to serve the designs of his grace and the interests of his glory. It was a part of his humiliation, that though He thought it not robbery to be equal with God, He took on Him the form of a servant, received a law, and came into bonds. Though He were a son, yet learned He this obedience, Heb. 5: 8. The motto of this Prince is, I serve.

(2.) That Jesus Christ was chosen of God, as the only fit and proper Person for the management of the great work of our redemption. He is my Servant whom I have chosen, as equal to the undertaking. He was One chosen out of the people, (Ps. 89: 19.) chosen by Infinite Wisdom to that post of service and honor, for which neither man nor angel was qualified; none but Christ, that He might in all things have the pre-eminence. Christ did not thrust Himself on this work, but was duly chosen to it, as the Head of election, and of all other the Elect, for we are chosen in Him, Eph. 1: 4.

(3.) That Jesus Christ is God's Beloved Son; as God, He lay from eternity in his bosom; (John 1: 18.) He was daily his Delight, Prov. 8: 30. Between the Father and the Son there was before all time an eternal and inconvertible intercourse and interchanging of love, and thus the Lord possessed Him in the beginning of his way, Prov. 8: 22. As Mediator, the Father loved Him; then when it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, John 10: 17.

(4.) That Jesus Christ is One in whom the Father is well pleased, in whom his soul is pleased; which denotes the highest complacency imaginable. God declared this by a voice from heaven; and He is well pleased with us in Him; for He has made us accepted in the Beloved, Eph. 1: 6. All the interest which fallen man has or can have in God, is grounded on, and owing to, God's well pleasedness in Jesus Christ: for there is no coming to the Father but by Him, John 14: 6.

2. The promise of the Father to Him in two things;

(1.) That He should be every way well qualified for his undertaking; *I will put my Spirit upon Him, as a Spirit of wisdom and counsel, Isa. 11: 2, 3.* Those whom God calls to any service, He will qualify for it; as Moses, Exod. 4: 12. Christ, as God, was equal in power and glory with the Father; as Mediator, He received from the Father power and glory; and all that the Father gave Him, to qualify Him for his undertaking, was summed up in this; *He put his Spirit upon Him;* this was that oil of gladness with which He was anointed above his fellows, Heb. 1: 9. He received the Spirit, not by measure, John 3: 34. Note Whoever they be that God has chosen, and in whom He is well pleased, He will be sure to put his Spirit upon them. Wherever He confers his love, He confers somewhat of his likeness.

(2.) That He should be abundantly success-

which might have destroyed them, chose to exhibit an example which might amend them. He showed them the difference between those malignant, vindictive passions which governed them, and the mild, gentle, conciliating disposition which his religion inspired: He withdrew Himself quietly and silently from them. Great multitudes following, He healed them all, and, to avoid all irritation and content charged them that they should not make Him known.

Healed them all.] i. e. 'All who desired to be healed by Him; for so particles of universality are frequently to be interpreted.'

He charged them to conceal, not his doctrine, nor his miracles, but his person.

Verse 16.

19 Behold 'my Servant, whom I have chosen; 'my Beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: 'I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall shew judgment to the Gentiles.

19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

20 A "bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, 'till he send forth judgment unto victory.

21 And 'in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

[Practical Observations.]

f. 19. 49. 5. 6. 52. 13. 53. 11. Zech. 9. 8. Psal. 25. 7. p. 39. 19. Is. 49. 1—3. Luke 22. 35. 1 Pet. 2. 4. h. 3. 17. 17. 5. Mark 1. 11. 9. 7. Luke 2. 25. Eph. 1. 5. Col. 1. 13. marg. 2 Pet. 1. 17. i. 5. 16. 11. 2. 59. 20. 21. 61. 1—3. Luke 32. 2. 418 John 1. 32—34. 2 Acts 10. 38. i. 32. 15. 49. 6. 60. 2. 3. 62. 2. Jer. 16. 19. Luke 23. 32. Acts 11. 18. 13. 46—48. 14. 27. 26. 17. 18. Rom. 15. 9—12. Eph. 2. 11—13. 9. 3. 11. 29. Zech. 9. 9. Luke 17. 30. John 1. 35—38. 2 Cor. 10. 1. 2 Tim. 2. 24. 25. 11. 28. 2 Kings 18. 21. Ps. 51. 17. 147. 3. Is. 40. 11. 57. 15. 61. 1—3. Lam. 3. 33—40. 24. 24. Luke 4. 13. 2 Cor. 2. 7. Heb. 12. 12. 13. p. 59. 1—3. Is. 42. 3. 4. Rom. 15. 17 —19. 2 Cor. 2. 16. 10. 5—6. Rev. 6. 13. 19. 11—21. i. 11. 10. Rom. 15. 12. Eph. 1. 12. 13. Col. 1. 13.

ful in his undertaking. Those whom God sends, He will certainly own. It was secured by promise to our Lord Jesus, that the good pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand, Isa. 53: 10. And here we have an account of it.

He shall show judgment to the Gentiles. Christ in his own person preached to those who bordered on the heathen nations, (see Mark 3: 6—8.) and by his apostles showed his Gospel, called here his judgment, to the Gentile world. God's judgments had been the Jews' peculiar privilege, (Psal. 147: 19, 20,) but it was often foretold, by the Old-Testament prophets, that they should be shown to the Gentiles, which therefore ought not to have been a surprise to the unbelieving Jews, much less a vexation.

In his name shall the Gentiles trust, v. 21. He shall so show judgment to them, that they may observe what He shows them, and be influenced by it to depend on Him, to devote themselves to Him, and conform to that judgment. Note, The great design of the Gospel is to bring people to trust in the name of Jesus Christ, that precious name, which is as ointment poured forth: The Lord our Righteousness. The evangelist here follows the Septuagint; (or perhaps the latter editions of the Septuagint follow the evangelist,) the Hebrew (Isa. 42: 4,) is, *The isles shall wait for his law.* The isles of the Gentiles are spoken of, (Gen. 10: 5,) as peopled by the sons of Japhet, of whom it was said, (Gen. 9: 27,) *God shall persuade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Shem;* which was now to be fulfilled, when the isles, (says the prophet,) the Gentiles, (says the evangelist,) shall wait for his law, and trust in his name: compare these together, and observe, that they, and they only, can with confidence trust in Christ's name, that wait for his law with a resolution to be ruled by it. Observe also, that the law we wait for, is the law of faith, the law of trusting in his name. This is now his great commandment, that we believe in Christ, 1 John 3: 23.

3. The prediction concerning Him, and his mild and quiet management of his undertaking, v. 19, 20.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14—21. The more good is done by the Gospel, the greater opposition proud Pharisees and enemies will excite against it; and the more clearly it is proved to be from God, the more determined will be their malice, if left to themselves. Whilst we take encouragement from the condescending mildness of our gracious Lord, we should also pray, that his Spirit may rest upon us; and enable us to copy his example. Thus we should look to Him, in behalf of ourselves and others, to bring forth judgment unto victory: expecting and earnestly praying also for the time, when all the Gentiles shall trust in his name, and wait for his law. Scott.—Surely fate does not more exactly answer to face in water, than the character of Christ, drawn by the prophet, to his temper and conduct, as

described by the evangelists. How should Zion rejoice in such a King! Let us with pleasure trace his gentle administration, and confidently commit our souls to a hand so kind and so faithful: far from breaking, He will strengthen the bruised reed: far from quenching the smoking flax, He will rather blow it into a flame.—How well does it become disciples of Christ, especially his ministers, not to despise the day of small things!—Gentiles now trust in a Redeemer's name, and wait for his law. May our souls, with such submission bow to it, and observe it with such faithful care, that our example, wherever it is seen, may promote the reception of it among those, that, as yet, are strangers to its power! Dodd.

Verses 19—21.

Here are described the Christ, lowly, compassionate, condescending, and beneficent nature of Christ's miracles and personal ministry; his perseverance in the midst of opposition, without engaging in contentious dispute; and his kind and tender dealing with weak, discouraged, and tempted believers. When the cause of the Gospel, and that of our Lord's servants against his enemies, shall be tried, and judgment shall be brought forth unto truth; they will also be made victorious; when the Gentiles learn to trust in his name, they also 'wait for his law'; and when all nations shall trust in him, judgment will be set on established in the earth.—He that stretcheth not forth his hand to the sinner, and he that beareth not the burden of his brother, breaks 'the bruised reed; and he that despiseth the small spark of faith in 'little ones, quenches the smoking flax.' Jerome. The evangelist quotes the last clause of this passage from the Septuagint, and no more. In many things, the prophet's meaning is mistaken or obscured in that version. Thus the whole is ascribed to Israel as a nation, instead of being understood of the Messiah: but Matthew gives the meaning of the Hebrew, yet not attending to literal exactness: which in an inspired writer was not necessary. The Septuagint, though highly venerable, has acquired disproportionate reverence from the notion, that the writers of the New Testament confine themselves to it in their citations: but in fact, they quote it, only when it accords to the Hebrew, or gives the sense of it without material alteration. Scott.

(18.) *Shew judgment.* 'I shall teach the law and will of God.'

(19.) *He shall not strive.* 'He shall not contend with martial violence, nor cry out in a clamorous and turbulent manner; nor shall any one hear his voice in the streets, as giving a loud and disquieting alarm: but He shall manage his administration with so much gentle-

ness and sweetness, with so much caution and tenderness, that (as is proverbially expressed) *He shall not break even a bruised reed or cane; nor extinguish even the smoking flax, or wick of a lamp, which, when first beginning to kindle, is put out by every little motion* with such kind and condescending regards to the weakest of his people, and to the first openings and symptoms of a hopeful character, shall He proceed, till He send forth judgment to victory, or till He make his righteous cause gloriously triumphant over all opposition.' Dodd.

(20.) *Bruised reed—smoking flax.* 'Bruised reed' and 'smoking flax' seem to be only proverbial expressions to signify a person of a most gentle character.'

'This prophecy is expressly referred to the Messiah by the Targumist, who renders, "Behold my servant, the Messiah," &c.' GREENFIELD. 'That is, He will not bear hard upon a wounded, contrite, and truly humble heart, bowed down with a sense of its infirmity. The faintest spark of returning virtue He will not extinguish by severity.'

Bp. PORTUS. 'The Jews used to employ flax, as we do cotton, for candles or lamps.'

The Gentiles trust. (21.) 'Hope. Comp. Ps. 146: 3. Jer. 17: 5. Rom. 15: 12. Eph. 1: 12.'

Horne, in his Intro. to N. T. cites this passage among the quotations agreeing with the Hebrew in sense but not in words, and also among those which differ both from the Septuagint and from the Hebrew, and are probably taken from some other translation, or paraphrase, or were so rendered by the sacred writers themselves. Ed.

(21.) 'Isaiah's saying, (chap. 42: 4.) *The isles shall wait for his law,* is illustrated and explained by this correspondent phrase which Matthew uses.'

22 ¶ Then ¹ was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind and dumb: and he healed him, inasmuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

23 And all the people were amazed, and said, 'Is not this the Son of David?'

24 But ² when the Pharisees heard it, they said, 'This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by ³ Beelzebub the prince of the devils.'

p 9,32. Luke 11:14.
q Mark 7:36-37. 8:17-26.
r Ps. 51:15. Is. 29:18. 82:3,4. 35:5,6.
Acts 26:18.
s 9:33. 15:20, 31.
t 9:27. 15:22. 21:9. 22:42,43. John 4:29. 7:40-42.
u 9:34. Mark 8:22. Luke 11:15.
v Gr. Beelzebub, and so 27.

that He came to destroy the works of the devil. This poor man could neither see to help himself, nor speak to others to help him. A soul under Satan's power, is blind in the things of God, and dumb at the throne of grace.

His cure was very strange, and the more so, because sudden: *He healed him.* Note, The conquering and dispossessing of Satan is the healing of souls. Christ's mercy is directly opposite to Satan's malice; his favors, to the devil's mischiefs. When Satan's power is broken in the soul, the eyes are opened to see God's glory, and the lips, to speak his praise; the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

II. The conviction this gave the people, (v. 23.) They inferred from it, *Is not this the Son of David?* The Messiah promised from the loins of David? Is not this He that should come? We may take this, as an *inquiring* question; they asked, *Is not this the Son of David?* But they did not stay for an answer; the impressions were cogent, but transient. It was a good question, but soon lost, and not prosecuted. Such convictions as these should affect the heart. Or, as an *affirming* question; *Is not this the Son of David?* 'Yes, certainly, it can be no other: such miracles as these plainly evince that the kingdom of the Messiah is now setting up.' And they were the people, the vulgar sort of spectators, that drew this inference. Atheists will say, 'That was because they were less prying than the Pharisees; no, the matter of fact was obvious, and required no search; it was because they were less prejudiced and biassed by worldly interest. So plain and easy was the way made to this great truth of Christ's being the Mes-

siah and does not flame, shall not be blown out, but kindled. The day of small things is the day of precious things; therefore He will not despise it, but make it the day of great things, Zech. 4: 10. Note, Our Lord Jesus deals very tenderly with those who have true grace, though they be weak in it, Isa. 40: 11. Heb. 5: 2. (3.) The good issue and success of this, intimated in that, *till He send forth judgment unto victory*; He will go on, conquering and to conquer, Rev. 6: 2. Both the preaching of the Gospel in the world, and the power of the Gospel in the heart, shall prevail. Christ's judgment will be brought forth to victory, for when He judges, He will overcome. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth; so it is, Isa. 42: 3. Truth and victory are much the same, for *great is the truth, and it will prevail.*

V. 22-37. In these verses, we have,

I. Christ's conquest of Satan, in the cure of one who, by divine permission, was under his power, and in his possession, v. 22. Here observe,

The man's case was very sad; he was *possessed with a devil.* More cases of this kind occurred in Christ's time than usual, that Christ's power might be the more magnified; and that it might the more evidently appear,

that He came to destroy the works of the devil. This poor man could neither see to help himself, nor speak to others to help him. A soul under Satan's power, is blind in the things of God, and dumb at the throne of grace.

His cure was very strange, and the more so, because sudden: *He healed him.* Note, The conquering and dispossessing of Satan is the healing of souls. Christ's mercy is directly opposite to Satan's malice; his favors, to the devil's mischiefs. When Satan's power is broken in the soul, the eyes are opened to see God's glory, and the lips, to speak his praise; the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

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siah and Savior of the world, that the common people could not miss it; the *way-faring men, though fools, could not err therein.* See Isa. 33: 8. It was found of them that sought it not. It is an instance of the condescensions of divine grace, that the things that were *hid from the wise and prudent were revealed unto babes.* The world by wisdom knew not God and by foolish things the wise were confounded.

III. The blasphemous cavil of the Pharisees, v. 24. The Pharisees were a sort of men that pretended to more religion than others; yet they were the most inveterate enemies to Christ; and his doctrine. They were proud of the reputation they had among the people; and when they heard them say, *Is not this the Son of David?* they were extremely irritated; more at that than at the miracle itself: it made them jealous of our Lord Jesus, and apprehensive, that as his interest in the people's esteem increased, *theirs* must of course diminish; therefore they envied Him, as Saul his father David, 1 Sam. 18: 7, 8. Note, Those who find up their happiness in the praise and applause of men, expose themselves to perpetual uneasiness upon every favorable word they hear of any other. Observe,

How scornfully they speak of Christ, *this fellow*; as if that precious name of his were not worthy to be taken into their lips. It is an instance of their pride and superciliousness, and their diabolical envy, that the more people magnified Christ, the more industrious they were to vilify Him. It is a bad thing to speak of good men with disdain because they are poor.

How blasphemously they speak of his miracles; it was as plain as the sun, that devils were cast out by the word of Christ; nor could they deny that it was an extraordinary thing, and supernatural. Being thus forced to grant the premises, they had no other way to avoid the conclusion, that *this is the Son of David*, but to suggest that *Christ cast out devils by Beelzebub*; that there was a compact between Christ and the devil; pursuant to which, the devil was not cast out, but voluntarily retired: or as if by an agreement with the ruling devil, He had power to cast out the inferior devils. No surmise could be more palpably false and vile than this; that He, who is Truth itself, should be in compination with the father of lies, to cheat

Verse 22.

It is probable, that this miracle was wrought some time after what is before recorded. 'This miracle appears to have been performed on the morning of that day on which Christ delivered the parables of the power, &c. (compare Matt. 13: 1. &c.) and on the evening of which He crossed the sea, stilled the tempest, and went into the country of the Gadarenes, where He dispossessed the legion. (See Mark 4: 35. &c.)' As it is not said that Christ gave this man his hearing, it is plain 'he was not deaf, and indeed it appears worthy of remark, that we 'hardly ever meet with entire blindness and deafness in the same person.' DODGE. Zacharias appears to have been deaf as well as dumb: (Luke 1: 21-25.) but no other instance occurs in the N. T. in which the word here (v. 22.) rendered dumb clearly embraces both ideas. SCOTT.

Verse 23.

This miracle seems to have astonished the people, in an uncommon degree; and led them to conclude that Jesus must be the Messiah, the Son of David; which astonished the Pharisees, and made them fear that He would finally prevail: yet they could not deny the reality of the miracle; and therefore malignantly renewed their accusation, that He cast out devils, by the concurrence of Beelzebub the prince of the devils, with whom He had formed an alliance, (Notes, 9: 32-34.) 'This they did,' says Whitby, 'not only from an apprehension, that if this belief prevailed, it might bring the power of the Romans upon them; (John 11: 48.) but chiefly, because it put an end to their credit with, and authority over, the people; they being thus represented by our Lord, as blind guides and the worst of hypocrites.' SCOTT.

Is not this the Son of David? That is, 'Is not this the true Messiah? Do not these miracles sufficiently prove it? See Is. 35: 6.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

The editor regards this as a proper place to introduce the following valuable arrangement of the Prophetic History of Christ.

'SECTION I. containing the earliest intimations of the Messiah. Gen. 3: 15. 17: 7, 19. 22: 18. 26: 3: 23: 14. 1 Chr. 17: 11. Is. 42: 6. 49: 8. Jer. 33: 20. 21. Is. 11: 1, 2. Jer. 23: 5, 6. 33: 15. Ezek. 17: 22, 23. Zech. 3: 8. 6: 12, 13. Mic. 4: 1, 7. Is. 2: 2. 25: 7. 2: 3, 4. 11: 6-9. Gen. 49: 10. Numb. 24: 17. Is. 49: 5. Dan. 7: 13, 14. Is. 11: 27. 40: 9. 49: 13. Mal. 4: 2.'

'SECTION II. containing those prophecies which relate to the birth of the Messiah.

Is. 40: 3-5. Mal. 4: 5. 3: 1. Ps. 2: 6-8. Is. 7: 14. Mic. 5: 2. Is. 9: 2, 6, 7.

SECTION III. containing those prophecies, which relate to the life of the Messiah—his preaching, and his miracles.

Deut. 18: 18. Is. 63: 2. 3. 42: 2. 3. 52: 7. Zech. 2: 10, 11. Is. 42: 1, 4. Is. 11: 3-5. 51: 1, 2. Mic. 4: 2. Is. 8: 14. Ps. 118: 22, 23, 24. Is. 28: 16. 29: 14. Zech. 9: 9. Hag. 2: 7, 9. Is. 35: 5, 6. 47: 7, 49: 9. 40: 1. 49: 10.

SECTION IV. containing such prophecies as relate to the death, resurrection, and exaltation of the Messiah.

Ps. 41: 9. Zech. 11: 12, 13. 13: 7. Is. 53: 7, 8. Ps. 35: 11, 38: 13. 22: 16. Is. 50: 6. Mic. 5: 1. Ps. 69: 21. 22: 16, 18. Zech. 13: 6. Ps. 22: 1, 7, 8. Joel 2: 30-32. Dan. 9: 24-26. Is. 53: 4-6. 10, 12. Zech. 12: 10. Ex. 12: 46. Zech. 13: 1. Is. 53: 9. Ps. 2: 1, 2, 4. Ps. 16: 10. Hos. 6: 2. Job. 19: 25. Hos. 13: 14. Ps. 110: 1-4.

Verse 24.

'The term employed on this occasion is very properly rendered "this fellow" as expressive of contempt and aversion, observes Dr. Scott, but it is remarked by Campbell, after noticing the similar phraseology in the question, v. 22. "As the Greek term does not imply, a translator is not entitled to add, any thing contemptuous." ED.

Beelzebub is the same as Baal-zebub, the god of Ekron in Philistia. (2 Kings 1: 3.)—The heathens fabulously write of the temple of Hercules and Jupiter, that the deity kept the flies from them; the Jews say of their temple, that a fly was not seen in the slaughter-house.

Whitby in Scott.

'The god of the Ekronites was called Baal-zebub, author for the plenty of flies with which his temple abounded, or because they sought help from that idol, against the flies with which they were troubled. "This name the Israelites after, for the contempt of that idol, gave to the prince of the devils." LEIGH.

He is called Satan in our Lord's answer, (26.)

The origin of the name Beelzebub it is difficult to ascertain, 'ob serves Horne; but it is remarked by Jahn, "The astrologers divided the heavens into apartments or habitations, to each one of which apartments, they assigned a ruler or president. This fact developed the origin of the word Beelzebub, or the lord of the celestial dwellings." Archeol. 100. IV. The Pharisees, if we may believe Josephus, taught that the demons, by which men were possessed, were the spirits of bad men, who were dead, and were commissioned on their progress, business of tormenting the children of men by Beelzebub.' JAHN

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.

26 And Satan cast out Satan he is divided against himself: how shall then his kingdom stand?

27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges.

28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

29 Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

r 24. Ps. 139-2. Jer. 17:10. Am. 4:13. Mark 2:28. John 2:24, 25. 21:17. 1 Cor. 2:11. Heb. 4:13. Rev. 2:23. 12:2. 12:18. 3. Mark 3:23-26. 1 Cor. 12:17-19 Gal. 3:15. Rev. 16:1. 17:16. 17. John 12:3. 14:30. 16:11. 2 Cor. 4:4. Col. 1:13. 1 John 5:19. Gr. Rev. 9:11. 12:9. 16:10. 20:2, 3. Mark 9:39, 39. Luke 9:49, 50. 11:19. Acts 15:12-16. 16:42. Luke 19:22. Rom. 3:19. c 18. Mark 16:17. Luke 11:20. Acts 10:38. 2. 24:43. 14. 9:47. Dan. 2:44. 7:14. Mark 14:15. 11:10. Luke 1:32, 33. 9:2. 10:11. 16:16. 17:20, 21. Rom. 14:17. Col. 1:13. Heb. 12:23. e 49:24. 53:12. Mark 3:27. Luke 11:21-22. 1 John 3:9. 4:4. Rev. 12:7-9. 20:1-3, 7-9.

should at all countenance such a design: if he should fall in with Christ, how should then his kingdom stand? He would himself contribute to its overthrow. Christ will destroy the devil's kingdom, but He needs not do it by any such little arts and projects as that of a secret compact with Beelzebub; no, this victory must be obtained by nobler methods.

2. It was not at all strange, or improbable, that devils should be cast out by the Spirit of God; for,

This fellow.] 'Rather, this man.' Why did not our translators say in the preceding verse, *Is not this fellow the son of David?* The pronoun is the same in both. Our idiom in many cases, will not permit us to use the demonstrative, without adding a noun. But as the Greek term does not imply, a translator is not entitled to add, any thing contemptuous. By such freedoms, one of the greatest beauties of these divine writers has been considerably injured.

VERSES 25, 26.

The Pharisees, it seems, circulated this opinion *privately*; but Jesus knew their thoughts, and took occasion to argue with them. Probably, his disregard to their traditions, and supposed violation of the Sabbath, caused this opinion; but He rested his argument on the tendency of his doctrine and example, to render men wise and holy, and delivering them from sin and Satan, to make them servants of God; so that, as his cause prevailed, Satan's kingdom must be perverted. As, therefore, these fallen spirits are too politic and sagacious to assist in ruining their own cause: and as a kingdom or family, if divided into contending parties, is desolated; so it was evident, that if Satan aided Jesus, his divided kingdom could not stand.—Nothing can be more conclusive than this argument.

Verse 27.

Your children cast them out.] For the proof of this fact, see Acts 19: 13. Mark 9: 38. Luke 9: 49. Joseph. Antiq. Jud. lib. viii. I do not see that there is any need of referring this to the apostles, who had not yet been sent out; and if they had, they to be sure would be involved in the same censure with Christ. It is more natural to suppose that the disciples of the Pharisees are here probably meant by their children.

DODDRIEDGE.

Your children expel them, who practise exorcisms, and are approved and extolled by you on that account, though some of them do it in my name.—Therefore they shall in this respect be your judges, and condemn you of a most partial and unequal conduct.

Id.

the world. This was the last resort of an obstinate infidelity. Observe, Among the devils there is a prince, the ringleader in apostasy and rebellion; but this prince is Beelzebub—the god of a fly, or a dunghill-god. How art thou fallen, O Lucifer! from an angel of light, to be a lord of flies!

IV. Christ's reply to this base insinuation, v. 25–30. It should seem that the Pharisees could not for shame speak it out, but kept it in their minds; they could not expect to satisfy the people with it, they therefore reserved it to silence the convictions of their own consciences. Note, Many are kept from their duty by that which they are ashamed to own, but which they cannot hide from Jesus Christ: yet it is probable that the Pharisees had whispered what they thought among themselves, to help to harden one another; but Christ's reply is said to be to their thoughts, because He knew with what mind and from what principle, they said it; that they did not say it in haste, but from a rooted malignity.

Christ's reply is copious and cogent, consisting of three arguments, by which He demonstrates the unreasonableness of this suggestion.

1. It would be very strange, and highly improbable, that Satan should be cast out by such a compact, because then Satan's kingdom would be divided against itself; which, considering his subtlety, is not a thing to be imagined, v. 25, 26.

Here is a known rule laid down, that in all societies a common ruin is the consequence of mutual quarrels; (v. 25.) 'What family,' says Cicero, 'is so strong, what community so firm, as not to be overturned by enmity and dissension?'

Divisions commonly end in desolations; if we clash, we break; if we divide, we become an easy prey to a common enemy; much more if we bite and devour one another, shall we be consumed one of another, Gal. 5: 15. Churches and nations have known this by sad experience.

The application of this to the case in hand, (v. 26.) If the prince of the devils should be at variance with the inferior devils, the whole kingdom and interest would soon be broken; nay, if Satan should come into a compact with Christ, it must be to his own ruin: for the manifest design and tendency of Christ's preaching and miracles was, to overthrow the kingdom of Satan, and to set up a kingdom of light, holiness and love. Therefore, it was the most absurd thing imaginable, to think that Beelzebub

How otherwise do your children cast them out? There were those among the Jews, who, in invocation of the name of God, sometimes cast out devils. Josephus speaks of some in his time, that did it; we read of Jewish exorcists, (Acts 19: 13,) and of some that in Christ's name cast out devils, though they did not follow Him, (Mark 9: 38,) or were not faithful to Him, ch. 7: 22. These the Pharisees condemned not, but imputed what they did to the Spirit of God, and valued themselves and their nation upon it. It was therefore merely from spite and envy to Christ, that they would own, that others cast out devils by the Spirit of God, but suggest that He did it by compact with Beelzebub. Note, It is the way of malicious people, especially the persecutors of Christ and Christianity, to condemn the same thing in those they hate, which they approve and applaud in those they have a kindness for: the judgments of envy are made, not by things, but persons; not by reason, but prejudice. But those were very unfit to sit in Moses' seat, who knew faces, and nothing else in judgment: Therefore they shall be your judges; 'This contradicting of yourselves will rise up in judgment against you, and condemn you.' Note, In the last judgment, not only every sin, but every aggravation of it, will be brought into the account, and some of our notions that were right and good, will be brought in evidence against us, to convict us of partiality.

This casting out of devils was a certain token of the approach and appearance of the kingdom of God: (v. 23.) 'But if it be indeed that I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, as certainly I do, then you must conclude, that though you are unwilling to receive it, the kingdom of the Messiah is now about to be set up among you.' Other miracles that Christ wrought proved Him sent of God, but this proved Him sent of God to destroy the works of the devil. Now that great promise was evidently fulfilled, that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head, Gen. 3: 15. 'Therefore that glorious dispensation of the kingdom of God, which has been long expected, is now commenced; slight it at your peril.' Note, The destruction of the devil's power is wrought by the Spirit of God, that Spirit who works to the obedience of faith, overthrows the interest of that spirit who works in the children of unbelief, and disobedience. The casting out of devils is a certain introduction to the kingdom of God. If the devil's interest in a soul be sunk and broken by the Spirit of God, as a Sanctifier, no doubt the kingdom of God is come to that soul, a blessed earnest of the kingdom of glory.

3. The comparing of Christ's miracles, particularly this of casting out devils, with his doctrine, and the design and tendency of his holy religion, evidenced that He was so far from being in league with Satan, that He was

Verse 28.

'But if you must allow that I cast out demons by the finger, of the power and Spirit of God, then it undoubtedly follows that the kingdom of God is indeed come unto you, as I assert; and all the doctrines that I preach are proved by this to be divine, and consequently worthy of your most serious and obedient regard, since it plainly shows my superiority over all the infernal powers. Otherwise, it is evident I could not do this: for how can any one break and enter into the house of a strong man, &c.'

'Perhaps the Spirit of God is here mentioned by way of opposition to the magical incantations of the Jews; for it is well known, that, by fumigations and magical washings, they professed to cast out devils.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Then the kingdom of God.] 'For the destruction of the kingdom of Satan plainly implies the setting up of the kingdom of God.' It come unto you.] 'Unexpectedly upon you.'

VERSES 29, 30.

The case might be illustrated by an apt similitude. How could any one enter into a strong man's house, whilst he was on his guard and plunder his property at pleasure, unless he first overpowered and bound the strong man? Thus it was evident, that Jesus by his divi power was able to subdue and limit the power of Satan: or He never could rescue the bodies and souls of men from his oppression. And, as He came to 'destroy the works of the devil,' so the cause would admit of no neutrality. Every one, who should refuse to join Him against the cause of Satan, would be adjudged an enemy; and all who would not concur with Him in rescuing sinners from the devil's kingdom, and bringing them into the kingdom of God, whatever pains they might take in any other way, would do worse than lose their labor; for all their contrivances, knowledge, and religious observances would tend to their own loss, and that of others, and they would finally lose their own souls.

SCOTT.

30 He 'that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

[Practical Observations.]

31 Wherefore I say unto you, ^a All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: ^b but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, shall not be forgiven unto men.

32 And ^c whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; ^d but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, ^e it shall not be forgiven.

f 24. Josh. 5:13. 24:15. 1 Chr. 12:17, 18. Mark 9:30. Luke 9:30. 11:22. 2 Cor. 6:15, 16. Rev. 3:15, 16. g Gen. 49:10. Hos. 1:11. John 11:52. h Is. 1:18. 55:7. Ex. 33:11. 1 Tim. 1:13-15. 1 John 1:9. 2:1, 2. i Mark 3:23-30. Luke 12:10. 1 John 5:16. k 11:19. Luke 7:34. 23:34. Acts 3:14, 15, 19. 26:9-11. 1 Tim. 1:15. l John 7:39. Heb. 6:4-6. 10:26-29. m Job 36:18. Mark 3:29. Luke 16:32-26.

at open enmity and hostility against him; (v. 29.) The world that sat in darkness, and lay in wickedness, was in Satan's possession, and under his power, as a house in the possession and under the power of a strong man; so is every unregenerate soul; there Satan resides, there he rules. Now, the design of Christ's Gospel was to spoil the devil's house, which, as a strong man, he kept in the world; to turn the people from darkness to light, from sin to holiness, from the power of Satan unto God; (Acts 26:18.) to alter the property of souls. Pursuant to this design, He bound the strong man, when He cast out unclean spirits. The doctrine of Christ teaches us how to construe his miracles, and when He showed how easily and effectually He could cast the devil out of people's bodies, He encouraged all believers to hope that, whatever power Satan might usurp and exercise in the souls of men, Christ by his grace would break it. When nations were turned from the service of idols to serve the living God, when some of the worst of sinners were sanctified and justified, and became the best of saints, then Christ spoiled the devil's house, and will spoil it more and more.

4. Christ's war against the devil and his kingdom admits of no neutrality, (v. 30.) In the little differences that may arise between the disciples of Christ, we are taught to lessen the matters in variance, and to account those who are not against us, to be with us; (Luke 9:50.) but in the great quarrel between Christ and the devil, no peace is to be sought, nor any such favorable construction to be made of any difference in the matter; he that is not hearty for

Christ will be reckoned with as really against him. When the dispute is between God and Baal, there is no halting between two, (1 Kings 18:21.) there is no trimming between Christ and Belial; for the kingdom of Christ, as it is eternally opposite to, so it will be eternally victorious over, the devil's kingdom; and therefore in this cause there is no sitting still with Gilead beyond Jordan, or Asher on the sea-shore; (Judg. 5:16, 17.) we must be entirely, faithfully, and immovably on Christ's side: it is the right side, and will at last be the rising side; see Exod. 32:26.

The latter clause is to the same purport. Note, Christ's errand into the world was to gather in his harvest, those whom the Father had given Him, John 11:52. Eph. 1:10. Christ expects and requires his disciples to gather with Him; that they not only gather to Him themselves, but gather others to Him, and so strengthen his interest. Those who will not appear, and act, as furtherers of Christ's kingdom, will be looked on, and dealt with, as hinderers of it; if we gather not with Christ, we scatter; it is not enough, not to do hurt; we must do good. Thus is the breach widened between Christ and Satan, to show that there was no such compact between them as the Pharisees whispered.

V. His discourse on the occasion, concerning sins of the tongue; Wherefore I say unto you. He seems to turn fr. m. the Pharisees to the people; and from the sin of the Pharisees He warns the people concerning three sorts of tongue-sins; others' harms are admonitions to us.

1. Blasphemous words against the Holy Ghost, v. 31, 32. Now,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 22-30. In every way, we see illustrations of the power and malice of our formidable enemies, and of the superior power and mercy of our great Deliverer. The changes effected by divine grace form a continued proof, that Jesus is the Son of David, and the Son of God; and that the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation. This should induce all men to submit to Christ: but it has a contrary effect on many, who dare to ascribe these changes to enthusiasm, or even diabolical delusion! He, who knows men's thoughts, has taught us how to answer such objections; and the enemies of all good might teach Christians a useful lesson: hateful and hating as they are, they are too subtle to divide against themselves, so as to subvert their own kingdom; but, whilst they agree together in malice, they tempt Christians to divide into parties, and quarrel with each other, to the irreparable injury

of the common cause!—But let us observe, that there are two grand interests in the world; all that side with Christ, against the kingdom of Satan, are his friends, but none else; and when unclean spirits are cast out by the Spirit of God, in the conversion of sinners to a life of faith and obedience, the kingdom of God is come unto us: nor could they be expelled did not One come upon them who is able to bind them at his will, take away from them their usurped possessions, and employ the convert, with all his talents, in his service and to his glory. All they, who refuse to concur, or do not rejoice, in such a revolution as this, are against Christ; and 'he that gathereth not with Him, scattereth.' Alas! what pains do many take in thus scattering abroad, and in ruining themselves and others, by promoting systems of human invention, in opposition to the Gospel of God our Savior!

SCOTT.

30.] *Gathereth.* 'He who gathereth not subjects into my kingdom with me, is but vainly and foolishly scattering abroad. Much more criminal and fatal than must the character and conduct of those be, who, with deliberate, implacable malice, oppose my cause, and are resolved at all adventures to bear it down, as you are attempting to do by the vile insinuations which you have now suggested. I therefore give you the most solemn and compassionate warning of your danger; for you are on the brink of a most dreadful precipice. That malignity of heart which leads you to ascribe these works of mine to a confederacy with Satan, may incline you to pass the same impious sentence on the greatest and fullest confirmation which is to be given to my Gospel, by the effusion of the Spirit on my followers; and therefore, to prevent, if possible, such guilt and ruin, verily I say unto you, *all other sins shall, &c.*'

Donne.

Verses 31, 32.

(Marg. Ref.) Scarcely any thing, in the whole Scripture, has given more discouragement to weak Christians than this passage, and a few others coincident with it. (Mark 3:22-30. Luke 12:8-10. Heb. 6:4-6. 10:26, 27. 1 John 5:16-18.) Almost every humble and conscientious believer, at one time or other, is tempted to think he has committed the unpardonable sin; and the interpretations many have given, without properly advertent to the context, frequently tend to increase these apprehensions and difficulties. In general we are sure, that they who indeed repent, and believe the Gospel, have not committed this sin, for repentance and faith are inseparably connected with forgiveness. On the other hand, without repentance and faith, no man can be forgiven, though he have not committed this sin.—It is probable, the matter was left in some measure of obscurity, to deter men from presumptuously venturing near the brink of so dreadful a precipice. One thing is clear, it does not hence follow, that any sin which is not forgiven here, will hereafter be forgiven: the expression only shows, that some of the Jews had notions of this kind, as well as papists and other professed Christians: but it seems to be no more than a form of speech common among the Jews, when they asserted strongly, that any thing should never be done.—The circumstances, in which this declaration was made, should carefully be adverted to. The Pharisees had spoken most blasphemous words against Christ and his miracles, which were indeed wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, but not under the immediate dispensation of the Spirit. They had gone as far in impiety as they could, without finally excluding themselves from forgiveness. They had spoken 'blasphemy against the Son of man,' and ascribed his miracles to the power of the devil; &c. it they might be pardoned, and one further method would

be used to convince them. In a short time, He, the promised Messiah, would be crucified, rise from the dead, and ascend into heaven; when, being exalted to the right hand of the Father, He would send forth the Holy Spirit on his apostles and disciples, enabling them to perform various wonderful works in his name, in proof of their testimony concerning his resurrection and ascension. Whosoever therefore should blaspheme this last and most complete attestation to Jesus, as the promised Messiah, and, from determined enmity to Him and his kingdom, deliberately ascribe the operations of the Holy Spirit to Satan;—that man would be given up to final obduracy and impenitency, and thus never be pardoned, but sink into final perdition. None therefore could commit this sin, who did not witness the effects of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit on the apostles: nor were all degrees of opposition thus finally destructive. Peter does not seem to have concluded, that Simon Magus had sinned beyond the reach of mercy, when he offered to buy the power of conferring the Holy Ghost. (Note, Acts 8:18-24.) Yet it is clear, that some kinds of apostasy, when attended with peculiar circumstances of aggravation, through love of this world, and enmity to the truth, were equivalent to it; and in every age, many provoke God to leave them to final impenitence. But there must be great opportunity of information, much inward conviction, determinate sinning against the light of a man's own conscience, and an obstinate opposition to it in defiance of evidence, to constitute this kind of impiety. They, who most fear having committed it, are generally at the greatest distance from it; while such as are thus given up, are, perhaps universally, either callous in presumption or enmity, or absolutely and outrageously impetrate, of which we sometimes meet awful instances: but the trembling, contrite sinner has 'the witness in himself,' that neither of these is his case.—The Jews, to this day, ascribe the miracles of Jesus, the reality of which they do not deny, especially his casting out devils, to enchantment; that is, to the power of Satan. SCOTT.

(31.) *Shall be forgiven.* 'In men is pardonable or remissible; that is, in the divine economy, capable of being pardoned.'

CAMPBELL.

'With Grotius, I cannot but think, that our Lord opposes some of the errors of the Pharisees, who maintained the final happiness of every Jew; and that the sins which were not forgiven in this state, would be at death, or in the future; and that He meant to assure them the sin against the Spirit would never be forgiven. Comp. Mark 3:29. and Luke 12:10.'

BOOTHBY.

'It is matter of great thankfulness, thus expressly to hear that every other sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven: but awful to think, that the

en him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.

33 ¶ Either "make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit.

34 O "generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

35 A "good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

36 But I say unto you, That "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

22:26. Ez. 18:31. Am. 5:15. Luke 11:39-40. Jer. 4:8.
33:10. Ps. 71:5-20. Luke 3:9. 6:43, 44. John 15:4-7. Jam. 3:12.
37. 23:33. Luke 3:7. John 8:44. 1 John 3:10.
1 Sam. 24:12. Ps. 10:6-7. 52:2-5. 58:1-5. 64:2-5. 120:2-4. 140:2-3. Isa. 32:6. 59:4-14. Jer. 7:2-5. Rom. 2:10-14. Jam. 3-5.
1 Cor. 14:6.
13:32. Ps. 37:30-31. Prov. 10:20-21. 12:6-17-19. 15:4, 23, 28. 16:21-23. 25:11, 12. Eph. 4:29. Col. 3:16. 4:6.
34.
Ec. 12:14. Rom. 2:16. Eph. 5:4-6. Jude 14:15. Rev. 20:12.

inevitably leaves the sinner in infidelity and impenitency. We have reason to think that none are guilty of this sin, who believe that Christ is the Son of God, and sincerely desire who fear they have committed this sin, give a good sign that they have not. Whithy very well observes, that Christ speaks not of what was now said or done, but of what should be, Mark 3:28: Luke 12:10. *Whosoever shall blaspheme.* As for those who blasphemed Christ when He was here on earth, and called Him a wine-bibber, a deceiver, a blasphemer, and the like, they had some color of excuse: the proof of his divine mission not being perfected till after his ascension; therefore, on their repentance, they shall be pardoned: and it was hoped they might be convinced by the pouring out of the Spirit, as many of them were, who had been his betrayers and murderers. But if, when the Holy Ghost is given, in his inward gifts of revelation, speaking, with tongues, and the like, such as were the distributions of the Spirit among the

blasphemy against the Holy Ghost is excepted. Let those who, while they cannot deny the facts of Christianity, despise and oppose its doctrines, tremble to think how near they approach to the boundaries of this sin, which is perhaps more obscurely described, than we may more cautiously avoid all such approaches. But let not the humble soul that trembles at God's Word, meditate terror to itself from such a passage; which, when viewed in its due connection, cannot, with any shadow of reason, be thought to belong to any who do not obstinately reject the Gospel, and maliciously oppose it, when made known to them with its fullest evidence.

(32.) *World.* "Rather state; which may mean the present life and the life to come, or the Jewish and Christian dispensations—of this ambiguity the original word admits." [But see again Mark 3:29. Ed.]

Blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. "When the person obstinately attributed those works to the devil, which he had the fullest evidence could be wrought only by the Spirit of God. That this, and nothing else, is the sin against the Holy Spirit, is evident from the connection in this place, and more particularly from Mark 3:23, 29, 30. Let it be observed, then, that no man who believes the divine mission of Jesus Christ, can commit this sin: therefore let no man's heart fail because of it."

Neither in this world, nor that which is to come. "The whole may be taken as a strong negative, frequent in the Jewish writers; and I must enter my protest against interpretations which curtail the plain sense of Scripture."

VERSES 33-37.

(Notes 3:7-10. 7:15-27.) Our Lord next showed the Pharisees his knowledge of the evil of their hearts. They were proud, carnal, malicious, ungodly men; yet made high professions of piety and sanctity. Thus they betrayed themselves: and, however they might deny this a light matter, Ch^r assured them, that every idle or useless

Here is a gracious assurance of the pardon of all sin on gospel-terms: the greatness of sin shall be no bar to our acceptance with God, if we truly repent and believe the Gospel; (v. 31.) Though the sin has been as scarlet and crimson, (Isa. 1:18.) ever so heinous, aggravated, or often repeated, though it reach up to the heavens, yet with the Lord there is mercy, that reacheth beyond the heavens: mercy will be extended even to blasphemy, a sin immediately touching God's name and honor: Paul obtained mercy, who had been a blasphemer, 1 Tim. 1:13. Well may we say, *Who is a God like unto Thee, pardoning iniquity?* Micah 7:18. Even words spoken against the Son of man shall be forgiven; as theirs were who reviled Him at his death, many of whom repented and found mercy. Christ herein has set an example to all the sons of men, to be ready to forgive words spoken against them: *I, as a deaf man, heard not.* Observe, *They shall be forgiven unto men, not to devils;* this is love to the whole world of mankind, above the world of fallen angels, that all sin is pardonable to them. Observe,

An exception of the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, here declared to be the only unpardonable sin. See here,

What this sin is; it is speaking against the Holy Ghost. See what malignity there is in tongue-sins, when the only unpardonable sin is such. It is not all speaking against the person or essence of the Holy Ghost, or some of his more private operations, or merely the resisting of his internal working in the sinner himself, that is here meant; for *who then should be saved?* It is adjudged in law, that an act of indemnity shall always be construed in favor of that grace and clemency which is the intention of the act; and therefore the exceptions in the act are not to be extended further than needs must. The Gospel is an act of indemnity; none are excepted but those only that blaspheme the Holy Ghost; which therefore must be construed in the narrowest sense: all presuming sinners are effectually cut off by the conditions of the indemnity, faith and repentance; therefore the other exceptions must not be stretched: and this blasphemy is excepted, not for any defect of mercy in God or merit in Christ, but because it inevitably leaves the sinner in infidelity and impenitency. We have reason to think that none are guilty of this sin, who believe that Christ is the Son of God, and sincerely desire who fear they have committed this sin, give a good sign that they have not. Whithy very well observes, that Christ speaks not of what was now said or done, but of what should be, Mark 3:28: Luke 12:10. *Whosoever shall blaspheme.* As for those who blasphemed Christ when He was here on earth, and called Him a wine-bibber, a deceiver, a blasphemer, and the like, they had some color of excuse: the proof of his divine mission not being perfected till after his ascension; therefore, on their repentance, they shall be pardoned: and it was hoped they might be convinced by the pouring out of the Spirit, as many of them were, who had been his betrayers and murderers. But if, when the Holy Ghost is given, in his inward gifts of revelation, speaking, with tongues, and the like, such as were the distributions of the Spirit among the

apostles, if they continue to blaspheme the Spirit likewise, as an evil spirit, there is no hope of them, that they will ever be brought to believe in Christ; for, *First*, Those gifts of the Holy Ghost in the apostles were the last proof that God designed to make use of to confirm the Gospel. *Secondly*, This was the most powerful evidence, and more apt to convince than miracles themselves. *Thirdly*, Those therefore who blaspheme this dispensation of the Spirit, cannot possibly be brought to believe in Christ. Those who shall impute his miracles to a collusion with Satan, as the Pharisees did, what can convince them? This is such a strong hold of infidelity as a man can never be beaten out of, and is therefore unpardonable, because hereby repentance is hid from the sinner's eyes. See,

The sentence passed on it; v. 32. As in the then present state of the Jewish church, there was no sacrifice of expiation for the soul that sinned presumptuously; so neither under the dispensation of gospel grace, which is often in Scripture called the world to come, shall there be any pardon to such as tread under foot the blood of the covenant, and do despite to the Spirit of grace: there is no cure for a sin so directly against the remedy. It was a rule in our old law, No sanctuary for sacrilege. Or, *It shall be forgiven, neither now, in the sinner's own conscience, nor in the great day, when the pardon shall be published.* Or, *This is a sin that exposes both to present wrath, and the wrath to come.*

2. Other wicked words, the product of corruption reigning in the heart, and breaking out thence, v. 33-35. It was said (v. 25.) that *Jesus knew their thoughts*, and here He spoke with an eye to them, showing that it was not strange that they should speak so ill, when their hearts were so full of enmity and malice; which yet they often endeavored to cloak by feigning themselves just men. He therefore points to the springs, and heals them; let the heart be sanctified, and it will appear in our words.

The heart is the root; the language, the fruit; (v. 33.) if the nature of the tree be good, it will bring forth good fruit; and, on the contrary, whatever lust reigns in the heart, it will break out; diseased lungs make an offensive breath: men's language discovers what country they are of; so likewise *what manner of spirit they are of*; get pure hearts, and then you will have pure lips and pure lives. 'You may graft a crab-stock with a shoot from a good tree, and then the fruit will be good; but if the tree be still the same, plant it where you will, and water it how you will, the fruit will be still corrupt.' Note, Unless the heart be transformed, the reformation of the life will never be thorough. These Pharisees were shy of speaking out their wicked thoughts; but Christ here intimates, how vain it was for them to seek to hide them, when they never sought to repress them. Note, It

word,—much more all pernicious, polluting, and impious words, must be 'given an account of at the day of judgment;' and at that solemn season, they will be deemed decisive evidences of a man's character, and the state of his heart; according to which a person professing religion will be justified as a true believer, or condemned as a hypocrite, and all men will be adjudged pious or impious, holy or unholy, as their habitual conversation has been. 'Discourse tending to innocent mirth,' says Doddridge, 'to exhilarate the spirits, is not idle discourse; as the time spent in necessary recreation is not idle time.'

SCOTT.

(33.) *Make the tree good.* 'Since you cannot but allow that my life and the tendency of my doctrine are good, be not so inconsistent as to suppose I am a confederate with Beelzebub.'

GROTIUS.

'It is, indeed, very possible that this may be the sense; but, choosing that which seems best to agree with what follows, I paraphrase thus: "Consider attentively what I have offered to you, and shew me aside your vain and hypocritical pretences to religion, or what malignity and wickedness which render these pretences insolent and odious."'

DOUGLAS.

(34.) *Out of the abundance.* 'Overflowing; wicked words and sinful actions may be considered as the overflowings of a heart that is more than full of the spirit of wickedness; and holy words and righteous deeds may be considered as the overflowings of a heart that is filled with the Holy Spirit, running over with love to God and man.'

DR. A. CLARKE.

(35.) *Idle word.* 'Pernicious, false, or calumnious word.'

CAMPBELL.

'For every unprofitable, and much more for every pernicious word! If any, on the whole are dissatisfied with this account, I would beseech leave to ask them, whether unprofitable talk be not a sinful wasting of time? and whether that must not render a man in some degree criminal before God?'

DODGE.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

[Practical Observations.]

38 ¶ Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, 'Master, we would see a sign from thee,

1 Jam 2:21-26.
7 18:1-4. Mark 8:11-12. Luke 11:16-20. John 2:19 4:45. 1 Cor. 1:22.

Now, what could be expected from a generation of vipers, but that which is poisonous and malignant? Can the viper be otherwise than venomous? Note, Bad things may be expected from bad people, as said the proverb of the ancients, *Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked*, 1 Sam. 24. 13. *The vile person will speak villany*, Isa. 32: 6. Those who are themselves evil, have neither skill nor will to speak good. Christ would have his disciples know what sort of men they were to live among, that they might know what to look for. As Ezekiel among scorpions, (Ezek. 2: 6,) they must not think it strange if they be stung and bitten. The heart is the *treasury*, the words are the things brought out of it, v. 36; and hence men's characters may be drawn, and judged of.

It is the character of a *good man*, that he has a *good treasure in his heart*, and thence brings forth good things, as there is occasion. Graces, comforts, experiences, good knowledge, good affections, good resolutions, these are a *good treasure in the heart*; the word of God hidden there, the law of God written there, divine truths dwelling and ruling there, are a treasure there, valuable and suitable, kept safe and secret, as the stores of the good householder, but ready for use on all occasions. A *good man*, thus furnished, will bring forth, as Joseph out of his stores; will be speaking and doing that which is good for God's glory, and the edification of others. See Prov. 10: 11, 13, 14, 20, 21, 31, 32. This is bringing forth good things. Some pretend to good expenses that have not a *good treasure*—such will soon be bankrupts: some pretend to a good treasure, but give no proof of it: they hope they leave it in them, and thank God, whatever their words and actions are, they have good hearts; but *faith without works is dead*: and some have a *good treasure* of wisdom and knowledge, but are not communicative, do not bring forth out of it: they have a talent, but know not how to trade with it. The complete Christian in this bears the image of God, that he both is good, and does good.

It is the character of an *evil man*, that he has an *evil treasure in his heart*, and out of it bringeth forth evil things. Lusts and corruptions dwelling and reigning in the heart, are an evil treasure, out of which the sinner brings forth bad words and actions, to the dishonor of God, and the hurt of others. See Gen. 6: 5, 12. Matt. 15: 18—20. Jam. 1: 15. But *treasures of wickedness*, (Prov. 10: 2,) will be *treasures of wrath*.

3. *Idle words*, (v. 36, 37.) It concerns us to think much of the day of judgment, that that may be a check on our tongues; and let us consider,

How particular the account will be of tongue-sins in that day: even for every idle word, or discourse, that men speak, they shall give account. 1. God notices every word we say, even that which we ourselves do not notice. See Ps. 139: 4. *Not a word in my tongue but Thou knowest it*: 2. Vain, idle, impertinent talk is displeasing to God, being the same with that

should be more our care to be good, than to seem good.

The heart is the *fountain*; the words, the streams; v. 34. *Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*. A wicked heart is said to send forth wickedness, as a *fountain casts forth her waters*, Jer. 6: 7. A troubled fountain, and a corrupt spring, must needs send forth muddy and unpleasant streams, Prov. 25: 26. Evil words are the natural, genuine product of an evil heart. Nothing but the salt of grace will heal the waters, season the speech and purify the corrupt communication. This they wanted, they were evil; and how can ye, being evil, speak good things? They were a generation of vipers; John Baptist had called them so, (ch. 3: 7,) and they were all still the same.

Now, what could be expected from a generation of vipers, but that which is poisonous and malignant? Can the viper be otherwise than venomous? Note, Bad things may be expected from bad people, as said the proverb of the ancients, *Wickedness proceedeth from the wicked*, 1 Sam. 24. 13. *The vile person will speak villany*, Isa. 32: 6. Those who are themselves evil, have neither skill nor will to speak good. Christ would have his disciples know what sort of men they were to live among, that they might know what to look for. As Ezekiel among scorpions, (Ezek. 2: 6,) they must not think it strange if they be stung and bitten. The heart is the *treasury*, the words are the things brought out of it, v. 36; and hence men's characters may be drawn, and judged of.

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foolish talking and jesting which is forbidden, Eph. 5: 4. that sin which is seldom wanting in the multitude of words; Job 15: 3. 3. We must shortly account for these idle words; they will be produced in evidence against us, to prove us unprofitable servants, that have not improved the faculties of reason and speech, which are part of the talents we are intrusted with. If we repent not of our idle words, and our account for them be not balanced by the blood of Christ, we are undone.

How strict the judgment will be on that account; v. 37: a common rule in men's judgments, here applied to God's. Note, The constant tenor of our discourse, according as it is gracious, or not, will be an evidence for or against us, at the great day. Those who seemed to be religious, but bridled not their tongue, will then be found to have put a cheat on themselves, Jam. 1: 26. Some think Christ here refers to that of Eliphaz, (Job 15: 6.) *Thine own mouth condemns thee, and not I*; or, rather to that of Solomon, (Prov. 18: 21.) *Death and life are in the power of the tongue*.

V. 38—45. The Pharisees with whom Christ here discourses, were probably not the same that cavilled at Him, (v. 24,) and would not credit the signs He gave; but another set, who saw there was no reason to discredit them, but would not admit the evidence of them, unless He would give them such further proof as they should demand. Here is,

I. Their address to Him, v. 38. They compliment Him with the title of *Master*, pretending respect, when they intend abuse: all are not indeed Christ's servants, who call Him *Master*. Their request is, *We would see a sign from Thee*. It was highly reasonable they should see a sign, and He by miracles prove his divine mission: see Exod. 4: 8, 9. He came to take down a model of religion that was set up by miracles, and therefore it was requisite He should produce the same credentials; but it was highly unreasonable to demand a sign now, when He had given so many signs already, proving Him *sent of God*. Note, It is natural to proud men to prescribe to God, and then to make that an excuse for insubmission to Him; but a man's offence will never be his justification.

II. His answer to this address, this insolent demand.

He condemns the demand, as that of an *evil and adulterous generation*, v. 39. He fastens the charge, on not only the scribes and Pharisees, but on the whole nation of the Jews; they were all like their leaders, a seed of evil doers;

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 31—37. In various ways, men sin against the truth, and even their own consciences; till, by resisting the Holy Ghost, they provoke God to give them up to final obduracy and impenitence.—Let all then be afraid of every approach to this fatal conduct: yet, let no trembling penitent yield to Satan's suggestions, to suppose that the sinful words and works of the days of his ignorance, which he now recollects with shame and contrition, or any of his sins when first brought under convictions, were of this malignant nature. 'All manner of sin and blasphemy' shall certainly be forgiven to the true believer; and 'him that cometh to Christ, He will in no wise cast out.' Indeed we might any of us have been left under condemnation, and the power of sin; but if 'God hath given us repentance, to the acknowledging of his truth,' we are evidently escaped 'from this snare of the devil,' and should not yield to discouraging fears. It is vain, however, for men to

think that the tree is made good, when the fruit is evil: we should therefore seek to have our hearts cleansed by divine grace, and stored with divine truth and holy affections; that whilst numbers are injuring others, with the evil things which they speak, we may bring forth edifying discourse. We should consider this as a matter of great importance; for our Judge has declared, that men shall give an account of every idle word at the last day. If there were nothing else to be, at that awful season, produced against us, this alone would suffice to leave us without excuse. We ought, then, to examine ourselves, and seek forgiveness for the past; and keep a watch over ourselves, that we may for the future speak such words, and such alone, as consist with the Christian character, are suited to 'minister grace unto the hearers,' and may be produced as proofs of our faith and love, in the day of judgment. SCOTT.

(37.) *By thy words thou shalt be justified.* 'That is, the whole tenor of thy conversation shall be an evidence for or against thee, in the great day. How many are there who count words for nothing, and yet eternity often depends on them! Lord, put a watch before the door of my lips! is a prayer proper for all men.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 38

A sign—perhaps some such tremendous displays of the Divine glory, as their fathers had seen on mount Sinai; or somewhat like that which took place when, at the word of Joshua, 'the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.' Josh. 10: 12—14.

SCOTT.

So also Doctrinae and Rosam. Her. 'The words of Luke expressly refer it to this sense, and Matthew, in another relation of this kind, (Matt. 16: 1) expressly tells us they demanded a sign from heaven. [Compare also Mark 8: 11.] It is not therefore to be understood of a sign only of deliverance from the Roman yoke, or of the erection of [192]

the Messiah's temporal kingdom, as some have supposed; but rather of some miracle performed in the visible heavens, where they seem to have thought, impostors had less power than on earth.—And they might probably conclude their proposal reasonable, as Moses, (Exod. 9: 22—24.) Joshua, (Josh. 10: 12) Samuel, (1 Sam. 7: 9, 10.) and Elijah, (1 Kings 17: 36—39 and 2 Kings 1: 10.) had given such signs. (Comp. Isa. 7: 11. and 38: 8.)

Doctr. 'They probably meant the sign of the Messiah, in the clouds, with holy angels and ensigns of celestial grandeur. Such an illustrious appearance they considered essential to their promised Deliverer, and called it "the sign of the Son of man," "the sign of his coming." ch. 24: 30. Our Lord ever refused them this, as inconsistent with the humble and lowly character, in which, for the wisest reasons, God designed, and the prophets foretold, that the Redeemer should appear

Ep. PORTER

39 But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall ^{no} sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas.

40 For ^{as} Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, ^{so} shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with ^{this} generation, and shall condemn it: ^{because} they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here!

42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here!

z Is. 57:8. Mark 8:38. Jam. 4:4.
a Mt. 1:17.
b Mt. 12:29. 17:23. 27:40, 63, 64. John 2:19.
c Ps. 63:9. Job. 2:2-3.
d Luke 11:32.
e Mt. 12:41. Jer. 31:1. Ez. 16:51.
f Mt. 12:41. Rom. 1:27. Heb. 11:7.
g Mt. 12:41. 17:23. 23:35.
h Mt. 12:41.
i Mt. 12:41. 17:23. 23:35.
j Mt. 12:41. 17:23. 23:35.
k Mt. 12:41. 17:23. 23:35.
l Mt. 12:41. 17:23. 23:35.
m Mt. 12:41. 17:23. 23:35.
n Mt. 12:41. 17:23. 23:35.

an evil generation indeed, that not only hardened themselves against conviction, but set themselves to abuse Him, and put contempt on his miracles. They were an *adulterous generation*, as an adulterous brood; ^{so} miserably degenerated from the faith and obedience of their ancestors, that Abraham and Israel acknowledged them not. See Isa. 57: 3. Or, as an adulterous wife; departed from that God, to whom by covenant they had been espoused: they were not guilty of idolatry, as they had been before the captivity, but they were of infidelity, and all iniquity; they did not look after gods of their own making, but they did for signs of their own devising.

He refuses to give them any other sign than that already given, of the prophet Jonas. Note, Though Christ is always ready to hear and answer holy desires and prayers, yet He will not gratify corrupt lusts and humors. Those who ask amiss, ask, and have not. Signs were granted to those who desired them for the confirmation of their faith, as to Abraham, and Gideon; but denied to those who demanded them for the excuse of their unbelief.

Justly might Christ have said, They shall never see another miracle: but see his wonderful goodness; they shall have the same signs still repeated, and one sign of a different kind from all these they shall have, and that is, the resurrection of Christ from the dead by his own power, called here the sign of the prophet Jonas; this was yet reserved for their conviction, and was intended to be the great proof of Christ's being the Messiah; for, by that He was declared to be the Son of God with power, Rom. 1: 4. That was such a sign as surpassed all the rest. If they will not believe the former signs, they will this; (Exod. 4: 9.) and if this will not convince them, nothing will. And yet the unbelief of the Jews found out an evasion, by saying, His disciples came and stole Him away; for none ^{of} ^{us} so incurably blind as those, who are resolved they will not see.

Now this sign of the prophet Jonas He further explains here; v. 40. 1. The grave was to Christ as the belly of the fish to Jonah; thither He was thrown, as a ransom for lives ready to be lost in a storm; there He lay, as in the belly of hell, (Jonah 2: 2.) and seemed to be cast out of God's sight. 2. He continued in the grave just as long as Jonah continued in the fish's belly, three days and three nights; not three whole days and nights: it is probable, Jonah did not lie so long in the whale's belly, but part of three natural days; He was buried in the afternoon of the sixth day of the week, and rose again in the morning of the first day;

it is a manner of speech very usual; see 1 Kings 20: 29. Esth. 4: 16. 5: 1. Luke 2: 21. 3. As Jonah in the whale's belly comforted himself with an assurance that yet he should look again *board God's holy temple*, (Jonah 2: 4.) so Christ, when He lay in the grave, is expressly said to rest in hope, as one assured that He should not see corruption, Acts 2: 26, 27. 4. As Jonah on the third day was discharged from his prison, and came to the land of the living again, from the congregation of the dead, (for dead things are said to be formed from under the water, Job 26: 5.) so Christ on the third day should return to life, and rise out of his grave, to send abroad his Gospel to the Gentiles.

He takes this occasion to represent the sad character and condition of the generation in which He lived; and He gives it as it would stand in the day of judgment. Persons and things now appear under false colors; characters and conditions are here changeable. Therefore we would make a right estimate, we must take our measures from the last judgment; things are really, what they are eternally.

Now Christ represents the people of the Jews,

1. As a generation that would be condemned by the men of Nineveh, v. 41. Christ's resurrection will be the sign of the prophet Jonas to them: but it will not have so happy an effect on them, as that of Jonas had on the Ninevites, for they were by it brought to such a repentance as prevented their ruin; but the Jews will be hardened in an unbelief that shall hasten their ruin; and, in the day of judgment, the repentance of the Ninevites will be mentioned as an aggravation of the sin, and consequently the condemnation, of those to whom Christ preached now, and of those to whom Christ is preached now; for this reason, because Christ is greater than Jonah. Jonah was but a man, subject to like sinful passions, as we are; but Christ is the Son of God. Jonah was a stranger in Nineveh, but Christ came to his own. Jonah preached but one short sermon, and that with no great solemnity, but as he passed along the streets: Christ renews his calls, and He said; and taught in the synagogues. Jonah preached nothing but wrath; but Christ, beside warning us of our danger, has showed wherein we must repent, and assured us of acceptance on our repentance. Jonah wrought no miracle to confirm his doctrine, showed no good-will to the Ninevites; but Christ wrought abundance of miracles; and all miracles of mercy: yet the Ninevites repented at the preaching of Jonas, but the Jews were not wrought upon by Christ's preaching. Note, The goodness of some, who

Verse 39.

[Generation.] 'The original word should be translated "race of people," here and in most other places in the gospels; for our Lord, in general, uses it to point out this Jewish people. This translation is a key to understand some very obscure passages in the evangelists. There is the utmost proof from their own writings, that in the time of our Lord, they were most literally an adulterous race of people, for, at this very time, he, Johanan ben Zachai abrogated the trial by the bitter waters of jealousy, because so many were found to be thus criminal. [See on John 8: 3, 9.]

[Sign of Jonas.] 'A miracle, answering to that which our Lord did in the person of Jonas. Thus He signified his own death, burial, and resurrection. He said, in effect, "You ask a sign from heaven, but the only sign I shall vouchsafe you is a sign from the earth. Instead of descending from above, as you expect, in visible pomp and triumph, shall rise with still greater triumph from the grave, after being numbered three days with the dead."

'As the prophetic office of Jonas was confirmed to the Ninevites, by his miracle, so deliverance on the third day from the belly of the fish; so the divine authority of Christ should be confirmed to the Jews by his resurrection on the third day.'

Verse 40.

'Three days and three nights.' It is a received rule among the Jews, that a part of a day is put for the whole; so that whatsoever is done in any part of the day, is properly said to be done that day. ... 1 Kings 20: 29, "... When eight days were accomplished for the circumcision of the child, &c." ... yet the day of his birth and of his circumcision were two of those eight days. ... Since then our Savior was in the grave, all Friday night and Saturday; seeing He was in the grave all Saturday night, and part of the morning of the day following, ... He may, according to the Hebrew computation, be truly said to have been "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

'Three days and three nights.' The very same quantity of time, which is here termed "three days, and three nights, and which in reality was but one entire day, a part of two others, and two whole nights."

termed three days and three nights in the book of Esther: God neither eat nor drink THREE DAYS, NIGHT OF DAY, &c. chap. 4: 16. Afterwards it follows, chap. 5: 1. On the third day, Esther stood in the inner court of the king's house. This, as Lightfoot amply shows, was very common among the Jewish writers. Dr A. CLARKE

[Whale.] The original word here "denotes any large fish;" and that a fish of the shark kind, and not a whale, is here meant, Barchart has abundantly proved. GREENFIELD; with whom accord Doddridge, Campbell, Rosenmüller, Glark, and Harris. In vindication of its being a whale, Hume adduces the testimony of Ep. Jebb in the natural history of the whale, and concludes that "the only objection that can be offered to Dr. Hume's opinion is, that there is no authentic instance on record of whales being found in the Mediterranean sea." It is added by Dr. A. Clarke, however, "the throat of a whale is capable of admitting little more than the arm of an ordinary man; but of the shark species many have swallowed a man whole." See further on Jonah.

[Heart of the earth.] 'The sepulchre. An Hebraism; as may be seen in Ps. 46: 3. Deut. 4: 11.'

[Heart.] 'As in Jonah 2: 3. the original is, in the heart of the sea, and Deut. 4: 11. the heart of heaven; so here, in the heart means simply within, in.'

Verse 41, 42.

There is vast dignity and propriety in this declaration of Christ concerning Himself, when we consider Him as the incarnate Son of God; but on the supposition that He was a mere man, the words must impress the mind in a very different manner. (Marg. Ref.) "God," says Whitchy, 'having promised to Solomon such wisdom, that, as there was none like him before, ... so should there arise none like unto him; (1 Kings 3: 12.) He that was greater in wisdom than Solomon, must be more than a man.'

(1.) Rise in judgment. 'An allusion to the custom among the Jews and Romans for the witnesses to rise from their seats when they accused criminals, or gave evidence against them.'

'Etc.' observes Doddridge, "it was not properly on the testimony of the Ninevites that these sinners would be condemned. The plain

43 ¶ When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

46 ¶ While he yet talked to the people,

n Luke 11:24. Acts 8:13.
o Job 17: 2, 22. 1 Pet. 5:8.
p Ps. 63:1. Isa. 35:7-8. 41:18. Ez. 47:8-12. Am. 8:11-13.
q 8:29. Mark 5:7-13. Luke 8:28-32.
r 29. Luke 11:21-22. John 13:27. Eph. 2:2. 1 John 4:4.
s 13:21-22. Ps. 81:11-12. Hos. 7:6. John 12:8. 13:2. Acts 5:1-3. 8:18-23. 1 Cor. 11:19. 2 Thes. 2:9-12. 1 Tim. 6:4-5, 9, 10. 1 John 2:19. 4:5. Rev. 17:3, 4, 8, 9.
t 24. Mark 5:9. 16:9. Eph. 6:12. u 23:15.
v Luke 11:26. Heb. 6:4-8. 10:26-31, 39. 2 Pet. 2:14-22. 1 John 5:16, 17. 10:13-14.
w 23:38-44. 23:39-42. 24:34. Luke 11:49-51. 19:41-44. John 15:22-24. Rom. 11:14-16. 1 Thes. 2:15, 16.
x Mark 3:21, 31. Luke 8:10.

have less helps and advantages for their souls, will aggravate the badness of those who have much greater. Those who by the twilight discover the things that belong to their peace, will shame those who grope at noon-day.

2. As a generation that would be condemned by the queen of the south, the queen of Sheba, v. 42. She had no invitation to come to Solomon; but we are invited to come to Christ. Solomon was but a wise man, but Christ is Wisdom itself, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom. She had many difficulties to break through; she was a woman, the journey long and perilous; a queen, and what would become of her own country in her absence? We have no such cares to hinder us. She could not be sure that it would be worth her while to go so far on this errand: fame uses to flatter men, but we come not to Christ on such uncertainties. She came from the uttermost parts of the earth, but we have Christ among us, and his word high us: Behold He stands at the door, and knocks. It should seem, the wisdom she came for, was only philosophy and politics; but the wisdom that is to be had with Christ, is wisdom to salvation. Solomon could not give her wisdom: but Christ will give wisdom to those who come to Him; nay, He will Himself be made of God to them. Wisdom: so that, on all these accounts, if we do not hear the wisdom of Christ, the forwardness of the queen of Sheba to come and hear the wisdom of Solomon, will rise up in judgment against us and condemn us; for Jesus Christ is greater than Solomon.

3. As a generation that were resolved to continue under the power of Satan, notwithstanding all the methods that were used to dispossess him. They are compared to one out of whom the devil, here called the unclean spirit, is gone, but returns with double force, v. 43-56. Now,

The parable represents his possessing men's bodies: Christ having lately cast out a devil, and they having said, He had a devil, gave occasion to show how much they were under the power of Satan; but Christ's ejectment of him, was final, and such as barred a re-entry: we find Him charging the evil spirit to go out, and enter no more, Mark 9:25. Probably the devil was wont sometimes thus to sport with those

he had possession of; hence the lucid intervals of those in that condition were commonly followed with the more violent fits. When the devil is gone out, he is uneasy, for he sleeps not except he have done mischief; (Prov. 4:16.) he walks in dry places, like one that is very melancholy; he seeks rest, but finds none, till he returns again. When Christ cast the legion out of the man, they begged leave to enter into the swine, where they went not being in dry places, but into the lake presently.

The application of the parable makes it to represent the case of the body of the Jewish church and nation: So shall it be with this wicked generation. The devil, who, by the labors of Christ and his disciples, had been cast out of many of the Jews, sought for rest among the heathen, from whose persons and temples the Christians would everywhere expel him: so Whithy? or finding no where in the heathen world such desirable habitations, as here in the heart of the Jews; so Hammond: he shall therefore enter again into them; and then he shall take a durable possession here, and the state of this people is likely to be more desperately damnable, (so Hammond) than it was before Christ came among them, or would have been if Satan had never been cast out.

The body of that nation is here represented, First, As apostate. After the captivity in Babylon, they began to reform; but they soon corrupted themselves again: though they never relapsed into idolatry, they fell into all manner of impiety and profaneness, and added to all the rest of their wickedness a wilful contempt of Christ and his Gospel. Secondly, As marked for ruin. A new commission was passing the seals against that hypocritical nation, (like that, Isa. 10:6,) and their destruction by the Romans was likely to be greater than any other: then it was that wrath came on them to the uttermost, 1 Thess. 2:15, 16. Let this be a warning to all nations and churches, to take heed of leaving their first love, and returning to that wickedness which they seem to have forsaken: for the last state of that man will be worse than the first.

V. 46-50. Many excellent, useful sayings came from the mouth of our Lord Jesus on particular occasions; even his digressions were instructive, as well as his set discourses: as here,

meaning is, that their case would illustrate the guilt of those who rejected Christ: so that here those are said to condemn others who furnish matter for their condemnation.

(Greater.) 'Something greater. There is a delicacy in the use made of the neuter gender in these verses, which a translator ought not to overlook. Our Lord chooses, on this occasion, rather to insinuate, than affirm the dignity of his character; and to afford matter of reflection to the attentive among his disciples, without exposing Himself to the contradiction of declared enemies.'

Verses 43-45.

This parable is a prophecy of the rejection of the Jews, and their awful state of enmity to the Gospel to this day. But it is also applicable to the case of individuals, who hear the word of God, are convinced of its truth, and in part reformed, but not truly converted: the unclean spirit indeed retires, but Christ is not welcomed to dwell in the heart by faith. The evil spirit hankers after his old abode, and waits his opportunity of returning: on examination, he finds his habitation empty, swept from convictions and serious impressions; and garnished or ready furnished, for the reception and entertainment of unclean spirits, by a preparation of heart to comply with their suggestions. Thus, instead of one evil spirit, seven take up their abode in the man, and his last state becomes worse than the first: he becomes, perhaps, a more decent, plausible, or presumptuous enemy of God; but seven fold more callous and inveterate than before—This was doubtless the case with great numbers, who had heard John the Baptist, Jesus, and the apostles, with attention, but who afterwards relapsed into wickedness: and it is the case of many, in all places where the Gospel is faithfully preached. (Marg. Ref.—Note 2. Pet. 2:21-23.)

(43.) The unclean spirit. 'Had there been no reality in demoniacal possessions, [as some represent,] our Lord would scarcely have appealed to a case of this kind here, to point out the real state of the Jewish people, and their approaching desolation. Had this been only a vulgar error, of the nonsense of which the learned scribes and wise Pharisees must have been convinced, the case, not being in point because not true, must have been treated with contempt by the very people for whose conviction it was designed.'

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Through dry places, seeking rest. 'Here is a plain reference to the common notion of evil demons had their haunts in deserts and desolate places. (Compare Isa. 13: 21. and Rev. 18: 2.) Some may think that a desire of doing mischief might rather have prompted the evil spirit... to continue in some city, or other place of public resort: but as he may be supposed... to apprehend that, after being driven out, he should for a while be under some extraordinary restraint, it seems... very natural and beautiful circumstance thus to represent this malignant being as impatient, of the sight of mankind, and rather choos-

ing to seek his rest in the prospect of a sandy desert, than in the view of any more agreeable scene, which might renew his anguish, by presenting to him the memorials of Divine goodness to the human race.'

DOODRIDGE.

Seeking rest. 'Or, refreshment. Strange! a fallen, corrupt spirit can have no rest but in the polluted human heart: the corruption of the one is suited to the pollution of the other, and thus like cleaves to like.'—In the Orphic demonology, evil spirits were divided into five classes, viz: celestial, aerial, aquatic, terrestrial, and subterranean demons. The Platonists, the followers of Zoroaster, and the primitive Jews, made nearly the same distinctions.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

To consider this parable as a great moral lesson of general and practical utility, it evinces the inefficacy and danger of irresolute purposes of amendment, and partial repentance, when men are enslaved to some particular sin. Not uncommonly are sinners conscious of guilt, and yet fail to return decidedly to the path of duty. In a short interval of contrition, a vulnerable conscience and a divided heart make them wretched. Their gratification in vice is lost, and they have no relish for virtue. Before peace can be restored to the soul, the victim of sinful passions feels an intolerable vacancy of enjoyment, making life a burden. He returns therefore to his former courses, and welcomes back his darling sins. Then it is usual for persons, relapsing desperately, not only to aggravate former transgressions, but to add new. He, who was at first a drunkard, becomes also a liar, a blasphemer, an adulterer, perhaps, and thief. Such is the natural progress of evil, making the last state worse than the first.'

HEWLETT.

(44.) Empty, swept, and garnished. 'Our Lord hereby strongly suggests, that indulging sinful habits is like sweeping and furnishing the house, to invite the abode of Satan there; in the same manner: as purity, devotion, and love are elsewhere represented as consecrating the soul for a temple to the Holy-Ghost.'

DOODRIDGE.

(45.) 'According to Josephus, the character of the Jews just before their final destruction by the Romans, was the vilest that can be conceived; and they pressed on to their own ruin, as if they had been possessed by legions of devils, and wrought up to the last degree of madness.'

Id.

Seven. 'One of the numbers used,' observes Hewlett, 'in an indefinite sense for "many" or "several." It is often imitated, with the Jews, something perfect, completed, filled up. It is the proper import of the Hebrew word. This meaning may refer to the completion of God's creative design, when He 'rested' on the seventh day. Seven demons—as many as could occupy his soul, filling it with pride, anger, self-will, lust, &c. and torturing the body with diseases.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

behold, *his* mother and *his* brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.

47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, *Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?*

49 And he stretched forth his hand towards *his* disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!

50 For whosoever shall *do* the will of my Father *which is in heaven*, *the same is* my brother, *and sister, and mother.*

a 13:55. Mark 6:3. John 2:12. 7:3. 5:10. Acts 1:14. 1 Cor. 9:5. Gal. 1:19.
b 10:37. Deut. 33:9. Mark 3:35. 33. Luke 2:49, 52. John 2:13, 4. 2 Cor. 10:19.
c 28:7. Mark 3:34. John 17:8, 9, 20, 21:17-20.
d 11:27, 28. Mark 6:35. Luke 8:21. 11:27, 28. John 6:29, 40. 16:14. Acts 3:22, 23. 16:30, 31. 17:30. 20: 20. Gal 5:6. 6:15. Heb. 5:9. Jam. 1:21, 22. 1 Pet. 4:2. 1 John 2:17. 3:23, 24. Rev. 22:14.
e 25:40, 45. 28:10. Ps. 22:22. John 20:17. Rom. 8:29. Heb. 2:11-17. 1 Cor. 15:10, 12. 5:14. 1 Cor. 9:5. 2 Cor. 11:2. Eph. 5:25-27.
f John 19:26, 27. 1 Tim. 5:2.

learned to command her Son, as the iniquity and idolatry of the church of Rome has since pretended to teach her: nor was she so free from fault and folly as they would make her. It was Christ's prerogative, and not his mother's, to do every thing wisely, and well, and in its season. Christ once said to his mother, *How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?* And it was then said, she laid up that saying in her heart; (Luke 2:49.) but if she had remembered it now, she would not have given him this interruption when He was about his Father's business. Note, There is many a good truth that we thought well laid up, when we heard it, which yet is out of the way, when we have occasion to use it.

II. How He regarded this interruption, v. 48-50. He would not hearken to it; v. 48. Not that natural affection is to be put off, or that, under pretence of religion, we may be disrespectful to

Observe, I. How Christ was interrupted in his preaching, p. 46, 47. It is needless to inquire which of his brethren they were that came along with his mother: perhaps they were those *who did not believe in Him*; (John 7:5.) or what their business was; perhaps it was only designed to oblige Him to break off, for fear He should fatigue Himself, or to caution Him to take heed of giving offence by his discourse to the Pharisees, and of involving Himself in a difficulty, as if they could teach Him wisdom.

He was as yet talking to the people. Note, Christ's preaching was talking; plain, easy, and familiar. What He had delivered had been cavilled at, and yet He went on. Note, The opposition we meet in our work, must not drive us from it. He left off talking with the Pharisees, for He saw He could do them no good; but continued to talk to the common people, who, not having such a conceit of their knowledge as the Pharisees had, were willing to learn.

His mother and brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him. They had the advantage of his daily converse in private, and therefore were less mindful to attend on his public preaching. Frequently those who are nearest to the means of grace are most negligent. Familiarity and easiness of access breed some degree of contempt. We are apt to neglect that to-day, which we think we may have any day, forgetting that it is only the present time we can be sure of. There is too much truth in that common proverb, 'The nearer the church, the further from God'; pity it should be so.

They not only would not hear Him themselves, but interrupted others that heard Him gladly. We often meet with hindrances and obstructions in our work, by our friends that are about us, and are taken off by civil respects from our spiritual concerns. Those who really wish well to us and our work, may sometimes, by their indiscretion, prove impediments to us in our duty. The mother of our Lord desired to speak with Him; it seems she had not then

parents, or unkind to other relations; but *every thing is beautiful in its season*, and the *best duty* must stand by, while the greater is done. When our regard to our relations comes in competition with the service of God, and the improving of an opportunity to do good, we must say to our father, *I have not seen him*, as Levi did, Deut. 33:9. The nearest relations must be comparatively hated, that is, we must love them less than Christ, (Luke 14:26.) and our duty to God must have the preference. Of this Christ has here given us an example. And we must not take it ill of our friends, nor put it to the score of their wickedness, if they prefer the pleasing of God to the pleasing of us; but we must readily forgive those neglects, which may be easily imputed to a pious zeal for God's glory and others' good. Nay, We must deny ourselves and our own satisfaction, rather than do that which may any way divert our friends from, or distract them in, their duty to God.

He took that occasion to prefer his disciples, who were his spiritual kindred, to his natural relations as such. He would rather be profiting his disciples, than pleasing his relations. Observe.

1. The description of Christ's disciples. They are such as *do the will of his Father*; not only hear it, and know it, and talk of it, but do it, for doing the will of God is the best preparative for discipleship, (John 7:17.) and the best proof of it; (ch. 7:21.) that denominates us his disciples indeed. Christ does not say, 'Whosoever shall do my will,' for He came not to seek or do his own will distinct from his Father's; his will and his Father's are the same; but He refers us to his Father's will, because now, in his present state and work, He referred Himself to it, John 6:38.

2. The dignity of Christ's disciples: *The same is my brother and sister, and mother.* His disciples that had left all to follow Him, and embraced his doctrine, were dearer to Him than any that were akin to Him according to the flesh. They had preferred Christ before relations; they left their father, (ch. 4:22 10:37.) and now, to make them amends, and to show that there was no love lost, He preferred them to his relations. Did not they hereby receive, in point of honor, an hundred fold? ch. 19:29. It was very endearing and encouraging for Christ to say, *Behold my mother and my brethren*; yet it was not their privilege alone; *this honor have all the saints.* Note, All obedient believers are near akin to Jesus Christ. They wear his name, bear his image, have his nature, are of his family. He loves them, converses freely with them as his relations, bids them welcome to his table, takes

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 33-50. Many from the remotest regions of the earth, who, by some faint report of the Gospel, have been led to inquire after Christ and his salvation, will rise up in judgment against unbelievers in this age and nation, and condemn them. — Let none rely on convictions, or external reformation; for every heart, indeed, is the residence of unclean spirits; those excepted, which are become the temple of the Holy Spirit, by faith in Jesus Christ. These enemies will, therefore, watch their opportunities, when convictions and terrors are vanished, and inclinations after former indulgences revive: and, finding no effectual opposition, will re-enter, and render the man more entirely their slave. Such characters cannot but be noticed, with mingled grief and horror, by those who carefully observe the state of congregations, where the Gospel is faithfully dispensed.—What encouragement does our Redeemer give us to follow Him unwearily, to attend on his instruction, to trust in his mercy, and, by obeying Him, to do the will of God our Father! Earthly relatives often fail of the duties incumbent

on them: but he is such a Relation and Friend as men would have been, had sin never entered; indeed far more desirable. Whatever there is peculiar in the affection or regard of the different endeared relations of life, all centres in the love of Christ to his true disciples; yea, to the poorest, weakest, and most sinful of them. Whatever credit, comfort, or advantage could be derived from a loving brother, father, husband, or son, who was advanced to the highest state of earthly dignity and authority; this, and far more, may we confidently expect from Christ, in life, death, judgment, and to eternity. Let us then cease from men, and cleave to Him; let us look upon every Christian, even in the lowest condition of life, as the beloved brother or sister, or honored mother, of the Lord of glory; and let us love, respect, and be kind to them for his sake, and after his example, and count this our privilege and delight: remembering his words, 'Forasmuch as ye did it to the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto Me.' (Notes, 25: 34-46. P. O. 31-46.)

Scott.

Verses 46-50.

It appears from the other evangelists, that the earnestness and assiduity of Jesus, in teaching the people, gave disquietude to near relations. (perhaps the children of Joseph by a former wife, or his cousins.) They wanted Him to desist, and seem to have engaged Mary to concur in the design to prevent Him from proceeding. (Notes, 7: 21-23. John 19: 25-27.)

Brethren, &c. 'This word in the Hebrew idiom means also, as is well known, cousins, nephews, and other near relations.'

'Abramam called Lot his brother, Gen 13: 8. Laban called Jacob his brother, though only his cousin.'

CAMPBELL. Dr. A. CLARKE. Gen 13: 8. Laban called Jacob BROTHER.

(48.) *Who is my mother?* 'To suppose that our Lord here intends to put any slight on his mother, would be very absurd: He only took the opportunity of expressing his affection to his obedient disciples in a peculiarly endearing manner.'

His relatives came to seize upon Him, for they thought He was distracted. See Mark 3: 21. Hence this seeming disregard of them.

(50.) *Sister, &c.* 'It may be there were present some of his kinswomen also, though they are not mentioned, or else He adds it for the comfort of those religious women, that followed Him, and ministered to Him.' Luke 8: 2 3.

Dr. A. CLARKE. ASSEMB. ANN

CHAP. XIII.

The parable of the sower, 1-9. The reason why Jesus taught by parables 10-17. The parable explained, 18-23. The parable of the tares, 24-30; of the grain of mustard-seed, 31, 32; of the leaven, 33. The sower, 34; to fill in Christ a teaching by parables, 34, 35. That of the tares explained, 36-43. The parable of the hid treasure, 44; of the pearl of great price, 45, 46; of the net cast into the sea, 47-50, and of the householder, 51, 52. Christ's countrymen are offended in Him; his enemies hate it, and subsequent conduct, 53-58.

THE same day went Jesus out of the house, and ^asat by the sea-side.

2 And ^bgreat multitudes were gathered together unto him, ^cso that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

^a Mark 2:13. 4:1.
^b 4:25. 15:30. Gen. 49:10. Luke 8: 4-8.
^c Mark 4:1. Luke 5:3.

To whom he preached; great multitudes. We do not find that any of the scribes or Pharisees were present. They were willing to hear Him when He preached in the synagogue, (ch. 12: 9, 14.) but thought it below them to hear a sermon by the sea-side, though Christ Himself was the Preacher. Note, Sometimes there is most of the power of religion where there is less of its pomp: *The poor receive the gospel*. When Christ went to the sea-side, multitudes were presently gathered together to Him. Where the king is, there is the court; where Christ is, there is the church, though it be by the sea-side. Note, Those who would get good by the Word, must be willing to follow it in all its removes; when the ark shifts, shift after it. The Pharisees had been laboring, by base calumnies and suggestions, to drive the people from following Christ, but they still flocked after Him as much as ever. Note, Christ will be glorified, in spite of all opposition; He will be followed.

Where he preached. His meeting-place was the sea-side. It was pity but such a preacher should have had the most spacious, sumptuous, and convenient place to preach in, that could be devised, like one of the Roman theatres; but He was now in his state of humiliation, and in this, as in other things, denied himself the honors due to Him: as He had not a house of his own to live in, so He had no chapel of his own. By this He teaches us in the external circumstances of worship not to covet that which is stately, but to make the best of the conveniences God in his providence allots to us. When Christ was born, He was crowded into the stable, and now to the sea-side, where all persons might come to Him with freedom. He that was Truth itself sought no corners, as the pagan mysteries did. *Wisdom cries without*, Prov. 1: 20. John 13: 20.

His pulpit was a ship; not like Ezra's pulpit, made for the purpose, (Neh. 8: 4.) but converted to this use for want of a better. No place amiss for such a Preacher, whose presence dignified and consecrated any place: let not those who preach Christ be ashamed, though they have mean and inconvenient places to preach in. Some observe, that the people stand on dry ground while the Preacher is on the water in more hazard. Ministers are most exposed to trouble. Here was a true rostrum, a ship-pulpit.

What and how he preached. 1. He spake many things; many more, it is likely, than are here recorded, but all excellent and necessary: things that belong to our peace; things pertaining to the kingdom of heaven; not trifles, but things of everlasting consequence. It concerns

care of them, provides for them, sees that they want nothing that is fit for them; when He died, He left them rich legacies, and now He is in heaven. He keeps a correspondence with them; He will have them all with Him at last, and in nothing fail to do the kinsman's part, (Ruth 3: 13.) nor ever be ashamed of his poor relations, but confess them before men, before the angels, and before his Father.

CHAP. XIII. v. 1-23. We have here Christ's preaching again, and may observe,

When He preached: it was the same day He preached the sermon in the foregoing chapter. Note, Christ was for preaching both parts of the day, and has by his example recommended that practice to his church; we must in the morning sow our seed, and in the evening not withhold our hand, Eccl. 11: 6. An afternoon sermon well heard, so far from driving out the morning sermon, will rather clench it, and fasten the nail in a sure place. Though Christ had been in the morning opposed by his enemies, and interrupted by his friends, yet He went on with his work; and in the latter part of the day, we do not find that he met with such discouragements. Those who with courage and zeal break through difficulties in God's service, will perhaps find them not so apt to recur as they fear. Resist them, and they will flee.

us to give more earnest need, when Christ has so many things to say to us, that we miss not any of them. 2. What He spake was in parables: a parable sometimes signifies any wise, weighty saying; but in the gospels generally, a continued similitude or comparison, by which spiritual and heavenly things are described in language borrowed from the things of this life.

It was a way of teaching used very much, not only by the Jewish rabbins, but by the Arabians, and other wise men of the east; a very profitable way, and the more so for its being pleasant. Our Savior used it much, and in it descended to the capacities of people. God he long used similitudes by his servants the prophets, (Hos. 12: 10.) and to little purpose; now He uses similitudes by his Son; surely they will reverence Him who speaks from heaven, and of heavenly things, and yet clothes them with expressions borrowed from things earthly. See John 3: 12. So descending in a cloud. Now,

I. We have here the general reason why Christ taught in parables. The disciples were a little surprised at it, for hitherto He had not much used it, and therefore they ask, *Why speakest Thou to them in parables?* They were truly desirous that the people might hear with understanding. They do not say, *Why speakest Thou to us?* (they knew how to get the parables explained,) but to *them*. Note, We ought to be concerned for the edification of others, as well as for our own, by the Word preached; and if ourselves be strong, yet to bear the infirmities of the weak.

To this question Christ answers, v. 11-17; where He tells them that He preached by parables, because thereby the things of God were made more plain and easy to them who were willing to be taught, and at the same time more difficult and obscure to those who were willingly ignorant; and thus the Gospel would be a savor of life to some, and of death to others. The same light directs the eyes of some, but dazzles others. Now,

This reason is laid down, v. 11. That is, 1. You know already something of these mysteries, and need not in this familiar way to be instructed; but the people are ignorant, and need to be taught by plain similitudes: for though they have eyes, they know not how to use them; so some. Or 2. The disciples were well inclined to the knowledge of gospel-mysteries, would search into the parables, and by them be led to a more intimate acquaintance with those mysteries; but the carnal hearers would be never the wiser, and so would justly suffer for their remissness. Note, There are mysteries in the kingdom of heaven, and without controversy, *great is the mystery of godliness*: Christ's incarnation, satisfaction, intercession, our justification and sanctification by union with Christ, and indeed the whole work of redemption, from first to last, are mysteries, could never have been discovered but by divine revelation, (1 Cor. 15: 51.) were at this time discovered but in part to the disciples, and will never be

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. v. 1. 'There are eight parables recorded in this chapter, designed to represent the kingdom of heaven, the method of planting the Gospel-kingdom in the world, and its growth and success. The great truths and laws of that kingdom are in other Scriptures laid down plainly, and without parables; but some circumstances of its beginning and progress are here laid open in parables. 1. Here is the parable to show what are the great hindrances of people's profiting by the Word of the Gospel; and in how many it comes short of its end, through their own folly, and that is the parable of the four sorts of ground. 2. Here are two parables intended to show that there would be a mixture of good and bad in the Gospel-church, which would continue till the great separation between them in the judgment-day: the parable of the tares put forth, and expounded at the request of the disciples; and that of the net cast into the sea. 3. Here are two parables intended to show that the Gospel-church should be very small at first, but that in process of time it should become a considerable body: that of the grain of mustard-seed, and that of the leaven. 4. Two parables show that those who expect salvation by the Gospel must be willing to venture all, and quit all, in the prospect of it, and that they shall be no losers: that of the treasure hid in the field, and that of the pearl of great price. 5. Here is one parable intended for direction to the disciples; to make use of the instructions He had given them for the benefit of others; and that is the parable of the good householder.'

Out of the house.] 'Of Peter, see chap. 17: 24, 25. And that, the same day; for our Lord is incessant in his labors, instant in season and out of season, seldom appearing to take rest. In this He has left an example to his ministers; for, as Satan, like a roaring lion, is intent on seeking whom he may devour, the minister must be diligent to counteract his work.'

Verse 2.

Luke relates the concluding incident in the last chapter after the parable of the sower. Our Lord went into a fisher-boat, or little ship, close to the land, that He might be less incommoded, and better heard by the people. 'If the shore were elevated,' observes Gilpin, 'as it probably might be, and formed a kind of semicircular bay, the people might range themselves round it, and hear with great advantage.'

SCOTT.

Into a ship.] 'The vessel, or boat, a particular vessel, as supposed by Wakefield, which seems to have been kept on the lake for the use of Christ and his apostles; it probably belonged to some of the fishermen.' (see chap. 1: 22.) who, he thinks, occasionally at least, followed their former occupation. See John 21: 3.

Doddridge and Rosenmüller, however, regard the expression as indicating no particular vessel.

And sat.] 'So was the manner of the nation, that the masters when they read their lectures, sat, and the scholars stood.'

L. MIFFOOT

HENRY

3 And he spake many things unto them^d in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow:

4 And when he sowed, some seeds fell by the way-side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth:

6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and, because they had no root, they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up and choked them.

10-13, 34, 35, 53. 22:1. 24:32. Judg. 9:8-20. 2 Sam. 12:1-7. Ps. 49:4. 79:2. Is. 51:7. Ec. 17:2. 20:49. 24:3 &c. Mic. 2:4. Hab. 2:6. Mark 3:23. 4:4, 13, 33. 12:12. Luke 8:10. 12:41. 15:3, &c. John 16:25. marg. 17:14. Luke 8:5-8. 18:19. 19:13. 20: 20. Ex. 11:9. 36:26. Am. 6:12. 22: 7. 7:12. 22: 49:10. Jam. 1:12. Rev. 7:16. 11:26, 27. Mark 8:13. Eph. 3:17. Col. 1:23. 2:7. 2 Tim. 3:18. Jer. 4:3, 4. Mark 4:16. 19.

Verses 3-8.

(Note, Judg. 9: 8-15.)—Parables are a kind of pictures of spiritual things: so that, when we have got the key, we perceive more of their nature by a single glance, than we could otherwise learn by labored descriptions, or multiplied distinctions.—This parable of the sower seems to be a prophetic history of the effects produced by the Gospel, in all places to which it should be sent.

(3.) *Parables.* 'A parable has been justly defined to be a *similitude*, in which one thing is compared to another, especially spiritual things to natural, by which means those spiritual things are better understood, and make a deeper impression on an honest and attentive mind. In a parable, a resemblance in the principal incidents is all that is required; smaller matters being considered as a sort of drapery. Maimonides, in Moreh Nevochim, gives an excellent rule on this head: "Fix it as a principle to attach yourself to the grand object of the parable, without attempting to make a particular application of all the circumstances and terms which it comprehends." GREENFIELD

'The word *parable* sometimes signifies a *sublime discourse*, elevated beyond the common forms of speech, though no simile be used. (Num. 23: 7. 24: 15. Job 27: 1. 29: 1. Ps. 73: 2.) And, as short parables after grew into proverbs, or were alluded to in them, hence the word *parable* is sometimes used for a *proverb*. Mic. 2: 4. Hab. 2: 6.

Appropriately, a parable is a narration of something fictitious or imagined, to represent another or different thing, which is real and true; it is a fable. The parables set forth by Christ are of two kinds; one, to illustrate moral sentiment, including the duties of life, and the other, more or less manifestly to bring to view the nature of the divine government and future events. Of this last kind are the parables in this chapter. ROSENM.

It matters not whether the relation itself be true history or fiction. The truth of the parable lies in the justness of the application.

So frequent and so important are the instructions of our Lord by parables, and as is marked by Lightfoot, 'no scheme of Jewish rhetoric' having been more familiarly used, it is deemed of consequence to insert a view of this method, condensed from Dr. A. Clarke, and its employment, specially in the Bible. He observes: 'The method of conveying instruction by parables, or moral fictions, sometimes in the form of similitude, allegory, fable, or apologue, was very common, and in high esteem among all ancient nations: but the Asiatics used it most frequently, and brought it to a higher degree of perfection, than any other people on the earth. The despotic and tyrannical nature of their governments led them often to make use of this method. Reproof and censure, which it might not, on many occasions, be expedient or safe to deliver in explicit language, and which might exasperate, when too plainly spoken, rather than correct, could be conveyed with delicacy and success under the disguise of parable. Even to the present time, information concerning grievances, oppressive acts of government, &c. is conveyed to the despotic Asiatic rulers, under the guise of parable. An ancient instance of this we find in the reproof conveyed to the heart of David by the prophet Nathan, in the parable of the poor man's ewe lamb.

Persons thus addressed, not perceiving at first the relation, under this artificial form, to be directed, against themselves, lost sight of their self-

the increase of grace, even to an abundance in glory, Prov. 4: 18. Joseph—He will add, Gen. 30: 24.

2. Here is a threatening to him that has not, that has no desire of grace, that makes no right use of the gifts and graces he has; that has, but uses not what he has; from him shall be taken away that which he has, or seems to have. His leaves shall wither, his gifts decay; the means of grace he has, and makes no use of, shall be taken from him; God will call in his talents out of their hands, that are likely to be come bankrupts.

This reason is particularly explained, with reference to the two sorts of people Christ had to do with.

1. Some were willingly ignorant; and such were amused by the parables, v. 13. They had shut their eyes against the clear light of Christ's plainer preaching, and therefore were now left in the dark. Note, There are many who see the gospel-light, and hear the gospel-sound, but it never reaches their hearts. It is just with God to take away the light from those who shut their eyes against it; and God's dealing thus with them magnifies his distinguishing grace to his disciples.

Now in this the Scripture would be fulfilled, v. 14: 15. It is quoted from Isa. 6: 9, 10, and is referred to no less than six times in the New Testament; which intimates, that in gospel-times spiritual judgments would be most common. That which was spoken of the sinners in Isaiah's time, was fulfilled in those in Christ's time, and is still fulfilling. Here is,

First, A description of sinners' wilful blindness and hardness. *This people's heart is waxed gross; is fattened*, so the word is; which denotes both sensuality and senselessness; (Ps. 119: 70.) *Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked*, Deut. 32: 15. And when the heart is thus heavy, no wonder the ears are dull of hearing; the whispers of the Spirit they hear not at all, the loud

finess and prejudices, and were frequently induced, by their unexpecting replies, to acknowledge the justice of the reprehension, and to pronounce the condemnation of their conduct, from their own mouths as in the case of David above referred to.

The word has the ten following significations in Scripture:

1. A simple comparison, such as that of our Lord, between the state of the Jewish nation, and that of the world in the days of Noah, mentioned, Matt. 24: 32-33. 2. An obscure similitude, such as that mentioned, Matt. 15: 13-15. 3. A simple allegory, such as our Lord's parable concerning persons invited to a marriage supper: of the sower—tares and wheat—gran of mustard-seed—hidden treasure—precious pearl—drag-net, &c. contained in Matt. 13. 4. A maxim or wise sentence, to direct and govern a man in civil or religious life. In 1 Kings 4: 32. we are informed that Solomon spake three thousand of this kind of parables or proverbs. 5. It means a by-word, or proverb of reproach. Such God threatened to make the disobedient Jewish people. See 2 Chron. 7: 20. In this sense it is used, Ps. 44: 14. Jer. 24: 9. 6. As parables, proverbs, and useful maxims for the regulation of life, and instruction in righteousness, had, before the Babylonian captivity, lost all their power and influence among the wicked Jews; so they were generally disregarded, and those who made use of them became objects of reproach and contempt; hence, parable, at that time at least, was used to signify a *frivolous, uninteresting discourse*. In this sense alone, the word appears to be used, Ezek. 20: 43. 7. It means a simple proverb or usage, where neither comparison nor similitude was intended, as Luke 4: 23. 6: 39. 8. It means a type, illustration, or representation. See Heb. 7: 9. where the first tabernacle is said to have been a figure, a parable, for the time then present. 9. It means a daring exploit, an unusual and severe trial, or a case of imminent danger and jeopardy. In this sense it is used by some of the best and most correct Greek writers. I know of no place in the sacred writings, in which it has this sense, unless it be in Heb. 11: 19. where the original Greek word is translated in a figure—which, it is probable should be translated, "he being in the most imminent danger of his life," i. e. at the time when Abraham drew his knife to slay his son, Gen. 22: 10, 10. It signifies a very ancient and obscure prophecy. Ps. 49: 4. 78, and probably Prov. 1: 6. and to this very subject, the words are applied and quoted by the evangelist Matthew. (13: 35.)

This note shall be closed with the following remarks on the subject from Dr. Townson: 'Although our Lord followed the example of other eastern teachers in the use of parables, He did it with a moderation and dignity becoming his character. He never introduces beasts of the field, or trees of the forest, debating and conversing together with the reason and faculties of man; nor does He bring forward emblematical persons, as influencing the counsels and actions of men. All is built upon nature and life, and the reality of things, and composed of circumstances which every one perceived might probably happen. Once only, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the scene is laid beyond this visible world.'

(4.) *Way-side.* There were ways and paths, as well common as more private, along the sown fields; see chap. 12: 1. And it is stated by travellers, that the fields are in general without fences.

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

10 ¶ And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables?

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

123, Luke 8:15. Rom. 7:18.
1 Gen. 26:12, John 15:8. Gal. 5:22,
23. Phil. 1:11.
14 11:15. Mark 4:8, 13. 7:14-16.
Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 23. 3:6, 13, 22, 13:3,
9
1 Mark 10:33, 34.
1 11:25, 26, 16:17. Ps. 25:8, 9, 14. Is.
28:19. 35:8. Mark 4:11. Luke 8:
10, 10:39-42. John 7:17. Acts 16:
14, 17:11, 12. 1 Cor. 2:9, 10. 4:7.
Jm. 1:5, 16-18. 1 John 2:27. 4:1, 13.
1 Rm. 16:25. 1 Cor. 2:7. 4:1, 13.
2 15:51. Eph. 1:9. 3:3-9. 5:32.
6:10. Col. 1:23, 27. 1 Tim. 3:
9, 16.
1 25:28. Mark 4:24, 25. Luke 8:18.
19:24-26. John 15:2-5.
1 21:43. Is. 54:7. Mark 12:9. 13:
20, 42. 12:20, 21. 16:2, 25. Rev. 2:
5. 3:15, 16.

calls of the Word, they regard not at all: *They stop their ears*; (Ps. 58: 4, 5.) they shut both the learning senses; for their eyes also have been closed, resolved that they would not see light come into the world, when the Sun of righteousness arose, because they loved darkness rather than light, John 3:19. 2 Pet. 3:5.

Secondly, A description of that judicial blindness, which is the just punishment of this; v. 14. 'what means of grace you have, shall be to no purpose to you; though, in mercy to others, they are continued, yet, in judgment to you, the blessing on them is denied.' The saddest condition a man can be in on this side hell, is to sit under the most lively ordinances with a dead, stupid, untouched heart. To hear God's word, and see his providences, and yet not to understand and perceive his will, is the greatest sin and the greatest judgment. Observe it is God's work to give an understanding heart, and He often, in a way of righteous judgment, denies it to those to whom He has given the hearing ear, and the seeing eye, in vain. Thus does God choose sinners' delusions, (Isa. 66:4.) and bind them over to the greatest ruin, by giving them up to their own hearts' lusts; (Ps. 81:11, 12.) *Let them alone*; (Hos. 4:17.) *My Spirit shall not always strive*, Gen. 6:3.

Thirdly, The woful effect and consequence of this; v. 15. They will not see, because they will not turn; and God says that they shall not see, because they shall not turn; *Let them alone* be converted, and *He shall heal them*.

Note, Seeing, hearing, and understanding are necessary to conversion; for God, in working grace, deals with men as men, as rational agents; He draws with the cords of a man, changes the heart by opening the eyes, and turns from the power of Satan unto God, by turning first from darkness to light, Acts 26:18. All those who are truly converted to God, shall certainly be healed by Him: so that, if sinners perish, it is not to be imputed to God, but to themselves; they foolishly expected to be healed, without being converted. It is just with God to deny his grace to those who have long and often refused and resisted it. Pharaoh, for a good while, hardened his own heart, (Exod. 8: 15, 32,) and afterwards God hardened it, ch. 9: 12.—10: 20.

Let us therefore fear, lest, by sinning against the divine grace, we sin it away.

2. Others were effectually called, and truly desirous to be taught; and they were instructed, v. 16, 17. They saw the glory of God in Christ's person; they heard the mind of God in Christ's doctrine; they saw much, and were desirous to see more, and thereby were prepared to receive further instruction; they had opportunity for it, by being constant attendants on Christ, and should have it from day to day, and grace with it. Now this Christ speaks of,

As a blessing; (v. 16.) 'It is your happiness, and a happiness for which you are indebted to the peculiar favor and blessing of God.' It is a promised blessing, that in the days of the Messiah, the eyes of them that see shall not be dim, Isa. 32: 3. The eyes of the meaneest believer, that knows experimentally the grace of Christ, are more blessed than those of the greatest scholars, that are strangers to God, who have eyes, and see not. *Blessed are your eyes*. Note, True blessedness is entailed on the right understanding and due improvement of the mysteries of the kingdom of God. The hearing ear and the seeing eye are God's work in those who are sanctified; (Prov. 20:12.) and they are a blessed work, which shall be fulfilled with power, when those who now see through a glass darkly, shall see face to face. It was to illustrate this blessedness, that Christ said so much of the misery of those who are left in ignorance; *they have eyes, and see not*; but *blessed are your eyes*. Note, The knowledge of Christ is a distinguishing favor to those who have it, and on that account lays under the greater obligations: see John 14:22. The apostles were to teach others, and therefore were themselves blessed with the clearest discoveries of divine truth: *The watchmen shall see eye to eye*, Isa. 52:8.

He speaks of it as a transcendent blessing, desired by, but not granted to, many prophets and righteous men, v. 17. The Old-Testament saints coveted earnestly further discoveries. They had the types, shadows, and prophecies, but longed to see the Substance. They desired to see the great Salvation, the Consolation of Israel; but did not see it, because the fullness of time was not yet come. Note, First, Those

Verse 9.

This address was suited to call the attention of all present to the parable; and to show them, that some peculiarly interesting instruction was intended by it.

This simple expression, which is often repeated, seems to imply no less than—Let nothing but absolute incapacity of hearing, or destitution of the necessary organs, be suffered to preclude attention to what I declare.

Verse 10, 11.

The multitudes, who heard this parable in public, did not understand it, and probably few at that time inquired further about it. But the disciples came to our Lord in private, desiring to be informed, why He thus taught the people, and what was the meaning of the parable. He had doubtless several reasons: this method of instruction is peculiarly suited to assist the memory, and engage the attention; and it communicates information and conviction to the teachable, in the most simple and compendious way. (Notes, Prov. 1: 1-5.) The reason, however, which our Lord here assigns, is to replete with instruction, warning, and encouragement. 'It was given to the disciples' to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but not to others; (that is, not at that time, for it might afterwards be given to them also.) This happened after Christ had upbraided and threatened the neighboring places, whence doubtless the greatest part of the multitude came: (11: 20-24.) and it is not improbable, that the Pharisees, who had so vilely blasphemed Him this very morning night with an ill purpose have gathered a company of their associates...about Christ to ensnare Him; which, if it were the case, will fully account for such a reserve. Doddridge. A mystery, in the scriptural use of the term, signifies, a subject in religion, of which we can know little or nothing, except by revelation, and nothing more than is revealed. This knowledge is received by faith only, and must be used as a principle in all our other reasonings; but itself must not be disputed, as if it were the subject of reason and argument. There are many mysteries respecting the kingdom of heaven: and it is given to Christ's true disciples to know or understand them, as far as it is needful; and to them alone. Those who in humble faith take Him for their Teacher, by attending to the instructions of his Word, and seeking the teaching of his Spirit, attain to this knowledge; but the proud, unteachable, and unbelieving do not: for no man can know them, except from the great Proprietor of the church.—But his special choice and effectual calling made those persons his disciples, rather than others of their countrymen, and this brought them to learn of Him.

(11.) He said to them in reply, I thus express myself in parables, because though it is granted, through Divine goodness, to you, whose hearts receive the truth, to know and understand the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, which have been long concealed; yet it is not granted to others, who are prejudiced against them; but they are just

suffered to continue unacquainted with them: and therefore to those who are strangers, through their own neglect and folly, to what they might before have learned, all these things are now involved in parables and figures; which, though they affect the mind of the attentive hearer, and promote his edification, are regarded by the rest as an empty amusement.

Compare 1 Cor. 13: 2. A "mystery," in the usual scripture sense of the word, is a doctrine, or fact, unknown, or obscurely intimated, which Christ, or his apostles discovered, or made fully known. As 1 Cor. 15: 51, and Eph. 3: 3-6. Thus, in this chapter, verse 31-33; 47-50, contained 'mysteries.'

Verse 12.

'Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance': that is, say many expositors, 'he who is left with what he has.' Yet if our Lord meant so, why did he not thus express Himself, either here or in other places? There is no doubt a truth in his way of stating it; for no man improves either natural or external advantages, without the special grace of God; yet it is a truth often misunderstood and perverted. The obvious meaning is, that one special gift of God to his people is an earnest of others: so that he who has faith and grace, shall receive further communications of knowledge, wisdom, holiness, and every blessing of salvation, till he has a great abundance; whereas he, who has not faith and grace, shall at last be deprived of all his other attainments and advantages, in which he trusted and gloried. The plain inferences from which are, that he who desires these blessings must seek them from Christ, or he never can have them; and he that has received them, must bless the Lord for making him to differ, and trust Him to perfect his own good work. Scott. *He that hath not*, 'the poor man'; 'He that hath,' 'the rich man'; 'he that hath not,' 'the poor man'; an expression common to both sacred and profane writers.

Dr. A. CLARKE. 'So, those who devote not the light and power which God has given to the purposes for which He granted these gifts, from them shall be taken away these unemployed or prostituted blessings.'

HARMER. 'The spiritual truth couched under this adage is this: He who hath considerable religious knowledge, and takes that care to improve it which men are observed to do with their wealth, will find it increase: while those who have but little, and manage it as the poor are often observed to do, will find it come to nothing.' The little he had intended, will slip out of his memory; he will be deprived of it, and in that sense it will be taken from him. Jesus, therefore, involves the doctrine of the Gospel in parables, that his hearers might be thus excited to attention, and not by inattention be deprived of all knowledge, but make as great a proficiency as possible.—It was never the intention of God that men should attain heavenly knowledge, any more than earthly, without labor, pains, and attention.

VINOEL. BLOOMFIELD.

13 Therefore speak [to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive.

15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

16 But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear.

17 For verily I say

16. Deut. 29:3-4. Is. 42:18-20, 43:18. Jer. 5:21. Ec. 1:22. Mark 6:17. John 5:19, 90. 93-94. 1. Cor. 4:3, 4. Is. 69:10. Mark 4:12. Luke 8:10. Rom. 1:23-40. Acts 28:25-27. Rom. 1:18-19. 2 Cor. 3:14, 15. Ps. 115:70.

who know something of Christ, cannot but covet to know more. Secondly, The discoveries of divine grace are made, even to prophets and righteous men, but according to the dispensation they are under. Though they were the favorites of Heaven, with whom was God's secret, yet they saw not the things which they desired to see, because God had determined not to bring them to light yet; and his favors shall not anticipate his counsels. There was then, as there is still, a glory to be revealed; something in reserve, that they without us should not be made perfect, Heb. 11:40. Thirdly, To excite our thankfulness, and quicken our diligence, it is good for us to consider what means we enjoy, and what discoveries are made to us, above what they had, who lived under the Old-Testament dispensation, especially in the revelation of the atonement for sin; (2 Cor. 3: 7, &c. Heb. 12:13.) and our improvements should be proportionable to our advantages.

II. We have, in these verses, the parable of the Sower and the seed. Christ drew his parables from common, ordinary things, not from philosophical notions or speculations, or the unusual phenomena of nature; many of them are from the husbandman's calling, as this of the sower, and that of the tares. Christ chose to do thus, 1. That spiritual things might hereby be made more plain, and easy to slide into our understandings. 2. That common actions might hereby be spiritualized, and we take occasion from those things which fall so often under our view, to meditate with delight on the things of God; and thus when our hands are busiest about the world, be led to have our hearts in heaven. Thus the Word of God shall talk with us, Prov. 6:22.

The parable of the Sower is plain enough, v. 3-9. The exposition of it we have from Christ Himself. The disciples, when they asked, *Why speakest Thou to them in parables?* (v. 10,) intimated a desire to have the parable ex-

Y. Zech. 7:11. John 8:43, 44. Acts 7: 27. 2 Tim. 4:4. Heb. 5:11. 1 s. 29:10-12. 44:30. 2 Thes. 2:10, 11.

a Acts 3:19. 2 Tim. 2:2:26. Heb. 6: 4-6. b John 3:18. Jer. 3:22. 17:14. 33:6. Hos. 14:4. Mai. 4:2. Mark 4:12.

Rev. 22:2.

c 5:8-11. 16:17. Luke 2:29, 30. 10: 23. John 20:23. Acts 26:18. 2 Cor. 4:6. Eph. 1:17, 18.

Verse 13.

Our Lord spake in parables to the people, because they refused to improve their faculties and advantages: for they hated the truth through love of sin, and closed their eyes to the light by proud and carnal prejudices. They saw his miracles, but could not see that He was the Messiah; and heard his doctrine, without acknowledging that it was the voice of God; and it was his sovereign will to leave many of them to final obduracy and unbelief. (Notes, 16, 17. Deut. 29: 4. Is. 42:18-20.)

Saying, they see not. Inasmuch as they do not honestly use the faculties which have been given them, but are like persons that have eyes and ears, and yet will neither see nor hear; it is in just displeasure I preach to them in this obscure language, that what has been their crime may be their punishment: that, seeing my miracles, they may see indeed the outward act, but not perceive the evidence arising from them: and hearing my discourses, they may indeed hear the sound of them, but not understand their true intent and meaning; lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins be forgiven them, which to many of these people shall never be.

DODDRIIDGE.

Verse 14, 15.

The prophecy referred to seems to have had a peculiar respect to the times and persons here spoken of. They would have the fullest opportunity of learning the way of salvation; yet they should not understand it, nor perceive in Jesus the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies. God judiciously left them to be blinded; so that it became impossible for them to understand or believe the doctrine of salvation, or to be converted, that their souls might be healed: for had they been converted, they must have been pardoned and healed; or, saved, and renewed unto holiness.—There seems throughout to be a special reference to the malevolent Pharisees and their adherents. "The prophets are in other places said to perform the thing which they only foretold." *By Louth.* But we might not suspect this grossness of heart and heaviness of ears was the effect of nature, and not of choice. He subjoins the fault of the will, "their eyes have they closed." *Jerome.*

By hearing, &c. The quotation is made almost exactly in the words of the LXX. The meaning is, indeed, the same with the Hebrew, as to the substance; but both the evangelist and the Septuagint render that, as relating the fact, which the Hebrew gives imperatively, Make this people's heart fat, &c. It is observable, that the passage is not once quoted imperatively in the New Testament.—In John it is quoted, "He hath blinded," &c. In Romans, "God hath given them," &c. SCOTT. (14.) On the latest review of this passage, both in Isaiah and in the several places where it occurs in the New Testament, I cannot apprehend that it was spoken merely by way of complaint, but think it plain that it was intended also as a prediction; (compare Mark 4: 12. Luke 8: 10. John 12: 40. Acts 23: 26, 27. Rom. 11: 8.) Now in predictions we generally render the future form, "such or such a thing shall happen," though we only mean to express the certainty of the event, without denying the freedom of the moral agents concerned in it, or detracting from it in any degree.

DODDRIIDGE

plained for the sake of the people. Our Lord Jesus kindly took the hint, and gave the sense directing his discourse to the disciples, but not the hearing of the multitude; for we have not the account of his dismissing them till p. 36.

Hear ye therefore the parable of the Sower (v. 18.) you have heard it, but let us go over again. Note, It would contribute much to our understanding of the Word, and profiting by it, to hear again what we have heard; (Phil. 3: 1.) it is no hearing at all, if it be not with understanding, Neh. 8: 2. It is God's grace indeed that gives the understanding, but it is our duty to give our minds to understand.

Let us therefore compare the parable and the exposition.

The seed sown is the word of God, here called the Word of the kingdom, (v. 19.) the kingdom of heaven; the kingdoms of the world, compared with that, are not to be called kingdoms: the word of the Gospel is the word of the kingdom; it is the word of the King, a law, by which we must be ruled and governed. This Word is the seed sown. It is incorruptible seed; (1 Pet. 1:23.) it is the Gospel that brings forth fruit in souls, Col. 1: 5, 6.

The Sower that scatters the seed is our Lord Jesus Christ; see v. 37. The people are God's husbandry, his tillage, so the word is; and ministers are laborers together with God, 1 Cor. 3: 9. The sowing of the Word is the sowing of a people for God's field, the corn of his floor, Isa. 21: 10.

The ground in which this seed is sown is the hearts of the children of men. Note, Man's heart is like soil, capable of improvement, of bearing good fruit; it is pity it should lie fallow, or be like the field of the slothful, Prov. 24: 30. The soul is the proper place for the Word of God to dwell, and work, and rule in; its operation is upon conscience; it is to light that candle of the Lord. Now, according as we are, so the Word is to us:—The reception depends on

Are fulfilled. The original means again fulfilled, i. e. once in the time of the prophet Isaiah, and again in these posterity. These awful words may be again fulfilled in us, if we take not warning.

DR. A. CLARKE.

(15.) Gross. Or "fat." The ancients had an idea that the fat of the body was insensible. Hence a "fat heart" denoted stupidity and want of feeling—we find such a use of the word fat in the Latin authors.

HEWITT.

For, like a wretch who has besotted and stupefied himself with riot, the heart, or intellectual faculty, of this people is, as it were, grown stiff with fatness, and they hear with heavy ears, and draw up their eyes as if they were more than half asleep; so that one would imagine they were afraid lest at any time they should happen to be roused, so as to see with their eyes, &c. I therefore justly leave them to their own obstinacy.

DODDRIIDGE.

HARMER notices, in reference to this passage, and that of the prophet to which it alludes, that, in the East, the sealing of the eyes, with gum, or otherwise, was both a part of the marriage ceremony, and a punishment of state. In the latter case, of which he gives instances, it was of longer or shorter duration, in proportion to the criminality of the offender; and he adds, "how beautiful, in this view, do these words appear, which have been so difficult."

ED.

Christ had very wise reasons for using the mode of instruction which He adopted. It is clear from history, that the Jews expected the Messiah to be a splendid monarch. If therefore they had heard from Jesus that the kingdom of God was to be nothing but a religious society, (i. e. ecclesia.) and that to be a member of the divine kingdom was to be nothing but to be a worshipper of God, they would altogether have despised Him, nor lent an ear to his discourses. Yet did Jesus intend to be entirely silent on the true nature of his divine kingdom.

KESENI.

Verse 16, 17.

(Marg. Ref.) The disciples, notwithstanding remaining ignorant, mistakes, and prejudices, had already been taught of God, to see and hear many things relative to his kingdom; and further light and instruction would continually be added. Their advantages also were peculiarly valuable: for many prophets and righteous persons, from the beginning of the world, had desired to see the times in which they lived, and the miracles which they witnessed, and to hear the Messiah's instructions which they daily heard: but this was reserved as a peculiar blessing for the apostles, whose light was proportionally more distinct and clear.

SCOTT.

Many of the prophets desired to understand more fully, than was possible for them, the nature of the Messiah's kingdom which they were intended to foretell: and righteous men may have anxiously waited for the consolation of Israel, to whom it was not given, as it was to Simeon, to "see the salvation of God."

BP. SUMNER.

The object always dearest to the hearts of all righteous men is, to witness the coming and advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

BAHNI.

unto you, "That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

[Practical Observations.]

18 ¶ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way-side.

d Luke 10:24. John 8:58. Eph. 3:5. 6. Heb. 11:13, 39, 40. 1 Pet. 1:10-12.

11:12. Mark 4:14.
12:23. Luke 8:11. 9:2. 10:9. Acts 10:25. 28:23. Rom. 14:17. 2 Cor. 4:2, 3. Eph. 3:8.
e Prov. 1:30-32. 2:1-8. 17:16. 18:1-2. John 3:19, 20. 8:43. 18:38. Acts 17:32. 18:15. 24:25, 28. 29:19, 20. 28:31, 32. Rom. 1:28. 2:9. 5: Thes 2:12. Heb. 2:1. 1 John 3:20.
f 3:1. Mark 4:15. Luke 8:12. 1 John 5:13, 14. 5:12. 5:18.

the receiver. As it is with the earth; one sort of ground, take ever so much pains with it, and throw ever so good seed into it, brings forth no fruit to any purpose; while the good soil brings forth plentifully: so it is with the hearts of men, whose different characters are here represented by four sorts of ground, of which three are bad, and but one good. Note, The number of fruitless hearers is very great, and was even of those who heard Christ Himself preach. Who has believed our report? Many are called with the common call, but in few is the eternal choice evidenced by the efficacy of that call, ch. 20: 16.

Now observe the characters of these four sorts of ground.

The highway ground, v. 4-19. They had pathways through their corn-fields, (ch. 12: 1.) and the seed that fell on them never entered, and so the birds picked it up. Observe, First, What kind of hearers are compared to the highway ground; such as hear the word, and understand it not; and it is their own fault that they do not. They take no heed to it, nor hold of it; they do not come with any design to get good, as the highway was never intended to be sown. They come before God as his people come, and sit before Him as his people sit; but it is merely for fashion's sake, to see and be seen; they mind not what is said, it enters at one ear and goes out at the other, and makes no impression.

Secondly, How they come to be unprofitable hearers. The wicked one, that is, the devil, cometh and catcheth away that which was sown.

—Such mindless, careless, trifling hearers, are an easy prey to Satan; who, as he is the great murderer of souls, is the great thief of sermons, and will be sure to rob us of the Word, if we take not care to keep it; as the birds pick up the seed that falls on the ground which is never ploughed before, nor harrowed after. If

we break not up the fallow ground, by bringing our hearts for the Word, and humbling them to it, and engaging our own attention; and if we cover not the seed afterwards, by meditation and prayer; if we give not a more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, we are as the highway ground. Note, The devil is a sworn enemy to our profiting by the Word of God; and none more befriending his design than heedless hearers, who are thinking of something else, when they should be thinking of the things that belong to their peace.

The stony ground. Some fell upon stony places, (v. 6, 7.) which represents the case of hearers, who receive some good impressions of the Word, but not lasting, v. 20, 21. Note, We may be a great deal better than some others, and yet not be so good as we should be; may go beyond our neighbors, and yet come short of heaven. Now, observe concerning these hearers that are represented by the stony ground,

First, How far they went. 1. They hear the word; they turn neither their backs on it, nor a deaf ear to it. Note, Hearing the Word, though ever so frequently, ever so gravely, if we rest in that, will never bring us to heaven.

2. They are quick in hearing, swift to hear, he anon receiveth it, he is ready to receive it, forthwith it sprung up, (v. 5.) it sooner appeared above ground than that which was sown in the good soil. Note, Hypocrites often get the start of true Christians in the shows of profession, and are often too hot to hold. He receiveth it straightway, without trying it; swallows it without chewing, and then there can never be a good digestion. Those are most likely to hold fast that which is good, that prove all things, 1 Thess. 5: 21. 3. They receive it with joy. Note, There are many that are very glad to hear a good sermon, that yet do not profit by it; they

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-17. Our divine Teacher orders every thing to the edification of the humble, teachable, and attentive disciple; but leaves occasions of falling, in the way of the careless, the captious, the self-sufficient, and presumptuous.—We not only have his word, but are required to call on Him for the teaching of his Holy Spirit: and to those, who thus wait on Him, 'it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,' which are concealed from all others under an impenetrable veil. We should therefore fear above all things an unteachable disposition. To persons of this temper, the things of the Spirit of God appear foolishness; and by deriding, reviling, and opposing them, they provoke the Lord to leave them under the power of strong delusions, to their final perdition. Such men may have excellent abilities, profound erudition, and many valuable advantages; but not having humble faith and love, all else will soon be taken from them, or turn to their unspeakable detriment. But the meanest and most illiterate believer

is happy: his senses and faculties are blessed, they are employed to good purpose, and are 'instruments of righteousness unto God.' Under the Christian dispensation, we all enjoy what 'prophets and righteous men' of old desired to see and hear, and were not able; and if we have grace to make a proper use of our advantages, more will be given us, and we shall have abundance. But do any desire these blessings, who cannot ascertain that they have received them? Let them wait on the Lord for his teaching, and search the Scriptures with prayer: let them not close their own eyes and ears, and then God will not close them; and let them remember that the purposes and promises of God are perfectly consistent, and that 'every one that asketh, receiveth.' As for those who harder themselves against the truth, they can have no reason to complain, if God leave them to their perverse choice; till they be so blinded, that they can neither see, nor hear, nor be converted and healed.

SCOTT.

Verses 18, 19.

Every kind of preaching is by no means sowing this seed: if men teach mere morality, metaphysical speculations, enthusiastic delusions, human traditions, false doctrines; as the seed is congenial to the soil of fallen human nature, an increase may be expected; but it must be of the same kind with the seed: for the good fruit of repentance, faith, piety, and holiness can be produced from 'the Word of the kingdom' alone. This word, by those discoveries which it makes to us of God and ourselves, of sin and holiness, of Christ and eternity, is as properly in the heart, as seed of all true goodness, as the grain which we sow in the fruitful soil of the future crop of wheat. Many hearers of the Gospel, where most scripturally preached, are like 'the way-side.' They are worldly, proud and prejudiced. They attend from curiosity, or custom, or worse motives; out of the midst of secular engagements and conversation: whilst the word is sounding in their ears, they are often employed in thoughts about their diversions, pursuits, or schemes, the persons and objects around them, or the appointments which are to succeed the tedious hour; or they come in order to object, deride, or revile; but without expectation or desire of profiting. They therefore understand nothing of the true meaning, excellence, or importance of what they hear: and those evil spirits, who are sure to form an adverse part of every congregation, where the Gospel is truly preached, (having more employment there, and being more in danger of losing their servants, than at the places of dissipation or debauchery) are ready immediately to catch away the word out of the mind of each hearer, by suggesting more pleasing ideas, by engaging them in vain speculations or frivolous conversation, or by exciting pride and evil passions; or to excite disgust at the plain truths of God's word, or against something in the style and manner of the preacher. This industry of Satan to snatch the word out of our hearts, as it discovers his enmity against the progress of the Gospel, so doth it highly commend its excellence and efficacy: for were it not of great importance to preserve it there, he would not be so industrious to snatch it thence; and were it not, when there, a powerful instrument to work within us 'that "faith which purifies the heart;" why loth he do this, lest we

'should believe? Why is it then that men do call this quick and powerful word of life, a dead letter? And when they daily by 'experience see, that the persuasions of themselves and others are 'often prevalent, why do they think that God's can be of no effect, 'without a miracle? Whitby.—No man can persuade another to that which his heart is totally set against; and before regeneration, the heart is totally set against the Gospel. If regeneration be called a miracle in the concluding clause, our Lord's words answer the question. Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. But if the learner write me something else, that regeneration, let those who expect miracles answer him.—The quotation, this excepted, which seemed to require notice, is of great importance. SCOTT.

(19.) The word of the kingdom. That is, the preaching of the Gospel of Christ.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Understandeth it not. 'Mindeth, or regardeth it not. See Ps. 41: 1. 106: 7. Prov. 21: 12. Rom. 3: 11. In two of these passages, the common translation has considered; and though understand is used in the other two, the context makes it manifest, that the meaning is the same.'

Jesus teaches them by this parable. As Rosenmüller has observed, "that He is the author of a new and better religion, whose seed He had then scattered, and which the apostles were to propagate. The comparison of truth to seed was not unusual with the ancients." BLOOMFIELD.

The wicked one. 'Signifying, from its derivation, he who distresses and torments the soul. Mark (ch. 4: 15.) calls him the adversary, or opposer, because he resists men in all their purposes of amendment, and opposes, to the utmost of his power, in order to frustrate the influences of divine grace upon the heart. In the parallel place in Luke, (ch. 8: 12.) he is called the devil, from a word signifying to shoot, or dart through. In allusion to this, St. Paul speaks of the fiery darts of the wicked one. It is worthy of remark, that these evangelists should use each a different appellation of this mortal enemy of mankind; probably to show, that the devil, with all his powers and perversities, opposes every thing that tends to the salvation of the soul.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;

21 Yet hath he not root in himself; but as soon as the word is taken away, he is as a chaff-stalk, which is blown away by the wind.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns, is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

23 The seed which is sown on good ground, is he that heareth the word, and receiveth it, and bringeth forth fruit.

24 The parable is represented in the parable by the sowing seed; which is sown on good ground, is he that heareth the word, and receiveth it, and bringeth forth fruit.

25 The parable is represented in the parable by the sowing seed; which is sown on good ground, is he that heareth the word, and receiveth it, and bringeth forth fruit.

26 The parable is represented in the parable by the sowing seed; which is sown on good ground, is he that heareth the word, and receiveth it, and bringeth forth fruit.

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31 The parable is represented in the parable by the sowing seed; which is sown on good ground, is he that heareth the word, and receiveth it, and bringeth forth fruit.

32 The parable is represented in the parable by the sowing seed; which is sown on good ground, is he that heareth the word, and receiveth it, and bringeth forth fruit.

33 The parable is represented in the parable by the sowing seed; which is sown on good ground, is he that heareth the word, and receiveth it, and bringeth forth fruit.

34 The parable is represented in the parable by the sowing seed; which is sown on good ground, is he that heareth the word, and receiveth it, and bringeth forth fruit.

35 The parable is represented in the parable by the sowing seed; which is sown on good ground, is he that heareth the word, and receiveth it, and bringeth forth fruit.

may be pleased with the Word and yet not changed and ruled by it. 4. They endure for a while, like a violent motion which continues as long as the impression of the force remains, but ceases when that has spent itself. Note, Many endure for a while, that endure not to the end, and so come short of the happiness which is promised to them only that persevere: (ch. 10: 22.) they did run well, but something hindered them, Gal. 5: 7.

Secondly, How they fell away, so that no fruit was brought to perfection; as corn, that, having no depth of earth from which to draw moisture, is scorched and withered by the heat of the sun. And the reason is,

1. They have no root in themselves, no settled, fixed principles in their judgments; no firm resolution in their wills, no rooted habits in their affections; nothing firm that will be either the sap or the strength of their profession. Note, There may be the green blade of a profession, where there is yet no root of grace in the heart, and what there is of soil and softness is only in the surface; inwardly they are no more affected than a stone; they have no root, they are not by faith united to Christ, who is our Root; they derive not from Him, they depend not on Him. Where there is no principle, though there be a profession, we cannot expect perseverance. Those who have no root will endure but a while. A ship without ballast, though she may at first outlast the laden vessel, yet will certainly fail in stress of weather, and never make her port.

2. Times of trial come, and then they come to nothing; p. 21. It is a stumbling-block which one of this character cannot get over, and so he flies off, and this is all his profession comes to. Note, 1. After a fair gale of opportunity, usually follows a storm of persecution, to try who have received the Word in sincerity, and who have not. When the word of Christ's kingdom comes to be the word of Christ's patience, (Rev. 3: 10), then is the trial, who keeps it, and who does not, Rev. 1: 9. It is wisdom to prepare for such a day. 2. When trying times come, those who have no root are soon offended; they first quarrel with their profession, and then quit it; first find fault with it, and then throw it off. Hence we read of the offence of the cross, Gal. 5: 11. Observe, Persecution is

represented in the parable by the scorching sun; (p. 6.) the same sun which warms and cherishes that which was well rooted, withers and burns up that which wanted root. As the word, so the cross of Christ, is to some a savor of life unto life, to others a savor of death unto death: the same tribulation which drives some to apostasy and ruin, works for others a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Trials which shake some, confirm others, Phil. 1: 12. Observe how soon they fall away, by and by; as soon rotten as ripe; a profession taken up without consideration is commonly let fall without it; 'Light come, light go.'

The thorny ground, p. 7. This represents the condition of those who do not quite cast off their profession, and yet come short of any saving benefit by it; the good they gain by the Word, being insensibly overcome by the things

of this world. Prosperity destroys the Word in the heart, as much as persecution does; and more dangerously, because more silently: the stones spoiled the root, the thorns spoil the fruit of the plant.

Now what are these choking thorns?

First, The cares of this world. Worldly cares are fitly compared to thorns, for they came in with sin, and are a fruit of the curse; they are good in their place to stop a gap, but a man must be well armed that deals much in them; (2 Sam. 23: 6, 7.) they are entangling, vexing, scratching, and their end is to be burned, Heb. 6: 8. These thorns choke the good seed. Note, Worldly cares are great hinderances to our profiting by the word of God, and our proficiency in religion: those who are careful and cumbered about many things, commonly neglect the one thing needful.

Secondly, The deceitfulness of riches. Those who have raised estates, and so have passed the danger from care to get riches; though they continue hearers of the word, yet are still in a snare; (Jer. 5: 4, 5.) it is hard for them to enter into the kingdom of heaven; they are apt to promise themselves that in riches which is not in them; to rely on them, and to make an inordinate complacency in them; and thus choke the Word as much as care did. Observe, It is not so much riches, as the deceitfulness of riches, that does the mischief:

The good ground; (p. 8.) it is pure, but that good seed should always meet with good soil, and then there is no loss; such are good hearers of the word, p. 23. Note, Though there are many that receive the grace of God, and the word of his grace, in vain, yet God has a remnant by whom it is received to good purpose; for God's word shall not return empty, Isa. 55: 10, 11.

Now, that which distinguished this good ground from the rest, was, in one word, fruitfulness. By this, true Christians are distinguished from hypocrites, that they bring forth the fruits of righteousness, John 15: 8. He does not say that this good ground has no stones in it, or no thorns; but there were none that prevailed to hinder its fruitfulness. Saints, in this world, are not perfectly free from the remains of sin; but happily freed from the reign of it.

The hearers represented by the good ground are, First, Intelligent hearers; they hear the Word and understand it; they understand not only the sense and meaning of the words, but their own concern in them; they understand it as a man of business understands his business. God in his Word deals with men as men, in a rational way, and gains possession of the will and affections by opening the understanding; whereas Satan, who is a thief and a robber, comes not in by that door, but climbeth up another way.

But they aim to serve two masters: their great concern is about the world; while religion is only a secondary concern to quiet conscience, to exclude the fear of hell, to keep up the hope of heaven, or to maintain the good opinion of Christians and ministers; whose approbation, or tacit connivance, often confirms them in this delusion. If in lower circumstances, their chief care is about a present and future provision for themselves and their families. Or perhaps being of another turn of mind, the pleasures of the world, and the desire of pomp, luxury, or authority, predominate. In this soil the seed seems to grow; but it is smothered by 'the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches;' for wealth seems to promise many advantages; and men of some seriousness often pursue it, under the self-flattering idea, that they shall by means of it be enabled to do the more good; and in both respects they find in the event, that they have been deceived. The love of wealth imposes on their judgments, and deludes them into multiplied methods of increasing it, some of which are fraudulent; it induces them to prostrate their intended earnestness about religion; and allures them into endless incumbrances, infectious connections, sinful compliances, and conformity to the world. These are the thorns, which grow up and choke the word; so that it becomes unfruitful, or brings nothing to perfection. This is the most unsuspected and fatal danger in great commercial cities, and in times of outward peace and prosperity; and it is to be feared, that very many are thus deceived, and lose their own souls, in attempting to gain more of this present world.

The deceitfulness of riches. 'The artful delusion of riches.' This phrase is very elegant, and admirably expresses the various artifices by which people in the pursuit of riches excuse themselves from day to day, in putting off religious cares, and the confounding disappointment which often mingles itself with their labors, and often with their success. Compare Prov. 11: 23. Luke 19: 24. 1 Tim. 6: 9, 10, 17. 2 Tim. 2: 4. and 4: 10.

DODDIDGE.

23 But he that received seed into the good ground, is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.

(Practical Observations.)

24 ¶ Another parable he put before them, saying, The seed is sown.

u 8. Mark 4:20. Luke 8:15.
a Prov. 1:5, 6. 2:2-8. Ez. 18:31.
8:26. Mark 10:15. John 1:11-13.
8:47. 10:26-27. 17:7, 8. A. 16:14.
17:11. 2 Thes. 2:10, 13, 14. Heb. 4:
2. 8:10. Jer. 1:21, 22. 1 Pet. 2:1,
2. 1 John 5:20.
b 3:9, 10. 12:33. Ps. 1:1-3. 92:13.
15. Luke 6:43-44. 13:9. John 15:1-
18. 16. Gal. 6:22, 23. Phil. 1:11.
417. Col. 1:16, 10. Heb. 6:7. 13:15,
16.
c 2 Cor. 8:12. 9:10. 1 Thes. 4:1. 2
Pet. 1:5-8. 3:18.
d 2:33. Judg. 14:12, 13. Ez. 17:2.

Secondly, Fruitful hearers, which is an evidence of their good understanding, which also beareth fruit. We then hear fruit, when we practise according to the Word; when the temper of our minds and the tenor of our lives are conformable to the Gospel we have received, and we do as we are taught.

Thirdly, Not all alike fruitful; some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty: some being more fruitful than others: where there is true grace, yet there are degrees of it; all Christ's scholars are not in the same form. We should aim at the highest degree, to bring forth an hundred-fold, as Isaac's ground did, (Gen. 23: 12,) abounding in the work of the Lord, John 15: 8. But if the ground be good, and the fruit right, the heart honest, and the life of a piece with it, those who bring forth but thirty-fold shall be graciously accepted of God; and it will be fruit abounding to their account, for we are under grace, and not under the law.

Lastly, He closes the parable with a solemn call to attention, (p. 9.) Note, The sense of hearing cannot be better employed than in hearing the word of God. Some are for hearing sweet melody, their ears are only the daughters of music; (Eccl. 12: 4.) there is no melody like

that of the word of God: others are for hearing new things; (Acts 10: 21.) no news like that.

V. 24-43. In these verses, we have, I. Another reason given why Christ preached by parables, (p. 34, 35.)—the time was not yet come, for the more clear and plain discoveries of the mysteries of the kingdom: and without a parable spake He not unto them; namely, at this time, and in this sermon. Note, Christ tries all ways to do good to souls; if men will not be instructed and influenced by plain preaching, He will try them with parables; and the reason here given is, That the Scripture might be fulfilled. The passage quoted, is part of the preface to that historical Psalm, (78: 2.) I will open my mouth in a parable. What David, or Asaph, says there, is accommodated to Christ's sermons; and that great precedent would serve to vindicate this way of preaching from the offence some took at it. Here is, 1. The matter of Christ's preaching; He preached things which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world. The mystery of the Gospel had been hid in God, in his councils and decrees, from the beginning of the world, Eph. 3: 9. Compare Rom. 16: 25. 1 Cor. 2: 7. Col. 1: 26

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 18-23. The good seed should be sown all over the world; though it can bear fruit only on the good ground. But let all who presume to sow it be careful to keep it free from every intermixture: let them sow it liberally, and 'be instant in season, out of season,' whether men will hear or forbear.' For these things they are accountable; but not for success, except as they prevent it by their own misconduct: nor should they be surprised or discouraged, if many hear in vain, or to bad purpose: for this was the case, when our Lord Himself condescended to preach the Gospel.—We should, however, especially look to ourselves, that we may ascertain what sort of hearers we are. We ought to heg of God to prepare our hearts to teach us the value of his Word; to deliver our minds from pride and prejudice; to preserve us from wandering thoughts and vain imaginations; and to impress us with a serious and earnest desire to learn of Him all those things which pertain to salvation. For want of this 'giving earnest heed,' many hearers of the pure Gospel 'receive the seed by the wayside': thus Satan immediately catches it out of their hearts, and no good effect can follow. (Note, Heb. 2: 1-4.) Though this may not be altogether the case with us, yet we should be humbled by the recollection, that it too often is, and has been so. Having therefore gone to hear the word, with a mind prepared by recollection and devotion; and having attended on it with serious and humble reverence; we should seek to preserve it in our hearts, by retirement, meditation, prayer, or pious conversation.—But there are more plausible paths to ruin, than those of the careless, the infidel, or the profligate; numbers of those who are greatly affected, and who are led to make a high profession of the Gospel, are found by the event to have 'had no root in themselves': for without deep humiliation, reverential fear of God, and a solemn sense of eternal things, the evil of sin, and the lost estate of our souls: high affections resemble the joy of a madman, who deems all the magnificent edifices which he sees to be his own. Nothing can so grow in an unhumiliated heart, as to stand the noon-day sun of tribulation

and persecution: many, when thus tried, go out from among God's people, because not of them; whilst some upright Christians are ready to stumble at the truths of God, because such men seem to be exceptions to them. But if this superficial religion will not stand present trials, how will it endure in the day of judgment?—Let us, however, beware of the thorns, as well as of the rock; many a man has 'a name to live,' whom God sees to be dead in sin; many deep convictions, and serious purposes are choked by 'the love of the world, and the things that are in the world.' (Note, 1 John 2: 15-17.) thus no fruit is brought to perfection. Such professed Christians often draw their hope of heaven from the Gospel; but their present comfort is derived from the world. The kingdom of God and his righteousness are placed last: (Note, 6: 32, 33.) and the getting, keeping, and spending of deceitful riches, or anxiety about secular affairs, rob them of their time, and at last, of their souls; for unless the Gospel render us fruitful, it will never bring us to glory. Let us then continually watch and pray against these fatal delusions; and keep at a distance from every degree of this pernicious attachment to worldly objects. Let us be instant in prayer for that 'honest and good heart,' which is the only soil in which the good seed will spring up, and grow, and ripen with a rich increase. This is the grand distinction betwixt the Christian and all other men: and the preachers of the Gospel do as much towards ensuring success to their labors, when employed in earnest prayer to the Lord thus to prepare the people's hearts for the seed, as when faithfully dispensing the Word of life; and in this part of the work, all that love the souls of men may afford them effectual assistance. Nor let it be forgotten, that there are different degrees of fruitfulness among true Christians, to which their own present comfort and future glory will be proportioned: we should therefore 'abide in Christ, that we may bring forth much fruit,' even 'an hundred fold,' that God may be glorified, and that all may know whose disciples we are. (Note, John 15: 6-8.)

SCOTT.

Verse 23.

All this precious seed is not thrown away, nor will 'return void,' or fall to 'prosper in that for which it is sent.' (Note, Is. 55: 10, 11.) 'Some of it falls on good ground, even in an 'honest and good heart,' sincerely desirous of learning, 'be 'truth and will of God, in order to believe and obey. This 'preparation of heart is from the Lord,' and the want of the honest and good heart is the only reason, why the Gospel occasions the condemnation of any who hear it. When the heart is influenced by the fear of God, and a desire of his favor; when it is humble and contrite; when forgiveness and grace are valued more than worldly objects; when sin is hated and dreaded, and deliverance from it earnestly desired; when a man is thus disposed to 'buy the truth' at any price, and to become Christ's disciple at all adventures; then the ground is prepared for the good seed, and nothing can prevent its growth and increase: when it springs up, it will strike deep root, so that persecutions and afflictions, which scorch and wither the seed sown upon the rock, will serve to ripen this for the harvest. He, whose heart is thus prepared, will hear the word of God with earnest prayer to be taught by the Holy Spirit, and to be delivered from prejudice and error; the cares, interests, and pleasures of the world will be subordinated and moderated, with reference to the welfare of the soul; and when they seem ready to injure the believer, or to mar his fruitfulness, he will bestow pains to root them up, as thorns and weeds, lest they should deprive him of his expected increase. Thus the seed will produce a plentiful crop, and he, in whose heart it grows, will 'bring forth fruit with patience,' and 'perseverance in well-doing, even to the end. All, who thus receive the good seed, will manifest their holiness of heart by holy actions. They will not all be alike fruitful; but all

will yield a rich increase of those 'fruits of the Spirit,' which are the effects and evidence of repentance and faith in Christ. These alone are valued by the Sower of the seed, and the Giver of the increase.

'By this parable, Christ teaches the various results of his religion, chiefly among the Jews; what would be the principal impediments to it, and what those should avoid or perform, who might desire to share in the felicity promised to the friends and followers of the Messiah.'

ROSENMULLER.

Hundred fold.] 'The land in the East generally yields ten fold, rarely twenty or thirty; but Gen. 26: 12. an hundred fold. Herodotus, Strabo and Pliny mentioned the increase of crops at the rate of one hundred and fifty, two hundred, and even three hundred fold. This great increase is owing to the circumstance of the kernels being put into the soil at a distance from each other, so as to send out several stalks (Gen. 41: 5, 47.) some of which, (according to Pliny) have from three to four hundred ears; and in Africa at the present time, they bear at least ten and fifteen.'

JAHN.

In all congregations, where the true Word of God has been preached hitherto, there have been these four sorts of hearers; and no others are conceivable. So that we may consider the parable as a remarkable prophecy, the accomplishment of which continually proves the truth of the sacred Scripture.

SCOTT.

Verses 24-30.

It is not certainly known what is meant by the word rendered *tares*; but it is evident, that the pulse at present called *tares*, or *weeds*, was not intended; otherwise the tares might early and certainly have been known, and eradicated without danger; and if permitted to grow up

them, saying, ^bThe kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed ^cgood seed in his field:

25 But while ^dmen slept, his ^eenemy came and sowed ^ftares among the wheat, and went his way.

26 But ^gwhen the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

27 So ^hthe servants of the householder came, and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from ⁱwhence then hath it tares?

28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, ^jWilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

30 Let ^kboth grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say ^lto the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, ^mand bind them

If we delight in the records of ancient things, and in the revelation of secret things, how welcome should the Gospel be to us, which has in it such antiquity and such mystery! It was from the foundation of the world wrapt up in types and shadows, which are now done away; and those secret things are now become such things revealed, as *belong to us and to our children*, Deut. 29: 29. 2. The manner of Christ's preaching by parables; wise sayings, but figurative, and which help to engage attention and a diligent search. Solomon's sententious dictates, which are full of similitudes, are called *Proverbs or parables*; the same word; but in this, as in other things, *Behold a greater than Solomon is here, in whom are hid treasures of wisdom!*

II. The parable of the tares, and the exposition of it; the exposition explains the parable, and the parable the exposition.

Observe, 1. The disciples' request to have this parable expounded; (v. 36.) *Jesus sent the multitude away*; and it is to be feared many went away no wiser than they came. It is sad to think how many go away from sermons with the word of grace in their ears, but not the work of grace in their hearts. Christ went into the house, not so much for his own repose, as for particular converse with his disciples, whose instruction He chiefly intended in all his preaching; the disciples laid hold on the opportunity, and came to Him. Note, Those who would be wise, must be wise to discern and improve their opportunities of converse with Christ, of converse with Him alone, in secret meditation and prayer. It is very good to talk over what we have heard, and by familiar discourse to help one another understand and remember it, and be affected with it; we lose the benefit of many a sermon by vain and unprofitable discourse after it. See Luke 24: 32. Deut. 6: 6, 7. It is especially good to ask of ministers the meaning of the Word, for their tips should keep knowledge, Mal. 2: 7. Private conference would contribute much to our profiting by public preaching. Nathan's *Thou art the man*, was that which touched David to the heart.

The disciples' request was, *Declare unto us the parable of the tares*. It is probable they apprehended the general scope of the parable, but desired to understand it more particularly, and to be assured that they took it right. Note, Those who are rightly disposed for Christ's teaching, are sensible of their ignorance, and sincerely desirous to be taught. He will teach the humble, (Ps. 25: 8, 9,) but will for this be inquired of. If any man lack instruction, let him ask it of God. Christ had expounded the foregoing parable unasked. Note, The mercies we have received must be improved, both for direction what to pray for, and for our encouragement in prayer. The first light and the first grace are given in a preventing or anticipating way; further degrees of both which must be daily prayed for.

2. The exposition Christ gave; the drift of the parable is, to represent to us the present and

future state of the kingdom of heaven, the gospel-church; Christ's care of it, the devil's enmity against it, the mixture that there is in it of good and bad in this world, and the separation between them in the other world. Note The visible church is the kingdom of heaven; though there be many hypocrites in it, Christ rules in it as a King; and there is a remnant in it, that are the subjects and heirs of heaven, from whom, as the better part, it is denominated: the church is the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Let us go over the particulars of the exposition.

He that sows the good seed is the Son of man. Note, Whatever good seed there is in the world it all comes from the hand of Christ, and is of his sowing: truths preached, graces planted, souls sanctified, are good seed, and all owing to Christ. Ministers are instruments in Christ's hand to sow good seed; are employed by Him and under Him, and the success of their labors depends purely on his blessing; so that it may well be said, It is Christ, and no other, that sows the good seed; *He is the Son of man*, one of us, that his terror might not make us afraid; the Son of man, the Mediator, that has authority.

The field is the world; a large field, capable of bringing forth good fruit; the more is it to be lamented that it brings forth so much bad fruit: the world here is the visible church, scattered all the world over, not confined to one nation. Observe, In the parable it is called *his field*; the world is Christ's field, for all things are delivered unto Him of the Father: whatever power and interest the devil has in the world, it is usurped and unjust; when Christ comes to take possession, He comes whose right it is; it is his field, and because it is his, He took care to sow it with good seed.

The good seed are the children of the kingdom, true saints. They are, 1. The children of the kingdom; not in profession only, as the Jews were, (ch. 8: 12,) but in sincerity; incorporated in faith and obedience to Jesus Christ, the great King of the church. 2. They are the good seed, precious as seed; (Ps. 126: 6,) the holy seed, Isa. 6: 13. The seed is that from which fruit is expected; what fruit of honor and service God has from this world, He has from the saints, whom He has sowed unto Himself in the earth, Hos. 2: 23.

The tares are the children of the wicked one. Here is the character of sinners, hypocrites, and all profane and wicked people. They are the children of the devil, as a wicked one; they bear his image, do his lusts; he rules over them, he works in them, Eph. 2: 2. John 8: 44. They are tares; but unprofitable in themselves, and hurtful to the good seed: they are weeds in the garden, have the same rain, and sunshine, and soil, with the good plants, but are good for nothing: *the tares are among the wheat*. Note, God has so ordered it, that good and bad should be mixed together in this world, that the good may be exercised, the bad left inexcusable, and a difference made between earth and heaven.

b 33, 44, 45, 47. 3: 2. 20: 1. 22: 2. 25: 1. Mark 4: 30. Luke 13: 18, 20. c 19: 37. 4: 23. Col. 1: 15. 1 Pet. 1: 23. d 25. 1a. 5: 29. 10. Acts 20: 30. 11. Gal. 2: 4. 2 Tim. 4: 3-5. Heb. 12: 15. 2 Pet. 2: 1. Rev. 2: 20. e 28. 2 Cor. 11: 13-15. 1 Pet. 5: 8. Rev. 12: 9. 13: 14. f 23. g Mark 4: 26-29. h 28. 3: 5-9. 12: 29. 29. 16: 10. 2 Cor. 5: 18-20. 6: 1, 4. Eph. 4: 11, 12. i Rom. 16: 17. 1 Cor. 1: 11-13. 15: 12. Gal. 5: 1-3. Jam. 5: 16, 4. j 4. k Luke 9: 49-54. 1 Cor. 5: 3-7. 2 Cor. 2: 6-11. 1 Thes. 5: 14. Jude 22, 23. l 39. 3: 12. 22: 10-14. 25: 6-13, 32. Mal. 3: 18. 1 Cor. 4: 45. m 38. 1 Sam. 25: 29.

harvest, they would have been too valuable to be burnt. Some useless noxious weed must therefore be signified, which could not so easily be distinguished from the blade of the wheat.

(25.) *Tares*. 'A kind of bad and hurtful plant, which spoiled the corn in Palestine, and is unknown in these days.' Quot. in Leigh.—A kind of plant very well known in Palestine; the seed of which was not unlike wheat, and the plant growing from it had the same greenness and stalk as wheat; but it brought forth no fruit, or certainly not good fruit.' Schleusener. It is used in this chapter only.

(24.) *Kingdom of heaven*. 'The success of the Gospel's dispensation.' (See ch. 3: 2.)

While men slept. JAHN understands it of a 'nap at noon,' it being common with orientals to sleep in the middle of the day.

Tares. 'Doubtless durnel, a noxious weed which bears a strong resemblance to wheat. "It is well known," says Mr. Forskal, "to the people of Aleppo. It grows among corn. If the seeds remain mixed with the meal, they occasion dizziness to those who eat of the meal." The reapers do not separate the plant; but, after the threshing, they reject the seeds by means of a van or sieve.' Other travellers say, that, in some parts of Syria, it is drawn up by the hand in harvest.

And went his way. 'There is something very expressive in this. He knew the soil; he knew how the seed would take root, and grow. He had only to sow the seed, and let it alone. So Satan knows the soil, which he sows his doctrine. He knows that in the human heart it

will take deep and rapid root. It needs but little culture. Grace needs constant attendance and care. Error, and sin, and hypocrisy, are the native products of the human heart; and, when left alone, start up with deadly luxury.

BARNES. (28.) *An enemy*. 'The envious man.' GENEVAY VERSION. 'It is the interest of Satan to introduce hypocrites and wicked persons into religious societies, in order to discredit the work of God, and favor his own designs.' But in removing them, 'a zeal which is rash and precipitate, is as much to be feared, as the total lack of strict discipline.'

Dr. A. CLARK. (29.) *But He said, Nay*. 'God judges otherwise than men of the mixture of good and evil in the world: He knows the good which He intends to produce from it, and how to extend his patience with the wicked, in order to their conversion, or the further sanctification of the righteous. Men often persecute a true Christian, intending only to persecute an impious person. "A zeal for the extirpation of heretics and wicked men," said a pious papist, "not regulated by these words of our blessed Savior, allows no time for the one to grow in goodness, or to the other to forsake their evil courses. They are of a spirit very opposite to his, who care not if they root up wheat, provided they can but gather up tares." That zeal which tends to persecute others for religious opinions, is not less a seed of the devil, than is a bad opinion of itself.'

(30.) 'Hersey Christ would not take away the office of the magistrate, in punishing the wicked, (Rom. 13: 4.) nor of the church, in the exercise of discipline, (1 Cor. 5: 7,) but gives to understand that men

in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn.

[Practical Observations.]

31 ¶ Another parable ¶ put he forth unto them, saying, 'The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field;

32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds; but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree; so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

33 ¶ Another parable spake he unto them: The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

o 35:41. Is. 27:10, 11. Ez. 15:4-7.
John 15:6.
p 2:12. Luke 3:17.
q 24. Luke 13:11. 20:9.
r Mark 4:30-32. Luke 13:13, 19.
s Ps. 72:15-23. Is. 22:4-44. Mic. 4:1-5. Dan. 2:34, 35, 44. Eccl. 4:1-3. Zech. 4:10. 8:20-23. 14:7-12. 12:1-11. 21:20. Gr. Rom. 15:1-19. Rev. 13:15.
t Ez. 17:23-24. 31:6. Dan. 4:12.
u Luke 13:21. 1 Cor. 5:7, 7 Gal. 5:9.
v Gr. A measure containing about a peck and a half, wanting a little more than a pint.
w Prov. 4:18. Hos. 6:3. John 15:2. 16:13, 13. Phil. 1:6, 9. 2:13-15. 1 Thes. 5:23, 24. 2 Pet. 8:18.

and discern between the sincere and the hypocrite; then you may say, This is wheat, and that tares.

4. The servants, when they were aware of it, complained to their master; (v. 27.) Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? No doubt he did; whatever is amiss in the church, we are sure it is not of Christ: considering the seed which Christ sows, we may well ask, with wonder, Whence should these tares come? Note, The rise of errors, the breaking out of scandals,

must use prudence therein: and that the hypocrite and wicked cannot be wholly removed; since sometimes they cannot well be distinguished from true believers, as the blasted corn can hardly be distinguished from the good when it first comes up.

Verses 31, 32.

A grain of mustard-seed is one of the least seeds men sow in the fields; yet in deep and rich soils it will produce a plant of very great size; so large, that they who have not seen it, have seldom an adequate conception of the propriety of the similitude. 'There was a stock of mustard-seed in Sichin, from which sprang out three boughs, of which one was broke off, and covered the tent of a potter, and produced three calks of mustard.' R. Simon.—'A stock of mustard-seed was in my field, into which was used to climb, and men do into a fig-tree.' R. Calippa in Whittier.—The author has seen plants of mustard, in the deep and rich soil of some low lands in Lincolnshire, [England,] larger than most shrubs, and almost like a small tree. Probably in the eastern countries, it is the largest plant from the smallest seed, which has yet been noticed. This rendered it peculiarly fit to represent the Gospel-dispensation; which, from very small beginnings, when its poor, unlearned, unarmed, and despised preachers had all the power, wealth, learning, wickedness, and false religion in the world against them, soon grew so large as to overspread whole nations, subvert the deep-rooted foundations of ancient idolatry, and take the place of the Mosaic dispensation; and which are long to fill the whole earth. It also illustrates the effect of the Gospel in any place where it is fully and faithfully dispensed. It begins in 'a day of small things'; but, as one after another is converted, the examples, prayers, and endeavors of this company render it prevalent, and it diffuses its influence all around.

SCOTT.

'Like a grain of mustard-seed, was proverbial for expressing a very small quantity.'

CAMPBELL.

'The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard-seed.' [This parable is the representation of the progress of the Gospel in the world, and of the growth of grace in the soul. That grace which leads the soul to the fulness of glory, may begin, and often does, in a single good desire—a wish to escape hell, or a desire to enjoy God in heaven.]

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(32.) The least:—That is, one of the least, and so small, that it

The enemy that sowed the tares is the devil; a sworn enemy to Christ and all that is good, an enemy to the field of the world, which he endeavors to make his own, by sowing his tares in it. Ever since he became a wicked spirit himself, he has been industrious to promote wickedness, and made it his business therein to counterwork Christ.

Now concerning the sowing of the tares, observe in the parable,

1. That they were sown while men slept. Magistrates, ministers slept, who should have prevented this mischief. Note, Satan watches all opportunities, to propagate vice and profaneness. The prejudice he does to particular persons is when reason and conscience sleep; we have therefore need to be sober, and vigilant. It was in the night. Note, Satan rules in the darkness of this world; that gives him an opportunity to sow tares, Ps. 104:20. It was while men slept; and there is no remedy, for men must have some sleeping time. Note, It is as impossible for us to prevent hypocrites being in the church, as it is for the husbandman, when he is asleep, to hinder an enemy from spoiling his field.

2. The enemy, when he had sown the tares, went his way, (v. 25.) that it might not be known who did it. Note, When Satan is doing the greatest mischief, he studies most to conceal himself; for his design is in danger of being spoiled if he be seen in it; therefore when he comes to sow tares, he transforms himself into an angel of light, 2 Cor. 11:13, 14. He went his way, as if he had done no harm; such is the way of the adulterous woman, Prov. 30:20. Observe, So prone is fallen man to sin, that if the enemy sow the tares, he may even go his way, they will spring up of themselves and do hurt; whereas, when good seed is sown, it must be tended, watered, and fenced, or it will come to nothing.

3. The tares appeared not, till the blades sprung up, and brought forth fruit, v. 26. There is a great deal of wickedness in the hearts of men, which is long hid under the cloak of a plausible profession, but breaks out at last. When a trying time comes, when fruit is to be brought forth, when good is to be done that has difficulty and hazard attending it, then you will return to nothing.

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was proverbially used, to signify, a very little thing. (Compare Matt. 17:20. Lightfoot, Rom. Heb.)

'The smallest of such as are apt to grow unto a lignified abundance.' Sir T. Brown.

Greatest among herbs. 'Since Jesus had ignorant auditors, whom He nevertheless wished to admonish, on the one hand, of the slow progress of his doctrine, and on the other, of very numerous multitudes of followers, which might be certainly expected: and yet could not always express this without circumlocution; lest by the former He should damp their good-will, and by the latter should seem a boaster, and be thought to utter incredibilities: He therefore propounded certain similitudes, which, when hereafter recalled to their memory, would make them perceive that there was no wonder the thing should be so; for He had predicted it. Such discourses were at length perfectly comprehended by those who knew the event, and saw the vicissitudes of the Christian Church. These too, when they perceived events correspond to the words of Jesus, might easily be convinced of the authority and divine legation of Him, who had so exactly adumbrated all these things.'

ROSENMULLER.

Verses 33.

(Luke 13:20, 21.) Leaven is generally used in Scripture, as the emblem of corrupt doctrine, or wickedness; (16:15-12. 1 Cor. 5:6-8. Gal. 5:7-12, &c.) yet here it represents the truth at a grain of God. This circumstance should warn men not to overstrain the emblems and parables of Scripture, or apply them without careful discrimination. The word of God, when received into the heart by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, gradually changes the judgment, affections, conduct, and conversation. Though these were before carnal, sensual, proud, selfish, envious, and ungodly; they now receive a heavenly savor: the thoughts, desires, pursuits, and discourse gradually become humble, and holy, and spiritual: the Christian learns to attend to his worldly affairs, possessions, comforts, and relative duties after a heavenly manner; and this change is progressive, till perfected in heaven.—The former parable represents the kingdom of heaven as set up in the world, this shews us the nature of it as it is set up in the heart.

SCOTT.

Three measures.] 'That is, an ephah. Ex. 16:36. and Ruth 2:17 'It was an ephah of barley.' Where the Targum reads, 'As it was three measures of barley.' LIGHTFOOT.

34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them:

35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, "I will open my mouth in parables; but I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world."

[Practical Observations.]

36 ¶ Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, "Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field."

37 He answered and said unto them, "He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;

38 The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one;

39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels.

¶ 13. Mark 4:33, 34. z. 14. 21:4, 5. Ps. 78:2. b. Ps. 119:10. Is. 42:9. Am. 3:7. Rom. 16:25, 26. 1 Cor. 2:7. Eph. 3:3, 9. Col. 1:25, 26. 2 Tim. 1:10, 11. Tit. 1:2, 3. Heb. 11:1. 1 Pet. 1:11, 12. c. 25:24. John 17:24. Acta 15:18. 1 Pet. 1:20, 11. Rev. 18:18. 17:8. d. 14:12. 16:39. Mark 6:45. 8:9. e. 1:9, 9. Mark 4:34. f. 11. 15:14, 15. Mark 7:17. John 16:17-20. g. 24:27. h. 1:10, 10. 16:13-16. Luke 10:16. John 18:20. 20:21. Acta 1:8. Rom. 15:18. 1 Cor. 3:5-7. Heb. 11:2, 3. 12:14. 12:14. 18:8-20. Mark 15:15-20. Luke 24:47. Rom. 10:18. 16:26. Col. 1:5. Rev. 14:6. i. Ps. 24:20. Is. 53:10. Hos. 2:23. Zech. 10:8, 9. John 11:12, 12. 12:24. Ro. 8:17. Jam. 1:18. 2:5. 1 Pet. 2:2. 2 Cor. 12:19. 13:14, 15. 20:2, 2. 21:11, 12. 2 Thes. 2:21, 11. 1 Pet. 5:8. Rev. 12:9. 13:14, 19-20. 20:2, 2, 7-10. j. 49:24, 25. Rev. 14:15. k. 25:31. Dan. 7:10. 2 Thes. 1:7, 10. Jude 14.

Verdes 34, 35.

(Ps. 49: 1-4. 78: 2.) What the Psalmist spake of himself, when instructing the people under the influence of the Holy Spirit, was also fulfilled, when Christ taught the people by parables: for under these He set before them those deep mysteries, which had been kept secret from the beginning; which neither prophets nor patriarchs had fully understood: and which many would afterwards remember to have heard from Him, when the event had in part developed their meaning. (Morg. Ref.)

(34.) All these things spake Jesus in parables.] "Divine things cannot be taught to man but through the medium of earthly things." "I could speak to us in that language which is peculiar to heaven, clothing those ideas which angelic minds form, how little should we comprehend of the things so described! How great is our privilege in seeing thus taught! Heavenly things in the parables of Christ assume to themselves a body, and thus render themselves palpable."

Verdes 36-43.

As the parable of the sower represents what is wrong in the visible church (even where the true Gospel is faithfully preached,) through

cd; every man's ground, and seed, and skill, and industry, will be manifested: see Gal. 6: 7, 8. Then they who sowed precious seed, will come again with rejoicing, (Ps. 126: 5, 6.) with the joy of harvest; (Isa. 9: 3.) when the sluggard, who would not plough by reason of cold, shall beg, and have nothing; (Prov. 20: 4.) shall cry, Lord, Lord, but in vain; when the harvest of those who sowed to the flesh, shall be a day of grief and desperate sorrow, Isa. 17: 11.

The reapers are the angels; they shall be employed, in the great day, in executing Christ's righteous sentences, both of approbation and condemnation, ch. 25: 31. The angels are skilful, strong, and swift, obedient servants to Christ, holy enemies to the wicked, and faithful friends to all the saints; therefore fit to be thus employed. He that reapeth receiveth wages, and the angels will not be unpaid for their attendance; for he that soweth, and he that reapeth, shall rejoice together; (John 4: 36.) that is joy in heaven, in the presence of the angels of God.

Hell torments are the fire, into which the tares shall then be cast, and in which they shall be burned. At the great day a distinction will be made, and with it a vast difference; it will be a notable day indeed.

1. The tares will then be gathered out: The reapers shall be charged first to gather out the tares. Though good and bad are together in this world undistinguished, yet at the great day no tares shall be among the wheat; no sinners among the saints: then shall you plainly discern between the righteous and the wicked, Mal. 3: 18. 4: 1. Christ will not bear always, Ps. 50: 1, &c. They shall gather out of his kingdom all wicked things that offend, and all wicked persons that do iniquity: when He begins, He will make a full end. All those corrupt doctrines, worships, and practices, which have offended, shall be condemned by the righteous Judge in that day, and consumed by the brightness of his coming; all the wood, hay, and stubble; (1 Cor. 3: 12.) and then woe to them that do iniquity, that make a trade of it, and persist in it. Perhaps here is an allusion to Zeph. 1: 3. I will consume the stumbling-blocks with the wicked.

2. They will then be bound in bundles, v. 30. Sinners of the same sort will be put together. Those who have been associates in sin, will be so in shame and sorrow; and it will be an aggravation of their misery, as the society of glorified saints will add to their bliss. Let us pray, as David, Lord, gather not my soul with sinners, (Ps. 26: 9.) but let it be bound in the bundle of life with the Lord our God, 1 Sam. 25: 29.

3. They will be cast into a furnace of fire; such will be the end of the wicked; they are fit for nothing but fire; to it they must go. Note, Hell is a furnace of fire, kindled by the wrath of God; and the tares cast into it will be ever in the consuming, but never consumed. But He slides out of the metaphor into a description of those torments that are designed to be set forth by it: There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth; comfortless sorrow, and an incurable indignation at God, themselves, and one another, will be the endless torture of damned souls. Let us therefore, knowing these terrors of the Lord, be persuaded not to do iniquity.

Heaven is the barn into which all God's wheat shall be gathered in that harvest-day v. 39. Old-Testament saints, and New-Testament saints, not one missing; Gather my saints! (Ps. 50: 5.) particular souls are housed at death as a shock of corn, (Job 5: 26.) but the general-gathering will be at the end of time: God's wheat will then be put together; there will be sheaves of corn, as well as bundles of tares: they will then be secured, and no longer exposed: no longer at a distance, in the field, but near, in the barn. Nay, heaven is a garner (ch. 3: 12.) in which the wheat will not only be separated from the tares of ill companions, but sifted from the chaff of their own corruptions.

In the explanation of th parable, this is gloriously represented; v. 43. First, It is their present honor, that God is their Father. Now are we the sons of God; (1 John 3: 2.) our Father in heaven is King there. Christ, when He went to heaven, went to his Father, and our Father, John 20: 17. It is our Father's house, nay, it is our Father's palace, his throne, Rev. 3: 21. Secondly, The honor in reserve for them is, that they shall shine forth as the sun in that kingdom. Here they are obscure and hidden; (Col. 3: 3.) their weaknesses and infirmities, and the reproach and disgrace cast on them, cloud them; but then they shall shine forth as the sun from behind a dark cloud: their bodies will be made like Christ's glorious body; their sanctification will be perfected, and their justification published; God will own them for his children, and will produce the record of all their services and sufferings for his name: they shall shine as the sun, the most glorious of all visible objects. Those who shine as lights in this world, that God may be glorified, shall shine as the sun in the other world, that they may be glorified. Our Savior concludes as before, with a demand of attention; Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. These are things which it is our happiness to hear of, and our duty to hearken to.

III. The parable of the grain of mustard-seed, v. 31, 32. The scope of this parable is to show that the beginnings of the Gospel would be small, but that its latter end would greatly increase. In this way the gospel-church, the kingdom of God among us, would be set up in the world; in this way the work of grace in the heart, the kingdom of God within us, would be carried on in particular persons.

Now concerning the work of the Gospel, observe,

1. It is commonly very weak and small at first, like a grain of mustard-seed, which is one of the least of all seeds. The kingdom of the Messiah was now but small; Christ only and the apostles. In particular places, the first breaking out of the gospel-light is but as the dawning of the day; and in particular souls, it is at first the day of small things, like a bruised reed. Young converts are like lambs that must be carried in the arms, Isa. 40: 11. There is a little faith, but there is much lacking in it, (1 Thess. 3: 10.) and the groanings such as cannot be uttered, they are so small; a principle of spiritual life, and some motion, but scarcely discernible.

2. Yet it is growing. Christ's kingdom strangely got ground; great accessions were

the subtlety of Satan, and the depravity of the human heart; so that of the tares represents the fatal effects of false teachers and doctrine, drawing men off from the truth, or prejudicing them against it.—The counterfeit characters, mentioned, are the genuine produce of false doctrine and distorted views of Christianity, which Satan propagates in the world: even as true believers are the produce of the real Gospel, attended by the influence of the Holy Spirit. The truths contained in these parables are universally interesting, and infinitely important: and every man in the world is concerned to attend to them, as he values the salvation of his soul.

(36.) "Some learned men are of opinion, that the whole of this parable refers to the Jewish state and people: and that the words which are commonly translated the end of the world, should be rendered the end of the age, viz. the end of the Jewish polity. That the words have this meaning in other places, there can be no doubt; and this may be their primary meaning here: but there are other matters in the parable which agree far better with the consummation of all things, than with the end of the Jewish dispensation and polity. See on Mark 1: 29."

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40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire: so shall it be in the end of this world.

41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity;

42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

[Practical Observations.]

44 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like

made to it: nations born at once, in spite of all opposition. In the soul where grace is true, it will grow really, though perhaps insensibly. A grain of mustard-seed is small, but, however, it is seed, and has in it a disposition to grow. Grace will be getting ground, shining more and more, Prov. 4: 18. Gracious habits confirmed, actions quickened, and knowledge more clear, faith more confirmed, love more inflamed; here is the seed growing.

3. It will at last come to a great degree of strength and usefulness: *when it is grown, it becomes a tree, much larger in those countries than in ours.* The church, like the vine brought out of Egypt, has taken root, and filled the earth; (Ps. 80: 9-11.) it is like a great tree, in which the fowls of the air lodge; God's people have recourse to it for food and rest, shade and shelter. In particular persons, the principle of grace, if true, will persevere and be perfected at last: growing grace will be strong grace, and bring much to pass. Grown Christians must covet to be useful to others, that those who dwell near or under their shadow, may be the better for them, Hos. 14: 7.

IV. The parable of the *leaven*, v. 33. The scope of this is much the same with that of the foregoing, to show that the Gospel should prevail and be successful by degrees, but silently and insensibly: the preaching of the Gospel is like leaven, and works like leaven in the hearts of those who receive it.

A woman took this leaven, it was her work. The woman is the weaker vessel, and we have this treasure in such vessels.

The leaven was hid in three measures of meal: leaven among corn unground does not work, nor does the gospel in souls unhumiliated and unbroken for sin: the law grinds the heart, and then the gospel leavens it. It is three measures of meal, a great quantity, for a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Our hearts must be broken, and pains taken with them to prepare them for the Word, that they may receive the impressions of it. This leaven must be hid in the heart, (Ps. 119: 11.) not so much for secrecy (for it will show itself) as for safety: our inward thought must be upon it, we must lay it up, as Mary laid up the sayings of Christ, Luke 2: 51. When the woman hides the leaven in the meal, it is with an intention that it should communicate its power to it; so we must treasure up the word in our souls, that we may be sanctified by it, John 17: 17.

The leaven thus hid in the dough, works there, it ferments; the Word is quick and powerful, Heb. 4: 12. The leaven works speedily, so does the Word, and yet gradually. What a sudden change did Elijah's mantle make

on Elisha! 1 Kings 19: 20. It works silently and insensibly, (Mark 4: 26.) yet strongly and irresistibly: it does its work without noise, for so is the way of the Spirit, but does it without fail. Hide but the leaven in the dough, and all the world cannot hinder it from communicating its power to it, and yet none sees how it is done, but by degrees the whole is leavened.

Thus it was in the world. The apostles by their preaching, hid a handful of leaven in the great mass of mankind, and it had a strange effect; it put the world into a ferment, in a sense turned it upside down, (Acts 17: 6.) and by degrees made a wonderful change in the condition of it: the savor of the Gospel was manifested in every place, 2 Cor. 2: 14. Rom. 15: 19. It was thus effectual, not by outward force, and therefore not by any such force resistible and conquerable, but by the Spirit of the Lord of hosts, who works and none can hinder.

Thus it is in the heart. When the Gospel comes into the soul, 1. It works a change, not in the substance, the dough is the same, but in the quality; it makes us to savor otherwise than we have done, and other things to savor with us otherwise than they used to do, Rom. 8: 5. 2. It works a universal change; it diffuses itself into all the powers and faculties of the soul, and alters the property even of the members of the body, Rom. 6: 13. 3. This change is such as makes the soul to partake of the nature of the Word, as the dough does of the leaven. We are delivered into it as into a mould, (Rom. 6: 17.) changed into the same image, (2 Cor. 3: 18.) like the impression of the seal on the wax. The gospel savors of God, and Christ, and free grace, and another world, and these things now relish with the soul. It is a word of faith and repentance, holiness and love, and these are wrought in the soul by it. This savor is communicated insensibly, for our life is hid; but inseparably, for grace is a good part that shall never be taken away from those who have it. When dough is leavened, then to the oven; trials and afflictions commonly attend this change; but thus saints are fitted to be bread for our Master's table.

V. 44-52. We have four short parables in these verses:

I. That of the treasure hid in the field. Hitherto He had compared the kingdom of heaven to small things, because its beginning was small; but, lest any should thence take occasion to think meanly of it, in this parable and the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 24-30, 36-43. Besides the dangers to which men are exposed, even where the good seed is sown, there is also another set of dangers, from the bad seed, which the enemy is continually endeavoring to sow in the same field. Though the servants be watchful, this enemy will find time to work. In the very place where the truth is preached, and while the hearts of people are open to receive it, by false but plausible teachers, Satan takes care to inculcate false sentiments. Often it is one of his arts, in a revival of religion, to spread secretly dangerous notions respecting true piety. Multitudes are persuaded that they are Christians, and are deceived. They are awakened, convicted, and alarmed. They take this for conversion. Or, they find their burden gone; or hear a voice; or a text of Scripture is brought to them, saying their sins are forgiven; or they see Christ, in vision, on the cross; or dream their sins are forgiven—and suppose they are Christians. But none of these things are a conclusive evidence of possessing real religion. All these may be, without true love of God, or

Christ, and no real hatred of sin, and change of heart. An enemy may have done it, to deceive them, and to bring dishonor on religion. BARNES.—The devil has often succeeded, in bringing in furious controversies and accursed persecutions, under pretence of opposing and eradicating heresies; and perfect purity must not be expected till we come to heaven. At length, however, an awful separation will be made: and then the angels of our glorious Judge will gather out of his kingdom all that offend and work iniquity, and cast them into a furnace of fire, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. What a dreadful event will this be to the hypocrite and the deceiver, who will perish miserably with all those, who have been stumbled, prejudiced, deceived, and hardened by them! But, what a blessed event will this be for the true believer, who will then shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of his Father! May this be our happy case, and may increasing numbers consider these things for their good!

SCOTT.

(41.) His angels.] The reader will observe the high idea our Lord here gives them of Himself, when He speaks of the angels as his attendants, who were at the last day to wait on Him, and at his order to assemble the whole world before Him.

[That offend.] Properly stumbling-blocks, or impediments; also, metaphorically, whatever makes any one stumble or fall in his Christian principles. Here it plainly signifies not things but persons. Campbell renders it seducers. It denotes false teachers, such as are censured by Peter and Jude, who, under the semblance of Christian liberty, inculcated doctrines repugnant to natural virtue, and held it among things indifferent.

(42.) Furnace of fire.] An allusion to the oriental custom of burning alive, mentioned by Daniel 3: 10, where Theodotus translates the Hebrew into the same Greek words used here, as does also the Septuagint, at v. 11. These expressions, however, are not to be taken literally. For the wicked will have no longer flesh and blood; they can neither be burned, nor gnash with the teeth, &c. We are to in-

derstand the words metaphorically. Euthymius judiciously points out that it denotes misery not to be expressed by human language. Punishments are meant, as exquisite in degree, as burning is to our present bodies.

Verse 44. The nature of the 'kingdom of heaven,' as it is set up in the world and in the heart, and as it is counteracted by human depravity and by false doctrine, has been shown: here, its privileges and blessings, and the way in which we obtain admission into it, are illustrated. In this view, 'the kingdom of heaven' is like an immense 'treasure, concealed in a field.' This represents the invaluable blessings of the Gospel, which suffice to render us rich and happy to all eternity: these are contained in the sacred Scriptures; yet multitudes have access to them, without being aware of the unsearchable riches they contain. But when a man is brought to a proper sense of his own character, state, and wants, and becomes in earnest about eternal life, he begins to search the word of God with greater diligence and care; and thus dis-

unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found he hideth, and, for joy thereof, goeth and sell-eth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

15 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant-man seeking goodly pearls;

46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

b 13:21, 27, 29. Luke 14:33. 18:23, 24. 19:5-8. Acts 2:44-47. 4:32-35. Phil. 3:7-9. Heb. 10:34. 11:24-26. c Ps. 23:2. 119:51. Rev. 3:18. d 10:25. 22:5. Prov. 3:13-18. 8:10. 11:18-20. e 13:44. Ps. 46:7. 39:6, 7. Ec. 2:2-12. 12:13. f Is. 33:8. 1 Cor. 3:21-23. Eph. 3:1. Col. 2:3. 1 John 5:11, 12. Rev. 2:21. g Mark 10:28-31. Luke 18:28-30. Acts 20:24. Gal. 6:14.

5:19.) have discovered such a treasure in this field, as makes it infinitely more valuable.

Those who discern this treasure in the field, and value it aright, will never be easy till they have made it their own. He that has found this treasure, hides it, which denotes a holy jealousy, *lest we come short*, (Heb. 4:1.) *looking diligently*, (Heb. 12:15.) lest Satan come between us and it. He rejoices in it, that he is in a fair way to have an interest in Christ; that the matter is in treaty: *their hearts may rejoice*, who are yet *but seeking the Lord*, Ps. 105:3. He resolves to *buy this field* for the sake of the unseen treasure in it. And so intent he is on it, that *he sells all to buy this field*: they who would have saving benefit by Christ, must be willing to part with all, that they may make it sure to themselves; *must count every thing but loss, that they may win Christ, and be found in him*.

II. That of the *pearl of price*, (v. 45, 46.) which is to the same purport with the former, of the treasure. *The dream is thus doubled, for the thing is certain*.

Note, 1. All men are busy, *seeking goodly pearls*: one would be rich, another honorable, another learned; but most are imposed on, and take up with counterfeits for pearls.

2. Jesus Christ is a *Pearl of great price*, a Jewel of inestimable value, which will make those who have it rich, truly rich, rich toward God: in having

next He represents it as of great value in itself, and of great advantage to those who embrace it; it is here likened to a *treasure hid in the field*, which, if we will, we may make our own.

Jesus Christ is the true Treasure; in Him is all *fulness*; (Col. 1:19. John 1:16.) *treasures of wisdom and knowledge*, (Col. 2:3.) of righteousness, grace, and peace; these are laid up for us in Christ; and, if we have an interest in Him, it is all our own.

The gospel is the field in which this treasure is hid. In gospel-ordinances it is hid as the milk in the breast, the marrow in the bone, the manna in the dew; as the water in the well; (Isa. 12:3.) *as the honey in the honey-comb*. It is hid, not in a garden inclosed, or a spring shut up, but in a field, an open field; *whoever will, let him come, and search the Scriptures*; let him dig in this field, Prov. 2:4.

It is a great thing to discover the treasure hid in this field, and the unspeakable value of it; the richest mines are often in grounds that appear most barren; and therefore many will not so much as go for the field, much less come up to the price. *What is thy beloved more than another beloved?* What is the Bible more than other good books? The gospel of Christ more than Plato's philosophy, or Confucius' morals? But those who have searched the Scriptures, so as in them to find Christ and eternal life, (John

Him, we have enough to make us happy here and forever.

3. A true Christian is a spiritual *merchant*, that does not take up with any thing short of an interest in Christ, and, as one that is resolved to be spiritually rich, trades high: *He went and bought that pearl*; did not only bid for it, but purchased it. What will it avail us to know Christ, if we do not know Him as ours, *made to us Wisdom?* 1 Cor. 1:30.

4. Those who would have a saving interest in Christ, must be willing to part with all for Him. Whatever stands in opposition to Christ, or in competition with Him, we must cheerfully quit, though ever so dear to us. A man may buy gold too dear, but not this Pearl of price.

III. That of the *net cast into the sea*, v. 47-49. The parable itself. Where note, The world is a vast sea, and the children of men are things creeping innumerable, both small and great, in that sea, Ps. 104:25. Men in their natural state are like the fishes of the sea that have no ruler over them, Hab. 1:14. The preaching of the gospel is the casting of a net into this sea, to catch something. Ministers are *fishers of men*, employed in casting and drawing this net; and then they speed, when at Christ's word they let down the net; otherwise, they toil and catch nothing. This net gathers of every kind, trash and rubbish, as well as fish. There is a time coming when this net will be full, and drawn to the shore; a set time when the Gospel shall have fulfilled that for which it was sent, and we are sure it shall not return void, Isa. 65:10, 11. The net is now filling, and will be drawn to shore, when the *mystery of God shall be finished*. When the net is full, and drawn to the shore, there shall be a separation between the good and bad that were gathered in it. Hypocrites and true Christians shall then be parted; the good shall be gathered, but the bad cast away; and miserable is the condition of those who are cast away in that day. While the net is in the sea, it is not known what is in it, the fishermen themselves cannot distinguish; but they carefully draw it, and all that is in it, to the shore, for the sake of the good that is in it. Such is God's care for the visible church, and such should ministers' concern be for those under their charge, though they are mixed.

covering the treasure, resolves at any rate to obtain it. He renounces all hopes, claims, pursuits, interests, or pleasures, which are incompatible with salvation. Nothing indeed can be given as the price of this salvation, yet much must be given up for the sake of it. This is implied by *purchasing* the field. The person who is thus decided, does not conclude that salvation belongs to him, because he has heard and assented to the Gospel. He rejoices, that he has found such a treasure, even before he can call it his own; but he knows that he must go to the price of the whole religion of the Scriptures, and receive it with all its aspects, if he would be saved and enriched by Him.—Thus he enters the kingdom, and obtains possession of its privileges; and when he has purchased the field, and begins to examine the treasure, he finds it is like a mine of gold, which is more and more rich, the longer it is wrought, and the more deeply it is penetrated. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Prov. 2:3-5. 23:23.)

Kingdom of heaven.) 'The blessings of religion.' ROSENMULLER. Treasure hid.) 'That is, hidden treasure, a gold or silver mine, which he who found out, could not get at, or work, without turning up the field, and for this purpose bought it.' HIDEIT. 'He kept it secret, till the discovery to no person till he had justly the field.' 'Our Lord's meaning seems to be this: The kingdom of heaven—the salvation provided by the Gospel—is like a treasure—something of inestimable worth—hidden in a field; it is a rich mine, the veins of which run in all directions in the sacred Scriptures; therefore the field must be dug up, the records of salvation diligently and carefully turned over, and searched: *which, when a man hath found, he keeps secret*—ponders the matter deeply in his heart; examines the preciousness of the treasure, and counts the cost of purchase: *for joy thereof*—finding that this salvation is just what his needy soul requires, and what will make him presently and eternally happy, *he goes and sells all that he hath*—renounces his sins, abandons his evil companions, and relinquishes all hope of salvation, through his own righteousness; and purchases that field—not merely buys the book for the sake of the salvation it describes, but, by the blood of the covenant, buys gold tried in the fire, white raiment, &c.; in a word, pardon and purity, which he receives from God, for the sake of Jesus. We should consider the salvation of God, 1. As our only treasure, and value it above all the riches in the world. 2. Search for it in the Scriptures, till we fully understand its worth and excellence. 3. Deeply ponder it in the secret of our souls. 4. Part with all we have in order to get it. 5. Place our whole joy and deliverance in it; and, 6. Be always convinced that it must be bought, and that no price is accepted for it out the blood of the covenant; the sufferings and death of our only Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'In the under parts of our Savior's parables, there is sometimes the

appearance of immoral tendency; as in the commendation bestowed on the unjust steward. Here, it seems against the principles of equity for a man to conceal from the possessor the unknown value of a field, accidentally discovered, that he might purchase it himself at an under-price.—But, with common sense only as a commentator on such passages, we perceive, that the instruction is not meant to be conveyed in under-parts, and trivial circumstances: but in the general scope only of the whole parable.'

GILPIN. On this passage, however, Wetstein observes, that 'the savorious were accustomed to bury their treasure in the earth, when they feared the invasion of an enemy.' And it is remarked by Bloomfield, from Rosenmuller, that 'the right of "treasure trove" is doubtful. Nevertheless, we learn from this passage, as from rabbinic authority also, that the Jewish law adjudged the treasure to the buyer of a field, not the seller.'

Verses 45, 46.

This parable is nearly of the same import as the preceding; but the former represents all spiritual blessings, as they are communicated to us through the Scriptures; this exhibits them, as they are laid up in Christ, to whom the Scriptures direct us for them.—Every man is 'a merchant seeking goodly pearls': all men seek happiness, and each deems his favorite object a precious jewel. But when the convinced sinner discovers the glory and preciousness of Christ, as the all-gracious Savior of the lost, he sees Him to be indeed 'the Pearl of great price,' and all things else comparatively worthless. Whatever it may cost him, he is determined to purchase this invaluable Pearl, which will surely enrich the possessor to all eternity: and if he obtain not this prize, he sees that eternal misery is his portion. He therefore counts all things but loss, that he may win Christ; and being determined rather to part with riches, reputation, liberty, or even life, than deny the Savior; and giving up all other pleasures and hopes, but those that arise from his person, undertaking sufferings, and mediation; he obtains admission into the kingdom, and to the participation of all its blessings.

SCOTT. (46.) 'In this, as in the preceding parable, (v. 45.) Jesus commends the excellence of his religion and the happiness connected with it, as being so great, that he who has once tasted it, will henceforth despise all the perishable interests and pleasures of this life, and pursue it most studiously.'

ROSENMULLER. 'The original word translated merchant, means a travelling trader. Such persons took long journeys for the purpose of buying, selling, or exchanging goods. These petty "merchants," was very supple, were not dissimilar to our pedlars; and by them much of the traffic of ancient times was carried on.'

ROSENMULLER.

47 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind;

48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels but cast the bad away.

49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just;

50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

[Practical Observations.]

51 ¶ Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord.

52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe which is instructed unto the king-

2. The explanation of the latter part of the parable: the latter part refers to that which is yet to come, and is therefore more particularly explained, v. 49, 50. *So shall it be at the end of the world:* then, and not till then, will the dividing, discovering lay be. We must not look for the net full of all good fish. See here, 1. The distinguishing of the wicked from the righteous. The angels of heaven shall come forth to *sever the wicked from among the just*; 2. The doom of the wicked when they are thus severed. They shall be *cast into the furnace*. Note, Everlasting misery and sorrow will certainly be the portion of those who live among sanctified ones, but themselves die unsanctified. This is the same with what we had before, v. 42. Note, Christ Himself preached often of hell-torments, as the everlasting punishment of hypocrites; and it is good for us to be often reminded of this awakening, quickening truth.

IV. That of the good-householder, which is intended to rivet all the rest.

The occasion of it was the proficiency the disciples had made in learning, and their profiting by this sermon in particular. 1. He asked them, *Have ye understood all these things?* intimating, that He was ready to explain what they did not understand. Note, It is the will of Christ, that all those who read and hear the Word should understand it. It is therefore good for us, when we have read or heard the Word, to examine ourselves, or to be examined, whether we have understood it or not. It is no disparagement to the disciples of Christ to be catechized. Christ invites us to seek to Him for instruction, and ministers should proffer their service to those who have any good question to ask concerning what they have heard. 2. They answered Him, *Yea, Lord:* and we have reason to believe they said true, because, when they did not understand, they asked for an explication, v. 36. And the exposition of that parable was a key to the rest. Note, The right understanding of one good sermon, will help us to understand another; for good truths mutually explain and illustrate one another; and *knowledge is easy to him that understandeth*.

The scope of the parable itself was to give his approbation and commendation of their proficiency. Note, Christ is ready to encourage willing learners in his school, though they are but weak.

He commends them as *scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*. They were now learning that they might teach, and the teachers among the Jews were the scribes. Ezra, who

prepared his heart to teach in Israel, is called a ready scribe. Ezra 7: 6, 10. Now a skilful faithful minister of the Gospel is a scribe too; but for distinction, he is called a scribe *instructed unto the kingdom of heaven*, well versed in the things of the Gospel, and well able to teach those things. Note, 1. Those who are to instruct others, have need to be well instructed themselves. If the priest's lips must keep knowledge, his head must first have knowledge. 2. The instruction of a gospel minister must be in the *kingdom of heaven*, as that about which his business lies. A man may be a great philosopher and politician, and yet, if not instructed to the kingdom of heaven, he will make but a bad minister.

He compares them to a good householder, who brings forth out of his treasure things new and old; fruits of last year's growth and this year's gathering, abundance and variety, for the entertainment of his friends, Cant. 7: 13. See here, 1. What should be a minister's furniture, a treasure of things new and old. Those who have so many and various occasions, need to stock themselves well in their gathering-days, that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished; (2 Tim. 3: 16, 17.) and we must not content ourselves with old discoveries, but must be adding new. Live and learn. 2. What we should make of this furniture; he should bring forth: laying up is in order to laying out. *You are to lay up, but not for yourselves*. Many are full, but have no vent; (Job 32: 19.) have a talent, but bury it: such are unprofitable servants; Christ himself received; that He might give; so must we, and we shall have more. In bringing forth things, new and old do best together; old truths, but new methods and expressions, especially new affections.

V. 53-58. We have here Christ in his own country. His own countrymen had rejected Him once, yet He came to them again. Note, Christ does not take refusers at their first word, but repeats his offers to those who have often repulsed them. In this, as in other things, Christ was like his brethren; He had a natural affection to his own country; *Every one loves his country*, observes Seneca, *not because it is beautiful, but because it is his own*. His treatment this time was much the same as before, scornful and spiteful.

Observe,

I. How they expressed their contempt of Him. When he taught them in their synagogue, they were astonished; looking on Him as unlikely to be such a teacher. Two things they upbraided Him with:

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 31-35, 44-50. In attempting to do good by scriptural means, and in dependence on the grace of our Lord, we have firm ground of hope, that from small beginnings a large increase will arise, perhaps after our decease. We ought not, therefore, in respect of individuals or ourselves, to despise the day of small things. As eternal life is set before us in the Scripture, may we highly prize and diligently search that sacred book, that we may become acquainted with its invaluable contents, and do what we can to communicate the blessing to all others likewise. Let us also, be very circumspect, that we do not come short of the felicity to which it directs us. And as all the salvation of God is laid up in Christ, our great Prophet, Priest, and King, let us fix our attention on Him, as the great subject of the sacred Word; and determine by the grace

of God, to part with all that we have, that we may be made possessors of this inestimable treasure. He who is willing to do this, will never come short of salvation, though he may often fear it; but he that prefers any thing to Christ, will not obtain his 'unsearchable riches,' though he may often be confident that he shall. Numbers of this description, besides those multitudes of professed Christians, concerning whose character no competent judge can be deceived, will find themselves mistaken, when the grand discrimination shall be made. Yet ministers have abundant encouragement to go on with patience and diligence in their work: for 'he that winneth souls is wise,' and in this respect, they will also find at last, that 'their labor was not in vain in the Lord.'

SCOTT.

Verses 47-50.

This parable seems to comprise the meaning of the parables of the sower and the tares, under an allusion to those things, about which several of the apostles had been most conversant.

SCOTT.

(50.) *Gnashing of teeth.* 'Since what is here spoken of is supposed to pass in a furnace of fire, it is strange any should have imagined, that the original phrase signifies the knocking, or as we commonly say, *gnashing of teeth*, through excess of cold. Yet from this, some have been weak enough to argue, that, (according to the Malabarian notion) the alternate extremities of heat and cold should constitute 'the torment of the damned.' See Abp. Dawes' sermons on hell. Sermon. liii. p. 14.

Verses 51, 52.

Our Lord seems to have spoken these latter parables to his disciples, apart from the multitude; and He demanded of them, whether they understood the things intended by them. To which they answered, (perhaps too confidently) that they did: yet probably they had a general apprehension of his meaning, as there was no immediate reference to his sufferings and death; for they were far more ignorant and prejudiced in favor of his priestly office, than about any other sub-

ject. He therefore concluded the whole with another parable, immediately relating to their office in the church. The apostles and other ministers, were to be the teachers. Every one of them, therefore, ought to be 'a scribe well instructed' in all things pertaining to 'the kingdom of heaven.' This He represented to them under the similitude of a householder, who has a large family to provide for, who will take care to have a stock of provisions in hand for their supply, to which he will be adding continually what he judges to be useful or useful. They in like manner should carefully treasure up all that they had learned, and add to their fund of knowledge continually, deriving fresh instruction from all they heard, saw or experienced. Then they would be able to lead the people forward in knowledge, as they made progress themselves. Some reference may also be had to the old and new dispensations. They ought to be different, who have not only to be wise for themselves, but to dispense the wisdom of God to others.' Ezra

SCOTT

(52.) *Scribe.* 'Because the scribe's office was to expound the Scriptures. He meaneth him that doth interpret them: aright, and according to the Spirit.'

GENEVAN VERSION.

dom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

53 ¶ And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence.

54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, inasmuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works?

55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things?

57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, save in his

1. His want of a technical education. They owned that he had wisdom, and did mighty works; but the question was, Whence He had it. For they knew He was not brought up at the feet of their rabbins; had never been at the university, nor taken his degree, nor was called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. Note, Mean and prejudiced spirits are apt to judge of men by their education, and to inquire more into their rise than into their reasons. 'Whence has this man these mighty works?' Thus they turned that against Him, which was really for Him; for if they had not been wilfully blind, they must have concluded Him to be divinely assisted and commissioned, who, without the help of education, gave such proofs of extraordinary wisdom and power.

2. The meanness and poverty of his relations, v. 55, 56.

They upbraided Him with his father. Is not this the carpenter's son? Yes, it is true He was reputed so: and what harm in that? No disparagement to Him to be the son of an honest tradesman. They remember not (though they might have known it) that this carpenter was of the house of David, (Luke 1: 27.) a son of David; (ch. 1: 20.) though a carpenter, yet a person of honor. Those who are willing to pick quarrels will overlook what is worthy and deserving, and fasten on that only which seems mean. Some sordid spirits regard no branch, no, not the Branch from the stem of Jesse, (Isa. 11: 1.) if it be not the top-branch.

They upbraided Him with his mother; and what quarrel have they with her? Why, truly, his mother is called Mary, and that was a very

own country, and in his own house.

58 And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

q 12:25. Prov. 10:20, 21. 11:30. 16:

common name, and they all knew her, and knew her to be an ordinary person; she was called Mary, not Queen Mary, nor Lady Mary, but plain Mary; and this is turned to his reproach, as if men had nothing to be valued by but foreign extraction, noble birth, or splendid titles; poor things to measure worth by.

They upbraided him with his brethren, whose names they knew, and had them ready enough to serve this turn; James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas, good men but poor men, and therefore despised; and Christ for their sakes. These brethren, it is probable, were Joseph's children by a former wife; or whatever their relation was to Him, they seem to have been brought up with Him in the same family. And therefore of the calling of three of these, who were of the twelve, to that honor (James Simon, and Jude, the same with Thaddæus) we read not particularly, because they need not such an express call to acquaintance with Christ, who had been the companions of his youth.

His sisters too are all with us; they should therefore have loved Him and respected Him the more, because He was one of themselves, but therefore they despised Him. They were offended in him: they stumbled at these stumbling-stones, for He was set for a Sign that should be spoken against, Luke 2: 34. Isa. 8: 14.

II. See how he regarded this contempt, v. 57, 58.

1. It did not trouble his heart. It appears He was not much concerned at it; He despised the shame, Heb. 12: 2. Instead of aggravating

20-24. 22-17. Ec. 12-11. 2. Cor. 4:5-7. 6:10. Eph. 3:4, 8. Col. 3:16.
r Cant. 7:13. John 13:34. 1 John 2:7, 8.
s Mark 4:32-35.
t 2:23. Mark 6:1, 2. Luke 4:16-30. John 1:11.
u 1:22. 2:22. 40:9, 10. Acts 13: 46. 28: 17-29.
x John 7: 16, 18. Acts 4:13.
y Ps. 22:6. Is. 49:7. 52:3, 3. Mark 6:3. Luke 9:23. 4:22. John 1:45. 4:42. 7:41, 42. 8:29.
z 1:14-30. Luke 1:27. 2:5-7. a 12:48. 27:35. Mark 15:40-47. 16:1. b Luke 2:10. John 19:34. Gal. 1:19. c 11:5. Is. 8:14. Mark 6:53. Luke 2:34, 35. 7:23. John 6:61. 1 Cor 12:23.
d Mark 6:14. Luke 4:24. John 4:42. Acts 3:22, 23. 7:37-38, 51, 62. e Mark 6:5, 6. Luke 4:25-29. Rom. 11:20. Heb. 3:12-19. 4:6-11.

Things new and old.] 'New things and old.' CAMPBELL. 'These words are spoken according to the dialect of the schools, where the question was not seldom started,—what wine, what corn, or fruits, were to be used in the holy things, and in some rites new or more old, namely of the present year, or the years past? But now, a thrifty man, provident of his own affairs, was stored both with the one and the other; prepared for either, as should be required. So it becomes a simile of the Gospel, to have all things in readiness, to bring forth according to the nature of the thing, of the place, and of the hearers.' LIGHTFOOT.

Verse 53.

(Mark 4: 34, 35.) Mark expressly fixes our Lord's crossing the sea of Tiberias to go over to the Galæenae, to the evening of the day, on which he spake the parable of the sower: so that, on finishing his parables, He sailed thither, and left the people to reflect on them. SCOTT.

Verses 54-58.

On another occasion, Jesus went to Nazareth, (called his own country, because he was there brought up,) and taught in the synagogue; thus giving the inhabitants an additional opportunity of hearing his doctrine, and seeking the benefit of those miracles, concerning which they must have heard many surprising accounts. (Luke 4: 16-30.) And indeed the authority and wisdom, with which He spake, astonished his former neighbors, and led them to inquire, where He had obtained this wisdom and miraculous power. Probably, they did not know, that He was born at Bethlehem, and of the family of David.—By comparing several passages in the gospels, (Marg. Ref. v. a.) it appears, that Mary, the wife of Cleophas, was the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus; and that James and Joses were her sons. According to the common way of speaking, being such near relations, they are called brethren, especially as they seem to have lived much together; and it is probable, that the others here mentioned were either the children of Cleophas and Mary, or some others standing in the same near relation to our Lord. But some think that they were Joseph's children by a former wife. They were, however, well known at Nazareth, as persons in a low and poor condition, who were nearly related to Jesus; and this proved an occasion of stumbling to the proud and prejudiced inhabitants.—On this occasion our Lord observed, that 'a prophet was not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own relations.' Those, who have most known and conversed with the man, are least disposed to respect the prophet. He is thought to take too much upon him, in authoritatively addressing their consciences; they are displeased with his pretensions, and the credit which he acquires; and various circumstances of no importance, respecting his former occupations and appearance, recur to their memory, and prejudice them against all he says.—The unbelief of the Nazarenes, however, precluded them from sharing the benefit of our Lord's power and grace: few came to Him for healing, and He did not think it consistent with his wisdom and dignity, to perform his miracles and presence upon them: so He retired, and left them to their prejudices; and, as far as we can tell, went among them no more. (Mark 8: 1-6.) SCOTT.

(54.) His own country.] 'No doubt, Nazareth is to be understood. For, though He had two other homes, namely, Bethlehem, where He was born, and Capernaum, where He dwelt, He is never said to have come to Bethlehem. It follows therefore that this must be understood of Nazareth.'

ROSENMTÜLLER.

'They considered Him as guilty of an usurpation, in assuming the character of a prophet, much more in aspiring to the title of the Messiah, to whom the people were accustomed to look up.'

Whence hath this man this wisdom? A question we may well ask, as did the Jews, but with another spirit. What education had Jesus, what patterns to form Himself upon, to become the man He was? By what train of thinking could He conceive, by what prospects be moved to undertake, by what power accomplish the unparalleled things He did? To imagine that such a person could have existed by accident, is monstrously unreasonable. But to have also fallen by accident into just that country, where was a system of religion He could build on, with predictions applicable to Himself; and at a period when He was so pointed out, as to raise an universal expectation; that under all disadvantages of condition, He could make and maintain the highest claims, interpret the ancient oracles in a sublimer, juster sense than the most learned instructors of the people, and have the self-will to prefer, in consequence, persecution and crucifixion before the splendor of offered dominion, or the safety of a private station; that all these things (and others equally strange) should meet in the same person, without the special appointment of heaven, exceeds all power of chance. Considered but as a man, He appears the greatest and best of men. His reasonable doctrines, cool temper, composed and familiar conversation, prove He was no enthusiast. The unvaried goodness of his life, and willing suffering of death, with no worldly advantage to attain by the course He took, fully prove He was no impostor. What must He then have been? And from his whole behavior what can we gather, but what the spectators did from the finishing scene on the cross, 'Truly this was the Son of God!' Matt. 28: 54.

ABP. SECKER.

(55.) The carpenter's son.] 'Seven copies of the old Itala have, Is not this the son of JOSEPH, the carpenter?' But it is likely our Lord, during the thirty years of his abode at Nazareth, wrought at the same trade with Joseph: and perhaps this is what is intended, Luke 11: 51.'

DR. A. CLARKE.

Carpenter.] 'That is, any artificer in wood, stone, or metal. The original denotes an artificer, or artisan, as applied to a laborer.'

BLOOMFIELD.

(56.) 'It was, moreover, the custom for the Jews—even those of wealth and learning—to train all their children to some trade, or manual occupation. Thus Paul was a tent-maker: comp. Acts 18: 3.'

BARNES.

(57.) 'Men commonly neglect them, whom they have known as children: also they do envy them of the same country.'

GENEVAN VERSION.

A prophet, &c.] 'An usual adage among the Jews, implying that he is less honored in his own country than elsewhere.'

GAUTIER.

CHAP. XV.

Herod supposes Jesus to be John the Baptist risen from the dead, 1, 2. As account of John's imprisonment and death, through the jealousy of Herod, Herodias, and her daughter, 3-12. Jesus departs to a desert place, and miraculously feeds the multitude, 13-21. He retires to a mountain top, having sent the disciples away in a ship, 22-24. He comes to them walking on the sea, 25-28. Peter obtains leave to come on the water, begins to sink, as he is preserved, and related, 29-31. Jesus enters the ship, the storm ceases, and the disciples worship Him as the Son of God, 32, 33. 34. Jesus enters the ship, the storm ceases, and the disciples worship Him as the Son of God, 32, 33. 34. Jesus enters the ship, the storm ceases, and the disciples worship Him as the Son of God, 32, 33. 34.

At that time ^a Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

2 And said unto his servants, ^c This is John the Baptist; ^e he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works ^d do shew forth themselves in him.

3 For ^d Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put him in prison for Herodias' sake, ^e his brother Philip's wife.

^a Mark 6:14-16. 8:15. Luke 9:7-9. 19:31, 32. 23:38-42. Acts 4:27. ^b 1 Cor. 15:21. ^c 11:1. 16:14. Mark 8:23. John 10:41. ^d Or, are wrought by him. ^e 4:12. Mark 6:17. Luke 3:19, 20. John 8:23, 24. ^f Luke 3:1.

V. 51-58. If we would be 'scribes instructed unto the kingdom of heaven,' we must be always learners. Our place is at Christ's feet; we must daily learn the old lessons over again, and new lessons also: and we must seek to have an increasing fund of knowledge and wisdom, the result of study, experience, and observation, that we may render old subjects attractive and interesting, by new elucidations and applications.

Let none wonder if faithful and able ministers are regarded with contempt and enmity, even where they labor most to do

the affront, or expressing an offence at it, He mildly imputes it to the common humor of the children of men, to undervalue excellences that are cheap, and common, and home-bred. It is usually so, v. 57. Note, 1. Prophets should have honor paid them, and commonly have; men of God are great men, men of honor, and challenge respect. It is strange indeed if prophets have not honor. 2. Notwithstanding this, they are commonly least regarded and revered in their own country, nay, and sometimes most envied. Familiarity breeds contempt.

2. It did for the present, (to speak with reverence,) in effect, tie his hands; *He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.* Note, Unbelief is the great obstruction to Christ's favors. *All things are in general possible to God,* (ch. 19: 26.) but it is to him that believes as to the particulars, Mark 9: 23. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation, but it is to every one that believes, Rom. 1: 16. So that if mighty works be not wrought in us, it is not for want of power or grace in Christ, but for want of faith in us. *By grace ye are saved,* and that is a mighty work, but it is through faith, Eph. 2: 8.

CHAP. XIV. v. 1-12. We have here the story of John's martyrdom. Observe,

1. The occasion of relating it here, v. 1, 2. 1. The account brought to Herod of the miracles Christ wrought. At that time, when his countrymen slighted Him, He began to be famous at court. Note, God will honor those that are despised for his sake. Christ had now been preaching and working miracles above two years; yet it should seem, Herod had not heard of Him till now, and now only heard the fame of Him. Note, It is the unhappiness of the great ones of the world, that they are most out of the way of hearing the best things, (1 Cor. 2:

8.) which none of the princes of this world knew 1 Cor. 1: 25.

2. The construction he puts on this; (v. 2.) *He said to his servants,* As sure as we are here, this is John the Baptist, he is risen from the dead. Either the leaven of Herod was not Sadducism; (Acts 23: 8.) or else Herod's guilty conscience (as is usual with atheists) got at this time the mastery of his opinion; and now he concluded, whether there be a general resurrection or no, that John Baptist is certainly risen, and therefore mighty works do shew forth themselves in him. John, while he lived, did no miracle; (John 10: 41.) but Herod concludes, that, being risen from the dead, he is clothed with a greater power than he had while living. Observe here concerning Herod,

How he was disappointed in what he intended by beheading John. He thought, if he could get that troublesome fellow out of the way, he might go on in his sins, undisturbed and uncontrolled; yet no sooner is that effected, than he hears of Jesus and his disciples preaching the same pure doctrine John preached; and, which is more, even the disciples confirming it by miracles in their Master's name. Note, Ministers may be silenced, and imprisoned, and banished, and slain, but the Word of God cannot be run down. The prophets live not forever, but the Word takes hold, Zech. 1: 5, 6. See 2 Tim. 2: 9. Sometimes God raises up many faithful ministers out of the ashes of one. This hope there is of God's trees, though they be cut down, Job 14: 7-9.

How he was filled with causeless fears, merely from the guilt of his own conscience. Thus blood cries, from the heart of him that shed it and makes him a terror to himself. Thus the wicked flee when none pursue; (Prov. 28: 1.) and are in great fears, where no fear is, Ps. 14: 5. Herod, by a little inquiry, might have found, that this Jesus was in being long before John

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

good, or where they might be supposed to possess the greatest influence. It is a general case, that the truths spoken are at first disregarded, in proportion as the speaker is known, even where there is no reason for it in his character and conduct for the carnal heart is glad of any pretence for rejecting the spiritual Word of God. Thus, whilst the servant of the Lord loses his labor, and is treated with contempt, men lose the benefit of the Gospel, yea, lose their own souls, and the power and grace of the Savior are of no avail as to them, 'because of their unbelief.'

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. John the Baptist had said concerning Christ, He must increase, but I must decrease, John 3: 30. The morning-star is here disappearing, and the Sun of righteousness rising to his meridian lustre. Thus He went forth, thus He went on, conquering and to conquer, or rather, curing and to cure.

Verses 1, 2.

(Marg. Ref.) John was not cast into prison, till some considerable time after Jesus had entered on his public ministry. (John 3: 22-36. 4: 1-4.) It is supposed, that John lay above a year in prison; and some time must have passed after his death, before Herod could conclude that he was risen again. We may therefore suppose that more years had elapsed after Christ's baptism, than harmonizers in general make out.—Herod is called 'the tetrarch,' and afterwards 'the king.' (9.) He was the son of Herod the Great, whose dominions were divided into four parts among his sons after his decease; as the word *tetrarch* implies: Judea, one fourth in this division, soon fell under the rule of a Roman governor as a province of that empire, and other alterations shortly took place. Herod, however, who was surnamed Antipas, was allowed to hold his tetrarchy; in which he was as much a king, as his father had been, only his dominions were smaller. Some think, that he was a Sadducee, because what is called the leaven of the Sadducees, is elsewhere called the leaven of Herod. (16: 6. Mark 8: 15.) It is most wonderful, that Herod and his courtiers should not have known of our Lord's preaching and miracles, at an earlier period, especially as He spent most of his time in Galilee. Some think, that Herod had been absent at Rome, during the former part of our Lord's ministry; but if this were so, his nobles and counsellors had not all been absent likewise. Others think, that he at this time attended to the report, because Christ had just sent forth his disciples, to work miracles in his name. But the supposition, that Jesus was John the Baptist risen from the dead, implies that Herod never heard of Him before, or known that such a person existed; for how could He, who had lived about thirty years in Galilee, be John the Baptist, who a short time before had been put to death? In fact, nothing can solve the difficulty, but the consideration of the general depravity which persons in high rank show to the concerns of religion, and the astonishing ignorance in which most of them remain, of what goes forward in that respect. Thus circumstanced, neither his immoral character, nor his Sadducean principles, could preserve him from delusion, on recollecting his conduct in beheading John the Baptist; and,

without much examination, he was led to concur with those, who said it was John risen from the dead. Nor could this haughty prince conceal from his own servants, his terrors and convictions; fearing probably that John, thus risen, would soon come and avenge his death on his murderers. Herod, as a Sadducee, under the momentary impression, lost sight of his principles, that there was no resurrection, nor angel, nor spirit, into whatever agency he ultimately resolved the powers, which wrought the effects.

SCOTT.

(1.) Herod. 'This was Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great by Malthea, and tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, which produced, according to Josephus, a revenue of two hundred talents a year.'

GREENFIELD.

'To distinguish the three Herods mentioned in the New Testament, we may recollect, that Herod the Great murdered the infants; Herod Antipas beheaded John, and Herod Agrippa killed James, and imprisoned Peter.'

ROSSAM.

Tetrarch. 'Properly, the governor of the fourth part of a country; commonly used as a title inferior to king, and denoting chief ruler. The name king is sometimes given to tetrarchs. See verse 9.'

CAMPBELL.

'The office of tetrarch had its origin from the Gauls.' JAHN. It is observed by Dr. A. Clarke, that 'the estates of Herod the Great were not, at his death, divided into four tetrarchies, but only into three: one was given by the emperor Augustus to Archelaus, the second to Herod Antipas, the person in the text; and the third to Philip; all three sons of Herod the Great.'

ED.

(2.) 'The words of Luke, (9: 9.) admit the following meaning: 'I know not what to think: some say it is John the Baptist; but John, whom I beheaded, can it then be he?' This state of hesitation and demur is quite reconcilable with the words of Matthew, when properly interpreted. These words, though they appear to contain an assertion, yet (I think) were not meant to assert, but imply doubt. Herod was only a follower of the political, not the religious dogmas of the Sadducees. He probably thought and cared very little about religion; yet his mind was by no means made up. As far as Herod believed the re-appearance, he supposed it a reviviscence of John's body.'

B. COMFIELD.

Verses 3-5.

The evangelist, having mentioned Herod's opinion respecting Jesus, made a digression to relate John's imprisonment and death. We care

4 For John said unto him, 'It is not lawful for thee to have her.'

5 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

[Practical Observations.]

6 But when Herod's birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.

† Lev. 19:16, 20:21. Dent. 25:5, 6.
2 Sam. 16:7. 1 Kings 21:19. 2 Chr. 28:19. Prov. 28:1. Is. 8:20.
Mark 6:18. Acts 24:24, 25.
* 6:19, 20. 14:1, 2. Acts 4:21.
5:26.
† 21:38, 32. Mark 11:30—32. Luke 20:17.
Gen. 40:20. Esth. 1:2—9. 2:18.
Dan. 5:1—4. Hos. 7:5, 6. Mark 6:21—23.
* 22:28.
† Esth. 1:10—12.
* Gr. 1. the midst.

offspring by this woman; and it was an aggravation of the wrong, that he was his brother, his half-brother by the father, but not by the mother. See Ps. 50: 20. For this sin John reproved him in plain terms, *It is not lawful for thee to have her*. He charges it on him as a sin. Note, 1. That which is unlawful to other people, is unlawful to the greatest of men. They who rule over men must not forget that they are themselves but men, and subject to God. There is no prerogative, for the most arbitrary kings, to break the laws of God. 2. If princes and great men break the law of God, it is very fit they should be told of it. As they are not above the commands of God's word, so they are not above the reproofs of his ministers. *It is not fit indeed to say to a king, Thou art Belial*, (Job 34: 18.) any more than to call a brother *Raca*, or *Thou fool*. But it is fit that, by those whose office it is, they should be told what is unlawful, and told with application. *Thou art the man*; for God accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor.

2. The imprisonment of John for his faithfulness, v. 3. Note, Faithful reproofs, if they do not profit, usually provoke, and are resented as affronts; they that will not bow to the reproof, will fly in the face of the reprover and hate him, as Ahab hated Micaiah, 1 Kings 22: 8. See Prov. 9: 8. 15: 10. 12. *Truth produces hatred*. It is no new thing for God's ministers to suffer ill for doing well. Troubles abide those most that are most diligent and faithful in doing their duty. Acts 20: 20, 23. It was so with the Old-Testament prophets, see 2 Chron. 16: 10. 24: 20, 21. Perhaps some of John's friends would blame him as indiscreet in reproving Herod, and tell him he had better be silent than provoke Herod, whose character he knew very

Baptist's death, and therefore could not be *John*, restored to life, and so might have undeceived himself; but God justly left him to this infatuation.

How, notwithstanding this, he was hardened in his wickedness; for though convinced that John was a prophet, and owned of God, yet he expresses not the least remorse or sorrow for his sin in putting him to death. The devils believe and tremble, but they never believe and repent. Note, There may be the terror of strong convictions, where there is not the truth of a saving conversion.

II. The story itself. As the first Old-Testament saint, so the first New-Testament minister, died a martyr. And if Christ's forerunner was thus treated, let not his followers expect to be caressed by the world. Observe here,

1. John's faithfulness in reproving Herod, v. 3, 4. Herod was one of John's hearers, (Mark 6: 20.) and therefore John might be the more bold with him. Note, Ministers, who are reprovers by office, are especially obliged to reprove those that are under their charge; they have the fairest opportunity of dealing with them, and with them may expect the most favorable acceptance.

The particular sin he reproved him for, was, marrying his brother Philip's wife. Here was a complication of wickedness, adultery, and incest, beside the wrong done to Philip, who had

well: but away with that discretion that would hinder men from doing their duty as magistrates, ministers, or Christian friends; I believe John's own heart did not reproach him for it, but this testimony of his conscience made his bonds easy, that he suffered for well-doing, and not as a *busy-body in other men's matters*, 1 Pet. 4: 15.

3. The restraint Herod lay under from venting his rage against John, v. 5.

(1.) He would have put him to death. Perhaps that was not intended at first, but his revenge by degrees boiled up to that height. Note, The way of sin, especially the sin of persecution, is down-hill; and when once a respect to Christ's ministers is cast off and broken, though in one instance, that is at length done, which the man would sooner have thought himself a dog than to have been guilty of, 2 Kings 8: 13.

(2.) That which hindered him, v. 5. It was not because he feared God, or John, though formerly he had had a reverence for him, but because he feared the people; he was afraid for his own safety, and the safety of his government. Note, 1. Tyrants fear their fears. Those who are, and affect to be, the terror of the mighty, are many times the greatest terror of all to themselves; and when they are most ambitious to be feared by the people, are most afraid of them. 2. Wicked men are restrained from the most wicked practices, merely by their secular interest, and not by any regard to God. A concern for their ease, credit, wealth, and safety, being their reigning principle, as it keeps them from many duties, so it keeps them from many sins, which otherwise they would not be restrained from; and this is one mean by which sinners are kept from being overmuch wicked, Eccl. 7: 12. The danger of sin that appears to sense, or fancy only, influences men more than that which appears to faith. Herod feared that the putting of John to death might raise a mutiny among the people, which it did not; but he never feared it might raise a mutiny in his own conscience, which it did, v. 2. Men fear being hanged for that, which they do not fear being damned for.

4. The contrivance of bringing John to his death. Long he lay in prison; and, against the liberty of the subject, might neither be tried nor bailed. It is computed that he lay a year and a half a close prisoner, which was about as much time as he had spent in his public ministry. Now here we have an account of his release, not by any other discharge than death, the period of all a good man's troubles, that

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V. 1—5. Reproaches of conscience are both the demonstration of future judgment, and an anticipation of future misery. Those who rebel against the light of the sacred Oracles, and that of their own convictions; and who quarrel with religion and its ministers, contrary to their own better judgment, are frequently given up to judicial hardness of heart; and companions in licentiousness often tempt each other to revenge and murder.— When the servants of Christ, by faithful reproofs, interfere with the sensual, interested, or ambitious schemes of abandoned transgressors; their resentment sometimes proves more powerful even than their other most domineering passions; not only *merit*, but *women*, may be wrought up to such a pitch of fury and vengeance, as to thirst for blood, more than for any of those objects, to which they would otherwise be most addicted. Yet 'the man of God' must rebuke with all authority. In doubtful matters, indeed, tenderness and caution, as well as prudence, are requisite; but when men in the most exalted stations live

in evident violations of the divine law, we must fairly discharge our consciences, by declaring their conduct to be absolutely unlawful and inconsistent with all religion. They must be clearly warned, that this is 'the right hand, which they are required to cut off,' if they would save their souls from hell. Indeed, the servants of God will thus incur the reproach of rudeness and bigotry; and even, from the more timid Christian, the censure of imprudence and want of courtesy; and if those, whom they thus counsel and reprove in love, do not profit by their faithful admonitions, they will certainly be offended, and perhaps exasperated to persecution. Yet the Lord will honor them and bear them out: nor can their most powerful or enraged enemies proceed any further than He sees good; and even the fear of man, though it in many cases 'bringeth a snare,' often restrains wicked men from acting out all the evil that is conceived in their hearts. SCOTT.

from a parallel passage (Mark 6: 14—29.) that Herod had taken much notice of John, and attended to his instructions with apparent satisfaction, and 'done many things' at his instance, regarding him as a holy man of God: but this did not satisfy John, so long as he retained Herodias, his brother's wife. Josephus says, that Herodias was granddaughter to Herod the Great; and consequently, she was niece both to her former husband Philip, and to Herod with whom she at this time lived. Herod had divorced his own wife in order to take her; and her husband Philip was still living, as well as the daughter whom he had by her. So that no connection could be more contrary to the law of God, and to all decorum, than this was. It is probable, many would think, that John should for a time, at least, have connived at this irregularity; as kings and princes generally deem themselves privileged in those respects. But he knew nothing of reserves or exceptions, being an Elijah in integrity and faithfulness. For an account of the Herod family, see Note on Matt. 2: 1.

(3.) Philip.] This was Herod Philip, son of Herod the Great, by Mariamne. He was [then] a private person, and not the tetrarch of

Iturea; for that tetrarch married the daughter of Herodias, mentioned in this transaction, whose name was Salome. HEWLETT.

(4.) Said unto him.] That is, to Herod himself, not to the people in the desert, which would have saved of sedition. But he had been sent for and questioned by Herod. BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 6.

Danced.] That immodest and pantomimic sort of dance then recently introduced from the neighboring nations into the Jewish church, which, by the movement of the hands and other members, expressed human manners and affections. IN.

Before them.] Rather, in the midst; that is, she was surrounded by guests, who gazed, with admiration and applause, at her person, at attitudes and steps. HEWLETT.

Herod's birth-day.] Either the day in which he was born, or the day on which he began to reign; for both were termed *birth-days*. See 1 Sam. 13: 1. and Hos. 7: 6. The kings of Persia were accustomed to reject no petition that was preferred to them during the entertainment. See Herodotus, in Calliope, and Esth. 5: 3. Dr. A. CHAMBERLAIN.

"In how dispassionate a manner, and with what uncommon candor, does Matthew relate this most atrocious action! No exclamation, no exaggeration, no invective!" *Campbell*, after *RAMES* etc.

came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past: ^b send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

16 But Jesus said unto them, ^c They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

17 And they say unto him, ^d We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

18 He said, Bring them hither to me.

19 And ^e he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and, ^f looking up to heaven, ^g he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

20 And they all did eat, and ^h were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained, two baskets full.

^b 15:23. Mark 8:3.
^c 2 Kings 4:42-44. Job 31:18, 17. Prov. 11:24. Ec. 11:2. Luke 3:11. John 13:29. 2 Cor. 8:2, 3. 9:7, 8.
^d 15:33, 34. Num. 11:21-23. Ps. 78: 8, 29. Mark 6:1, 38. 8:4, 5. Luke 9:13. John 6:5-9.
^e 15:35. Mark 6:39-40. 8:5. Luke 9:15. John 6:10.
^f Mark 6:41. 7:24. Luke 9:16. John 11:41.
^g 15:36. 26:26, 27. 1 Sam. 9:13. Mark 3:5. 14:22, 23. Luke 22:19. 24:30.
^h John 6:11, 23. Acts 27:35. Rom. 14: 6. 1 Cor. 10:16, 31. 11:24. Col. 3: 1. 1 Tim. 4:5.
ⁱ 15:37. Ex. 16:8-12. Lev. 26: 26. 1 Kings 17:12-16. 2 Kings 4: 43, 44. Prov. 13:25. Ec. 4:14-16. Hag. 1:6. Luke 1:53. 9:42. John 6:7, 11. 15:37, 38. 16:2-10. Mark 6:42-44. 8:8, 9, 16-21. John 6:12-14.

part of his purchase; He was himself clothed with a body, that He might encourage us to depend on Him for the supply of our bodily wants. But He takes a particular care of the body, when it is employed to serve the soul in his more immediate service. If we seek first the kingdom of God, and make that our chief care, we may depend on God to add other things to us, as far as He sees fit, and cast all our care of them on Him. These followed Christ but for a trial, and yet He took this care of them; much more will He provide for those who follow Him fully.

IV. The slender provision made for this great multitude; compare the number of guests invited with the bill of fare.

The number of the guests was five thousand men, beside women and children; and it is probable the women and children might be as many as the men, if not more. This was a vast, and we have reason to think an attentive auditory; and yet, it should seem, far the greater part, notwithstanding all this seeming zeal and forwardness, came to nothing; they went off and followed Him no more; for many are called, but few chosen. We would rather perceive the acceptableness of the Word by the conversations, than by the crowds of its hearers; though that also is a good sight, and a good sign.

The bill of fare was very disproportionate to the number of the guests; but five loaves, and two fishes. This provision the disciples carried about with them for the use of the family, now they were retired into the desert. To set us an

example of providing for those of our own household, Christ will have their own camp virtualled in an ordinary way. Here is neither plenty, nor variety, nor dainty; but food convenient for the twelve; two fishes for their supper, and bread to serve them perhaps for a day or two: here was no wine or strong drink, but water from the rivers in the desert was the best they had to drink with their meat; and yet out of this Christ will have the multitude fed. Note, Those who have but a little, yet when the necessity is urgent, must relieve others out of that little, and that is the way to make it more. Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Yes, when He pleases, a plentiful table.

V. The liberal distribution of this provision among the multitude, (v. 18, 19.) Bring them hither to Me. Note, The way to creature-comforts comforts indeed, is to bring them to Christ; for every thing is sanctified by his Word, and by prayer to Him. What we give in charity, we should bring to Christ first, that He may graciously accept it from us, and graciously bless it to those to whom it is given; this is doing it as unto the Lord. Now at this miraculous meal we may observe,

1. The seating of the guests; (v. 19.) which intimates, that while He was preaching to them, they were standing. But what shall we do for chairs for them all? Let them sit down on the grass. When Ahasuerus would show the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honor of his excellent majesty, in a royal feast for the great men of all his provinces, the beds or couches they sat on were of gold and silver, on a pavement of red, and blue, and white, and black marble, Esther 1: 6. Our Lord Jesus now showed the riches of a more glorious kingdom, and the honor of a more excellent majesty, even a dominion over nature itself; but here is not so much as a cloth spread, no plates or napkins laid, no knives or forks, not so much as a bench to sit down on; but, as if Christ intended indeed to reduce the world to the plainness and simplicity, and so to the innocency and happiness of Adam in paradise, He commanded them to sit down on the grass. By doing every thing thus, without any pomp or splendor, He plainly showed that his kingdom was not of this world, nor cometh with observation.

2. The craving of a blessing. He himself looked up to heaven, and blessed, and gave thanks. In this prayer and thanksgiving, we may suppose, He had special reference to the multiplying of this food, but herein has taught us that good duty of craving a blessing and giving thanks at our meals: God's good creatures must be received with thanksgiving, 1 Tim. 4: 4. Samuel blessed the feast, 1 Sam. 9: 13. Acts 2: 46, 47. 27: 34, 35. This is eating and drinking to the glory of God; (1 Cor. 10: 31.) giving God thanks, (Rom. 14: 6.) eating before God, as Moses, and his father-in-law, Exod. 18: 12, 15. When Christ blessed, He looked up to heaven, to teach us, in prayer, to eye God as a Father in heaven: and when we receive our creature-comforts to look thitherward, as taking them from God's hand, and depending on Him for a blessing.

3. The carving of the meat. He brake, and gave the loaves to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. Christ intended hereby to put honor on his disciples, that they might be respected as workers together with Him: as also to signify in what way the spiritual food of the Word should be dispensed to the world; from Christ, as the original Author, by his ministers. What Christ designed for the churches, He signified to his servant John; (Rev. 1: 1, 4.) they delivered all that, and that only, which they re-

ceived of the Father of a family, among the Jews, to take the bread into his hands and render thanks to God, before any of the family was permitted to taste it. Dr. A. CLARKE.

(20.) Basket.] 'Flag-basket. Juvenal calls a bundle of straw and a flag-basket the whole household furniture of the Jew.' BLOOMFIELD.

The simple reason why the Jews carried baskets with them appears to be this: in Gentile countries, they carried their own provisions, for fear of pollution, from partaking the meat of heathens. This probably obliged them to carry hay also to sleep on. Dr. A. CLARKE.

verses 15-21.
It is probable, that the portion given to each, continued to increase, by his creating power, as they dispensed it, till the whole multitude was sufficed.
SCOTT.
(19.) Blessed.] 'The original word signifies gave thanks. The custom was always observed by the Jews, and even by the heathens.'

WETSTEIN.
Ana brake.] 'There is an allusion here to the Jewish leavins, which, like all the oriental ones, (according to travellers,) were thin and brittle.'

21 And they that had eaten were ^{about five thousand men, beside women and children.}

[Practical Observations.]
22 ¶ And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, ^{while he sent the multitudes away.}

23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, ^{he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.}

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, ^{tossed with waves; for the wind was contrary.}

k John 6:10. Acts 4:34. 2 Cor. 9: 8-11. Phil. 4:19. =
l Mark 6:45.
m 13:38. 15:39.
n 16. 26:35. Mark 6:46. Luke 6:12.
o Acts 6:4.
p John 6:15-17.
q 8:24. Is. 54:11. Mark 6:48. John 6:8.

one basket for each apostle: thus what they gave they had again, and a great deal more with it; and they were so far from being niggard, that they could make this broken meat serve another time, and be thankful. This was to manifest and magnify the miracle, and to show that the provision Christ makes for those who are his, is not bare and scanty, but rich and plentiful; Luke 15: 17. Elisha's multiplying the loaves was somewhat like his, but far short of it; and then it was said, *They shall eat and leave, 2 Kings 4: 43.*

It is the same divine power, though exerted in an ordinary way, which multiplies the seed sown in the ground every year, and makes the earth yield her increase; so that what was brought out by handfuls, is brought home in sheaves: *This is the Lord's doing; it is by Christ that all natural things consist, and by the word of his power that they are upheld.*

We have here the story of another miracle which Christ wrought for the relief of his friends and followers. *his walking on the water to his disciples.* In the foregoing miracle, he acted as the Lord of nature, improving its powers for the supply of those who were in want; in this, He acted as the Lord of nature, correcting and controlling its powers for the succor of those who were in danger and distress. Observe,

I. Christ's dismissing his disciples and the multitude, after He had fed them miraculously, v. 22. John gives a particular reason for the hasty breaking up of this assembly, John 6: 15.

When they had sat down to eat and drink, they did not rise up to play, but each went to his business.

1. Christ sent the people away. It intimates somewhat of solemnity in dismissing them; He sent them away with a blessing, some parting words of caution, counsel, and comfort.

V. 13-21. In promoting the welfare of souls, we should have consideration and compassion for the bodies of men also; and a little, properly managed, and brought to Christ for his blessing, will go further than it is commonly supposed: it increases in our hands, and we are rather enriched, than impoverished by liberality. And whilst the rich recollect how He and his disciples fared, they should learn to spare from their own expenses to feed his poor; and the poor should learn to be contented with their mean food, which is seldom less luxurious, than that with which the Savior of the world was pleased to satisfy his hunger.—We should all learn to thank God, and to

rejoice, from the Lord, 1 Cor. 11: 23. Ministers can never fill the people's hearts, unless Christ first fill their hands: and what He has given to the disciples, they must give to the multitude; they are stewards, to give to every one their portion of meat, ch. 24: 45. And, blessed be God, by the multitude ever so great, there is enough for all, enough for each.

4. The increase of the meat. This is taken notice of only in the effect; here is no mention of any word that Christ spoke, by which the food was multiplied; the purposes and intentions of his mind and will shall take effect, though they be not spoken out: but this is observable, that the meat was multiplied, not in the heap, but in the distribution of it. As the widow's oil increased in the pouring out, so here the bread in the breaking. Thus grace grows by being acted, and, while other things perish in the using, spiritual gifts increase. God ministers seed to the sower, and multiplies not the seed hoarded up, but the seed sown, 2 Cor. 9: 10. Thus there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; that scattereth, and so increaseth.

VI. The plentiful satisfaction of all the guests with this provision. Though the disproportion was so great, yet there was enough and to spare.

There was enough; *They did all eat and were filled.* Note, Those whom Christ feeds, He fills; (Psal. 37: 19.) *They shall be satisfied;* though there was but a little, there was enough, and that is as good as a feast. Note, The blessing of God can make a little go a great way; as, if God blasts what we have, we eat, and have not enough, Hag. 1: 9.

There was to spare; *They took up of the fragments that remained, twelve baskets full,*

one basket for each apostle: thus what they gave they had again, and a great deal more with it; and they were so far from being niggard, that they could make this broken meat serve another time, and be thankful. This was to manifest and magnify the miracle, and to show that the provision Christ makes for those who are his, is not bare and scanty, but rich and plentiful; Luke 15: 17. Elisha's multiplying the loaves was somewhat like his, but far short of it; and then it was said, *They shall eat and leave, 2 Kings 4: 43.*

It is the same divine power, though exerted in an ordinary way, which multiplies the seed sown in the ground every year, and makes the earth yield her increase; so that what was brought out by handfuls, is brought home in sheaves: *This is the Lord's doing; it is by Christ that all natural things consist, and by the word of his power that they are upheld.*

We have here the story of another miracle which Christ wrought for the relief of his friends and followers. *his walking on the water to his disciples.* In the foregoing miracle, he acted as the Lord of nature, improving its powers for the supply of those who were in want; in this, He acted as the Lord of nature, correcting and controlling its powers for the succor of those who were in danger and distress. Observe,

I. Christ's dismissing his disciples and the multitude, after He had fed them miraculously, v. 22. John gives a particular reason for the hasty breaking up of this assembly, John 6: 15.

When they had sat down to eat and drink, they did not rise up to play, but each went to his business.

1. Christ sent the people away. It intimates somewhat of solemnity in dismissing them; He sent them away with a blessing, some parting words of caution, counsel, and comfort.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13-21. In promoting the welfare of souls, we should have consideration and compassion for the bodies of men also; and a little, properly managed, and brought to Christ for his blessing, will go further than it is commonly supposed: it increases in our hands, and we are rather enriched, than impoverished by liberality. And whilst the rich recollect how He and his disciples fared, they should learn to spare from their own expenses to feed his poor; and the poor should learn to be contented with their mean food, which is seldom less luxurious, than that with which the Savior of the world was pleased to satisfy his hunger.—We should all learn to thank God, and to

crave his blessing, at our meals, and to avoid all profusion and waste: remembering that our Lord would not suffer the fragments of this miraculous provision to be lost; and considering that frugality is the proper source of liberality.—But we see also, in this miracle, an emblem of 'the Bread of life, which came down from heaven,' to sustain our perishing souls: the provisions of his Gospel appear to the carnal eye mean and scanty; yet they suffice for the whole multitude, who 'feed on Him, in their hearts, by faith, with thanksgiving,' and his ministers may go forth in confidence, assured that whilst they feed others, they will also be fed themselves. Scott.

Verses 22-24.

(Marg. R.) The multitudes, concluding Jesus to be the promised Messiah, purpose to make him their King (John 6: 15.) and as the apostles might be distressed to concur, our Lord constrained them to put to sea without Him: He then dismissed the people, who retired quietly to their own homes. Instead, however, of resting after his fatigues, He Himself retired to a mountain to pray. (Marg. Ref. n.) He had no sins to be pardoned or subdued: but He had manifold and tremendous desires, temptations, and sufferings before Him, through which He was to pass as man, in dependence on the power, truth, and love of God: He and the cause of his disciples and that of his church to plead; his debt was in communion with the Father; and He acted as our Surety and Example. Scott.

(22.) To the other side.] 'That is, of the creek, to the city of Bethsaida.

Constrained,] 'He made them enter, i. e. He ordered, caused them to enter. The original Greek often denotes moral persuasion So John 6: 10.'

Ship.] Rather bark or small vessel. (John 6: 22.) as noticed heretofore.

(23.) The original phrase here translated, 'and when the evening was come,' is the same with that translated 'and the time is now past.' The evening, says John, was divided into two parts, the first of which commenced, according to the rabbins, just before sunset, the second precisely at sunset. Before the captivity, the Hebrews appear to have made the first part of the evening to commence at sunset, and the second, when it began to grow dark.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, 'Be of good cheer; 'tis I, be not afraid.

q 24-43. Luke 12:38.
Joh 9:6. Ps. 93:3-4. 104:3. Mark 6:48. John 6:12. Rev. 10:2, 5, 8.
s Sam. 28:12-14. Job 4:14-16.
Dan. 10:6-12. Mark 6:49-50. Luke 1:11, 12. 24:5. Acts 12:15. Rev. 1:7.
t 2. John 16:33. Acts 23:11.
u Is. 41:14, 10, 14. 51:1. Luke 24:38. 29. John 6:20. 14:1-3. Rev. 1:17, 18.

tures. We need not inquire how this was done, whether by condensing the surface of the water, (when God pleases, the depths are congealed in the heart of the sea, Exod. 15: 8.) or by suspending the gravitation of his body, which was transfigured as He pleased; it is sufficient that it proves his divine power, for it is God's prerogative to tread upon the waves of the sea, (Job 9: 8.) as it is to ride upon the wings of the wind. He that made the waters of the sea a wall for the redeemed of the Lord, (Isa. 51: 10.) here makes them a walk for the Redeemer Himself, who, as Lord of all, appears with one foot on the sea and the other on dry land, Rev. 10: 2. The same power that made iron to swim, (2 Kgs 6: 6.) did this. What ailed thee, O thou sea? Ps. 114: 5. It was at the presence of the Lord. Thy way, O God, is in the sea, Ps. 67: 19. Note, Christ can take what way He pleases to save his people.

V. An account of what passed between Christ and his distressed friends on his approach.

1. Between Him and all the disciples. We are here told, How their fears were raised; v. 26. It seems, the existence and appearance of spirits was generally believed by all except the Sadducees; yet, doubtless, many supposed apparitions have been merely the creatures of men's own fear and fancy. These disciples said, *It is a spirit; an apparition*: so it might much better be rendered; when they should have said, *It is the Lord*; it can be no other. Note, [1] Even the appearances and approaches of deliverance are sometimes occasions of trouble and perplexity, Luke 1: 29. Exod. 3: 6, 7. The comforts of the Spirit of adoption are introduced by the terrors of the spirit of bondage, Rom. 8: 15. [2.] The appearance of a spirit, or the fancy of it, cannot but strike us with terror, because of our ignorance of the world of spirits, the just quarrel good spirits have with us, and the inveterate enmity evil spirits have against us: see Job 4: 14, 15. The more acquaintance we have with God, the Father of spirits, and the more careful we are to keep ourselves in his love, the better able we shall be to deal with these fears. [3.] The fears of good people arise from their mistakes and misapprehensions concerning Christ, his person, offices, and undertaking; the more clearly and fully we know his name, with the more assurance we shall trust in Him, Ps. 9: 10. [4.] A little thing frightens us in a storm. When without are fightings, no marvel that within are fears. Note, Most of our danger from outward troubles arises from the occasion they give for inward troubles.

How these fears were silenced, v. 27. He straightway relieved them, by showing them their mistake; when they were wrestling with the waves, He delayed his succor for some time, but hastened it against their fright; He straightway laid the storm with his word, *Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid*.

[1.] He rectified their mistake, by making Himself known to them, as Joseph to his brethren; *It is I*. He does not name Himself as He did to Peter, *I am Jesus*; for Paul as yet knew Him not: to these disciples it was enough to say, *It is I*; they knew his voice, as his sheep, (John 10: 4.) as Mary Magdalene, John 20: 16. They could say with the spouse, *It is the voice of my Beloved*, Cant. 2: 8. 5: 2. True believers know it by a good token. It was enough to make them easy, to understand who it was they saw. Note, A right knowledge opens the door to true comfort, especially the knowledge of Christ.

[2.] He encouraged them against their fright; *It is I*, and therefore, *First, Be of good cheer*; *Be courageous*; pluck up your spirits.' If Christ's disciples be not cheerful in a storm, it is their own fault. Secondly, *Be not afraid*; 'I 'Be not afraid of Me, now that you know it is I.' Note, Christ will not be a terror to those to whom He manifests Himself; when they

trains them up by degrees to live by faith, and not by sense.

4. Though the wind was contrary, and they were tossed with waves, yet being ordered by their Master to the other side, they did not tuck about and come back again, but made the best of their way forward. Note, Though troubles and difficulties may disturb us in our duty, they must not drive us from it; but through the midst of them we must press forward.

IV. Christ's approach to them in this condition; (v. 25.) in this we have an instance,

1. Of his goodness; He went to them, as one that took cognizance of their case, and was concerned for them, as a father for his children. Note, The church's extremity is Christ's opportunity; but He came not till the fourth watch, toward three o'clock in the morning. It was in the morning-watch that the Lord appeared for Israel in the Red sea, (Exod. 14: 24.) so was this. He that keepeth Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps, but, when there is occasion, walks in darkness for their succor; helps, and that right early.

2. Of his power: He went unto them, walking on the sea. This is a great instance of Christ's sovereign dominion over all the crea-

ture to understand Him right, the terror will be over 2. Be not afraid of the tempest, though noisy and very threatening. I am He that concerns himself for you, and will not see you perish.' Note, Nothing is a terror to those that have Christ near them, and know He is theirs; no, not death itself.

2. Between him and Peter, (v. 28-31.) where observe.

(1.) Peter's courage, and Christ's countenancing that.

It was very bold in Peter, that he would venture to come to Christ on the water; v. 23. Courage was Peter's master-grace; and that made him so forward above the rest to express his love to Christ, though others perhaps loved Him as well.

First, It is an instance of Peter's affection to Christ, that he desired to come to Him. He does not say, *Bid me walk on the waters*, as desiring it for the miracle-sake; but, *Bid me come to Thee*, as desiring it for Christ's sake. Christ was coming to succor and deliver them. Note, When Christ is coming towards us in a way of mercy, we must go forth to meet Him in a way of duty. Those that would have benefit by Christ as a Savior, must thus by faith come to Him. Christ had been now, for some time, absent, and hereby it appears why He absented Himself; it was to endear Himself so much the more to his disciples at his return, to make it highly seasonable and doubly acceptable. Note, When, for a small moment, Christ has forsaken his people, his returns are welcome, and most affectionately embraced; when gracious souls, after long seeking, find their Beloved at last, they hold him, and will not let him go, Cant. 3: 4.

Secondly, It is an instance of Peter's caution, and due observance of the will of Christ, that he would not come without a warrant. Not, 'If it be Thou, I will come,' but, *If it be Thou, bid me come*. Note, The holdest spirits must wait for a call to hazardous enterprises. Such extraordinary warrants as this to Peter were are not now to expect, but must have recourse to the general rules of the Word, in the application of which to particular cases, with the help of providential hints, wisdom is profitable to direct.

Thirdly, It is an instance of Peter's faith and resolution, that he ventured on the water when Christ bid him. To quit the safety of the ship, and throw himself into the jaws of death, to despise the threatening waves he so lately dreaded, argued a very strong dependence on the power and word of Christ. What difficulty or danger could stand before such faith and such zeal?

It was very kind and condescending in Christ, that He was pleased to own him in it, v. 29. He might have condemned the proposal as foolish and rash; nay, as proud and assuming. But Christ knew that it came from a sincere and zealous affection to Him, and graciously accepted it. Note, Christ is well pleased with the expressions of his people's love, though mixed with manifold infirmities.

First, He bid him come. When the Pharisees asked a sign, they had not only a repulse, but a reproof, because they did it with a design to tempt Christ; when Peter asked a sign, he had it, because he did it with a resolution to trust Christ. The gospel-call is, 'Come, come to Christ; venture all in his hand, and commit the keeping of your souls to Him; venture through a stormy sea, a troublesome world, to Jesus Christ.'

Secondly, He bore him out when he did come. Peter walked on the water. Now, methinks, the communion of the true believer with Christ is represented by this; Through the strength of Christ we are borne above the world, enabled to

Verses 25-27.

Th. fourth watch of the night began three hours before sunrise; and during these three hours Jesus came to the disciples; perhaps after day-break. 'The picture of two feet, walking on the sea, was an Egyptian hieroglyphic for an impossible thing.' Doddridge. It was, no doubt, an attestation, that He was the God of nature, the Lord of the creation; and also an exhibition of his power over the troubles and persecutions which he brought the church. That the Jews had then an opinion of 'holy spirits walking in the night,' is evident from the Seventy, who [116].

'render, "from the pestilence walking in darkness" (v. 31: 6.) from the fear of the devils, that walk in the night.' Whitty. Scott. (25.) 'In the time of Christ, the night, in imitation of the Romans, was divided into four watches, viz. 1. the evening, from twilight to nine o'clock; 2. the midnight, from nine to twelve; 3. the cock-crowing, from twelve to three; and the morning, from three o'clock till day-break. The assertions of the Talmudists, i. opposit. to this statement, are not to be regarded.'

JAM.

28 And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water.

29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.

30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me.

31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased.

x 19:27, 26:33—35e Mark 14:31, Luke 22:31—34, 49, 51 John 6:68, 13:36—17:29, 12:3.
y 17:29, 21:21, Mark 9:23, 11:23, Luke 17:8, Acts 5:16, Rom. 4:13, Phil. 4:13.
z 26:69—75, 2 Kings 6:18, Mark 14:33—72, Luke 22:54—51, John 18:23—27, 2 Tim. 4:16, 17.
a Gr. *strong*.
b 8:24, 25, Ps. 3:7, 69:1, 2, 107:27—30, 116:3, 4, Lam. 3:54—55, Jon. 2:2—7, 2 Cor. 12:7—10.
c Ps. 138:7, Mark 1:31, 41, 5:41, Acts 4:30.
d Gen. 22:14, Dent. 32:34, Mark 16:7, Luke 22:31, 32, 24:34, 1 Pet. 1:5.
e 1:28, 16:8, 17:20, Mark 4:40, 16:14, Luke 24:25.
f 21:21, 23:17, Mark 11:23, Rom. 4:18—20, 1 Tim. 2:8, Jam. 1:6—8, 5:17, 19:23, 30, Mark 4:41, 6:51, John 6:21.

he took notice of the danger he was in, and observed how the floods lifted up their waves, then he feared. Note, Looking at difficulties with an eye of sense, more than at precepts and promises with an eye of faith, is at the bottom of all our inordinate fears, both as to public and personal concerns. Abraham was strong in faith, because he considered not his own body; (Rom. 4:19.) he minded not the discouraging improbabilities which the promise lay under, but kept his eye on God's power; and so, against hope, believed in hope, v. 18. Peter, when he saw the wind boisterous, should have remembered what he had seen, (ch. 8:27.) when the winds and the sea obeyed Christ; but therefore we fear continually every day, because we forget the Lord our Maker, Isa. 51:12, 13.

Secondly, The effect of this fear; He began to sink. While faith kept up, he kept above water; but when faith staggered, he began to sink. Note, The sinking of our spirits is owing to the weakness of our faith; we are upheld as we are saved, through faith; (1 Pet. 1:5.) and, therefore, when our souls are cast down and disquieted, the sovereign remedy is, to hope in God, Ps. 43:5. It is probable that Peter, being bred a fisherman, could swim very well; (John 21:7.) and perhaps he trusted in part to that, when he cast himself into the sea; if he could not walk, he could swim; but Christ let him begin to sink, to show him that it was Christ's right hand and his holy arm, not any skill of his own, that was his security. It was Christ's great mercy to him, that, on the failing of his faith, He did not leave him to sink outright as a stone, (Exod. 15:5.) but gave him time to cry, Lord, save me. Such is Christ's care of true believers. Peter walked as he believed; to him, as to others, the rule held good, According to your faith be it unto you.

Thirdly, The remedy he had recourse to in this distress, the old, tried, approved remedy of prayer; he cried, Lord, save me. Observe, 1. The manner of his praying; it is fervent and importunate; He cried. Note, When faith is weak, prayer should be strong. Our Lord Jesus has taught us on the day of our fear to offer up strong cries, Heb. 5:7. Sense of danger

trample on it, kept from sinking into it, from being overwhelmed by it, obtain a victory over it, (1 John 3:4.) by faith in Christ's victory, (John 16:33.) and with Him are crucified to it, Gal. 6:14. See blessed Paul walking on the water with Jesus, more than a conqueror through Him, and treading on all the threatening waves, as not able to separate him from the love of Christ, Rom. 8:35, &c. Thus the sea of the world is become like a sea of glass, congealed so as to bear; and they that have gotten the victory, stand on it and sing, Rev. 15:2, 3. When our souls are following hard after God, then it is that his right hand upholds us; it was David's experience, Ps. 63:8. Special supports are promised, and are to be expected, only in spiritual pursuits. When God bears his Israel on eagles' wings, it is to bring them to Himself; (Exod. 19:4.) nor can we ever come to Jesus, unless we be upheld by his power; it is in his own strength that we wrestle with Him, that we reach after Him, that we press forward toward the mark, being kept by the power of God, which power we must depend on, as Peter when he walked on the water; and there is no danger of sinking while underneath are the everlasting arms.

2. Peter's cowardice, and Christ's reproving and succoring him. Christ bid him come, not only that he might walk on the water, and so know Christ's power, but that he might sink, and so know his own weakness; for as He would encourage his faith, so He would check his confidence, and make him ashamed of it. Observe then,

[1.] Peter's great fear; v. 30. The strongest faith and the greatest courage have a mixture of fear. Those that can say, Lord, I believe, must say, Lord, help my unbelief. Nothing but perfect love will quite cast out fear. Good men often fail in those graces which they are most diligent for, and which they have then in exercise, to show that they have not yet attained. Peter was very stout at first, but afterwards his heart failed him. The lengthening out of a trial discovers the weakness of faith.

Here is, First, The cause of this fear; He saw the wind boisterous. While Peter kept his eye fixed on Christ, and his word and power, he walked on the water well enough; but when he looked at the waves, he was in, and observed how the floods lifted up their waves, then he feared. Note, Looking at difficulties with an eye of sense, more than at precepts and promises with an eye of faith, is at the bottom of all our inordinate fears, both as to public and personal concerns. Abraham was strong in faith, because he considered not his own body; (Rom. 4:19.) he minded not the discouraging improbabilities which the promise lay under, but kept his eye on God's power; and so, against hope, believed in hope, v. 18. Peter, when he saw the wind boisterous, should have remembered what he had seen, (ch. 8:27.) when the winds and the sea obeyed Christ; but therefore we fear continually every day, because we forget the Lord our Maker, Isa. 51:12, 13.

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will make us cry, sense of duty and dependence on God should make us cry to Him. 2. The matter of his prayer was pertinent and to the purpose; He cried, Lord, save me. Christ is the great Savior, He came to save; those that would be saved, must not only come to Him, but cry to Him, for salvation; but we are never brought to this, till we find ourselves sinking; sense of need will drive us to Him.

[2.] Christ's great favor to Peter, in this fright. Though there was a mixture of presumption with Peter's faith in his first adventure, and of unbelief with his faith in his after-fainting, yet Christ did not cast him off; for,

First, He saved him: Christ's time to save is, when we sink, Ps. 15:4—7. Christ's hand is still stretched out to all believers, to keep them from sinking. Though He may seem to have left his hold, He doth but seem to do so, for they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of his hand, John 10:29.

Secondly, He rebuked him; for as many as He loves and saves, He reproves and chides. Note, 1. Faith may be true, and yet weak; as first, like a grain of mustard-seed. Peter had faith enough to bring him upon the water, yet because not enough to carry him through Christ tells him he had but little. 2. Our discouraging doubts and fears are all owing to the weakness of our faith: therefore, we doubt, because we are but of little faith. Could we but believe more, we should doubt less. 3. The weakness of our faith, and the prevalence of our doubts, are very displeasing to our Lord Jesus. There is no good reason why Christ's disciples should be of a doubtful mind, no, not in a stormy day, because He is ready to help them, a very present Help.

VI. The ceasing of the storm, v. 32. When Christ was come into the ship, they were presently at the shore. Christ walked on the water till He came to the ship, and then went into that, when He could as easily have walked to the shore; but when ordinary means are to be had, miracles are not to be expected. Though Christ needs not instruments to do his work, He is pleased to use them. Observe, When Christ came into the ship, Peter came in with Him. Companions with Christ in his patience, shall be companions in his kingdom, Rev. 1:9. Those that walk with Him, shall reign with Him; those that are exposed, and that suffer with Him, shall triumph with Him.

When they were come into the ship, immediately the storm ceased, for it had done its work, its trying work. He that has gathered the wind into his fists, and bound the waters in a garment, is the same that ascended and descended; and his word even stormy winds fulfil, Ps. 148:8. When Christ comes into a soul, He makes winds and storms to cease there, and commands peace. Welcome Christ, and the noise of her waves will soon be quelled. The way to be still is, to know that He is God, that He is the Lord with us.

VII. The adoration paid to Christ hereupon; (v. 33.) They that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, and said, Of a truth, Thou art the Son of God. Two good uses they made of this distress, and this deliverance.

It was a confirmation of their faith in Christ, and abundantly convinced them that the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him; for none but the world's Creator could multiply the loaves, none but its Governor could tread on the waters of the sea; they therefore yield to the evidence, and make confession of their faith; Thou truly art the Son of God. They knew before that He was the Son of God, but now they know it better. Faith, after a conflict with unbelief, is sometimes the more active, and gets to greater

Verses 23—32.

Peter, from the first appears a man of integrity, who had very exalted thoughts of Jesus, and a cordial affection to Him; but of a sanguine temper, and not deeply acquainted with his own heart: he was therefore always most forward to speak, to propose, to object, and attempt. When he saw Jesus walking on the sea, he found himself excited to a very high confidence, and he desired permission to come to Him on the water. Probably he expected a commendation of the greatness of his faith; but our Lord, to show him his weakness, and to teach all his disciples many useful lessons, bade him come; and Peter

without hesitation attempted to walk on the unstable waves! Peter's doubting did not relate to his own acceptance, or final salvation, but to the power of Christ to preserve him from sinking amidst the violence of the storm. (Note, 8:23—27.)

SCOTT

(28.) The rebuke which Peter suffered may warn us not rashly to throw ourselves on unnecessary trials, lest our excess of confidence end in fear and disgrace. Modesty and caution will adorn our other virtues, and render us amiable in the eyes of the humble Jesus.

DODDIDGE.

23 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, ^bOf a truth thou art the Son of God.

34 And ⁱwhen they were gone over, they came into the land of ^kGennesaret.

35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, ⁱthey sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased;

36 And besought him that they might ^monly touch the ⁿhem of his garment: and as many as touched were made ^operfectly whole.

g 15:25, 28-9, 17, Luke 24:29.
h 16:18, 17:5, 26:17, 27:43-54, Ps. 97.
i Mark 1:1, 14:58, 15:39, Luke 9:41, 6:28, John 1:49, 6:69, 9:35-38, 11:27, 17:1, 19:7, Acts 8:37, Rom. 1:4.
j Mark 6:52-56.
k Luke 5:1.
l 4:24-25, Mark 1:28-34, 2:1, &c.
m 9:30-51, Mark 3:10, Luke 6:19, Acts 15:11, 12.
n 23:5, Ps. 28:33, &c. Num. 15:38, 39.
o John 7:23, Acts 3:16, 4:9, 10, 14-16.

had knowledge of Him. Probably the report of his miraculous passage over the sea, might help to make way for his entertainment in those parts; and perhaps it was one thing Christ intended in it, for He has great reaches in what He does. This they had knowledge of, and of the other miracles He had wrought, and therefore flocked to Him. Note, They that know Christ's name, will make their application to Him: if Christ were better known, He would not be neglected as He is; He is trusted as far as He is known.

They had knowledge of Him, that is, that He was among them, and would be a while among them. Note, To discern the day of our opportunities is a good step toward the improvement of it. This was the condemnation of the world, that Christ was in the world, and the world knew Him not; John 1:10. Jerusalem knew Him not, (Luke 19:42.) but there were some, who,

degrees of strength by being exercised. Now they know it of a truth. Note, It is good for us to know more and more of the certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed, Luke 1:4. Faith then grows, when it arrives at a full assurance, when it sees clearly, and saith, *Of a truth.*

They took occasion from it to give Him the glory due unto his name. They not only owned that great truth, but were suitably affected by it; they worshipped Christ. Note, When Christ manifests his glory for us, we ought to return it to Him; (Ps. 50:15.) *I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.* Their worship and adoration of Christ were thus expressed, *Of a truth Thou art the Son of God.* Note, The matter of our creed may and must be made the matter of our praise. Faith is the proper principle of worship, and worship the genuine product of faith. *He that comes to God must believe;* and he that believes in God, will come, Heb. 11:6.

V. 34-36. We have here an account of miracles Christ wrought on the other side the water, in the land of Gennesaret. Whithersoever He went, He was doing good. Gennesaret was a tract of land that lay between Bethsaida and Capernaum, and either gave the name to, or took the name from, this sea, which is called, (Luke 5:1.) *The Lake of Gennesaret;* it signifies the valley of branches. Observe here,

1. The forwardness and faith of the men of that place. These were more noble than the Gergesenes, their neighbors, who were borderers on the same lake. Those besought Christ to depart from them, they had no occasion for Him; these besought Him to help them, they had need of Him. Christ reckons it the greatest honor we can do Him, to make use of Him. We are told,

1. How they were brought to Christ; they

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 22-36. Even in those places to which the Lord has evidently appointed us, we may expect storms and difficulties; but in due time He will come to our relief. We should enjoy far more comfort, did we more zealously copy his example, and were we more careful not to omit fervent, constant prayer.—We are, sometimes, troubled at those incidents, which denote our deliverance; but our Lord beholds our fears, and considering that all power is in our Redeemer's hands, and all events are ordered by his appointment, we may comfortably hear Him say to us in every one of them, *'It is I, be not afraid.'*—We find it hard to be very humble without dejection, or animated without self-complacency: but our faith is irregular, when it leads us to desire or attempt difficult or perilous services, without a proper call. The Lord, however, often lets his servants have their choice, in order to humble and prove them, and to show the greatness of his power and grace. In the most perilous situation to which He calls us, if our faith be

steadfastly fixed on his infinite power, truth, and love, we may proceed with safety and confidence. But He will rebuke the weak believer, though He will not leave him to perish.—We ought indeed to doubt, and to examine ourselves, whether we be true disciples or not: but we never should doubt the power of Christ to save and help all those, who call upon Him.—The dangers, trials, and humiliations of the believer, will eventually render the Savior more glorious in his eyes; and precious to his heart.—Were men more acquainted with Him, and with the destituted state of their souls, they would flock to Him, that they might experience his healing influence; for all who touch Him, though with a feeble, trembling faith, shall in due season be made perfectly whole: and, whilst we consider all these wonders of his divine power and love, shall we refuse to adore Him, or to acknowledge, that *'of a truth He is the Son of God?'* Or shall we neglect to do what we can, to bring others to Him for the healing and saving of their souls? SCOTT.

Verse 33.

The apostles seem to have been more impressed with this, than any of our Lord's preceding miracles; nor did He in the least decline the honor which they rendered to Him. It does not appear, that any, except the apostles and those who belonged to the vessel, were present. To suppose additional mariners, heathen mariners, on board this fisher-boat, the property of fishermen, on an inland lake in Galilee, in order to explain away this confession to Christ, as if it only meant a son of a god, according to pagan notions, and as made by the Gentiles alone, strikingly shows, how unwilling many learned men are to admit the obvious conclusion; but even on this supposition, the words cannot admit that construction. See *Bp. Middleton on the Greek Article*, p. 263-271. (Note, Mark 15:39.) SCOTT.

The Son of God. That this was the name commonly given to the Messiah, is manifest from John 1:50, and from those passages in which He is now called the Christ, and now, the Son of God; especially from the second Psalm, which also the ancient Hebrews interpreted of the Messiah.

ROSENB.

Verses 34-36.

(34.) *Gennesaret.* This district extended along the west side of the lake, to which it gave its name, about thirty stadia, or nearly four miles, and was in breadth, upon an average, about two miles and a half. It is supposed to have been the same as Chinnereth, or Cinnereth, in the Old Testament.

WELLS.

Gennesaret is the title of the whole province, which contained in it the lake so called. Hammond.—It is likely, that our Lord landed not far from Capernaum, which some think was situated in the land of Gennesaret, for He very soon went to that city. (John 6:24, 59.) As the inhabitants had previous knowledge of Jesus, they flocked to Him, with their sick, who only desired leave to touch the hem, or fringe, of his garment; and, as this was done in faith and expectation, they were all immediately and perfectly healed.

SCOTT.

'In this district were the cities of Capernaum and Tiberias.' Dr. A. CLARKE. PLOOMFIELD.

(35.) *Men.* Rather, the people. *Had knowledge.* Rather, when they knew Him again, or remembered Him: for He had been in those parts before. Matt. 8:23.

CHAP. XV.

Jesus reproves the scribes and Pharisees, for setting their traditions above God's commandments; and exposes their hypocrisy, 1-9. He warns the people against their doctrine, and shows the source and nature of delirium, 10-20. He tries the faith, and heals the daughter of a woman of Canaan, 21-28; heals great numbers at the sea of Galilee, 29-31; and again feeds the multitude by miracle, 32-39.

THEN ^a came to Jesus ^b scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,

2 Why do thy disciples ^c transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

3 But he answered and said unto them, ^d Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

4 For ^e God commanded, saying, ^f Honor thy father and mother: and ^g He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

^a Mark 7:1, &c. b. 5:20. 23:2, 15, &c. Luke 5:30. Acts 23:9.

^c Luke 5:17, 21. ^d Mark 7:1. Gal. 1:14. Col. 2:8, 20-23. 1 Pet. 1:18.

^e 7:3-5. Marx 7:8-13. 14:10. 5:17-19. Is. 8:20. Rom. 13:8.

^f 19:19. Ex. 20:12. Lev. 19:3. Deut. 5:16. Prov. 23:22. Eph. 6:1.

^g Ex. 21:17. Lev. 20:9. Deut. 21:18-21. 27:16. Prov. 20:20. 30:17.

of spirits instructing them; as & concerned for the bodies of his people, providing for them.

Here is, I. The cavil of the scribes and Pharisees at Christ's disciples: The scribes and Pharisees were the great men of the Jewish church, men whose gain was godliness; great enemies to the Gospel of Christ, but colored their opposi-

over the place of persons diseased, as Naaman did; (2 Kings 5:11.) but were sure that there was in Him such an overflowing fulness of healing virtue, that they could not fail of a cure, who were but admitted near Him. It was in this country and neighborhood that the woman with the bloody issue was cured by touching the hem of his garment, and was commended for her faith; (Ch. 9:20-22.) and thence, probably, they took occasion to ask this. Note, The experiences of others in their attendance on Christ may be of use both to direct and to encourage us in our attendance on Him. It is good to use those means and methods which others before us have used with success.

II. The fruit and success of their application to Christ. It was not in vain that these seed of Jacob sought Him, v. 36. Note, 1. Christ's cures are perfect cures. Those that He heals, He heals perfectly. He doeth not his work by halves. Though spiritual healing be not perfected at first, yet, doubtless, He that has begun the good work, will perform it, Phil. 1:6. 2. There is abundance of healing virtue in Christ for all that apply to Him, be they ever so many. That precious ointment which was poured on his head, ran down to the skirts of his garment, Ps. 133:2. 3. The healing virtue that is in Christ, is put forth for the benefit of those that by a true and lively faith touch Him. Christ is in heaven, but his Word is high us, and Himself in that Word. When we mix faith with the Word, apply it to ourselves, depend on it, and submit to its influences and commands, then we touch the hem of Christ's garment. It is but thus touching, and we are made whole. On such easy terms are spiritual cures offered by Him that He may truly be said to heal freely; so that if our souls die of their wounds, it is not owing to our Physician, but to ourselves. He could, He would have healed us, but we would not be healed; so that our blood will lie on our own heads.

CHAP. XV. v. 1-9. In this chapter, we have our Lord Jesus, as the great Prophet teaching, as the great Physician healing, and as the great Shepherd of the sheep feeding; as the Father of spirits instructing them; as the Conqueror of Satan dispossessing him; as & concerned for the bodies of his people, providing for them.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. v. 1, 2. The report of our Lord's miracles seems to have given great uneasiness to the scribes and Pharisees at Jerusalem; and some of them had come in order to watch his conduct, and to seek for matter of accusation against Him. But not finding that He, or his disciples, neglected any part of the divine law, they objected to Him his disregard of 'the tradition of the elders.' It was pretended by them, and still is by modern Jews, that these traditions were originally received from God, by immediate revelation, and were of equal authority with the written law; and that they had been delivered down, by word of mouth from one to another, through successive generations. Thus the scribes, who were the supposed repositories and interpreters of them, had the power of altering them, and imposing them on the people according to their convenience; in the same manner as the church of Rome long maintained its usurped authority, by dictating to the whole western church under similar pretensions; and as it still maintains that usurpation, through many populous regions. SCOTT.

(2.) Tradition.] Besides the laws of Moses, as recorded in the Pentateuch, the rabbins pretend that he left a variety of oral traditions, delivered to him by the voice of God at Sinai, and handed down from generation to generation, by word of mouth, to the time of our Lord, and even lower; for it does not appear that any complete digest of them was put into writing till the latter part of the second century, by Rabbi Judas, surnamed *the holy*. This work (which makes six volumes folio) is called the *Mishna*, or second law, as containing a variety of additions to, and explanations of, the written law: these were pretended to be explicatory, but many of them were evasive, and some even subversive of the laws of Moses, as in the text. WILLIAMS.

To explain the *Mishna*, mentioned above, were written the two *Talmuds*, called the Jerusalem and Babylonish, which are named *Gemara*, or complement, as Dr. A. Clarke has observed, 'because by these the oral law is fully explained.' The former was completed about A. D. 300; the latter after A. D. 500.

[Elders.] 'Not the members of the sanhedrim, but all those who had obtained among the people a distinguished name for wisdom.'

Wash hands.] 'It is plain that other nations commonly used to wash before their meals.'

Eat bread.] 'Every attentive reader [of the Bible] must have observed, that food in general is called bread, in a multitude of places; and bread is sometimes put even for the provisions of a royal table. 2 Sam. 9:7, 10, and 12:20.'

DODDGE.

10

tion with a pretence of zeal for the law & Moses, when really nothing was intended but the support of their own tyranny over the consciences of men. They were men of learning and of business. These here introduced were of Jerusalem, the holy, the head-city; the should therefore have been better than others, but they were worse. Note, External privileges, not duly improved, commonly swell men up with pride and malignity. Jerusalem, which should have been a pure spring, was now become a poisoned sink. How is the faith of Jerusalem become a harlot!

Now if these great men be the accusers, pray what is the accusation? Why, truly, non-conformity to the canons of their church; v. 2. This charge they make good in a particular instance; *They wash not their hands when they eat bread.* A very high misdemeanor! It was a sign that Christ's disciples conducted themselves offensively, when this was the worst thing they could charge them with.

Observe, 1. What was the tradition of the elders—that people should often wash their hands, and always at meat. This they placed a great deal of religion in, supposing that the meat they touched with unwashed hands would defile them. The Pharisees practised it themselves, and with a great deal of strictness imposed it on others, making it a sin against God if they did not do it. Rabbi Jose determined, 'that to eat with unwashed hands is as great a sin as adultery.' And Rabbi Akiba being kept a close prisoner, having water sent him both to wash his hands with, and to drink with his meat, the greatest part being accidentally shed, washed his hands with the remainder, though he left himself none to drink, saying he would rather die than transgress the tradition of the elders. Nay, they would not eat meat with one that did not wash before meat. This mighty zeal in so small a matter would appear very strange, if we did not still see it incident to church-oppressors, not only to be fond of practising their own inventions, but furious in pressing their own impositions.

2. What was the transgression of this tradition by the disciples; it seems, they did not wash their hands when they ate bread. The custom was innocent enough, and had a decency in it; but when it came to be practised and imposed as a religious rite, and such a stress laid on it, the disciples, though weak in knowledge, yet were so well taught as not to observe it.

Verses 3-6.

(Note, Deut. 4:2.) All additions to the laws of God are an infringement of his legislative authority; and a presumptuous imputation on his wisdom; and in one way or other, they always clash with the divine precepts: so that an attachment to human traditions necessarily leads men to disobey God; and it is evident that our Lord had expressly taught his disciples to disregard them. Doubtless they, at this time, observed the ceremonial distinction of meats, and other divine appointments. 'Honor thy father and thy mother.' 'By honor is meant all kind of duty, which children owe to their parents.' Beza in SCOTT.

(4.) Curseth.] 'Revileth.' The proper import of the [original] word, is to give abusive language, to revile, to calumniate. The application, in the present instance, is evidently to reproachful words, quite different from cursing.

CAMPBELL. 'If a man can answer his parents, when they need any relief, and tell them, I have bound myself with an oath, that I will not do any thing to the relief of my father or mother: or, as some understand it, 'O father, that by which thou shouldst be relieved by me, is a gift already devoted to God, and cannot without impiety be otherwise employed; and by this piety to God I may be as profitable to thee: for God will repay it to me and thee in our needs: he is under obligation not to give it to his father: and the Pharisees approve of this practice, that he may thus evacuate his duty to his parent.' *Hornwald*. The pretence of devoting to God the property thus withheld from the parent, as the occasion of the oath, seems implied. 'A man may be so bound by them, (that is, by vows,) that he cannot, without great sin, do what God had by his law required to be done. So that if he made a vow, which laid him under a necessity to violate God's law that he might observe it, his vow must stand, and the law be abrogated.' *Jewish canon from Pococke*.—This specimen is sufficient to lead any reflecting person to conclude, that human traditions and the law of God cannot subsist together; but the prevalence of the former must inevitably lead to make void the latter, and this consideration shows the reason of our Lord's most decided opposition to the system of tradition.

Honor.] This word was taken in great latitude of meaning among the Jews: it not only meant respect and submission, but also to take care of a person, to nourish and support him, to enrich. See Num. 22:17. Judg. 13:17. 1 Tim. 5:17. And that this was the sense of the law, as it respected parents, see Deut. 27:16.

Dr. A. Clarke.

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But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father, or his mother, *It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;*

6 And honor not his father or his mother, *he shall be free.* ^m Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

7 Ye ⁿ hypocrites, how well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; ^o but their heart is far from me.

23:16-18. Am. 7:15-17. Mark 7:10-13. Acts 4:19, 5:29.
e Lev. 27:9, &c. Prov. 20:25. Mark 7:11, 12.

f 1 Tim. 5:3, 4, 16.
m Ps. 119:126, 127, 129. Jer. 8:9, 9.
n Hos. 4:8. Mal. 2:7-9. Mark 7:13. Rom. 3:31.

o Mark 7:5. Acts 23:25-27.
p Is. 29:13. Ez. 33:31. John 1:47. 1 Pet. 3:10.
q Prov. 23:26. Jer. 12:2. Acts 8:21. Heb. 3:12.

Note, Those who are most zealous of their own impositions, are commonly most careless of God's commands. Though the Pharisees, in this command of washing before meat, did not intrench on any command of God; yet, because in other instances they did, He justifies his disciples' disobedience to this.

The proof of this charge is in a particular instance, that of their transgressing the fifth commandment.

[1.] Let us see what the command of God is, v. 4.

The precept is enjoined by the common Father of mankind, and by paying respect to them whom Providence has made the instruments of our being, we give honor to Him who is the Author of it. The whole of children's duty to their parents is included in this of honoring them, which is the spring and foundation of all the rest. *If I be a Father, where is my honor?* Our Savior here means by it the duty of children's maintaining their parents, and ministering to their wants, if there be occasion, and being every way serviceable to their comfort. *Honor widows*, that is, maintain them, 1 Tim. 5: 3.

The sanction is a promise, *that thy days may be long*; but our Savior waves that, and insists on the penalty in another scripture, which denotes the duty to be highly and indispensably necessary; *He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death*: this law we have, Exod. 21: 17. The sin of cursing parents is here opposed to the duty of honoring them. Those who speak ill of their parents, or wish ill to them, who mock at them, or give them insulting and opprobrious language, break this law. If to call a brother *Raca* be so penal, what is it to call a father so? By our Savior's application of this law, it appears, that denying service or relief to parents is included in cursing them. Though the language be respectful, yet what will that avail, if the deeds be not agreeable? It is but like him that said, *I go, sir, and went not*, ch. 21: 30.

[2.] Let us see what was the contradiction which the tradition of the elders gave to this command. It was not direct and downright, but implicit; their casuists gave them such rules as furnished them with an evasion from the obligation of this command, v. 5, 6. You hear what God saith, *but ye say so* and so. Note, That which men say, even great and learned men, and men in authority, must be examined by that which God saith; and if found either contrary or inconsistent, it may and must be rejected, Acts 4: 19. Observe,

First, What their tradition was; That a man could not bestow his worldly estate better than to devote it to the service of the temple: and that, when any thing was so devoted, it was not only unlawful to alienate it, but all other

They had already learned Paul's lesson, *All things are lawful for me*; but I will not be brought under the power of any; especially not of those who said to their souls, *Bow down, that we may go over*, 1 Cor. 6: 12.

3. What was the complaint of the scribes and Pharisees against them. They quarrel with Christ about it, supposing that He allowed them in it, as He did, no doubt, by his own example. It was well that the complaint was made to Christ; for the disciples themselves, though they knew their duty in this case, were perhaps not well able to give a reason for what they did.

II. Christ's answer to this cavil, and his justification of the disciples. Note, While we stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, He will be sure to bear us out.

Two ways Christ replies to them:

I. By way of recrimination, v. 3-6. They were spying notes in the eyes of his disciples, but Christ shows them a beam in their own. What He charges on them is, not barely a recrimination, but such a censure of their tradition as makes not only a non-compliance lawful, but opposition a duty. That human authority must never be submitted to, which sets up in competition with divine authority.

The charge is general, v. 3. They called it the tradition of the elders, laying stress on the antiquity of the usage, and the authority of them that imposed it, as the church of Rome does on fathers and councils; but Christ calls it *their* tradition. Note, Illegal impositions will be laid to the charge of those who support and maintain them, as well as of those who first invented and enjoined them; Mic. 6: 16.

You transgress the commandment of God.

obligations, though ever so just and sacred were thereby superseded; what was given to the temple they were gainers by; thus their covetousness was, in truth, at the bottom of this tradition.

Secondly, How they allowed the application of this to the case of children. When their parents' necessities called for their assistance, they pleaded, that all they could spare, they had devoted to the treasury of the temple; *It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me*, and therefore their parents must expect nothing from them; suggesting what, that the spiritual advantage of what was so devoted would redound to the parents, who must live on that. This, they taught, was a valid plea, and many unthinking, unnatural children they justified in it, and said, *He shall be free; so we supply the sense.* Some go further, and supply it thus, *'He doth a will, his days shall be long in the land,* as having only observed the fifth commandment. The practice of religion would make his refusal to provide for his parents plausible. But the absurdity and impiety of this tradition were evident; for revealed religion was intended to improve, not to overthrow, natural religion; one of the fundamental laws of which is this of honoring our parents; and had they known what that meant, *I will have justice and mercy, and not sacrifice*, they had not thus made the most arbitrary rituals destructive of the most necessary morals. This was *making the command of God of no effect*. Note, Whatever leads to, or countenances, disobedience, makes void the command; and they that take on them to dispense with God's law, do, in Christ's account, repeal and annul it. To break the law is bad, but to teach men so, as the scribes and Pharisees did, is much worse, ch. 5: 19. To what purpose is the command given, if it be not obeyed? The rule is, as to us, of no effect, if we be not ruled by it. *It is time for Thee, Lord, to work*; for they have made void thy law; Ps. 119: 126. But, thanks be to God, in spite of them and their traditions, the command stands in full force, power, and virtue.

2. By way of reprehension; v. 7. Note, It is the prerogative of Him who searcheth the heart, and knows what is in man, to pronounce who are hypocrites. The eye of man can perceive open profaneness, but only the eye of Christ can discern hypocrisy, Luke 16: 15. And as it is a sin which his eye discovers, so it is a sin which of all others his soul hates.

He fetches his reproof from Isa. 29: 13. *Well did Esaias prophesy of you.* Esaias spoke it of the generation to which he prophesied, yet Christ applies it to these scribes and Pharisees. Note, The reproofs of sin and sinners, which we find in Scripture, were designed to reach the like persons and practices to the end of the world; for they are not of private interpretation, 2 Pet. 1: 20. The sinners of the latter days are prophesied of, 1 Tim. 4: 1. 2 Tim. 3: 1. 2 Pet. 3: 3. Threatenings directed against others, belong to us, if we be guilty of the same sins. The prophecies of Scripture are every day fulfilling.

This prophecy exactly deciphers a hypocritical nation, Isa. 9: 17. 10: 6. Here is,

(1.) The description of hypocrites, in two things.

[1.] In their own performances of religious worship, v. 8. Observe,

First, How far a hypocrite goes; he is, in profession, a worshipper of God. The Pharisees went up to the temple, to pray; he does not

(5.) *It is a gift.* At Mark 7: 11. it is expressed, "It is Corban" It means probably some person or thing declared, by vow or otherwise, to be given to God, and therefore so sacred, as not to be applied to any other purpose.

Allusion is made to a method of rendering void the precept to relieve parents, practised by the Jews at this time. It was held by the traditions of the elders, that, if a son made a formal devotion to sacred purposes, of those goods which he could afford for the relief of a parent, it was their no, lawful for him to succor his parent. And, what was most strange, he was not held to be bound by his words to devote his estate to sacred uses; but, not to relieve the parent he was involuntarily bound.

LIGHTFOOT.

(8.) *Made the commandment of God of none effect, &c.* At 1 Tim. 5: 8.

what respects the duties of religion we ought ever to regard the authority of God. Mere human institutions ought ever to be considered as without authority to bind the conscience. For what right has one man to impose his own invention on another? "To the law and to the testimony" should be our appeal; and if any thing is not divinely appointed, we may neglect it without sin. Hypocrites have ever been more zealous for forms of human appointment, the tradition of man than the law of God.

BOOTHBY

Verses 7-9.

The passage in the prophet seems to refer as much to the deluded people, as to their false teachers. (Note, Is. 29: 13-16.) SCORR.

(7.) *Prophecy of you.* It may be thus parenthetically rendered: "The words of Esaias are exactly suitable to you"

BLOOMFIELD

9 But ^{in vain} they do worship me; ^{teaching} for doctrines the commandments of men.

[Practical Observations.]

10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, ^{Hear, and understand:}

11 Not ^{that which} goeth into the mouth ^{defileth} a man; ^{but} that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

12 ¶ Then came his disciples, and said unto him, ^{Knowest thou} that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

Ex. 29:7. Lev. 25:16, 20. 1 Sam. 25:21. Ps. 39:4. 73:13. Ec. 5:2-7. Is. 13:15. 58:1-3. Mtl. 5:14. Mark 7:7. 1 Cor. 15:2. Jn. 2:20. Ps. 11:12, 22. Jer. 23:15. Is. 29:13. Col. 2:18-22. 1 Tim. 1:4. 4:1-3. 6:7. Tit. 1:14. Heb. 15:9. Rev. 2:2, 18.

1 Tim. 2:28. Mark 7:14, 16. Luke 20:45-47.

Is. 19:24, 15. Is. 6:9. 55:3. Luke 9:45. Eph. 1:17, 18. Col. 1:9. 2a. 1b.

Mark 7:15. Luke 11:53-41. Acts 10:14, 15. 11:8, 9. Rom. 11:14, 17. 2. 1 Tim. 4:4, 5. Tit. 1:15. Heb. 13:9.

Is. 20:12. 23:4-57. Ps. 10:7. 12:2. 35:15. 58:3, 4. Is. 57:23. 59:2-5. 64:15. Jer. 9:4-6. Rom. 8:13, 14. 1 Pet. 2:18.

1 Tim. 2:14. 2 Cor. 10:1. 13:2. 2 Cor. 9:3. Gal. 2:5. Jam. 4:17.

(2.) ^{The} doom of hypocrites; *In vain do they worship Me.* Their worship does not attain the end for which it was appointed; it will neither please God, nor profit themselves. If it be not in spirit, it is not in truth, and so is nothing. That man who only seems to be religious, his religion is vain; (James 1:26.) and if our religion be a vain religion, how great is that vanity! How sad is it to live in an age of prayers and sermons, and sabbaths and sacraments, in vain! It is so, if the heart be not with God in them. Lip-labor is lost labor, Isa. 1:11. Hypocrites sow the wind and reap the whirlwind;

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-9. How thankful ought we to be for the written word, when oral traditions are so liable to error, perversion and uncertainty!—Never let us for a moment imagine, that the religion of the Bible can be improved by any possible additions, doctrinal or practical: but common sense will teach a candid inquirer, to distinguish between those circumstances of worship, which each society must order for itself, though none have a right to impose on others, and those inventions, which corrupt the purity, destroy the simplicity, and deform the spiritual beauty, of religious worship.—We should peculiarly advert to our Lord's marked attention to the due performance of relative duties, especially that of children to their parents. No forms, no names, subscription to charities or any thing else, which looks like faith, zeal, or piety, can prove that a true

Christian, who neglects to 'honor his father and mother,' or to supply their wants according to his ability. Temporal death indeed is not now inflicted on him, who curses his parents; yet a far more dreadful punishment will be awarded hereafter to all disobedient children, if they continue impenitent, and they must expect no comfort or blessing from God even in this present world.—Alas! too many 'draw near to God with their mouth, and honor Him with their lips, whilst their hearts are far from Him,' and thus prove that they worship Him in vain. And this is the case, not only among those who 'teach for doctrines the commandments of men,' but even with many who profess evangelical religion, yet neglect relative duties, and evidently commit iniquity, and are fraudulent in their dealings, and oppressive to their dependents. Scott.

(9.) In verse 1. 'Not only unprofitable, but to their hurt.'

ROSENEM.

Commandments. 'Injunctions, precepts, institutions.'

BLOOMFIELD.

'By the traditions of the elders, not only was the Word of God perverted, but his worship also corrupted greatly. Not Jews alone however, have done this: whole Christian churches, as well as sects and parties, have acted in the same way. Men must not mould the worship of God according to their fancy—it is not what they think *will do, is proper, or innocent*, &c. but what God Himself has prescribed, that He will acknowledge as his worship. However sincere a man may be in a worship of his own invention, or of man's commandment, yet it profits him nothing. Christ Himself says it is in vain: to condemn such may appear to some, illiberal; but, whatever may be said in behalf of sincere heatheens, and others who have no divine revelation, there is no excuse for the man who has the BIBLE before him.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 10, 11.

When Jesus had thus answered the scribes. He saw good to caution the people also against their delusions: and cogently instructed them that real pollution was not an adventitious matter from without, but the genuine produce of man's fallen nature; and that the tongue was one main instrument, in bringing forth and propagating it. 'A man may bring guilt upon himself, by eating what is pernicious to his health, or

they trust in vanity, and vanity will be their recompense.

Thus Christ justified his disciples; and thus the scribes and Pharisees got by cavilling. We read not of any reply they made; if they were not satisfied, yet they were silenced, and could not resist the power wherewith Christ spoke.

V. 10-20. Christ having proved that the disciples, in eating with unwashed hands, were not to be blamed, as transgressing the traditions and injunctions of the elders, shows that they were not to be blamed, as having done any thing in itself evil. Observe,

1. The solemn introduction to this discourse; v. 10. The multitude were withdrawn while Christ discoursed with the scribes and Pharisees; probably those proud men ordered them away, as not willing to talk with Christ in their hearing. But Christ had a regard to them; thus the poor are evangelized; and the foolish things of the world, and things that are despised, hath Christ chosen. He turns from the Pharisees as wilful and unteachable, to the multitude, who, though weak, were humble, and willing to be taught. To them He said, *Hear and understand.* Note, What we hear from the mouth of Christ, we must give all diligence to understand. Not only scholars, but even the multitude, must apply their minds to understand the words of Christ. Note, There is need of a great intention of mind and clearness of understanding, to free men from those corrupt principles and practices they have been bred up in and long accustomed to; for in that case the understanding is commonly bribed and biased by prejudice.

II. The truth itself laid down, (v. 11.) in two propositions.

1. *Not that which goes into the mouth defiles the man.* That defiles the man, by which guilt is contracted before God: now what we eat, if we do not eat unreasonably and immoderately, does not this; for to the pure all things are pure, Tit. 1:15. The Pharisees carried the ceremonial pollutions much further than the law intended, which our Savior witnesses against. He was now beginning to teach his followers to call nothing common or unclean; and if Peter, when he was bid to kill and eat, had remembered this word, he would not have said, *Not so, Lord.* Acts 10:13-15, 28.

2. *But that which comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man.* We are polluted by the

'by excess in food or liquor; and a Jew might have done it by eating what was forbidden by the law; yet in all these instances, the pollution would arise from the wickedness of the heart, and be just proportionable to it. Doddridge. 'It is evident that, in our Lord's judgment, the whole multitude was capable of understanding those things which the Pharisees did not, and by which the traditions were overthrown.' Whitby.

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(11.) 'The Pharisees thought that some things were impure by nature, and of themselves, and not merely ceremonially, and therefore polluted the soul. This opinion Christ refutes.' ROSENEM.

Verses 12-14.

When our Lord had spoken these words, He retired; as the disciples came to inform Him how greatly the Pharisees were offended; *He stumbled*, by his attack on their traditions. To this He answered, *that every plant which his heavenly Father had not planted, should be rooted up;* meaning, that the teaching and traditions of the scribes and Pharisees, not being from God, must be destroyed, to make room for true religion; and it was therefore proper to expose them before all the people. But the words are a universal rule, in respect to teachers, doctrines, observances, and every thing relative to religion: all which is not from God, has no authority or excellency, and cannot be of long duration; and true godliness can never prosper, till these weeds and suckers be extirpated, which draw away the nourishment from its root.

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12 But he answered said, 'Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.'

14 'Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind.' And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

15 Then answered Peter and said unto him, 'Declare unto us this parable.'

16 And Jesus said, 'Are ye also yet without understanding?'

17 Do not ye yet understand, 'that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?'

18 But 'those things, which proceed out of the mouth, come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.'

19 For 'out of the heart proceed 'evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

1340, 41. Ps. 92:13. Isa. 60:21. John 15:2. 1 Cor. 3:12-15.

Hos. 4:17. 1 Tim. 6:5. 22:1-24. Isa. 9:16. 42:19. 55:10. Luk. 6:39.

Jer. 5:31. 6:15. 8:12. Ez. 14:9, 10. Mic. 3:7. 2 Pet. 2:17. Rev. 19: 20. 22:15.

13:56. Mark 4:34. 7:17. John 16:23.

13:51. 15:9-11. Isa. 28:10, 11. Mark 6:52. 7:18. 8:17, 18. 9:32. Luke 9:45. 18:34. 24:45. Heb. 5:12.

Mark 7:19, 30. 1 Cor. 6:13. Col. 2: 21, 22.

2 Kings 10:27.

11. 12:34. 1 Sam. 24:13. Ps. 36:3. Prov. 6:12. 10:32. 15:22. Luke 19:22. Jam. 3:6-10. Rev. 13:5-6.

Gen. 6:5. 8:21. Prov. 4:23. 6:4. 22:5. Jer. 17:9. Mark 7:21-23.

Rom. 3:10-19. 7:15. 8:7, 8. Gal. 5:19-21. Eph. 2:1-3. Tit. 3:2-6.

194. Ps. 119:113. Isa. 55:7. 56:7. Jer. 4:14. Acts 8:22. Jam. 1:13-15.

hated to be reformed, and were marked out for destruction. Two things Christ here foretells concerning them.

1. The rooting out of them and their traditions: v. 13. Not only the corrupt opinions and superstitious practices of the Pharisees, but their sect, way, and constitution were not of God's planting. Note, (1.) In the visible church, it is no strange thing to find plants that our heavenly Father has not planted. It is implied that whatever is good in the church, is of God's planting, Isa. 41:19. What is corrupt, though of God's permitting, is not of his planting; He sows nothing but good seed in his field. Let us not therefore be deceived, as if all must needs be right, that we find in the church, and all those persons and things our Father's plants, that we find in our Father's garden. *Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits*; see Jer. 19: 23-31, 32. (2.) Those that are of the spirit of the Pharisees, what figure soever they make, and of what denomination soever they be, God will not own them as of his planting. *By their fruit ye shall know them*. (3.) Those

words we speak from an unsanctified heart; so it is that the mouth causeth the flesh to sin, Eccl. 5:6. Christ, in a former discourse, had laid great stress on our words; (ch. 12: 36, 37.) and that was intended for reproof and warning to those that cavilled at Him: this is intended for reproof and warning to those that cavilled at the disciples, and censured them. It is not the disciples that defile themselves with what they eat, but the Pharisees that defile themselves with what they speak spitefully and censoriously of them. Note, Those who charge guilt on others for transgressing the commandments of men, many times bring greater guilt on themselves by transgressing the law of God against rash judging. Those most defile themselves, who are most forward to censure the deficiencies of others.

III. The offence that was taken at this truth, and the account brought to Christ of that offence: v. 12.

1. It was not strange that the Pharisees should be offended at this plain truth. Sore eyes cannot bear clear light; and nothing is more provoking to proud imposers than the undeceiving of those whom they have first blindfolded, and then enslaved. It should seem that the Pharisees were more offended than the scribes; and perhaps they were as much galled with the latter part of Christ's doctrine, which taught a strictness in the government of our tongue, as with the former part, which taught an indifference about washing our hands; great contenders for the formalities of religion being commonly as great contemners of the substantial of it.

2. The disciples thought it strange that their Master should say that which He knew would give so much offence. But He knew what He said, and to whom He said it, and what would be the effect of it, and would teach us: that though in indifferent things we must be tender of giving offence, yet we must not, for fear of that, evade any truth or duty.

Perhaps the disciples themselves stumbled at what Christ said, and therefore objected this that they might themselves be better informed. They seem likewise to be concerned for the Pharisees, though they had quarrelled with them; which teaches us to forgive, and seek the good, especially the spiritual good, of our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers. Weak hearers are sometimes more solicitous than they should be to have wicked hearers offended. But if we please men by concealing the truth, and indulging their errors and corruptions, we are not the servants of Christ.

IV. The doom passed on the Pharisees and their corrupt traditions; coming in as a reason why Christ cared not though He offended them, and therefore why the disciples should not care; because they were a generation of men that

hated to be reformed, and were marked out for destruction. Two things Christ here foretells concerning them.

1. The rooting out of them and their traditions: v. 13. Not only the corrupt opinions and superstitious practices of the Pharisees, but their sect, way, and constitution were not of God's planting. Note, (1.) In the visible church, it is no strange thing to find plants that our heavenly Father has not planted. It is implied that whatever is good in the church, is of God's planting, Isa. 41:19. What is corrupt, though of God's permitting, is not of his planting; He sows nothing but good seed in his field. Let us not therefore be deceived, as if all must needs be right, that we find in the church, and all those persons and things our Father's plants, that we find in our Father's garden. *Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits*; see Jer. 19: 23-31, 32. (2.) Those that are of the spirit of the Pharisees, what figure soever they make, and of what denomination soever they be, God will not own them as of his planting. *By their fruit ye shall know them*. (3.) Those

plants that are not of God's planting shall not be of his protecting, but he rooted up. What is not of God shall not stand, Acts 5: 38. What things are unscriptural, will wither and die or be justly exploded; however, in the great day, these tares that offend will be bundled for the fire. What is become of the Pharisees and their traditions? They are long since abandoned; but the Gospel of truth is great, and will remain. It cannot be rooted up.

2. The ruin of them, and their followers, v. 14. Where.

(1.) Christ bids his disciples *let them alone*. 'Have no converse with them or concern for them; neither court their favor, nor dread their displeasure; care not though they be offended, they will take their course, and let them take the issue of it. Seek not to please a generation of men that please not God, (1 Thess. 2: 15.) and will be pleased with nothing less than absolute dominion over your consciences. They are joined to idols, as Ephraim, (Hos. 4: 17.) the idols of their own fancy; let them alone, let them be filthy still,' Rev. 22: 11. The case of those sinners is sad indeed, whom Christ orders his ministers to let alone.

(2.) He gives them two reasons for it.

[1.] They are proud and ignorant, v. 14. They are grossly ignorant in the things of God and strangers to the spiritual nature of the divine law, and yet so proud, that they think they see better and further than any; and, accordingly, prescribe to all, and prescribe those who will not follow them. Though they were blind, if they had owned it, and come to Christ for eye-salve, they might have seen, but they disdained the intimation of such a thing; (John 9: 49.) *Are we blind also?* They were confident that they themselves were guides of the blind, (Rom. 2: 19, 20.) that every thing they said, was an oracle and law; 'Therefore let them alone.' How miserable was the case of the Jewish church! Now the prophecy was fulfilled, Isa. 29: 10, 14. And it is easy to imagine what will be in the end hereof, when the prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and the people love to have it so, Jer. 5: 31.

[2.] They are posting to destruction, and will shortly be plucked into it, v. 14. This must needs be the end of it, if both be so blind, and yet both so bold. Both will be involved in the general desolation coming on the Jews, and both drowned in eternal destruction and perdition. We find (Rev. 22: 15.) that hell is the portion of those that make a lie, and of those that love it when made. *The deceived and the deceiver* are obnoxious to the judgment of God, Job 12: 16. Note, First, Those that by their cunning craftiness draw others to sin and error, shall not, with all their craft and cunning, escape ruin themselves. *If both fall together into the ditch, the blind leaders will fall undermost, and have the worst*; see Jer. 14: 15, 16. *The prophets shall be consumed first, and then the people to whom they prophesy*, Jer. 20: 6. 28: 15, 16. Secondly, The sin and ruin of the deceivers will be no security to those that are deceived by them. Though the leaders of this people cause them to err, yet they that are led of them are destroyed, (Isa. 9: 16.) because they shut their eyes against the light which would have rectified their mistake. Seneca, complaining of most people's being led by common opinion and practice, says, *Things are taken on trust, and never examined*; and concludes, *Hence crowds fall on crowds, in vast confusion*. De Vita

(13.) Every plant, &c.] 'Every religious doctrine which has not (God for its author. Such dogmas as are founded neither on Divine revelation nor on human reason, but are contrary to both and therefore deserving of being rejected and eradicated. The original Greek word translated plant, which properly signifies the art of planting, or, by metonymy, the plants themselves, here signifies doctrine, by a metaphor common to the Hebrew writers, who compare the human mind to a field, and precepts and doctrines to seed and plants. Comp. 1 Cor. 3: 6.'

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Verses 15-20.

Peter, hearing this answer, in the name of all the apostles, desired of Christ an explanation; probably it seemed to them contrary to the Mosaic law, as well as to the traditions of the scribes. And Jesus, removing their dullness, proceeded to show them, that food, (if not unlawful or impure,) could not by any contracted pollution defile them: [152]

for it entered not into the heart, and had no effect on the state of the soul; but went into the stomach, and all which was unsuitable to nourish the body, was carried off by a regular process of nature, without communicating any sinful defilement. But what proceeded out of the mouth, came from the heart; when lies, impiety, blasphemy, or wickedness were uttered, corrupt nature expressed itself; and this defiled a man in the sight of God. Crimes were indeed perpetrated by the body, but they were conceived in the heart, and proved its desperate wickedness; this rendered men loathsome and filthy in God's sight; and not eating their meals with unwashed hands.

(15.) 'It is not that Peter did not understand the saying; but he could scarcely believe that a distinction of meats availed not; and therefore, as Theophylact observes, pretends ignorance, and answered,'

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(19.) Blasphemies.] 'Calumnies: as in Eph. 4: 31. Col. 3: 8.'

AD.

20 These are the things ^m which defile a man: ⁿ but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.

[Practical Observations.]

21 ¶ Then Jesus went thence, and departed

m 1 Cor. 3:16, 17. 6:9-11, 18-20. Eph.

6:2-5. Rev. 21:8, 27.

n 2. 22:9, 26. Mark 7:3, 4. Luke

11:39-40.

o Mark 7:24.

will seek for instruction. The Pharisees were offended, but kept it to themselves; but the disciples, though offended, sought for satisfaction.

2. Christ's reproof of their weakness and ignorance, v. 16. As many as Christ loves and teaches, He thus relikes. Note, They are very ignorant indeed, who understand not that moral pollutions are abundantly worse and more dangerous than ceremonial ones. Two things aggravated their dullness and darkness.

(1.) That they were the disciples of Christ; 'Ye whom I have admitted into so great a degree of familiarity with Me, are ye so unskilful in the word of righteousness?' Note, the ignorance and mistakes of those that profess religion, and enjoy the privileges of church-membership, are justly a grief to the Lord Jesus.

(2.) That they had been a great while Christ's scholars; 'Are ye yet so, after ye have been so long under my teaching?' Note, Christ expects knowledge, grace, and wisdom in us, according to the time and means we have had. See John 14:9. Heb. 5:12. 2 Tim. 3:7, 8.

3. Christ's explication of the doctrine of pollutions. Though He chid them for their dullness, He did not cast them off, but pitied them, and taught them, as Luke 24:25-27. He here shows us,

(1.) What little danger we are in of pollution from that which *entereth in at the mouth*, v. 17. An inordinate appetite; intemperance, and excess in eating, come out of the heart, and are defiling; but meat in itself is not so, as the Pharisees supposed. What there is of dregs and defilement in our meat, is cast out into the draught. It may be a piece of cleanliness, but it is no point of conscience, to wash before meat; and we go on a great mistake if we place religion in it. It is not the practice itself, but the opinion it is built on, that Christ condemns, as if meat commended us to God; (1 Cor. 8:8.) whereas Christianity stands not in such observances.

(2.) What great danger we are in of pollution from that which *proceeds out of the mouth*, (v. 18.) out of the abundance of the heart: compare ch. 12:24. There is no defilement in the products of God's bounty; the defilement arises from the products of our own corruption. Now here we have,

1. The corrupt foundation of that which proceeds out of the mouth; it comes from the heart; that is the spring and source of all sin, Jer. 8:7. It is the heart that is so deperately wicked; (Jer. 17:9.) for there is no sin, in word or deed, which was not first in the heart. There is the root of bitterness, which bears gall and wormwood. It is the inward part of a sinner, that is very wickedness, Ps. 5:9. All evil speakings come forth from the heart, and are defiling; from the corrupt heart comes the corrupt communication.

2. Some of the corrupt streams which flow from this fountain, specified; though they do not all *come out of the mouth*, yet they come out of the man,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 10-20. When teachers of religion contradict the Word of God, it often becomes necessary not only to answer their objections and arguments, but to point out their errors, and expose their ignorance to the people, and to call on them to hear and understand the truth. It is not, however, generally expedient for us to bring any decided charge of hypocrisy against our opponents, in the manner which became the heart-searching Savior: yet we must, by no means, put either the honor of the clerical order, or our own reputation, in competition with the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. But when scribes and Pharisees are offended with plain truth, timid disciples will be disquieted, and almost disposed to think that their

elder brethren have gone too far, even though in other things they honor them, especially when they see those exasperated, whom they had hopes of conciliating. We should however remember, that nothing in religion is of value, except what God Himself has planted; nothing will endure in the soul, but the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit; nothing should be admitted into the church, or be suffered to abide there, but what is of heavenly extraction: and therefore, if hypocrites be detected, false teachers offended, and professed friends changed into avowed enemies, by an open declaration of the truth, we ought not to be disconcerted; for 'the trees of righteousness' will grow more fruitful, when such noxious plants are rooted up. If men quarrel with the word of Christ, we must 'let them alone,' and not 'cast pearls before swine;' yet it is grievous to reflect how the blind have, in every age of the church, undertaken to lead the blind; and what numbers are

and are the fruits of that wickedness which is in the heart, and is wrought there, Ps. 58:2.

First, *Evil thoughts*, sins against all the commandments. Therefore David puts vain thoughts in opposition to the whole law, Ps. 119:113. These are the first-born of the corrupt nature, the beginning of its strength, and do most resemble it. There is a great deal of sin that begins and ends in the heart. Carnal fancies and imaginations are evil thoughts, wicked plots, purposes, and devices of mischief to others, Mic. 2:1.

Secondly, *Murders*, sins against the sixth commandment; these come from a malice in the heart against our brother's life, or a contempt of it. Hence he that *hates his brother* is said to be a murderer; he is so at God's bar, 1 John 3:15. *War is in the heart*, Ps. 55:21. James 4:1.

Thirdly, *Adulteries and Fornications*, sins against the seventh commandment; those come from the wanton, unclean, carnal heart; and the lust that reigns there, is conceived there, and brings forth these sins, James 1:15. There is adultery in the heart first, and then in act ch. 5:28.

Fourthly, *Thefts*, sins against the eighth commandment, cheats, wrongs, rapines, and all injurious contracts; the fountain of all these is in the heart, which is exercised in these covetous practices, (2 Pet. 2:14.) set on riches, Ps. 62:10. *Achan coveted, and then took*, Joshua 7:20, 21.

Fifthly, *False witness*, against the ninth commandment; this comes from a complication of falsehood and covetousness, or falsehood and malice in the heart. If truth, holiness, and love, which God requires in the inward parts, reigned as they ought, there would be no false-witness bearing, Ps. 64:6. Jer. 9:8.

Sixthly, *Blasphemies*, speaking evil of God, against the third commandment; speaking evil of our neighbor, against the ninth commandment; these come from a contempt and dislike of both in the heart; thence the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost proceeds; (ch. 12:33, 34.) these are the overflowings of the gall within.

Now these are the things which defile a man, v. 20. Note, Sin is defiling to the soul, renders it unlovely and abominable in the eyes of the pure and holy God, unfit for communion with Him, and for the enjoyment of Him in the new Jerusalem, into which nothing shall enter that defileth, or worketh iniquity. The mind and

thus continually plunging together into the pit of destruction; in which the blind leader sinks the deepest, in proportion to the degree of his pride, enmity, and presumption. Yet, as God has sometimes opened the eyes of such blind guides, and changed them into faithful teachers, we should remember still to pray for them, as well as against their wickedness.—In all our difficulties, we should apply to Christ for instruction; and though He reluke us for our want of understanding, yet He will continue to teach us, and his reproofs will tend to our humiliation and increased attention. When He teaches, He will certainly convince men, that their sin and pollution originate from themselves, and not from external causes. He will show them 'the deceitfulness, and desperate wickedness' of the human heart; and whilst they perceive that all the wickedness of every kind, which has filled and corrupted the earth, has been the genuine produce of depraved nature, and that it would have been ten-fold greater but for merciful restraints; they will be led to see and feel, that all this exists in their own hearts, and might be educed by temptation. He will teach them to trace all the streams of their own actual transgressions to this corrupt fountain; to watch the evil thoughts which rise within; to humble themselves for these defilements, and to seek cleansing from them, in 'the Fountain which He hath opened for sin, and for uncleanness'; to consider inward sanctification as far more important than all forms and notions; and to perceive that even truth is no further valuable, than as it tends to purify the heart and conscience.

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Verses 21-24.

After this offence given to the scribes, our Lord retired to the most remote part of the land, in the borders of Tyre and Sidon; and, though the usual proper means for concealing Himself, his coming was soon known. Mark 7:24. For a woman of Canaan, a Syrophenician, probably descended from the ancient Canaanites, a remnant of whom

had taken shelter in Tyre and the adjacent regions,) heard of his miracles, having before thus renounced idolatry, and become a worshipper of the true God. Doubtless she was acquainted with the Scriptures of the prophets, probably by means of the Greek translation; and, comparing what she read with what she heard, was satisfied that Jesus was the promised Messiah.

in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, 'Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David: my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.'

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, 'Send her away; for she crieth after us.'

10:5-6, 11:21-23, Gen. 49:13
John. 11:8, 13:5, 19:28-29, Judg. 1:31
1:43-9, Ps. 45:12, Ec. 3:5, Mark 7:25
9:27, 17:15, Ps. 43:1, 62, Luke 17:13, 18:9, 38:1
1:13, 2:40-51, 22:42-43, Luke 18:38-43, 19:1, 21:44
17:15, Mark 7:25, 9:27-29
Gen. 4:7, Deut. 32:1, Ps. 33:1, Lam. 3:8
14:13, Mark 10:47-48.

the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; not to those cities, (they were excluded from any share in his mighty works, ch. 11:21, 22,) but into that part of the land of Israel which lay that way; thither He went, as Elias to Sarepta, a city of Sidon, (Luke 4:26,) to look after this poor woman, whom He had mercy in reserve for. The dark corners of the country, which lay most remote, shall have their share of his benign influences; and as now the ends of the land, so afterward the ends of the earth, shall see his salvation. Isa. 49:6. Here it was, that this miracle was wrought; in the story of which we may observe,

1. The address of the woman of Canaan to Christ, v. 22. She was a Gentile, a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel; probably one of the posterity of those accursed nations that were devoted by that word, *Cursed be Canaan*. Note, The doom of political bodies doth not always reach every individual member. God will have his remnant out of all nations, chosen vessels in all coasts, even the most unlikely: she came out of the same coasts. If Christ had not now made a visit to these coasts, though the mercy was worth travelling far for, it is probable she had never come to Him. Note, It is often an excitement to a dormant faith and zeal, to have opportunities of acquaintance with Christ brought to our doors.

Her address was very importunate, she *cried* to Christ, as one in earnest; cried, as being at some distance from Him, not daring to approach too near, being a Canaanite, lest she should give offence. In her address,

(1.) She relates her misery, v. 22. *My daughter is possessed*. There were degrees of that misery, and this was the worst sort. It was a common case at that time, and very calamitous. Note, The vexations of children are the trouble of parents, and nothing should be more so than their being under the power of Satan. Tender parents very sensibly feel the miseries of their children; 'Though grievously vexed with the devil, yet she is my daughter still.' The greatest afflictions of our relations do not dissolve our obligations to them, and therefore ought not to alienate our affections from them. It was the distress and trouble of her family, that now brought her to Christ; yet, because she came in faith, He did not reject her. Though need drives us to Christ, yet we shall not therefore be driven from Him; and it is good to make the afflictions of others our own, in sense and sympathy, that we may make them our own, in improvement and advantage.

(2.) She requests mercy, v. 22. In calling him *Lord*, the Son of David, she owns Him to be the Messiah: that is the great thing which faith should fasten on. From the Lord we may expect acts of power; from the Son of David, the mercy and grace which were foretold of Him. Though a Gentile, she owns the promise made to the fathers of the Jews, and the honor of the house of David. The Gentiles must receive Christianity, not only as an improvement of natural religion, but as the perfection of the Jewish religion, with an eye to the Old Testament.

(21.) *Inte*; 'Rather, towards.' BLOOMFIELD.
(22.) 'In Mark (ch. 7:26) this woman is called "a Greek, a Syro-phenician by nation," here, "a woman of Canaan." Canaan himself inhabited a part of that northern country, with Sidon and Beth, his first-born sons; thence the name of Canaanites distinguished the inhabitants—Jabir, king of Habor, being called "king of Canaan." (Judg. 4:2)—and the kings of Tyre and Sidon, if I mistake not, "kings of the Hittites." 1 Kings 10:29. Now, though Judea, as almost the whole world, had stooped for a long time nearly one hundred and fifty years) under the yoke of the Romans, yet the memory of the Syro-Grecian kingdom, and the name of the nation, had not vanished: the rabbies compute the years, in the captivity, only from the kingdom of the Greeks. This woman, then, was Syro-Grecian by nation, and by habitation a Phenician; thence called a woman of Canaan.'

More mercy, &c.] 'How proper is this prayer for a penitent! Short, humble, full of faith, fervent, modest, respectful, rational, relying only on the mercy of God, persevering.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

conscience are defiled by sin, and that makes every thing else so, Tit. 1:15. This defilement by sin, was signified by the ceremonial purifications, which the Jewish doctors added to, but understood not. See Heb. 9:13, 14. 1 John 1:7.

These therefore are the things we must carefully avoid, and all approaches toward them, and not lay stress on the washing of the hands. Christ doth not yet repeal the law of the distinction of meats, (that was not done till Acts 10.) but the tradition of the elders, tacked to that law; and therefore He concludes, *To eat with unwashed hands*, (which was the matter now in question,) *this defileth not a man*. If he wash, he is not the better before God; if he wash not, he is not the worse.

V. 21-23. We have here an account of Christ's casting the devil out of the woman of Canaan's daughter.

I. Jesus went thence. When Christ and his disciples could not be quiet among them, He left them, and so left an example to his own rule, (ch. 10:14.) *Shake off the dust of your feet*. Though Christ endure long, He will not always endure the contradiction of sinners against Himself. He had said, (v. 14.) *Let them alone*, and did so. Note, Wilful prejudices against the Gospel, and cavils at it, often provoke Christ to withdraw, and remove the candlestick out of its place, Acts 13:45, 51.

II. When He went thence, He departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon; not to those cities, (they were excluded from any share in his mighty works, ch. 11:21, 22,) but into that part of the land of Israel which lay that way; thither He went, as Elias to Sarepta, a city of Sidon, (Luke 4:26,) to look after this poor woman, whom He had mercy in reserve for. The dark corners of the country, which lay most remote, shall have their share of his benign influences; and as now the ends of the land, so afterward the ends of the earth, shall see his salvation. Isa. 49:6. Here it was, that this miracle was wrought; in the story of which we may observe,

1. The address of the woman of Canaan to Christ, v. 22. She was a Gentile, a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel; probably one of the posterity of those accursed nations that were devoted by that word, *Cursed be Canaan*. Note, The doom of political bodies doth not always reach every individual member. God will have his remnant out of all nations, chosen vessels in all coasts, even the most unlikely: she came out of the same coasts. If Christ had not now made a visit to these coasts, though the mercy was worth travelling far for, it is probable she had never come to Him. Note, It is often an excitement to a dormant faith and zeal, to have opportunities of acquaintance with Christ brought to our doors.

Her address was very importunate, she *cried* to Christ, as one in earnest; cried, as being at some distance from Him, not daring to approach too near, being a Canaanite, lest she should give offence. In her address,

(1.) She relates her misery, v. 22. *My daughter is possessed*. There were degrees of that misery, and this was the worst sort. It was a common case at that time, and very calamitous. Note, The vexations of children are the trouble of parents, and nothing should be more so than their being under the power of Satan. Tender parents very sensibly feel the miseries of their children; 'Though grievously vexed with the devil, yet she is my daughter still.' The greatest afflictions of our relations do not dissolve our obligations to them, and therefore ought not to alienate our affections from them. It was the distress and trouble of her family, that now brought her to Christ; yet, because she came in faith, He did not reject her. Though need drives us to Christ, yet we shall not therefore be driven from Him; and it is good to make the afflictions of others our own, in sense and sympathy, that we may make them our own, in improvement and advantage.

(2.) She requests mercy, v. 22. In calling him *Lord*, the Son of David, she owns Him to be the Messiah: that is the great thing which faith should fasten on. From the Lord we may expect acts of power; from the Son of David, the mercy and grace which were foretold of Him. Though a Gentile, she owns the promise made to the fathers of the Jews, and the honor of the house of David. The Gentiles must receive Christianity, not only as an improvement of natural religion, but as the perfection of the Jewish religion, with an eye to the Old Testament.

Her petition is, *Have mercy on me*. She doth not limit Christ to this or that particular instance of mercy, but mercy, mercy is the thing she begs; *Have mercy on me*. Mercies to children are mercies to parents; favors to ours are favors to us, and so to be accounted. Note, It is the duty of parents to be earnest in prayer for their children, especially for their souls. Bring them to Christ by faith and prayer, who alone is able to heal them. Parents should regard it as a great mercy to themselves, to have Satan's power broken in the souls of their children.

2. The discouragements she met in this address: in all the story of Christ's ministry we do not find the like. He was wont to countenance and encourage all that came to Him, and either to answer before they called, or to hear while they were yet speaking; but here was one otherwise treated: and what could be the reason of it? (1.) Because He would not give offence to the Jews, by being as free and forward in his favor to Gentiles as to them. So some. He had bid his disciples not go into the way of the Gentiles, (ch. 10:5,) and therefore would not Himself seem so inclinable to them as to others. Or rather, (2.) Christ treated her thus, to try her; He knew the strength of her faith; He therefore met her with discouragements, that the trial of her faith might be found unto praise, and honor, and glory, 1 Pet. 1:6, 7. This was like God's tempting Abraham, (Gen. 22:1,) or the angel's wrestling with Jacob, only to put him on wrestling, Gen. 32:24. Many of the methods of Christ's providence, and especially of his grace, in dealing with his people, which are dark and perplexing, may be explained with the key of this story, which is for that end left on record, to teach us that there may be love in Christ's heart, while there are frowns in his face, and to encourage us, therefore, though He slay us, yet to trust in Him.

Observe the particular discouragements given her:

[1.] When she cried after Him, He answered her not a word, v. 23. His ear was wont to be always open to the cries of poor supplicants; but to this poor woman He turned a deaf ear, and she could get neither alms nor answer. It was a wonder that she did not fly off in a fret. But Christ knew what He did. He heard her, and was pleased with her, and strengthened her with strength in her soul to prosecute her request, Ps. 133:3. Job 23:6. By seeming to draw away the desired mercy from her, He drew her on to be so much the more importunate for it. Note, Every accepted prayer is not immediately an answered prayer. Sometimes God seems not to regard his people's prayers, like a man asleep or astonished, (Ps. 44:23. Jer. 14:9. Ps. 22:1, 2) nay, to be angry at them; (Ps. 80:4. Lam. 3:8, 44,) but it is to prove, and so to improve, their faith, and to make his after-appearances for them the more glorious to Himself, and the more welcome to them; for the vision at the end shall speak, and shall not lie, Hab. 2:3. See Job 33:14.

[2.] When the disciples spake a good word for her, He gave a reason why He refused her, which was yet more discouraging.

First, It was some little relief, that the disciples interposed on her behalf, v. 23. It is desirable to have an interest in the prayers of good

(21.) 'This was the first instance in which our Lord's aid had been invoked by a person, neither by birth an Israelite, nor by profession a worshipper of the God of Israel. The miracle, which He was presently to work for her, was to be an action of no small importance; being a prelude to the disclosure of the great mystery, that through Him the gate was opened to the Gentiles. It was fit, therefore, that she should be put to some previous trial of her faith, and show herself in some sort worthy of so high a preference.'

Send her away.] 'That is, "Give her a favorable dismissal, and an answer of peace." Doubtless they were surprised at the coldness and silence of Christ; and not presuming directly to press Him, they take another method, and ask Him to remove them from the importunity of the petitioner.'

24 But he answered and said, 'I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, 'Lord, help me.'

26 But he answered and said, 'It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.'

9:55, 10:5, 6, 15:33, Jer. 50:5, 7, 8, 24:5, 6, 18:33, Luke 15:4-6, Acts 13:25, 28, 15:49, Rom. 15:8, 15:13-10, 18:1, 4c.

14:33, 15:14, Mark 9:22, 4, 7:5, Mark 7:27, 28, Acts 22:21, 22, Rom. 9:4, Gal. 2:15, Eph. 2:12.

Gentile is taken away: we many, and if for many, why not for me?

Thirdly, When she continued her importunity, He insisted on the unfitness of the thing, and gave her not only a repulse, but a seeming reproach too; v. 26. This seems to cut her off from all hope, and might have driven her to despair, if she had not had a very strong faith indeed. Gospel-grace and miraculous cures belonged to them to whom pertained the adoption, (Rom. 9:4,) and lay not on the same level with that rain from heaven, and those fruitful seasons, which God gave to the nations whom He suffered to walk in their own ways; (Acts 14:16, 17,) no, these were peculiar favors, appropriated to the peculiar people, the garden enclosed. Christ preached to the Samaritans, (John 4:41,) but we read not of any cures He wrought among them; that salvation was of the Jews; it is not meet therefore to alienate these. The Gentiles were counted dogs by the Jews; and, in comparison with the house of Israel, Christ here seems to allow it, and therefore thinks it not meet that the Gentiles should share in the favors bestowed on the Jews. But see how the tables are turned; after the bringing of the Gentiles into the church, the Jewish zealots for the law are called dogs, Phil. 3:2.

Now this Christ ureth against this woman of Canaan; 'How can she expect to eat of the children's bread, who is not of the family?' Note, 1. Those whom Christ intends most signally to honor, He first humbles and lays low in a sense of their own meanness and unworthiness. We must first see ourselves to be less than the least of all God's mercies, before we are fit to be dignified and privileged with them. 2. Christ delights to exercise great faith with great trials, that, being tried, we may come forth like gold. This general rule is applicable to other cases for direction, though here used only for trial. Special ordinances and church-privileges are children's bread, and must not be prostituted to the grossly ignorant and profane. Common charity must be extended to all, but spiritual dignities are appropriated to the household of faith; and therefore promiscuous admission to them, without distinction, wastes the children's bread, and is the giving of that which is holy to the dogs, ch. 7:6. Off, ye profane.

3. Here is the strength of her faith and resolution. Many, thus tried, would either have sunk down in silence, or broken out in passion. 'Here is cold comfort,' might she have said, 'for a poor distressed creature; as good for me to have staid at home, as come hither to be taunted and abused; not only to have a piteous case slighted, but to be called a dog!' A proud, unhumiliated heart would not have borne it. The reputation of the house of Israel was not now so great in the world, but that this slight put on the Gentiles was capable of being retorted, had the poor woman been so minded. It might have occasioned a reflection on Christ, and might have been a blemish on his reputation, as well as a shock to the good opinion she had entertained of Him; for we are apt to judge of persons as we ourselves find them; and think that they are what they are to us. 'Is this the Son of David?' (might she have said); 'Is this He that has such a reputation for kindness, tenderness, and compassion? I have no reason to give Him that character, for I was never treated so roughly; He might have done as much for me as others; or, if not, He needed not to have set me with the dogs of his flock. I am not a dog, I am a woman, an honest woman, a woman in misery; and I am sure it is not meet to call me dog.' No, here is not a word of this. Note, A humble, believing soul, that truly loves Christ, takes every thing in good part, that He saith and doeth, and puts the best construction on it.

She breaks through all these discouragements.

(1.) With a holy earnestness of desire in prosecuting her petition. This appeared on the former repulse; v. 25. [1.] She continued to pray. Note. The more sensibly we feel the burden, the more resolutely we should pray for the removal of it. And it is the will of God, that we should continue instant in prayer, should always pray, and not faint. [2.] She improved on prayer. Instead of blaming Christ, she seems rather to suspect herself. She fears lest, in her first address, she had not been humble and reverent enough, and therefore now she came, and worshipped Him; or she fears that

she had not been earnest enough, and therefore now she cries, *Lord, help me*. Note, When the answers of prayer are deferred, God is thereby teaching us to pray more, and pray better. It is then time to inquire wherein we have come short. Disappointments in the success of prayer must be excitements to the duty of prayer. Christ, in his agony, prayed more earnestly. [3.] She waives the question, whether she was of those to whom Christ was sent or no. Many weak Christians perplex themselves with questions and doubts about their election; such had better mind their errand to God, and continue instant in prayer for mercy and grace; and then that matter will by degrees clear itself. A fervent, affectionate *Lord, help me*, will help us over many of the discouragements which are sometimes ready to overwhelm us. [4.] Her prayer is very short, but comprehensive and fervent; *Lord, help me*. Take this, *First*, As lamenting her case; 'If the Messiah be sent only to the house of Israel, the *Lord help me*, what will become of me and mine?' Note, It is not in vain for broken hearts to bemoan themselves; God looks on them then, Jer. 31:18. Or, *Secondly*, As begging grace to assist her in this hour of temptation. She found it hard to keep up her faith when it was thus frowned on, and therefore prays, *Lord, help me*; Ps. 63:8. Or, *Thirdly*, As enforcing her original request; '*Lord, help me*; *Lord, give me what I come for*.' She believed Christ could and would help her, though she was not of the house of Israel; else she would have dropped her petition. Still she keeps up good thoughts of Christ, and will not quit her hold. *Lord, help me*, is a good prayer, if well put up; and it is pity that it should be turned into a by-word, and we take God's name in vain in it.

(2.) With a holy skillfulness of faith, suggesting a very surprising plea. Christ had placed the Jews with the children, as disciples round about God's table, and had put the Gentiles with dogs, under the table; and she does not deny the aptness of the similitude. Note, There is nothing got by contradicting any word of Christ, though it bear ever so hard on us. But this poor woman, since she cannot object against it, resolves to make the best of it; v. 27. Now here,

[1.] Her acknowledgment was very humble; *Truth, Lord*. Note, Some that seem to dispraise and disparage themselves, will yet take it as an affront if others do so too; but one that is humbled aright, will subscribe to the most abasing challenges, and not call them abusing. '*Truth, Lord*; I cannot deny it; I am a dog, and have no right to the children's bread.' David, *Thou hast done foolishly, very foolishly*; *Truth, Lord*. Asaph, *Thou hast been as a beast before God*; *Truth, Lord*. Agur, *Thou art more brutish than any man*; *Truth, Lord*. Paul, *Thou hast been the chief of sinners, art less than the least of saints, not meet to be called an apostle*; *Truth, Lord*.

[2.] Her improvement of this into a plea was very ingenious; *Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs*. It was by a singular spiritual sagacity, that she discerned matter of argument in that which looked like a slight. Note, A lively, active faith will make that to be for us, which seems to be against us. Unbelief is apt to draw dismal conclusions even from comfortable premises; (Judges 13:22, 23.) but faith can find encouragement even in that which is discouraging, and get nearer to God by taking hold on that hand which is stretched out to push it away. So good a thing it is to be of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, Isa. 11:3.

Her plea is, *Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs*. It is true, the full provision is intended for the children only, but the small crumbs are allowed to the dogs. We poor Gentiles cannot expect the stated ministry and miracles of the Son of David, that belongs to the Jews; but they be-

Verse 26.
[Cue, it to dogs.] 'This is the language that the Jews constantly used towards the Gentiles when they dared; and the same language has been so long used by Christians toward the Jews.' WILLIAMS.
Dogs: 'The bad properties of dogs are, obstinate barking, cruel

biting, insatiable gluttony, filthiness in lust, vomiting and returning to their vomit. Compare Prov. 26:11. 2 Pet. 2:22. Hence the Gentiles, on account of the impurity of their lives, and their being without the covenant, were called dogs by the Jews.' HONNE.

27 And she said, 'Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.'

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

[Practical Observations.]
29 ¶ And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.

d 8,3. Gen. 32-10. Job 40:5. 42:2-6. Ps. 31:4-5. Ec. 16:53. Dan. 9:18. Luke 7:5. 15:18-19. 18:13. 19:40-42. Rom. 3:19. 1 Cor. 13:9. 1 Tim. 1:18-19. 5:45. Luke 16:21. Rom. 3:29. 10:12. Eph. 3:8,19. 1 Cor. 16:13. 1 Sam. 2:30. Luke 17:5. Rom. 4:19,20. 2 Thes. 1:3. 3:13. 9:29,30. Mar. 5:31. 7:29,30. 9:23,24. Luke 7:29,30. 18:42,43. 9:30. 42:1-53. Mark 7:31. 4:18. Josh. 12:3. Chinneroth, Is. 41:8. Mark 1:16. Luke 5:1. Luke 6:1. Gen. 31:23. 21:1. 5:1. 13:2.

hid his face from her, but now gathers her with everlasting kindness, v. 27. Then Jesus said, O woman, great is thy faith. This was like Joseph's making himself known to his brethren, I am Joseph: so here, in effect, I am Jesus. Now He begins to speak like Himself, and put on his own countenance. He will not contend for ever.

(1.) He commended her faith. O woman, great is thy faith. Observe, 1. It is her faith He commends. There were several other graces that shone bright in her conduct; but these were the product of her faith, and therefore Christ fastens on that as most commendable; because of all graces faith honors Christ most. 2. It is the greatness of her faith. Note, First, Though the faith of all the saints is alike precious, yet it is not in all alike strong: all believers are not of the same size and stature. Secondly, The greatness of faith consists much in a resolute adherence to Jesus Christ, as an all-sufficient Savior, even in the face of discouragements; to love Him, and trust Him as a Friend, even when He seems to come forth against us as an enemy. This is great faith! Thirdly, Though weak faith, if true, shall not be rejected, yet great faith shall be commended, and shall appear greatly pleasing to Christ: for in them that thus believe He is most admired. Thus Christ commended the faith of the centurion, and he was a Gentile too: he had a strong faith in the power of Christ, this woman in the good-will of Christ; both were acceptable.

(2.) He cured her daughter: 'Be it unto thee as thou wilt: I can deny thee nothing, take what thou earnest for.' Note, Great believers may have what they will for asking. When our will conforms to the will of Christ's precept, his will concurs with the will of our desire. Those that will deny Christ nothing, shall find that He will deny them nothing at last, though for a time He seems to hide his face from them. 'Thou wouldest have thy sins

pardoned, thy corruptions mortified, thy nature sanctified; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And what canst thou desire more? When we come, as this poor woman did, to pray against Satan and his kingdom, we concur with the intercession of Christ, and it shall be accordingly. Though Satan may sift Peter, and buffet Paul, yet, through Christ's prayer and the sufficiency of his grace, we shall be more than conquerors, Luke 22:31, 32. 2 Cor. 12:7, 9. Rom. 16:20.

The event was answerable to the word of Christ; Her daughter was made whole from that very hour; thenceforward was never vexed with the devil any more; the mother's faith prevailed for the daughter's cure. Though the patient was at a distance, that was no hindrance to the efficacy of Christ's word. He spoke, and it was done.

V. 29-39. Here is, I. A general account of Christ's cures. Observe,

1. The place where these cures were wrought; it was near the sea of Galilee, a part of the country Christ was much conversant with. We read not of any thing He did in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, but the casting of the devil out of the woman of Canaan's daughter, &c. He took that journey on purpose for that. Let not ministers grudge their pains to do good. He that knows the worth of souls, would go a great way to help to save one.

But Jesus departed thence. Having left fall that crumb under the table. He here returns to make a full feast for the children. We may do that occasionally for one, which we may not make a constant practice of. He sat down on a mountain, that all might see and have free access to Him; for He is an open Savior.

2. The multitudes and maladies that were healed by Him; (v. 30.) Great multitudes came to Him; that the Scripture might be fulfilled, Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be, Gen. 49:10. If Christ's ministers could cure bodily diseases as Christ did, there would be more flocking to them than there is; we are soon sensible of bodily pain, but few are concerned about their souls.

Now, such was the goodness of Christ, that He admitted all sorts of people. He never complained of crowds or throngs, or looked with contempt on the vulgar; the souls of peasants are as precious with Him as the souls of princes.

Such was the power of Christ, that He healed all sorts of diseases; those that came to Him brought their sick relations and friends along with them, v. 30. We read not of any thing they said to Him, but they laid them down before Him as objects of pity, to be looked on by Him. Their calamities spoke more for them than the tongue of the most eloquent orator. David shouted before Goliath's corpse, that was enough, he then left it with Him, Ps. 142:2. Whatever our case is, the only way to find ease and relief is, to lay it at Christ's feet, and submit it to Him. Those that would have spi-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 21-23. Our divine Savior is 'the same yesterday, to-day, and forever'; and still He sees good to vary the expressions of his love to those who wait on Him. Sinners of every nation and description are alike welcome to his salvation, and He will in no wise cast out those who cry to Him for mercy. Yet He can veil the compassions of his heart under a frowning countenance; not only to humble and prove those whom He loves, but also to show the strength of their faith, and the depth of their humility. In some cases the disciples may seem more compassionate than their Lord: but when the folly and selfishness of their pity, and the wisdom and mercy of his frowns and delays, come to be compared, the case will appear far otherwise; and the event will prove that 'He is rich in mercy to all them that call on Him.' Let then such as seek

help from Him, and receive no gracious answer, increase their importunity, and endeavor, with heavenly skill, to turn even their unworthiness and discouragements into arguments, with which to plead before his mercy-seat. Let sinners submit without reserve to every humiliating charge, and rely on his mercy. Thus, whilst they allow that they are not 'worthy of the crumbs from his table,' they may expect to be supplied with children's food, for He cannot be impoverished by his bounty to the most atrocious transgressors. Indeed true faith gathers strength by trials, as healthy bodies do by exercise; and when the Lord has sufficiently proved the waiting soul, He will honor faith and humble perseverance, and abundantly answer every believing prayer.

SCOTT.

Verse 27.

'Flomer represents persons of the highest rank, as allowing their faithful does to wait round their festive boards, and gather up the fragments of their meals. Iliad, book V. 173.' To.

Verse 28.

'The case of the Canaanitish woman is in itself a thousand sermons. Her faith—her prayers—her perseverance—her success—the honor she received from her Lord &c. How instructively, how powerfully do

these speak and plead! What a profusion of light does this single case throw upon the manner in which Christ sometimes exercises the faith and patience of his followers! They that seek shall find, is the great lesson inculcated in this short history. God is ever the same. Reader, follow on after God—cry—pray—plead—all in Him is for thee! Thou canst not perish, if thou continuest to believe and pray. The Lord will help thee.'

Verse 29. (Notes, Mark 7: 31-37)

Dr. A. A. ARKEL
SCOTT

30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:

31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered when they saw ^a the dumb to speak, ^b the maimed to be whole, ^c the lame to walk, and the blind to see: ^d and they glorified the ^e God of Israel.

32 Then [†] Jesus called his disciples *unto* him, and said, [†] I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now [†] three days, [†] and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, [†] lest they faint in the way.

33 And his disciples say unto him, ^v Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as ^z to fill so great a multitude?

34 And Jesus saith unto them, ^a How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and ^a ^b few little fishes.

35 And he commanded the multitude ^c to sit down on the ground.

36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, ^d and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

37 And they did ^e all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left, ⁱ seven baskets full.

38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

39 And ^ghe sent a-
way the multitude,
and took ship, and
came into the coasts
of Magdala.

ritual healing from Christ, must lay themselves at his feet, to be ruled and ordered as He pleaseth.

Here were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, brought to Christ. See what work sin has made! It has turned the world into a hospital; See what work the Savior makes! He conquers those hosts of enemies to mankind. *He sent his word, and healed them.* Note, All diseases are at the command of Christ, to go and come as He bids them. 'This is an instance of Christ's power, which may comfort us in all our weaknesses; and of his pity, which may comfort us in all our miseries.

3. The influence that this had on the people,
v. 31.

They wondered, and well they might. *It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous*, Ps. 118: 23. The spiritual cures that Christ works, are wonderful. When blind souls are made to see by faith, the dumb to speak in prayer, the lame to walk in holy obedience, it is to be wondered at. *Sing unto the Lord a new song, for thus he has done marvellous things.*

They glorified the God of Israel, whom the Pharisees, when they saw these things, blasphemed. Miracles, which are matters of our wonder, must be the matter of our praise ; and mercies, which are matter of our rejoicing, must be the matter of our thanksgiving. Those that were healed, glorified God ; if He heal our diseases, all that is within us must bless his holy name ; and if we have been graciously preserved from blindness, and lameness, and dumbness, we have as much reason to bless God, as if we had been cured of them : nay, and the standers-by glorified God. Note, God must be acknowledged with praise and thankfulness in the mercies of others as in our own. They glorified Him as the God of Israel, his church's God, a God in covenant with his people, who hath sent the Messiah promised ; and this is He. See Luke 1 : 69. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel. This was done by the power of the God of Israel, and no other could do it.

II. Here is a particular account of his feeding *four thousand men with seven loaves, and a few little fishes*, as He had lately fed *five thousand with five loaves*. The guests indeed were now not quite so many as then, and the provision a little more ; which intimates that Christ wrought his miracles as the occasion required, and not for ostentation ; both then and now He took as many as were to be fed, and made use of all that was at hand to feed them with. When once the utmost powers of nature are exceeded, we must say, *This is the finger of God*; so that this is no less a miracle than the former.

Here is, 1. Christ's pity; v. 32. He tells his disciples this, both to try and to excite their compassion. When about to work this miracle, He called them to Him, and discoursed with them; not because He needed their advice, but because He would give an instance of his condescending love to them. He called them *not servants*, but treated them as friends and counsellors. *Shall I hide from Abraham the thing that I do?* Gen. 18: 17. In what He said to them, observe,

l 4:23,24. 11:4,5.
6. Mark 1:32-3
s 17-19. 7:21,22
16 19:11,12.
m 9:33. Mark 7:37
n 18:8. Mark 9:43
o 21:14. Acts 3:2-
p 9:8. Ps. 50:15,23
7:16. 17:15-18
q Gen. 32:28. 38
24:10.

r 9:36. 14:14 20:34. Mark 8:1,2.
s 9:22. Luke 7:13.
t Heb. 4:5.
u 12:40. 27:63. Acts 27:33.
v 6:32,33. Luke 12:29,30.
x 1 Sam. 14:28-31. 30:11,12. Mark
8:3.
Num. 11:21,22. 2 Kings 4:42,43.
Mark 6:37. 8:4,5. John 6:5-7.
s 14:15. Luke 9:13. John 6:8,9.
t 16:9,10.

b Luke 24:41,42. John 21:9,10.
c 14:19. Mark 6:39,40. Luke 9:13-
16. John 6:10.
d 26:26,27. 1 Sam. 9:13. Luke 22:
19. John 6:11. Acts 27:35. Rom.
14:6. 1 Cor. 10:31. 1 Tim. 4:3,4.
e 33 14:20,21. Ps. 107:9. Luke
1:53.
f 16:9,10. Mark 8:8,9,19-21.
g 14:22. Mark 8:10.

Verse 31.

Maimed.) It is generally allowed, that the word here used, in its primary meaning, signifies such persons as have been deprived of their limbs; and the restoration of them may be considered as one of the most stupendous effects of our Lord's creating power. 'The word' which we render *maimed*, does in the strictest propriety, signify one who se hand or arm had been cut off; (*Mark* 9: 43); but it is sometimes applied to those who were only disabled in those parts. It is reasonable to suppose, that among the *maimed*, who were brought in, there must have been some whose limbs had been cut off; and I will suppose, hardly any of the miracles of our Lord were more illustrious than these.

'trious and amazing, than the recovery of such.' *Doddridge*. 'Men
'that had lost their limbs.' *Hammond*.

‘They all, whether Jews or Gentiles, acknowledged this to be a wonderful work of mercy, wrought by the God of Israel, and such as no other god was able to do.’ *Id.* SCOTT.

14.
Verses 32—33

(Notes, and P. O. 14: 13—21.) The multitudes on this occasion continued with our Lord three days, or till the third day; so that they must have lodged out of doors two nights, which might be done in those warm climates without great inconvenience; but it shows the earnestness, with which they listened to his instructions. It appears wonder-

CHAP. XVI.

Jesus rebukes the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Sadducees, who required a sign from heaven; and refuses to give any but the sign of Jonah. He warns the disciples against the covenant of the Pharisees and Sadducees, explains his meaning, and reproves the disciples for their selfish and want of understanding. 6-12. The opinions of the people concerning Him, 13, 14. Peter's confession commended, 15-17. The foundation of the church, and the power of the keys, 18-20. Jesus foretells his death and resurrection, and rebukes Peter for dissuading Him from suffering, 21-23. He shows, that his disciples must deny themselves, and suffer, in prospect of a future reward, 24-27. The specially established of his kingdom, 28.

THE ^aPharisees also, with the ^bSadducees, came, and tempt-

a 5:20 9:11 12:14, 15:1. 22:15, 34.

23:2, 27:62.

b 6:11, 37:8. 7:23, 23:15, 28:18.

17: 20:37. Acts 4:1. 5:17, 23:15.

6-8.

c 19:3. 22:18, 35. Mark 10:2. 12:15.

16:10, 16:25. 17:16, 33:34. 20:23.

John 8:5.

loaves, and a few little fishes: the fish not proportionable to the bread, for bread is the staff of life. It is probable that the fish was such as they had themselves taken; for they were fishers, and were now near the sea. Note, It is comfortable to eat the labor of our hands, (Ps. 128: 2.) and to enjoy that which is any way the product of our own industry, Prov. 12: 27. And what we have got by God's blessing on our labor, we should be free of; for therefore we must labor, that we may have to give, Eph. 4: 28.

Secondly, The putting of the people in a posture to receive it; v. 35. They saw but very little provision, yet they must sit down, in faith that they should have a meal out of it. They who would have spiritual food from Christ, must sit down at his feet, to hear his Word, and expect it to come in an unseen way.

Thirdly, The distributing of the provision among them. He first gave thanks. The word used in the former miracle was—*He blessed*. It comes all to one; giving thanks to God is a proper way of craving a blessing from God. And when we come to ask and receive further mercy, we ought to give thanks for the mercies we have received. He then brake the loaves, (for it was in the breaking that the bread multiplied,) and gave to his disciples, and they to the multitude. Though the disciples had distrusted Christ's power, yet He made use of them now as before; He is not provoked, as He might be, by the weaknesses and infirmities of his ministers, to lay them aside; but still He gives to them, and they to his people, of the Word of life.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 29—39. 'Who can describe the sentiments of these happy creatures, who, without any dangerous or painful operation, found themselves in a moment restored, beyond all the efforts of nature, and prospects of hope! With what pleasure did the ear which had been just opened, listen to his instructive tongue! How did the lame leap round Him for joy; and the maimed extend their recovered hands, in grateful acknowledgments of his new-creating power! The voice of the dumb sang forth his praises in sounds before unknown! The eye of the blind checked the curiosity, which would have prompted it to range over the various and beautiful objects of unveiled nature, to fix its regards on the gracious countenance of Him who had given it the day. Let us further reflect, with what correspondent pleasure must our Lord survey these grateful and astonished creatures, while his benevolent heart took its share in all the delight He gave. These trophies of his greatness! how unlike to those of the field, the monuments of desolation and slaughter! Doddridge.—With what raptures then will they, whose souls have been restored to holiness by his healing grace, forever contemplate and adore their divine Benefactor, and meditate on the price which He paid for their redemption!

And how will He forever behold them with immense complacency, and 'delight over them to do them good!' Let us then wait on Him to open our eyes, that we may behold his glory; to enable us to walk in his ways and to do his will; and to teach us to show forth his praises, that the Father may be glorified in Him, and in us, during life, and forever. And let us copy his example of love, according to the ability which He has given us, delighting to do good and to communicate felicity.—Whilst we are willing to endure hardship, in attending to the concerns of our souls, we may be sure that our gracious Lord will compassionate us under all our troubles, and supply what He sees needful for our temporal support.—But alas! how soon do even believers forget his interpositions in their behalf! How often do we repeat our objections against self-denying and expensive duties, though we never yet were losers by them! And how frequently do our unbelieving doubts revive, under even lighter trials, after we have been delivered out of greater! Lord, 'increase our faith,' and pardon our unbelief; and still renew thy mercies towards us; teaching us to live upon thy fullness and bounty, for all things pertaining to this world, and to that which is to come. Scott.

Verse 39.

'Dalmanutha (Mark 8: 10.) was a particular place within the bounds of Magdala.' Lightfoot. Scott

Took ship.] 'He went into the ship.' Some small vessel, when was waiting, and in which probably He and his disciples had come thither. Scott.

Magdala.] 'Magdala was a city, and probably a territory, east of Jordan, sometimes called by the rabbins *Magdala of Gadara*, from its vicinity to that city. Dr. Lightfoot has satisfactorily shown, from the Jewish writers, that it was situated on the south-east side of the lake of Genesareth, a sabbath-day's journey, or two miles from Chammath, near the hot baths of Tiberias, one mile from Jordan, and the same distance from Hippo. It appears to be the same *Magdala* which Josephus mentions, in his Life, as in the vicinity of Gamala, in Gaulanitis.' GREENFIELD.

NOTES

CHAP. XVI. v. 1. 'THE PHARISEES were the most considerable sect among the Jews, for they had not only the scribes and all the learned men of the law of their party, but they also drew after them the bulk of the people. Josephus speaks of this sect as existing about

ful, that the disciples should renew their objection, when Christ had declared his compassionate purpose of feeding the multitude; especially as their provision was something larger than before, and the number present not so great. The word rendered *baskets* is different from that, we translated, in the preceding chapter, and the same distinction is made in the original, in all the places where either of these miracles is mentioned. Some think that the word in this place signifies a larger basket than the other, but others suppose exactly the contrary. Scott.

(33.) *Whence should we have, &c.* 'Human foresight, even in the followers of Christ, is very short. In a thousand instances, if we supply not its deficiency by faith, we shall be always embarrassed, and often miserable.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(36.) *Gave thanks.* 'The form of the short prayer, which, in the time of Christ, was uttered before and after meals, has been preserved by the Talmudists. It is as follows: "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, our King, who hast produced this food, of this kind, (and there may be,) from the earth, or the vine." JAHN.

(37.) *Pockets.* 'Hand-baskets, or mounds.' CAMPBELL. BLOOMFIELD.

ing desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.

2 He answered and said unto them, 'When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather; for the sky is red:*

3 And in the morning, it will be foul weather to-day; for the sky is red and lowering.

'O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

5 And when his disciples were come

d 12:39. 39. Mark 8:11-13. Luke 11:12-39. John 6:30-32. 1 Cor. 12:22.

e Luke 12:54-56.

f 7:5. 15:7. 22:18. 23:15. Luke 11:13-15.

g 4:23. 11:5. 1 Cor. 12:32.

h 12:39-40. Mark 8:12-13. A. 2:40.

i John. 1:17. Luke 11:29-30.

j 1 Cor. 10:63. Heb. 4:17. 9:2.

k Mark 5:17, 18. Act. 18:5.

l 15:39. Mark 8:13, 14.

m set a table in the wilderness, they tempted Him, saying, Can He give us a sign from heaven?

II. Christ's reply to this demand.

1. He condemns their overlooking the signs they had, v. 2, 3. They were seeking for the signs of the kingdom of God, when it was already among them. *The Lord was in this place, and they knew it not.* Thus their unbelieving ancestors, whom miracles were their daily bread, asked, *Is the Lord among us, or is He not?*

To expose this, He notices,

(1.) Their skillfulness and sagacity in other things, particularly in natural prognostications of the weather; 'You know that a red sky over night is a presage of fair weather, and a red sky in the morning, of foul weather.'

There are common rules drawn from observation and experience, by which it is easy to foretell very probably what weather it will be. When second causes have begun to work, we may easily guess at their issue, so uniform is nature in its motions, and so consistent with itself.

We know not the balancings of the clouds, (Job 37: 16.) but we may spell something from the faces of them. This gives no countenance at all to the wild and ridiculous predictions of the astrologers, the star-gazers, and the monthly prognosticators, (Isa. 47: 13.) concerning the weather long before, with which weak people are imposed on; we are sure, in general, that *seed-time and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, shall not cease.* But it is not for us to

hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who were the great imposers of the traditions of the elders. Observe,

I. Their demand, and the design of it.

1. They must have a sign of their own choosing; they despised those signs which relieved the necessity of the sick and sorrowful, and insisted on some sign which would gratify the curiosity of the proud. It is fit that the proofs of divine revelation should be chosen by the wisdom of God, not by the follies and fancies of men. The evidence given, is sufficient to satisfy an unprejudiced understanding, but was not intended to please a vain humor. And it is an instance of the deceitfulness of the heart, to think we should be wrought upon by means and advantages we have not, while we slight those we have. *If we hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would we be wrought upon though one rose from the dead.*

2. It must be a sign from heaven. They would have such miracles to prove his commission, as were wrought at the giving of the law on Sinai. Whereas sensible and terrible signs were not agreeable to the spiritual and comfortable dispensation of the Gospel. Now the word comes more nigh us, (Rom. 10: 8.) and therefore the miracles do so, and do not oblige us to keep such a distance as these did, Heb. 12: 18.

The design was, to tempt Him; not to be taught by Him. If He should shew them a sign from heaven, they would attribute it to a confederacy with the prince of the power of the air; if He should not, as they supposed He would not, they would have that to say for themselves, *why they did not believe on Him.* And observe their perverseness; then, when they had signs from heaven, they tempted Christ, (1 Cor. 10: 9.) saying, *Can He furnish a table in the wilderness?* Now that He had furnished a table in the wilderness, they tempted Him, saying, *Can He give us a sign from heaven?*

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know the particulars, till, by the weather-glasses, or otherwise, we perceive the immediate signs of the change of weather. Let it suffice, that it shall be what weather pierces God; and that should not displease us.

(2.) Their sottishness and stupidity in the concerns of their souls; *Can ye not discern the signs of the times?*

[1.] 'Do you not see that the Messiah is come?' The sceptre was departed from Judah. Daniel's weeks were just expiring, and yet they regarded not. Christ's miracles, and the gathering of the people to Him, were plain indications that the *kingdom of heaven was at hand*, that this was the *day of their visitation*. Note, 1. There are signs of the times, by which wise and upright men are enabled so far to understand the motions and methods of Providence, as thence to know what Israel ought to do, like the men of Issachar, as the physicians from certain symptoms finds a crisis formed. 2. There are many who are skilful enough in other things, and yet cannot or will not discern the day of their opportunities, are not aware when the wind is fair, and so let slip the gale. See Jer. 8: 7. Isa. 1: 3. 3. It is great hypocrisy, when we slight the signs of God's ordaining, to seek for signs of our own prescribing.

[2.] 'Do you not foresee your own ruin coming for rejecting Him? You will not entertain the Gospel of peace, and can you not evidently discern that hereby you pull inevitable destruction on your own heads?' Note, It is the undoing of multitudes, that they are not aware what will be the end of their refusing Christ.

2. He refuses to give them any other sign, (v. 4.) as before, ch. 12: 39. Those that persist in the same iniquities, must expect the same reproofs. Here, as there, (1.) He calls them an *adulterous generation*; because, while they professed themselves of the true church of God, they treacherously departed from, and brake their covenants with Him. The Pharisees were a *generation pure in their own eyes*, like the adulterous woman, Prov. 30: 20. (2.) Christ will not be prescribed to; *we ask, and have not, because we ask amiss.* (3.) He refers them to the sign of Jonas, which should yet be given them; his resurrection from the dead, and his preaching by his apostles to the Gentiles; these were reserved for the last and highest evidences of his divine mission. Note, Though the fancies of proud men shall not be humored, yet the faith of the humble shall be supported, and the unbelief of them that perish, left inexcusable, and every mouth shall be stopped.

This discourse broke off abruptly; *He left them and departed.* Christ will not tarry long with those that tempt Him, but justly withdraws. He left them as irreclaimable; *Let them alone*: left them in the hand of their own

144 years B. C. When it arose is uncertain. They had their appellation from a Hebrew word signifying to separate, and were probably, in their rise, the most holy among the Jews, having separated themselves from the national corruption, with a design to restore and practise the pure worship of the Most High. In our Lord's time, they still kept up the outward regulations of the institution, but they had utterly lost its spirit. As to their religious opinions, they still continued to credit that being of God, who received the promises of Moses, the writings of the prophets, the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles. These last twelve books occupied, among the Jews, a middle place between the *law* and the *prophets*, as divinely inspired. The Pharisees believed, in a confused way, in the resurrection though they received the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls. Those, however, who were notoriously wicked, they consigned, on their death, immediately to hell, without the benefit of transmigration, or the hope of future redemption. They held also the predestinarian doctrine of necessity, and the government of the world by fate; and yet inconsistently allowed some degree of liberty to the human will.

The Sadducees had their origin and name from one Sadoc, a disciple of Antigonos of Socho, president of the sanhedrim, and teacher of the *law* in one of the great divinity schools in Jerusalem, about two hundred and sixty-four years before the incarnation. This Antigonos having often in his lectures informed his scholars that they should not serve God through expectation of a reward, but through love and filial reverence only; Sadoc inferred from this teaching, that there were neither rewards nor punishments after this life, and by consequence that there was no resurrection of the dead, nor angel, nor spirit in the terrible world; and that man is to be rewarded or punished here, for the good or evil he does. They received only the five books of Moses, and rejected all unwritten traditions. From every account that we have of this sect, it plainly appears they were a kind of mongrel

deists, and professed materialists. See Prideaux, &c.' [Note. 3: 7.]

Dr. A. CLARKE.

(1.) (Notes, Mark 8: 10—13. Luke 12: 54—57.) No two descriptions of bad men could be much more opposite to each other, in principles and conduct, than the Pharisees and Sadducees; yet they were alike enemies to Jesus! (Note, 3: 7—10.) They could find no objection against his conduct and doctrine, but what He answered to their confusion: they therefore came insidiously to make trial of his power, as if 'desiring a sign from heaven,' to satisfy them that He was the Messiah, of which they pleaded, that his other miracles were not a sufficient proof. (Note, 12: 38—40.) The descent of the Holy Spirit on Him at his baptism, and the voice of the Father declaring Him to be his beloved Son, were signs from heaven; yet the Pharisees and Sadducees required some further evidence; and probably they intended to mention some particular sign, or appearance in the heavens, without which they could not be convinced; pursuing thus to make trial of his power.

SCOTT.

Verse 4.

'It was never known, that any one, pretending to be a prophet, laid the foundation of the truth of his pretensions, upon his being despised and rejected, and even crucified as a deceiver, by them to whom He was sent, and among whom He performed all his miracles; and upon what should be done by others at his death; and upon what He should do after his resurrection.' Whitby. Yet this our Lord did repeatedly and openly, so that even his enemies were well aware of it! (27: 63.)

SCOTT.

Verse 5.

The other side.] 'Viz the coast of Bethsaida, by which our Lord passed going to Caesarea, for He was now on his journey thither. See v. 13, and Mark 8: 22, 27.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Had forgotten.] 'Saw that they had forgotten.' Kaimel.

BLOOMFIELD.

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to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

5 Then Jesus said unto them, ^m Take heed, and beware of ⁿ the leaven of ^o the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

7 And ^p they reasoned among themselves, saying, ^q It is because we have taken no bread:

9 Which ^r when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, ^s O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

9 Do ^t ye not yet understand, neither remember ^u the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many ^v baskets ye took up?

10 Neither ^w the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

11 How ^x is it that ye do not understand, that I spake ^y it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

12 Then understood they how that he bade ^z them not beware of the leaven of bread, ^a but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

[Practical Observations]

- m Luke 12:15.
n 12. Ex. 16:15—19, Lev. 2:11, Mark 8:15, Luke 12:1. 1 Cor. 5:6—8. Gal. 5:9. 2 Tim. 2:17.
o Mark 8:16—18. 9:10. Luke 9:46
p 15:16—18. Acts 10:14
q John 22:24. 16:30. Heb. 4:13.
r Rev. 2:21.
s 6:30. 8:28. 14:31. Mark 16:14.
t 15:16, 17. Mark 7:18. Luke 24:23.
u 27. Rev. 3:10.
v 14:17—21. Mark 6:33—44. Luke 9:13—17. John 6:9—13.
w 15:34—39. Mt. 8:5—9, 17—21.
x Mark 4:40. 8:21. Luke 12:37. John 8:44.
y 15:4—9. 23:13, &c. Acts 2:38.

counsels; so He gave them up to their own hearts' lusts.

V. 5—12. As in many other discourses, Christ here speaks of spiritual things under a similitude, and they misunderstand Him of carnal things. The occasion was, their forgetting to take along with them provisions for their family; usually they carried bread with them, because they were sometimes in desert places; and when they were not, yet this would not be burdensome. But now they forgot. Note, Christ's disciples are often such as have no great forecast for the world.

I. Here is the caution Christ gave them, v. 6. He had now been discoursing with the Pharisees and Sadducees, and saw them to be men of such a spirit, that it was necessary to caution his disciples to have nothing to do with them. Against those that are openly vicious, disciples stand on their guard, but against Pharisees, who are great pretenders to devotion, and Sadducees, who pretend to a free and impartial search after truth, they commonly lie unguarded; therefore the caution is doubled, *Take heed, and beware.*

The corrupt principles and practices of the Pharisees and Sadducees are compared to leaven; they fermented wherever they came.

II. Their mistake concerning this caution, v. 7. They thought Christ hereby upbraided them, that they were so busy attending to his discourse with the Pharisees, that they forgot their private concerns. Or, that He would not have them ask bread of the Pharisees and Sadducees, lest He should so far countenance them; or expose Himself to mischief from them. Or, they took it for a caution, not to be familiar to eat with them, (Prov. 23: 6.) whereas the danger was not in their bread, (Christ himself did eat with them, Luke 7: 36. 14: 1. 11: 37.) but in their principles.

III. The reproof Christ gave them for this.

1. He re-proves their distrust of his ability and readiness to supply them; v. 8. He does not chide them for their little forecast, as they expected. Note, Parents and masters must not be angry at the forgetfulness of their children and servants, more than is necessary to make them take more heed another time; we are all apt to be forgetful of duty. This should serve to excuse a fault, *Peradventure it was an oversight.* See how easily Christ forgave his disciples' carelessness, though in such a material point as taking bread; and do likewise. But He chides them for their little faith.

(1.) He would not have them depend on Him for supply, though in a wilderness, nor disquiet themselves with anxious thoughts about it. Note, Though brought into straits through their own carelessness and incontinency, Christ encourages his disciples to trust in Him for relief. We must not therefore use this as an excuse for our want of charity to those who are really poor, that they should have minded their own affairs better, and then they would not have been in need. It may be so, but they must not therefore be left to starve.

(2.) He is displeased at their solicitude. We must endeavor to keep the mean between the extremes of carelessness and carefulness; but of the two, the excess of thoughtfulness about

the world worst becomes Christ's disciples. Note, To distrust Christ, and to disturb ourselves when we are in straits and difficulties, is an evidence of the weakness of our faith, which, if it were in exercise as it should be, would ease us of the burden of care, by casting it on the Lord, who *careth for us.*

(3.) The aggravation of their distrust was, the experience they had so lately had of Christ's power and goodness in providing for them, v. 9, 10. Though they had no bread with them, they had Him with them, who could provide bread for them. If they had not the cistern, they had the Fountain. *Do ye not yet understand, neither remember?* Note, Christ's disciples are often to be blamed for the shallowness of their understandings, and the slipperiness of their memories. 'Have ye forgot those repeated supplies; five thousand fed with five loaves, and four thousand with seven loaves, and yet they had enough and to spare? Remember how many baskets ye took up.' These baskets were intended for memorials of the mercy, as the pot of manna preserved in the ark, Exod. 16: 32. The meat for their bodies was intended to be meat for their faith, (Ps. 74: 14.) which therefore they should have lived on, now that they had forgotten to take bread. Note, We are perplexed with present cares and distrusts, because we do not duly remember our former experiences of divine power and goodness.

2. He reproves their misunderstanding of his caution; v. 11. Note, Christ's disciples may well be ashamed of the dulness of their apprehensions in divine things; especially when they have long enjoyed the means of grace. He took it ill, (1.) That they should think Him as thoughtful about bread as they were; whereas *his meat and drink were to do his Father's will.* (2.) That they should be so little acquainted with his way of preaching, and so like the multitude, as to take that literally which He spake by way of parable, ch. 13: 13.

IV. The rectifying of the mistake by this reproof, v. 12. Note, Christ shows us our folly and weakness, that we may stir up ourselves to take things right. He did not tell them expressly what He meant, but repeated what He had said, and so obliged them to arrive at the sense in their own thoughts. Thus Christ teaches by the Spirit of wisdom in the heart, opening the understanding to the Spirit of revelation in the Word. And those truths are most precious, which we have found out after some mistakes. Though Christ did not tell them plainly, yet now they were aware that by the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees, He meant their way and doctrine. They were leading men, and in reputation, which made the danger of infection by their errors the greater. In our age, we may reckon atheism and deism to be the leaven of the Sadducees, and popery that of the Pharisees, against both which it concerns all Christians to be on their guard.

V. 13—20. We have here a private conference of Christ with his disciples concerning Himself. It was in the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, the utmost borders of the land of Canaan northward. Note, When ministers are abridged in their public work, they should endeavor to do the more in their own families.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12. Ungodly men, of discordant sentiments and parties, readily unite in opposition to the cause of Christ; and infidels, Pharisees and time-servers often postpone their subordinate controversies, that they may join their subtlety and influence in opposing the word of God. Men frequently make accurate observations, and deduce just inferences, in matters of a temporal nature; yet when they return to religious subjects, they seem incapable of understanding the plainest truths, which run counter to their interests, passions, and prejudices. But Christ will convict such disingenuous prevaricators: and, in the mean time, it is commonly best for us to leave them, and not to waste our time, or give them a handle, by disputing with them.—We ought not indeed allowedly to neglect our temporal concerns, in attending to those of our souls; yet if any are betrayed into it occasionally, through great earnestness about

spiritual things, they need not fear but the Lord will provide for them. Our main concern should be, to beware of false teachers and false doctrine; and to avoid the leaven of hypocrisy, pride and infidelity: yet even disciples are sometimes more anxious concerning the supply of their wants, than about keeping at a distance from error and sin. This arises from weakness of faith, and will expose them to rebukes.—Shor ^d the Lord interrogate us, under many of our despondings, concerning our past experience of his power, truth, and love, He would soon show us, what cause we have to be ashamed of our present distrust and solicitude, and force us to confess, that we did not properly understand and remember his former interpositions in our favor. But it is well, if we learn to profit by our own dulness and mistakes, and are made more attentive to his instructions.

Scott

Verse 7.

Remembered; 'The term *leaven* was very rarely used among the Jews to signify doctrine, therefore they deliberated, reasoned or considered.'

Jews to signify doctrine, therefore they deliberated, reasoned or considered.

2. ¶ When Jesus came into the coasts of *Cesarea Philippi*, he asked his disciples, saying, 'Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?'

14 And they said, *Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias, and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.*

15:21. Acts 10:38.
b. Mark 9:27.
c. Luke 9:18.
d. 8:29. 9:6. 12:8, 32, 40. 13:37, 41.
e. 35:1. Dan. 7:13. Mark 8:38. 10:45. John 1:51. 3:14. 5:27. 12:34.
f. Acts 7:35. Heb. 2:14-18.
g. 1:12. Mark 8:29. Luke 9:19.
h. 13:4. 4:5. Mark 8:15. Luke 9:18.
i. John 7:12, 40, 41. 9:17.

better know what they said. Christ had not plainly said who He was, but left people to infer it from his works, John 10: 24, 25. Now, 1. He would know what inferences they drew from them, and from the miracles which his apostles wrought in his name.

To this question the disciples answer; v. 14. Some said, He was the *Son of David*, (ch. 12: 23.) and the great Prophet, John 6: 14. The disciples, however, do not mention that opinion, but only such opinions as were wide of the truth, which they had gathered up from their countrymen. Observe,

(1.) Some say one thing, and others another. Truth is one; but those who vary from that commonly vary one from another. Thus Christ came eventually to send division, Luke 12: 51. Being so noted a Person, every one would be ready to pass his verdict on Him, and those that were not willing to own Him to be the Christ, followed every guess and hypothesis.

(2.) They are honorable opinions; and bespeak their respect for Him, according to the best of their judgment. These were not the sentiments of his enemies, but the sober thoughts of those that followed Him with love and wonder. Note, it is possible for men to have good thoughts of Christ, and yet not right ones, a high opinion of Him, and yet not high enough.

(3.) They all suppose Him to be *risen from the dead*; which perhaps arose from a confused notion they had of the resurrection of the Messiah, before his public preaching, as of Jonas; or from an excessive value for antiquity; as if it were not possible for an excellent man to be produced in their own age, but it must be one of the ancients returned to life.

(4.) They are all false opinions, built on wilful mistakes. Christ's doctrines and miracles bespoke Him an extraordinary Person; but because of the meanness of his appearance, they will not own Him to be the Messiah, but grant Him to be any thing else.

[1.] *Some say, Thou art John the Baptist.* Herod said so; (ch. 14: 2.) and those about Him would be apt to say as he did. This notion might be strengthened by an opinion they had, that martyrs should rise again before others; which some think the second of the seven sons refers to, 2 Macc. 7: 9. *The King of the world shall raise us up, who have died for his laws, unto everlasting life.*

[2.] *Some, Elias; taking occasion, no doubt, from the prophecy of Malachi, (ch. 4: 5.) Behold, I will send you Elijah.* And the rather, because Elijah (as Christ) did many miracles, and was himself, in his translation, the greatest miracle.

[3.] *Others, Jeremias:* they fasten on him, because he was the weeping prophet, and Christ was often in tears; or because God had *set him over kingdoms and nations*, (Jer. 1: 10.) which agreed with their notion of the Messiah.

[4.] *Or, one of the prophets.* This shows what an honorable idea they entertained of the prophets; and yet they were the children of them that persecuted and slew them, ch. 23: 29. Rather than they would allow Jesus of Nazareth, one of their own country, to be such an extraordinary person as his works bespoken him, they would say, 'It was not he, but one of the old prophets.'

II. He inquires what their thoughts were concerning Him, v. 15. Ye tell Me, what other people say of Me; can ye say better? 1. The disciples had had greater advantages than others, and been better taught. Note, Those who have more acquaintance with Christ than others, should have truer sentiments concerning Him, and be able to give a better account of Him than others. 2. The disciples were trained up to teach others, and therefore it was highly requisite that they should understand the truth themselves. Note, Ministers must be examined before they be sent forth, especially what their sentiments are of

Verse 13.

'*Cesarea Philippi* was anciently called *Panæas*, from the mountain of Panium, or Hermon, at the foot of which it was situated, near the springs of Jordan; but Philip the tetrarch, the son of Herod the Great, having rebuilt it, gave it the name of *Cesarea* in honor of Tiberius, the reigning emperor, and he added his own name to it, to distinguish it from another *Cesarea* on the coast of the Mediterranean. It was afterwards named *Neronias* by the young Agrippa, in honor of Nero; and in the time of William of Tyre, it was called *Belinas*. It was, according to Josephus, a day's journey from Sidon, and one hundred and twenty stadia from the lake of Tiberias; and according to Abulfeda, a journey of a day and a half from Damascus. Many have confounded it with Dan, or Leshem; but Eusebius and Jerome expressly affirm, that Dan was four miles from Panæas, on the road to Tyre. It is

now called *Banias*, and is described by Seetzen, as a hamlet of about twenty miserable huts, inhabited by Mohammedans; but Burckhardt says it contains about one hundred and fifty houses, inhabited by Turks, Greeks, &c.'

Verse 14.

'It was the opinion of the Jewish rabbins (founded on a wrongly interpreted passage of Malachi, see Sirach, 48: 9, 10.) that Elias would appear a short period before the time of the Messiah. Of this there are vestiges in the writings of the Jews. Some maintain that he will come in another body, as *Kinchi* on Malachi. That the Jews expected the reviviscence of Jeremias appears from Ben Gorion. Those who thought Him one of the prophets risen again, appear to have heard nothing of the birth, &c. of Jesus, but to have recently received their first report of Him from his miracles.'

Christ, and who they say that He is; for how can they be owned as ministers of Christ, that are either ignorant or erroneous concerning Christ? This is a question we should every one of us be frequently putting to ourselves, 'Who do we say, what kind of one do we say, that the Lord Jesus is? Is He precious to us? Is He in our eyes the chief of ten thousand? Is He the Beloved of our souls? It is well or ill with us, according as our thoughts are right or wrong concerning Jesus Christ.

Now let us observe,

(1.) Peter's answer to this question, v. 16. To the former question concerning the opinion others had of Christ, several of the disciples answered, according as they had heard people talk; but to this Peter answers in the name of all the rest. In all companies there are found some warm, bold men, to whom a precedence of speech falls of course; Peter was such a one: yet we find other of the apostles sometimes speaking as the mouth of the rest; as *John*, (Mark 9: 35.) *Thomas, Philip, and Jude*, John 14: 5, 8, 22. So that this is far from being a proof of such primacy and superiority of Peter above the rest of the apostles, as the church of Rome ascribes to him. They will needs advance him to be a judge, when the utmost they can make of him, is, that he was but foreman of the jury.

Peter's answer is short, but full, true, and to the purpose, v. 16. Here is a confession of the Christian faith, addressed to Christ, and so made an act of devotion; a confession of the true God as the living God, and of *Jesus Christ whom He hath sent*, whom to know is *life eternal*. This is the conclusion of the whole matter.

[1.] The people called Him a *Prophet*, that *Prophet*; (John 6: 14.) but the disciples own Him to be the Christ, the anointed One; the true Messiah. It was a great thing to believe this of one whose outward appearance was so contrary to the general idea the Jews had of the Messiah.

[2.] He called Himself the *Son of man*; but they owned Him to be the *Son of the living God*. The people's notion of Him was, that He was the ghost of a dead man, Elias or Jeremias; but they know Him to be the *Son of the living God*, who has life in Himself, and has given to his Son to have life in Himself, and to be the *Life of the world*. If He be the *Son of the living God*, He is of the same nature with Him; and though his divine nature was now veiled with the cloud of flesh, yet there were those who looked through it, and saw his glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. Now can we with an assurance of faith subscribe to this confession? Let us then, with a fervency of affection and adoration, go to Christ, and tell Him so; Lord Jesus, thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

(2.) Christ's approbation of his answer; (v. 17-19.) in which Peter is replied to, both as believer and an apostle.

[1.] As a believer, v. 17. Christ shows Himself well pleased with Peter's confession, it was so clear and express. Note, The proficiency of Christ's disciples is very acceptable to Him; and Christ shows him whence he received the knowledge of this truth. At its first discovery in the dawning of the Gospel-day, it was a mighty thing to believe it; all men had not this faith. But,

15 He saith unto them, "But whom say ye that I am?"

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee," but my Father which is in heaven.

[13:11. Mark 8:29. Luke 9:20.
14:33. 26:63. 27:54. Ps. 2:7. Mark 14:61. John 1:49. 6:69. 11:27. 20:31. Acts 8:37. 9:20. Rom. 1:4. Heb. 1:2-5. 1 John 4:15. 5:5, 20. Deut. 5:28. Ps. 42:2. Dan. 6:28. Isa. 14:15. 1 Thes. 1:9.
1:5-11. 13:16-17. Luke 10:23, 24. 22:32. 1 Pet. 1:3-5. 5:1.
John 1:42. 21:15-17.
Gal. 1:11, 12, 16.
1:25-27. Is. 54:13. Luke 10:21. 22 John 6:45. 17:26-9. 1 Cor. 2:9-12. Gal. 1:16. Eph. 1:17, 18. 2:8-5. 15, 18, 19. Col. 1:26, 27. 1 John 5:20.]

no achievement of our own, but the free gift of God's grace; so that we have nothing to boast of, Ps. 115: 1. 1 Cor. 4: 7.

[2.] Christ replies to him as an apostle or minister, v. 18, 19. Peter, in the name of the church, had confessed Christ, and to him therefore the promise intended for the church is directed. Note, There is nothing lost by being forward to confess Christ; for those who thus honor Him, He will honor.

God had had a church in the world from the beginning, and it was built on the rock of the promised Seed, Gen. 3: 15. But now, it was requisite that the church should have a new charter, as Christian in relation to a Christ already come. Now here we have that charter; and a thousand pities it is, that this word, which is the great support of the kingdom of Christ, should be wrested and pressed into the service of antichrist. But the devil has employed his subtlety to pervert it, as he did, (ch. 4: 6.) that promise, Ps. 91: 11.

Now the purport of this charter is,

First, To establish the being of the church, v. 18. It is Christ that makes the grant, He who is the church's Head and Ruler. The grant is put into Peter's hand; 'I say it to thee.' The Old-Testament promises relating to the church were given immediately to particular persons, eminent for faith and holiness, as to Abraham and David; which yet gave no supremacy to them, much less to any of their successors; so the New-Testament charter is here delivered to Peter as an agent, but to the use and behoof of the church in all ages, according to the purposes therein specified and contained. Now it is here promised,

1. That Christ would build his church on a rock. This body politic is incorporated by the style and title of *Christ's Church*. It is a number of the children of men called out of the world, and set apart from it, and dedicated to Christ. It is not *thy* church, but *mine*. Peter remembered this, when he cautioned ministers *not to lord it over God's heritage*. The world is God's, and they that dwell therein; but the church is a chosen remnant, standing in relation to God through Christ as Mediator. It bears his image and superscription.

(1.) The Builder and Maker of the church is Christ Himself; *I will build it*. It is a temple of Christ's building. Zech. 6: 11, 13. Herein Solomon was a type of Christ, and Cyrus, Isa. 44: 28. The materials and workmanship are his. By the working of his Spirit with the preaching of his word, He adds souls to the church, and so builds it up with living stones; (1 Pet. 2:

Verse 16.

Numbers thought Jesus a deceiver; but those who esteemed Him more highly, had very inadequate apprehensions of his real dignity.—The apostles had, not long before, worshipped Christ, as 'the Son of God.' (See 14: 33.) and their repeated confessions, to the same effect, show what their habitual judgment was, on this subject. Some think, that they only meant to say that He was the Messiah; whereas it is obvious they thus showed, that in this respect they understood the true meaning of the prophecies concerning the Messiah. (Notes, Ps. 2: 7-12.) John 15: 66-71. 9: 35-38. 11: 27-27.]

SCOTT.

Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 'Every word here is emphatic—a most concise, and yet comprehensive confession of faith. The Christ, or Messiah, points out his divinity, and shows his office—the Son, designates his person: on this account it is, that both are joined together so frequently in the new covenant. Of the living God—literally, of God, the Living one. Living—a character applied to the Supreme Being, not only to distinguish Him from the dead idols of paganism, but also to point Him out as the source of life, present, spiritual, and eternal. Probably there is an allusion here to the great name *Yehv*, or *Yehovah*: which properly signifies being, or existence.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 17.

Others had enjoyed the same outward means, but were not yet brought to believe in Jesus, "as the Christ, the Son of the living God" and the teaching of God alone, had made him differ from his unbelievers.

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First, Peter had the happiness of it; *Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona*. He reminds him of the obscurity of his extraction; he was *Bar-jona*—The son of a dove: so some. Having reminded him of this, He makes him sensible of his great happiness as a believer; *Blessed art thou*. Note, True believers are truly blessed. All happiness attends the right knowledge of Christ.

Secondly, God must have the glory of it; *For flesh and blood have not revealed it to thee*. Thou hadst this neither by the invention of thy own wit, nor by the instruction of others; neither from nature nor from education, but from my Father, who is in heaven. Note, 1. The Christian religion is a religion given by inspiration of God, not the learning of philosophers, nor the politics of statesmen. 2. Saving faith is the gift of God, wrought by Him, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for his sake, and on the score of his mediation, Phil. 1: 29. Therefore thou art blessed, because my Father has revealed it to thee. Note, The revealing of Christ to us and in us is a distinguishing token of God's good will and a firm foundation of true happiness.

Perhaps Christ discerned something of pride and vain-glory in Peter's confession; a subtle sin apt to mingle itself even with our good duties. It is hard for good men to compare themselves with others, and not to have too great a conceit of themselves; to prevent which, we should consider that our preference to others is

5.) and building is a progressive work; the church in this world is but in the forming. It is comfort to all who wish well to the church, that Christ, who has divine wisdom and power undertakes to build it.

(2.) The foundation on which it is built is, *this Rock*; and it must be meant, Christ, for other foundation can no man lay. See Isa. 28: 16.

[1.] The church is built on a rock; Christ would not build on the sand. A rock is high Ps. 61: 2. Christ's church does not stand on a level with this world; a rock is large, so is the church's foundation; and the more large, the more firm; those are not the church's friends, that narrow its foundations.

[2.] It is built on *this rock*; thou art Peter, which signifies a stone or rock; Christ gave him that name when He first called him, (John 1: 42.) and here He confirms it; 'Peter, thou dost answer thy name, thou art a solid, substantial disciple, fixed and stayed, not shaken with the waves of men's fluctuating opinions concerning Me, but established in the present truth,' 2 Pet. 1: 12. From the mention of this significant name, occasion is taken for this metaphor of building on a rock.

1st, Some by this rock understand Peter himself as an apostle. The church is built on the foundation of the apostles; (Eph. 2: 20.) hence their names are said to be written in the foundations of the new Jerusalem, Rev. 21: 14. Now Peter being that apostle by whose hand the first stones of the church were laid, both in Jewish converts, (Acts 2.) and in the Gentile converts, (Acts 10.) he might in some sense be said to be the rock on which it was built. *Cephas* was one that seemed to be a pillar, Gal. 2: 9. But it sounds very harsh, to call a man that only lays the first stone of a building, which is a transient act, the foundation on which it is built, which is an abiding thing. Yet if it were so, this would not support the pretensions of the bishop of Rome; for Peter had no such headship as he claims; much less could he derive it to his successors, and least of all to the bishops of Rome, who, whether they are so in place or no, are not so in the truth of Christianity, past all question.

2dly, Others by this rock understand Christ. 'Thou art Peter, thou hast the name of stone, but on this rock, pointing to Himself, *I will build my church*.' Perhaps He laid his hand on his breast, as when He said, *Destroy this temple*, (John 2: 19.) meaning the temple of his body. But this must be explained by those many Scriptures which speak of Christ as the only Foundation of the church; see 1 Cor. 3: 11. 1 Pet. 2: 6. Christ is both its Founder and its Foundation; He draws souls, and draws them to Himself; to Him they are united, and on Him they rest and have a constant dependence.

3dly, Others, by this rock, understand this confession which Peter made of Christ, and this comes all to one with understanding it of Christ Himself. It was a good confession which Peter witnessed, *Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God*; the rest concurred with him in it.

ing countrymen; his faith and knowledge were of a spiritual and saving nature, and therefore he was blessed. Peter was, at this time, greatly ignorant of many evangelical truths, and even prejudiced against them: he did not understand the plan of redemption by the blood of Christ; he was but little acquainted with his own heart, and with spiritual things; he had a variety of carnal and vain expectations; he was afterwards left to make many gross mistakes, yea, even to commit grievous sins, and to incur rebukes and chastenings; and he had many persecutions to endure, and was at length to die a martyr by a most painful death: yet he was 'blessed,' because he was regenerate, and an upright believer in Christ: having received these introductory benefits, more would in due time be given; (Notes, 13: 12.) and his everlasting happiness was sure. 'Revealed,' does not seem, in this place, to mean the immediate communication of knowledge by inspiration; for that would not have insured Peter's happiness: (Note, 7: 21-23.) but the removing of those proud and carnal prejudices which veiled the hearts of others, that they could not understand what was in itself most plain. (Notes, 1-4. 11: 25-26. 2 Cor. 3: 12-18.) Peter was 'taught of God' and 'his understanding, as to this subject, was opened to understand the Scriptures.'

Flesh and blood. Man; human nature, our bodies as existing and acting in this world. SCOTT. *Flesh and blood.* 'The Jews use this phrase infinitely times, and by it oppose "men" to "God".'

LIGHTFOOT

18 And I say also unto thee, That ^{as} thou art Peter; and ^{as} upon this rock ^I will build ^{my} church; ^{and} the gates of hell ^{shall} not prevail against it.

103. John 1:42. Gal. 2:9.
1. Is. 28:16. 1 Cor. 3:10, 11. Eph. 2:19-22. Rev. 21:14.
2. Zech. 6:12, 13. 1 Cor. 3:9. Heb. 3:14.
3. 13:17. Acts 2:47. 8:1. Eph. 3:10. 5:25-27, 32. Col. 1:16. 1 Tim. 3:15.
4. Gen. 22:17. 2 Sam. 14:1. Ps. 59:12. 137:5. Prov. 24:7. Is. 28:6. 1 Cor. 15:55. 16:13.
5. Pa. 25:1, 2. Is. 54:17. John 10:27-30. Rom. 8:33-39. Heb. 12:28. Rev. 11:15. 21:1-4.

2. Christ here promises to preserve and secure his church, when it is built; *The gates of hell shall not prevail against it*; neither against this truth, nor against the church which is built on it.

(1.) This implies that the church has enemies that fight against it, here represented by the *gates of hell*, that is, the city of hell; the devil's interest among the children of men; the powers and policies of the devil's kingdom, the dragon's heads and horns, by which he *makes war with the Lamb*. These fight against the church by opposing Gospel-truths, corrupting Gospel ordinances, persecuting good ministers and good Christians; drawing or driving, persuading by craft or forcing by cruelty, to that which is inconsistent with the purity of religion: this is the design of the gates of hell, to root out the name of Christianity, (Ps. 83:4.) *to devour the man-child*, (Rev. 12:9.) to *aze* this city to the ground.

(2.) This assures us that the enemies of the church shall not gain their point. While the world stands, Christ will have a church in it, in spite of all the powers of darkness; *They shall not prevail against it*, Ps. 129:1, 2. This gives no security to any particular church, or church governors, that they shall never err, never apostatize or be destroyed; but that somewhere or other the Christian religion shall have a being.

The *roman lives*, though in a wilderness, (Rev. 12:14.) *cast down, but not destroyed*, (2 Cor. 4:9.) *as dying, and behold we live*, 2 Cor. 6:9. Corruptions grieving, persecutions grievous, but neither fatal. The church may be foiled in particular encounters, but in the main battle it shall come off more than a conqueror.

Vefse 18.

Peter's confession contains that fundamental truth, respecting the person and office of Christ, upon which, as on a rock, He would build his church. Nor could the powers of death or the entrance into the eternal world, destroy the hope of those who should build on it. Nothing can be more absurd, than to suppose that Christ meant, that the person of Peter was the rock, on which the church should be builded; except it be the wild notion, that the bishops of Rome have since been substituted in his place! 'Their rock is not as our Rock, our enemies themselves being judges.' Without doubt, Christ Himself is the Rock and tried Foundation of the church, and woe be to him who attempts to lay any other! (Note, 1 Cor. 3:10-15.) but Peter's confession is that *rock doctrinally*. The profession of the truths implied in it constitutes a man a member of the visible church; the vital belief of them constitutes a member of the real church, however he may err in other matters; but nothing less than this can entitle any one to the name of a believer. The Deity of Christ as 'the Son of the living God,' and his human nature as 'the Son of man,' have by turns been opposed; and his union to his prophetic, his priestly, and his kingly office, has been explained away by different descriptions of deceivers. Yet the church, established on the person of Christ, as Emmanuel, the Prophet, Priest, and King of his redeemed people, still subsists; and it will assuredly, ere long, gain a decided victory over all its adversaries of every name on earth or in hell. Such pains have also been taken, to show that the gates of hell *Hades*, the invisible world do not mean, according to the common interpretation, the power and policy of the devil, and of his angels and servants; but merely death, as the entrance into *Hades*; and that a resurrection of all true believers to eternal life is especially intended. But Christ came, not only 'to overcome death, but him that hath the power of death, that is, the devil,' and this brings in the substance of the more usual and far more ancient interpretation. *Hades* here signifies death, or grave, or destruction, and by consequence Satan also, who hath the power of these. *Gates* may signify, first, power, which consists in arms, which were usually kept over the gates of the cities; secondly, counsel, contrivance, stratagems, policy; because they were wont to sit in council in the gates; thirdly, worldly authority borrowed by Satan from his instruments, the heathen powers of the world, because judgment was wont to be exercised in the gates. "The church" signifies particular persons, (believers, true faithful Christians,) of which the church consists, or the 'whole congregation and society of men.' Hammond. The original word signifies any assembly of people, for whatever purpose, or in whatever way collected; but in the New Testament, it is generally used in the senses above given. Considered as a prophecy, this has been most wonderfully accomplished, during almost eighteen hundred years, during a vast proportion of which, the professed friends of the church have combined with her avowed enemies to destroy her, by power and policy, by persecution and heresies, and by every imaginable way; but all in vain. 'The gates of hell' have not prevailed, and shall not prevail against her. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but Christ's words shall not pass away.' Let it be remarked, that our Lord says, 'I will build,' &c. but the church is 'God's building and his church,' (Cor. 3:9.)

Scott. The original Greek means a congregation, or assembly

'Now,' saith Christ, 'this is that great truth on which *I will build my church*.' 1. Take away this truth itself, and the universal church falls to the ground. If Christ be not the Son of God, Christianity is a cheat, and the church is a mere chimera; *our preaching is vain, your faith is vain, and you are yet in your sins*, 1 Cor. 15:14, 17. 2. Take away the faith and confession of this truth from any particular church, and it ceases to be a part of Christ's church, and relapses to the state and character of infidelity. This is that article, with the admission or the denial of which, the church either rises or falls; those who let go this, do not hold the foundation; and though they may call themselves Christians, they give themselves the lie; for the church is a sacred society, incorporated on the certainty and assurance of this great truth; and great it is, and has prevailed.

Particular believers are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, 1 Pet. 1:5.

Secondly, The other part of this charter is, to settle the order and government of the church.

19. Now this constituting of the government of the church, is here expressed by the delivering of the keys, and, with them, a power to bind and loose. This is not to be understood, of any peculiar power that Peter was invested with, as if he were sole door-keeper of the kingdom of heaven, and had that key of David, which belongs only to the Son of David; no, this invests all the apostles and their successors with a ministerial power to guide and govern the church of Christ, as it exists in particular congregations or churches, according to the rule of the Gospel. *All we that are priests, received, in the person of the blessed apostle Peter, the keys of the kingdom of heaven*; so Ambrose, *De Dignit. Sacerd.* Only the keys were first put into Peter's hand, because he was 'the first that opened the door of faith to the Gentiles,' Acts 10:28. Christ, having incorporated his church, appointed the office of the ministry for the keeping up of order and government, and to see that his laws were duly served; *I will give thee the keys*. He doth not say, 'I have given them,' or 'I do now'; but 'I will do it,' meaning after his resurrection; *when He ascended on high, He gave those gifts*, (Ephes. 4:8.) then this power was actually given, not to Peter only, but to all the rest, ch. 28:19, 20. John 20:21. He doth not say, *The keys shall be given*, but, *I will give them*; for ministers derive their authority from Christ, and all their power is to be used in his name, 1 Cor. 5:4.

Now, 1. The power here delegated, is a spiritual power pertaining to the kingdom of heaven, not a civil, secular power; Christ's kingdom is not of this world; their instructions afterward were in things pertaining to the kingdom of God, Acts 1:3.

good or bad; (hence used, Acts 19:32, for the mob, or confused rabble gathered together against Paul,) and it must have some other word joined to it to determine its nature. In primitive times, before Christians had any stated buildings, they worshipped in private houses, hence the church that was in the house of Aquila and Priscilla (Rom. 16:3, 5. and 1 Cor. 16:19.) and in the house of Nymphas, Col. 4:15. Now as these houses were dedicated to the worship of God each was termed *Kyrius oikos*, the house of the Lord, which word was contracted into *kyriak* and *kyriake*: and hence *kirk* of the Scotch and *kirik* of the Saxons, from which by corruption, we have made church, changing the hard Saxon *c* to *ch*. Though this term is generally used for the people worshipping in a particular place, yet by a metonymy from the council being put for the congregation, we apply it, as was originally, to the building, which contains the worshipping people. Church is very properly defined in the nineteenth article of the church of England, to be 'a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments duly ministered, according to Christ's ordinance.'"

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Thou art Peter, &c.] Although himself of a different opinion, Horne remarks, "The most eminent of the ancient fathers, as well as some of the early bishops or popes of Rome, particularly Gregory the Great, and likewise several of the most judicious modern commentators, respectively, take this rock to be the profession of faith, which Peter had made, that *Christ was the Son of God*." *Peter's rock*.] "The true meaning of *Petros*, or Peter, is given by Christ when He calls him Cephas, or a stone, and *Petros* never signifies a rock, according to Leigh. *Petra* means a rock, which is the regular figurative expression in holy Scripture for a divine Protector, (2 Sam. 22:2, 32. Ps. 18:2. and many other places.) thus this word cannot be applied to any other than God or Christ; thus St. Paul testifies that Christ was the rock of the primitive church, (1 Cor. 10:4.) and a foundation, 1 Cor. 3:2. Peter then was but the stone laid on this foundation rock, as he himself says, (1 Pet. 2:5.) *Ye also as living stones are built up a spiritual house, &c.* and proceeds to quote that text in Isaiah of a chief corner-stone to be believed on, &c. and this stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner. From the whole argument of St. Peter, then it is manifest, that there cannot be any other true head of the church than Christ Himself. So that the pretence for setting up a vicarial head on earth, is not only contrary to St. Peter's instruction to the eastern churches, long after Christ's ascent into heaven, but also to our Lord's promise: Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them. Matt. 18:20."

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Gates of hell.] The original expression is found (and in the same sense) both in the classical, Hellenistic, the Greek and Hebrew versions. By both sacred and profane writers, the expression conveys the very same idea, i. e. the approach to the place of departed souls, the state of the dead, or death itself. So Hom. II. 9:312. Theocr. Idyl. 2:155. &c. The Septuagint uses the same word, Gen. 37:33 Prov. 14:12. 16:25. In Ps. 6:5. and 94:17. the word rendered grave, or silence, is the same in the Greek version. So in 1 Cor. 15. In Is. 38:9. 10. 18. the Greek version uses the same word as those here translated hell. Wisdom of Solomon, 16:13. &c."

BLOOMFIELD

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

20 Then charged he his disciples, that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

[Practical Observations.]

u Acts 2:14, &c. 10:34, &c. 15:7.
v Is. 22:22. Rev. 1:18. 3:7. 9:1.
20:1-3.
y 19:13. John 9:23. 1 Cor. 5:4, 5.
z 2 Cor. 9:10. 1 Thess. 4:8. 1 Tim. 11:1.
a S. 4. 1:2. Mark 9:30. 9:9. Luke 9:21, 36.
b John 14:14, 20:23. Acts 2:36. 1 John 5:22. 3:1.

the word of God, and to be received accordingly, 1 Thess. 3: 13. John 13: 20.

Now the keys of the kingdom of heaven are,

(1.) The key of doctrine, called the key of knowledge. Your business shall be to explain to the world the will of God, both as to truth and duty; in the common speech of the Jews, at that time, to teach or declare a thing to be unlawful, was to bind; to be lawful, was to loose. Now the apostles had an extraordinary power of this kind; some things forbidden by the law of Moses were now to be allowed, as the eating of such and such meats; some things allowed were now to be forbidden, as divorce; and the apostles were empowered to declare this to the world, and men might take it on their word. When Peter was first taught himself, and then taught others, to call nothing common or unclean, this power was exercised. There is also an ordinary power hereby conveyed to all ministers, to preach the Gospel as appointed officers; to tell people, in God's name, and according to the Scriptures, what is good, and what the Lord requires of them; and they who declare the whole counsel of God, use these keys well, Acts 20: 27.

Some make the giving of the keys to allude to the custom of the Jews in creating a doctor of the law, which was to put into his hand the keys of the chest where the book of the law was kept, denoting his being authorized to take

and read it; and the binding and loosing, to allude to the fashion of their books, which were in rolls; they shut them by binding them up with a string, which they untied when they opened them. Christ gives his apostles power to shut or open the book of the Gospel to people, as the case required. See the exercise of this power, Acts 13: 46. 18: 6. When ministers preach pardon and peace to the penitent, wrath and the curse to the impenitent, in Christ's name, they act then pursuant to this authority of binding and loosing.

(2.) The key of discipline, which is but the application of the former to particular persons on a right estimate of their characters and actions; not legislative, but judicial: Such is the power of the keys, wherever it is lodged, with reference to church-membership and privileges. [1.] Christ's ministers have a power to admit into the church; 'Go, disciple all nations, baptizing them; those who profess faith in Christ, and obedience to Him, admit them and their seed members of the church by baptism.' [2.] They have a power to expel and cast out such as have forfeited their church membership; refusing to unbelievers the application of Gospel-promises and the seals of them; and declaring to such as appear to be in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, that they have no part or lot in the matter, as Peter did to Simon Magus, though he had been baptized; and this is a binding over to the judgment of God. [3.] They have a power to restore and to receive in again, on repentance, such as had been thrown out; to loose those whom they had bound; declaring that, if their repentance be sincere, the promise of pardon belongs to them. The apostles had a miraculous gift of discerning spirits; yet even they went by the rule of outward appearances, (as Acts 8: 21. 1 Cor. 5: 1. 2 Cor. 3: 7. 1 Tim. 1: 20.) which ministers may still make a judgment upon, if they be careful and faithful.

Lastly, Here is Christ's charge to his disciples, to keep this private for the present; n.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13-20. We often foolishly want to know what men say of us; but our blessed Lord had wise, holy and important reasons for making a similar inquiry; and we ought to imitate his manner of grafting instructive observations on every topic of conversation.—There are various opinions concerning the Lord Jesus; but none can be his true disciples, who hesitate to confess, 'that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God.' or who labor to explain away the meaning of such emphatical words. Happy are they, who confess this from an understanding and believing heart! Human teaching alone has not given them this, but it is the gift of their heavenly Father, and an earnest of further favors.—We should learn to make allowances for inquirers who seem to have a teachable spirit, but are

yet strangers to many truths: for not the doctrines believed, but the origin, nature, and effects of their faith and knowledge, distinguish the true disciples from other men.—The Person and work of Christ, the Son of God, is the Rock, on which alone the church is built; and let the powers of darkness plot and rage, let infidels and heretics revile and menace as they please, they will never be able to subvert this foundation, or to destroy one soul which rests his hope upon it.—We have not at present such authority as was intrusted to the apostles, and none can forgive sins but God only; yet let no man despise the declarations and censures of faithful ministers: for, as far as they agree with the word of God, they are ratified in heaven.

SCOTT.

Verse 19.

Our Lord next stated the authority, with which Peter would be invested. He had spoken in the name of his brethren, as well as in his own; and doubtless this related to them as well as to him: (18: 13.) but he might be especially addressed, as he first preached the Gospel, after Christ's ascension, both to the Jews, and to the Gentiles; thus opening the kingdom of heaven, as it were, to them both, in which it was impossible that any successor could share with him. Keys were an ancient emblem of authority: (Rev. 3: 7, 8. Note. Is. 22: 22-23.) The expression doubtless immediately related to the authority, which the apostles possessed, as the representatives of Christ, and the principal ministers of his kingdom. (Note. John 21: 19-23. c. 23.) They were endued with the Holy Spirit, that they might infallibly declare his truth to mankind, and determine what was binding on the conscience, and what not; to show what persons ought to be admitted into the church, or excluded from it; to decide on the characters of those whose sins were forgiven, or the contrary; and whatever in these, and similar respects, they bound or loosed on earth, would be bound or loosed in heaven. The apostles themselves had not an infallible insight into the characters of men, and they were liable to mistakes and sins in their own conduct. But they were infallibly preserved from error, in stating the way of acceptance and salvation, the rule of obedience, the believer's character and experience, and the final doom of unbelievers, hypocrites, and apostates. In such cases their decision was absolute, and ratified in heaven, as all will find at last, even they who now despise it. In this respect, their apostolical authority continues in their doctrine as transmitted to us in the New Testament; but all other ministers of whatever rank, name, or age, can do no more than declare the doctrine of the apostles, and apply it to particular cases; by preaching the Word, administering divine ordinances, admitting men into the visible church, or excluding them from it, or by personal encouragement and warning. As far as they proceed according to the Scripture in these things, their decisions are warranted, and ratified in heaven; but not when they mistake either the doctrine, or in its application to particular

persons or characters. As no man can see another's heart, and as no man has any inherent power to forgive sin, or the contrary; so all pretensions absolutely to absolve, or retain men's sins, claim more than even apostolical authority; for surely none will maintain that any man can be made a true believer, or a hypocrite, by the erroneous decision of another concerning him. 'Touching the keys, wherewith they may either open or shut the kingdom of heaven, we, with Chrysostom say, 'they may be the knowledge of the Scriptures; with Tertullian we say, the interpretation of the law, (or Word of God,) and with 'Eusebius, we call them the Word of God.' Bp. Jewel. SCOTT.

'Among the Jews, we meet with the phrases bound and loosed thousands of times over. It is used first, in doctrine and in judgments, concerning things allowed or forbidden; in the law. Secondly, to bind is the same as to forbid or to declare forbidden. "I am about to build a Gentile church," saith Christ, "and to thee, O Peter, do I give the keys of the kingdom of heaven, that thou mayst first open the door of faith to them; but if thou askest by what title that church is to be governed, when the Mosaic rule may seem so improper for it, thou shalt be so guided by the Holy Spirit, that whatsoever of the law of Moses thou shalt forbid them, shall be forbidden; whatsoever thou grantest them shall be granted, and that under a sanction made in heaven." Hence when he was ready to use his keys and open the gate of the Gospel to the Gentiles, (Acts 10:) he was aware, from heaven, that the consorting of the Jew with the Gentile, which before had been bound, was now loosed; and the eating of any creature convenient for food, was now loosed which before had been bound; and he in like manner looses both these.' LIGHTFOOT.

Verse 20.

Our Lord, having opened these things in confidence to his disciples, charged them not to speak to others concerning his being the Messiah. Let them collect it from the fulfilment of prophecy, and from his miracles and doctrine; but the time for an explicit declaration of it was not yet come.

SCOTT.

21 ¶ From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, now that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, * Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

b 17:22-23. 20:17-19, 28. 26:2. Mark 8:31-32. 9:31-32. 10:32-34. Luke 9:22, 31, 44, 45. 18:31-34. 24:6, 7, 36. c 28:47. 27:12. 1 Chr. 24:1-19. Neh. 13:2. d 27:13. John 2:19-21. Acts 2:23-32. e 16:17. 26:51-53. Mark 8:32. John 8:58-59. f Gr. *Pity thyself.* 1 Kings 22:13. Acts 21:11-13.

(Acts 2:36.) *That God hath made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ; there is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak.*

V. 21-23. Here.

I. Christ foretells his sufferings. From this time he frequently spake of them. Some hints He had already given, as when He said, *Destroy this temple: when He spake of the Son of man being lifted up, and of eating his flesh, and drinking his blood:* but now He began to speak plainly and expressly. Note, Christ reveals his mind to his people gradually, and lets in light as they can bear it, and are fit to receive it.

From that time, when they had made that full confession of Christ, that He was the Son of God. When He found them knowing in one truth, He taught them another; *for to him that has, shall be given.* Let them first be established in the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and then go on to perfection, Heb. 6:1. All truths are not to be spoken to all persons at all times, but such as are proper and suitable to their present state. Now observe,

1. What He foretold.

(1.) The place where He should suffer. Jerusalem, the head city, the holy city. Though He lived most of his time in Galilee, He must die at Jerusalem; there all the sacrifices were offered, there therefore He must die, *who is the great Sacrifice.*

(2.) The persons by whom He should suffer; *the elders, and chief priests, and scribes:* these made up the great sanhedrim, which sat at Jerusalem. It was strange that men of knowledge in the Scripture, who professed to expect the Messiah's coming, and pretended to have something sacred in their character, should use Him thus barbarously when He did come. It was the Roman power that condemned and crucified Christ, but He lays it to the *chief priests and scribes*, as the first movers.

(3.) What He should suffer; *many things, and be killed.* His enemies' insatiable malice, and his own invincible patience, appear in the variety and multiplicity of his sufferings; nothing less than his death would satisfy them; He must be killed. The suffering of many things is more tolerable; and death, without such prefaces, would be less terrible; but He must first suffer many things, and then be killed.

(4.) What should be the happy issue; He shall be raised again the third day. As the prophets, so Christ Himself, when He testified beforehand his sufferings, testified withal the glory that should follow, 1 Pet. 1:11. His rising again proved Him to be the Son of God, notwithstanding his sufferings; and therefore He mentions that, to keep up their faith. When He spake of the cross and the shaver, He spake in the same breath of the joy set before Him, in the prospect of which He endured the cross, and despised the shame. Thus we must look on Christ's suffering for us, tracing in it the way to his glory; and

on our suffering for Christ, looking through it to the recompense of reward. *If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him.*

2. Why He foretold it, (1.) To show that his sufferings were the product of an eternal counsel agreed on between the Father and the Son; *thus it behoved Christ to suffer.* The matter was settled in the determinate counsel and foreknowledge, in pursuance of his own voluntary undertaking for our salvation; his sufferings were no surprise to Him, but He had a distinct and certain foresight of them, which greatly magnifies his love, John 18:4. (2.) To rectify the mistakes of his disciples concerning the external pomp and power of his kingdom. They counted on nothing but dignity and authority; but here Christ tells them of the cross and sufferings; nay, that the chief priests and the elders, whom, it is likely, they expected to be the supports of the Messiah's kingdom, should be his great enemies and persecutors. Those that follow Christ must be dealt plainly with, and warned not to expect great things in this world. (3.) It was to prepare them for the share of sorrow and fear, which they must have in his sufferings. When He suffered many things, the disciples could not but suffer some; if their Master be killed, they will be seized with terror; let them know it before, that they may provide accordingly.

II. The offence which Peter took at this, (p. 22.) probably he spake the sense of the rest of the disciples, as before, for he was chief speaker. He took Him, and began to rebuke Him. Perhaps Peter was a little elevated with the great things Christ had now said to him, which made him more bold with Christ than became him; so hard is it to keep the spirit humble in the midst of great advancements!

1. It did not become Peter to contradict his Master, or to advise Him. *Shall any teach God knowledge? He that reproveth God, let him answer it.* Note, When God's dispensations are intricate or cross to us, it becomes us silently to acquiesce, and not to prescribe to the divine will. Unless we know the mind of the Lord, it is not for us to be his counsellors, Rom. 11:34.

2. It savored much of fleshly wisdom, for him to appear so warmly against suffering. It is the corrupt part of us, that is thus solicitous to sleep in a whole skin. We are apt to look on sufferings as they relate to this present life; but there are other rules to measure them by, which, if duly observed, will enable us cheerfully to bear them, Rom. 8:18. See how passionately Peter speaks; *'Be it far from Thee, Lord. God forbid, that thou shouldst suffer and be killed.' Master, spare Thyself:* so it might be read. He would have Christ to dread suffering as much as he did. He intimates, likewise, the improbability of the thing, humanly speaking; *'This shall not be unto Thee.* It is impossible that one who hath so great an interest in the people as Thou hast, should be crushed by the elders, who fear the people: we that have followed Thee, will fight for Thee, if occasion be; and there are thousands that will stand by us.'

III. Christ's displeasure against Peter for

Verases 21-23.

It is probable, that the scribes were at this time fully expecting that Jesus, appearing in external glory, as 'the King of Israel'; but He began to show them that He must suffer, even be put to death. (Notes, 17-19. Mark 10:32-34. Luke 24:26-31.) Thus He proceeded to bring them acquainted with his priestly office. But Peter took Him aside, or by the hand, and expressed to Him his hope, that it should not be so with Him. Thus Peter soon showed how unfit he was to be the rock, on which the church was to be builded. Accordingly Christ turned, and rebuked him in the very terms which He had used in recalling the devil's temptations. (Luke 4:8.) Some wish to soften the apparent harshness of the expression: but doubtless Christ intended to show, that on this occasion Satan spake by Peter, and used him (without Peter's intention,) as an instrument in tempting Jesus to shun the cross. It was therefore proper to recognise Satan, as well as Peter, as the suggestion. Thus Peter was 'an offence,' or *attending block;* Jesus, for in this instance he spake as a carnal man, who did not properly value, or relish, the spiritual excellency of divine things; but was more disposed to prize and choose the things of men, such as ease, indulgence, honor, and riches, than to understand the doctrine of redemption and the glory of God in it.

Scott.

(21.) Elders, chief priests and scribes. Christ is generally per-

secuted by these three descriptions of men; *rich men, who have their portion in this life: ambitious and covetous ecclesiastics, who seek their portion in this life: and concealed scholars, who set up their wisdom against the wisdom of God, being more intent on criticising words,*

than in providing for the salvation of their souls.' QUESNEL. On the third day. After two days, i. e. the next day but one; an idiom to be found even in the classical writers. BLOOMFIELD.

(22.) Took Him. Took Him up—suddenly interrupted Him. Dr. A. CLARKE and WAREFIELD. 'Took Him to task.' That is, chided. So classical writers. BLOOMFIELD.

Be it far, &c. 'Rather, God forbid, as in 1 Macc. 2:21. I do be it far from thee.' Be merciful to thyself. Peter wished Christ to exert that power in his own behalf which He had often exerted for others. How many Peters are there now in the world, who are in effect saying, *This cannot be done unto Thee*—Thou didst not give thy life for the sin of the world—it would be injustice to cause the innocent to suffer thus for the guilty. But what said God? *His soul shall be made an offering for sin—He shall taste death for every man—the iniquities of us all were laid upon Him.* Glorious truth! may the God who published it have eternal praises.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, 'Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.'

24 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.'

25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it.

f 4:10. Gen. 3:1-5, 17. Mark 8:33. Luke 4:8. 2 Cor. 11:34, 15. g 2 Sam. 19:22. 1 Chr. 21:1. Zech. 3:1-2. John 6:70. h 18:7. Is. 8:14. Rom. 14:21. Mark 8:33. Rom. 9:5-8. 1 Cor. 2:1, 13, 17. Phil. 3:19. Col. 3:2. i 10:38. Mark 8:34. 10:21. Luke 9:23-27. 14:27. Acts 14:22. Col. 1:24. 1 Thes. 3:3. 2 Tim. 3:12. Heb. 11:24-26. j 17:32. Mark 15:21. Luke 23:26. k 19:17. 1 Pet. 4:1, 2. l m 19:39. Eccl. 4:16. Mark 8:35. Luke 17:33. John 12:25. Acts 2:23, 24. Rev. 12:11.

(1.) *Thou art an offence to Me; Thou art my hinderance*; (so it may be read; 'thou standest in my way.' Christ was hastening on in the work of our salvation, and took it ill to be hindered, or tempted to start back. So strongly was He engaged for our redemption, that they who but indirectly endeavored to divert Him from it, touched Him in a very tender part. Peter was not so sharply reproved for disowning and denying his Master in his sufferings as he was for dissuading Him from them; though that was the defect, 'this the excess, of kindness. It argues a very great firmness and resolution of mind in any business, when it is an *offence* to be dissuaded, and a man will not endure to hear any thing to the contrary; like that of Ruth, *Entreat me not to leave thee*. Note, Our Lord preferred our salvation before his own ease and safety; for even Christ pleased not Himself; (Rom. 15: 3.) He came into the world, not to spare Himself, as Peter advised, but to spend Himself.

See why He called Peter *Satan*; because, whatever stood in the way of our salvation, He looked upon as coming from the devil. The same Satan that afterwards entered into Judas, maliciously to destroy Him in his undertaking, here prompted Peter plausibly to divert Him from it. Thus he changes himself into an angel of light.

Thou art an offence to Me. Note, [1.] Those that engage in any great and good work, must expect to meet with hinderance and opposition from friends and foes, from within and from without. [2.] Those that obstruct our progress in any duty, must be as an offence to us. Then we do the will of God, as Christ did, *whose meal and drink it was to do it*, when it is a trouble to us to be solicited from our duty. Those that hinder us from doing or suffering for God, when we are called to it, are *Satans, adversaries* to us.

(2.) *Thou savorest not the things that are of God, but those that are of men*. Note, [1.] *The things of God*, that is, the concerns of his will and glory, often clash with the things of men, that is, with our wealth, pleasure, and reputation. While we mind Christian duty as our way and work, and the divine favor as our end and portion, we *savor the things of God*; but if these be minded, the flesh must be denied, hazards must be run and hardships borne; and here is the trial which of the two we savor. [2.] Those that inordinately fear, and industriously decline suffering for Christ, when they are called to it, savor more of the things of man than of God.

V. 24-23. Christ, having showed his disciples that He must suffer, and that He was ready and willing to suffer, here shows them that they must suffer too, and must be ready and willing. We have in these verses,

I. The law of discipleship, and the terms on which we may have the honor and benefit of it, v. 24. He said this to his disciples, not only that they might instruct others concerning it, but that by this rule they might examine their own sincerity. Observe,

1. What it is to be a disciple of Christ. When Christ called his disciples, it was the word of command; *Follow me*. A true disciple of Christ is one that follows Him in duty, and shall follow Him to glory; not one that pre-

scribes to Him, as Peter now undertook to do forgetting his place; but one that comes after Him, as the sheep after the shepherd, the servant after his master, the soldiers after their captain; one that aims at the same end Christ aimed at, the glory of God, and the glory of heaven; one that walks in the same way that He walked in, is led by his Spirit, treads in his steps, submits to his conduct, and follows the Lamb, whithersoever He goes, Rev. 14: 4.

2. What are the great things required of those that will be Christ's disciples; *If any man will, be willing*, to come. It denotes a deliberate, cheerful, and resolute choice. Many are disciples more by chance or the will of others, than by any act of their own will; but Christ will have his people volunteers, Ps. 110: 3. I is as if Christ had said, 'If any of the people that are not my disciples, be steadfastly minded to come to Me, and if you that are, be in like manner minded to adhere to Me, it is on these terms, these and no other; you must follow Me in sufferings as well as in other things, and therefore when you sit down to count the cost, reckon upon it.'

Now what are these terms?

(1.) *Let him deny himself*. Peter had advised Christ to spare Himself, and would be ready, in the like case, to take the advice; but Christ tells them all, they must be so far from sparing themselves, that they must deny themselves. Herein they must come after Christ, for his birth, life, and death were all a continued act of self-denial, a self-emptying, Phil. 2: 7. If self-denial be a hard lesson, it is no more than what our Master learned and practised before us, both for our redemption and for our instruction; and the servant is not above his lord. Note, All the disciples and followers of Jesus Christ must deny themselves. It is the fundamental law of admission to Christ's school, and the first and great lesson to be learned in this school, to deny ourselves; it is necessary in order to our learning all the other good lessons that are there taught. We must deny ourselves absolutely, not admire our own shadow, nor gratify our own humor; not lean to our own understanding, nor seek our own things, nor be our own end. We must deny ourselves, comparatively, for Christ, and his will and glory and the service of his interest in the world; for our brethren, and for their good; for ourselves deny the appetites of the body for the benefit of the soul.

(2.) *Let him take up his cross*. The cross is here put for all sufferings; providential afflictions, persecutions for righteousness' sake, every trouble that befalls us. The troubles of Christians are fitly called crosses, in allusion to the death of Christ on the cross; and it should reconcile us to troubles, and take off the terror of them, that they are what we bear in common with Christ, and such as He hath borne before us. Note, [1.] Every disciple of Christ hath his cross; as each hath his special duty, so each hath his special trouble, and every one feels most his own burden. That is our cross which Infinite Wisdom has appointed for, and a Sovereign Providence laid on us, as fitted for us. We are apt to think, we could bear such a one's cross better than our own; but that is best, which is, and we ought to make the best of it. [2.] Every disciple of Christ must take up that which the wise God hath made his cross. It is an allusion to the Roman custom of compelling those that were condemned to be crucified, to carry their cross: when Simon carried Christ's cross after Him, this phrase was illustrated. 1st. It is supposed that the cross lies in our way, and is prepared for us. We must not make crosses to ourselves. Our rule is, not to go a step out of the way of duty, either to meet

(23.) *Satan*.] *Evil counsellor*, as in 2 Sam. 19: 22. i. e. under the appearance of friendship thou givest Me the worst counsel.

ROBERT. Bloomfield. KUNOBLE. Verse 24.

'To deny himself, in the New Testament, is taken for him, who renounces himself, and all the advantages of this life; so that he is prepared to despise and lose all his most valuable possessions, and even

his life, for the profession of the Christian religion. The discourse is not concerning vice which is to be renounced, as not a few persons think; but concerning the advantages of this life, of which the follower of Christ must be prepared to suffer the loss with an undisturbed mind.'

Schlosser in Scott. Verses 25, 26. Jesus subjoined two most interesting questions, which are supposed to have been proverbial among the Jews.

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

n 529. Job 27-8. Mark 8:36. Luke 16:25.
 n 530. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 531. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 532. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
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 n 563. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 564. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 565. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
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 n 584. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
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 n 587. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 588. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 589. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 590. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 591. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 592. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 593. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 594. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 595. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 596. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 597. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 598. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 599. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.
 n 600. Job 27-8. Mark 12:20. 16:25.

any man will set out after Me, in good beginnings, let him continue to follow Me with all perseverance.

That is following the Lord fully, as Caleb did. Those that come after Christ, must fulfil after Him.

II. Arguments to persuade us to submit to these laws, and come up to these terms. Self-denial, and patient suffering, will never be learned if we consult with flesh and blood; let us therefore consult with our Lord Jesus, and see what advice He gives us; and here He gives us,

1. Some considerations proper to engage us to these duties. Consider,

The weight of that eternity which depends on our present choice; v. 25. Here are life and death, good and evil, the blessing and the curse. Observe,

[1.] The misery that attends the most plausible apostasy; *Whoever will save his life in this world, if it be by sin, he shall lose it in another.* There cannot be a fairer pretence for apostasy than saving the life by it, so cogent is the law of self-preservation; and yet even that is folly, for it will prove in the end self-destruction; the life saved is but for a moment, the death shunned is but as a sleep; but the life lost is everlasting, and the death run upon is the depth and complement of all misery, and an endless separation from all good. Now, let any rational man consider it, take advice and speak his mind, whether there is any thing got, at long run, by apostasy, though a man save his estate, preferment, or life, by it.

[2.] The advantage that attends the most perilous and expensive constancy; *Whoever will lose his life for Christ's sake in this world, shall find it in a better, infinitely to his advantage.* Note, 1st. Many a life is lost, for Christ's sake, in doing his work, by laboring fervently for his name, by choosing rather to die than to deny Him or his truths. Christ's holy religion is handed down to us, sealed with the blood of thousands. 2dly. Though many have been losers for Christ, even of life itself, yet never any one was, or will be, a loser by Him in the end. The loss of other comforts, for Christ, may possibly be made up in this world; (Mark 10: 30.) the loss of life cannot, but it shall be made up in the other world, in an eternal life; the believing prospect of which hath been the great support of suffering saints in all ages. An assurance of the life they should find, in lieu of the life they hazarded, hath enabled them to triumph over death in all its terrors; to go smiling to a scaffold, and stand singing at a stake, and to call the utmost instances of their enemies' rage but a light affliction.

[3.] The worth of the soul which lies at stake, and the worthlessness of the world in comparison of it; (v. 26.) the same word which is translated *his life*, (v. 25.) is here translated *soul*, for the soul is the life, Gen. 2: 7. This alludes to that common principle, that, whatever a man gets, if he lose his life, it will do him no good. But it looks higher, and speaks of the soul as immortal, and a loss of it beyond death, which cannot be compensated by the gain of the whole world. Note, 1st. Every man has a soul, a spiritual and immortal part, which thinks and reasons, has a power of reflection and prospect, which actuals as nobody now, and will shortly act in a separation from the body. Our

or miss a cross. We must so manage an affliction, that it may not be a stumbling-block or hindrance to us in any service we have to do for God; *None of these things move me.* We must take up the cross, go on with it, though it lie heavy. 2dly. We must not only bear the cross, (that a stock or a stone may do,) but we must *take it up*, and improve it to some good advantage. We should not say, 'This is an evil, and I must bear it, because I cannot help it,' but, 'This is an evil, and I will bear it, because it shall work for my good.' When we *rejoice in our afflictions, and glory in them*, then we take up the cross. This fitly follows on denying ourselves; for he that will not deny himself the pleasures of sin, and the advantages of this world for Christ, when it comes to the push, will never have the heart to take up his cross. 'He that cannot take up a resolution to live a saint, has a demonstration within himself, that he is never like to die a martyr;' so Abb. Tillotson.

(3.) *Let him follow Me*, in this particular of taking up the cross. Suffering saints must look unto Jesus, and take from Him both direction and encouragement. Do we bear the cross? We therein follow Christ. He bore it for us, the heavy end of it, the end that had the curse on it, and so made the other light and easy for us. Or, we may take it in general, we must follow Christ in all instances of holiness and obedience. To do well and suffer ill, is to follow Christ. *If any man will come after Me, let him follow Me*; that seems to be the same thing over again. What is the difference? Surely it is this, 'If any man will come after Me, in profession, and so have the name and credit of a disciple, let him follow Me in truth, and so do the work and duty of a disciple.' Or thus, if we, in good beginnings, let him continue to follow Me, in following the Lord fully, as Caleb did.

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II. Arguments to persuade us to submit to these laws, and come up to these terms. Self-denial, and patient suffering, will never be learned if we consult with flesh and blood; let us therefore consult with our Lord Jesus, and see what advice He gives us; and here He gives us,

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souls are our own, not in respect of dominion and property, (for we are not our own, *All souls are mine*, saith God,) but in respect of nearness and concern; for they are ourselves. 2dly. It is possible for the soul to be lost, and there is danger of it. The soul is lost when it is eternal ly separated from all the good to all the evil that a soul is capable of; when it dies as far as a soul can die; when it is separated from the favor of God, and sunk under his wrath and curse. A man is never undone till he is in hell. 3dly. If the soul be lost, it is of the sinner's own losing; Hos. 13: 9. The sinner dies because he will die; *his blood is on his own head.* 4thly. One soul is worth more than all the wealth, honor, and pleasures of this present time, if we had them. Here is the whole world set in the scale against one soul, and *Tekel* written on it. This is Christ's judgment, and He is a competent Judge; He had reason to know the price of souls, for He redeemed them; nor would He undervalue the world, for He made it. 5thly. The winning of the world is often the losing of the soul. It is the *love of the world*, and the eager pursuit of it, that *drowns men in destruction and perdition.* 6thly. He that loses his soul, though it be to gain the world, will sit down at last an unspeakable loser. When he comes to balance the account, he will find that, instead of the advantage he promised himself, he is irreparably broken and ruined.

What shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Note, If once the soul be lost, it is lost forever. If, after that great price which Christ laid down to redeem our souls, they be so neglected for the world, that they come to be lost, that new mortgage will never be taken off; there remains no more sacrifice for sins, nor price for souls, but the equity of redemption is eternally precluded. Therefore it is good to be wise in time, and do well for ourselves.

2. Here are some considerations proper to encourage us in self-denial and suffering for Christ.

(1.) The assurance we have of Christ's glory, at his second coming to judge the world, v. 27. If we look to the end of all these things, and the posture of souls then, we shall thence form a very different idea of the present state of things. If we see things as they will appear then, we shall see them as they should appear now.

The great encouragement to steadfastness in religion is taken from the second coming of Christ, considering it,

[1.] As his honor; v. 27. To look on Christ in his state of humiliation, so abased, so abused, a reproach of men, and despised of the people, would discourage his followers from taking at y pains, or running any hazards for Him; but with an eye of faith to see the Captain of our salvation coming in his glory, in all the pomp and power of the upper world, will animate us, and make us think nothing too much to do, or too hard to suffer, for Him. *The Son of man*: He here gives Himself the title of his humble state, to show that He is not ashamed to own it. His first coming was in the meanness of his children, who being partakers of flesh, He took part of the same; but his second coming will be in the glory of his Father. At his first coming, He was attended with poor disciples; at his second, He will be attended with glorious angels; and if we suffer with Him, we shall be glorified with Him, 2 Tim. 2: 12.

[2.] As our concern; v. 27. Observe, 1st. Christ will come as a Judge, to dispense rewards and punishments. 2dly. Men will then be rewarded, not according to their gains in this world, but according to what they were a doing. Then the treachery of backsliders will be punished with eternal destruction, and the constancy of faithful souls recompensed with a crown of life. 3dly. The best preparative for that day is, to deny ourselves, and take up our cross and

Verse 28.

Till they see, &c.] This appears to refer to the Mediatorial kingdom our Lord was about to set up, by the destruction of the Jewish nation and polity, and the diffusion of the Gospel throughout the world.

Doddridge refers it chiefly to that providential appearance of Christ for the destruction of Jerusalem, so often called the coming of the Son of man, (Matt. 24: 3. 27, 30, 37.) and the day in which He shall be revealed. Luke 17: 24. 26: 30.

GREENFIELD.

CHAP. XVII.

The transfiguration of Christ, who discourses with Moses and Elias to Peter, James and John, 1-8. He charges them not to make it known, and instructs them concerning the coming of Elias, 9-13. He shows them an evil spirit, and reproves the unbelief of the people and of his disciples, 14-21. He foretells his death and resurrection, 22, 23; and pays tribute with money obtained by miracle, 24-27.

AN^d after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart,

Mark 9:2. Luke 9:28.
28:37. Mark 5:7. Luke 8:51. 2 Cor. 13:1.
c 2 Pet. 1:18.

Many then present lived to see it, particularly John, who lived till after the destruction of Jerusalem, and saw Christianity planted in the world. Let this encourage the followers of Christ to suffer for Him, [1.] That their undertaking shall be succeeded. Note, It is a great encouragement to suffering saints, to be assured, not only of the safety, but of the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and that even by their sufferings. [2.] That their cause shall be pleaded; their deaths avenged, and their persecutors reckoned with. [3.] That this shall be done shortly, in the present age. Note, The nearer the church's deliverances are, the more cheerful should we be in our sufferings for Christ. Behold, the Judge standeth before the door. It is spoken as a favor to those that should survive the present cloudy time, that they should see better days. Note, It is desirable to share with the church in her joys, Dan. 12: 12. Observe, Christ saith, Some shall live to see those glorious days, not all; some shall enter into the promised land, but others shall fall in the wilderness. He does not tell them who should live to see this kingdom, lest, if they had known, they should have put off the thoughts of dying, but some of them shall; Behold, the Lord is at hand. The Judge standeth before the door; be patient, therefore, brethren.

follow Christ; for so we shall make the Judge our Friend, and these things will then pass well in the account. 4thly. The rewarding of men according to their works is deferred till that day. Here good and evil seem to be dispensed promiscuously; we see not apostasy punished with immediate strokes, nor fidelity encouraged with immediate smiles; but in that day all will be set to rights. Therefore judge nothing before the time, 2 Tim. 4: 6-8.

(2.) The near approach of his kingdom in this world, c. 23. It was so near, that there were some attending Him, who should live to see it. At the end of time, He shall come in his Father's glory; but now, in the fulness of time. He was to come in his own mediatorial kingdom. A specimen was given of his glory a few days after this, in his transfiguration; ch. 17: 1. But this points at Christ's coming by the pouring out of his Spirit, the planting of the gospel-church, the destruction of Jerusalem.

Here was the Son of man coming in his kingdom. Many then present lived to see it, particularly John, who lived till after the destruction of Jerusalem, and saw Christianity planted in the world. Let this encourage the followers of Christ to suffer for Him, [1.] That their undertaking shall be succeeded. Note, It is a great encouragement to suffering saints, to be assured, not only of the safety, but of the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and that even by their sufferings. [2.] That their cause shall be pleaded; their deaths avenged, and their persecutors reckoned with. [3.] That this shall be done shortly, in the present age. Note, The nearer the church's deliverances are, the more cheerful should we be in our sufferings for Christ. Behold, the Judge standeth before the door. It is spoken as a favor to those that should survive the present cloudy time, that they should see better days. Note, It is desirable to share with the church in her joys, Dan. 12: 12. Observe, Christ saith, Some shall live to see those glorious days, not all; some shall enter into the promised land, but others shall fall in the wilderness. He does not tell them who should live to see this kingdom, lest, if they had known, they should have put off the thoughts of dying, but some of them shall; Behold, the Lord is at hand. The Judge standeth before the door; be patient, therefore, brethren.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 21-23. We ought not so to regard one part of the Redeemer's character, as to overlook another; but should keep in view, at once, the depth of his voluntary humiliation and sufferings as our great High Priest, and the height of his exaltation as our glorious King. In like manner, we should connect our view of the believer's privileges with that of his duty, and of the cross which he must bear in the way to glory. But it often happens, that men speak so excellently of one part of Christianity, as to be entitled to commendation, and yet betray their ignorance and carnal prejudices, when they give their sentiments on other subjects, and so lay themselves open to deserved rebukes. We must not parley with such as 'are an offence to us,' but decidedly reject their solicitations; showing them, that their false tenderness springs from their 'savoring,' not the 'things of God,' but those of men.'—But what repeated instructions do we need, to teach us to deny ourselves, and to copy the example of our suffering Redeemer; and to convince us, that every disciple must have the spirit of a martyr, whether it ever be put to the trial, or not!—If life is so valuable, that the whole world is a paltry compensation for the loss of it, what words can describe, or computation reach, the worth of an immortal soul? It is the noblest work of God below, formed at first in his own image, possessed of vast and most valuable powers, capable of most exquisite happiness or misery, and intended for eternal existence. Such an invaluable treasure every man is possessed of; but how few seem sensible of its preciousness, or of the danger of losing it! This loss consists in the eternal forfeiture of the favor of God, in deprivation of his image, and banishment from his presence, in the regions of darkness and despair. The souls of all men are in themselves thus lost, by transgression of the holy law of our Creator; yet, through the mercy of the Lord Jesus, none will eventually perish, but the impenitent and unbelieving. Could any man therefore obtain the whole world, and the sure enjoyment of it during a thousand years, as his recompense for neglecting the salvation of the Gospel; he would, through the countless ages of eternity,

curse his own folly, in making so mad a bargain. Yet millions lose their souls for the sake of the most trivial gain, or the most worthless indulgence, nay, from mere sloth and negligence! for whatever the object be for which men refuse or forsake Christ, that is the price at which Satan purchases their souls. But, alas, we are all prone to believe the soothing lies of that cruel murderer and his emissaries, and to disbelieve the alarming truths of God and his ministers: we are disposed to procrastinate, or to take it for granted that all is well, when it is far otherwise; and therefore men lose their souls for 'a thing of nought.'—But, what can they give in exchange for them? Alas! death reduces the wealthiest sinner to the level of the meanest beggar, and he has naught to give. The dying transgressor, however wealthy, cannot, with all his treasures, perhaps acquired by iniquity, purchase one hour's respite, in order to seek the mercy of his offended God. The whole world in this case is of no value: 'it cost more to redeem the soul, and that must be let alone forever,' by all who neglect the precious ransom which the Savior once paid, when 'He gave Himself for us, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us to Himself, a peculiar people, zealous of good works.' Let us then learn to value our souls, and Christ as the Savior of ruined souls; and to despise every glittering bait, or formidable danger, by which Satan would allure or fright us from our only refuge. Let us fear coming short of this salvation, and continually anticipate the season when 'the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, and all his holy angels with Him, to reward every man according to his works;' for He will mercifully recompense the fruits of his own grace in us, and all our losses and sufferings for his sake: 'but if any man draw back, his soul will have no pleasure in him.' Though our trials must come first, yet they will soon be over: we shall speedily behold our once suffering Savior in his glory, and our transient taste of death will introduce us into 'his presence where is fulness of joy, and pleasures forevermore.' SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. v. 1. 2. (Marg. Ref.—Luke 9: 29.) Our Lord retired to a mountain apart to pray, where He spent the night, as He did on some other occasions: (See Luke 6: 12.) tradition reports that it was Tabor a lofty mountain to the north of Galilee. He was pleased to take with Him Peter, James, and John, but not the other apostles, because it 'seemed good in his sight,' for we cannot assign any other satisfactory reason. The apostles saw their Master daily in 'the form of a servant,' and as the Son of man: but on this occasion, they beheld his glory, as of the Only-begotten of the Father, and had such a discovery of Him 'in the form of God,' as they were able to sustain. (Note, Phil. 2: 9-11.) His disguise was, as they were, laid aside, and He appeared like Himself: 'the Son of righteousness,' 'the Light of the world.' 'The fashion of his countenance was altered,' and 'did shine like the sun;' and his very 'raiment became white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could whiten it.' (Mark 9: 3.) yea, 'white as the light,' and resplendent as lightning. This appearance of Christ, as Man, would give the apostles some faint conception of the Divine glory, which He had with the Father before his incarnation, and which was always inherent in Him, though He saw good to veil it under external meanness. It would serve to interpret to them the meaning of their own confession, 'Thou art the Son of the living God;' and give them an idea of his heavenly glory after his ascension; and of the glory prepared for them also, when changed by his power to be like Him, even in respect of his glorified body. (Notes, 1 Cor. 15: 45-49 Phil. 3: 20, 21.)

(1.) A high mountain, apart.] Whether Hermon or Tabor, it is uncertain. The latter was near Cesarea, and is a high mountain, town, and

SCOTT.

2 And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with him.

4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, 'It is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

d Luke 9:29. Rom. 12:2. Phil. 2:6, 7.
Ex. 34:29-35. John 1:14.
17:24. Act 28:13-15. Rev. 1:13-17.
10:1. 19:2, 13. 20:11.
1 Ps. 104:2. Mark 9:3.
Mark 9:4. Luke 9:30, 31.
11:13, 14. Deut. 18:18. 34:5, 6, 10.
Luke 24:27, 44. John 1:7. 5:45.
2 Cor. 3:7-11. Heb. 3:1-6.
1 Kings 17:1. 18:36-40.
2 Kings 2:11-14. Mal. 4:5. Elijah.
Luke 1:17. 9:33. 16:16.
Mark 9:3, 6. Luke 9:33.
Ex. 33:18, 19. Ps. 4:6. 16:11. 63:1-5.
Is. 33:17. Zech. 9:17. John 14:8, 9.
17:24. Phil. 1:23. 1 John 3:2. Rev. 5:13, 23. 22:3-5.

of his body remained the same, but the accidents and appearances of it were greatly altered. He was transfigured—metamorphosed. The profane poets amused and abused the world with idle extravagant stories of metamorphoses, and to these some think Peter has a eye, when, being about to mention this transfiguration of Christ, he saith, *We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made it known unto you*, 2 Pet. 1: 16. Christ was both God and man; and in the days of his flesh, He took on Him the form of a servant; (Phil. 2: 7.) though now, in his transfiguration, he put by that veil, appeared in the form of God, (Phil. 2: 6,) and gave his disciples a glimpse of his glory, which could not but change his form.

The great truth which we declare is, that God is light, (1 John 1: 5.) dwells in light, (1 Tim. 6: 16.) covers Himself with light, Ps. 104: 2. And therefore when Christ would appear in the form of God, He appeared in light, the most glorious of all visible objects, the first-born of the creation, and most nearly resembling the eternal Parent. Christ is the Light; while He was in the world, He shined in darkness, and therefore the world knew Him not; (John 1: 5, 10,) but at this time, that Light shined out of the darkness.

Now his transfiguration appeared in two things:

1. His face did shine as the sun, when he goes forth in his strength, so clear, so bright; for He is the Sun of righteousness, the Light of the world. The face of Moses shone but as the moon, but Christ's as the sun, with an innate, inherent light, which was the more sensibly glorious, because it suddenly broke out, as it were, from behind a black cloud.

2. His raiment was white as the light. All his body was altered, as his face was; so that beams of light, darting from every part through his clothes, made them white and glittering. The shining of the face of Moses was so weak, that it could easily be concealed by a thin veil; but such was the glory of Christ's body, that his clothes were enlightened by it.

beautiful, 'standing by itself in the plain of Esdraelon, a short distance from Nazareth, towards the east. After a very laborious ascent of an hour,' continues Maundrell, 'we reached the highest part of the mountain, which is a plain area of an oval figure, about two furlongs in length, and one in breadth. It is inclosed with trees on all parts, except towards the south, and was anciently surrounded with walls and trenches, and other fortifications, of which there are remains to this day. There are in it several cisterns of good water, and three contiguous grottoes to represent the tabernacles Peter proposed to make. From the top of Tabor is a most extensive prospect, which well repays the labor of the ascent.'

Verse 3.

(Marg. Ref.) Moses and Elijah were conversing with our Lord, on the painful and ignominious death He was shortly to suffer. (Notes, Luke 9: 23-36. p. 31.) The apostles, hearing at least part of this conversation, probably understood from it, that the persons whom they saw were Moses and Elijah. Elijah was taken up alive into heaven, and doubtless appeared in his glorified body: how Moses appeared is no proper subject for our inquiry; but, as Christ rose 'the first fruits' of all who rise to die no more, there is no ground for the notion, that the body of Moses was raised for the very purpose. This scene was given to the apostles as a realizing apprehension of the invisible world, and of the present felicity of departed believers, to which they would immediately be admitted, if 'faithful unto death.' These two eminent persons attended on Jesus, as servants on their Lord, coming, as it were, on purpose to do Him homage. Moses was the great lawgiver of Israel, and Elijah the chief of the prophets; but they both came, to lay down their commissions and their honors at the Redeemer's feet, in whose person, and obedience unto do, the moral law

Ed.

III. The companions of it, v. 3. Observe, 1. There were glorified saints attending Him, that as on earth, there were, Peter, James, and John so there might be some to bear record from heaven too. We see here, that they who are fallen asleep in Christ, are not perished, but exist in a separate state, and shall be forthcoming when there is occasion. 2. These two were Moses and Elias, men very eminent in their day; both having fasted forty days and forty nights, as Christ did, and wrought other miracles, and both remarkable at their going out of the world, as well as in their living in it. The Jews had great respect for the memory of Moses and Elias, and in them the law and the prophets honored Christ, and bore testimony to Him; they appeared to the disciples, who saw them, and heard them talk, and, either by their discourse or by information from Christ, knew them to be Moses and Elias. Glorified saints shall know one another in heaven. They talked with Christ. Christ was now to be sealed in his prophetic office, and therefore these two great prophets were fittest to attend Him, as transferring all their honor and interest to Him; for in these last days God speaks to us by his Son, Heb. 1: 1.

IV. The great pleasure and satisfaction that the disciples took in the sight of Christ's glory, v. 4. Peter here expresses,

1. Their delight in this converse; *Lord, it is good to be here*. Though on a high mountain, rough and unpleasant, bleak and cold, it is good to be here. The soul that loves Christ, and loves to be with Him, loves to go and tell Him so; *Lord, it is good for us to be here*. This intimates a thankful acknowledgment of his kindness in admitting them to his favor. Note, Communion with Christ is the delight of Christians. All the disciples of the Lord Jesus reckon it good for them to be with Him in the holy mount. It is good to be where Christ is, and whither He brings us; retired and alone with Him, where we may behold the beauty of the Lord Jesus, Ps. 27: 4. It is pleasant to hear Christ, with Moses and the prophets, to see how all the institutions of the law, and all the predictions of the prophets, were fulfilled in Him.

2. Their desire of its continuance; *Let us make here three tabernacles*. There was in this, as in many other of Peter's sayings, a mixture of weakness and of good will, more zeal than discretion.

(1.) Here was a zeal for this converse with heavenly things, a laudable complacency in the sight they had of Christ's glory. Peter thought this mountain a fine spot to build upon, and was for making tabernacles there; as Moses in the wilderness made a tabernacle for the Shekinah, or divine glory. Note, Those that by faith behold the beauty of the Lord in his house, cannot but desire to dwell there all the days of their life. It is good having a nail in God's holy place, (Ezra 9: 8.) a constant abode; to be

was magnified, the ceremonial types fulfilled, the prophecies accomplished, and the end of all preceding dispensations answered. Thus Moses and Elijah bare witness to the apostles, that Jesus was their Lord also; and that, by his coming, the time of the law and the prophets was terminated, and that of the Gospel introduced. (Notes, Mark 9: 2-10. John 1: 15-18. 1 Pet. 1: 10-12.)

SCOTT.
'It was a constant and prevalent tradition among the Jews, that both Moses and Elijah should appear in the times of the Messiah, and to this very tradition the disciples refer, v. 16.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 4.

With this glorious scene before their eyes, the apostles were heavy with sleep, either overpowered by the splendor, or drowsy through weariness; (Luke 9: 32,) but when they were awakened, Peter, delighted and surprised to see his beloved Master 'appear in glory' and receive such honor, instead of hearkening to the discourse, broke out into an exclamation, that it was most pleasant and desirable for them to continue there, and not to go down any more to meet those sufferings, of which he was so reluctant to hear. (Marg. Ref. l.—See 16: 24-23, v. 22, 23.) But that sacrifice was not yet offered, without which his sinful soul could not have been saved; and most important services were appointed to him and his brethren, for the glory of God and the good of the church, in all succeeding ages. Peter on this occasion also savored the things of men, and was not meet for the spiritual felicity to which he aspired; and he seems to have forgotten the other disciples who were left below, from a regard to his own present ease and comfort. He however scarcely understood the meaning of his own proposal, which was rather the language of his feelings, than of his understanding. (Notes, John 13: 36-38. p. 37. 2 Pet. 1: 12-19.)

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5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.

6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

Ex. 40:34, 35. 1 Kings 8:10-12. Ps. 18:10, 11. Luke 9:34. Acts 1:9. Rev. 17.
Ex. 19:18. Deut. 4:11, 12. 5:22. Job 38:1. Ps. 31:7. John 5:37. 12:28-30. Acts 9:5-6.
8:17. Mark 1:11. 9:7. Luke 3:22. 9:35. John 3:16, 35. 5:20-23. Eph. 1:8. Col. 1:13. marg., 2 Pet. 1:16, 17.
12:13. Is. 42:1. John 15:9, 10. Deut. 18:15, 19. Acts 3:22, 23. 7:37. Heb. 2:1-3. 5:9. 12:25, 26.
1 Pet. 9:24. 1 Pet. 13:20, 22. 1 Chr. 21:15. Ez. 3:23. 43:3. Dan. 8:17. 10:7-9, 16, 17. Acts 22:7. 26:14. Dan. 8:18. 9:21. 10:10, 18. Rev. 1:17.
Luke 24:5. Acts 9:6.

Father gave us for our Lord Jesus, in which, *He received from Him honor and glory*, (2 Pet. 1:17.) when there came this voice from the excellent glory. This was like proclaiming the royal style of a prince; and be it known, to the comfort of mankind, the royal style of Christ is taken from his mediation. Thus, in vision, He appeared with a rainbow, the seal of the covenant, about his throne; (Rev. 4:3.) for it is his glory to be our Redeemer.

Now concerning this testimony, observe,

1. How it came, and in what manner it was introduced, v. 5.

(1.) There was a cloud. We find often in the Old Testament, that a cloud was a visible token of God's presence; He came down on mount Sinai in a cloud, (Exod. 13:9.) and so to Moses, Exod. 34:5. Num. 12:25. He took possession of the tabernacle in a cloud, and afterward of the temple. We know no. 1. balancings of the clouds, but we know that much of the intercourse and communication between heaven and earth is maintained by them; therefore God is said to make the clouds his chariots; so he did here when He descended on this mount.

(2.) It was a bright cloud under the law, God commonly made a thick and dark cloud the token of his presence; Exod. 19:16. 1 Kings 8:12. But we are now come, not to the mount that was covered with blackness and darkness, (Heb. 12:18.) but to the mount that is crowned with a bright cloud. The Old-Testament dispensation was a dispensation of darkness, terror and bondage; the New, is one of light, love, and liberty.

(3.) It overshadowed them; being intended to break the force of that great light, which otherwise would have overcome the disciples, and been intolerable; it was like the veil which Moses put on his face when it shone. God, in manifesting Himself to his people, considers their frame. This cloud was to their eyes as parables to their understandings, to convey spiritual things by things sensible, as they were able to bear them.

(4.) There came a voice out of the cloud, the voice of God, who now, as of old, spake in the cloudy pillar; (Ps. 99:7.) no thunder, or lightning, or voice of a trumpet, as when the law was given by Moses, but only a voice, a still small voice, and that not ushered in with a strong wind, or an earthquake, or fire, as when God spake to Elias, 1 Kings 19:11, 12. Moses then and Elias were witnesses, that in these last days God hath spoken to us by his Son, in another way than He spake formerly to them. This voice came from the excellent glory; (2 Pet. 1:17.) in comparison of which the former had no glory.

2. What it was, v. 5. Here we have,

(1.) The great gospel-mystery revealed, v. 5. This was the very same that was spoken from heaven at his baptism; (ch. 3:7.) the best news that ever came from heaven to earth since man sinned; the same in purport with that great doctrine, (2 Cor. 5:19.) *That God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself*. Moses and Elias were great men, and favorites of Heaven, yet they were but servants, and servants that God was not always well pleased in; for Moses spake unadvisedly, and Elias was a man subject to passions; but Christ is a Son, and in Him God was always well pleased. Moses and Elias were sometimes instruments of reconciliation between God and Israel; Moses was a great intercessor, and Elias a great reformer; but in Christ God is re-

in holy ordinances as a man at home, not as a wayfaring man.

It argued great respect for his Master and the heavenly guests, with some commendable forgetfulness of himself and his fellow-disciples, that he would have tabernacles for Christ, and Moses, and Elias, but none for himself. He would be content to lie in the open air, on the cold ground, in such good company; if his Master have but where to lay his head, no matter whether he himself has or no.

(2.) Yet in this zeal he betrayed a great deal of weakness and ignorance. What need had Moses and Elias of tabernacles? They belonged to that blessed world, where they hunger no more, nor doth the sun light on them. Christ had lately foretold his sufferings, and bid his disciples expect the like; Peter forgets that, or, to prevent it, will needs be building tabernacles in the mount of glory, out of the way of trouble. Note, There is a proneness in good men to expect the crown without the cross.

Yet it is some excuse for the incongruity of Peter's proposal, not only that he knew not what he said, (Luke 9:33.) but also that he submitted the proposal to the wisdom of Christ; *If Thou wilt, let us make tabernacles*. Note, Whatever tabernacles we propose to make to ourselves in this world, we must always remember to ask Christ's leave.

Now to this which Peter said, there was no reply made; the disappearing of the glory would soon answer it. They that promise themselves great things on earth, will soon be undeceived by their own experience.

V. The glorious testimony which God the

conciling the world; his intercession is more prevalent than that of Moses, and his reformation more effectual than that of Elias.

This repetition of the same voice that came from heaven at his baptism was no vain repetition; but, like the doubling of Pharaoh's dream, was to show the thing was established. It was spoken at his baptism, because then He was entering on his temptation, and his public ministry; and now it was repeated, because He was entering on his sufferings, which are to be dated from hence; for now, and not before, He began to foretell them, and immediately after his transfiguration it is said, (Luke 9:51.) *that the time was come, that He should be received up*; this therefore was then repeated, to arm Him against the terror, and his disciples against the offence of the cross. When sufferings begin to abound, consolations are given in more abundantly, 2 Cor. 1:5.

(2.) The great gospel-duty required; *Hear ye Him*. God is well pleased with none in Christ but those that hear Him; we must hear Him, and believe Him, as the great Prophet and Teacher; hear Him, and be ruled by Him, as the great Prince and Lawgiver; hear Him, and heed Him. Whoever would know the mind of God, must hearken to Jesus Christ; for by Him God has in these last days spoken to us. This voice from heaven has made all the sayings of Christ as authentic as if they had been thus spoken out of a cloud; and it refers to that prediction concerning the Prophet God would raise up, like unto Moses; (Deut. 18:18.) *Him shall ye hear*.

Christ now appeared in glory; and the more we see of his glory, the more cause we shall see to hearken to Him: but the disciples were gazing; they are therefore bid not to look at Him, but to hear Him. Their sight of his glory was soon intercepted by the cloud, but their business was to hear Him. We walk by faith, which comes by hearing, not by sight, 2 Cor. 5:7.

Moses and Elias were now with Him, the law and the prophets; hitherto it was said, *Hear them*, Luke 16:29. The disciples were ready to equal them with Christ, and probably were desirous to know what they said, when talking with Christ, and to hear something more from them; No, saith God, *hear Him*, that is enough, and Moses and Elias gave consent to this voice; whatever interest they had in the world as prophets, they were willing to see it all transferred to Christ, that in all things He might have the pre-eminence. Be not troubled that Moses and Elias make so short a stay with you; hear Christ, and you will not want them.

VI. The fright of the disciples at this voice, and the encouragement Christ gave them.

1. The disciples fell on their faces, and were sore afraid. The greatness of the light, and the surprise of it might have a natural influence on them, to dispirit them. But that was not all; ever since man sinned, and heard God's voice in the garden, extraordinary appearances of God have ever been terrible to man, who, knowing he has no reason to expect any good, has been afraid to hear any thing immediately from God. Note, Even then when fair weather comes out of the secret place, yet with God is terrible majesty, Job 37:22. See what dreadful work the voice of the Lord makes, Ps. 29:4. It is well for us that God speaks to us by men like ourselves, whose terror shall not make us afraid.

2. Christ graciously raised them up with abundance of tenderness. It is comficial to think that our Lord Jesus, in his exalted state, still has a compassion for, and condescends to, every true believer. Observe here, (1.) What He did; *He came and touched them*. His approach banished their fears, and there needed

Verse 5.

I am well pleased. [Rather, in Him have I delighted, intimating that it was in Him alone, as typified by those sacrifices, that He had delighted through the whole course of the legal administration; and that it was only in reference to the death of his Son, that He accepted the offerings and oblations made to Him under the old covenant.]

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Verses 6, 7.

Fell on their face. [So Dan. 8:17, and Saul, Acts 9:4.] *Touched them.* [Exactly parallel to this account is Dan. 8:18. Comp. Lev. 9:24.]

Fell, stunned and struck with fear, as though they had heard thunder. Any sudden glare of light makes a vast our eyes to the ground; so it is no wonder that a more powerful superelectric should cast out very bodies themselves to the ground. BLOOMFIELD

8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, ^a Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, ^b until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

10 And his disciples asked him, saying, ^a Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come?

11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, ^a and restore all things:

12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, ^b and they knew him not, ^c but have done unto him whatsoever they listed: ^d likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them.

^a Mark 9:8. Luke 9:36. Acts 12:10, 11.
^b 16:30. Mark 8:30. 9:9, 10. Luke 8:56. 9:21, 22.
^c 16:31. Luke 18:33, 34. 24:46, 47.
^d 4. 11:4. 27:47-49. Mal. 4:5. Mark 9:11. John 1:21, 25.
^e 26:1. 4:6. Luke 1:46, 17. 3:3-14. Acts 9:21.
^f 11:3-15. 21:23-25, 32. Mark 9:12, 13. 11:30-32. Luke 7:33. John 1:11. 5:32-35. Acts 13:24-26.
^g 11:2. 14:3-10. Mark 6:14-28. Luke 9:19, 20. Acts 7:52.
^h 16:21. 16:33. 16:34. Luke 9:21-25. Acts 2:27. 3:14, 15. 4:10.

1. Note, We must come down from the holy mountains, where we have communion with God, and of which we are saying, *It is good to be here*; even there we have no continuing city. Blessed be God, there is a mountain of glory and joy before us, whence we shall never come down. But observe, When the disciples came down, Jesus came with them. Note, When we return to the world again after an ordinance, it must be our care to take Christ with us.

2. As they came down, they talked of Christ. Note, When we are returning from holy ordinances, our discourse should be suitable to the work we have been about. That communication which is good to the use of edifying, is then a special manner seasonable; as, on the contrary, that which is corrupt, is worse then, than at another time.

Here is, (1.) Christ's charge to the disciples to keep the vision very private for the present; p. 9. If they had proclaimed it, the credibility of it would have been shaken by his sufferings, which were now hastening on. But let

us more to make them easy. Christ laid his right hand on John in a like case, and on Daniel, Rev. 1: 47. Dan. 8: 18. 10: 10. Christ's touches were often healing, and here they were strengthening and comforting. (2.) What He said; *Arise, and be not afraid*. Note, Though a reverential fear is pleasing to Christ, yet a fear of amazement is not so, but must be striven against. Note, It is Christ, by his word, and the power of his grace, that raises up good men from their dejections, and silences their fears; and none but Christ can do it. Causeless fears would soon vanish, if we would not yield to them, but do what we can against them. Considering what they had seen and heard, they had more reason to rejoice than to fear, and yet they needed this caution. Note, Through the infirmity of the flesh, we often frighten ourselves with that wherewith we should encourage ourselves. Observe, After they had had an express command from heaven to hear Christ, the first word they had from Him, was, *Be not afraid*, hear that. Note, Christ's errand into the world was to give comfort to good people, that, being delivered out of the hands of their enemies, they might serve God without fear, Luke 1: 74, 75.

VII. The disappearing of the vision; p. 8. Moses and Elias were gone, the rays of Christ's glory were laid aside, or veiled again. They hoped this had been the day of Christ's entrance into his kingdom, and his public appearance in that external splendor which they dreamed of; but see how they are disappointed. Note, It is not wisdom to raise our expectations high in this world, for the most valuable of our glories and joys here are vanishing. If sometimes we are favored with special manifestations of divine grace and pledges of future glory, yet they are withdrawn presently; two heavens are too much for those to expect, that never deserve one. Now they saw no man save Jesus only. Note, Christ will tarry with us when Moses and Elias are gone. The prophets do not live forever, (Zech. 1: 5.) and we see the period of our ministers' conversation; but Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, Heb. 13: 7, 8.

VIII. The discourse between Christ and his disciples as they came down from the mountain, p. 9, 13.

Verse 9.
As Jesus came down, the next day, to the other apostles and the people. He charged those with Him, not to mention the instructive and animating scene which they had witnessed, till after his resurrection from the dead: for before that event it would not have obtained credit; and it was, for the present, rather intended for their own support and encouragement, than for the conviction of others. It seems that it must not be mentioned even to the other disciples. (Marg. Ref. x, y. Mark 9: 9, 10.—Note, 2 Pet. 1: 16-19.)

The whole of this emblematic transaction appears to me to be intended to prove, 1st. The reality of the world of spirits, and the immortality of the soul: the disciples saw Moses and Elijah still existing, though the former had been gathered to his fathers upwards of fourteen hundred years; and the latter had been translated nearly nine hundred. 2dly. The resurrection of the body, and the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, see ch. 16: 27. 3dly. The abolition of the Mosaic institutions, and the fulfilment of the predictions of the prophets relative to the person, nature, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the glory that should follow. 4thly. The establishment of the mild, light-bringing, and life-giving Gospel of the Son of God. And 5thly. That as the old Jewish covenant and discipleship had ended, Jesus was now to be considered as the sole Teacher, the only availing offering for sin, and the grand Mediator between God and man.

Verse 10-13.

The apostles, being fully convinced that Jesus was the promised Messiah, and that He would speedily set up his glorious kingdom,

the publication of it be adjourned till after his resurrection, and then that and his subsequent glory will be a great confirmation of it. Note, Christ observed a method in the manifestation of Himself; would have his works put together, mutually to explain and illustrate each other, that they might appear in their full strength and convincing evidence. Every thing is beautiful in its season. Christ's resurrection was properly the beginning of the gospel-state, to which all before was but preparatory; and therefore, though this was transacted before, it must not be produced as evidence till then, (and then it appears to have been much insisted on, (2 Pet. 1: 16-18.) when the religion it was designed to confirm, was brought to its full consistence and maturity. Christ's time is the best and fittest for manifesting Himself, and must be attended to by us.

(2.) An objection which the disciples made against something Christ had said; p. 10. 'If Elias make so short a stay, and is gone so suddenly, and we must say nothing of him; why have we been taught out of the law to expect his public appearance in the world immediately before the setting up of the Messiah's kingdom? Must the coming of Elias, which every body looks for, be a secret?' Or, thus; 'If the resurrection of the Messiah, and with it the beginning of his kingdom, be at hand, what comes of that glorious preface and introduction to it, which we expect in the coming of Elias?' (Mal. 4: 5.) Behold I send you Elijah the prophet. The disciples spoke the common language of the Jews, who made that the saying of the scribes, which was the saying of the Scripture whereas of that which ministers speak to us according to the Word of God, we should say, 'God speaks it to us, not the ministers'; for we must not receive it as the word of men, 1 Thess. 2: 13. Observe, When the disciples could not reconcile what Christ said with what they had heard out of the Old Testament, they desired Him to explain it to them. Note, When we are puzzled with Scripture difficulties, we must apply ourselves to Christ by prayer for his Spirit, to open our understandings, and to lead us into all truth.

(3.) The solving of this objection. [1.] Christ allows the prediction, (p. 11.) 'So far you are in the right.' Christ did no come to alter or invalidate any thing foretold in the Old Testament. Note, Corrupt glosses may be rejected without diminishing the authority or dignity of the sacred text. New Testament prophecies are true, and to be received and improved, though some may have misinterpreted them, and drawn wrong inferences from them. He shall come and restore all things; not restore them to their former state, (John Baptist did not that,) but he shall accomplish all things, (so it may be read,) all things that were written of him, all the predictions of the coming of Elias. John Baptist came to restore things spiritually, to revive the decays of religion, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children; which means the same with this, he

were nevertheless unable to reconcile these things with the doctrine of the scribes; that Elias or Elijah, 'must first come,' especially as it was grounded on an express prophecy in Malachi. (Marg. Ref. x, y. Notes, Mal. 3: 1-6. p. 1. 4: 2-6.) Perhaps they supposed that the appearance of Elijah on the mount was intended; and, in that case, why must they conceal it? To this our Lord replied, that it had doubtless been predicted that Elijah would come, and restore, or regulate, all things, in order to prepare the way for the Messiah's kingdom; but that in fact he had come, and the people and scribes had not known or believed Him, and at length he had been put to death by the malice of his enemies; and in like manner they would also persecute and slay their promised Messiah, as it had been predicted by the prophets. By this the disciples more clearly perceived, that John the Baptist had been foretold under the name of Elijah, because of the similarity of his disposition and ministerial labors.

Scott.
(1.) Restore. 1. Regulate. Dodd. Reform. No fanciful restoration of all men, devils and damned spirits, is spoken of as either being done or begun by the ministry of John; but merely that he should preach a doctrine, tending to universal reformation of manners, and be greatly successful: (see Matt. 3: 1-7, and especially Luke 3: 3-15.) where we find that a general reformation had taken place among the common people, the tax-gatherers, and the soldiers. And as John announced the coming of Christ, who was to baptize with the Holy Ghost, i. e. to enlighten, change, and purify the heart, that the reform might be complete, both outward and inward. He may be said, in the strictest sense of the word, to have fulfilled the prophecy; and that he was the Elijah mentioned by Malachi, the words (Luke 1: 17.) prove.

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13 Then 'the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

[Practical Observations.]

14 ¶ And 'when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a certain man, kneeling down to him, and saying,

15 Lord, 'have mercy on my son; 'for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: 'for oft-times he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, 'and they could not cure him.

e 11:14.

f Mark 9:14. Luke 9:37.

g Mark 1:40. 10:17. Acts 10:25, 26.

h 15:22. Mark 9:22, 23. 9:22. Luke

9:38—42. John 4:16, 47.

i 4:24. Mark 9:17, 18, 20—22.

k 8:31, 32. Job 1:10—19. 2:7. Mark

8:4, 5.

l 13:20. 2 Kings 4:23—31. Luke 9:40.

Acts 3:16. 19:15, 16.

strangeness of all other sufferings; (John 15: 18.) when they had imbrued their hands in the blood of John Baptist, they were ready to do the like to Christ. Note, As men deal with Christ's servants, so they would deal with Him Himself; and they that are drunk with the blood of the martyrs, still cry, *Give, give*. Acts 12: 1—3.

(4.) The disciples' satisfaction in Christ's reply to their objection; v. 13. He did not name John, but gives them such a description of him as would put them in mind of what He had said to them formerly concerning him; *This is Elias*. This is a profitable way of teaching; it engages the learners' own thoughts, and makes them, if not their own teachers, yet their own remembrancers; and thus knowledge becomes easy to him, that understands. When we diligently use the means of knowledge, how strangely are mistakes scattered and mistakes rectified!

V. 14—21. We have here the miraculous cure of a child that was lunatic, and vexed with a devil. Observe,

I. A melancholy representation of the case to Christ by the afflicted father, immediately on his coming down from the mountain where He was transfigured. Note, Christ's glories do not make Him unmindful of us and of our wants

shall restore all things. John preached repentance, and that restores all things.

[2.] He asserts the accomplishment. The scribes say true; *Elias shall come*; but *I say unto you*, what the scribes could not say, *Elias is come*, v. 12. Note, God's promises are often fulfilled, and men perceive it not. *Elias is come*, and they knew him not; knew him not to be the Elias promised, the forerunner of the Messiah. The scribes busied themselves in criticising the Scripture, but understood not, by the signs of the times, the fulfilling of it. Note, It is easier to explain the Word of God than to apply it, and make a right use of it. But it is no wonder the morning star was not observed, when He who is the Sun himself, was in the world, and the world knew Him not.

Because they knew him not, they have done to him *whatsoever they listed*; if they had known, they would not have crucified Christ, or beheaded John, 1 Cor. 2: 8. They ridiculed John, persecuted him, and at last put him to death; which, though Herod's doing, is here charged on the whole generation of unbelieving Jews; particularly the scribes, who, though they could not prosecute John themselves, were pleased with what Herod did. He adds, *Like-wise also shall the Son of man suffer of them*. Marvel not that Elias should be abused and killed by those who pretended, with a great deal of reverence, to expect him, when the Messiah Himself will be in like manner treated.

Note, The sufferings of Christ took off the sufferings of all other sufferers; (John 15: 18.) when they had imbrued their hands in the blood of John Baptist, they were ready to do the like to Christ. Note, As men deal with Christ's servants, so they would deal with Him Himself; and they that are drunk with the blood of the martyrs, still cry, *Give, give*. Acts 12: 1—3.

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—13. Discoveries of the Redeemer's divine majesty greatly assist us in rightly understanding the motive, the benefit, and the glory of his basement. Could we now behold that sacred countenance, which once, for our sins, was disfigured with blood and spitting, we should view it more resplendent than the meridian sun. We should see the Savior no longer 'crowned with thorns,' insulted with the purple robe, and nailed to the cross between two robbers; but 'arrayed with light as a garment,' and surrounded with the adoring throng of prophets, apostles, saints, and angels, emulating each other, who should most rapturously celebrate his praises: yea, we should hear the eternal Father, from the inaccessible light in which He dwells, proclaim the honors of the Redeemer as his co-equal Son, and regard Himself as glorified in all the adorations rendered to Him. (Notes, John 5: 20—23, v. 23. Phil. 2: 9—11, v. 11.) But alas! how dull and drowsy are our minds, when we would contemplate such subjects!—If, however, by faith we get a glimpse of our Redeemer's glory, and our hearts glow with love and joy; we find our heaven begun, and we are ready to say, 'It is good for us to be here;' and we want always to continue in that pleasant frame of spirit, and to spend our lives in contemplation. But we know not what we say, or do: ever in this, there is a large proportion of carnal self-love; some knowledge indeed of the essence of felicity; but great ignorance of what is needful to fit us for it, and of the situation in which we are placed during our continuance here. These glimpses and foretastes are vouchsafed to prepare us for tribulations, and to support us under them; but we must pass through varying experiences in our way to glory, and

spend our lives in self-denying services, for the honor of Christ and the benefit of his people.—We know not what we shall at last be: yet we are assured, that when the Savior shall appear, we shall be like Him: and as our bodies must be changed by his omnipotence, so must our souls be transfigured and transformed by his renewing grace. This should be our grand personal object, whilst we wait for the time when he 'will receive us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also.' In order to this, we must obediently hear Him, as our Prophet and King; trust in Him as the great Mediator, 'in whom' the Father 'is well pleased;' and wait for the communication of his grace, in fervent prayer, and retirement from the hurry of this vain world. But we could not now endure the refulgence of the divine glory: not only the terrors of mount Sinai, but the glories of mount Tabor, would overwhelm us, save for the gracious interposition and encouraging words of the incarnate Savior.—After sweet seasons of communion with God, we must return to our several employments: yet the Savior will be with us, if we rely on his promises, and are observant of his precepts; and we should ever keep in mind 'his death and resurrection, and anticipate the time when we shall behold Him in glory, and be forever with Him.—But even with the Scriptures in our hands, how apt are we to overlook the accomplishments of them! And how little in comparison has yet been effected, in bringing fallen sinners unto God, by the labors of all his servants! Men knew not the Son of the Father, but crucified and slew Him; and we need not wonder if they treat his disciples and ministers in the same manner. SCOTT.

Verse 14.
Kneeling down to Him. 'Or falling at his knees. The ancients consecrated the EAR to memory; the FOREHEAD to genius; the RIGHT HAND to faith, and the KNEES to mercy; hence those who entreated favor, fell at and touched the knees of him whose kindness they supplicated.'

Verse 16.
Lunatic. 'One who was affected with' his disorder at the change [172]

and full of the moon. This is the case in some kinds of madness and epilepsy. This youth was, no doubt, epileptic; but it was evidently either produced, or taken advantage of, by a demon or evil spirit.

GREENFIELD.
'Those who are under the influence of the devil, are often driven into extremes, into the fire of presumption, or the waters of despair.'

Dr. A. CLAI.

17 Then Jesus answered and said, ^m O faithless and perverse generation, ⁿ how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me.

18 And Jesus rebuked the devil, and he departed out of him: and the child was cured ^p from that very hour.

19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could we not cast him out?

20 And Jesus said unto them, ^q Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, ^r If ye have faith as ^s a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and ^t nothing shall be impossible unto you.

21 Howbeit ^u this kind goeth not out ^v but by prayer and fasting.

^m 6:30, 9:26, 13:58, 16:8, Mark 9:18, 16:14, Luke 10:41, 24:25, John 9:27, Heb. 3:16-19.
ⁿ Ex. 10:3, 16:28, Num. 14:11, 27, Pa. 85:10, Prov. 1:22, 6:9, Jer. 4:14, Acts 13:13.
^o 12:23, Mark 1:34, 5:8, 9:25-27, Luke 1:35, 38, 41, 8:29, 9:42, Acts 16:18, 19:13-15.
^p 9:22, 15:28, 16:17, John 4:52, 53.
^q Mark 4:10, 9:28.
^r 17, 14:30, 31.
^s 21:21, Mark 11:23, Luke 17:6, 1, 13:2.
^t 13:31, Mark 4:31.
^u Mark 9:23, Luke 1:37, 18:27.
^v 12:45.
^w 13:45, 17:20, 21, Dan. 9:3, Mark 9:29, Acts 13:2, 3, 14:23, 1 Cor. 7:5, 2 Cor. 11:27, Eph. 6:18.

long. It is comfortable to those who are wrestling with principalities and powers, that Christ hath spoiled them, Col. 2: 15.

2. He redresses the grievances of the children of men. It was an immediate cure, and a perfect one. This is an encouragement to parents to bring their children to Christ, whose souls are under Satan's power; He is able to heal them, and as willing as He is able. Not only bring them to Christ by prayer, but bring them to the Word of Christ. Christ's rebukes, brought home to the heart, will ruin Satan's power.

III. Christ's discourse with his disciples hereupon.

1. They ask the reason why they could not cast out the devil at this time; ^p 19. Note, Ministers, who are to deal for Christ in public, have need to keep up a private communion with Him, that they may in secret bewail their weak-

ness and straitness in their public performances, and inquire into the cause of them. Such questions as the disciples put to Christ we should put to ourselves, in communing with our own hearts; Why were we so dull and careless at such a time? Why came we so much short in such a duty?

II. The rebukes Christ gave to the people, and then to the devil.

1. He chid those about Him; ^v 17. This is not spoken to the disciples, but to the people, and perhaps especially to the scribes, (Mark 9. 14.) who, as it should seem, insulted over the disciples, because they had now met with a case that was too hard for them. Christ Himself could not do many mighty works among a people in whom unbelief reigned. They were faithless and perverse. Note, Those that are faithless will be perverse: and perverseness is sin in its worst colors. Faith is compliance with God, unbelief is opposition and contradiction to God. Israel of old was perverse, because faithless, (Ps. 95: 9.) froward, for in them is no faith, Deut. 32: 20.

Two things He upbraids them with. (1.) His presence with them so long; ^w How long shall I be with you? Will you always need my bodily presence, and never be fit to be left, the people? the conduct of the disciples, and the disciples to the conduct of the Spirit and of their commission? (2.) His patience with them so long; ^x How long shall I suffer you? Note, [1.] The faithlessness and perverseness of those who enjoy the means of grace are a great grief to the Lord Jesus. Thus did He suffer the manners of Israel of old, Acts 13: 18. [2.] The longer Christ has borne with a perverse and faithless people, the more He is displeased with their perverseness and unbelief; and He is God, and not man, else He would not suffer so long, nor bear so much as He doth.

2. He cured the child. Though the people were perverse, and Christ was provoked, yet care was taken of the child. Note, Though Christ may be angry, He is never unkind, nor doth He, in the greatest of his displeasure, shut up the bowels of his compassion from the miserable; ^y Bring him to Me. Note, When all other helps fail, we are welcome to Christ, and may confide in Him.

See here an emblem of Christ's undertaking as our Redeemer.

1. He breaks the power of Satan, (^z 18.) rebuked the devil, as one who could back with force his word of command. Note, Christ's victories over Satan are obtained by the power of his word, the sword of his mouth, Rev. 19: 21. Satan cannot stand before the rebukes of Christ, though his possession has been ever so

ness and straitness in their public performances, and inquire into the cause of them. Such questions as the disciples put to Christ we should put to ourselves, in communing with our own hearts; Why were we so dull and careless at such a time? Why came we so much short in such a duty?

2. Christ gives them two reasons why they failed.

(1.) ^z Because of their unbelief, ^z 20. Where He spake to the father of the child and to the people, He charged it on their unbelief; ^z 17. He spake to his disciples, He charged it on them; there were faults on both sides; but we are more concerned to hear of our own faults than of other people's, and to impute what is amiss to ourselves than to others. When the preaching of the Word seems not to be so successful as sometimes it has been, the people are apt to lay all the fault on the ministers, and the ministers on the people; whereas, it is more becoming for each to acknowledge his own faultiness. Ministers, in reproving, must learn thus to give to each his portion of the Word; and to take people off from judging others, by teaching all to judge themselves; ^z It is because of your unbelief. Though they had faith, yet that faith was weak and ineffectual. Note, [1.] As far as faith falls short, it may truly be said, 'There is unbelief.' Many are chargeable with unbelief, who yet are not to be called unbelievers. [2.] It is because of our unbelief, that we bring so little to pass in religion, and so often miscarry, and come short in that which is good.

Our Lord takes this occasion to show them the power of faith; ^z If ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall do wonders, ^z 20. Some make the comparison to refer to the quality of the mustard-seed; 'If you have an active growing faith, not dead, flat, or insipid.' But it rather refers to the quantity; 'If you had but a grain of true faith, though so little, that it were like that which is the least of all seeds.' Faith, in general, is a firm assent to, a compliance with, and a confidence in, all divine revelation. The faith here required is that, which had for its object that particular revelation, by which Christ gave his disciples power to work miracles in his name, for the confirmation of the doctrine they preached. This faith they were defective in. Perhaps their Master's absence with the three chief of his disciples, with a charge to the rest not to follow them, might occasion some doubts concerning their power, or rather the power of the Lord with them. It is good for us to be diffident of ourselves and of our own strength; but it is displeasing to Christ, when we distrust any power derived from Him.

^z Ye shall say to this mountain, Remove. This is a proverbial expression, denoting that which follows, and no more. ^z Nothing shall be impossible to you. They had a full commission among other things, to cast out devils without exception; but this devil, being more than ordinarily malicious and inveterate, they distrusted the power they had received, and so failed. To convince them of this, Christ shows them

Verse 17.

Faithless. The scribes and multitude were chiefly meant in this rebuke; yet the disciples, and even the father of the child, showed a very reprehensible degree of unbelief on this occasion. Scorr.

Verses 19, 20.

The apostles had doubtless in some instances cast out devils. 'By faith as a grain of mustard-seed.' (13: 31.) some understand a faith that groweth and increaseth as a grain of mustard-seed. Christ elsewhere for 'the removing of a mountain.' (21: 21.) requires 'faith in God.' (Mark 11: 22, 23.) which seems to signify an excellent faith, 'faith without doubting.' St. Paul reckons faith able 'to remove mountains,' as the strongest faith. (1 Cor. 13: 2.) According to this exposition, the sense runs thus. Did your faith increase, according to the examples of God's power you have had before your eyes; as the grain of mustard-seed grows up to be the greatest of all herbs, so would your faith transmute and grow superior to all difficulties. A remover of mountains seems only to import a doer of those things which are exceeding difficult, and beyond the power of nature to perform.' [Comp. Zech. 4: 7.] Whitby.
(19.) *Why could not ye cast him out?* 'They were confounded at their want of success—but not at their want of faith, which was the cause of their miscarriage! When the ministers of the Gospel find their endeavors with respect to some places or persons ineffectual, they should come by private prayer to Christ, humble themselves before Him, and beg to be informed whether some evil in themselves have not been the cause of the unfruitfulness of their labors.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 21.

This seems clearly to intimate, that there are different orders of spirits, some more powerful and malignant than others; (12: 45.) and that these could not be cast out, except by persons who were much engaged in fasting and prayer. As success depended on the strength and simplicity of faith, 'fasting and prayer' may be considered as proper means for increasing humility, zeal, compassion, and those holy affections of the soul, with which vigorous and simple faith must be intimately connected; and the spirit of the instruction is equally applicable to us, in our personal conflicts and public services. Scorr.

'This difficult passage is wanting in the Vatican MS. and one of the eleventh or twelfth century, and in some ancient versions.' *Dr. A. Clarke.* Prayer, by impressing the mind with a more intimate sense that all things depend on the infinite and incomprehensible power of God, raises his ideas of that power to a greater sublimity, that can be done by ordinary speculation. And fasting, by lowering the animal life, subdues such passions as are nourished by the continued repletion of the body. Hence fasting has a tendency to free the mind from the dominion of passion, which never fails to occasion great perturbation, and at times is found to make even the best men inattentive, at least to the more silent impressions of God's Holy Spirit. Fasting, therefore, produces an inward quietness and calmness very favorable to the growth of faith and is one of the most efficacious means of curing many of the diseases produced by intemperance or plethoric habits.' MACKENZIE.

22 And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, 'The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men;

23 And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received *tribute-money* came to Peter, and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute?

25 He saith, 'Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children or of strangers?

26 Peter saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

what they might have done. Note, An active faith can remove mountains, not of itself, but in the virtue of a divine power engaged by a divine promise, both which faith fastens on.

(2.) Because there was something in the kind of the malady, which rendered the cure more than ordinarily difficult; v. 21. This possession, which works by a falling sickness, or this kind of devils that are thus furious, is not cast out ordinarily, but by great acts of devotion, and therein ye were defective. Note, [1.] Though the adversaries we wrestle with, be all principalities and powers, yet some are stronger than others. [2.] The extraordinary power of Satan must not discourage our faith, but quicken us to greater intenseness in the acting of it, and more earnestness in praying to God for the increase of it; so some understand it here; 'This kind of faith (which removeth mountains) doth not proceed, is not obtained from God, nor is it carried up to its full growth, nor drawn out into act and exercise, but by earnest prayer.' [3.] Fasting and prayer are proper means for the bringing down of Satan's power against us, and the fetching in of divine power to our assistance. Fasting is of use to put an edge on prayer, is a means of mortifying corrupt habits, and of disposing the body to serve the soul in prayer. When the devil's interest in the soul is confirmed by the temper and constitution of the body, fasting must be joined with prayer, to keep under the body.

V. 22, 23. Christ here foretells his own sufferings; He began to do it before; (ch. 16: 21.) and, finding that it was to his disciples a hard saying, He saw it necessary to repeat it. Observe here,

1. What He foretold concerning Himself—that He should be betrayed and killed. He perfectly knew, before, all things that should come to Him, and yet undertook the work of our redemption, which greatly commends his love; nay, his clear foresight of them was a kind of ante-passion, had not his love to man made all easy to Him.

(1.) He tells them that He should be *betrayed into the hands of men*. He shall be delivered up; (it might be understood of his Father's delivering Him up by his determined counsel and foreknowledge, (Acts 2: 23. Rom. 8: 32.) but as we render it, it refers to Judas' betraying Him into the hands of the priests, and their betraying Him into the hands of the Romans.

(2.) That they should *kill Him*; nothing less than that would satisfy their rage; it was his blood, his precious blood that they thirsted after. *This is the heir, come, let us kill Him*. Nothing less would satisfy God's justice, and answer his undertaking; if He be a Sacrifice of atonement, He must be killed; without blood no remission.

(3.) That He shall be *raised again the third day*. Still, when He speaks of his death, He gave a hint of his resurrection. This was an encouragement, not only to Him, but to his disciples; for if He rise the third day, his absence will not be long, and his return will be glorious.

1 Gen. 1: 28. 1 Kings 17: 34. 8: 8. Gen. 1: 17. 2: 10. Heb. 2: 7, 8.

† Or, a stater, half an ounce of silver, value 2s. 6d. [About 56 cents.]

k 2 Cor. 8: 9. Jam. 2: 5.

Ver. 22.

In Galilee.] 'Lower Galilee, where Capernaum was.' Dr. A. Clarke. Betrayed.] 'Delivered up.' Grotius, Wakefield, Clarke. Ed.

Veruses 24—27.

This 'tribute' seems to have been the half-shekel apiece, collected to defray the expense of the sanctuary service. (Marg.—Notes, Ex. 30: 11—16. 2 Kings 12: 4, 5. Neh. 10: 32, 33.) This at first was collected occasionally, as wanted; but we are informed by Josephus, that in his time it was paid annually, by all above twenty years of age. 'Our Saviour's argument, why He should not pay this tribute, as being the Son of that King to whom it was paid, holds not with reference to the other tribute, said to Caesar, He being not the Son of Caesar, but of God. By this example, Christ teacheth us to avoid the scandal and sinister suspicions of men, though they be groundless, with some Injurious to ourselves, especially when we have not means to convince them. The scandal of the Pharisees, proceeding not from ignorance but pure malice, He is not thus concerned to avoid. (15: 12.) Whithy. (Marg. Ref. h.) The external poverty of Christ, contrasted with this display of divine glory, must sensibly affect every considerate mind. Had Jesus so pleased, all the treasures in the depths of the sea, and in the heart of the earth might with equal ease have been

2. How the disciples received this; *They were exceeding sorry*. Herein appeared their love to their Master's person, but withal, their ignorance and mistake concerning his undertaking. Peter indeed durst not say any thing against it, as he had done before, (ch. 16: 22.) having then been severely chidden for it; but he, and the rest of them, greatly lamented it, as it would be their own loss, their Master's grief, and the sin and ruin of them that did it.

V. 24—27. We have here an account of Christ's paying tribute.

1. Observe how it was demanded, v. 24.

1. It was not a civil payment to the Romans but the half-shekel, about fifteen pence, which was required from every person for the service of the temple, and the defraying of the expenses of the worship there; it is called a *ransom for the soul*, Exod. 30: 12, &c. This was not so strictly exacted now, especially in Galilee, as sometimes it had been.

2. The demand was very modest; the collectors standing in such awe of Christ, that they durst not speak to Him about it, but apply to Peter, at whose house, in Capernaum, probably Christ lodged, who therefore was fittest to be spoken to, as it might be presumed, he knew his Master's mind. Their question is, *Doth not your Master pay tribute?* Some think they sought an occasion against Him, desiring, if He refused, to represent Him as disaffected to the temple-service; (Ezra 4: 13.) but it should rather seem, they asked this with respect, intimating, that if He had any privilege to exempt Him from this payment, they would not insist on it.

Peter presently passed his word for his Master; 'Yes, certainly; my Master pays tribute, it is his principle and practice; you need not fear moving it to Him.' *He was made under the law*; (Gal. 4: 4.) therefore under this law He was paid for, at forty days old, (Luke 2: 22.) and now He paid for Himself, as one who, in his estate of humiliation, had taken on Him the form of a servant, Phil. 2: 7, 8. *He was made sin for us, and was sent forth in the likeness of sinful flesh*, Rom. 8: 3. Now this tax paid to the temple, is called an *atonement for the soul*, Ex. 30: 15. Christ, that in every thing He might appear in the likeness of sinners, paid it, though He had no sin to atone for. *Thus it became Him to fulfil all righteousness*, ch. 4: 15. He did it, to set us an example, (1.) *Of rendering to all their due, tribute to whom tribute is due*, Rom. 13: 7. The kingdom of Christ not being of this world, its favorites and officers are so far from having a power granted them, as such, to tax other people, that they are made liable to the powers that are. (2.) *Of contributing to the support of the public worship of God in the places where we are*. If we reap spiritual things, it is fit that we should return carnal things. The temple was now made a den of thieves, and the temple-worship a pretence for opposition to Christ and his doctrine; and yet Christ paid this tribute. Note, Church duties, legally imposed, are to be paid, notwithstanding church corruptions. We must take care not to use our

laid at his feet. His poverty was therefore voluntary, as our suffering Surety, to take away the reproach of an indigent station, and to reconcile his people to it, as best and safest for them.

(24.) *Tribute-money*. 'Vespasian afterwards ordered this to be paid into the Roman treasury.'

It seems to have been a voluntary thing, which custom rather than law had established. In Nehemiah's day it was accounted so, and the sum was then somewhat lower. See Neh. 10: 32. Donations.

(25.) *He saith, Yes*. 'From this reply of Peter, it is evident that our Lord customarily paid all taxes, tributes, &c. which were common among the people wherever He came. The children of God are subject to all civil laws in the places where they live—and should pay the taxes levied on them by public authority: and though any of these should be found unjust, they rebel not, as their business is not to reform the politics of nations, but the morals of the world.'

Dr. A. Clarke. (27.) *Lest we should offend them*. 'Rather, that we may not give them a handle for saying, that we despise the temple, &c.; or lest we should make them suppose that we undervalue the temple: which might cause them to stumble at, and reject my pretensions to the Messiahship.'

WHITNEY AND BLANCHARD.

CHAP. XVIII.

Jesus teaches humility by the example of a little child. — He inculcates a devotion to his "little ones," and watchfulness against stumbling others, or falling ourselves, 5-10. He illustrates his love for his people, by the parable of a lost sheep, 11-14, shews how to act towards an offending brother, 15-17; assures his apostles that what his hand or voice shall be found or loosed in heaven, 18; gives special promises to those who unite in prayer, or make in His name, 19, 20; and enforces the constant forgiveness of injuries, by a parable of a king, and his dealings with a servant, who was deeply indebted to him; yet was not influenced by his readiness to forgive him, to forgive his fellow servant, 21-35.

AT the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, a Mark 9:33.

faithful as a Son in his own house: (Heb. 3:6.) and therefore not obliged to pay this tax. Thus Christ asserts his right, lest his paying tribute should be misimproved to the weakening of his title as the Son of God, and the King of Israel, and look like a disowning of it Himself. God's children are freed by grace and adoption, from the slavery of sin and Satan, but not from their subjection to civil magistrates in civil things; here the law of Christ is expressed; *Let every soul* (sanctified souls not excepted) *be subject to the higher powers. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's.*

III. How it was paid, notwithstanding, v. 27.

1. The reason why He paid it. *Let us should offend them.* Few knew, as Peter did, that He was the Son of God; and it would have been a diminution to the honor of that great truth, yet a secret, to advance it now, to serve such a purpose as this. Therefore Christ drops that argument; and, considering, that if He should refuse this payment, it would increase people's prejudice, and alienate their affections, He resolves to pay it. Note, Christian prudence and civility teach us, in many cases, to recede from our right, rather than give offence by insisting on it. We must never decline our duty for fear of giving offence; (Christ's preaching and miracles offended them, yet He went on with them, ch. 15:12, 13.) better offend men than God; but we must sometimes deny ourselves in that which is our secular interest, rather than give offence; as Paul, 1 Cor. 8:13. Rom. 14:13.

2. What course He took to pay it: wherein appears,

(1.) The poverty of Christ; He had not fifteen pence to pay his tax with; though He cured so many that were diseased, He did all gratis; *for our sakes He became poor*, 2 Cor. 8:9. In his ordinary expenses, He lived on alms, (Luke 8:3.) and in extraordinary ones, on miracles. He did not order Judas to pay this out of the bag which he carried; that was for subsistence, and He would not order that for his particular use, which was intended for the benefit of the community.

(2.) The power of Christ, in fetching money out of the fish's mouth for this purpose. Whether his omnipotence put it there, or his omniscience knew it was there, it was an evidence of his divinity, and that He is Lord of hosts. Those creatures that are most remote from man, are at the command of Christ, even the fishes of the sea; (Ps. 8:5.) and to evidence his dominion, and to accommodate Himself to his present state of humiliation, He chose to take it out of a fish's mouth, when He could have taken it out of an angel's hand. Now observe,

[1.] Peter must catch the fish by angling. Even in miracles He would use means to encourage industry and endeavor. Do we expect Christ to give to us? Let us be ready to work for Him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14-27. Manifold are the troubles of body and mind, personal and domestic, to which we are liable, by the power of Satan, and for our sins: but, through the goodness of our God, hitherto we have not been destroyed, though sorely vexed and endangered; and if our troubles bring us humbly to seek help from Christ, they will eventually be 'for our profit.' We may do right in applying to disciples, and they may be desirous to help us, though often unable; nothing, however, but our unbelief and disobedience, can preclude us from finding relief in Christ: yet He will sharply rebuke us, if we remain faithless and perverse amidst abundant opportunities of instruction and conviction. Should we inquire the reason of our ill success, in our conflicts with sin and temptation, and our endeavors to do good, the answer would still be, 'Because of your unbelief.' Wonderful is the power of holy faith; and nothing is impossible to those who go forth in the Redeemer's name, to obey His commands and promote his cause. But our faith will commonly be strong, and our efforts successful, in proportion as we seek the victory by 'fasting and prayer'; and it especially behoves us to make a fair trial of this method, as to those particular conflicts in which we have been most foiled, and those services respecting which we deplore our want of success.—What a varied scene of outward debasement, and of divine

[2.] The fish came up, with money in the mouth; so we have the reward of obedience in obedience. What work we do at Christ's command, brings its own pay along with it: *In keeping God's commands, as well as after keeping them, there is great reward*, Ps. 19:11. Peter was made a fisher of men, and those that he caught thus, came up; where the heart is opened to entertain Christ's Word, the hand is opened to encourage his ministers.

[3.] The piece of money was just enough to pay the tax for Christ and Peter. Thou shalt find a *shekel*, the value of a Jewish shekel, which would pay the poll-tax for two, for it was half a shekel, Exod. 30:13. Christ could as easily have commanded a bag of money as a piece of money; but He would teach us not to covet superfluities, but, having enough for our present occasions, therewith to be content, and not to distrust God, though we live but from hand to mouth. If we have a competency for to-day, *let to-morrow take thought for the things of itself.* Christ paid for Himself and Peter, because it is probable that here he only was assessed, and of him it was at this time demanded; perhaps the rest had paid already, or were to pay elsewhere. The papists make a great mystery of Christ's paying for Peter, as if this made him the head and representative of the whole church; whereas the payment of tribute for him, was rather a sign of subjection than of superiority. His pretended successors pay no tribute, but exact it. Peter fished for his money, and therefore part of it went for his use. Those that are *workers together with Christ* in winning souls, shall be sharers with Him in his glory, and shall shine with Him. *Give it for thee and Me.* What Christ paid for Himself was looked upon as a debt; what He paid for Peter, was a courtesy to him. Note, It is a desirable thing, if God so please, to have wherewithal of this world's goods, not only to be just, but to be kind; not only to be charitable to the poor, but obliging to our friends. What is a great estate good for, but that it enables a man to do so much the more good?

Lastly, Observe the evangelist records here the orders Christ gave to Peter; the effect is not particularly mentioned, but taken for granted, and justly; for with Christ, saying and doing are the same thing.

CHAP. XVIII. v. 1-6. The Gospels are, in short, a record of what Jesus began both to do and to teach. In the foregoing chapter, we had an account of his doings, in this of his teachings; probably, not all at the same time, in a continued discourse, but at several times, upon divers occasions, here put together, as near akin. See how practical Christ's preaching was; He could have revealed mysteries, but He pressed plain duties, especially those that

glory, was the life of our Redeemer! Yet all his humiliation made way for his resurrection and final exaltation. Let us then 'endure the cross,' despise riches and worldly honors, and be contented in poverty, if that be his will concerning us. Let those who are rich learn to be poor in spirit, and not to trust in riches, or to despise the needy, lest they be found to have reproached their Savior, as well as their Maker. (Notes, 1 Tim. 6:16-19. Jam. 1:9-11. 2:5-7.)—We should always be ready to waive our privileges and exemptions, rather than give offence. Yet we seldom follow the dictates of our own minds, without inquiring the will of God, but we fall into mistakes, even in things apparently most obvious.—Even the poor believer should be ready to pay the tribute and custom, for the credit of the Gospel, and trust in the Lord to defray the expense; and 'the fishers of men,' though needy, may go on cheerfully in their work, trusting in the Lord to supply their wants; for He will, when necessary, bring to their net such, as shall be both able and willing to contribute to the support of his cause.—But how glorious are the privileges, and how noble the freedom, of the children of the King of kings! To these privileges we strangers are admitted by faith in Christ; and 'if the Son make us free, then shall we be free indeed.' (See John 8:30-36.)

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. v. 1-4. It appears from the other evangelists, that our Lord first inquired of the disciples about what they had disputed

by the way; and for some time they remained silent, being afraid to mention the subject. But at length, sensible that He knew their thoughts, they plainly asked Him, which of them was to be the great

Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them,

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receive me.

b 20:20-23, 23:11. Mark 9:34, 10: 35-45, Luke 9:48, 22:34-37. c 12:19, 13:23. d 3:2, 5:19-20, 7:21. Mark 10:14, 15, d 19:13, 14, 1 Kings 3:7, Jer. 1:7. Mark 9:36, 37. e 1:18, 6:2, 1:18, John 1:51, 3:3. f 13:13, Ps. 31:13, Is. 61:1, Mark 4:12, Luke 22:9, Acts 3:19, 28: 27. g Mark 5:19-20. h Mark 10:11, 15, Luke 18:16, 17, 1 Cor 11:20, 1 Pet 2:2. i 5:20, 19:23, Luke 13:24, John 3:5. j 14:12, 14:22, 2 Pet 1:11. k 23:12, 13, 13:1, 2, 15, 57:15, 1 Pet. 5:5. l 1:20-23, 23:11 to 43, Luke 4:43. m 1:20-12, 25:40, 45, Mark 9:41. n Luke 9:48, 17:3. o Mark 9:37, John 13:20, Gal. 4:14.

greatest. Judas had the bag, which, though now he come last, he hopes will then denominate him the greatest. Simon and Jude are nearly related to Christ, and they hope to take place of all the great officers of state, as princes of the blood. John is the beloved disciple, the favorite of the Prince, and therefore hopes to be the greatest. Andrew was first called, and why should not he be first preferred? Note, We are very apt to amuse and humor ourselves with foolish fancies of things that will never be.

II. The discourse itself, which is a just rebuke to the question, *Who shall be greatest?* We have abundant reason to think, that if Christ ever intended that Peter and his successors at Rome should be heads of the church, and his chief vicars on earth, having so fair an occasion, He would now have let his disciples know it; but so far from this, his answer disallows and condemns the thing itself. Christ will not lodge such an authority or supremacy any where in his church; whoever pretend to it, are usurpers; instead of settling any of the disciples in this dignity, He warns them all not to put in for it.

Christ here teacheth them to be humble.

1. By a sign; v. 2. Christ often taught by signs or sensible representations, as the prophets of old. Note, Humility is a lesson so hardly learned, that we have need by all means to be taught it. When we look on a little child,

are most displeasing to the flesh and blood. As there never was a greater pattern of humility, so there never was a greater preacher of it, than Christ.

I. The occasion of this discourse, They mean not, *who* by character, (then the question had been good, that they might know what graces and duties to excel in,) but *who* by name. They had heard much, and preached much, of the kingdom of heaven, the church in this world; but as yet they were so far from having any clear notion of it, that they dreamed of a temporal kingdom. Christ had lately foretold his sufferings, and the glory that should follow; and now they thought it was time to put in for their places; and, instead of asking how they might have strength and grace to suffer with Him, they ask Him, Who shall be highest in reigning with Him? Upon other discourses of Christ to that purport, debates of this kind arose: *ch. 20: 19, 20, Luke 22: 22, 24.* Note, Many look so much at the crown, that they forget the yoke and the cross. So the disciples did here, when they asked, *Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?*

1. They suppose that all in that kingdom are great, for it is a kingdom of priests. Note, Those are truly great, who are truly good; and they will appear so at last, when Christ shall own them as his, though ever so mean and poor in the world.

2. They suppose that there are degrees in this greatness. All the saints are honorable, but not all alike so; *one star differs from another in glory.*

3. They suppose it must be some of them, that must be prime ministers of state. To whom should King Jesus delight to do honor, but to them who had left all for Him, and were now his companions in patience and tribulation?

4. They strive who it should be, each having some pretence or other to it. Peter was always the chief speaker, and already had the keys given him; he expects to be lord chancellor, or lord chamberlain of the household, and so to be the

we should be put in mind of the use Christ made of this child. Sensible things must be improved to spiritual purposes. Grown men, and great men, should not disdain the company of little children, or think it below them to take notice of them. They may either speak to them, and give instruction to them; or look on them, and receive instruction from them. Christ Himself, when a Child, was in the midst of the doctors, Luke 2: 46

2. By a sermon on this sign; in which He shows them and us,

(1.) The necessity of humility, v. 3. Here observe,

[1.] What He requires and insists on. First, 'You must be converted, be of another mind, and in another frame and temper, must have other thoughts, both of yourselves, and of the kingdom of heaven. The pride, ambition, and affectation of honor and dominion, which appear in you, must be repented of, mortified, and reformed, and you must come to yourselves.' Note, Beside the first conversion, there are after-conversions, which are equally necessary to salvation. Every step out of the way by sin, must be a step into it again by repentance. When Peter repented of his denying his Master, he was converted. Secondly, You must become as little children. Note, Converting grace makes us like little children, not foolish (1 Cor. 14: 20.) nor fickle, (Eph. 4: 14.) nor playful, but child-like; (*ch. 11: 16.*) as children, we must desire the sincere milk of the word; (1 Pet. 2: 2.) be careful for nothing, but leave it to our heavenly Father to care for us; (*ch. 6: 31.*) be harmless and inoffensive, and void of malice, (1 Cor. 14: 20.) governable, and under command; (*Gal. 4: 2.*) and (which is here chiefly intended) we must be humble as little children. Little children have no great aims or projects to raise themselves in the world; they exercise not themselves in things too high for them; and we should in like manner behave, and quiet ourselves, Ps. 131: 1, 2. As children are little in body and low in stature, so we must be little and low in spirit, and in our thoughts of ourselves. This temper leads to other good dispositions: childhood is the learning age.

[2.] What stress he lays on this; Without this you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Note, Disciples of Christ have need to be kept in awe by threatenings, that they may fear lest they seem to come short, Heb. 4: 1. The disciples, when they put that question, (*n. 1.*) thought themselves sure of the kingdom of heaven; but Christ awakens them to be jealous of themselves, and tells them, that, except they came to a better temper, they should never come thither. Note, Many that set up for great ones in the church, prove not only little, but nothing and are found to have no part or lot in the matter. Our Lord designs here to show the great danger of pride and ambition. Pride threw the angels that sinned, out of heaven, and will keep us out, if we be not converted from it. They

est in the kingdom He was about to establish. Children, when very young, show little disposition to claim precedence, or to aspire after authority: they willingly associate with their inferiors, are regardless of external distinctions, and devoid of malice and guile: they are docile, simple, submissive to authority, willingly dependent on their parents, and disposed to credit what they say. No doubt, they soon begin to show other propensities, and other ideas are early inculcated on most of them and imbibed by them; but these are the obvious characteristics of childhood, and suffice to render 'little children' proper emblems of the humble, unambitious, submissive, and dependent spirit, which is the essence and the excellence of genuine Christianity. Though not innocent, strictly speaking, they are comparatively harmless: as the young, even of the most ferocious animals, are at first innoxious, but soon begin to discover the nature of that stroke from which they spring. (*Marg. Ref. d. e.*—See also *Mark 10: 13-16*, v. 15, *1 Pet. 2: 1-3*.) In general, therefore, little children are apt emblems of those qualities, which are the effects of regeneration; and though all the apostles, except Judas, were at this time regenerate and 'converted,' in the general sense of the word; yet they all needed a very great change, in respect of their ambition and carnal emulation. It was also proper to show them, that in their present temper they were not only unfit to be the 'greatest in the kingdom of heaven,' but even unfit for the meanest station in it; and that the lust of dominion was as contrary to Christianity, as any kind of immorality. In accordance with the spirit of the kingdom, they who are most lowly, and most indifferently about consequence and pre-eminence, and most willing to be little, inferior, and neglected, must be the greatest; and not they who have the greatest abilities, most splendid gifts, or most exalted stations in the church.

Scott.

(3.) *Except ye be converted.* 'Unless ye be changed.' The English phrase to convert denotes either to bring over from infidelity to the profession of the true religion, or to recover from a state of impetuosity to the love and obedience of God. Neither of these appears to be the meaning of the word here. The only view is, to signify, 'that they must lay aside their ambition and worldly pursuits, before they be honored to be the members, much more the ministers, of that new establishment, or kingdom, He was about to erect.' CAMPBELL.

Verses 5, 6.

'The little ones,' include the meaneast of those who come to Christ, and (as far as man can discern) believe in Him and belong to Him; especially such as, whether ministers or private Christians, being peculiarly humble and 'poor in spirit,' are the greatest in his sight, though often most slighted by men. (*Marg. Ref.—Notes, 10, 11, 14: 6, 3; Zechar. 13: 7.*) These are the most evident and distinguished representatives of the meek and lowly Savior. The word rendered 'offend,' signifies *cause to stumble*. It is used both for those who fall and perish, and for those who fall and rise again. All the disciples were 'offended,' when Christ was betrayed to his enemies; and Peter especially; but says the Savior, 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not' (*Notes, 26: 30-35. Luke 22: 31-34, v. 32.*) The conduct, however, of those, who contemptuously, maliciously, or even heedlessly, did such things as tended to the destruction of their weak brethren, would not be in the least excused, because the special grace of God might prevent the fatal consequences. The men of Lystra, who stoned Paul, and left him for dead, were his murderers, in the sight of God, though He was pleased to restore his apostle to life and health. All attempts therefore to prove or disprove disputed points of doctrine from such passages are foreign to the purpose of the sacred historians. Scott.

6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

(Practical Observations.)

7 Woe unto the world because of of-

n Ps. 105:15. Zech. 2:8. Mark 9:42. Luke 17:2. Acts 9:5. Rom. 14:13—15:21. 15:1—3. 1 Cor. 8:9—13. 10: 23. 2 Thes. 1:6—8.
o 10:14. Zech. 13:7. Luke 17:2. P Gen. 13:7. 1 Sam. 2:17—22—25. 2 Sam. 12:1. Luke 17:1. Rom. 2:23. 5:4. Tim. 5:14. 15. Gal. Tit. 2:5, 8. 2 Pet. 3:2.

anored in the church, that are most humble and self-denying; for though they least seek it, they best deserve it.

(3) The special care Christ takes for those that are humble.

They will be afraid,

[1.] That nobody will receive them, v. 5. But whatever kindnesses are done to such, Christ takes as done to Himself. Whoso entertains a meek and humble Christian, countenances him and studies to do him a kindness: and doth it in Christ's name, for his sake, because he bears the image of Christ, serves Christ, and because Christ has received him; this shall be recompensed as an acceptable piece of respect to Christ. Observe, though it be but one such little child that is received in Christ's name, it shall be accepted. Note, The tender regard Christ has to his church, extends itself to every particular member, even the meanest. If Christ were personally among us, we think we should never do enough to welcome Him; the poor, the poor in spirit, we have always with us, and they are his receivers. See ch. 25: 35—40.

[2.] They will be afraid that every body will abuse them. This objection He obviates, (v. 6.) where He warns all people, as they will answer it at their utmost peril, not to offer any injury to one of Christ's little ones. This word makes a wall of fire about them; he that touches them, touches the apple of God's eye.

Observe, First, The crime supposed; *offending one of these little ones that believe in Christ*. Their believing in Christ unites them to Him, so that, as they partake of the benefit of his sufferings, He also partakes in the wrong of

that are lifted up with pride, *fall into the condemnation of the devil*; to prevent this, we must become as little children, and, in order to that, *must be born again, put on the new man*, and be like the holy child Jesus; so He is called even after his ascension, Acts 4: 27.

(2.) He shows the honor and advancement that attend humility, (v. 4.) thus furnishing a direct but surprising answer to their question; He that humbles himself as a little child, though he may fear that hereby he will render himself contemptible, as men of timid minds, who thereby throw themselves out of the way of preferment, yet the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Note, The humblest Christians are the best Christians; most like Christ, and highest in his favor; best disposed for the communications of divine grace, and fittest to serve God in this world, and enjoy Him in another. They are great, for God overlooks heaven and earth, to look on such; and certainly those are to be most respected and

theirs. Even the little ones that believe, have the same privileges with the great ones, for they have all obtained like precious faith. There are those that offend these little ones, by drawing them to sin, (1 Cor. 8: 10, 11.) grieving and vexing their righteous souls, discouraging them, taking occasion from their mildness to make a prey of them in their persons, families, goods, or good name. Thus the best men have often met with the worst treatment in this world.

Secondly, The punishment of this crime; intimated in that word, *Better for him that he were drowned in the depth of the sea*. The sin is so heinous, and the ruin so great, that he had better undergo the sorest punishments inflicted on the worst of malefactors. Note, 1. Hell is worse than the depth of the sea; for it is a bottomless pit, and it is a burning lake. We meet with one that had comfort in the depth of the sea, it was Jonah; (ch. 2: 2, 4, 9,) but never any that had the least in hell, nor will have to eternity. 2. The irresistible, irrevocable doom of the great Judge, will sink sooner and surer, and bind faster, than a mill-stone hanged about the neck. It fixes a great guilt, which can never be broken through, Luke 16: 26. Offending Christ's little ones, though by omission, is assigned as the reason of that dreadful sentence, *Go ye cursed*, which will at last be the doom of proud persecutors.

V. 7—14. Our Savior here speaks of offences, or scandals,

I. In general, v. 7. That is an offence, 1. Which occasions guilt, and draws men from that which is good to that which is evil. 2. Which occasions grief, and makes the heart of the righteous sad. Christ here tells us, concerning them,

(1.) That they were certain things: *Christ must needs be that offences come*. Not that Christ's word necessitates any man to offend, but it is a prediction on a view of the causes; considering the subtlety and malice of Satan, the weakness and depravity of men's hearts, and the foolishness that is found there, it is morally impossible

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—6. Pride and ambition are so deeply rooted in our fallen nature, that they remain, and often break forth, even in those who are 'born of God.' Hence so many contentions in the church, even among real disciples, who are tempted to seek pre-eminence above their brethren, after they have given up their prospects of worldly honor and greatness! (Notes, Prov. 13: 10. 2 Cor. 12: 7—10, v. 7. Phil. 2: 1—4, p. 3.) Such ambitious plans and desires, however, are peculiarly contrary to the spirit of the Gospel, and to the character of Christ, and are productive of envy, discord, and other fatal consequences. In this, as well as in other respects, we need to be daily more and more 'renewed in the spirit of our mind,' that we may 'be-

come as little children, willing to be 'the least of all and the servants of all.' If we have not some measure of this disposition, and yet think ourselves the subjects of Christ, we are awfully deceived; and he who has made the greatest proficiency in self-abasement, is in fact the greatest in the kingdom of grace, and will shine the brightest in the kingdom of glory. We ought therefore daily to meditate on this subject, and to examine our own spirits respecting it, that we may be more and more cast into the mould of the Gospel, and that we may learn to behave properly towards our fellow Christians, however feeble, poor, or obscure.

SCOTT.

(6.) *Mill-stone*. 'A mill-stone turned by an ass.' Luke 17: 2. Hand-mills were most common in those days: a mill turned by an ass, was one of the largest size; for wind-mills and water-mills are of much later invention.

SCOTT.

Drowned. 'It is supposed that in Syria, as well as in Greece, this mode of punishing criminals was practised; especially in cases of parricide, and when a person was devoted to destruction for the public safety, as in cases of plague, famine, &c. That this was the custom in Greece, we learn from the Scholiast on the Equites of Aristophanes. When a person was drowned, they hung a weight, or vast stone, about his neck. We find that it was also a positive institution of the ancient Hindoo law.' Dr. A. Clarke. It is still practised by the Ottoman Porte.

I.D.

Verses 7—9.

Our Lord here proceeded to speak more generally concerning 'offences' meaning, not only the injuries and snares, by which men would discourage and entangle his disciples, and bring guilt on themselves; but all those evils within the church, which prejudice men's minds against his religion, or any of its doctrines, true ministers, and disciples. The scandalous lives, and shameless oppressions, cruelties, and iniquities of men called Christians, their divisions and bloody contentions, the schismatical and heretical sects, at this day, the great offences, and causes of stumbling, to Jews, Mohammedans, and Pagans, in all the four quarters of the globe; they constitute one grand hindrance to the labors of missionaries; and they furnish infidels, of every description, with their most dangerous weapons against the truth. The acrimonious controversies, agitated among those who agree in the principal doctrines of the Gospel, and their mutual contempt and revilings, together with the extravagant notions and wicked practices found among them, excite strong prejudices in the minds of great multitudes against evangelical religion; and harden the hearts of heretics, Pharisees, disguised infidels, and careless sinners, against the truths of the Gospel. In these, and in numberless other ways, it may be said, 'Woe unto the world because of offences!' for the devil, the sower of those tares, makes use of them in deceiving the nations of the earth, and in murdering the souls of men. In the present state of human nature, it

must needs be, that offences should come; and God has wise and righteous reasons for permitting them: yet we should consider it as the greatest of personal afflictions, or causes of sorrow and shame, to be accessory to the destruction of souls; and an awful woe is denounced against every one, whose delusions or crimes thus stumble men, and set them against the only method of salvation. If this is done wilfully, and is not repented of, the offender's punishment will be most tremendous: and believers ought to dread occasional falls far more than death, and submit to any present loss or self-denial, rather than cause others to fall. (Marg. Ref. p. r.—Notes, 2 Sam. 12: 14. Luke 17: 1—4. Rom. 2: 17—24. v. 24. 2 Pet. 2: 1—3, v. 2.) In this connection, therefore, our Lord introduced again a warning and counsel, which have already been considered; (Marg. Ref. s.—u.—Note, 5: 23, 30.) and which here intimate, that they, who for the sake of temporal interest or indulgence, or from regard to any friend or relative, or to avoid loss or self-denial, wilfully cause others to stumble, have reason to suspect themselves of hypocrisy, and to fear lest they should perish through their own unrepented lusts, and so fall into perdition themselves, as well as prove scandals to their profession. We ought not to forget, that there was a Judas in the company, to which this warning was addressed. 'The necessity' here mentioned is therefore only conditional, 'on supposition of the wickedness of men not hindered, the subtlety and malignity of Satan, and the self-denial required of all who would embrace the Gospel; whence nothing could be expected, but that many should be scandalized at, and be unwilling to embrace, the Gospel upon these terms, and many who had once embraced it should 'fly off from it.' Whither, To maintain any other kind of necessity, is not Christian predestination, but heathen fatalism.—We can not for a moment suppose, that any will enter halt or maimed into heaven, but even if that could be, it would be infinitely preferable, to being 'cast into everlasting fire.' (Marg. Ref. x.—Notes, 25: 41—46, v. 41, 46. Mark 9: 43—50. Rev. 20: 11—15, v. 15.) SCOTT.

(7.) *Woe!* 'Or, alas!' It is the opinion of some eminent critics, that this word is here used by our Lord to express sympathy and concern.

Dr. A. Clarke.

ferences! * for it must needs be that offences come; * but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

8 Wherefore * if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or * maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into * everlasting fire.

9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to * enter into life with one eye, * rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire.

10 Take * heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven * their angels do always * behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

o Mark 13:7. Acts 1:16. 1 Cor. 11: 19. 2 Thess. 2:13-12. 1 Tim. 4:1-3. 5. Tim. 3:1-5. 24. John 17: 12-22. 13:41, 42. 23:13, 46. 28:24. John 17: 2. Acts 1:18-20. 2 Pet. 2:3, 15-17. Jude 11-13. Rev. 21:14, 15, 20-22. 19:20, 21. 6:29, 30. 14:3, 4. Deut. 13:6-8. Mark 9:43-48. Luke 14:26, 27, 33. 18:22, 23. 1. 2:20, 21. 30-22. Ec. 13:31. Rom. 13:12. Phil. 3:8, 9. 15:30, 31. 26:1, 46. Is. 33:14. Mark 9:48, 49. Luke 16:24. 2 Thess. 1:8, 9. Rev. 14: 10. 20:15. 21:8. 17:17, 23, 34. Acts 14:22. Heb. 4:11. Rev. 21:27. 16:26. Luke 9:24, 25. 6:14. 12:20. Pa. 15:4. Zech. 4:10. Luke 10:16. Rom. 14:1-3, 10, 13-15, 21. 15:1. 1 Cor. 8:9, 13. 9:22. 11:22. 16:11. 2 Cor. 10:1, 10. Gal. 4:13, 14. 6:1. 1 Thes. 4:8. 1 Tim 4:2. 1:20. 2:13, 19. 24:31. Gen. 3:21, 2. Kings 6:16, 17. Ps. 147: 9, 11. Luke 16:22. Acts 5:19. 10:3. 12:7 -11, 23. 27, 33. Heb. 1:14. 2 Sam. 14:23. 1 Kings 2:21, 9. Esth. 1:14. Pa. 17:15. Luke 1:19.

elves are good, and may be used as instruments of good, even those, through the corruptions of our hearts, prove snares to us, incline us to sin, and hinder us in duty. [2.] In such a case, we must, as far as lawfully we may, part with that which we cannot keep without being entangled in sin by it. First,

(7.) Needs be that offences come. 'In Scripture language, to offend is, to be accessory to the crimes of others, and share in the guilt of them, by having promoted them by our advice, direction, or example; not barely to do an act offensive to others. As it consists with Divine goodness to create free agents, so, consequently, to permit offences; and the justice of God in punishing them cannot reasonably be questioned, because He is no farther concerned than in the creation of the powers He bestows: the agents themselves only are chargeable with the abuse of them; the necessity under which offenders lie being only voluntary and moral. There is no necessary connection between liberty and sin: the one, indeed is the gift of God; the other, the free act of man. Great, therefore, is the ingratitude, great the injustice of charging our iniquities on Him, and calling his bounties cruelties, merely because we can and do misapply them.'

As to the question, apparently involved in this discussion, concerning the origin of evil, we may simply say with Dr. Bundy, quoted above, unless it interfere with the purity of God to form creatures superior to us, and make them more like Himself, by giving them a liberty of action; we must allow his goodness to be in no way impeached by his permitting offences; or we may advert to the fact, that if God created any beings, such as himself were inferior to Himself, and therefore, in various degrees, imperfect.

Ed.

The same heresies, divisions, and scandal, which cause numbers to stumble to their ruin, frequently mislead and ensnare unestablished believers also; and thus tend as much to their destruction as any thing can do. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Rom. 14:13-18, p. 13, 15, 19-23, p. 19-21. 1 Cor. 8: 7-13.) Such as are strong, or think themselves so, are apt to undervalue and despise weak, wavering, and unconformed

but that here should be offences; and God has determined to permit them for wise and holy ends, that both they which are perfect, and they which are not, may be made manifest. See 1 Cor. 11: 19. Dan. 11: 35. Being told, before, that there will be seducers, tempters, persecutors, and many bad examples, let us stand on our guard, ch. 24: 24. Acts 20: 29, 30.

(2.) That they would be *woeful* things, and of fatal consequence. Here is a double woe annexed to offences:

[1.] A woe to the careless and unguarded, to whom the offence is given; *Woe to the world because of offences.* The obstructions and oppositions given to faith and holiness, are the bane and plague of mankind, and the ruin of thousands. As for those whom God hath chosen and called out of the world, they are preserved by the power of God from the prejudice of these offences. *They that love God's law, have great peace, and nothing shall offend them.* Ps. 119: 165.

[2.] A woe to the wicked, who wilfully give the offence; *But woe to that man by whom the offence comes.* Though it must needs be, that the offence will come, that will be no excuse for the offenders. Note, Though God makes the sins of sinners to serve his purposes, that will not secure them from his wrath: and the guilt will be laid at the door of those who give the offence, though they also fall under a woe, who take it. Note, They who any way hinder the salvation of others will find their own condemnation the more intolerable, like Jeroboam, who sinned and made Israel to sin. This woe is the moral of that judicial law, (Exod. 21: 33, 34. 22: 6.) that he who opened the pit, and kindled the fire, was accountable for all the damage that ensued. The anti-christian generation, by whom came the great offence, will fall under this woe, for their delusion of sinners, (2 Thess. 2: 11, 12.) and their persecutions of saints; (Rev. 17: 1, 2, 6.) for men will be reckoned with, not only for their doings, but for the fruit of their doings, the mischief done by them.

II. In particular, Christ here speaks of offences given.

1. By us to ourselves, which is expressed by our hand or foot offending us; in such a case, it must be cut off; v. 8, 9. This Christ had said before, (ch. 5: 29, 30,) where it especially refers to seventh-commandment sins; here it is taken more generally.

(1.) What is here enjoined. We must part with an eye, or a hand, or a foot, that is, that, whatever it is, which is dear to us, when it proves unavoidably an occasion of sin to us. Note, [1.] Many prevailing temptations to sin arise from within ourselves; if there were never a devil to tempt us, we should be drawn away of our own lusts: nay, those things which in themselves are good, and may be used as instruments of good, even those, through the corruptions of our hearts, prove snares to us, incline us to sin, and hinder us in duty. [2.] In such a case, we must, as far as lawfully we may, part with that which we cannot keep without being entangled in sin by it. First,

disciples, when they see them mistaken or perplexed in their judgments; and liable to be discouraged or drawn aside, by example, authority, persuasion, or plausible reasonings: yet these things may often be the effect of deep humility, combined with weak natural abilities and insufficient instruction. Our Lord therefore cautioned his disciples, not to aspire after being the greatest, and not to despise the least of those who professed themselves his disciples. The persons whom He addressed, were ministers, and the admonition is therefore especially directed to all their successors in that sacred function; who are, alas! very apt to pay far more regard to the eminent, the wise, and the strong, (than to say the wealthy,) than to the poor, the ignorant, and the weak of the flock. (Notes, Rom. 14: 1-3. Gal. 2: 1-5.)

(10.) Their angels. 'It was an opinion of the Gentiles that some persons had attendant angels; so Dio Cassius, Horace, &c. believe, however, that they confined them to persons of distinction. Among the Jews it was a general belief (which Christ in his wisdom pleased not to disturb), that every person had his attendant angel, who was considered as his representative, and to whom they seem to have thought that he bore a personal resemblance. (As we find from Acts 12: 15. "it is his angel.") Some confined them to the good. So Heb. 1: 14. By the generality it was thought that all had their attendant angels; so Theophrastus, and the Mohammedans. Among many opinions about the offices of these angels, (see Lightfoot.) the Jews thought the angelic representative stood in the same favor with God as did the person himself. This will guide us to the real meaning of our Savior. "These my humble and unambitious followers enjoy the perpetual favor and approbation of my Father," &c. So Euthymius and Theophylact.'

SCOTT

11 For ^athe Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

12 ^bHow think ye? ^cIf a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth ^einto the mountains and seeketh that which is gone astray?

13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, ^bhe rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

14 Even so ⁱit is not the will of ^kyour Father which is in heaven, that ^lone of these little ones should perish.

[Practical Observations.]

d. 9:12, 13. 10:6. 15:24. Luke 15:24, 32. *10. John 3:17. 12:47. 1 Tim. 1:15.
e. 21:28. 22:42. 1 Cor. 10:15.
f. 12:11. Ps. 119:17. Is. 53:6. Jer. 50:8. Ez. 34:16, 28. Luke 15:4.
John 10:11, &c. 1 Pet. 2:25.
g. 1 Kings 22:17. Ez. 34:6, 12.
h. Ps. 137:1. Is. 53:11. 62:5. Jer. 38:37-41. Mic. 7:18. Zeph. 3:17. Luke 15:5-10. 23:24. John 4:34-36. Jan. 2:13.
i. Luke 12:32. John 6:39, 40. 10:27-30. *12. Rom. 8:28-39. Eph. 1:7. 1 Pet. 1:3-5.
j. 5:16. 6:2-32.
k. Is. 40:11. *Zech. 13:7. John 21:15. 1 Cor. 11:13. 2 Tim. 2:10. Heb. 12:13.

some think, the special dignity and honor of the little ones' angels; the prime ministers of state are said to see the king's face, (Esth. 1: 14.) as if the strongest angels had the charge of the weakest saints. 2. It bespeaks their continual readiness to minister to the saints. They behold the face of God, expecting to receive orders from Him what to do for the good of the saints. *As the eyes of the servant are to the hand of his master, ready to go or come on the least beck, &c.* the eyes of the angels are upon the face of God, waiting for the intimations of his will, which those winged messengers fly swiftly to fulfil; they go and return like a flash of lightning, Ezek. 1: 14. If we

spise them; we must be afraid of the sin, and very cautious what we say and do, lest we should inadvertently give offence to Christ's little ones, and put contempt on them, without being aware of it. There were those that hated them, and cast them out, and yet said, *Let the Lord be glorified.* And we must be afraid of the punishment; 'Take heed of despising them; for it is at your peril if you do.'

(2.) The reasons to enforce the caution. We must not look on these little ones as contemptible, because really they are considerable. Let not earth despise those whom heaven respects. To prove that the little ones which believe in Christ are worthy to be respected, consider,

[1.] The ministration of the good angels about them; v. 10. This Christ saith to us, and we may take it on his word, who came from heaven to let us know what is done there by the world of angels. Two things he lets us know concerning them,

First, That they are the little ones' angels. God's angels are theirs; for all his is ours, if we be Christ's, 1 Cor. 3: 22. They are theirs; for they have a charge concerning them to minister for their good, Heb. 1: 14. Some have imagined that every particular saint has a guardian angel; but why should we suppose that, when we are sure that every particular saint, when there is occasion, has a guard of angels? This is particularly applied here to the little ones. While the great ones of the world have honorable men for their retinue and guards, the little ones of the church are attended with glorious angels. It is had being enemies to those who are so guarded; and it is good having God for our God, for then we have his angels for our angels.

Secondly, That they always behold the face of the Father in heaven. This bespeaks, 1. The angels' continual felicity and honor. The happiness of heaven consists in the vision of God, seeing him face to face as He is, beholding his beauty; this the angels have without interruption, even when ministering to us on earth, Rev. 4: 8. Luke 1: 19. The expression intimates, as

V. 7-14. What miseries come upon the world, through scandals in the church! This should render men careful not to admit prejudices against Christianity, from the misconduct of those who profess it, but to examine what Christianity is, in its nature and tendency, as it stands in the Scripture. Yet, alas! few will adopt this method. While, therefore, we mourn over the evils which we cannot remedy, we should be careful not to add to them, and should fear death far less than dishonoring the Gospel, and causing souls to stumble and perish by our misconduct. We ought constantly to associate the idea of the Redeemer's glory with that of our own salvation, and to mortify every inclination, and renounce every interest, which may throw a stumbling-block in the way of others, even as if it endangered the loss of our own souls. This disposition is a proper evidence that we are true believers: but how dreadful will be the disappointment of selfish, or self-indulgent persons, who prove the ruin of their neighbors, and will at last sink themselves into the unquenchable and everlasting fire of hell, under the guilt of those sins, and the power of those darling sinful inclinations, which they refused here to relinquish and mortify? We should then keep at distance from every extreme, and labor to remove those offences which prejudice men against the Gospel; remembering that those persons are peculiarly entitled to our prayers, and countenance, who attempt, by any proper means, to terminate oppressions, reform corruptions, and heal divisions, within the church. Numbers, who have been awak-

would behold the face of God in glory hereafter; as the angels do, (Luke 20: 36.) we must behold the face of God now, in readiness to our duty, as they do, Acts 9: 6.

[2.] The gracious design of Christ concerning them; v. 11. This is a reason, *First*, Why the little ones' angels have such a charge concerning them; it is in pursuance of Christ's design to save them. Note, The ministration of angels is founded in the mediation of Christ. *Secondly*, Why they are not to be despised; because Christ came to save them. Note, 1. Our souls by nature are lost souls; as a traveller is lost, that is out of his way, as a convicted prisoner is lost. 2. Christ's errand into the world was, to save that which was lost, to save those that are spiritually lost from being eternally so. 3. This is a good reason why the least and weakest believer should not be despised or offended. If Christ put such a value on them, let us not undervalue them. If He denied Himself so much for their salvation, surely we should deny ourselves for their edification and consolation. See this argument urged, Rom. 14: 15. 1 Cor. 8: 11, 12. Nay, if Christ came into the world to save souls, and his heart is so much on that work, He will reckon severely with those that obstruct and hinder it, and so thwart his great design.

[3.] The tender regard which our heavenly Father has to these little ones, and his concern for their welfare. This is illustrated by a comparison, v. 12-14. Observe the gradation in the argument; the angels of God are their servants, the Son of God is their Savior, and, to complete their honor, God Himself is their Friend. *None shall pluck them out of my Father's hand, John 10: 28.*

Here is, *First*, The comparison, v. 12, 13. Now this is applicable, 1. To the state of fallen man in general; he is strayed like a lost sheep, the angels that stood, were as the ninety-nine that never went astray; wandering man is sought on the mountains, which Christ, in great fatigue, traversed in pursuit of him, and he is found; which is matter of joy. Greater joy there is in heaven for returning sinners than for remaining angels. 2. To particular believers, who are offended and put out of their way. Now though but one of a hundred should be driven off, yet that one shall be looked after with a great deal of care, the return of it welcomed with a great deal of pleasure; and therefore the wrong done to it, no doubt, will be reckoned for with a great deal of displeasure.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

ened to a concern about their souls, stumble and perish by the misconduct of professed disciples; and weak Christians are greatly harassed and perplexed by them. We ought therefore seriously to consider, what effects our conduct may have on persons of these descriptions: and by no means to despise the scruples and mistakes of our weak brethren, or endanger their comfort and progress from selfish motives. Ministers, especially, are called upon to watch over the weak, and discouraged, and the young unestablished convert, to comfort the feeble-minded, and to be gentle, compassionate, and long-suffering towards them. And shall any of us refuse attention to those, unto whom the blessed angels delight to minister; whom the Son of God came to seek and save; and concerning whom 'it is the Father's good pleasure, that not one of them should perish?' This would be the more inexorable, in us, seeing we all have been 'as lost sheep; and have been ransomed by the blood, and brought back by the tender care of our good Shepherd; who delights more in saving lost sinners, than even in the worship of those holy angels, who never went astray, and who receives, as it were, a new accession of joy and glory, by every one that is brought back to his fold. Let us then remember from what a dreadful state we have been saved, and copy the pattern of our gracious Benefactor; and study to be gentle, harmless and useful, as behoves 'the sheep of his pasture.'

SCOTT.

Verse 12.

One, ninety and nine.] 'A common kind of proverb among the Jews, as, "if ninety-nine die by reason of cold; but one, by the hand of God," &c. &c.

Verse 14.

From this striking comparison, our Lord shows the care which the Father takes of the weakest of his true people. The disciples of Christ ought therefore to copy the example of angels, of the Son of God, and

of the Father Himself, respecting them; and not that of proud Pharisees. (Marg. Ref.—See also Luke 15: 1, 2. 8-10, 22-32. John 6: 36-40. 10: 28-31.) 'God is very unwilling that any, the meanest person upon earth, should be lost, that might, by any care or method of ours, be recovered to piety.' Hammond. 'The weaker a man is, the greater care we ought to have of his salvation, as God teacheth us by his own example.' Beza. (Note, 1 Tim. 2: 3, 4.) SCOTT.

15 ¶ Moreover ^m if thy brother shall trespass against thee, ⁿ go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, ^o thou hast gained thy brother.

16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, ^p that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

m 35. Lev. 6:2-7. Luke 17:3,4. 1 Cor. 6:8-9. 9:12. 2 Cor. 7:12. Col. 3:13. 1 Thes. 4:6.
n Lev. 19:17. Ps. 141:5. Prov. 25:9,10.
o Prov. 11:30. Rom. 12:21. 1 Cor. 9:19-21. Jam. 5:19,20. 1 Pet. 3:1.
p Num. 35:30. Deut. 17:6. 19:15. 1 Kings 21:13. John 8:17. 2 Cor. 13:1. 1 Tim. 5:19. Heb. 10:28. 1 John 5:7,8. Rev. 11:3.

they will be reckoned with for it by Him, who, in his saints, as in other things, is jealous of his honor, see Isa. 3: 15. *What mean ye that ye beat my people?* Ps. 76: 8, 9.

Observe, Christ called God, (v. 19.) *my Father which is in heaven*; He calls Him, (v. 14.) *your Father which is in heaven*; intimating that He is not ashamed to call his poor disciples brethren; for have not He and they one Father? *I ascend to my Father and your Father*; (John 20: 17.) therefore ours because his. This intimates likewise the ground of the safety of his little ones; that God is their Father. A father takes care of all his children, but is particularly tender of the little ones, Gen. 33: 13. He is their Father in heaven; a place of prospect, and therefore He sees all the indignities offered them; and a place of power, therefore He is able to avenge them. This comforts offended little ones, that their Witness is in heaven, (Job 16: 19.) their Judge there, Ps. 68: 5.

V. 15-20. Christ comes next to direct what to do in case of offences given; which may be understood either of personal injuries, or of public scandals. Let us consider it both ways.

I. Let us apply it to personal injuries. If thy brother grieve, (1 Cor. 8: 12.) affront, condemn or abuse thee, if he blemish thy good name, encroach on thy rights, or injure thee in thy estate; if he be guilty of any of those trespasses that are specified, (Lev. 6: 2, 3.)—if he transgress the laws of justice, charity, or relative duties; these are trespasses against us, and often happen among Christ's disciples, and sometimes, for want of prudence, are of very mischievous consequence. Now the rule prescribed in this case is,

1. *Go, and tell him his fault between him and thee alone*; compare, Lev. 19: 17. *Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart*; that is, 'If thou art displeased at thy brother for any injury he hath done thee, do not suffer thy resentments to ripen into a secret malice, but give vent to them in a mild and grave admonition; do not go and rail against him behind his back, but *thou shalt in any wise reprove him*: if thou wouldst convince him, do not expose him, for that will but exasperate him, and make the reproof look like a revenge.' This agrees with Prov. 25: 8, 9. *Go not forth hastily to strive, but debate thy cause with thy neighbor himself*, argue it calmly and amicably; and if he shall hear thee, well and good, *thou hast gained thy brother*, there is an end of the controversy, and it is a happy end; let no more be said of it, but let the falling out of friends be the renewing of friendship.

2. *If he will not hear thee*, try what he will say, if thou take one or two more, not only to be witnesses of what passes, but to reason the case further with him; they will be disinterested; and if reason will rule him, the word of reason in the mouth of two or three witnesses will be better spoken to him, and perhaps it will influence him to acknowledge his error, and to say, *I repent*.

3. *If he shall neglect to hear them*, then tell it to the church, to the ministers, elders, or other officers, or the most considerable persons in the congregation you belong to; make them the referees to accommodate the matter, and do not presently appeal to the magistrate, or fetch a writ for him. This is fully explained by the apostle; (1 Cor. 6.) he would have the saints to judge those small matters, (v. 2.) that pertain to this life, v. 3. If you ask, 'Who is the church?' The apostle directs there, (v. 5.) *Is there not a wise man among you?* Those of the church that are presumed to be most capable of determining such matters; and he speaks ironically, when he says, (v. 4.) *Set them to judge, who are least esteemed in the church*; those, if there be no better, those, rather than suffer an irreconcilable breach between two church-members. This rule was then in a special manner requisite, when the civil

government was in the hands of such as were not only aliens, but enemies.

4. 'If he will not hear the church, but persists in the wrong he has done thee, and proceeds to do thee further wrong, let him be to thee as a heathen man, and a publican; take the benefit of the law against him, but let that always be the last remedy; appeal not to the courts of justice till thou hast first tried all other means. Or thou mayst, if thou wilt, break off thy friendship and familiarity with him—though thou must by no means study revenge. Thou wouldst have preserved his friendship but he would not, and so has forfeited it.' If a man cheat and abuse me once, it is his fault; if twice, it is my own.

II. Let us apply it to public scandal. Christ, having taught us to indulge the weakness of our brethren, here cautions us not to indulge their wickedness under pretence of that. Designing to erect a church for Himself in the world, He took care for the preservation, 1. Of its purity, that it might have an expulsive power to cleanse and clear itself, like a fountain of living waters. 2. Of its peace and order, that every member may know his place and duty, and its purity be preserved in a regular way and not tumultuously. Now let us see,

(1.) What is the case supposed; *If thy brother trespass against thee*. [1.] 'The offender is a brother.' Note, Church-discipline is for church-members. *Them that are without, God judges*, 1 Cor. 5: 12, 13. When any trespass is done against us, it is good to remember that the trespasser is a brother, which furnishes us with a qualifying consideration. [2.] 'The offence is a trespass against thee; if thy brother do any thing which is offensive to thee as a Christian.' Note, Christ and believers have common interests; what is done against them, Christ takes as done against Himself; and what is done against Him, they cannot but take as done against themselves. *The reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me*, Ps. 69: 9.

(2.) What is to be done in this case. We have here,

[1.] The rules prescribed, v. 15-17.

1st. *Go and tell him his fault between him and thee alone*. Do not stay till he comes to thee, but go to him, as the physician visits the patient. Note, We should think no pains too much to take for the recovering of a sinner to repentance. *Tell him his fault*, and the evil of it, *show him his abominations*. Note, People are loath to see their faults, and have need to be told of them. Great sins often amuse conscience, and for the present stupefy and silence it; and there is need of help to awaken it. David's own heart smote him, when he had cut off Saul's skirt, and when he had numbered the people; but (which is very strange) we do not find that it smote him in the matter of Uriah, till Nathan told him, *Thou art the man*.

Tell him his fault, argue the case with him; (so the word signifies); 'and do it with reason and argument, not with passion.' Christum reproof is an ordinance of Christ for the bringing of sinners to repentance, and must be managed as an ordinance. 'Let the reproof be private, that it may appear you seek not his reproach, but his repentance.' Note, It is a good rule, not to speak of our brethren's faults to others, till we have first spoken of them to themselves; this would make less reproaching and more reproof; less sin committed, and more duty done. It will be likely to work on an offender, when he sees his reprover concerned not only for his salvation, in telling him his fault, but for his reputation, in telling him of it privately.

If he shall hear thee, that is, 'heed thee, if

Verses 15-17.

Our Lord next prescribed some rules for stopping the progress, and preventing the consequences of contentions among Christians, which could seldom fail of being effectual, if honestly and exactly followed. It would be absurd to restrict these rules to any particular form of church-government and discipline; yet they certainly suppose the existence of government and discipline among the disciples of Christ, and the exclusion of disorderly persons, from those societies to which they immediately belong; and they are capable of being reduced to

practice, under different forms of church-government; though they are alas! in great measure, neglected by all.

(15.) These rules respecting an offending brother, were well known to and practised by the Jews. *Maimonides* speaks of private and more public admonition. 'He that sinneth against his fellow, it is necessary that he say to him, I have offended against thee. If he receive him, well; if not, he must bring two men, and appease him, before them.' They likewise use, *specifically* to proclaim as a terrible punishment the synagogue.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

q Acts vii-3. 15:6, 7. 1 Cor. 5:4, 5. 6:1-4. 2 Cor. 2:6, 7. 3 John 9, 10.
r Rom. 16:17, 18. 1 Cor. 5:9-13. 2 Thes. 3:14, 15. 1 Tim. 6:5. 2 John 10, 11.
s 6:7. Ezra 6:21. Eccl. 11:12. 2 Cor. 6:14-17. Eph. 4:17-19. 5:11, 12. 1:5, 48. 11:19. 21:31, 32. Luke 15:1. 18:1. 19:2, 3.
t 16:19. John 20:23. Acts 15:28, 29. 1 Cor. 5:4, 5. 2 Cor. 2:10. Rev. 8:7, 8.
u 21:19. Mark 11:24. John 13:17, 18. Acts 1:14. 2:1-2. 4:24-31. 8:4. 12:5. Eph. 6:18-20. Phil. 1:19. Jam. 5:14-16. 1 John 5:14-18. Rev. 1:13-6.
v John 14:13, 14. 15:23, 24.

impartial inquiry made into

Tell it to the church. But what church? is the question. The civil magistrate, say some; The Jewish sanhedrim then in being, say others; but by what follows, (v. 18.) it is plain that He means a Christian church, now in the embryo. 'Tell it to the church, that particular church, in the communion of which the offender lives; to those of that congregation, who are by consent appointed to receive informations of that kind; to the minister or ministers, the elders or deacons, or (if such the constitution of the society,) to the representatives or heads of the congregation, or to all the members of it; let them examine the matter, and if they find the complaint groundless, let them rebuke the com-

is well, thou hast gained thy brother; thou hast helped to save him from sin and ruin, and it will be thy credit and comfort,' James 5: 19, 20. Note, The converting of a soul is the winning of that soul; (Prov. 11: 30.) and if the loss of a soul be a great loss, the gain of a soul is sure no small gain.

2dly. If that doth not prevail, then take with thee one or two more, v. 15. Note, We must not be weary of well-doing, though we see not presently the good success of it. In work of this kind we must travail in birth again, Gal. 4: 19.

'Take with thee one or two more; 1. They may speak some pertinent, convincing word which thou didst not think of, and may manage the matter with more prudence than thou didst.' Note, Christians should see their need of help in doing good, and pray in the aid one of another. 2. 'To affect him.' Note, Those should think it high time to repent and reform, who see their misconduct become a general offence and scandal. 3. 'To be witnesses of his conduct, in case the matter should afterward be brought before the church.' None should come under the censure of the church as obstinate and contumacious, till it be very well proved that they are so.

3dly. If he neglect to hear them, and will not be humbled, then tell it to the church, v. 17. Note, 1. Private admonitions must always go before public censures; if gentler methods will do the work, those that are more rough and severe must not be used, Tit. 3: 10. Those that will be reasoned out of their sins, need not be shamed out of them. Let God's work be done effectually, but with as little noise as may be; his kingdom comes with power, but not with observation. But, 2. Where private admonition does not prevail, there public censure must take place. The church must receive the complaints of the offended, and rebuke the sins of the offenders, and judge between them, after an

impartial; if they find it just, let them rebuke the offender, and call him to repentance. It is an awful thing to receive a reproof from a church, from a minister, a reprover by office, and therefore it is the more regarded by such as pay any deference to an institution of Christ's and his ambassadors.

4thly. 'If he neglect to hear the church, and will neither be ashamed of his faults, nor amend them, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican;' let him be cast out of the church, and let the members be warned to withdraw from him, that he may be ashamed of his sin, and they not be infected by it, or made chargeable with it. Those who put contempt on the orders and rules of a society, and bring reproach on it, forfeit the honors and privileges of it, and are justly laid aside till they repent and submit, and reconcile themselves to it again. Christ has appointed this method for the vindicating of the church's honor, the preserving of its purity, and the conviction and reformation of those that are scandalous. But observe, He doth not say, 'Let him be to thee as a devil or damned spirit, as one whose case is desperate,' but, 'as a heathen and a publican, as one in a capacity of being restored and received in again. Count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.' The directions given to the church of Corinth concerning the incestuous person, agree with the rules here, 1 Cor. 5: 2, 11, 13.

[2.] Here is a warrant signed for the ratification of all the church's proceedings according to these rules, v. 18. What was said before to Peter, is here said to all the disciples, and in them to all the faithful office-bearers in the church, to the world's end. While ministers preach the word of Christ faithfully, and in their government of the church strictly adhere to his laws, they may be assured that He will own them, and ratify what they say and do, so that it shall be taken as said and done by Himself. He will own them,

1st. In their sentence of suspension; Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven. If the censures of the church duly follow the institution of Christ, his judgments will follow the censures of the church; (Rom. 11: 8.) for Christ will not suffer his own ordinances to be trampled on. How light soever proud scornors may make of the censures of the church, let them know that they are confirmed in the court of heaven. They that are shut out

(17.) Church.] 'It would be contrary to all rules of criticism, to suppose that our Lord used this term in a sense wherein it could not then be understood by any one of his hearers; or that He would say congregation, for so the word literally imports, when He meant only a few heads or directors.'

Heathen-publican.] 'To such persons, however, the common offices of humanity did not cease to be due, (as most of the Jews thought,) but only those which respected a nearer intimacy.'

ROSENK.

Verse 18.

A groundless sentence of excommunication, or absolution, cannot possibly make any alteration in a man's state or character: all such decisions being merely declaratory. This has been entirely overlooked, in all those scandalous perversions of church-censures, which are the real cause of that relaxation, or rather destitution of discipline, which now so generally prevails. (Marg. Ref.—See Note, 16: 19.) Our Lord spoke to the apostles, and to all of them. The absolute authority given them was inseparably connected with their immediate inspection; and all their successors, pretended or real, from the consistory at Rome, to an independent church-meeting are concerned in the clause at Rome, to an independent church-meeting are concerned in the promise; just so far as their decisions, whether they bind or loose, accord to the doctrines, precepts, and rules, transmitted to us from the apostles; and no further. 'Nor shall you only in these cases, have power as Christians, to loose your repenting, and bind your obstinately offending brother; but, as you are my apostles, to whom I have promised my Spirit "to teach you all things, and lead you into all truth," whatsoever things ye shall bind on earth, or shall declare to be forbidden on pain of my displeasure, shall render them indeed obnoxious to my wrath: and whatsoever things ye shall loose on earth, (which once required by divine authority, of those who owned the law of Moses,) shall be loosed in heaven; and men shall be allowed to do them, without incurring my displeasure. And in this sense, this promise is the foundation of our obligation to believe and obey all the commands and doctrines of the apostles, and of the cessation of the ritual precepts of the law of Moses.' Whitby. Authority, to the extent of the words used by our Lord, many have claimed, but God never gave it to any, except his inspired apostles: and in this view, the promise is our Lord's full attestation to all the writings, which by them, and under their inspection, were given to the church and to posterity, as the infallible oracles of God. Scott.

Bind, &c.] 'See ch. 16: 19.' When the Jews set any apart to be a preacher, they used these words, 'Take thou liberty to teach what is bound and what is loose.' Strype.

Verses 19, 20.

It is here supposed, that all such transactions, as those above mentioned, would be conducted with prayer for direction, and for the humiliation of the offender; and in this case, not only when many, but even when two persons should agree to present their joint request on earth, the eternal Father, whose throne is in heaven, would surely regard and answer it. Some interpret this, of those miraculous interpositions, by which the censures of the church were sometimes followed and confirmed in the primitive times; or restrict it to the apostles, i.e. the execution of their important office: and, as they were immediately addressed, this might be especially intended: (Notes, 1 Cor. 4: 18-21 v. 21. 5: 1-5, v. 5. 2 Cor. 13: 1-4, 7-10. 1 Tim. 1: 18-20.) yet it seems to be also a general promise encouraging social prayer, especially in arduous cases. (Marg. Ref. x. y.) When such prayers are presented in faith, and the petition of them is conducive to our good, and to the glory of God, we are every where warranted to expect a favorable answer; and limitations must have been implied, even in the days when miracles were wrought. To this our Lord added, that when two or three were assembled in his name; that is, in dependence on his promise, in obedience to his command, out of love to Him, and regard to his glory, for prayer or other acts of worship, to hear his word, or to regulate those things, which pertain to the peace and purity of his church; 'there, says He, 'I AM, in the midst of you.' He says not, I will be, but, I am, referring to his divine presence, at all times and in all places; and to his special presence by the influences of his Spirit, to communicate blessings to his people, whenever or wherever they wait upon Him for them. Two or three of his true disciples may be thus met together, in ten thousand different places all over the earth, at the same time: this must therefore be allowed to be a direct assertion of his omnipresent Deity; and cannot, on any other supposition, be rendered consistent with propriety. (Marg. Ref. z. a.—Notes, 28: 19, 20, v. 20. Eccl. 3: 14. 20: 21-25, v. 24. John 8: 54-59, v. 58. Rev. 3: 1-3, v. 1.)

(19.) Two of you.] 'Hence Peter and John act jointly together among the Jews (Acts 3: 4. &c.) and they act jointly among the Samaritans, (Acts 8: 14.) and Paul and Barnabas among the Gentiles Acts 13: 2.'

It shall be done.] 'That this refers to a miraculous answer of prayer, may appear from comparing Matt. 21: 21, 22. Mark 11: 23. John 14: 13, 14. 1 John 3: 22. 5: 14, 15, and James 5: 16.'

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20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

21 ¶ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?

Gen. 49:10. John 20:19, 26. 1 Cor. 5:4. 1 Thes. 5:1. Philm. 2. 23:20. Ez. 20:24. Zach. 2:5. John 8:38. Rev. 1:11-13. 21. 2:3. 16. Luke 17:3, 4.

fight with God. Paul speaks in the person of Christ, when he saith, *To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also*. 2 Cor. 2:10.

Now it is a great honor which Christ here puts on the church, that He will condescend not only to take cognizance of their sentences, but to confirm them; and in the following verses we have two things laid down as the ground of this.

(1.) God's readiness to answer the church's prayers; v. 19. Apply this, [1.] In general, to all the requests of the faithful; they shall not seek God's face in vain. Many promises we have in Scripture of a gracious answer to prayer, but this gives a particular encouragement to joint prayer; 'the requests which two of you agree in, much more which many agree in.' No law of heaven limits the number of petitioners. Note, Christ has been pleased to put honor on the joint prayers of the faithful. If they join in the same prayer, together, on some special errand, or, though at a distance, agree in some particular matter of prayer, they shall speed well. God is particularly pleased with union and communion in the prayers of the saints. See 2 Chron. 6:13. Acts 4:31.

[2.] In particular, to those requests that are put up to God about binding and loosing; to which this promise seems more especially to refer. Observe, 1st. That the power of church-discipline is not here lodged in the hand of a single person, but two, at least, are supposed to be concerned in it. When the incestuous Corinthian was to be cast out, the church was gathered together, (1 Cor. 5:4.) and it was a punishment inflicted of many, 2 Cor. 2:6. 2dly. It is good to see those who have the management of church-discipline, agreeing in it. Heats and animosities among those whose work it is to remove offences, will be the greatest offence of all. 3dly. Prayer must evermore go along with church-discipline. Pass no sentence, which you cannot in faith ask God to confirm. The binding and loosing spoken of, (ch. 16:19) was done by preaching, this by praying. Thus the whole power of gospel-ministers is resolved into the word and prayer, to which they must wholly give themselves. He doth not say, 'If you shall agree to sentence and decree a thing, it shall be done;' (as if ministers were judges and lords;) but, 'If you agree to ask it of God, from Him you shall obtain it.' Prayer must go along with all our endeavors for the conversion of sinners; see James 5:16. 4thly. The unanimous petitions of the church of God, for the ratification of their just censures, shall be heard in heaven; and obtain an answer; and if Christ say, 'It shall be done,' we may be assured that it is done, though we see not the effect in the way we look for it. God doth especially own and accept us, when praying for those that have offended Him and us. *The Lord turned the captivity of Job*, not when he prayed for himself, but when he prayed for his friends who had trespassed against him.

(2.) The presence of Christ in the assemblies of Christians; (v. 20.) the promise refers to meetings where two or three are gathered in his name, not only for discipline, but for religious worship, or any act of Christian communion. Assemblies of Christians for holy purposes are hereby appointed, directed, and encouraged.

[1.] They are hereby appointed; the church of Christ exists most visibly in religious assemblies; it is the will of Christ that these should be set up, and kept up for the honor of God, the edification of men, and the preserving of a face of religion on the world. When God intends special answers to prayer, He calls for a solemn assembly, Joel 2:15, 16. If there be no opportunity for large assemblies, yet then it is the will of God that two or three should gather together, to show their good will to the great congregation. Note, When we cannot do what we would in religion, we must do as we can, and God will accept us.

[2.] They are hereby directed to gather together in Christ's name. In the exercise of church-discipline, they must come together in the name of Christ, 1 Cor. 5:4. That name gives to what they do authority on earth, and acceptableness in heaven. In meeting for worship, we must have an eye to Christ; must come together, by virtue of his warrant and appointment, in token of our relation to Him, professing faith in Him, and in communion with all that in every place call upon Him. When we come together, to worship

from the congregation of the righteous now, shall not stand in it in the great day, Ps. 1:5. Christ will not own those, as his, whom the church has duly delivered to Satan; but if through error or envy the censures of the church be unjust, Christ will graciously find those who are so cast out, John 9:34, 35.

2dly. In their sentence of absolution; *Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven*. Note, 1. No church-censures bind so fast, but that, on the sinner's repentance and reformation, they may and must be loosed again. Sufficient is the punishment which has attained its end, 2 Cor. 2:6. There is no unpassable gulf fixed but that between hell and heaven. 2. Those who, on their repentance, are received to communion again, may take the comfort of their absolution in heaven, if their hearts be up to communion again, when he saith, *To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also*. 2 Cor. 2:10.

God in dependence on the Spirit and grace of Christ as Mediator, having an actual regard to Him as our Way to, and Advocate with the Father, then we are met together in his name.

[3.] They are hereby encouraged with an assurance of the presence of Christ; *There am I in the midst*. By his common presence He is in all places, as God; but this is a promise of his special presence. Where his saints are, there He will dwell; it is his rest, (Ps. 132:14.) his walk; (Rev. 2:1.) He is in the midst of them as the sun in the midst of the universe: it is a spiritual presence, the presence of Christ's Spirit with their spirits. *There am I*, not only *I will be there*, but *I am there*; as if He came first, they shall find Him there; He repeated this promise at parting, (ch. 23:20.) *Lo, I am with you always*. Note, The presence of Christ in the assemblies of Christians is promised, and may in faith be prayed for and depended on; *There am I*. This is equivalent to the Shechinah, or special presence of God in the tabernacle and temple of old, Exod. 40:24. 2 Chron. 5:14.

Though but two or three are met together, Christ is among them; this is an encouragement to the meeting of a few, when it is either, 1st. Of choice, two or three coming together, for mutual assistance in conference or in prayer. Or, 2dly. By constraint; when there are not more than two or three to come together, or, if there be, they dare not, for fear of the Jews. It is not the multitude, but the faith and sincere devotion, of the worshippers, that invites the presence of Christ; and though there be but two or three, the smallest number that can be, yet, if Christ make one among them, their meeting is as honorable and comfortable as if they were two or three thousand.

V. 21-35. This part of the discourse is certainly to be understood of personal wrongs which it is in our power to forgive. Now observe,

I. Peter's question concerning this matter; v. 21.

1. He takes it for granted that he must forgive; Christ had before taught his disciples this lesson, (ch. 6:14, 15.) and Peter has not forgotten it. He knows that he must not only not bear a grudge against his brother, or meditate revenge, but be as good a friend as ever, and forget the injury.

2. He thinks it a great matter, to forgive till seven times; he means not seven times a day, as Christ said, (Luke 17:4.) but seven times in his life; supposing, that if a man had any way abused him seven times, though he were ever so desirous to be reconciled, he might then abandon his society, and have no more to do with him. Perhaps Peter had an eye to Prov. 24:16. *A just man falleth seven times*; or to the mention of three transgressions, and four, which God would no more pass by, Amos 2:1. Note, There is a proneness in our corrupt nature to stint ourselves in that which is good, and particularly in forgiving, though we have so much forgiven us.

II. Christ's direct answer to Peter's question; *I say not unto thee, Until seven times, (he never intended to set up any such bounds,) but, Until seventy times seven*; a certain number for an indefinite great one. Note, There is something of ill-nature in scoring up the offences and injuries we forgive, as if we would allow ourselves to be revenged when the measure is full. God keeps an account, (Deut. 32:34.) because He is the Judge, and vengeance is his; but we must not, lest we be found stepping into his throne. It is necessary to the preservation of peace, both within and without, to pass by inju-

(20.) *In the midst*. [The like do the rabbins speak of two or three sitting in judgment, (or in discourse concerning the law. Schoettgen.) that 'the divine presence' is in the midst of them.] LIGHTFOOT.

Verses 21, 22.

As our Lord had intimated, that his disciples must bestow much pains to preserve or restore peace with their offending brethren, Peter wanted to be informed, how often they were required to renew their forgiveness of injuries, to such as repeated the offence. And, perhaps with reference to the traditions of the elders, he asked whether they were to proceed as far as seven times. To this our Lord answered, '1821

that they ought to forgive, not only to the seventh time, but 'to seventy times seven;' meaning an indefinite number; even as often as men renew their offences, or as God renews his pardons to believers. (Marg. Ref.—Note, Luke 17:3, 4.) The determination of the rabbins in this case runs thus, that three offences are to be remitted, but not the fourth; and this they gather from those words, 'For three transgressions, and for four, I will not turn away my wrath.' Amos 1:3. Peter puts the three and the four together, and enquires whether of their doctors did; and asks, whether he must forgive '1821 times.' Whitby.

22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times; but, Until seventy times seven.

[Practical Observations.]

23 Therefore ⁴ is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, ⁵ which would take account of his servants.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which ⁶ owed him ⁷ ten thousand * talents:

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord ⁸ commanded

him, without reckoning how often. God multiplies his pardons, and so should we, Ps. 78: 38, 40. It intimates that we should make it our constant practice to forgive injuries, and should accustom ourselves to it till it becomes habitual.

III. A further discourse of our Savior's, by way of parable, to show the necessity of forgiving the injuries that are done to us. The parable is a comment on the fifth petition of the Lord's prayer, *Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us*. Those, and those only, may expect to be forgiven of God, who forgive their brethren. The parable represents the *kingdom of heaven*, that is, the church, and the administration of the gospel dispensation in it. The church is God's family, his court; there He dwells, there He rules. In general, the parable intimates how much provocation God has from his family on earth, and how untoward his servants are.

There are three things in the parable.

1. The master's wonderful clemency to his servant who was indebted to Him; v. 23-27. Where observe,

(1.) Every sin we commit, is a debt to God; not like a debt contracted by buying or borrowing, but like a debt to a prince when a recognizance is forfeited, or a penalty incurred by a breach of the law or a breach of the peace; like the debt of a servant to his master, by withholding his service, wasting his lord's goods, breaking his indentures, and incurring the penalty. We are all debtors.

(2.) There is an account kept of these debts, and we must shortly be reckoned with for them. This king would take account of his servants. God now reckons with us by our consciences.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15-22. How careful should all Christians be, to preserve the peace, as well as the purity, of the church! Alas! many deem themselves injured, when in reality they have no cause to complain; and others have recourse to slander and litigation, and almost every other expedient, instead of trying the method which Christ has expressly enjoined ⁹ on all his disciples; and few, in any place, have uniformly followed these directions of our common Lord. Various corrupt maxims, customs and reserves, prevent even conscientious men from speaking privately to their offending brethren, and from referring their disputes to the arbitration of pious Christians: hence jealousies, resentments, contentions, and even frivolous law-suits, among professors of the Gospel; and hence mutual criminations, and appeals in *print* to the world against each other, to the scandal of religion, and the insulting triumphs of its enemies! Surely we ought not to harbor so injurious an opinion of a professed Christian, as to think, that he would not endure to be mildly expostulated with, when he had evidently done wrong! Surely we should prefer gaining, recovering, and conciliating our offended brother, to obtaining a victory over him, or exposing his character! And certainly he who has done injustice, and will not be induced to make moderate concessions and amends, has no right to be treated as a believer, 'till he

'repent and do works meet for repentance.' No man should think himself a competent judge in his own cause: nor should any Christian seek legal redress, till it is evident, that no other means can procure that justice, which it is requisite should be done him. Indeed the abuse of discipline has so prejudiced the minds of numbers against it, that it is grievously fallen into disuse: yet, in whatever way the faithful ministers of Christ, and consistent believers, concur to show their decided disapprobation of an offender's conduct, on *Scriptural grounds*, it ought to be deemed a very solemn matter; for whatsoever is thus bound or loosed on earth, shall be ratified in heaven, however the offender may despise the protest.—In all our undertakings we should seek direction by prayer; and we cannot too highly value the promises of God to this effect: all the general concerns of families and churches should be conducted with social as well as secret prayer: nor should we ever censure or rebuke any man, without at the same time praying for his humiliation and salvation.—Whenever we meet in the name of Christ, in our families, or in public ordinances, at any time, or in any place, we should realize his presence in the midst of us; that we may both be impressed with awe of his holy, heart-searching eye upon us, and encouraged to expect abundant blessings from Him.

SCOTT.

(22.) *Seventy times seven.* 'An offence, properly such, is that which is given wantonly, maliciously, and without any provocation. Let a man search ever so accurately, he will not find that he has received, during the whole course of his life, four hundred and ninety (seventy times seven) such offences.'

⁴ Meaning a number without limitation: See Gen. 4: 24.

Bp. PEARCE.

Verses 23-27.

This parable represents God as calling men to account for the use which they have made of their abilities and advantages; especially, as by his conduct in this respect, the true Christian is distinguished from the hypocrite. (Notes, 25: 14-30. Luke 16: 1-12.) It represents our immense obligations to God, and our exceedingly great guilt as transgressors of his law, increased by our neglect or abuse of his Gospel: all indeed are deeply indebted, but some far more than others. (Notes, Luke 7: 40-43.) As the servant was wholly unable to pay this very great debt, his lord commanded that he, and his wife and children, should be sold for slaves, and his substance confiscated, according to the custom of those countries, in order that payment might be made. (Marg. Ref. h.—Notes, Ex 21: 2. 2 Kings 4: 1. Neh. 5: 1-5. Is. 60: 1-3, v. 1. Dan. 8: 24.) [Lev. 22: 3. Lev. 27: 1-8. Amos 8: 6. which state continued six years.] This represents the strictness of the law and justice of God, and the dreadful punishment to which sinners are righteously exposed; from which they cannot deliver themselves, and in which their connections are often involved. The servant, terrified, in the most submissive posture, craved time and patience, and promised that he would at length discharge the whole debt: this may show the terrors and convictions, to which men are subject from a view of the severity of God's justice, and that general hope of mercy by which they seek relief: but the engagement, 'I will pay thee all,' seems an intimation of an unburdened and self-confident spirit. (Notes, 23: 36 v. 25. Luke 14: 4-43 v. 42. Rom. 10: 1-4.) The Lord, however,

One of the first questions that an awakened conscience asks, is, *How much owest thou unto my Lord?* And unless it be bribed, it will tell the truth, and not write fifty for a hundred. A day of reckoning is coming, when these accounts will be called over, and nothing but the blood of Christ will balance the account.

(3.) The debt of sin is a very great debt; and with some is reckoned than with others. When he began to reckon, one of the first defaulters appeared to owe *ten thousand talents*, a vast sum, amounting by computation to one million, eight hundred seventy-five thousand pounds sterling. See what our sins are; [1.] For the heinousness of their nature, they are talents, the greatest denomination ever used in the account of money or weight. Every sin is the load of a talent, *a talent of lead, this is wickedness*, Zech. 5: 7, 8. The trusts committed to us, as stewards of the grace of God, are each a talent, (ch. 25: 15.) and for every one of them buried, much more wasted, we are a talent in debt. [2.] For the vastness of their number; they are ten thousand, a myriad, more than the hairs on our head, Ps. 40: 12. Who can understand the number of his errors, or tell how oft he offends? Ps. 19: 12.

(4.) The debt of sin is greater than we are able to pay; *He had not to pay*. Sinners are insolvent debtors; the Scripture is a statute of bankruptcy against us all. Silver and gold would not pay our debts, Ps. 49: 6, 7. Sacrifice and offering would not do it; our good works are but God's work in us, and cannot make satisfaction; we are without strength, and cannot help ourselves.

(5.) If God should deal with us in strict justice, we should be condemned as insolvent debtors.

of that servant is induced, by compassion, to set him at liberty and remit the debt; knowing well he would never be able to pay it: this represents the Lord's readiness to forgive all true penitents; and the false conclusions which many thence draw concerning their sins being pardoned, though they be not truly penitent.

SCOTT.

(23.) *Take account of.* 'Settle accounts with.' Bloomfield. *Servant.* 'Some petty prince.' Dr. A. Clarke. *His ministers.* *Gracious.* 'his treasurers. Kuinol. Collectors of the revenues, or governors of provinces, who would have to pay an annual sum for their government, as is customary in Turkey and the East. Hence the immense sum said to be due, which we may suppose to be in arrears, since, in the East, governors of provinces are often deeply in arrears, and do not pay until compelled by an armed force.' BLOOMFIELD.

(24.) *Ten thousand talents.* 'A myriad of talents, the highest number known in Greek arithmetical notation. According to *Priestley*, the Roman talent was equal to 2164; ten thousand of which would amount to 2,160,000. If the Jewish talent of silver be designed, which is estimated by the same learned writer at 4504, this sum amounts to 4,500,000, but if the gold talent is meant, which is equal to 7200, then the amount is 72,000,000. (4,500,000, if the silver talent is meant, but if the gold, 67,000,000. Dr. A. Clarke.) This immense sum represents our boundless obligations to God, and our utter incapacity, as sinners infinitely indebted to divine justice, of paying one (mite) out of the talent.' 'A talent is 750 ounces of silver, which at five shillings the ounce is 1875. 10s.' GREENFIELD.

(25.) *Commanded him to be sold, &c.* 'This custom, how cruel soever we justly account it, was, in early ages, established by the laws of many countries in Europe, as well as in Asia, republican, as well as monarchical.'

CAMPBELL.

After the captivity, according to *Juhn*, the Jews fell into the custom, in this respect of other nations.

Ed

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him to be sold, and his wife and children, and that he had, and payment to be made.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence; and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

29 And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

* Or, besought.
v. 29. Luke 7:43. Rom. 10:3.
v. 30. 10:16. Neh. 9:17. Ps. 78:38.
88:5, 15. 145:8. Heb. 11:8.
* The Roman penny is the eighth part of an ounce, which, after five shillings the ounce, is ten pence half-penny. 20:2. (Near 14 c.)
Deut. 15:2. Neh. 5:10, 11. 10:31. 1s. 58:2. Ez. 45:9.
m. 26. 6:12. Philom. 18, 19.
n. 1 Kings 21:27-28. 22:27.
o. Ps. 119:136, 159. Jer. 9:1. Mark 8:5. Luke 19:13. Rom. 13:1. 12:15. 2 Cor. 11:21. Heb. 13:3.
p. Gen. 37:2. Luke 14:21. Heb. 13:17.

ors, and God might glorify Himself in our utter ruin. Justice demands satisfaction. The servant had contracted his debt by wastefulness and wilfulness, and therefore might justly be left to lie by it. See here what every sin deserves; (v. 25.) *this is the wages of sin.* [1.] To be sold. Those that sell themselves to work wickedness, must be sold, to make satisfaction. Captives to sin are captives of wrath. He that is sold for a bond-slave, has nothing left him but his life, that he may be sensible of his miseries; which is the case of damned sinners. [2.] Thus he would have payment to be made, that is, something done towards it; though it is impossible that the sale of one so worthless should amount to the payment of so great a debt. By the damnation of sinners, divine justice will be to eternity in the satisfying, but never satisfied.

(6.) Convinced sinners cannot but humble themselves before God, and pray for mercy. *The servant fell down at the feet of his royal master, and worshipped him;* or, as some copies read it, *besought him;* his address was very submissive and very importunate, v. 26. The servant knew before that he was so much in debt, but was under no concern about it, till called to an account. Sinners are commonly careless about the pardon of their sins, till they come under the arrests of some awakening word, some startling providence, or approaching death, and then, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?* Mic. 6: 6. How easily, how quickly, can God bring the proudest sinner to his feet: Ahab to his sackcloth, Manasseh to his prayers, Pharaoh to his confessions, Judas to his restitution, Simon Magus to his supplication, Belshazzar and Felix to their tremblings. The stoutest heart will fail, when God sets the sins in order before it. This servant doth not deny the debt, nor seek evasions, nor attempt to abscond.

But, [1.] He begs time; *Have patience with me.* Patience and forbearance are a great favor, but many are borne with, who are not thereby brought to repentance, (Rom. 2: 4.) and then their being borne with does them no kindness.

[2.] He promises payment; *Have patience a while, and I will pay thee all.* Note, It is the folly of many who are under convictions of sin, to imagine that they can make God satisfaction for the wrong they have done Him; who go about to establish their own righteousness, Rom. 10: 3. He that had nothing to pay, (v. 25.) fancied he could pay all. See how close pride cleaves even to awakened sinners; they are convinced, but not humbled.

(7.) The God of infinite mercy is very ready to forgive the sins of those that humble themselves before Him; v. 27. *The lord of that servant, when he might justly have ruined him, mercifully released him.* The servant's prayer was, *Have patience with me;* the master's grant is, a discharge in full. Note, [1.] The pardon of sin is owing to the mercy of God, to his

tender mercy; Luke 1: 77, 78. *He was more with compassion.* God's reasons of mercy are fetched from within Himself; He has mercy because *He will have mercy.* God looked with pity on mankind in general, because miserable and sent his Son to be a Surety for them; He looks with pity on particular penitents, because sensible of their misery, and accepts them in the Beloved. [2.] There is forgiveness with God for the greatest sins, if they be repented of. Though the debt was vastly great, *he forgave it all.* v. 32. [3.] The forgiving of the debt, is the loosing of the debtor; *He loosed him;* we never walk at liberty till our sins are forgiven. But observe, Though he discharged him from the penalty as a debtor, he did not discharge him from his duty as a servant. The pardon of sin doth not slacken, but strengthen our obligations to obedience; Luke 1: 74. *I am thy servant, for thou hast loosed my bonds.*

2. The servant's unreasonable severity toward his fellow-servant, notwithstanding his lord's clemency toward him, v. 28-30. This represents the sin of those who, though not unjust, yet are rigorous and unmerciful. *Push a claim to an extremity, and it becomes a wrong.* To exact satisfaction for debts of injury, which tend neither to reparation nor to the public good, but purely for revenge, though the law may allow it, in order to strike terror, yet savors not of a Christian spirit. To sue for money-debts, when the debtor cannot possibly pay them, and so let him perish in prison, argues a greater love of money, and a less love of our neighbor, than we ought to have, Neh. 5: 7.

Here, (1.) How small the debt was; *He owed him a hundred pence or denarii*, about three pounds and half a crown of [sterling] money. Note, Offences done to men are nothing to those committed against God. Not that *therefore* we may make light of wronging our neighbor, for that is also a sin against God; but *therefore* we should make light of our neighbor's wronging us, and not aggravate it, or study revenge. David was unconcerned at the indignities done to him; *I, as a deaf man, heard not;* but laid much to heart the sins committed against God for them, *rioters of tears ran down his eyes.*

(2.) How severe the demand was; *He laid hands on him, and took him by the throat.* What needed all this violence? The debt might have been demanded without taking the debtor by the throat; without sending for a writ, or setting the sheriff on him. How lordly this man's carriage, and yet how base and servile his spirit! Had he himself been going to prison for his debt to his lord, he might have had some preface for going to this extremity, in requiring his own; but frequently pride and malice prevail more to make men severe than would the most urgent necessity.

(3.) How submissive the debtor was; though his equal, yet knowing how much he lay at his

(26.) *Fell down and worshipped him.* [*Crouched as a dog before him.*] Dr. A. Clarke. "Prostrated himself at his feet." Bloomfield. "The form of lowly submission from the servant to his master, which is here described, is still practised in the East among the Arabs, when inferiors, in paying respectful deference to their superiors, fall down before them, and kiss their feet, their knees, or their garments."

Dr. SHAW.

Verses 28-30.

This seemeth to bear hard on those unmerciful and unchristian creditors, who cast poor men, who, they know, have nothing to pay, into prison for their debt; so rendering their brother's state more miserable, and their debt from him as desperate as ever. For sure, he that bid us "lend, hoping for nothing again," will not allow us to imprison, where nothing can be hoped for: and it is to be feared, that men so unmerciful may find but little mercy at that day. For if it be a crime that will then be objected to our condemnation, that we did not visit Christians when in prison: what will it be to cast them into prison? *Whitby.* (Marg. Ref.) Ten thousand talents were six hundred thousand times as much as the hundred denarii, calculating by Roman talents; (Marg.) by the Jewish talent, they were more than double that sum.

Scott.

(28.) *Take him by the throat.* [*Throttled.*] Dr. A. Clarke. "To take by the throat, so as almost to strangle, or rather to twist the neck behind them, was what merciless creditors used frequently to do to debtors, when they dragged them before the magistrates."

WESTEIN, BURDER.

Verses 31-35.

The man's fellow-servants 'were grieved' to see one, who had so merciful a master, thus cruel, and they inform their lord. This shows that real Christians are grieved and shocked at the misconduct of pro-

fessed believers, more than at the wickedness of those who do not make any pretensions to religion; and that they complain to God of this dishonor thus done to his Gospel. The lord then called the servant, and having reproached him for acting in opposition to his example, and shown the wickedness of his character, and the unreasonableness of his conduct, he delivered him over to the executioners of justice, so he was confined and punished till he had paid the whole debt; and as he was not able to pay it, he could never obtain deliverance. *Circumstances* in parables do not always admit of minute application. In the parable of the prodigal son, the elder brother, who was evidently the representative of the Pharisees, is spoken of as heir of all his father's property. (Note, Luke 15: 25-32.) Our Lord frequently addresses men, according to what they thought of themselves, and not according to their real character. The servant, in this parable, bears no one mark of a humble penitent: and none but humble penitents are true believers, or really pardoned; though many others think themselves so. The general tenor of Scripture excludes the supposition, that God actually forgives men, and then afterwards imputes guilt to them to their final condemnation. (Notes, Ps. 103: 11-13. Jer. 31: 33, 34. Mic. 7: 18-20. Heb. 8: 7-13, v. 12.) But men will at last be dealt with, not according to their confidence, but according as their conduct, especially towards their offending brethren, has evidenced the reality of their faith and love, or the contrary. This is our Lord's own inference from it: whatever men's profession may be, God will deliver them as 'wicked servants' to the tormentors, to be punished according to their sins with exact justice; if they 'do not from their heart,' which He especially regards, 'forgive their brethren their trespasses.' No doubt, if true believers are betrayed into any degree of this unchristian spirit, they will experience frowns, rebukes, and chastenings: but to suppose that a real Christian can be habitually of this unmerciful

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

33 Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

25:28. Luke 19:22. Rom. 3:19.
F 544,45. Luke 6:35,38. Eph. 4:32.
S1. Col. 3:13.
E 525,36. Luke 12:58,59. 2 Thes. 1:8,9. Rev. 14:10.
E 612,14,15. 7:12. Prov. 21:13. Luke 6:37,38. Jam. 2:13.
U Prov. 21:2. Jer. 3:10. Zech. 7:12. Luke 18:15. Jam. 3:14. 4:8. Rev. 2:23.

helps meet a man, rather than such a fool in his folly; but they went to their lord, and besought him to appear for the oppressed against the oppressor. Note, That which gives us occasion for sorrow, should give us occasion for prayer. Let our complaints, both of the wickedness of the wicked and of the afflictions of the afflicted, be brought to God, and left with Him.

3. The master's just resentment of the cruelty his servant was guilty of, v. 32, 33. Now observe here,

(1.) How he reproved his servant's cruelty; *O thou wicked servant*. Note, Unmercifulness is wickedness, great wickedness. [1.] He upbraids him with the mercy he had found with his master; *I forgave thee all that debt*. Those that abuse God's favors, may expect to be upbraided, ch. 11: 20. Consider; It was all that debt, that great debt. Note, The greatness of sin magnifies the riches of pardoning mercy: we should think how much has been forgiven us, Luke 7: 47. [2.] He thence shows him the obligation he was under to be merciful to his fellow-servant, v. 33. Note, It is justly expected, that such as have received mercy, should show mercy. *He who needs forgiveness, easily*

bestows it. Senec. Agamemn. He shows him, 1st, That he should have been more compassionate, because he had himself experienced the same distress. What we have had the feeling of ourselves, we can the better have the fellow feeling of with our brethren. *The Israelites know the heart of a stranger, for they were strangers*. 2dly, That he should have been more conformable to the example of his master's tenderness, having himself experienced it, so much to his advantage. Note, The comfortable sense of pardoning mercy tends much to dispose our hearts to forgive our brethren. It was in the close of the day of atonement, that the jubilee-trumpet sounded a release of debts (Lev. 25: 9.) for we must have compassion on our brethren, as God has on us.

(2.) How he revoked his pardon, and cancelled the acquittance, so that the judgment against him revived; v. 34. Though the wickedness was very great, his lord laid on him no other punishment than the payment of his own debt. Note, Those that will not come up to the terms of the Gospel, need be no more miserable than to be left to the course of the law. See how the punishment answers the sin; he that would not forgive, shall not be forgiven. *He delivered him to the tormentors*. Note, The power of God's wrath to ruin us, goes far beyond the utmost extent of any creature's strength and wrath. The reproaches and terrors of his own conscience, that worm that dies not, and devils, the executioners of God's wrath, they are sinners' tempters now, will be their tormentors forever. He was sent to bridewell that he should pay all. Note, Our debts to God are never compounded; either all is forgiven, or all is exacted; glorified saints in heaven are pardoned all, through Christ's complete satisfaction damned sinners in hell are paying all, that is, are punished for all. The offence done to God by sin, is in point of honor, and therefore, some way or other, by the sinner, or by his surety, it must be satisfied.

Lastly, Here is the application of the whole parable; v. 35. The title Christ here gives to God, was made use of, (v. 19.) in a comfortable promise; *It shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven*; here it is made use of in a terrible threatening. If God's government be fatherly, it follows thence that it is righteous, though not that it is not rigorous, or that under his government we must not be kept in awe by the fear of the divine wrath. When we pray to God as *our Father in heaven*, we are taught

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 23 -35. While we sinners live so entirely on mercy and forgiveness, how backward are we to forgive the offences of our brethren! Yet let us not think that any provocation can authorize us to harbor resentment, or seek revenge. This we can never suppose, if we consider duly, how many and aggravated our former and later transgressions have been, against our Creator and daily Benefactor; and how ready He is to forgive us, when we repent and seek his face. If He enter into judgment with us, our debt will be found immensely large; all the terrible curses of the law will be adjudged to be our righteous desert; and it will be in vain for us to say, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.' This the humbled sinner will perceive, and he will rely only on free abounding mercy, through the ransom of the death of Christ: in this way, his sins will be 'blotted out,' and 'buried in the depths of the sea;' and his gentle, forgiving, and compassionate spirit and conduct towards those who have injured him, or are dependent on him, will prove him

a partaker of the Spirit and mind of Christ. But the unhumiliated professor of the Gospel will often betray himself, by a harsh, unforgiving, and unrelenting behavior to his debtors, his servants, the poor, and especially to those who have offended him. Such men scandalize the cause, and grieve true believers; but they deceive and destroy themselves, and their offended Lord will shortly deliver them, as 'wicked servants,' to the executioners of his vengeance, and the everlasting punishment prepared for the workers of iniquity. (See 25: 41-46.) Let us then examine ourselves, whether 'from our hearts we forgive every one his brother his trespasses.' Let us frequently ask ourselves, whether our conduct towards poor debtors, supplicants, or such as have affronted us, resembles the merciful conduct of our Lord towards us; and let us seek more and more for the renewing grace of God, to teach us to forgive others, even as we hope for forgiveness from Him.

SCOTT.

and malignant temper, and act according to it. (Morg. Ref. t. u.—See 6: 12, 14, 15. Luke 6: 37, 38. 17: 3, 4. Eph. 5: 30—32. Col. 3: 12—15. Jam. 2: 8—13, v. 12, 13.) directly militates against the design of the parable, and of the whole Scripture; and is calculated to encourage selfish, revengeful, and hard-hearted professors of evangelical doctrine, who are the scandal of the Gospel, and as unlike Christ as the grossest libertine or drunkard in the world.

(34.) *Tormentors*. If a person was suspected of fraud, (as there was reason for in this case) he was put to very cruel tortures among the Asiatics, to induce him to confess. In the punishments of China, a great variety of these appear; and probably there is an allusion to such tortures here. But if this refers to the day of judgment, then the *worm* that dieth not, and the *fire* that is not quenched, are the tormentors.

Bloomfield, however, translates *tormentors*, for tormentors, and says it does not appear that creditors had the power of using torture towards their debtors.

(43.) Reader, hast thou a child or servant who has offended thee, N. T. VOL. I.

and humbly asks forgiveness? Hast thou a debtor or a tenant who is insolvent, and asks a little longer time? Thy child is banished thy debtor in prison, thy tenant sold up; yet the child offered to *run at thy feet*; and the debtor, utterly insolvent, prayed for a *little longer time*; but to these things thy *stony* heart and seared conscience paid no regard! Monster of ingratitude, if thou canst, go hide thyself from the face of the Lord! In our common method of dealing with insolvent debtors, we in some sort imitate the Asiatic customs; we put them in prison, and all their circumstances there are so many *tormentors*; the place, the air, the company, the provision, the accommodations, all, all are destructive to comfort, to peace, to health, and to every thing that *humanity* would devise. If the person be *poor*, or *comparatively poor*, is his imprisonment likely to lead him to discharge his debt? But he had no other way to discharge it than by his labor; that is now impossible through his *confinement*, and the creditor is put to a *certain* expense towards his maintenance. How foolish this policy! What other end can be answered by it than the gratification of the malice, revenge or inhumanity of the creditor?

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CHAP. XIX.

Jesus journey towards Judea, and he is the sick, 1, 2; answers the Pharisees concerning divorces, and his disciples on the expediency of marriage, 3-12; receives little children, 13-15; discourses with a rich young man, concerning eternal life, and detects a false wealth more than of God, 16-22; shews the difficulty of a rich man's salvation, 23-26; and makes gracious promises to those, who renounce worldly objects for his sake, 27-30.

AND it came to pass, ^a that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan:

2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

3 ¶ The Pharisees also came unto him, ^c tempting him, ^d and saying unto him, ^e Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

^a Mark 10:1. John 10:40.
^b 4:23-29. 9:35-38. 12:15. 14:35, 36.
^c 15:29, 31. Mark 6:55, 56.
^d 1:21. 22:16-18, 35. 10:2. 12:13-15. Luke 11:53, 54. John 8:6. Heb 9:9.
^e 5:31, 32. Mal. 2:14-15.

bear the Christian name, persist in the most rigorous and unmerciful treatment of their brethren, as if the strictest laws of Christ might be dispensed with, to gratify their unbridled passions; and so they curse themselves every time they say the Lord's prayer.

CHAP. XIX. v. 1, 2. We have here an account of Christ's removal. Observe,

1. He left Galilee. There He had spent the greatest part of his life; it being only on occasion of the feasts, that He came up to Jerusalem, and manifested Himself there. But it was an instance of his humiliation, and in this, as in other things, He appeared in a mean state; that He would go under the character of a Galilean, a north-countryman, the least polite and refined part of the nation. Most of Christ's sermons hitherto had been preached, and most of his miracles wrought in Galilee; but now, having finished these sayings, He departed from Galilee, and it was his final farewell; (unless his passing through the midst of Samaria and Galilee, Luke 17: 11. was after this, which yet was but a visit, as He passed through the country.) Christ did not take his leave of Galilee till He had done his work there, and then He departed thence. Note, as Christ's faithful ministers are not taken out of the world, so they are not removed from any place, till they have finished their testimony in that place, Rev. 11: 7. This is very comfortable to those that follow not their own humors, but God's providence, in their removals. And who would desire to continue any where longer than he has work to do for God there?

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. v. 1, 2. This seems to have been our Lord's final departure from Galilee, previous to his crucifixion: but He took a large compass in his journey, and passed through the districts which lay east of Jordan. (Marg. Ref.—See Luke 13: 22-30, v. 22.) SCOTT.

(1.) Beyond Jordan.] 'Or, by the side of Jordan.'

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'Bezai and some other critics render it, on the banks of Jordan; and this may seem more suitable to what is said of Christ's coming to the coasts of Judea, which was bounded by Jordan, and had no coasts beyond it. But it appears from John 10: 40. that our Lord removed to Bethabara, (John 1: 28.) which was undoubtedly beyond Jordan. And this over against Jericho. Compare Josh. 3: 16. and Judg. 7: 24. And this was so near to the coasts of Judea, that we might very well take the phrase as Matthew has expressed it; especially as it is probable that Jesus, during his abode in these parts, might often cross the river, and pass from Bethabara to Judea, which lay on the opposite side.'

DODDRIDGE.

Verses 3-6.

The school of Hillel taught, that a man might put away his wife for any cause, because this divorce was permitted, "if she found not grace in his eyes." (Deut. 24: 1.) The son of Sirach saith, "If she go not away, as thou wouldest have her, cut her off from thy flesh, give her a bill of divorce, and let her go." (Ecclesiastes, 25: 26.) And Josephus saith, "The law runs thus, He that will be disjoined from his wife, for any cause whatsoever, as many such causes there are, let him give her a bill of divorce." And he confesseth, that he himself put away his wife, after she had borne him three children, because he was not pleased with her behavior. But the school of Shammai determined on the contrary, that the wife was only to be put away for adultery; because it is said, "Because he hath found some uncleanness in her." (Leviticus, 20: 10.) (See 5: 31, 32. Ex 20: 14. Mark 10: 2-12. Luke 16: 18, 19.)

to ask for the forgiveness of sins, as we forgive our debtors. Observe here,

1. The duty of forgiving; we must, from our hearts forgive. Note, We do not forgive aright, nor acceptably, if we do not forgive from the heart; for that is what God looks at. No malice must be harbored there, or ill will; no projects of revenge must be hatched there, as there are in many who outwardly appear peaceable and reconciled. Yet this is not enough; we must from the heart desire and endeavor the welfare even of those that have offended us.

2. The danger of not forgiving; So shall your heavenly Father do. (1.) This is not intended to teach that God reverses his pardons, but that He denies them to those that are unequal for them, according to the tenor of the Gospel; though, having seemed to be humbled like Ahab, they thought themselves, and others thought them, in a pardoned state, and made bold with the comfort of it. Intimations enough we have in Scripture, of the forfeiture of pardons, for caution to the presumptuous; and yet we have security enough for the continuance of them, for comfort to those that are sincere, but timorous; that the one may fear, and the other may hope. Those that do not forgive, did never truly repent, nor ever truly believe; and therefore that which is taken away, is only what they seemed to have, Luke 8: 13. (2.) This is intended to teach us, that they shall have judgment without mercy, that have shewed no mercy, Jam. 2: 13. It is indispensably necessary to pardon and peace, that we not only do justly, but love mercy. It is an essential part of that religion which is pure and undefiled before God and the Father, of that wisdom from above, which is gentle and easy to be entreated. Look how they will answer it another day, who, though they were in the most rigorous and unmerciful treatment of their brethren, as if the strictest laws of Christ might be dispensed with, to gratify their unbridled passions; and so they curse themselves every time they say the Lord's prayer.

2. He came into the coasts of Judea, beyond Jordan, that they might have their day of visitation, as well as Galilee, though He went to those parts of Canaan that lay towards other nations; Galilee is called Galilee of the Gentiles; and the Syrians dwelt beyond Jordan. Thus Christ intimated that, while He kept within the confines of the Jewish nation, He had his eye on the Gentiles, and his Gospel was aiming and coming toward them.

3. Great multitudes followed Him. Where Shiloh be, there will the gathering of the people be. The redeemed of the Lord are such as follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes, Rev. 14: 4. It was a respect to Christ, and yet a continual trouble, to be thus crowded after, wherever He went; but He sought not his own ease, nor honor in the eye of the world, but *veris civis doing good*; for so it follows, *He healed them there*. This shews what they followed Him for; and they found Him as able and ready to help here, as He had been in Galilee. He healed them there, because He would not have them follow Him to Jerusalem, lest it should give offence. He shall not strive, nor cry.

V. 3-12. We have here the law of Christ in the case of divorce. Observe,

1. The case proposed by the Pharisees; v. 3. This they asked, tempting Him, not desiring to be taught by Him. Some time ago, He had, in Galilee, declared his mind in this matter, (ch. 6: 31, 32.) and if He would in like manner declare Himself now, they would make use of it to prejudice and incense the people of this country against Him, who would look with a jealous eye on one that attempted to cut them short in a liberty they were fond of. They hoped He would lose Himself in the affections of the people as much by this as by any of his precepts. Or, if He should say that divorces were not lawful, they would reflect on Him as an enemy to the law of Moses, which allowed them; if He should say that they were, they would represent his doctrine as not having that perfection in it which was expected in the doctrine of the Messiah; since, though divorces were tolerated, they were not, with the stricter sort of people, of good report. Some think, that, though the law of Moses did permit divorce, yet, in assigning the just causes for it, the Pharisees had a controversy among themselves, and they desired to know what Christ said to it. Matrimonial cases have often been intricate and perplexed; not by the law of God, but by the lust and follies of men; and often in these cases people resolve, before they ask, what they will do.

Their question is, Whether a man may put away his wife, as was now common with the looser sort of people, for every cause. The toleration, in this case, permitted it, in case she found

16-18.) 'For every cause.' That is, on account of any thing in her temper, or person, or for any infirmity, which rendered her disagreeable. (See Deut. 24: 1-4.) When marriage was instituted, sin and death had not entered: the sinful cause of separation afterwards mentioned, and the natural dissolution of the union, were therefore not referred to: but they have since been specified, and resemble the cutting off of a mortified limb, and the separation of the parts of the body by death. In all other respects, the union is to be considered as indissoluble. It is observable, that Christ inserts the word 'twain,' which is not in the original institution, but is added by the LXX, purposely, as it seems, to obviate all misconception of its meaning. (Marg. Ref. c—g.—Notes, Gen. 2: 21-25.) The apostle warning the Corinthians against fornication, says, 'He that is joined to an harlot, is one flesh.' Hence some have endeavored to prove, that nothing more is essential to marriage, than carnal knowledge; and that every woman is in fact the wife of him, who first knows her. But if this were so, such a crime as simple fornication could not exist, nor such a character as a harlot; for every female must either be a virgin, a wife, an adulteress, or a widow. The apostle, however, could not mean this: for the woman of whom he spake is supposed to have been previously a harlot, not a virgin; (Note, 1 Cor. 6: 12-17, v. 15-17.) and surely none will say, that when a man becomes one 'flesh with an harlot,' they are 'joined together by God, and man must not put them asunder.' The Lord brought Eve to Adam, and gave her to him, and thus joined them together in marriage, previous to their carnal intercourse: and some established and attested recognition, as well as the consent of parties, is absolutely needful to honorable marriage, and to distinguish those who live in that state, from the adulterers and fornicators whom God will judge.' It may also be added, that they, who from erroneous religious motives, either separate themselves from their wives, or usurp, or counsel others to do so, whatever specious arguments they may use, most evidently act in direct violation of Christ's command, and *Notes*

4 And he answered and said unto them, 'Have ye not read, that he, which made them at the beginning, made them male and female,

5 And ⁶ said, For ⁷ 's cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall ⁸ cleave to his wife; ⁹ and they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore ¹⁰ God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

7 They say unto him, ¹¹ Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorce-ment, ¹² and to put her away?

¶ 12:3. 21-16, 42. 22:31. Mark 2:25, 12:10, 26. Luke 9:3. 10:36.
f Gen. 1:27. 5:2. Mal. 2:15.
g Gen. 2:24-24. Ps. 45:10. Mark 10:5-9. Eph. 5:31.
h Gen. 34:3. Deut. 4:14. 10:30. 11:22. 1 Sam. 18:1. 2 Sam. 1:26. 1 Kings 11:2. Ps. 68:3. Rom. 12:9.
i 1 Cor. 6:16. 7:2.
k Prov. 2:17. Mal. 2:14. Mark 10:9. Rom. 7:2. 1 Cor. 7:10-14. Eph. 5:32. Heb. 13:4.
l 1:531. Deut. 24:1-4. Is. 50:1. Jer. 3:8. Mark 10:4.
m 1:19. Mal. 2:16.

pleasing of sense and the preserving of a seed. Hence the manner of expression is somewhat singular, (Gen. 1:27.) *In the image of God created He him, male and female created He them; him and them* are used promiscuously; being one by creation before they were two, when they became one again by marriage-covenant, that oneness could not but be closer and indissoluble.

2. The fundamental law of marriage, that a man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, v. 5. The relation between husband and wife is nearer than that between parents and children. May a child desert his parents, or a parent abandon his children for any cause, for every cause? No, by no means. Much less may a husband put away his wife, betwixt whom, though not by nature, yet by divine appointment, the relation is nearer, and the bond of union stronger, than between parents and children; for that is in a great measure superseded by marriage, when a man must leave his parents

no favor in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her, Deut. 24:1. This they interpreted so largely as to make any disgust, though causeless, the ground of a divorce.

II. Christ's answer to this question; though proposed to tempt Him, yet, being a case of conscience, He gave a full answer to it; laying down such principles as undeniably prove that such arbitrary divorces as were then in use, were by no means lawful. Christ Himself would not give the rule without a reason, nor lay down his judgment without Scripture-proof to support it. His argument is this; 'If husband and wife are by the appointment of God joined together in the strictest and closest union, then they are not to be lightly, and on every occasion, separated; if the knot be sacred, it cannot be easily untied.' Now, to prove that there is such a union between man and wife, he urges three things.

1. The creation of Adam and Eve, concerning which He appeals to their own knowledge of the Scriptures; p. 4. It is some advantage in arguing, to deal with those that own, and have read, the Scriptures. Note, it will be of great use to us, often to think of our creation, how and by whom, what and for what, we were created. *He made them male and female*, one female for one male: so that Adam could not divorce his wife, and take another, for there was no other to take. It likewise intimated an inseparable union between them; Eve was a rib out of Adam's side, so that he could not put her away, but he must put away a piece of himself, and contradict the manifest indications of her creation. Christ hints briefly at this; but in appealing to what they had read, He refers them to the original record, where it is observable, that, though the rest of the living creatures were made male and female, yet it is not said so concerning any of them, but only concerning mankind; because between man and woman the conjunction is rational, and intended for nobler purposes than merely the

to cleave to his wife. See here the power of a divine institution, that the result of it is a union stronger than that which results from the highest obligations of nature.

3. The nature of the marriage-contract: *They twain shall be one flesh, no more twain, but one flesh.* A man's children are pieces of himself, but his wife is himself; the conjugal union is in a manner equivalent to that between one member and another in the natural body. As this is a reason why husbands should love their wives, so it is a reason why they should not put away their wives. They *would be* one, therefore there must be but one wife, for God made but one Eve for one Adam, Mal. 2:15.

From hence he infers, *What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.* Note, (1.) husband and wife are of God's joining together—*He hath yoked them together*, so the word is, and it is very significant. God Himself instituted the relation between husband and wife in the state of innocence. Marriage and the Sabbath are the most ancient of divine ordinances. Though marriage be common to the world, yet, being stamped with a divine institution, and here ratified by our Lord Jesus, it ought to be managed after a godly sort, and sanctified by the Word of God and prayer. A conscientious regard to God in this ordinance, would have a good influence on the duty, and consequently on the comfort of the relation. (2.) Husband and wife being joined together by the ordinance of God, are not to be put asunder by any ordinance of man. Let not man put them asunder; not the husband himself, nor any one for him: not the magistrate, God never gave him authority to do it. The God of Israel hath said, that *He hateth putting away*, Mal. 2:16. It is a general rule, that man must not put asunder what God hath joined together.

III. A plausible objection started by the Pharisees against this; p. 7. He urged Scripture reason against divorce, they allege Scripture authority for it. Note, The seeming contradictions that are in the Word of God, are great stumbling-blocks to men of corrupt minds: what they call a command, was only an allowance, (Deut. 24:1.) and designed rather to restrain the exorbitances of it, than to give countenance to the thing itself. The Jewish doctors themselves observe such limitations in that law, that it could not be done without great deliberation. A particular reason must be assigned, the bill of divorce must be written, and, as a judicial act, must have all the solemnities of a deed, executed and enrolled. It must be given into

(3.) *Tempting Him.* 'Trying what answer He would give to a question which, however decided by Him, would expose Him to censure.'

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Is it lawful, &c.] 'What made our Lord's situation at present so critical in respect to this question was, at this time there were two famous divinity and philosophical schools among the Jews, that of SHAMMAI, and that of HILLEL. By answering the question, not from *Shammai* or *Hillel*, but from *Moses*, our blessed Lord defeated their malice, and confounded their devices.'

(5.) *Shall cleave.]* 'Shall be firmly cemented.' A beautiful metaphor, which most forcibly intimates that nothing but death can separate them: as a well-fused board will break sooner in the whole wood than in the glued joint.'

One flesh.] 'Not only meaning that they should be considered as one body; but also as two souls in one body, with a complete union of interests, and an indissoluble partnership of life and fortune, comfort and support, desires and inclinations, joys and sorrows.'

'It is solidly argued, from Adam's pronouncing concerning the obligation of a child's relation to its parent, which had never yet existed, that he spake these words in consequence of some divine illumination; nor could he otherwise have known what had passed in his sleep, or ever conjectured the original of woman to have been what he so plainly refers to.'

VERSES 7-9.

We find from St. Mark, that our Lord asked the Pharisees, what Moses had commanded them; (Mark 10:45.) and to this they answered, that he had commanded to give a bill, &c. (Mark 10:4, 5.) 'Because public laws are constrained to bear with some things, it followeth not that God alloweth them.' Beza. (Notes, Ex. 21:2. Deut. 24:1-4.) The general scope of this reasoning is equally applicable to polygamy. (Marg. Ref. 1-6.—Note, 3-6.) A question has been raised, and copiously disputed, whether those who, according to this permission of Moses, put away their wives, or married others, committed sin against God. But it is a question in which we are little concerned. In a state of sinless perfection, such things would not have been even desired. Some, no doubt, were very criminal in availing themselves of the permission, and were adulterers in the sight of God. Others might have stronger reasons and better motives for their con-

duct; and whatever was sinful in those true believers, who allowed themselves in the practices thus tolerated or connived at, was no doubt forgiven by the special mercy of God, on their general repentance.—Our Lord however added, that *therefore* whosever should put away his wife, except for unchastity, (which violates the marriage-covenant, and destroys as it were the very nature of it,) and should marry another woman, would be adjudged an adulterer; as that man also would, who should marry the divorced woman. Whatever *injustice* there might be in the divorce, it could not be 'adultery against' the divorced woman, if the man and woman were not put entirely upon a level in this respect: so that under the Christian dispensation, the husband, who for the husband to take another woman, as for the wife to take another man. (Marg. Ref. 9-8.—See Mal. 2:13-16. Mark 10:2-12, p. 11, 12. Luke 16:16-18, p. 18. 1 Cor. 7:1-5.) Some argue, that as adultery was punishable by death according to the law of Moses, and the betrothed virgin was considered as the wife of him to whom she was contracted, and included in this law; the word rendered 'fornication' should be here understood in its usual sense, *exclusively*; so that the reason, why the woman who had been guilty of fornication might, nay must, be divorced, was this: 'She was in fact another man's wife, and to retain her would be to live in adultery.' This, however, increases the difficulty: for the woman who was detected at her marriage of unchastity before her espousals, was likewise condemned to die: so that, supposing these three laws rigorously executed, no woman detected, after marriage, of previous fornication, could escape death; and, according to this opinion, no man might marry her, who pleaded guilty of that crime, because she was already another man's wife. (Notes, Lev. 20:10-19, p. 10. Deut. 22:13-27.) For in that case none could be spared, but she who confessed her guilt, and no man on this supposition might marry her: and surely it is very absurd to suppose, that a word, constantly used in an ill sense through the whole Scripture, should here be considered as synonymous with *marriage*; for unless the woman who had committed fornication was, by so doing, married to her paramour, the whole argument falls to the ground. Did not many lay hold of such unguarded concessions, in reputable ways to support or palliate a most licentious system, which is secretly doing immense mischief, learned men might possess their peculiar notions undisturbed, at least by the author. In fact, these laws were seldom

5 He saith unto them, 'because of the hardness of your hearts, I suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

9 And I say unto you, 'Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery.

10 His disciples say unto him, 'If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.

11 But he said unto them, 'All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.

n Ps. 95:8. Zech. 7:12. Mal. 2:13, 14. Mark 10:5.
o 3:16. 8:31. 1 Cor. 7:8.
p Gen. 2:24. 7:7. Eccl. 6:16.
q 5:32. Mark 10:11, 12. Luke 16:18.
r 1 Cor. 7:10-13, 39.
s 2 Chr. 21:11. Jer. 3:8. Ez. 16:8.
t Gen. 12:18, 19, 20:3. Jer. 31:1. Rom. 7:2, 3. 1 Cor. 7:4, 11, 39.
u Gen. 2:18. Prov. 5:15-19. 18:22. 19:13, 14. 21:9, 19. 1 Tim. 4:3, 5:11-15.
v 1 Cor. 7:7, 9, 17, 35.

God not only sees, but foresees the hardness of men's hearts; He suited both the ordinances and providences of the Old Testament to the temper of that people, both in terror. Further observe, The law of Moses considered the hardness of men's hearts, but the Gospel of Christ cures it; his grace takes away the heart of stone, and gives a heart of flesh. By the law was the knowledge of sin, but by the Gospel its conquest.

2. He reduces them to the original institution, v. 8. Note, Corruptions that are crept into any ordinance of God, must be purged out by having recourse to the primitive institution. Thus, when Paul would redress the grievances in the church of Corinth, about the Lord's supper, he appealed to the appointment, (1 Cor. 11:23.) So and so I received from the Lord. Truth was from the beginning; we must therefore inquire for the good old way, (Jer. 6:16.) and reform, not by latter patterns, but by ancient rules.

3. He settles the point by an express law, (v. 9.) and it agrees with what He said before; (ch. 5: 32.) there it was said in preaching, here in dispute, but it is the same; Christ is constant to Himself. Now, in both these places,

(1.) He allows divorce in case of adultery; the reason of the law against divorce being this, *They two shall be one flesh*. If the wife play the harlot, and make herself one flesh with an adulterer, the reason of the law ceases, and so does the law. By the law of Moses, adultery was punished with death, Deut. 22:22. Now our Savior mitigates the rigor of that, and appoints divorce to be the penalty. Whithy understands this, not of adultery, but (because our Savior uses the word *fornication*) of uncleanness committed before marriage, but discovered afterward; because, if it were committed after, it was a capital crime, and there needed no divorce.

(2.) He disallows it in all other cases, v. 8. This is a direct answer to their query, that it is not lawful. In this, as in other things, gospel-times are times of reformation, Heb. 9:10. The law of Christ tends to re-instate man in his primitive integrity; the law of love, conjugal love is no new commandment, but was from the beginning. If we consider what mischiefs to families and states, what confusions and disorders, would follow upon arbi-

trary divorces, we shall see how much this law of Christ is for our own benefit, and what a friend Christianity is to our secular interests.

The law of Moses allowing divorce for the hardness of men's hearts, and the law of Christ forbidding it, intimate, that Christians being under a dispensation of love and liberty, tenderness of heart may justly be expected among them, that they will not be hard-hearted, like Jews, for God has called us to peace. There will be no occasion for divorces, if we forbear one another, and forgive one another in love as those that are, and hope to be, forgiven, and have found God not forward to put us away, Isa. 50:1. No need of divorces, if husbands love their wives, and wives be obedient to their husbands, and they live together as heirs of the grace of life: and these are the laws of Christ, such as we find not in all the law of Moses.

V. A suggestion of the disciples against this law of Christ; v. 10. It seems, the disciples themselves were loath to give up the liberty of divorce, thinking it a good expedient for preserving comfort in the married state. Though from the beginning, when no divorce was allowed, God said, *It is not good for man to be alone*, and pronounced them blessed, who were thus strictly joined together; yet, unless they may have a liberty of divorce, they think it is good for a man not to marry. Note, 1. Corrupt nature is impatient of restraint, and would fain have a liberty for its own lusts. 2. It is a foolish thing for men to abandon the comforts of life, because of the crosses woven in with them. As if we must needs go out of the world, because we have not every thing to our mind in the world; or must enter into no useful calling or condition, because it is made our duty to abide in it. No, whatever our condition is, we must bring our minds to it, be thankful for its comforts, submissive to its crosses, and, as God has done, set the one over against the other, and make the best of that which is, Eccl. 7:14. If the yoke of marriage may not be thrown off at pleasure, it does not follow that therefore we must not come under it; but therefore when we do come under it, we must resolve to comport with it, by love and meekness and patience, which will make divorce the most unnecessary, undesirable thing that can be.

VI. Christ's answer to this suggestion, (v. 11, 12.) in which,

1. He allows it good for some not to marry; *He that is able to receive it, let him receive it*. Christ allowed what the disciples said, *It is not good to marry*; not as an objection against the prohibition of divorce, as they intended it, but as giving them a rule, (perhaps no less unpleasant to them,) that they who have the gift of continence, and are not under any necessity of marrying, do best if they continue single; (1 Cor. 7:1.) for they that are unmarried have opportunity, if they have but a heart, to care more for the things of the Lord, how they may please the Lord, 1 Cor. 7:32, 34. The increase of grace is better than the increase of the family, and fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, is to be preferred before any other fellowship.

2. He allows it, to forbid marriage, because all men cannot receive this saying; indeed few can, and therefore the crosses of the married state must be borne, rather than that men should run themselves into temptation, to avoid them; better marry than burn.

Christ here speaks of a two-fold unfitness to marriage:

discreetly executed under the Old Testament: being judicial regulations, they were not intended for the new dispensation, as of divine obligation; and concerning this our Lord was authoritatively laying down injunctions. The word rendered 'fornication' is in many places used as a general term, so that, undoubtedly, the common interpretation is the true one. Note also hence, that according to either interpretation, where it is lawful to put away the wife, it is so to marry again. Whithy.

Verses 10-12.

Jesus replied, that all men were not capable of complying with such a restriction; for seeing the human species was to be continued, and that men were generally to marry for that purpose, God had so constituted them, that many could not live, conscientiously and comfortably, in a single state. Indeed some were born with such a temperament of body that they were all their lives devoid of those inclinations, to which [185]

others are subject: some were mutilated in infancy, through the violence or policy of men; and others were successful in their endeavors to subdue their natural inclinations, that they might more entirely dedicate their time and talents to the service of God, and have less incumbency in so doing. And if any man found himself disposed to that kind of life, and capable of it, it might be good for him not to marry; as he might be more useful in promoting the kingdom of heaven among men. Thus our Lord intimated to the apostles, that, whatever they chose for themselves, they must impose no restrictions on others in this matter.

(10.) *It is not good to marry.* 'God has said, (Gen. 2:18.) it is not good for man to be alone, i. e. unmarried. The disciples seem to say, that if the husband have not the power to divorce his wife when she is displeasing to him, it is not good for him to marry. Here was a flat contradiction to the decision of the Creator. There are difficul-

12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mothers' womb; and there are some eunuchs, * which were made eunuchs of men; and there be eunuchs, * which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.

(Practical Observations.)

13 ¶ Then were there * brought unto him little children, that he should put his hands on them, and pray: * and the disciples rebuked them.

¶ 12. 38-7. 55-3, 4.
¶ 1 Cor. 7:32-38. 9, 15, 15.
18-26. Gen. 48:19-20. 1 Sam. 1:10. Ps. 115:14, 15. Jer. 32:39. Jer. 10:13. Luke 18:15. Acts 2:39. 1 Cor. 7:14.
¶ 15:22. 40:31. Luke 9:49, 50, 54, 55.

But men, in this case, must 23: 14.

[2.] The single state must be chosen for the kingdom of heaven's sake; in those who resolve never to marry, only that they may save charges, or may gratify a morose, selfish humor, or have a greater liberty to serve other

(1.) That which is a calamity by the Providence of God; such as those labor under, who are born eunuchs, or made so by men, who, being incapable of answering one great end of marriage, ought not to marry. But to that calamity let them oppose the opportunity that there is in the single state, of serving God better, to balance it.

(2.) That which is a virtue by the grace of God; such as theirs who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. This is meant of an unaptness for marriage, not in body, but in mind. Those have thus made themselves eunuchs who have attained a holy indifference to all the delights of the married state, have a fixed resolution, in the strength of God's grace, wholly to abstain from them; and by fasting, and other instances of mortification, have subdued all desires towards them. These are they that can receive this saying; and yet these are not to bind themselves by a vow that they will never marry, only that, in the mind they are now in, they purpose not to marry.

* Now, [1.] This affection to the single state must be given of God, for none can receive it, save they to whom it is given. Note, Contenance is a special gift of God to some, and not to others; and when a man in the single state finds, by experience, that he has this gift, he may determine with himself, and (as the apostle speaks, 1 Cor. 7: 37.) stand steadfast in his heart, having no necessity, but having power over his own will, that he will keep himself so, take heed lest they boast of a false gift, Prov.

lusts and pleasures, it is so far from being a virtue, that it is an ill-natured vice; but when it is for religion's sake, not as in itself a meritorious act, (which the papists make it,) but only as a means to keep our minds more entire for and more intent on, the services of religion, that having no families to provide for, we may do the more in works of charity, then it is approved and accepted of God. Note, That condition is best for us, and to be chosen accordingly which is best for our souls, and tends most to prepare us for, and preserve us to, the kingdom of heaven.

V. 13-15. We have here the welcome Christ gave to some little children that were brought to Him. Observe,

1. The faith of those that brought them. How many were brought, we are not told; but they were so little as to be taken up in arms, a year old, it may be, or two, at most. They were brought to Him that He should put his hands on them and pray, v. 13. Probably their parents, guardians, or nurses brought them; and herein, 1. They testified their respect to Christ, and the value they had for his favor and blessing. Note, Those who glorify Christ by coming to Him themselves, should further glorify Him by bringing all they have, or have in influence upon, to Him likewise. 2. They did so kindness to their children, not doubting but they would fare the better, in this world and the other, for the blessing and prayers of the Lord Jesus. Others brought their children to Christ, to be healed when they were sick; but these children were under no present malady, only they desired a blessing for them. Note, It is a good thing to come to Christ ourselves, and bring our children to Him, not only in

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V. 1-12. We are again called to follow the divine Savior, as 'He went about doing good; let us not fail to look earnestly to Him, that we may not be wearied in well-doing, by the ingratitude and perverseness of our fellow sinners. Human depravity has deranged and perverted the appointments of the all-wise Creator, to the introduction of accumulated misery; and oppressors share the consequences with those, whom they oppress: but the Gospel is intended to soften the heart, and meliorate the spirits of men, as well as to regulate their passions and subdue their iniquities. When it is really embraced, it renders men affectionate relatives and faithful friends; teaches them to 'bear with the infirmities,' and 'to bear the burdens,' of those with whom they are connected; and to consider their interest, peace, and happiness, more than their own indulgence or convenience. This will reduce marriage, in good measure, to its original institution; and teach the parties concerned to regulate their conduct respecting it by the law of God, and not by their own humor, passion, or caprice. The true Christian will consider his wife, as the gift and appointment of the Lord, and his union with her as God's ordinance: he will learn to love her as his own flesh; and no more want a separation, than he would desire to have his limb cut off, or his flesh mangled. This he regards as a desperate and most painful remedy, in case of an incurable gangrene. He will consider the regulations of the divine law, as the dictates of wisdom and love, and every temptation as a source of temptation and disquietude, and the want of domestic felicity: and will perceive, that this view of

the marriage-union, as indissoluble, and as an inseparable conjunction of interests and comforts till death, gives the most effectual motives to persevering endeavors for mutual peace and harmony. (Notes, Eph. 5: 22-23. 1 Pet. 3: 1-7.) Should a Christian even be united with an unconverted person, (which is indeed a heavy affliction,) he will see it best to take it up as his cross, and to submit to the will of God in thus correcting him; endeavoring to extract good from it, and expecting grace sufficient to support him under it: this he will perceive to be far preferable to any irregular method of dissolving the union. As to ungodly persons, it is proper, that their passions should be so restrained by human law, that they may not prove injurious to the peace of society. It does not indeed follow, that 'if the case of a man be so with his wife, it is' generally 'not good to marry;' but it certainly proves, that men should enter into this state with great seriousness, consideration, and fervent prayer; that they should not form the indissoluble union with one, whose external appearance or riches are the chief recommendation; and that Christians should be very careful not to be 'unequally yoked with unbelievers.' (Notes, P. 18: 22. 19: 13, 14. 31: 10-12.) As to the rest, our gracious Lord has imposed upon us no rigorous restrictions; but has left each of his disciples to choose that state of life, in which he can serve God, and mind the concerns of his soul, with most comfort and least distraction; and his condescending and considerate statement of this difficult subject forms a proper example for his people to imitate, in their conduct towards one another.

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ies and trials in all states; but let marriage and celibacy be weighed impartially, and I am persuaded the former will be found to have fewer than the latter. However, before we enter into an engagement, which nothing but death can dissolve, we had need to act cautiously; carefully consulting the will and word of God. Where an unbridled passion, or a base love of money, leads the way, marriage is sure to be miserable.

(12.) For the kingdom of heaven's sake. 'I believe our Lord here alludes to the case of the ESSENEs, one of the most holy and pure sects among the Jews. These abstained from women, hoping thereby to acquire a greater degree of purity, and be better fitted for the kingdom of God: children they had none of their own, but constantly adopted those of poor people, and brought them up in their own way.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 13-15.

Christ might in part be displeased with the disciples, for so soon forgetting that instructive discourse which has been considered. (Notes, 18: 1-5.) and doubtless He meant to encourage parents to seek a blessing from Him, on their children, from their earliest infancy; and to teach the children to look to Him, as soon as they can understand his words. Christ did not indeed order these infants to be baptized; for Christian baptism was not then instituted, and circumcision was still in force. (Notes, 23: 19, 20.) Yet the passage seems to give considerable sanction to that method of bringing children to Christ; and we must think those disciples mistaken, who object to it, sometimes with arguments, which would have equally held good against infant-circumcision,

or against 'bringing infants to Christ that He might touch them.' Indeed, the expression may also intimate that the kingdom of heavenly glory is greatly constituted of such as die in their infancy. Infants are as capable of regeneration, as grown persons; and there is ground to conclude, that all those who have not lived to commit actual transgressions, though they share in the effects of the first Adam's offence, will also share in the blessings of the second Adam's gracious covenant, without their personal faith and obedience, but not without the regenerating influence of the Spirit of Christ. What a topic of exhortation would this transaction give the ministers of Christ, if these parents afterwards brought up their children in an unchristian manner, or set them a bad example! or with the children, if they renounced that Savior, who had so condescendingly taken them in his arms and blessed them! In what a variety of ways, might instructions and admonitions, both to the parents and the children, have been grounded upon it: and what a sweet subject of converse would it afford to the parents, in afterwards instructing the children! What a plea in prayer for them. And might not infant-baptism be improved to similar purposes, did all who approve and contend for it, bestow true pains to make it a means of grace to themselves and those concerned? (Marg. Ref.—See Mark 10: 13-16.)

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(13.) Put his hands on them, and pray. 'It appears to have been customary among the Jews, when one prayed for another who was present, to lay his hand upon the person's head.' [Gen. 18: 14. Matt. 9: 18. Acts 6: 6. 8: 17.]

CAMPBELL.

14 But Jesus said, 'Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven.'

15 And ^ahe laid his hands on them, and departed thence.

[*Practical Observations.*]

16 ¶ And, behold, ^aone came, and said unto him, Good Mas-

^a Gen 17:7, 9, 24-26 21:4. Jude: 13. 7. 1 Sam 1:11 9:24. 2:18. Mark 10:14, 15. Luke 12:16. 11:25. 1:3. 1 Cor. 14:20. 1 Pet. 2:1, 2. 18. 40:11. Mark 10:16. 1 Cor. 7:14. 2 Tim. 2:15. ^c Mark 10:17. Luke 8:18.

reproved them that made it. Either they thought it below their Master to take notice of little children, except any thing in particular ailed them, or that He had toil enough with his other work, and would not have Him diverted from it; or, that if such an address were encouraged, all the country would bring their children to Him, and they should never see an end of it. Note, It is well for us, that Christ has more love and tenderness than the best of his disciples have. And let us learn of Him not to discountenance any well-meaning souls in their inquiries after Him, though weak. Those that seek Christ must not think it strange if they meet with opposition and rebuke, even from good men, who think they know the mind of Christ better.

III. The favor of our Lord Jesus.

1. He rebuked the disciples, and rectifies the mistake, v. 14. Note, (1.) The children of believing parents belong to the kingdom of heaven, and are members of the visible church. Of such, not only in *disposition* and *affection*, (that might have served for a reason why doves or lambs should be brought to Him), but of such *in age*, to them pertain the privileges of visible church-membership, as among the Jews of old. *The promise is to you, and to your children.* I will be a God to thee and thy seed. (2.) That for this reason they are welcome to Christ, who is ready to entertain those who, when they cannot come themselves, are brought to Him. And this, [1.] In respect to the little children themselves, whom He has on all occasions expressed a concern for; and who, having participated of the malignant influences of the first Adam's sin, must needs share in the riches of the second Adam's grace, else what would come of the apostle's parallel, 1 Cor. 15: 22. Rom. 5: 14, 15, &c. Those who are given to Christ, as part of his purchase, He will in no wise cast

out. [2.] With an eye to the faith of the parents that brought them. Parents are trustees of their children, empowered by nature to transact for their benefit; and therefore Christ accepts their dedication of them as their act and deed, and will own these dedicated things in the day He makes up his jewels. [3.] Therefore He takes it ill of those who forbid and exclude those whom He has received, who cast them out from the inheritance of the Lord, and say, *Ye have no part in the Lord*; (see Josh. 22: 27.) and who forbid water, that they should be baptized, who, if that promise be fulfilled (Isa. 44: 3.) *have received the Holy Ghost as well as we*, for aught we know.

2. He received the little children, and did as He was desired; *He laid his hands on them*, that is, *He blessed them*. The strongest believer lives not so much by apprehending Christ, as by being apprehended of Him, (Phil. 3: 12.) not so much by knowing God as by being known of Him; (Gal. 4: 9.) and this the least child is capable of. If they cannot stretch out their hands to Christ, yet He can lay his hands on them, and so make them his own, and own them for his own.

Mathinks it has something observable in it, that, when He had done this, He departed thence, v. 16. As if He reckoned He had done enough there, when He had thus asserted the rights of the lambs of his flock, and made this provision for a succession of subjects in his kingdom.

V. 16-22. Here is an account of what passed between Christ and a hopeful young man, of great possessions, (v. 22.) a ruler, (Luke 18: 18.) and, as is probable, one of abilities beyond his years.

Now concerning this young man, we are told how fair he bid for heaven, and came short.

I. How fair he bid for hea.en. Here is, 1. The gentleman's serious address to Jesus Christ; v. 16. Not a better question could be asked, nor more gravely.

(1.) He gives Christ an honorable title, *Good Master*, not a ruling, but a teaching, Master. His calling him, *Master*, bespeaks his submissiveness, and willingness to be taught: and

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V. 13-15. The training up of children in true religion, is one grand design of God in marriage; and it beehoves all men to have respect to this in every step they take about it. And all Christians should, by faith and prayer, bring their children to the gracious Savior, at their birth, and even before it, that He may bless them with all his spiritual blessings. Whether they deem it right to devote their infant-offspring to Him in baptism, or form other conclusions on that controverted subject, they should certainly agree, in giving them up to Him, and bringing them up for Him. In attending to these important duties, we may take encouragement from the very rebuke which Christ gave his disciples, and from his readiness to grant the desire of these parents for their children: nor can we much

doubt, that He really received and blessed them, as the lambs of his flock. Whilst we teach our children, as they become capable of learning, how ready the condescending Son of God is to answer their lisping petitions, and to accept of them as his disciples, we may be well satisfied, that He has taken to his heavenly kingdom such of them as have died in infancy: for doubtless the covenant is made with the believer, for the good of this part of his offspring in an especial manner. If then Christian parents have their beloved branches crot in the bud, they cannot surely have cause to complain; or to think much of their pain, care, or trouble, when they are made the instruments of God in raising up children to Him, who may inherit his everlasting kingdom.

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(14.) *Of such is the kingdom of heaven.* I acknowledge these words will not of themselves prove *infant baptism* to be an institution of Christ; but if that appears from other scriptures to be the case, (which I think probable,) there will be proportionable reason to believe that our Lord might here intend some reference to it; and I cannot apprehend of rendering [the original here] *such as resemble these* (that is, such children.) It is the part of a faithful translator not to limit the sense of the original, nor to fix what it leaves ambiguous. DOMINGUS.

Children have no appetite of revenge against those that hurt them, when the parents correct them; yet they cleave to them, and prefer them before all others: they would rather see their mother, though sordid and poorly clothed, than another in the most princely attire: they desire nothing beyond necessity; they are not distracted with cares of this world; nor know the many sins, wherewith years and maturity acquaint the best of the mere sons of men: if we will be saved, let us imitate these harmless patterns, which come nearest to our lost state of innocency.

Verſes 16-22.

The young person here mentioned was a person of great decency and amiableness in his moral character, and had serious thoughts about religion. He came 'sunning,' and kneeling down, (Mark 10: 17.) and inquired, 'What good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' The question at first sight may seem equivalent to the inquiry of the trembling jailer, 'What must I do to be saved?' (Marg. Ref. 1. g.—see Luke 10: 25-29. Acts 16: 29-34, v. 31.) But our Lord said: that his judgment was erroneous, and his heart unhumblid and carnal: He therefore first objected to his giving Him, whom he supposed to be a mere man, the title of *good*: as all mere men are evil in themselves. The remark was the more needful, as the rabbi affected this title; and it intimated, that the inquirer was not properly sensible of the depravity of his own heart, or of the dignity of the person whom he thus addressed. He then directed him to keep the commandments

of God, if he purposed 'to enter into life,' by the good things which he should do. The knowledge of the holy and spiritual law of God is the proper cure of a self-justifying spirit, as it tends to discover the deficiencies and defeilements of all human obedience: (Marg. Ref. 1.—Notes, Rom. 3: 19, 20. 7: 9-12. Gal. 2: 17-21, v. 19.) but probably he expected some external observances and austerities to have been superadded by our Lord, in order to complete his righteousness. (Notes, Rom. 9: 30-33, v. 32. 10: 1-4, v. 3.) He therefore ignorantly repelled, by inquiring, which of the commandments he was to keep; whereas, a perfect obedience to all of them is the indispensable condition of life, according to the covenant of works; (Gen. 2: 10-14.) In order therefore to his conviction, or detection, our Lord pointed out to him the commandments of the second table, and summed them up in the rule of 'loving his neighbor as himself.' But he, regardless of the first table, and ignorant of the spiritual import of the precepts adduced, answered, that 'he had kept them all from his youth.' He could mean the letter alone, and that he was free from the grosser violations of it: for doubtless he had infringed several of them, even in his outward conduct; and he certainly was very far from 'loving his neighbor as himself.' On his further asking 'What lack I yet?' our Lord, to discover to him and others, the evil which lay concealed under these plausible appearances, told him, that he yet *lacked one thing*. (Marg. Ref. 1. g.—see also Mark 10: 17-31, v. 17, 19, 21. Luke 18: 18-30.) This was acting like a skilful physician, who was aware of the patient's disorder, and determined to apply the medicine directly to it. It served at once to prove him far distant from the righteousness of the law, and from the state of mind and heart required by the Gospel. Not to enlarge on the love of God with all the heart and soul: had he 'loved his neighbor as himself,' and believed Jesus to speak with divine authority, he would readily have disposed of his wealth, at his command, in relieving the afflicted, when at the same time it would have insured his own felicity: and had he been a humbled sinner, earnestly seeking

ter, 'what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? ^b *there is none good but one, that is, God*; ^c *but, if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*

18 He saith unto him, 'Which? Jesus said, 'Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness,

^a Luke 10:28. John 6:27-29. Acts 13:46. Dan. 12:2. John 3:15. 4:14. 9:39. 6:47, 68. 10:28. 12:25. 17:2. 3. Rom. 2:7. 5:21. 12:22. 13:9. 15: 6:12, 19. 7:11. 12:3. 3:7. 1 John 1:2. 2:25. 5:11-13, 20. Jude 21. 1 Sam. 2:2. Ex. 6:21. 145:7-9. 137. 1 John 4:8-10, 16. Lev. 18:5. Ex. 20:11, 12. Luke 10:26-28. Rom. 10:5. Gal. 3:11-13. 1 Tim. 2:10. Jam. 2:10. 1 Pet. 1:5. 1:21-22. Ex. 20:12-17. Deut. 5:7-21. Mark 10:19. Luke 18:20. Rom. 13:8-10.

ence to Christ is the appointed way to it, Heb. 5:9. [4.] That he was, or at least thought himself, willing to do what was to be done to obtain this eternal life. Those that know what it is to have eternal life, and what it is to come short of it, will be glad to accept of it on any terms. Such a holy violence does the kingdom of heaven suffer. Note, While there are many that say, *Who will show us any good?* our great inquiry should be, *What shall we do, that we may have eternal life?* What shall we do, to be forever happy in another world? For this world has not that in it, that will make us happy.

2. The encouragement that Christ gave to this address. It is not his manner to send any away without an answer, that come to Him on such an errand, for nothing pleases Him more, p. 17. In his answer,

(1.) He tenderly assists his faith; for, doubtless, He did not mean it for a reproof, when He said, *Why callest thou Me good?* But He would seem to find that faith in what he said, when he called Him *good Master*, which he perhaps was not conscious of to himself; he intended no more than to own and honor Him as a good man, but Christ would lead him to own and honor Him as a good God; for *there is none good, but one, that is God*. Christ will have this young man either to know Him to be God, or not call Him *good*; to teach us to transfer to God all the praise that is at any time given to us. Do any call us *good*? Let us tell them all goodness is from God; and therefore not to us, but to Him give glory. All crowns must lie before his throne. Note, God only is good, and there is none essentially, originally, and unchangeably good, but God only. His goodness is of and from Himself, and all the goodness in the creature is from Him; He is the Fountain; whatever the streams are, *all the springs are in Him*, Jam. 1:17. He is the great Pattern and Sample, by Him all goodness is to be measured; that is good, which is like Him, and agreeable to his mind; we in our language call Him *God*, because He is good. In this, as in other things, our Lord Jesus was the brightness of his glory, (and his goodness is his glory,) and the express Image of his person, and therefore fitly called *good Master*.

(2.) He plainly directs his practice, in answer to his question. He started that thought of his being good, and therefore God, but did not stay on it, lest He should seem to divert from the main question, as many do in needless disputes and strifes of words. Now Christ's answer is, *If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*

[1.] The end proposed is, entering into life. The young man spake of eternal life; but Christ speaks of life, to teach us, that eternal life is the only true life. The words concerning that are the words of this life, Acts 5:20. The present life scarcely deserves the name of life, for *in the midst of life we are in death*. Or, into life, that spiritual life which is the beginning and earnest of eternal life: we have it by the merit of Christ, a mystery which was not as yet fully revealed, and therefore Christ waives that; but the way of entering into it, is, by obedience, and Christ directs us in that. By the former, we

mercy and eternal life, as the gift of God through the divine Savior, he would readily have left all to follow Him. But the event proved, that his wealth was more valued by him, than either God or his neighbor; than Christ, a heavenly treasure, or even his own soul. Doubtless it was his duty to yield a prompt obedience to his command: yet our Lord knew that he would not, and it is evident He intended it as a touchstone, by which to discover him to himself. For when he heard that saying, all his pleasing prospects at once vanished, and he departed sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Though reluctant to give up the hope of eternal life, yet he would not at that time renounce his riches for the sake of it. (*Marg. Ref. t. u.*) We cannot decide what he afterwards did; he might at length be brought to a more spiritual frame of mind. Certainly, all that Christ said to him was suited to humble and convince him; and some would infer his subsequent con-

vince our title; by this, we prove it; it is by adding to faith virtue, that an entrance (the word here used) is ministered to us into the everlasting kingdom, 2 Pet. 1:5, 11. Christ, who is our Life, is the way to the Father, the only Way; but duty, and the obedience of faith, are the way to Christ. There is an entrance into life hereafter, at death, at the great day, and those only shall then enter into life that do their duty; it is the diligent, faithful servant that shall then enter into the joy of his Lord. There is an entrance into life now; *we who have believed, do enter into rest*, Heb. 4:3. We have peace, and comfort, and joy, in believing, and to this also sincere obedience is indispensably necessary.

[2.] The way prescribed is, keeping the commandments. Note, Keeping the commandments of God, is the only way to life and salvation; and sincerity herein is accepted through Christ as our gospel-perfection, provision being made for pardon, on repentance, wherein we come short. Through Christ we are delivered from the condemning power of the law, but the commanding power of it is lodged in the hand of the Mediator, and we still are under the law to Christ, (1 Cor. 9:12.) under it as a rule, though not as a covenant. Keeping the commandments includes faith in Jesus Christ, for that is the great commandment, (1 John 3:23.) and it was one of the laws of Moyses, that, when the great Prophet should be raised up, they should hear Him. Observe, In order to our happiness here and forever, it is not enough for us to know the commandments of God, but we must keep them.

[3.] At his further request, He mentions some particular commandments which he must keep, (p. 18, 19.) *The young man saith unto Him, Which?* Note, Those that would do the commandments of God, must seek them diligently, and inquire after them, what they are. Ezra set himself to seek the law, and to do it, Ezra 7:10.

In answer to this, Christ specifies several, especially the commandments of the second table, p. 18, 19. 1st, That which concerns our own and our neighbor's life; 2^d, Our own and our neighbor's chastity, which should be as dear to us as life itself; 3^d, Our own and our neighbor's wealth and outward estate; 4th, That which concerns truth, and our own and our neighbor's good name; neither for thyself nor against thy neighbor; for so it is here left at large. 5th, That which concerns the duties of particular relations; 6th, That comprehensive law of love, which is the spring and summary of all these duties; (Gal. 5:14. Rom. 13:9.) that royal law, Jam. 2:8. Some think this comes in here, not as the sum of the second table, but as the particular import of the tenth commandment; *Thou shalt not covet*, which, in Mark, is, *De fraud not*; intimating that it is not lawful for me to design advantage to myself by the loss of another; for that is to covet, and to love myself better than my neighbor, whom I ought to love as myself, and to treat as I would myself be treated.

Our Savior here specifies second-table duties only, 1. Because they that now sat in Moses' seat, either wholly neglected, or greatly corrupted them, ch. 23:23. Their preaching ran out all in rituals, and nothing in morals; and therefore Christ pressed that most, which they least insisted on. As one truth, so one duty must not justify another; but equity requires that that he helped up, which is most in danger of being thrust out. That is the truth we are

version from the words of St. Mark, who says that Jesus loved him: though this may only mean, that He saw a natural amiableness, which excited in Him, as man, a peculiar regard. (See Mark 10:17-31, p. 21, 22.) The reference to the ten commandments accords both to the Hebrew and the LXX; except as the fifth commandment is placed last, and part of it omitted.

(16.) *What good thing?* The Pharisees divided the precepts of the law into the weighty and the slight; and thought that many of them might be neglected and violated. Those laws which respected external rites they almost solely referred to the number of the weighty.

(17.) *Callest thou Me good?* 'Some MSS. and versions have, "Questionest Me concerning that good thing?" Dr. A. CLARKE

19 "Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

20 The young man saith unto him, "All these things have I kept from my youth up; what lack I yet?"

21 Jesus said unto him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come and follow me.

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

[Practical Observations.]

■ 15:4-6, Lev. 19:3. Prov. 30:17.
Eph. 6:1, 2.
22:29, Lev. 19:18, Luke 10:27.
Rom. 13:9, Gal. 5:14, Jam. 2:8.
Mark 10:20, Luke 15:27, 29, 18:11, 18:21, John 8:7.
■ Gal. 3:24, Phil. 1:6, 19:24, Mark 10:21, Luke 18:22, 19:20, 20:48, Gen. 6:9, 17:1, Job 1:1, 2:1, Ps. 37:37, Luke 6:40, Phil. 3:12-15.
■ 19:120, Mark 10:21, Luke 18:23, 18:33, 16:9, 18:22, Acts 2:45, 4:34, 2:34, 1 Tim. 6:17, 18, Heb. 10:34, ■ 28, 4:19, 8:22, 10:21, Mark 2:14, 8:34, 10:21, Luke 5:27, 9:23, 18:22, John 10:27.
18:32, 16:9, Jude 1:23, 24, Dan. 6:11-17, Mark 6:28, 10:22, Luke 9:23, John 19:12-16.
■ 6:24, 18:23, Ps. 17:14, Ex. 33:31, Eph. 5:5, Col. 3:5.

Christ, whose doctrine was supposed to improve and perfect the Mosaic institution. He desired to know what were the peculiar precepts of his religion, that he might have all that was in them to polish and accomplish him. Who could bid fairer?

But, (2.) Even in this, he discovered his ignorance and folly. [1.] Taking the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16-22. It is necessary that we inculcate, not only a decency of moral conduct, and an external regard to religion, but an attention to the Gospel as the only remedy for lost sinners: otherwise those we instruct, though very amiable, serious, and earnest about eternal life, will never know their need of salvation. Many abstain from gross vices, and rest in the outward letter of the commandments, and are ready to say, 'All these have I kept from my youth;' when ten thousand instances of disobedience, in thought, word, and deed, are marked against them in the book of God, to be produced to their conviction and confusion at the day of judgment. Indeed, no man can enter into life, who does not habitually aim to keep the commandments of God; and wilful, customary transgression will prove many professors of the Gospel to be further from the kingdom of heaven, than even this ruler. But 'there is none righteous, no, not one;' it is therefore proper sometimes to task self-sufficient inquirers; and when they proudly ask, 'What lack I yet?' to point out to them their duty, according to the spiritual and extensive law of God. This may lead them into an acquaintance with their own weakness and depravity, and detect the secret pride and worldliness of their hearts; and so prepare 'he way for their understanding and welcoming the Gospel of free salvation. Not only does the law require us (if Provi-

called to bear our testimony to, which is opposed or neglected. 2. Because He would teach all, that moral honesty is a necessary branch of true Christianity, and to be minded accordingly. Though a mere moral man comes short of being a complete Christian, yet an immoral man is certainly no true Christian; for the grace of God teaches us to live soberly and righteously, as well as godly. Nay, though first-table duties have in them more of the essence of religion, yet second-table duties have in them more of the evidence of it. Our light burns in love to God, but shines in love to our neighbor.

1. See here how he came short.

II. By pride, and a vain conceit of his own merit and strength; this is the ruin of thousands. When Christ told him what commandments he must keep, he answered very scornfully, v. 20.

Now; (1.) According as he understood the law, as prohibiting only the outward acts of sin, I think he said true, and Christ knew it, for He did not contradict him; nay, it is said in Mark, He loved him; so far was very good and pleasing to Christ. Paul reckons it a privilege, not contemptible in itself, though dross in comparison with Christ, that he was, as touching the righteousness that is in the law, blameless, Phil. 3:6. His observance of these commands was universal; All these have I kept; it was early and constant; from my youth up. Note, A man may be free from gross sin, and yet come short of grace and glory. His hands may be clean from external pollutions, and yet he may perish eternally in his heart-wickedness. What shall we think then of those whose fraud and injustice, drunkenness and uncleanness, witness against them, that all these they have broken from their youth up, though they have named the name of Christ? Well, it is said to come short of those that come short of heaven.

It was commendable also, that he desired to know further what his duty was; What lack I yet? Having not yet attained, he thus seemed to press forward. And he applied himself to

law in its spiritual sense, no doubt he had offended against all these commands. Had he been acquainted with the extent and spiritual meaning of the law, instead of saying, All these have I kept; what lack I yet? he would have said, with shame and sorrow, 'All these have I broken, what shall I do to get my sins pardoned?' Take it how you will, what he said savored of pride and vain-glory, and had in it too much of that boasting which is excluded by the law of faith, (Rom. 3:27,) and which excludes from justification, Luke 18:14, 14. What lack I yet? perhaps was not so much a desire of further instruction, as a demand of the praise of his present fancied perfection, and a challenge to Christ Himself to show him any one instance wherein he was deficient.

2. By an inordinate love of the world, and his enjoyments in it. This was the fatal rock on which he split. Observe,

(1.) How he was tried in this matter; v. 21. Christ waived the matter of his boasted obedience to the law, because this would be a more effectual way of discovering him than a dispute of the extent of the law: and what Christ here prescribes, is not a thing of supererogation, or a perfection we may be saved without, but necessary and indispensable duty. What Christ said to him, He thus far said to us all, that, if we will approve ourselves Christians indeed, and would be found at last the heirs of eternal life, we must do these two things:

[1.] We must practically prefer the heavenly treasures before all the wealth and riches in this world. No thanks to us to prefer heaven before hell; the worst man in the world would be glad of that for a refuge, when he can stay no longer here; but to make it our choice, and to prefer it before this earth—that is to be a Christian indeed. Now, as an evidence of this, 1st, We must dispose of what we have in this world, for the honor of God, and in his service; 'Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor;' as the first Christians did, with an eye to this precept; (Acts 4:34.) sit loose to it, be willing to part with it. A gracious contempt of the world, and compassion of the poor and afflicted, are a necessary condition of salvation; and giving of alms as necessary an evidence of that contempt of the world, and compassion to our

dence call us to it,) to part with our substance, or even our lives, for the glory of God, and the good of our neighbors: but except a man be ready to forsake all that he has for Christ's sake, he cannot be his disciple, or be saved according to the Gospel. No unregenerate man will comply either with the precept of the law, or the requisition of Christ, when he is fairly put to the trial. In this manner, numbers forsake Him, loving this present world; they have their convictions and desires, but the sacrifice insisted on is too valuable; therefore they depart sorrowful, perhaps trembling. This is peculiarly the case with those who have great possessions, and who live in trying times. Few, in comparison of the numbers of those who call Christ, Lord, Lord, seem prepared for obedience, should He require them to 'sell all and give to the poor, and come and follow Him, that they may have a treasure in heaven.' Many refuse, at his express command, to part with the most trivial interest or indulgence; many will not give even a moderate proportion of their goods to the poor, notwithstanding all the promises made to those, who do this out of faith, and love to Christ. It behoves us then to try ourselves in these matters, for the Lord will ere long put us to the trial; and then, if found wanting, we must abide the eternal and awful consequences.

SCOTT

(19.) As thyself. 'Self-love, as it is generally called, has been declaimed against, even by religious people, as a pernicious and dreadful evil. But they have denominated that intense propensity which unregenerate men feel to gratify their carnal appetites and vicious passions self-love; whereas it might more properly be termed self-hatred, or self-murder. If I am to love my neighbor as myself, and this is 'love your neighbor as ill to its neighbor,' then self-love, in the sense in which our Lord uses it, is something excellent. It is properly a disposition essential to our nature, and inseparable from our being, by which we desire to be happy, seek the happiness we have not, and rejoice in it when possessed. In a word, it is a uniform wish of the soul to avoid all evil, and to enjoy all good. Therefore, he who is wholly governed by self-love, properly and scripturally speaking, will devote his whole soul to God, and earnestly and constantly seek all his peace, happiness and salvation in the enjoyment of God. But self-love cannot make me happy. I am only the subject which receives the happiness, not the object that constitutes it; for it is that object, properly

speaking, that I love, and love not only for its own sake, but also for the happiness I enjoy through it. "No man," saith the apostle, "ever hated his own flesh." But he that sinneth against God wrongeth his own soul, both of present and eternal salvation; and is so far from being governed by self-love, that he is the enemy of his best interests in both worlds. (1 Pet. 3:10, 11.)

(21.) When Christ calls it "perfection" to sell all and give to the poor,—he speaks according to the idiom of the nation, which thought so; not that hence He either devoted Christians to voluntary poverty, or that He exhorted this man to rest ultimately in a Pharisaical perfection.

LIGHTFOOT.

(22.) Went away sorrowful. Men undergo great agony of mind while they are in suspense between the love of the world and the love of their souls. When the first absolutely predominates, they enjoy a factitious rest through a false peace: when the latter, then they possess true tranquillity of mind, through that peace of God that passeth knowledge.

DR A. CLARKE.

23 Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Deut. 6:10-12. 9:10-18. Job 31: 24, 25. Ps. 49:7, 16-19. Prov. 11: 24, 26, 28, 30. Mark 10: 23. Luke 12: 15-21. 16:13, 14, 19-28. 18:24. 1 Cor. 1:26. 1 Tim. 6:9, 10. Jam. 4:9-11. 24. 5:1-4. 1 Pet. 5:3. 21:31. John 3:3, 5. Acts 14:22.

and recompense for all we have left, or lost, or laid out, for God in this world; *Thou shalt have treasure in heaven.* The precept sounded hard and harsh; 'Sell that thou hast, and give it away;' and the objection against it would soon arise, that 'Charity begins at home;' therefore Christ immediately annexes this assurance of a treasure in heaven. Note, Christ's promises make his precepts easy, and his yoke not only tolerable but pleasant, sweet, and very comfortable; yet this promise was as much a trial of this young man's faith, as the precept was of his charity, and contempt of the world.

[2.] We must devote ourselves entirely to the conduct and government of our Lord Jesus; *Come, and follow Me.* It seems here to be meant of a close and constant attendance on his person, such as the selling of what he had in the world was as necessary to, as it was to the other disciples to quit their callings; but of us it is required that we duly attend on his ordinances, strictly conform to his pattern, and cheerfully submit to his disposals, and by upright, universal obedience observe his statutes, and keep his laws; and all this from a principle of love to Him, and dependance on Him, and with a holy contempt of every thing else in comparison of Him, and much more in competition with Him. This is to *follow Christ fully*. To sell all and give to the poor, will not serve, unless we come, and follow Christ. If I give all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profits me nothing. Well, on these terms, and on no lower, is salvation to be had; and they are very easy and reasonable terms, and will appear so to those who are brought to be glad of it o. any terms.

(1.) See how he was discovered. This touched him in a tender part; v. 22. [1.] He was a rich man, and loved his riches, and therefore went away. He did not like eternal life on these terms. Note, 1st, Those who have much in the world, are in the greatest temptation to love it, and to set their hearts on it. Such is the bewitching nature of worldly wealth, that those who want it least, desire it most; when riches increase, then is the danger of setting the heart on them, Ps. 62: 10. If he had had but two mites in all the world, and had been commanded to give them to the poor, or but one handful of meal in the barrel, and a little oil in the cruse, and had been bidden to make a cake of that for a poor prophet, the trial, one would think, had been much greater, and yet those trials have been overcome; (Luke 21: 4. and 1 Kings 17: 14.) which shows that the love of the world draws stronger than the most pressing necessities. 2dly, The reigning love of this world keeps many from Christ, who seem to have some good desires toward Him. A great estate, as to those who are got above it, is a great furtherance; so to those who are entangled in the love of it, it is a great hindrance, in the way to heaven.

Yet something of honesty there was in it, that when he did not like the terms, he went away, and would not, as Demas did, pretend to that which he could not find in his heart, to come up to the strictness of; since he could not be a complete Christian, he would not be a hypocrite.

[2.] Yet he was a thinking man, and well inclined, and therefore *went away sorrowful*. He had a leaning toward Christ, and was loath to part with Him. Note, Many a one is ruined by the sin he commits with reluctance; leaves Christ sorrowfully, and yet is never truly sorry for leaving Him, for if he were, he would return to Him. Thus this man's sorrow was *recreation of spirit* to him, then when it was his temptation. What then would the sorrow be afterward, when his possessions would be gone, and all hopes of eternal life gone too?

V. 23-30. We have here Christ's discourse with his disciples upon occasion of the rich man's breaking with Christ.

1. Christ took occasion from hence to show the difficulty of the salvation of rich people; v. 23, 26.

1. It is a hard thing for a rich man, such as this here, to get to heaven. Note, From the harms and falls of others, it is good for us to infer that which will be of caution to us.

Now, (1.) This is vehemently asserted by our Savior, v. 23, 24. He said this to his poor disciples, that the less they had of worldly wealth, the less hindrance they had in the way to heaven. Note, It should be a satisfaction to

them who are in a low condition, that they are not exposed to the temptations of a high and prosperous condition: if they live more hardly in this world than the rich, yet, if withal they get more easily to a better world, they have no reason to complain. This saying is ratified, v. 23., *Verily I say unto you.* He that has reason to know what the way to heaven is, tells us, that this is one of the greatest difficulties in that way. It is repeated, v. 24. *Again I say unto you.* Thus He speaks once, yea, twice that which man is loath to perceive, and more loath to believe.

[1.] He saith that it is a hard thing for a rich man to be a good Christian, and to be saved. More duties are expected from rich people than from others, which they can hardly do; and more sins easily beset them, which they can hardly avoid. Rich people have great temptations, and such as are very insinuating; it is hard not to be charmed with a smiling world; very hard, when we are filled with these hid treasures, not to take up with them for a portion. Rich people have a great account to make up for their estates, their interest, their time, and their opportunities of doing and getting good, above others. It must be a great measure of divine grace, that will enable a man to break through these difficulties.

[2.] He saith that the conversion and salvation of a rich man is extremely difficult, v. 24. He uses a proverbial expression, denoting a difficulty altogether unconquerable by the art and power of man; only the almighty grace of God will enable a rich man to get over this difficulty. The difficulty of the salvation of apostates, (Heb. 6: 4.) and of old sinners, (Jer. 13: 23,) is thus represented as an impossibility. The salvation of any is so very difficult, (even the righteous scarcely are saved,) that where there is a peculiar difficulty, it is fitly set forth thus. It is very rare for a man to be rich, and not to set his heart on his riches; and it is utterly impossible for a man that sets his heart on his riches to get to heaven; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, 1 John 2: 15. James 4: 4. First, The way to heaven is very fitly compared to a needle's eye, which it is hard to hit, and hard to get through. Secondly, A rich man is fitly compared to a camel, a beast of burden, for he has riches, as a camel has his load; he carries it, but it is another's, he has it from others, spends it for others, and must shortly leave it to others; it is a burden, for men load themselves with thick clay, Hab. 2: 26. A camel is a large creature, but unwieldy.

(2.) This truth is very much wondered at, and scarcely credited by the disciples, v. 25. Many surprising truths Christ told them; this was one, but their weakness was the cause of their wonder. It was not in contradiction to Christ, but for awakening to themselves, that they said, *Who then can be saved?* Note, Considering the many difficulties that are in the way of salvation, it is really strange that any are saved. When we think how good God is, it may seem a wonder that so few are his; but when we think how bad man is, it is more a wonder that so many are, and Christ will be eternally admired in them. *Who then can be saved?* Since so many are rich, and so many more would be rich, who can be saved? If riches are a hindrance to rich people, are not

them He did not mean that all rich persons must be lost, but to warn them against the desire of such dangerous distinctions, assured them, that 'with men indeed it was impossible, but with God all things were possible.'

SCOTT.
(23.) *A rich man shall hardly enter, &c.* 'By the kingdom of heaven is sometimes understood the Christian church, then soon to be erected, and sometimes the state of the blessed in heaven, after the resurrection. I take this to hold true, in which way soever the kingdom be understood. Opuient and voluptuous men, who had so much to lose, and so much to fear, would not, among the hearers of the Gospel, be easily persuaded. As little can the justness of the sentiment be doubted, in relation to the state of the blessed hereafter, when the deceitfulness of riches and the snare into which it so often inveigles men, are duly considered. So close an analogy runs through all the divine dispensations, that, in more instances than this, it may be affirmed with truth, that the declarations of Scripture are susceptible of either interpretation.'

CAMPBELL.

Verses 23-26.

Some would read a *camel*, instead of a *camel*; but it seems to have been a proverbial expression, signifying extreme difficulty, or apparent impossibility. Riches powerfully tend to increase pride, covetousness, and self-indulgence: they purchase flatterers, and exclude faithful reprovers. They prejudice the mind against the humbling truths and self-denying precepts of Christ; and they increase the number and force of these obstacles which must be broken through, and the supposed value of those objects which must be renounced, if a man would become a disciple of Christ. Far more, in proportion, of the poor, than of the rich, are converted, and enter the kingdom of grace and of glory and the conversion of a very wealthy man seems the peculiar triumph of almighty grace. (See Luke 12: 15-21. 16: 9-15, 19-23. 19: 1-10. 1 Tim. 6: 6-10, v. 9, 10, 17-19. Jam. 1: 9-11. 2: 5-7.) The disciples, however, who were poor and felt their own difficulties, and probably thought that the rich had more advantages for religion than themselves, were exceedingly astonished at this saying, and exclaimed, 'Who then can be saved?' But Jesus, to allow

24 And again I say unto you, ^aIt is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, ^bthan for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

25 When his disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, ^cWho then can be saved?

26 But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; ^dbut with God all things are possible.

27 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, ^ewe have forsaken all, and followed thee; ^fwhat shall we have therefore?

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, ^gin the regeneration ^hwhen the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ⁱye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

^a 28, 23-24, Jer. 13:23, Mark 10:24, 25, Luke 19:35, John 5:44.
^b 24-25, Mark 13:20, Luke 13:23, 24, Rom. 10:13, 11:5-7.
^c Gen. 18:14, Num. 11:23, Job 42:2, Jer. 32:27, Zech. 8:6, Mark 10:27, Luke 17:37, 18:27.
^d 23-25, 9:45, 17:33, 33:9, Mark 1:17-20, 2:14, 9:28, Luke 5:11, 37:38, 14:33, 18:34, Phil. 3:7.
^e 20:10-12, Luke 10:29, 1 Cor. 1:2, 2:10, 4:7.
^f 1, 65-17, 66:22, Acts 3:21, 2 Pet. 3:13, Rev. 21:5.
^g 20:11-15, 2 Thes. 1:7-10.
^h 20:21, 1 Cor. 6:2.
ⁱ 20:21, 2 Tim. 2:12, Rev. 2:26, 27, 3:21, 5:27, 24:4, 28:21, Lev. 24:5, Exod. 8:12, 1 Kings 18:31, Ezra 6:17, Rev. 7:4, 12:1, 21:12-14, 22:2.

what are the characters of those that shall be saved, it concerns us to inquire whether we, through grace, answer those characters. Now Peter hopes that, as to the main scope of the condition, they had come up to it, for God had wrought in them a holy contempt of the world, in comparison with Christ;

pride and luxury to those that are not rich: and who then can get to heaven?

2. Though it be hard, yet it is not impossible, for the rich to be saved; *v. 26*. This is a great truth in general, that nothing is too hard for God, Gen. 18: 14. Num. 11: 23. When men are at a loss, God is not, for his power is infinite and irresistible; but this truth is here applied, (1.) To the salvation of any. *Who can be saved?* say the disciples. None, saith Christ, by any created power. *With men, this is impossible:* the wisdom of man would soon be non-plussed in contriving, and the power of man baffled in effecting, the salvation of a soul. No creature can work the change that is necessary to the salvation of a soul, either in itself or in any one else. It is a creation, it is a resurrection; but *with God all things are possible*. Note, The beginning, progress, and perfection of the work of salvation, depend entirely upon the almighty power of God, to which all things are possible. Faith is wrought by that power, (Eph. 1: 19.) and is kept by it, 1 Pet. 1: 5. Job's experience of God's convincing, humbling grace, made him acknowledge, more than any thing else, *I know Thou canst do every thing*, Job 42: 2. (2.) To the salvation of rich people especially; it is impossible with men that such should be saved, but with God even this is possible: not that they should be saved in their worldliness, but *from it*. Note, The sanctification and salvation of such as are surrounded with the temptations of this world are not to be despaired of; it may be brought about by the all-sufficiency of the divine grace; and when such are brought to heaven, they will be there everlasting monuments of the power of God. I am willing to think that in this there is an intimation of mercy Christ had yet in store for this young gentleman, who was now gone away sorrowful; it was not impossible to God yet to recover him, aid bring him to a better mind.

II. Peter took occasion hence to inquire what they should get by it, who had come up to the terms, and had left all to follow Him, *v. 27*. &c. We have here the disciples' expectations from Christ, and his promises to them.

1. We have their expectations from Christ; Peter, in the name of the rest, signifies that they depended on Him for something considerable in lieu of what they had left for Him, *v. 27*. Christ had promised the young man, that, if he would sell all, and come and follow Him, he should have treasure in heaven: Now Peter desires to know,

(1.) Whether they had sufficiently come up to those terms: they had not sold all, (for they had many of them wives and families to provide for,) but they had forsaken all; they had not given it to the poor, but they had renounced it as far as it might be any way a hindrance to them in serving Christ. Note, When we hear

and how this must be evidenced, no certain rule can be given, but according as we are called.

Lord, saith Peter, *we have forsaken all*. Alas! it was a poor all: one of them had indeed quitted a place in the custom-house, but Peter, and the most of them, had only left a few boats and nets, and the appurtenances of a poor fishing-trade; and yet observe how Peter there speaks of it, as if it had been some mighty thing; *Behold, we have forsaken all*. Note We are too apt to make the most of our services and sufferings for Christ, and to think we have made Him much our debtor. However, Christ does not upbraid them, though it was but little that they had forsaken, yet it was *their all*, like the widow's two mites, and was as dear to them as if it had been more, and therefore Christ took it kindly that they left it to follow Him; for He accepts according to what a man hath.

(2.) Whether therefore they might expect that treasure which the young man shall have if he will sell all. 'Lord,' saith Peter, 'shall we have it, who have left all?' All people are for what they can get; and Christ's followers are allowed to consult their own true interest, and to ask, *What shall we have?* Christ looked at the joy set before Him, and Moses at the recompense of reward. For this end it is set before us, that by a patient continuance in well-doing we might seek for it. Christ encourages us to ask what we shall gain by leaving all to follow Him; that we may see He doth not call us to our prejudice, but unspeakably to our advantage. As it is the language of an obedient faith to ask, 'What shall we do?' with an eye to the precepts; so it is of a hoping, trusting faith, to ask, 'What shall we have?' with an eye to the promises. But observe, the disciples had long since left all to engage themselves in the service of Christ, and yet never till now asked, *What shall we have?* Though there was no visible prospect of advantage by it, they were so well assured of his goodness, that they knew they should not lose by Him at last, and therefore referred themselves to Him, in what way He would make up their losses to them; minded their work, and asked not what should be their wages. Note, It honors Christ, to trust Him and serve Him, and not to indent with Him. Now that this young man was gone from Christ to his possessions, it was time for them to think what they should trust to. When we see what others keep by their hypocrisy and apostasy, it is proper for us to consider what we hope, through grace, to gain not for, but by, our sincerity and constancy, and then we shall see more reason to pity them than to envy them.

2. We have here Christ's promises to them, and to all others that tread in the steps of their faith and obedience.

(1.) To his immediate followers, *v. 28*. They had signalized their respect to Him, as the first that followed Him, and to them He promises not only treasure, but honor, in heaven; and

(24.) *A camel.* 'Six manuscripts, by the changing of a letter, read *camel*, a mere gloss inserted by some who did not know that the word was a proverb, common enough in the East. So the Koran, Surat 7: 37. "Gates of heaven shut; nor shall he enter there till a camel shall pass through the eye of a needle." &c.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(25.) *Who then can be saved?* 'A rich man, in our Lord's sense of it, is not one who has so many hundreds or thousands more than some of his neighbors; but is one who gets more than is necessary to supply all his own wants, and those of his household, and keeps the residue still to himself; though the poor are starving through lack of the necessities of life. In a word, he is a man who gets all he can, serves all he can, and keeps all he has gotten.' Id.

It has been said, 'The love of gain is the most formidable of all enemies to the law of neighborly love. Men brought up under the influence of the spirit of trade, generally endeavor by every means in their power to evade the commands of natural morality.' In view of these reflections, we need not wonder at the expressions of our Lord. Ep.

Verse 27.

'To forsake all, without following Christ, is the virtue of a philosopher. To follow Christ in profession, without forsaking all, is the state of the generality of Christians. But, to follow Christ and forsake all, is the perfection of a Christian.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 28.

If we join the expression, 'in the regeneration,' to the preceding clause, it may mean the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit on their hearts, disposing them to obey his call. But it may, and probably should, be joined to the subsequent clause; and then it refers to the

time, when the apostles would receive their full recompense, even when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory.' Some reference may perhaps be had to the establishment of the Christian church, and the condemnation of the Jewish nation in consequence of their ministry: but the day of judgment seems immediately intended.—Judas was at this time one of the number; but he had never truly left all and followed Christ: when 'he by transgression fell,' then another was appointed in his place, and the number of twelve was continued, with reference to the twelve tribes of which Israel was originally constituted.—In the day of the great restoration of all things, when the elect shall enter on a new life of unspeakable glory, even in that great and dreadful day, when 'the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of majesty, to judge the quick and the dead,' then shall ye, my apostles, who are now despisable and mean, have the honor to sit up on several thrones, to second and assist this awful act of final judgment, on the rebellious tribes of Israel.' Ep. Hall.

[Scott.] 'Regeneration.' 'Renovation.' we are accustomed to apply the term regeneration to the conversion of individuals; whereas its relation here is to the general state of things. The return of the Israelites, after the Babylonish captivity, is so named by Josephus. The principal completion will be at the general resurrection, when there will be, in the most important sense, a renovation, or regeneration of heaven and earth, when all things shall become new; yet in a subordinate sense it may be said to have been accomplished when God came to visit, in judgement, that guilty land, when the old dispensation was utterly abolished, and succeeded by the Christian dispensation. CAMPBELL.

29 And 'every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

30 But many that are first shall be last, and the last shall be first.

14:29. Mark 10:29, 30. Luke 18: 29, 30.
 14:31. 10:27, 28. Luke 14:26. 2 Cor. 12: 5. Phil. 3:8.
 14:32. 1:22. Luke 6:22. John 15: 19. Act. 9:14. 1 Pet. 4:14. 3 John 7.
 14:33, 34. 16: 25, 34, 46.
 8:11, 12. 20:16. 21:31, 32. Mark 10: 31. Luke 7:29, 30. 13:30. 18:13, 14. Rom. 1:20, 31. 9:30—33

here they have a grant for it from Him who is the Fountain of honor in that kingdom, v. 28. Observe.

[1.] The preamble or consideration of the grant, which, as usual, is a recital of their services; 'You have followed me in the regeneration, and therefore this will I do for you.' The time of Christ's appearing in this world was a time of regeneration, of reformation, Heb. 9: 10. The disciples had followed Christ when the church was yet in embryo, the gospel-temple but in the framing, when they had more work and service than dignity and power. Now, therefore, he will put particular marks of honor on them. Note, Christ hath special favor for those who begin early with Him, who trust Him, as they did, who followed Him in the regeneration. Observe, Peter spake of their forsaking all, to follow Him; Christ only speaks of their following Him, which was the main matter.

[2.] The date of their honor. It should commence, not immediately from the date of these presents, but when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory; and to this some refer that, in the regeneration; 'You who now have followed me, shall, in the regeneration, be thus dignified.'

Christ's second coming will be a regeneration, when there shall be new heavens, and a new earth, and the restitution of all things. All that partake of the regeneration in grace, (John 3: 3.) shall partake of the regeneration in glory; for as grace is the first resurrection, (Rev. 20: 6.) so glory is the second regeneration.

Now their honor being adjourned till the Son of man's sitting in the throne of his glory, intimates, 1st, That they must stay for their advancement till then. Note, As long as our Master's glory is delayed, it is fit that ours should be so too, and that we should wait for it with an earnest expectation, as of a hope not seen, Rom. 8: 19. We must live, and work, and suffer, in faith, and hope, and patience, which therefore must be tried by these delays. 2dly, That they must share with Christ in his advancement. They, having suffered with a suffering Jesus, must reign with a reigning Jesus, for both here and hereafter Christ will be all in all; we must be where He is, (John 12: 26.) must appear with Him; (Col. 3: 4.) and when our Lord comes, we shall receive not only our own, but our own with usury. The longest voyages make the richest returns.

[3.] The honor itself hereby granted; Ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. It is hard to determine the particular sense of this promise, and I see no harm in admitting it to have many accomplishments. 1st, When Christ is ascended to the right hand of the Father, and sits on the throne of his glory, then the apostles shall receive power by the Holy Ghost; (Acts 1: 8.) shall be advanced as on thrones, in promoting the Gospel; shall deliver it with authority, as a judge from the bench; shall have their commission enlarged, and shall publish the laws of Christ, by which the church (Gal. 6: 16.) shall be governed, and Israel according to the flesh, that continues in infidelity, with all others that do likewise, shall be condemned. The honor and power given them may be explained by Jer. 1: 10. See, I have set thee over the nations; and Ezek. 20: 4. With thou judge them? and Dan. 7: 18. The saints shall take the kingdom; and Rev. 12: 11. where the doctrine of Christ is called a crown of twelve stars. 2dly, When Christ appears for the destruction of Jerusalem, (ch. 24: 31.) then shall He send the apostles to judge the Jewish nation, because in that their predictions would be accomplished. 3dly, Some think it has reference to the conversion of the Jews, yet to come, at the latter end of the world, after the fall of antichrist; so Whitby; and that 'it respects the apostles' government of the twelve tribes of Israel, by a reviviscence of that Spirit which resided in them, and of that purity and knowledge which they delivered to the world, and chiefly by admission of their Gospel to be the standard of their faith, and the direction of their lives.' 4thly, It is certainly to have its full accomplishment at the second coming of Jesus Christ, when the saints in general shall judge the world, and the twelve apostles especially, as assessors with Christ, in the judgment of the great day, when all the world shall receive their final doom, and they shall ratify and applaud the sentence. But the tribes of Israel are named, partly because the number of the apostles was designedly the same with the number of the tribes; partly because

the apostles were Jews, befriended them most, but were most spitefully persecuted by them; and it intimates that the saints will judge their acquaintance and kindred according to the flesh, and will, in the great day, judge those they had a kindness for; will judge their persecutors, who in this world judged them.

But the general intendment of this promise is, to show the glory and dignity reserved for the saints in heaven. The apostles in this world were hurried and tossed, there they shall sit down at rest and ease; here they were in bonds, afflictions, and deaths, there they shall sit on thrones of glory; here they were dragged to the bar, there they shall be advanced to the bench; here the twelve tribes of Israel trampled on them, there they shall tremble before them. And will not this be recompense enough to make up all their losses and expenses for Christ? Luke 22: 29.

[4.] The ratification of this grant; it is firm, inviolably, immutably sure; for Christ hath said, 'Verily I say unto you, I the Amen, the faithful Witness, who am empowered to make this grant, I have said it, and it cannot be disannulled.'

[2.] Here is a promise to all others that should in like manner leave all to follow Christ. It was not peculiar to the apostles, but this honor have all his saints. Christ will take care they shall none of them lose by Him; (v. 29.) Every one that has forsaken any thing for Christ, shall receive.

[1.] Losses for Christ are here supposed. Christ had told them, that his disciples must deny themselves in all that is done to them in this world; now here He specifies particulars. If they have not forsaken all, as the apostles did, yet they have forsaken a great deal, houses, suppose, or dear relations, that would not go with them; these are particularly mentioned, as hardest for a tender, gracious spirit to part with; brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children; and lands are added in the close, the profits of which were the support of the family.

Now, 1st, The loss of these things is supposed to be for Christ's name's sake; else He doth not oblige himself to make it up. Many forsake brethren, and wife, and children, in humor and passion, as the bird that wanders from her nest; that is a sinful desertion. But if we forsake them for Christ's sake, because we cannot keep them, and keep a good conscience; if we do not quit our concern for them, or our duty to them, but our comfort in them, and will do it rather than deny Christ, and this with an eye to Him and to his will and glory; this is that which shall be thus recompensed. It is not the suffering, but the cause, that makes both the martyr and the confessor.

2dly, It is supposed to be a great loss; and yet Christ undertakes to make it up, be it ever so great.

[2.] A recompense of these losses is here secured. Thousands have dealt with Christ, and have trusted Him far; but never any one lost by Him, never any one but was an unspeakable gainer by Him, when the account came to be balanced. Christ here gives his word for it, that He will not only indemnify his suffering servants, and save them harmless, but will abundantly reward them. Let them make a sche-

Verses 29, 30.

This must be understood especially of divine consolations, which commonly most abound when great sacrifices are made, or great hardships endured, for conscience's sake; and which are a hundred-fold better, than all earthly comforts and possessions; as they best know who have most experienced them. But those providential interpositions may also be included, by which the Lord often makes up, in outward comforts, of a far more valuable nature, all the losses and privations voluntarily incurred by his true disciples, in adhering to Him, and obeying his commandments; for evidently the promise has respect to all times and places. 'A full content of mind, the comforts of an upright conscience; the joys of the Holy Ghost, increase of grace, and hopes of glory; and shall have God for their Father, and be rich towards God, and have Christ for their Spouse, and all good Christians bearing that warm affection to them, which will render them more closely united to, and more affectionately concerned for them, than those who were allied to them by the strictest bonds of nature.' Whitby. (Marg. Ref. 1.—n.—See Rom. 6: 3—5. 1 Cor. 3: 18—23, v. 21—23. 2 Cor. 1—7, v. 6—6. Phil. 1: 21—26. 1 Pet. 4: 12—16.) To this our Lord added,

'But many that are first shall be last, and the last first.' He doubtless referred to the moral and amiable young man, who was found on trial to be 'further from the kingdom of heaven,' than many publicans and harlots, who became 'first,' when he was cast behind; but the rule has reference to a variety of cases. Prodigals often repent, and get before decent moralists; the Gentile converts obtained the priority to the Jewish nation; splendid hypocrites apostatize, and open persecutors become preachers of the Gospel; and those, who have been the grief and reproach of families and neighborhoods, sometimes become their chief credit and blessing; whilst plausible characters are by this very circumstance rendered more inveterate against the truth. Marg. Ref. o.—See 20: 1—16. 21: 28—32.

(30.) 'This was doubtless a proverb. Most commentators think our Lord had the apostles in view, which I think most probable. Gratius and Theophylact take it to refer to the Jews and Gentiles. I think we are not warranted in limiting the application, which seems to reach to all whom it may concern; though doubtless it was intended for the warning and edification of all Christians, as Luke 13: 30.'

CHAP. X.

Jesus speaks a parable of laborers sent at different hours into a vineyard, and applies it, 1-16. ¹⁷⁻¹⁹ foretells his own death and resurrection; ²⁰⁻²³ rejects the request of the mother of James and John in behalf of her sons; and represents the indignation and annihilation of the other apostles, 24-28; and gives sight to two blind men, 29-34.

FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire laborers into his vineyard.

2 And when he had agreed with the laborers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

3 And he went out

3: 12, 13, 24, 31, 33, 44, 45, 47. 22: 3. 25: 1, 14.
9: 37, 38. 21: 33-43. Cant. 8: 11, 12. Is. 54: 2. Job. 18: 21.
c. 23: 37. Jer. 25: 3, 4.
d. Mark 13: 34. 1 Cor. 15: 58. Heb. 13: 21. 2 Pet. 1: 15-10.
e. 12. Ex. 12: 5, 6. Deut. 5: 27-30.
f. 18: 28. 22: 19. *Marginal*—Luke 10: 35. Rev. 6: 6.
g. 1 Sam. 2: 18-26. 3: 21. 12: 11, 12. 1 Kings 3: 6-16. 18: 21. 2 Tim. 3: 34.
h. Ec. 12: 1. Luke 1: 15. 2 Tim. 3: 15.

due of their losses for Christ, and they shall be sure to receive.

1st. A hundred-fold in this life: sometimes in kind, in the things themselves which they have parted with. God will raise up more friends, that will be so for Christ's sake, than they have left that were so for their own sakes. The apostles, wherever they came, met with those that were kind to them, and entertained them, and opened their hearts and doors to them. However, they shall receive a hundred fold in kindness, in those things that are abundantly better and more valuable. Their graces shall increase, their comforts abound, they shall have tokens of God's love, more free communion with Him, more full communications from Him, clearer foresights, and sweeter foretastes, of the glory to be revealed; and then they may truly say, they have received a hundred times more comfort in God and Christ, than they could have had in wife or children.

2dly. Eternal life at last. The former is reward enough, if there were no more; cent. per cent. is great profit; what then is a hundred to one? But this comes in over and above, as it were, into the bargain. The life here promised includes in it all the comforts of life in the highest degree, and all eternal. Now if we could mix faith with the promise, and trust Christ for the performance of it, surely we should think nothing too much to do, nothing too hard to suffer, nothing too dear to part with, for Him.

Our Savior, in the last verse, obviates a mistake of some, as if pre-eminence in glory went by precedence in time, rather than the measure and degree of grace, v. 30. No; God will cross

hands; will reveal that to babes, which He hid from the wise and prudent; will reject unbelieving Jews, and receive believing Gentiles. The heavenly inheritance is not given as earthly inheritances commonly are, but according to God's pleasure. This is the text of another sermon, which we shall meet with in the next chapter.

CHAP. XX. v. 1-16. This parable of the laborers in the vineyard is intended to represent to us, I. The kingdom of heaven, (v. f.) that is, the way and method of the Gospel dispensation, and, II. That concerning it which He had said in the close of the foregoing chapter, that many that are first shall be last, and the last first; that truth, having in it a seeming contradiction, which needed further explication.

Nothing was more a mystery in the Gospel dispensation than the rejection of the Jews and the calling in of the Gentiles; so the apostle speaks of it: (Eph. 3: 3-6.) nor was any thing more provoking to the Jews than the intimation of it. Now this seems to be the principal scope of this parable, to show that the Jews should be first called, but that at length, the Gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, and they be admitted to equal privileges and advantages with the Jews; which the Jews, even those of them that believed, would be very much disgusted at, but without reason.

But the parable may be applied more generally, and shows us, 1. A great truth, that God is debtor to no man. 2. That many who begin last, and promise little in religion, sometimes arrive at greater attainments, than others whose entrance was more early, and who promised

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 23-30. Nothing more fully proves men's want of true faith, than their eagerness to be rich. Yet how few are there who do not labor to be rich, and to enrich their children! Who does not associate the idea of wealth with that of felicity? Who that has riches does not confide in them as a substantial advantage? And who that is not so tempted to envy the wealthy? But experience fatally confirms the declarations of Christ; and proves that this earnestness is like toiling to build a high wall, to shut themselves and their children out of heaven: for in this manner, many that will be rich, fall into fatal snares, and involve their families in every kind of ruinous temptation, to their everlasting perdition. (See 1 Tim. 6: 6-10.) Such assertions will not only offend unbelievers; even disciples will be astonished at them, and be ready to think that none then can be saved. Indeed, not many of the rich and honorable of the earth are called, but the people of God are generally found among the poor: and the difficulties in the way of the wealthy sinner's conversion are so many, and so insurmountable by man, that we should have no hope of him, except as we know that with God all things are possible. And, blessed be his name, He surprises us with some demonstrations of the omnipotence of his grace, even in these degenerate days: here and there, a very wealthy person is brought forth, and appears eminent for humility, simplicity, spirituality, and fruitfulness: some of this kind are even found among those, who are growing rich from inferior circumstances; but none among those, that will be rich, or who trust, idolize, or love riches. What we here read, however, should surely make

us willing to be poor, to beware of covetousness, and to pity and pray for the rich; as we would for men at sea in a violent storm, whom nothing but an extraordinary interposition of God could save from being swallowed up by the tempestuous waves; and in all our labors of love, we may still apply this rule, even to the most abandoned and hardened, that with God all things are possible. But whether a man have a kingdom or only a fishing-boat; if he be duly bumbled as a sinner, and earnestly seek eternal life from the Savior, he will, at his call, leave all and follow Him; and if he be allowed to keep his substance, he will learn to use it in his service. Indeed, mixtures of self-preference often tarnish our conscious integrity, and our gratitude to Him, 'who hath made us to differ': yet our gracious Lord accepts his own work, and pardons our evil; and if we here follow Him with simplicity, He will at length cause us to inherit 'a crown of glory that fadeth not away.' Nay, He has promised most abundantly to recompense us, for all that we give up for his sake; so that it is only like sowing seed, with the assurance, even in this world, of reaping a hundred-fold, as well as of eternal life in that which is to come. May He then give us faith to lay hold of his promise, and rest our hope on Him; and then we shall be prepared for every service or sacrifice. But let us neither trust in promising appearances, or in outward profession, nor despair of such as are fallen the deepest into immorality, impiety, or infidelity; seeing many of the first shall be last, and the last first, and the chief of sinners may, for what we know, become most eminent in faith and holiness.

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX. v. 1-16. In interpreting the parable, the grand scope ought principally to be adverted to. The church, as represented by a vineyard, the employment of the servants, and their wages, with several other particulars, are only circumstances: (*Marg. Ref. a-f*.) the main scope of the parable respects the dealings of God with men according to the Gospel, and vindicates Him from the charge of injustice and partiality. Some expositors refer the different hours of the day, to several periods in the history of the church from the beginning; and others, to the times when a remnant of the Jews, and afterwards the Gentiles, were brought into the Christian church: but it is very difficult, at least, to make the circumstances of the parable in any measure accord to these events. With more plausibility and utility, they may be applied to the conversion of sinners, at the earlier and later stages of human life: for thus indeed one man does serve the Lord longer than another does. (*Marg. Ref. g-o*.) Yet this must not be strained too far: for it would be absurd to suppose, that any real Christians, at the great day of account, will murmur at the appointments of the Judge, or boast of their own services. It is, therefore, rather a description of the state of the visible church; and an illustration of the maxim, 'The last shall be first, and the first last,' in all its bearings. The concluding sentence evidently shows, that professors of religion in general were especially intended, and that they were addressed according to their own opinion of themselves, and not according to the real state of their souls. (*Marg. Ref. u-d*.) There is a possible, not

wholly dissimilar, in the Jewish Talmud; and some Christian expositors seem to think, that our Lord took this from what was then extant of it: but omitted some things, which they seem to think ought to be added in order to a right understanding of the subject! especially, that the laborers, who came late into the vineyard, were so diligent, that in a short time they performed as much, as the others had done in the whole day; and were 'chosen,' because known to be men of remarkable industry. This is supposed to be necessary in order to make the parable consist with every man being rewarded according to his works. But Dr. Doddridge has very justly called the parable of the Talmudists, 'an insipid imitation;' and we may add, that it is a perversion of the parable before us, in opposition to the grand principles of the Gospel. The nature and motives of our works, and not merely the quantity, must be taken into the account at the great day; and the reward be made accordingly: (See 25: 34-40. Rom. 2: 4-11. 1 Cor. 5: 10-12.) but this is not the immediate subject of the parable, which has above been fully shown.

(1.) Early. The day's work began with the rising of the sun, and ended at the appearance of the stars. Lightfoot. In this simile, as in others, some things are dissimilar, which may only respect the ornament, and do not affect the scope of the parable: as the laborers waiting to be hired, and the murmurers, &c. of the laborers after the distribution of the wages. The main point of similarity is the rejection of those who were first, and the admission of those who seemed last.

HARRINGTON.

about the third hour and saw others standing idle in the marketplace,

4 And said unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle?

7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.

7 Mark 15:25. Acts 3:15. 16:17. 19:15. Ex. 1:19. Acts 17:17-21. 1 Tim. 5:13. Heb. 6:12. 9:9. 21:22-31. Luke 18:7-10. Rom. 6:16-22. 1 Cor. 6:12. 1 Tim. 1:12. 12. Tit. 3:8. 1 Pet. 1:13. 4:2,3. Gal. 4:1. 12:4. Mark 15:33-34. Luke 23:44. 46. John 1:39. 4:6. 11:29. Acts 3:1. 10:3,9. 13:12-14. Josh. 24:2,3. 2 Chr. 33:12-19. Heb. 11:24-26. 1 Pet. 3:10. Luke 23:40-43. John 8:4. 6 Acts 14:16. 17:30,31. Rom. 10:14-17. 16:25. Eph. 2:11,12. 3:5,6. Col. 1:26. 2:25,10. Luke 14:21-23. Eph. 6:8. Heb. 6:10.

The soul of man stands ready to be hired into some service or other; it was (as all the creatures were) created to work, and is a servant to iniquity, or to righteousness, Rom. 6:19. The devil, by his temptations, is hiring laborers into his field, to feed swine; God, by his Gospel, is hiring laborers into his vineyard, to dress it, and keep it. We are put to our choice; for hired we must be; (Josh. 24:15.) Choose ye this day whom you will serve. Secondly, Till hired into the service of God, we are standing all the day idle; a sinful state, though a state of drudgery to Satan, may really be called a state of idleness; sinners are doing nothing of the great work they were sent into the world about, or that will pass well in the account. Thirdly, The gospel call is given to those that stand idle in the marketplace. The marketplace is a place of concourse, and there wisdom cries: (Prov. 1:20, 21.) a place of sport, there the children are playing; (ch. 11:16.) and the Gospel calls us from vanity to seriousness; a place of business, of noise and hurry; and from that we are called to retire.

[3.] What are they ailed to do? To labor in his vineyard. Note, First, The church is God's vineyard; and the fruits of it must be to his honor and praise. Secondly, We are all called to be laborers in this vineyard. The work of religion is vineyard-work, pruning, dressing, digging, watering, fencing, weeding. We have each of us our own vineyard to keep, our own soul; and it is God's, and to be kept and dressed for Him. In this work we must not be slothful, not loiterers, but laborers, working, and working out our own salvation. Work for God will not admit of trifling. A man may go idle to hell; but he that will go to heaven, must be busy.

[4.] What shall be their wages? He promises, First, A penny, (v. 2.) the value of seven pence halfpenny, a day's wages for a day's work, and the wages sufficient for the day's maintenance. This doth not prove that the reward of our obedience is of works, or of debt; (Rom. 4:4.) or that there is any proportion between our services and heaven's glories; but it is to signify that there is a reward set before us, and a sufficient one. Secondly, Whatsoever is right, v. 4, 7. Note, God will be sure not to be behindhand with any for the service they do Him: never any lost by working for God. The crown set be-

(3.) Hour.] A twelfth part of the time, from the rising to the setting of the sun. At the equinox, the third hour answered to nine o'clock in the forenoon; the sixth, to noon; the eleventh, to five in the afternoon.

In the marketplace.] 'I have often seen laborers standing in the marketplace of large towns in these countries, waiting to be employed.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

In Hanna Jan is 'Nasjid Jumrah, a large mosque, and before it a maidan

fairer. Paul was as one born out of due time, yet came not behind the chiefest of the apostles, and outdid those that were in Christ before him. Thus many that are last, shall be first. Some make it a caution to the disciples, who had boasted of their timely and zealous embrace of Christ; they had left all to follow Him; but let them look to it, that they press forward and persevere; else their good beginnings will avail them little; they that seemed to be first, would be last. Something of affinity there is between this parable and that of the prodigal son, where he that returned from his wandering, was as dear to his father as he that never went astray; first and last alike. 3. That the recompense of reward will be given to the saints, not according to the time of their conversion, but according to the preparations for it by grace in this world; not according to the seniority, (as Gen. 43:33.) but according to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ. Christ had promised the apostles, who followed Him in the regeneration, at the beginning of the gospel dispensation, great glory; (ch. 19:28.) but He now tells them that those who are in like manner faithful to Him, even in the latter end of the world, shall have the same reward, Rev. 2:26. 3:21. Sufferers for Christ in the latter days shall have the same reward with the martyrs and confessors of the primitive times, though they are more celebrated; and faithful ministers now, the same with the first fathers.

We have two things in the parable; the agreement with the laborers, and the account with them.

(1.) The agreement with the laborers; (v. 1-7.) and here it will be asked, as usual,

[1.] Who hires them? A man that is a householder. God is the great Householder; who, as a householder, has work to be done, and servants to do it; a great family in heaven and earth, which is named from Jesus Christ, Eph. 3:16. God hires laborers, not because He needs them, (for, if we be righteous, what do we unto Him?) but as some charitable, generous householders, in kindness to the poor, to save them from idleness and poverty; and pay them for working for themselves.

[2.] Whence they are hired? Out of the marketplace, where, till hired into God's service, they stand idle, v. 3, 6. Note, First,

fore as is a crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge shall give.

Secondly, Others are hired in old age, at the eleventh hour, when the day of life is far spent. None are hired at the twelfth hour; when life is done, opportunity is done; but, while there is life, there is hope, 1. for old sinners; if, in sincerity, they turn to God, they shall doubtless be accepted: true repentance is never too late. 2. of old sinners; nothing is too hard for almighty grace to do. Nicodemus may be born again when he is old, and the old man be put off, who is corrupt.

Yet let none, on this presumption, put off their repentance till they are old. These were sent into the vineyard, it is true, at the eleventh hour; but nobody had hired them, or offered to hire them, before. Those that have had gospel-offers made them at the third, or sixth hour, and have resisted and refused them, will not have that to say for themselves at the eleventh hour, that these had; No man has hired us; nor can they be sure that any man will hire them at the ninth or eleventh hour; and therefore not to discourage any, but to awaken all, be it remembered, that none is the accepted time; if we will, hear his voice, it must be to-day.

(2.) The account with the laborers. Observe, [1.] When it was taken; when the evening was come. Note, evening-time is the reckoning time; the particular account must be given up in the evening of our life; for after death cometh the judgment. Faithful laborers shall re-

fore as is a crown of righteousness, which the righteous Judge shall give.

[5.] For what term are they hired? For a day. It is a short time; the reward is for eternity, the work but for a day; man is sent, to accomplish, as a hireling, his day, Job 14:6. This should quicken us to expedition and diligence in our work; it our great work be not done when our day is done, we are undone forever. It should also encourage us in reference to the hardships and difficulties of our work; the approaching shadow, which the servant earnestly desireth, will bring with it both rest, and the reward of our work, Job 7:2. Hold out, faith and patience, yet a little while.

[6.] Notice is taken of the several hours of the day, at which the laborers were hired. The apostles were sent forth at the first and third hour of the gospel-day; they had a first and a second mission, while Christ was on earth, and their business was to call in the Jews; after Christ's ascension, about the sixth and ninth hour, they went out again on the same errand preaching the Gospel to the Jews only, to them in Judea first, and afterward to them of the dispersion; but, at length, as it were about the eleventh hour, they called the Gentiles, and told them, that in Christ Jesus there should be no difference made between Jew and Greek.

But this may be, and commonly is, applied to the several ages of life, in which souls are converted to Christ. The common call is promiscuous, but the effectual, particular, and it is then effectual when we come at the call.

1st, Some are effectually called when very young; early in the morning. John the Baptist was sanctified from the womb, and therefore great; (Luke 1:15.) Timothy from a child; (2 Tim. 3:15.) Obadiah feared the Lord from his youth.

2dly, Others are savingly wrought upon in middle age; Go work in the vineyard, at the third, sixth, or ninth hour. The power of divine grace is magnified in the conversion of some, when in the midst of their pleasures and worldly pursuits, as Paul. God has work for all ages; no time amiss to turn to God; whatever hour of the day it is with us, the time past of our life may suffice that we have served sin; Go ye also into the vineyard. God turns away none that are willing to be hired, for yet there is room.

3dly, Others are hired in old age, at the eleventh hour, when the day of life is far spent. None are hired at the twelfth hour; when life is done, opportunity is done; but, while there is life, there is hope, 1. for old sinners; if, in sincerity, they turn to God, they shall doubtless be accepted: true repentance is never too late. 2. of old sinners; nothing is too hard for almighty grace to do. Nicodemus may be born again when he is old, and the old man be put off, who is corrupt.

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or square, which serves as a market-place. Here we observed every morning before the sun rose, that a numerous band of peasants were collected with spades in their hands, waiting, as they informed us, to be hired for the day to work in the surrounding fields. When passing by the same place, late in the day, we still found others standing idle: on asking them, "Why stand ye here all the day idle?" they answered us, "Because no man hath hired us."

*ENIER.

8 So 'when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith 'unto his steward, Call the laborers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

9 And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

11 And when they had received it, they murmured against the good-man of the house,

12 Saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

r 13:39, 40. 25:19, 31. Rom. 2:6-10. 2 Cor. 5:10. Heb. 9:26. Rev. 20:11, 12.
Gen. 15:2. 39:4-6. 43:19. Luke 12:12. 16:12. 1 Cor. 4:1, 2. Tit. 1:7. 1 Pet. 4:10.
2:6, 7. Luke 23:43. Rom. 4:2-6. 5:20, 21. Eph. 1:6-8. 2:8-10. 1 Tim. 1:14-16.
Luke 5:30. 15:2, 23. 19:7. Acts 1:23. 13:35. 22:21, 22. 1 Thes. 2:16. Luke 16.

Or, continued one hour only.
Luke 14:10, 11. Rom. 3:22-24, 30. Eph. 3:6.
Gen. 15:2. 39:4-6. Mal. 1:11, 13. 2:14. Luke 15:29, 30. 1 Tim. 1:12. Rom. 9:27. 9:30-32. 10:1-3. 11:5, 6. 1 Cor. 4:11. 2 Cor. 11:23-28. 2:21, 22. 25:50.
Gen. 18:25. Job 34:8-12, 17, 35:2. 40:8. Rom. 9:14, 15, 20.

not only be accepted, but by free grace richly rewarded. Compare Luke 17:7, 8, with Luke 12:37.

2dly, The particular pleading with those who were offended with this distribution in gavel-kind.* We have here,

1. The offence taken; v. 11, 12. Not that there is, or can be, any discontent or murmuring in heaven; but there may be, and often are, discontent and murmuring concerning heaven, while in prospect and promise in this world. This signifies the jealousy which the Jews were provoked to by the admission of the Gentiles into the kingdom of heaven. As the elder brother, in the parable of the prodigal, repined at the reception of his younger brother, and complained of his father's generosity to him; so these laborers quarrelled with their master, not so much because they had not enough, as because others were made equal with them. They boast, as the prodigal's elder brother did, of their good services, v. 12. Sinners are said to labor in the very fire, (Hab. 2:13.) but God's servants, at the worst, do but labor in the heat of the day, not in the heat of the iron furnace. The Gentiles, newly called in, have as much of the privileges of the kingdom of the Messiah as the Jews, have, who have so long been laboring in the vineyard of the Old-Testament church, in expectation of that kingdom. Note, There is a great proneness in us to think that we have too few, and others too many, of the tokens of God's favor; and that we do too much, and others too little, in the work of God. Very apt we all are to undervalue the deserts of others, and to overvalue our own. Perhaps, Christ here gives an intimation to Peter, not to boast too much, as he seemed to do, of his having left all to follow Christ. It is hard for those that do or suffer more than ordinary for God, not to be elevated too much with the thought of it, and to expect to merit by it. Blessed Paul guarded

* A legal custom, according to which all the sons inherit equally.—En.

ceive their reward when they die; it is deferred till then, that they may wait with patience for it, but no longer; for God will observe his own rule, *The hire of the laborers shall not abide with thee all night, until the morning.* See Deut. 24:15. When Paul, that faithful laborer, departs, he is with Christ presently. The payment shall not be wholly deferred; but then, in the evening of the world will be the general account, when every one shall receive according to the things done in the body. When time ends, retribution commences; then call the laborers, and give them their hire. Ministers call them into the vineyard, to do their work; death calls them out of it to receive their penny; and to those to whom the call into the vineyard is effectual, the call out of it will be joyful. Observe, They did not come for their pay till they were called; we must with patience wait God's time for our rest and recompense; go by our Master's clock. *The last trump, at the great day, shall call the laborers,* 1 Thess. 4:16. *Then shall thou call, saith the good and faithful servant, and I will answer.* In calling the laborers, they must begin from the last, and so to the first. Let not those that come in at the eleventh hour, be put behind the rest, but, lest they should be discouraged, call them first. *At the great day, though the dead in Christ shall rise first, yet they which are alive and remain, on whom the ends of the world (the eleventh hour of its day) come, shall be caught up together with them, in the clouds; no preference shall be given to seniority, but every man shall stand in his own lot at the end of the days.*

[2.] What it was; and here observe, 1st. The general pay; v. 9, 10. Note, *All that by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honor, and immortality, shall undoubtedly obtain eternal life,* (Rom. 2:7.) not as wages, but as the gift of God. Though there be degrees of glory in heaven, yet it will be to all a complete happiness. They that come from the east and west, and are picked up out of the highways and the hedges, shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, at the same feast, ch. 8:11. In heaven, every vessel will be full, though not alike capacious. In the distributions of future joys, as it was in the gathering of the manna, he that shall gather much, will have nothing over, and he that shall gather little will have no lack, Exod. 16:18.

The giving of a whole day's wages to those that had not done the tenth part of a day's work, is designed to show that God distributes his rewards by grace and sovereignty, and not of debt. The best and earliest of the laborers may truly be said to labor in the vineyard scarcely one hour of their twelve; but even such defective services, done in sincerity, shall not only be accepted, but by free grace richly rewarded. Compare Luke 17:7, 8, with Luke 12:37.

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against this, when, though the chief of the apostles, he owned himself to be nothing, to be less than the least of all saints.

2. The offence removed. Three things the master of the house urges, in answer to this ill-natured surmise.

(1.) That the complainant had no reason at all to say, he had any wrong done to him, v. 13, 14. Here he asserts his own justice; *Friend, I do thee no wrong.* He calls him friend, for in reasoning with others we should use soft words and hard arguments; if our inferiors are peevish and provoking, yet we should not thereby be put into a passion, but speak calmly to them. [1.] It is uncontestedly true, that God can do no wrong. This is the prerogative of the King of kings. *Is there unrighteousness with God?* The apostle startles at the thought of it; *God forbid!* Rom. 3:5, 6. His word should silence all our murmurings, that, whatever God doth, he doth no wrong. [2.] If God gives that grace to others, which He denies to us, it is kindness to them, but no injustice to us; and we ought not to find fault with bounty to another, while it is no injustice to us. Because it is free grace, that is given to those that have it, boasting is forever excluded; and because it is free grace, that is withheld from those that have it not, murmuring is forever excluded. Thus shall every mouth be stopped, and all flesh be silent before God.

To convince the murmurer that he did no wrong, he refers him to the bargain, *'Didst not thou agree with me for a penny?'* And if thou hast what thou didst agree for, thou hast no reason to cry out of wrong; thou shalt have what we agreed for. Though God is a debtor to none, yet He is graciously pleased to make himself a debtor by his own promise. Note, It is good for us often to consider what it was that we agreed with God for. First, Carnal worldlings agree with God for their penny in this world; they choose their portion in this life; (Ps. 17:14.) in these things they are willing to have their reward, (ch. 6:2, 5.) their consolation, (Luke 6:24.) their good things; (Luke 16:25.) and with these they shall be put off, and cut off from spiritual and eternal blessings; and herein God doeth them no wrong; they have what they agreed for. Secondly, Obedient believers agree with God for their penny in the other world, and they must remember that they have so agreed. Didst not thou agree to take up with heaven as thy portion, thy all, and to take up with nothing short of it? And wilt thou seek for a happiness in the creature, or think from thence to make up the deficiencies of thy happiness in God?

He therefore, 1. Ties him to his bargain; (v. 14.) *Take that thine is, and go thy way.* If we understand it of that which is ours by debt or absolute propriety, it would be a dreadful word; but if we understand it of that which is ours by gift, the free gift of God; it teaches us to be content with such things as we have. Instead of repining that we have no more, let us take what we have, and be thankful. If God be better in any respect to others than to us, yet we have no reason to complain while He is so much better to us than we deserve. 2. He tells him that those he envied should fare as well as he did; *'I will give unto this last, even as unto thee; I am resolved I will.'* Note, The unchangeableness of God's purposes in dispensing his gifts, should silence our murmurings. If He will do it, it is not for us to gainsay; for He is in one mind, and who can turn Him? Neither grieveth He an account of any of his matters; nor is it fit He should.

(2.) He had no reason to quarrel with the master; for what he gave, was absolutely his own, v. 15. As before he asserted his justice, so here his sovereignty. Note, [1.] God is the Owner of all good; his propriety in it is absolute, sovereign, and unlimited. [2.] He may therefore give or withhold his blessings, as He pleases. What we have, is not our own, and

(13.) Friend.] 'Rather, companion. The word ordinarily trans- and indifferent persons It is used ch. 22:12, and was given by our friend always denotes affection and regard. The original word Lord to Judas; ch. 26:50.'
here does not. but was employed as a civil compellation to strangers
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14 Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee.

15 Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

[Practical Observations.]

17 ¶ And Jesus going up to Jerusalem,

6:2,6,16. 2 Kings 10:13,30,31. Ez. 29:15-20. Luke 15:1. 16:25. Rom. 3:9, 10.

11:53. Ez. 33:19. Deut. 7:5-8. 1 Chr. 28:4,5. Jer. 27:5-7. John 17:1. Rom. 9:15-24. 11:5,6. 1 Cor. 4:7. Eph. 1:11, 21. 5. Jan. 1:18.

2 Deut. 15:9,24. Prov. 23:5,25. 22. Mark 7:22. Jan. 5,9.

1:1, 3:1-11. 4:15,15:45. 8:11,12. 19:30. 21:31. Mark 10:31. Luke 7:47. 19:32-30. 15:7. 17:17.

18. John 12:19-22. Rom. 5:17,10:9,30,31.

7:13. 22:14. Luke 14:24. Rom. 8:30. 2 Thes. 2:13,14.

2 Mark 10:32-34. Luke 13:31-34. John 12:12.

others, and desires their hurt. What can have more evil in it? It is grief to ourselves, anger to God, and ill-will to our neighbor; and it is a sin that has neither pleasure, profit, nor honor, in it; it is an evil, an only evil.

[2.] The aggravation of it: 'It is because I am good.' Envy is unlike-ness to God, who is good, and doeth good, and delighteth in doing good; nay, it is an opposition and contradiction to God; it is a dislike of His proceedings, and a displeasure at what He doeth, and is pleased with. It is a direct violation of both the two great commandments at once; both that of love to God, in whose will we should acquiesce, and love to our neighbor, in whose welfare we should rejoice. Thus man's badness takes occasion from God's goodness to be more exceeding sinful.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-16. The pride of the human heart, and its enmity to the sovereignty of God, render it very difficult to convince men of the justice and goodness of his dispensations: yet nothing can be more certain, than that 'He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.' This may be evidently proved, in respect of those parts of his plan, with which we are acquainted; if we impartially judge of them, according to the rules established in human society, for the conduct of men towards subjects, servants, and dependents, and for the disposal of their property. Let us then remember, that we are all condemned: criminals; and that our wise and righteous Sovereign does no more any injustice, and that He dispenses his unmerited favors as He sees good: let us forego every proud claim, and seek salvation as a free gift: and let us never envy or grudge; but always rejoice, and praise God, for every display of his mercy to the vilest of our fellow sinners. SCOTT. 'May we by divine grace appear in the happy number of those who are not only called, but chosen too! If we are first in privileges and opportunities, let us be careful that our improvement be proportionable; otherwise we shall be last, and see ourselves an-

other day exceeded, and perhaps condemned, by those who stood in a rank much below us. We are called to a course of holy labor, even to work in our Lord's vineyard, or in every station, whether public or private, to do our utmost to promote the glory of God and the happiness of mankind. Let us not, with so many calls and so many advantages, stand all the day idle; but let us be active and patient, and cheerfully willing to bear all the burden and heat of the day in so good a cause; knowing that ere long the evening will come, and that He who employs us saith, *Behold I come quickly, and my reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be.* Rev. 22:12. Let such as have long neglected the great business of life, be encouraged with this thought, that some were called at the eleventh hour; but let none presume on their having such a call, nor strain the parable so far as to imagine, that an equal reward awaits all, without any regard to their characters or improvements; which is most contrary to the reason of things, to the Word of God, and to the great intent of that day which is to render to every man according to his deeds. Rom. 2:6.

DODDRIIDGE.

(15.) *Is thine eye evil?* 'An evil eye among the Jews meant a malicious, covetous, or envious person.'

DR. A. CLARKE.

(16.) *Called, &c.* Called sometimes means invited, or favored with the means of grace; and at others, *effectual vocation.* (Marg. Ref.) See 2:1-14. Rom. 8:28-31. 2 Thes. 2:13. 1 Cor. 1:9. Multitudes are called in the former sense, who will at last appear to have been, at best, only plausible hypocrites. 'But they who are endued with so excellent a gift' (as predestination to life) 'be called according to God's purpose by His Spirit in due season, they through grace obey the calling; they be justified freely, they be made the children of God by adoption; they be made like the image of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works; and at length by God's mercy they attain to everlasting felicity.' 17th Article.—Chosen. 'The elect are few.'

Many are called, &c.] The word translated 'call,' which is used of God and Christ in the N. T. not only denotes to destine a benefit for, and offer it to, but to bestow it upon, any one. Now, since the Jews were the people of God, as it were selected from the other nations, since they had the true religion, and had many excellent benefits conferred on them, they were called 'the called' and also 'the chosen.' But Christ and the apostles were accustomed to apply the common forms of expression used in the Jewish ceremonies to Christians; and by them Christians were termed 'the called,' as being distinguished with particular favors by God. The difference between 'called' and 'chosen' is this: by 'the called' must be understood those who took upon them the Christian religion, and by 'the chosen' those who so

received it, as to be Christians properly disposed and approved of God. 'The chosen' also denotes those who excel others, especially as applied to military affairs, (2 Sam. 6:1. 21:6. Ps. 89:3. 56:13) and the cognate word denotes all that is superior, and excellent in its kind, and to that account approved and loved. Gen. 23:26, where by the Sept. it is rendered by the same word here translated 'chosen,' and in Matt. 12:18. 'whom I have chosen' is explained 'my beloved.'

KUNDEL.

Grotius has a very learned and ingenious note on this text; but no genius or learning can be sufficient to prove what he seems to intend, that persons are called the chosen of God, merely with respect to the divine complacency in them on account of some distinguished virtue and excellence. Compare Deut. 7:6-8. 9:6. John 15:16. Acts 9:13, 15. Rom. 11:5, 6. and 1 John 4:19.

DODDRIIDGE.

Dr. A. Clarke supposes an allusion here to the ancient Roman custom of recruiting their armies by choosing from the citizens presented by the several tribes (summoned by the consuls for the purpose) those who were most proper to serve in war.

En.

Verses 17-19.

(Marg. Ref.) 'Humanly speaking, it was much more probable, that Jesus should have been privately assassinated, or stoned, as he before attempt'd, than that He should have been thus solemnly condemned, and delivered up to crucifixion. But all this was done that the Scripture might be fulfilled.' Doddridge. 'Christ goeth to the cross necessarily, but yet willingly.' Beza. (See 10:21-23. Mark 9:30-32. 10:32-34.)

SCOTT.

[19C]

took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them,

18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; ¹ and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and ² they shall condemn him to death.

19 And ³ he shall deliver him to the Gentiles ⁴ to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: ⁵ and the third day he shall rise again.

20 ¶ Then ⁶ came to him ⁷ the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, ⁸ worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

13-11, 16:13, Gen. 18:17. John 15:13. Acts 10:41.
16:21, 17:22, 23, 26:2, Ps. 2:1-3, 22:1, &c. 68:1, &c. Is. 53. Dan. 9:24-27. Acts 2:23, 4:27, 28, 56:66. 27:1. Mark 14:64, 65, Luke 22:57.
27:2, &c. Mark 15:1, 16, &c. Luke 23:1, &c. John 18:28, &c. Acts 3:13-16. n 26:67, 68, 27:47-51, Ps. 22:7-8. 26:67, 68, 27:47-51, Ps. 22:7-8. 26:67, 68, 27:47-51, Ps. 22:7-8. 26:67, 68, 27:47-51, Ps. 22:7-8.

21. 17:22, 23. This intimates that He not only saw clearly what troubles lay before Him, but that his heart was on them. Note, It is good for us to be often thinking and speaking of our death, and of the sufferings which, it is likely, we may meet with betwixt this and the grave; and thus, by making them more familiar, they would become less formidable. This is one way of dying daily, and of taking up our cross daily; which would come neither the sooner nor the surer, but much the better, for our thoughts and discourses of them.

2. He is more particular here in foretelling his sufferings than any time before. He had said, (ch. 16:21.) that He should suffer many things, and be killed; and (ch. 17:22.) that He should be betrayed into the hands of men, and they should kill Him; but here He adds, that He shall be condemned and delivered to the Gentiles, that they shall mock Him, and scourge Him, and crucify Him: for the chief priests and scribes had no power to put Him to death, nor was crucifying a manner of death in use among the Jews. Christ suffered from the malice both of Jews and Gentiles, because He was to suffer for the salvation of both, and to reconcile both by his cross, Eph. 2:16.

3. Here, as before, He mentions his resurrection and glory, with his death and sufferings, v. 19. He still brings this in, (1.) To encourage Himself in his sufferings, and to carry Him cheerfully through them. He endured the cross for the joy set before Him; He foresaw He should rise again, and rise quickly. He shall be straightway glorified, John 13:32. (2.) To encourage his disciples, and comfort them, who would be overwhelmed and greatly terrified by his sufferings. (3.) To direct us, under all the sufferings of this present time, to keep up a believing prospect of the glory to be revealed, to look at the things that are not seen, that are eternal, which would enable us to call the present afflictions light, and but for a moment.

Y. 20-28. Here is, first, the request of James and John, and the rectifying of the mistake on which it was grounded; v. 20, 23. They were the sons of Zebedee, and two of the first three of Christ's disciples; Peter and they were his favorites; yet none were so often reproved as they; whom Christ loves best He reproves most, Rev. 3:19.

I. Here is the ambitious address they made to Christ, v. 20, 21. It was a great degree of faith, that they were confident of his kingdom though now He appeared in meanness; but a great degree of ignorance, that they still expected a temporal kingdom with worldly pomp and power, when He had so often told them of sufferings and self-denial. They expected to be grandees. They ask not for employment, but for honor only; and no place would serve them, but the highest, next to Christ. It is probable, that the last word in Christ's foregoing discourse gave occasion to this request, that the third day He should rise again. They concluded that his resurrection would be his entrance on his kingdom, and therefore resolved to put in their claims for the best place. What Christ said to comfort them, they thus abused, and were puffed up with. Some cannot bear comforts, but turn them to a wrong purpose; as sweetmeats in a foul stomach produce bile. Now observe,

1. Their policy in the management of this address; they put their mother on to present it. Though proud people think well of themselves, they would not be thought to do so, and therefore affect nothing more than a show of humility, (Col. 2:18.) and others must be put on to court that honor for them, which they are ashamed to court for themselves. The mother of James and John was Salome, as appears by comparing ch. 27:61 with Mark 15:40. Some think she was daughter of Cleophas or Alphaeus, and sister or cousin german to Mary, the mother of our Lord. She was one of those women that attended Christ, and ministered to Him; and they thought she had such an interest in Him, that He could deny her nothing, and therefore they make her their advocate. Thus, when Adonijah had an unreasonable request to make to Solomon, he put Bathsheba on to speak for him. It was their mother's weakness thus to become the tool of their ambition, which she should have given a check to. In gracious requests, we should learn this wisdom, to desire the prayers of those that have an interest at the throne of grace; we should beg of our praying friends to pray for us, and reckon it a real kindness.

It was likewise policy to ask first for a general grant, that He would do a certain thing for them, not in faith, but in presumption on that general promise; Ask, and it shall be given you; in which is implied this qualification of our request, that it be according to the revealed will of God, otherwise we ask and have not, if we ask to consume it on our lusts, Jam. 4:3.

2. There was pride at the bottom of it, a proud conceit of their own merit, a proud contempt of their brethren, and a proud desire of honor and preferment; pride is a sin that most easily besets us, and which it is hard to get clear of. It is a holy ambition, to strive to excel others in grace and holiness; but a sinful ambition to covet to exceed others in pomp and

(17.) *Part 1.* 'Lest He should, by openly predicting his death, irritate the hatred of the Jews against Himself; and thereby seem to have purposely procured the fulfilment of the prediction.' EUTHYMUS.

(18.) *Shall condemn Him.* 'Shall cause Him to be condemned: for they had no power to do it themselves, the Romans having taken from them the power of judicature, in matters capital and concerning life and death.' ASSEMB. ANN.

(19.) *They shall deliver, &c.* The same verb just before translated *betrayed*, v. 15. It was as much treason for the rulers and priests to deliver up their King into the hands of Pilate to be crucified, as it had been in Judas, to deliver Him up into their hands. SCOTT.

Verses 20-23.

Perhaps Zebedee, the father of James and John, was dead before this time, or he was not so constant a follower of Christ as his wife was; so that she is mentioned as 'the mother of Zebedee's children.' (Note, v. 18-22, v. 21, 22.) At their desire, in their name, and with them, she prostrated herself before Christ, and besought Him to grant her one request; seeming to expect, that He would engage his word before the petition was made. (Notes, 1 Kings 2:14-20, 3:5-14, Esth. 6:1-3.) They were however continually expecting that He would appear in his glory; and probably she had respect to the twelve thrones [200]

which He had promised to the apostles; (19:28.) the two principal of which she wished to engage for her sons; being emboldened to make such a request, by the special favor which our Lord had shown to them. Either they did not duly attend to the meaning of the question, or they had too great a confidence in themselves, when they answered, that 'they were able.' He assured them, however, that they would be called thus to follow Him, through sufferings and persecutions and that they would be enabled to endure them for his sake. The words in Italics, 'it shall be given,' rather obscure the meaning, and may well be spared. Our Lord might indeed, by a strong figure of speech, be said to have been immersed in sufferings, when He endured the wrath of God as the propitiation for our sins; but the lighter afflictions of the apostles, connected with abundant joys and consolation, must be allowed, in this sense, to have been another and a far milder kind of baptism than his. (Marg. Ref. a-d.—See on 3:6.—also, 26:42-46, v. 42. Mark 10:35-45, v. 35-40. Luke 12:49-53, v. 50. John 18:10-14, v. 11. Col. 1:24.) 'None of Christ's disciples imagined, He had promised the supremacy to Peter, by those words, 'Thou art Peter,' for then neither would these two persons have desired it, nor would the rest have contended for it afterwards. Luke 22:24. Whitty.

SCOTT.

21 And he said unto her, 'What wilt thou? She saith unto him, 'Grant that these my two sons may sit, 'the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left,' in thy kingdom.

22 But Jesus answered and said, 'Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of 'the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, 'We are able.

22. 1 Kings 3:5. Eccl. 5:3. Mark 6:22. 10:36, 51. Luke 18:41. John 15:7.

18:1. 19:28. Jer. 4:5. Mark 10:37. Luke 22:24. Rom. 12:10. Phil. 2:3.

1 Kings 2:19. Ps. 45:9. 110:1. Mark 1:13. Rom. 9:34. Col. 3:1.

7. Luke 17:30, 31. 19:11. Acts 1:6.

Mark 10:38. Rom. 8:26. Jam. 4:3.

26:39, 42. Ps. 75:3. Jer. 25:15, 42.

Mark 14:35. Luke 22:42. John 19:11.

Mark 10:39. Luke 12:50.

26:35, 36. Prov. 16:18.

looked for but crowns and garlands;

whereas there were far greater hardships

and difficulties before them than they had yet met with.

They dream of being

in Canaan presently, and consider not what they shall do in the swellings of

Jordan. Note, [1.] We are all apt, when we are but *girding on the harness*,

to boast as though we had put it off. [2.] We know not what we ask, when

we ask for the glory of wearing the crown, and ask not for grace to bear the

cross in our way to it.

2. How He repressed the vanity and ambition of their request. They

were boasting themselves with the fancy of sitting on his right hand, and on

his left, in great state; to check this, he leads them to the thoughts of their

sufferings, and leaves them in the dark about their glory.

(1.) He leads them to the thoughts of their sufferings, which they were

not so mindful of as they ought to have been. They looked so earnestly on

the crown, the prize, that they were ready to plunge headlong and unprepared

into the foul way that led to it; therefore he thinks it necessary to put them

in mind of the hardships that were before them, that they might be no surprise

or terror to them.

Observe, [1.] How fairly he puts the matter to them, *v. 22.* 'You would

stand candidates for the first post of honor in the kingdom; but are you able

to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?' These same two disciples once

knew not what manner of spirit they were of, when they were disturbed with

anger; (Luke 9:55.) and now they were not aware what was amiss in their

spirits, when they were lifted up with ambition. Christ sees that pride in

us, which we discern not in ourselves.

Note, 1st. That to suffer for Christ, is to drink of a cup, and to be baptized

with a baptism. In this description of sufferings, 1. Affliction abounds. It is

supposed to be a bitter cup, wormwood and gall, those waters of a full cup,

that are wrung out to God's people; (Ps. 73:10.) a cup of trembling indeed, but

not of fire and brimstone, the cup of the wicked men, Ps. 11:6. It is supposed

to be a baptism, a washing with the waters of affliction; some are dipped

in them, the waters compass them about even to the soul; (Jonah 2:5.) others

have but a sprinkling of them; both are baptisms. But, 2. Even in this, *con-*

solation doth more abound. It is but a cup, not an ocean; a draught, hither

perhaps, but we shall see the bottom of it; a cup in the hand of a Father;

(John 13:11.) and full of mixture, Ps. 75:8. It is but a baptism; if dipped,

not drowned; perplexed, but not in despair. Baptism is an ordinance by

which we join ourselves to the Lord in covenant and communion; and so is

suffering for Christ, Ezek. 20:37. Isa. 49:10. Baptism is 'an outward and

visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace;' and so is suffering for Christ,

for unto us it is given, Phil. 1:29.

2dly. It is to drink of the same cup that Christ drank of, and to be bap-

tized with the same baptism. Christ is before us in suffering, and left us an

example. 1. It bespeaks the condescension of a suffering Christ, that He

would drink of such a cup, (John 13:11.) nay, such a brook, (Ps. 110:7.) drink

so deep, and yet so cheerfully; that He would be baptized with such a bap-

tism, and was so forward to it, Luke 12:50. It was much that He would be

grandeur. *Seekest thou great things for thyself,* when thou hast just now heard of thy Master's being mocked, and scourged, and crucified? For shame! *Seek them not,* Jer. 45:5.

II. Christ's answer to this address, (*v. 22, 23.*) directed not to the mother, but to the sons that set her on; they were overtaken in the fault of ambition, but Christ restored them with the spirit of meekness. Observe,

1. How he reproved the ignorance and error of their petition; *Ye know not what ye ask.*

(1.) They dreamed of a temporal kingdom, but Christ's kingdom is not of this world. They knew not what it was to sit on his right hand,

and on his left; they talked of it as blind men do of colors. Our apprehensions of that glory

which is yet to be revealed, are like the apprehensions which a child has of the preferences

of grown men. If at length, through grace, we arrive at perfection, we shall then put away

such childish fancies; when we come to see face to face, we shall know what we enjoy; but,

now, alas, we know not what we ask; we can but ask for the good as it lies in the promise,

Tit. 1:2. What it will be in the performance, eye has not seen, nor ear heard. (2.) They

were much in the dark concerning the way to that kingdom. They know not what they ask,

who ask for the end, but overlook the means. The disciples thought, when they had left what

little all they had for Christ, and had gone about the country a while, preaching the Gospel

of the kingdom, all their service and suffering were over, and it was now time to ask, *What*

shall we have? As if nothing were now to be

looked for but crowns and garlands; whereas there were far greater hardships

and difficulties before them than they had yet met with. They dream of being

in Canaan presently, and consider not what they shall do in the swellings of

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to be a baptism, a washing with the waters of affliction; some are dipped

baptized with water as a common sinner, much more with blood as a malefactor. But in all this, He was made in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was made sin for us. 2. It bespeaks one consolation of suffering Christians, that they do but pledge Christ in the bitter cup, are partakers of his sufferings, and fill up that which is behind of them; we must therefore arm ourselves with the same mind, and go to Him without the camp.

3dly. It is good for us to be often asking ourselves, if we are able to drink of this cup, and be baptized with this baptism. We must expect suffering, and look on it as hard to suffer well, and as becomes us. Are we able to suffer cheerfully, and in the worst times still to hold fast our integrity? What can we part with for Christ? How far will we give Him credit? Could I find in my heart to drink of a bitter cup, and to be baptized with a bloody baptism, rather than let go my hold of Christ? The truth is, Religion, if it be worth any thing, is worth every thing; but it is worth little, if it be not worth suffering for. Now let us sit down, and count the cost of dying for Christ, rather than denying Him, and ask, Can we take Him on these terms?

[2.] See how boldly they engage for themselves; they said, *We are able*, in hopes of all sitting on his right hand, and on his left; but at the same time they fondly hoped they should never be tried. As before they knew not what they asked, so now they knew not what they answered. They would have done well to put in *'Lord, by thy strength, and in thy grace, we are able, otherwise we are not.'* But Peter's temptation, to be confident of his own sufficiency, was here the temptation of James and John; and it is a sin we are all prone to. They knew not what Christ's cup was, nor what his baptism; therefore they were thus bold in promising for themselves. But those are commonly most confident, that are least acquainted with the cross.

[3.] See how plainly and positively their sufferings are here foretold; (*v. 23.*) *Ye shall drink of my cup.* Sufferings foreseen will be the more easily borne, especially if looked upon under a right notion. Christ began in suffering for us, and expects we should pledge Him, in suffering for Him. Christ will have us know the worst, that we may make the best of our way to heaven; *Ye shall drink:* that is, ye shall suffer. James drank the bloody cup, first of all the apostles, Acts 12:2. John, though at last he died in his bed, if we may credit the ecclesiastical historians, yet often drank of this bitter cup, as when he was banished into the isle of Patmos, (Rev. 1:9.) and when (as they say) at Ephesus he was put into a caldron of boiling oil, but was miraculously preserved. He was, as the rest of the apostles, in deaths often. He took the cup, offered himself to the baptism, and it was accepted.

(2.) He leaves them in the dark about the degrees of their glory; it was enough to be assured that they should have a place in his kingdom. The lowest seat in heaven is an abundant recompense for the greatest sufferings on earth. But as to the preferences there, it was not fit there should be any intimation given for whom they were intended; for the infirmity of their present state could not bear such a discovery with any evenness; *'To sit on my right hand and on my left, is not mine to give, and therefore not for you to ask or to know; but it shall be given to them of whom it is prepared of my Father.'* Note, [1.] It is very probable that there are degrees of glory in heaven; for our Savior seems to allow that there are some that shall sit on his right hand and on his left,

(21.) *The one at thy right hand.* 'As thy chief ministers of state. There may perhaps be an allusion in these words to a circumstance which the talmaudic writers relate concerning the sanhedrim, that there were two officers of peculiar distinction, who sat on each side of the Nasi, or president of the court: the one on the right called the father of the justiciary, the other called the sage, who sat on the left.'

'According to eastern custom, the degree of proximity to the throne denoted the degree of dignity.' (Comp. 1 Kings 2:19. Ps. 45:9. and

1 Kings 2:1. BLOOMFIELD.)

(22.) *Drink of the cup.* 'An image frequent among the Hebrews, and was so forward to it, Luke 12:50. It was much that He would be

draws, who thus compared God's benefits to a liberal entertainment, and usually compared whatever is dealt out to men by the Almighty, (whether good or evil) to a cup of wine. Nor was this confined to the Hebrews; for, as Doddridge tells us, it was customary among the ancients in general, to assign to each guest at a feast a particular *cup*, as well as *dish*; and by the kind and quantity of the liquor contained in it, the respect of the entertainer was expressed. Hence *cup* came in general to signify a portion assigned. (Ps. 16:5. 23:5.) whether of pleasure or sorrow. But the expression was more frequently used of evil than good. So Matt. 26:39, 42. Apoc. 14:10, 16. 19:16. Ps. 65:9. Jas. 5:17. Jer. 25:15. [Ps. 75:8.]

23 And he saith unto them, 'Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

[Practical Observations.]

24 And when the ten heard it, 'they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

25 But Jesus* called them unto him, and said, 'Ye know that^b the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

4 Acts 12:2. Rom. 8:17. Col. 1:24.
2 Tim. 2:11,12. Rev. 1:9.
25:34. Mark 10:41. 1 Cor. 2:9.
Heb. 11:16.
1 Prov. 13:10. Mark 10:41. Luke 22:23-24. 1 Cor. 13:4. Phil. 2:3. Jam. 3:14-18. 4:1,5,8. 1 Pet. 5:5.
11:39. 18:34. John 13:12-17.
2 Mark 10:42. Luke 22:26-27.
1 Dau. 12:12, 13:37-45. 3:2-7, 15:19-22, 5:19.

in others, which they allow of and indulge in themselves. Nothing makes more mischief among brethren, nor is the cause of more indignation and contention, than ambition, and desire of greatness. We never find Christ's disciples quarrelling, but something of this was at the bottom of it.

2. The check that Christ gave them. He had reproved this very sin before, (ch. 13:3,) and told them they must be humble as little children; yet they relapsed into it, and yet He reproved them for it thus mildly.

He called them unto Him, which intimates great tenderness and familiarity: *wherefore* He is fit to teach, and we are invited to learn of Him, because *He is meek and lowly in heart*. What He had to say concerned both the two disciples and the ten, and therefore He will have them all together. And He tells them, that, whereas they were asking which of them should have dominion in temporal kingdom, there was really no such dominion reserved for any of them. For,

(1.) They must not be like the princes of the Gentiles. Principality no more becomes ministers than Gentilism doth Christians.

Observe, [1.] What is the way of the princes of the Gentiles; (v. 25.) to exercise dominion and authority over their subjects, and (if they can) over one another too. That which bears them up in it, is, that they are great, and

in the highest places. [2.] As the future glory itself, so the degrees of it, are purposed and prepared in the eternal counsel of God; as the common salvation, so the more peculiar honors, are appointed, the whole affair is long since settled, and there is a certain measure of the stature, both in grace and glory, Eph. 4:13. [3.] Christ, in dispensing the fruits of his own purchase, goes exactly by the measures of his Father's purpose. *It is not mine to give, save to them (so it may be read) for whom it is prepared*. Christ has the sole power of giving eternal life, but then it is to as many as were given Him, John 17:2. *It is not mine to give, that is, to promise now; that matter is already settled and concerted, and the Father and Son understand one another perfectly well in this matter*. 'It is not mine to give to those that seek and are ambitious of it, but to those that by great humility and self-denial are prepared for it.'

III. Here are the reproof and instruction which Christ gave to the other ten disciples for their displeasure at the request of James and John. He had much to bear with in them all, they were so weak in knowledge and grace, yet he bore it.

1. The fret the ten disciples were in; (v. 24.) not because the two brethren were desirous to be preferred, which was their sin, and for which Christ was displeased with them, but because they were desirous to be preferred before them, which was a reflection on them. Many seem to have indignation at sin, not because it is sin, but because it touches them. They will inform against a man that swears; but it is only if he swear at them, not because he dishonors God. These disciples were angry at their brethren's ambition, though they themselves, nay because they themselves, were, as ambitious. Note, It is common for people to be angry at those sins in others, which they allow of and indulge in themselves. Nothing makes more mischief among brethren, nor is the cause of more indignation and contention, than ambition, and desire of greatness. We never find Christ's disciples quarrelling, but something of this was at the bottom of it.

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great men think they may do any thing. Dominion and authority are the great things which they pursue, and pride themselves in.

[2.] What is the will of Christ concerning his apostles and ministers, in this matter.

First, It shall not be so among you. The constitution of the spiritual kingdom is quite different. 'You are to instruct and beseech, to counsel and comfort, to take pains with, and suffer with, not to exercise dominion or authority over the subjects of this kingdom; you are not to *lord it over God's heritage*, (1 Pet. 5:3.) but to labor in it.' This forbids not only tyranny, and abuse of power, but the claim or use of any such secular authority as the princes of the Gentiles lawfully exercise. So hard is it for 'vain men, even good men, to have such authority, and not to be puffed up, and do more hurt than good with it, that our Lord Jesus saw fit wholly to banish it out of his church. Paul himself disowns dominion over the faith of any, 2 Cor. 1:24. Now, if there were no such power and honor intended to be in the church, it was nonsense for them to be striving who should have it. *They knew not what they asked*.

Secondly, How then shall it be among the disciples of Christ? Something of greatness among them Christ Himself had intimated, and here He explains it; '*He that will be great among you, really so, and so at last, let him be your minister, your servant*,' v. 26, 27. Here observe, 1. That it is the duty of Christ's disciples to serve one another, for mutual edification. This includes both humility and usefulness. The followers of Christ must be ready to stoop to the meanest offices of love for the good one of another, must submit one to another, (1 Pet. 5:5. Eph. 5:21.) and edify one another, (Rom. 14:19.) please one another for good, Rom. 15:2. The great apostle made himself every one's servant; see 1 Cor. 9:19. 2. It is the dignity of Christ's disciples faithfully to discharge this duty. The way to be great and chief is, to be humble and servicable. Those are to be best accounted of, and most respected, in the church, and will be so by all that understand things aright, who are most humble and self-denying and lay out themselves most to do good, though to the diminishing of themselves. These honor God most, and those He will honor. As he must become a fool, that would be wise, so he must become a servant, that would be chief. Paul was a great example of this. Do we not by consent call him the great apostle, though he called himself less than the least? And perhaps he it was for whom the first post of honor in Christ's kingdom was reserved and prepared of his Father, not for James who sought it; and therefore, just before Paul began to be famous as an apostle, Providence ordered

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17-23. A believing view of our once crucified, and now glorified Redeemer, is the great antidote to a proud, self-justifying disposition. When we consider what need there was of the humiliation and sufferings of the Son of God, in order to the salvation of sinners; and when we recollect the willingness, meekness, constancy, and patience, with which the Redeemer endured the insults and cruelty of men and the wrath of God for us; we cannot but feel our self-sufficiency abate, and be sensible of the unspeakable freeness and richness of divine grace in our salvation. Yet with what strange indifference do even disciples sometimes read, hear, or speak of these interesting topics! especially when Satan tempts them to aspire after 'the honor that cometh from man.' If we ask such things as are truly good for us or others, God will not refuse our request: but when we pray, under the influence of pride, avarice, or any other passion, we 'know not what we ask;' we

mistake poison for food or medicine; and if He loves us, He will withhold from us what we foolishly crave. If we would at last be conformed to our glorified Lord, we must be willing here to have fellowship with Him in his sufferings; we must pass through tribulations and reproach; we must drink in some measure of his bitter cup, and experience some degree of his afflictive baptism: yet how light, and mingled with comfort, are our sharpest trials, compared with the unmixed agony and anguish which He endured for us! Possessing a good hope of being admitted to the felicity of heaven, we shall be satisfied with the thought, that it will be 'according as it is prepared for us by our heavenly Father.' And, even in this world, it becomes us indeed to be earnest about growth in grace, and diligence and fruitfulness, the redemption of our time and the improvement of our talents, and usefulness in the lowest station in the church; but not about pre-eminence among our brethren.

SCOTT.

(23.) *Baptism*.] 'A metaphor expressive of deep affliction, very frequent among the Hebrew writers, and not unknown to the classical ones.'

Afflictions are ordinarily compared in Scripture to waters. *Pools*. Phrases like these, to be overwhelmed with grief, to be immersed in affliction, are common in most languages.

Verses 25-28.

This does not prove, that Christians must not be kings or rulers; but it fully demonstrates, that they must not be ambitious and tyrannical. Government and discipline are also necessary to the church: but worldly power, the pride of life, dominion over consciences, and the spirit of persecution, are not necessary to its rulers, under any form of government.

ment, nay, totally incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel, though, alas! too common in most ages and places.

(25.) 'The government of the church of Christ is widely different from secular governments. It is founded on humility and brotherly love; it is derived from Christ, the great Head of the church, and is ever conducted by his maxims and Spirit. When political matters are brought into the church of Christ, both are ruined. The church has more than once ruined the state; the state has often corrupted the church: it is certainly for the interests of both to be kept separate. This has already been abundantly exemplified in both cases, and will continue so to be, over the whole world, wherever the church and state are united in secular matters.'

DR. A. CLARKE.

26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

29 ¶ And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

30 And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way-side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David!

1833-12, Mark 10:43-45, Luke 14:1-11, 18:14, John 18:36, 2 Cor. 12:1, 10:4-10, 1 Pet. 5:3, 3 John 1:10, Rev. 19:11-17, 17:5.
1844, 27:58, Ex. 24:13, Acts 13:5, 1 Tim. 1:18, Philemon 13, Heb. 1:14, 1 Pet. 4:11.
1845, Mark 9:33-35, Luke 22:26, Acts 20:34-35, Rom. 1:14, 1 Cor. 9:19-23, 2 Cor. 4:5, 11:5-23-27, 12:15.
1846, Luke 22:27, John 13:14-17, Phil. 2:3-8, Heb. 5:6.
1847, Job 32:24, Ps. 49:7, Is. 53:10-11, Dan. 9:24-28, John 10:15, 11:50-52, Rom. 3:24-26, Gal. 3:13, Eph. 1:7, 5:2, 1 Tim. 2:6, Tit. 2:14, 1 Pet. 1:18, 2:24, 3:18, Rev. 5:8, 9.
1848, Mark 14:24, Rom. 5:15-19, Heb. 9:23, 1 John 2:2.
1849, Mark 10:45-52, Luke 18:35-43, 9:27-31, 13:22, 21:14, 1 Pt. 14:6, 19:18, 3:5-6, 42:16, 18, 59:10, 61:1, 2, Luke 4:18, 7:21, John 9:1, 6:5.
1850, 12:29, 15:22, 21:9, 22:42, Acts 2:30, Rom. 1:3, 4.

seed, for which his soul travailed; and when they all come together, though now they appear but a little flock.

Now this is a good reason why we should not strive for precedence, because the cross is our banner, and our Master's death is our life. It is a good reason why we should study to do good, and, in consideration of the love of Christ in dying for us, not hesitate to lay down our lives for the brethren, 1 John 3:16. Ministers should be more forward than others to serve and suffer for the good of souls, as blessed Paul was, Acts 20:24, Phil. 2:17. The nearer we are all concerned in, and the more we are advantaged by, the humility and humiliation of Christ, the more ready and careful we should be to imitate it.

V. 29-34. We have here an account of the cure of two poor blind beggars; in which we may observe,

I. Their address to Christ, v. 29, 30. And in this,

(26, 27.) Your minister.] 'Or, deacon, whose office in the primitive church was to serve in the agape, or love feasts, to distribute the bread and wine to the communicants; to proclaim different parts and names of worship in the churches; and to take care of the widows, orphans, prisoners, and sick, who were provided for out of the revenues of the church. Thus we find it was the very lowest ecclesiastical office. Deacons were first appointed by the apostles, Acts 6:1-6. They had the care of the poor, and preached occasionally.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

The primitive sense of the original word is a servant, who attends his master, waits on him at table, and is always near his person, to obey his orders, which was accounted a more degradable kind of service.

Servant.] 'The lowest secular office; the original word is often put for slave.'

'We are to judge of the value of the words minister and servant, or servant and slave, from the import of those they are contrasted with. And, as desiring to be great is a more moderate ambition than desiring to be chief, we naturally conclude, that as the word opposed to the former should be expressive of some of the inferior stations in life, that opposed to the latter must be expressive of the lowest.' CAMPBELL.

(28.) A ransom for many.] 'The word here translated ransom is used Sept. for the ransom paid for a man's life.' (Ex. 21:30, Num. 3:49, 51.) and the feminine form of the same is used, Num.

so that James was cut off, (Acts 12:1,) that is, the college of the twelve, Paul might be substituted in his room.

(2.) They must be like the Master Himself; and it is very fit they should. To both, the present state is a state of humiliation; the crown and glory were reserved for both in the future state. Let them consider that the Son of man came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many, v. 28. Our Lord Jesus here sets Himself before his disciples, as a pattern of those two things before recommended, humility and usefulness.

[1.] Never was there such an example of humility and condescension, as in the life of Christ. When the Son of God came into the world, one would think He should have been ministered to; but He made no figure, had no pompous train of state-servants, nor was He clad in robes of honor, for He took on Him the form of a servant. He was indeed ministered to as a poor man, (Luke 8:2, 3.) but never as a great man; He never took state on Him, was not waited on at table; He once washed his disciples' feet, but we never read that they washed his feet. He came to minister, attended continually to this very thing, denying Himself both food and rest to attend to it.

[2.] Never was there such an example of beneficence and usefulness as in the death of Christ. He lived as a servant, but died as a sacrifice, and in that He did the greatest good of all. He came into the world on purpose to give his life a ransom; it was first in his intention. The aspiring princes of the Gentiles make the lives of many a ransom for their own honor, and perhaps a sacrifice to their own humor. Christ doth not so; his subjects' blood is precious to Him, and He is not prodigal of it; (Ps. 72:14.) but, on the contrary, gives his honor and life too, a ransom for his subjects.

Note, First, Jesus Christ laid down his life for a ransom. Our lives were forfeited into the hands of divine justice by sin. Christ, by parting with his life, made atonement for sin, and so rescued ours; He was made Sin and a Curse for us, and died, not only for our good, but in our stead, Acts 20:28. 1 Peter 1:18, 19. Secondly. It was a ransom for many, sufficient for all, effectual for many; and, if for many, then saith the poor doubting soul, 'Why not for me?' It was for many, that by Him many may be made righteous. These many were his

1. The circumstances of it are observable. It was as Christ and his disciples departed from Jericho; of that devoted place, which was rebuilt under a curse, Christ took his leave with this blessing, for He received gifts even for the rebellious. It was in the presence of a great multitude that followed Him: Christ had a numerous, though not a pompous, attendance, and did good to them, though He did not take state to Himself. This multitude was a mixed multitude. Some followed Him for loaves, and some for love, some for curiosity, and some in expectation of his temporal reign, very few with desire to be taught their duty; yet, for the sake of those few, He confirmed his doctrine by miracles wrought in the presence of great multitudes; who, if they were not convinced by them, would be the more inexcusable. Two blind men concurred in their request; for joint-prayer is pleasing to Christ, ch. 18:19. These joint-sufferers were joint-suitors. Note, It is good for those that are laboring under the same calamity, to join together in the same prayer for relief, that they may quicken one another's fervency, and encourage one another's faith. There is mercy enough in Christ for all the petitioners. These blind men were sitting by the way-side, as blind beggars used to do. Note, Those that would receive mercy from Christ, must place themselves where his out-goings are. It is good thus to way-lay Christ, to be in his road.

They heard that Jesus passed by. Though they were blind, they were not deaf. Seeing and hearing are the learning senses. It is a great calamity to want either; but the defect of one may be, and often is, made up in the acuteness of the other; and therefore it has been observed by some, as an instance of the goodness of Providence, that none were ever known to be born both blind and deaf; but that, one way or other, all are in a capacity of receiving knowledge. These blind men had heard of Christ by the hearing of the ear, but they desired that their eyes might see Him. Note, It is good to improve the present opportunity, because, if once let slip, it may never return; these blind men did so, and did wisely; for we do not find that Christ ever came to Jericho again. None is the accepted time.

2. The address itself is more observable; Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David, repeated again, v. 31. Four things are here recommended to us for an example.

(1.) Importunity in prayer. They cried out as men in earnest: men in want are earnest, of course. Cold desires do but beg denials. Those that would prevail in prayer, must stir up themselves to take hold on God in the duty. When they were discountenanced in it, they cried the more. The stream of fervency, if it be stopped, will rise and swell the higher. This is wrestling with God in prayer, and makes us the fitter to receive mercy; for, the more it is striven for, the more it will be prized and thankfully acknowledged.

(2.) Humility in prayer; in that word, Have mercy on us, not specifying the favor, or pre-

35:31, where a satisfaction (Hebrew, atonement,) for the life of a murderer is refused. The original Greek word is used by Lucian in exactly the same sense, who represents Ganymede promising to sacrifice a ram to Jupiter as "a ransom for himself," provided he would dismiss him. The whole Gentile world, as well as the Jews, believed in vicarious sacrifices. Virg. Æn. V. 815, has nearly the same words as those in the text "One man must be given for many." Jesus Christ laid down his life as a ransom for the lives and souls of the children of men.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 30.

Cried out.] 'Though God had deprived them, for wise reasons, of the use of their eyes. He left them the use of their speech. It is necessary to ill with us but it might be much worse: let us, therefore, be submissive and thankful.'

'Much has been said by some commentators, who endeavor to devise methods of reconciling the minute discrepancy which here subsists between the different evangelists. These variations arose from the diversity of oral narration; and such trifling discrepancies, which are perpetually found in the best historians, are of no moment, and it is not necessary anxiously to hunt after conjectures by which such diversities may be reconciled. As the credibility of historians is not diminished by such, but rather increased, so will not that of the evangelists be at all affected.'

BLOOMFIELD. ROSENM. KUNZEL.

31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: ^abut they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David!

32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, ^aWhat will ye that I shall do unto you?

33 They say unto him, ^aLord, that our eyes may be opened.

34 So ^aJesus had compassion on them, and ^atoucheth their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, ^band they followed him.

^c 15:23. 19:13.
^d 7:7, 8. Gen. 32:25—29. Luke 11:8—10. 18:1, &c. 39. Col. 4:2. 1 Thes. 5:17.
^e 21. Ex. 36:37. Acts 10:29. Phil. 4:6.
^f Ps. 119:19. Eph. 1:17—19.
^g 9:36. 14:14. 15:32. Ps. 145:3. Luke 7:13. John 11:33—35. Heb. 2:17. 4:15, 16. 1 Pet. 3:8.
^h 6:29. Mark 7:36. Luke 22:51. John 8:6, 7.
ⁱ 8:5. Ps. 119:67, 71. Luke 18:43. Acts 26:18.

multitude that followed Christ. Note, Sincere, serious beggars at Christ's door, commonly meet with the worst rebukes from those that follow Him in pretence only. ^aBut they would not be beaten off so. When they were in pursuit of such a mercy, it was no time to compliment, or to practise a timid delicacy; no, they cried the more. Note, Men ought always to pray and not to faint; to pray with all perseverance; (Luke 18: 1.) to continue in prayer with resolution, and not to yield to opposition.

II. Christ's answer. The multitude rebuked them; but Christ encouraged them. It were sad for us, if the Master were not more kind and tender than the multitude; but He will not suffer his humble supplicants to be run down, and put out of countenance.

1. He stood still and called them, v. 32. He was going to Jerusalem, and straitened till his work there was accomplished; yet He stood still to cure these blind men. Note, When we are ever so much in haste about any business, yet we should be willing to stand still, to do good. He called them, not because He could not cure them at a distance, but would do it in the most obliging and instructing way, and would countenance weak but willing patients and petitioners. Christ not only enjoins us to pray, but invites us; holds out the golden sceptre, and bids us come and touch the top.

2. He inquired further into their case; v. 32. This implies, (1.) A very fair offer; (Here I am; let Me know what you would have, and you shall have

scribing what, much less pleading merit, but casting themselves on, and referring themselves cheerfully to, the Mediator's mercy, in what way He pleases; 'Only have mercy.' They ask not for silver nor gold, though they were poor, but mercy, mercy. This is that which our hearts must be upon, when we come to the throne of grace, that we may find mercy. Heb. 4: 16. Ps. 130: 7.

(3.) Faith in prayer; in the title they gave to Christ, which was in the nature of a plea; O Lord, Thou Son of David; they confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, and therefore had authority to command deliverance for them. Surely it was by the Holy Ghost that they called Christ Lord, 1 Cor. 12: 3. Thus they take their encouragement in prayer from his power, as, in calling Him the Son of David, they take encouragement from his goodness, as Messiah, of whom so many kind and tender things had been foretold, particularly his compassion to the poor and needy, Ps. 72: 12, 13. It is of excellent use, in prayer, to eye Christ in the grace and glory of his Messiahship; to remember that He is the Son of David, whose office it is to help and save, and plead it with Him.

(4.) Perseverance in prayer, notwithstanding discouragement. The multitude rebuked them, as noisy, clamorous, and impertinent, and bid them hold their peace, and not disturb the Master, who perhaps at first Himself seemed not to regard them. In following Christ with our prayers, we must expect to meet hindrances and discouragements from within and from without, something or other that bids us hold our peace. Such rebukes are permitted, that faith and fervency, patience and perseverance, may be tried. These poor blind men were rebuked by the

it. (2.) A condition annexed, which is very easy and reasonable—that they should tell Him what they would have Him do for them. One would think this a strange question; any one might tell what they would have. Christ knew but He would know it from them, whether they begged only for alms, as from a common person, or for a cure, as from the Messiah. Note, It is the will of God, that we make our requests known to Him by prayer and supplication; not to inform, or move Him, but to qualify ourselves for the mercy. The waterman in 'the boat, who with his hook takes hold of the snore, does not thereby pull the shore to the boat, but the boat to the shore. In prayer we do not draw the mercy to ourselves, but ourselves to the mercy.

They soon made known their request to Him, such as they never made to any one else; *Lord, that our eyes may be opened.* The wants and burthens of the body we are soon sensible of, and can readily relate. Oh that we were but as apprehensive of our spiritual maladies, and could as feelingly complain of them, especially our spiritual blindness! Lord, that the eyes of our mind may be opened! Many are spiritually blind, and yet say they see, John 9: 41. Were we but sensible of our darkness, we should soon apply to Him who alone has eye-salve, with this request, *Lord, that our eyes may be opened!*

3. He cured them; when He encouraged them to seek Him, He did not say, *Seek in vain* What He did was an instance,

(1.) Of his pity; *He had compassion on them* Misery is the object of mercy. It was the tender mercy of our God, that gave light and sight to them that sat in darkness, Luke 1: 78, 79 We cannot help those that are under such calamities, as Christ did; but we may and must pity them, as Christ did, and draw out our soul to them.

(2.) Of his power; *He that formed the eye, can He not heal it?* Yes, He can, He did it easily, He touched their eyes; He did it effectually, *Immediately their eyes received sight.* *That* He not only proved that He was sent of God, but showed on what errand He was sent—to give sight to those that are spiritually blind, to turn them from darkness to light.

Lastly, These blind men, when they had received sight, followed Him. Note, None follow Christ blindfold. He first, by his grace, opens men's eyes, and so draws their hearts after Him. They followed Christ, as his disciples, to learn of Him, and as his witnesses, to bear their testimony to Him, and to his power and goodness. The best evidence of spiritual illumination is a constant, inseparable adherence to Jesus Christ as our Lord and Leader.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 24—34. Alas! how have ambition and envy moved professed Christians to indignation against each other, and sown contentions among brethren, in every age! And what enormous mischiefs have arisen, from church-rulers and pastors exercising dominion after the manner of the kings, nay, tyrants of the nations; or indeed with more atrocious pride, cruelty, and iniquity! (P. O. Rev. 18: 9—19.) Carnal men thus seek to be the greatest; but those Christians and ministers are in reality the chief, and most honorable, and will be deemed so by all competent judges, who stoop the lowest, labor the most diligently, and suffer with most entire meekness and patience, in seeking to do good to their brethren, and to promote the salvation of souls. They most resemble Him, 'who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many;' and will be most honored by Him to all eternity. Yet so deceitful is the heart, that those who sincerely avow the determination of leaving all for Christ's sake, and in hope of an eternal and gracious recompense, and who have actually

given up many things on these accounts, may yet have secret expectations of honor and importance among their brethren; which various circumstances detect, and which should always be watched against. But a humble sense of our own indigence, unworthiness, and misery, and exalted apprehensions of the Savior's power and grace, are in some respects the standard of human excellency, and the source of human felicity. However poor, ignorant, weak, and sinful that man may be, who thus humbly seeks to Christ for help, he will be earnest in proportion as his applications are discouraged; he will cry the more vehemently, when men would require him to 'hold his peace;' and the Lord will at length attend to him and answer his petitions; He will compassionate his sorrows, open his eyes, supply his wants, and forgive his sins; and thus enable him to join the number of his followers, and 'to show forth his praises, who hath called him out of darkness into his marvelous light.'

SCOTT.

Verse 31.

Rebuked them, because they should hold their peace. [Rather, *chided them that they should be silent.* The historian surely did not mean to blame the poor men for their importunity. Our Lord, on the contrary, commended such importunity, sometimes expressly in words, and always by making the application successful.] CAMPBELL.

The multitude rebuked them. [Whenever a soul begins to cry after Jesus for light and salvation, the world and the devil join to

gether to drown its cries, or force it to be silent. But let all such remember, Jesus is now passing by; that their souls must perish eternally if not saved by Him, and they may never have so good an opportunity again. While there is a broken heart and a contrite spirit, let it sigh its complaints to God till He hear and answer. Reader, whenever thou art, act in behalf of thy soul as these blind men did in behalf of their sight, and thy salvation is sure. The Lord desires that earnestness and faith! Dr. A. A. A. A.

CHAP. XXI

enters Jerusalem on an ass,^a amidst the acclamations of the multitude, 1-11. He drives the buyers and sellers out of the temple; heals the blind and lame; and answers the objections of the priests, 12-16. He causes the barren fig-tree to wither; and shews the disciples the power of faith and prayer, 17-22. He silences those who demand by what authority He acted, 23-27; and exposes the wickedness, and predicts the doom, of the priests and rulers, by a parable of two sons, 28-32, and by that of a vineyard let out to husbandmen, 33-46.

AND when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.

3 And if any man say ought unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying,

^a Mark 11:1, Luke 19:28, 29.
^b Zech. 14:4, Luke 19:37.
^c 21:7, John 8:1, Acts 1:12.
^d 28:18, Mark 11:2, 3, 14:13-16, Luke 19:30-32, John 2:15-8.
^e 1 Cor. 29:14-16, Ps. 21:1, 50:10, 11.
^f Hag. 2:3, 9, John 3:35, 17:2.
^g Acts 17:25, 2 Cor. 8:9.
^h 1 Sam. 10:26, 1 Kings 17:9.
ⁱ 1 S. 5, 7:2, 2 Cor. 5:1, 2:16, Jarr. 1:17.
^j 12:2, 26:56, John 19:36, 37.
^k Zech. 9:8, John 12:15.

the world, for that was the glory his heart was on; his glory in this world He was dead to, and therefore did not forecast for it. They were come to Bethphage, a long scattering street that lay toward the mount of Olives; when He entered on that, He sent two of his disciples, some think Peter and John, to fetch Him an ass.

2. It was very mean. He sent only for an ass and her colt, v. 2. Asses were much used in that country for travel; horses only by great men, and for war.

Some think He had herein an eye to the custom in Israel for the judges to ride on white asses, (Judg. 5:10.) and their sons on ass-colts, Judg. 12:14. And Christ would thus enter, not as a Conqueror, but as the Judge of Israel, who, for judgment came into this world.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI, v. 1-5. Several events, especially the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, intervened before those recorded in this chapter. (See John 11:12, 1-11.) In his last journey to Jerusalem, he lodged at Bethany; and then proceeded on the road towards the city, to the extremity of that village, or rather to a part of the mount of Olives, which lay between it and Bethphage. (Marg. Ref. a, b.) From thence He sent two of his disciples to the village over against them, perhaps to Bethphage. The owners might have heard of Jesus nuder that title; but it undoubtedly implied a high claim of authority over them and their land. The kings of Israel and Judah were forbidden to multiply horses, or to use them in war; for this would make way for worldly confidences: it was therefore a proper characteristic of Zion's King, to come "riding on an ass," to denote the spiritual nature of his kingdom. Asses were then frequently used to ride on, though not so much as in preceding ages: yet this was an emblem of our Lord's external poverty and humiliation; and an open declaration, that He was Zion's predicted King and Savior. (Marg. Ref. f-1.—Note, Deut. 17:16.) The quotation is a more literal translation of the Hebrew text than the Septuagint is, in which the Greek word for an ass is not used, but more general terms, though two different words, both signifying an ass, or asses, or an ass, and a colt the son of asses, are found in the Hebrew. Perhaps they did not choose to state explicitly to the magnificent Grecians, famed for beautiful horses, that Zion's glorious King should come to his royal city riding on an ass's colt.

(1.) "Though Jesus was aware that his death was decreed by the Jewish rulers, yet He proceeded to Jerusalem." It cannot, however, be therefore concluded that He was prodigal of life. If in order to void

CHAP. XXI, v. 1-11. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the two main hinges upon which the door of salvation turns. He came into the world on purpose to give his life a ransom; ch. 20:28. And therefore, the history of his sufferings, even unto death, and his rising again, is more particularly recorded by all the evangelists than any other part of his story; and to that, this evangelist now fastens apace. For at this chapter begins that which is called the passion-week. He had said to his disciples more than once, Behold we go up to Jerusalem, and there the Son of man must be betrayed. A great deal of good work He did by the way, and now at length He came up to Jerusalem.

All the four evangelists take notice of this event of Christ's riding in triumph into Jerusalem, five days before his death. The Passover was on the fourteenth day of the month, and this was the tenth; on which day, the law appointed that the paschal lamb should be taken up, (Exod 12:3.) and set apart for that service; on that day therefore Christ, our Passover, who was to be sacrificed for us, was publicly showed. So that this was the prelude to his passion. He had lodged at Bethany, a village not far from Jerusalem, for some time; and at a supper there, the night before, Mary had anointed his feet, John 12:2. Our Lord Jesus travelled much, and his custom was to travel on foot, which was both humbling and toilsome. How ill does it become Christians to be inordinately solicitous about their own ease and state, when their Master had so little of either! Yet once in his life He rode in triumph; and it was now when He went into Jerusalem, to suffer and die, as if that were the pleasure and premerment He courted.

Now, here we have, I. The provision made for this solemnity, which was very poor and ordinary. Here were no heralds at arms, no trumpet sounded before Him, no chariots of state, no liveries; such things were not agreeable to his present state of humiliation, but will be far outdone at his second coming, to which his magnificent appearance is reserved; when the last trumpet shall sound, the glorious angels shall be his heralds and attendants, and the clouds his chariots. But in his public appearance,

1. The preparation was sudden. For his glory in the other world, and ours with Him, preparation was made before the foundation of the world, his heart was on; his glory in this world He was dead to, and therefore did not forecast for it. They were come to Bethphage, a long scattering street that lay toward the mount of Olives; when He entered on that, He sent two of his disciples, some think Peter and John, to fetch Him an ass.

the sneers of his enemies, He had retired to some other country, not only would the Jews have striven to destroy Him by treachery, as a condemned criminal, but also in the promulgation of his doctrine He would have incurred the hatred and envy of the priests; and for the sake of preserving his life, He would have been compelled to deliver his doctrine to a few only, and those, disciples interioris admissionis. But then He could not have vindicated his claims to the dignity of Messiah. For it was in Judea that the Messiah was to come forward and erect his kingdom; nor would all those hopes and expectations of Jesus, as Messiah, which his followers nourished, (and which, when He returned to life, and ascended back to heaven, proved their strongest excitement to virtue and constancy,) have then had place." KINGSLEY.

"Some think Bethphage to have been a certain tract of mount Olive, so called from the fig-trees with which it was planted; the Hebrew word for fig, together with that for house or place, making the name by composition. For although the mount was remarkable for olives, and hence received its name, it produced also the fig and the palm, and different tracts of it were wont to be denominated accordingly." ROSENM.

(3.) The Lord, &c. The master. Campbell. It was no great injury done to the owner, to borrow an ass for a mile, and then doubtless to feed and return it. But the evangelists do not descend to such minute particulars; not to mention that it is highly probable, that Jesus and the disciples were well known to the owner. Bloomfield. There is no appearance of Christ's intending to show his sovereignty in transferring the property of these creatures; and though, no doubt, He had the power to do it, his usual prudence would direct Him to waive it, at a time when so many eyes were upon Him for evil."

DODDIDGE.

5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them;

7 And brought the ass and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set him thereon.

8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way.

h Ps. 94:4. Is. 12:5. 40:9. 62:11. Zeph. 3:14, 15.

i 2:5, 6. Gen. 49:10. Num. 24:19. Ps. 26:12. 151:1, &c. 72:1, &c. 110: 1-4. Is. 9:5-7. Jer. 23:5, 6. Ez. 34:24. 37:24. Dan. 2:44, 45. 7:13. 14. Mic. 5:2. Zech. 6:12, 13. John 1:49. 19:15-22. 12:19, 20. 2 Cor. 10:1. Phil. 2:3-5.

Deut. 17:16. Judg. 5:10. 12:14. 2 Sam. 16:2. 1 Kings 1:33. 10:25. Hos. 1:7. Mic. 5:10, 11. Zech. 9: 10.

m Gen. 6:22. 12:4. Ex. 39:43. 40:18. 1 Sam. 15:11. John 15: 14.

n Mark 11:4-8. Luke 19:32-35. 2 Kings 9:13. p Lev. 22:40.

His government is mild and gentle, and his laws not written in the blood of his subjects, but in his own. His yoke is easy.

(2.) As an evidence of this, his appearance is very mean, sitting upon an ass, a creature made not for state, but service, not for battles, but for burthens; slow in its motions, but sure, and safe, and constant. The foretelling of this so long before, and the care taken that it should be exactly fulfilled, intimate it to have a peculiar significance, for the encouragement of poor souls to apply themselves to Christ. Mention is made in the prophecy of a colt, the foal of an ass; and therefore Christ sent for the colt with the ass, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

III. The procession itself, which was answerable to the preparation, both being destitute of worldly pomp, and yet both accompanied with a spiritual power.

Observe, 1. His equipage; *The disciples did as Jesus commanded them*; (v. 6) they went to fetch the ass and the colt, not doubting but to find them, and to find the owner willing to lend them. Note, Christ's commands must not be disputed, but obeyed; and those that sincerely obey them shall not be balked or baffled in it; *They brought the ass and the colt*. The meanness and contemptibleness of the beast might have been made up with the richness of the trappings; but those were, like all the rest, such as came next to hand. Note, We ought not to be nice or curious, or to affect exactness, in outward conveniences. A holy indifference and neglect will become us in these things: it will evidence that our heart is not on them, and that we have learned the apostle's rule, (Rom. 12:16. margin,) *to be content with mean things*.

(5.) 'God, that He might keep the people of Israel in a more sensible dependence on Himself, forbade the use of that strong, generous and majestic animal, the horse, (Job 39:19-25.) in their armies, and also of chariots, (Deut. 17:16. Compare Josh. 11:6. Judg. 5:15.) and the removal of them is spoken of as matter of promise in the days of the Messiah, Hos. 1:7. Mic. 5:10, 11. and Zech. 9:10. It is therefore with great propriety that Christ, in his most public triumph, chose, according to the prophecy before us, *to ride on an ass*. Nor are we to imagine there was any thing mean and ridiculous in it; for the eastern asses are a much larger and more beautiful animal than ours, and it plainly appears the patriarchs and judges of the Jewish nation thought it no disgrace to ride upon them; of which Abraham, (Gen. 22: 3.) Moses, (Ex. 4: 20.) and Jair's family, (Judg. 10: 4.) are instances. Nay, magistrates are spoken of by the general description of those that *rode on white asses*, Judg. 5: 10. Compare Num. 22: 21. 2 Sam. 16: 2. 17: 23. 19: 26. Doddridge. *A colt on which never man sat.* Yearlings, which have never borne the yoke, and have never been employed for common purposes, are reserved for sacred uses. See Deut. 21: 3. 1 Sam. 6: 7.

Daughter of Sion. 1. 'A city of Sion, i. e. Jerusalem, its inhabitants. Sion, as being the most celebrated part of Jerusalem, is put (by synecdoche) for Jerusalem. It is a poetical figure, usual with the oriental writers, to personify a country or city under a woman, girl, virgin, or daughter. Neither was this unknown to the Greek poets, especially the lyric ones. Pindar very frequently uses it.' BLOOMFIELD. *The King cometh, &c.* 'The rabbins expressly refer this prophecy to the Messiah.'

GREENFIELD.

The disciples went, and did as every circumstance accord to what

which was written of Him, (Zech. 9: 9.) where it ushers in a large prediction of the kingdom of the Messiah, must be accomplished. Now observe here,

1. How the coming of Christ is foretold, v. 5. Note, (1.) Jesus Christ is the church's King, according to the law of the kingdom, (Deut. 17: 15.) appointed and (Ps. 2: 6.) accepted, and to whom the daughter of Zion swears allegiance, Hos. 1: 11. (2.) Christ, the King of his church, is *Head over all things to the church*. He came to Sion, (Rom. 11: 26.) that out of Sion the law might go forth; for the church and its interests were all in all with the Redeemer.

(3.) Notice was given to the church, beforehand, of the coming of her King; *Tell the daughter of Sion*. Note, Christ will have his coming looked for, and waited for, and his subjects big with expectation of it; Cant. 3: 11. Notices of Christ's coming are usually ushered in with a *Behold!* *Behold, thy King cometh*; behold and wonder at Him, behold and welcome Him. Pilate, like Caiaphas, said he knew not what, in that great word, (John 19: 14.) *Behold your King*.

2. How his coming is described. When a king comes, something great and magnificent is expected, especially when he comes to take possession of his kingdom. The King, the Lord of hosts, was seen upon a throne high and lifted up; (Isa. 6: 1.) but there is nothing of that here; *Behold, He cometh to thee meek, and sitting upon an ass*. When Christ would appear in his glory, it is in his meekness, not in his majesty.

(1.) His temper is very mild. He comes not in wrath to take vengeance, but in mercy to work salvation. He is meek to suffer the greatest injuries and indignities for Zion's cause. He is easy of access, easy to be entreated. He is meek, not only as a Teacher, but as a Ruler.

His government is mild and gentle, and his laws not written in the blood of

Any thing will serve travellers; and there is a beauty in some sort of carelessness, a noble negligence; yet the disciples furnished Him with the best they had, and did not object the spoiling of their clothes, when the Lord hath need of them. Note, We must not think the clothes on our backs too dear to part with for the service of Christ, for the clothing of his poor, destitute and afflicted members. *I was naked, and you clothed me*, ch. 25: 36. Christ stript Himself for us.

2. His retinue; there was nothing in this stately or magnificent. Sion's King comes to Sion, and the daughter of Sion was told of his coming long before; yet he is not attended by the gentlemen of the country, nor met by the magistrates of the city: He should have had the keys of the city presented Him, and been conducted with all possible convenience to the thrones of judgment, the thrones of the house of David; but here is nothing of all this; He has his attendants, a very great multitude; but they are only the common people; the chief priests and the elders afterward herded with the multitude that abused Him on the cross; but we find none of them here joining with the multitude that did Him honor. Ye see here your calling, brethren, *not many mighty, or noble, but the foolish things of this world, and base things, which are despised*, 1 Cor. 1: 26, 28. Note, Christ is honored by the multitude, more than by the magnificence of his followers; for He values men by their souls, not by their preferments, names, or titles.

Now, concerning this great multitude, we are here told,

(1.) What they did; according to the best of their capacity, they studied to do honor to Christ. [1.] *They spread their garments in the way*, that He might ride on them. When Jehu was proclaimed king, the captains put their garments under him; in token of their subjection to him. Note, Those that take Christ for their King, must lay their all under his feet. Some think that these garments were spread, not on the ground, but on the hedges or walls, to adorn the roads; as, to beautify a cavalcade, the balconies are hung with tapestry. This was but a poor piece of state, yet Christ accepted their good-will; and we are hereby taught to contrive how to make Christ welcome to our hearts and houses. How shall we express our respects to Christ? What honor and what dignity shall be done to Him? [2.] *Others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed them in the way*, as they used to do at the feast of tabernacles, in token of liberty, victory, and joy; for the mystery of that feast is particularly spoken of as belonging to gospel-times, Zech. 14: 16.

(2.) What they said, both those that gave notice of his coming, and those that attended Him with their applauses, v. 9. When they carried branches about at the feast of tabernacles, they were wont to cry *Hosanna*, and from thence

their Lord had foretold; which could not fail to impress their minds with a conviction of his divine knowledge and power, and help to prepare them for what was about to open. He was pleased to be seated on the unbroken colt; and by his miraculous energy to render it tractable and steady, amidst the acclamations of the multitude, which were sufficient to render unruly even an animal, that had been accustomed to the road. This seems to have been an emblem of his power, in rendering the hearts of sinners submissive to his will in the midst of the temptations of this world; and notwithstanding their natural pride, obstinacy, and carnal affections. Thereon, or on them; that is, on the garments; for He rode on the colt only. (Marg. Ref.—Note, Mark 11: 11—12, v. 7.)

(7.) *And put on them their clothes.* [1.] 'Tucher, who made a pilgrimage to the holy sepulchre in the last half of the fifteenth century, advises a person who intends travelling in Palestine, to "have a coat made at Venice, of double cloth, as it is very convenient in the Holy Land. You spread it upon the ass, and ride on it."'

Verse 8. *Spread their garments in the way.* [The custom of reverently strewing vests, flowers, &c. for the great to walk upon, was always, and still is, prevalent in the East. With this honor Alexander was received, as also Agrippa, when he came to Jerusalem. Nor was it confined to the east.]

'So also Clytemnestra orders her servant to spread garments in the road, to grace and honor the return of Agamemnon. Eschyl'

Cut down branches, &c. [Compare 1 Mac. 13: 51. 2 Mac. 10 7. and Rev. 7: 9.]

BURDER.

Dr. A. C. LAMM.

9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David: 'blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna 'in the highest!

10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, 'all the city was moved, saying, 'Who is this?

11 And the multitude said, 'This is Jesus the prophet 'of Nazareth of Galilee.

[Practical Observations.]

12 And Jesus 'went into the temple of God, 'and cast out all them that sold and bought

to call their bundles of branches their *Hosannas*. *Hosanna* signifies, *Save now, we beseech thee*; referring to Ps. 118: 25, 26, where the Messiah is prophesied of as the *Head-stone of the corner, though the builders refused Him*; and all his loyal subjects are brought in triumphing with Him, and attending Him with hearty good wishes to the prosperity of all his enterprises. *Hosanna to the Son of David* is, 'This we do in honor of the Son of David.'

The hosannas with which Christ was attended, bespeak two things,

[1.] Their welcoming his kingdom. *Hosanna* is the same with, *Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord*. It was foretold concerning this Son of David, that *all nations shall call Him blessed*; (Ps. 72: 17.) and all true believers in all ages concur: it is the genuine language of faith. Note, *First*, Jesus Christ comes in the name of the Lord; He is sanctified, and sent into the world, as Mediator; *Him hath God the Father sealed*. *Secondly*, The coming of Christ, in the name of the Lord, is worthy of all acceptance; we all ought to say, *Blessed is He that cometh*; and be pleased in Him. Well may we say, *Blessed is He*; for it is in Him that we are blessed.

[2.] Their wishing well to his kingdom; intimated in their *Hosanna*; earnestly desiring that prosperity and success may attend it, and that it might be a victorious kingdom; 'Send *now prosperity* to that kingdom.' If they understood it of a temporal kingdom, it was their mistake, which a little time would rectify; however, their good-will was accepted. Note, It is our duty earnestly to desire and pray for the prosperity and success of Christ's kingdom. Thus prayer must be made for Him continually, (Ps. 72: 15.) that all happiness may attend his interest in the world, and that, though He may ride on an ass, yet in his majesty He may ride meekness, Ps. 45: 4. This we mean, when we

q 15. Ps. 118:24-26. Mark 11:9, 10.
r 23-39. Ps. 119:37-38. John 12:13-15.

s Luke 2:14.
t 23. Ruth 1:9. 1 Sam. 16:4. John 12:16-19.
u Cent. 3:6. Is. 63:1. Luke 5:21. 7:46. 9:9. 20:2. John 3:18. Acts 9:5.

x 16:13, 14. Deut. 18:15-19. Luke 7:16. John 7:40. 9:17. Acts 22:2, 27.

y 26. John 1:45, 46.
z Mal. 3:2. Mark 11:11.
a Mark 11:15. Luke 19:45, 46. John 2:14-17.

prosperously, because of that pray, *Thy kingdom come*. They add, *Hosanna in the highest*; let prosperity in the highest degree attend Him, let Him have a name above every name, a throne above every throne; or, Let us praise Him in the best manner, with exalted affections; or, Let our prayers for his church ascend to heaven, to the highest heavens, and fetch in peace and salvation from thence. See Ps. 20: 6. *The Lord saveth his Anointed, and will hear from his high, his holy heaven*.

[3.] We have here his entertainment in Jerusalem; (v. 10.) every one took notice of Him, some were moved with wonder; others with laughter; some, perhaps, were moved with joy, *who waited for the Consolation of Israel*; others, of the pharisaical class, were moved with envy and indignation. So various

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-11. We should cheerfully resign whatever we possess, if the Lord require it; for He has a right to dispose of us and ours as He sees best.—There is nothing so mean in itself, but He knows how to employ it in his service: we should not then despise men of weak abilities, or in obscure stations; and we have no ground for self-complacency, should He be pleased to 'have need of us,' or to use us as the instruments of his work: nor ought we to wonder, if He at one time employ us, and afterward lay us aside, having no further occasion for us.—As meekness and external poverty distinguished our King, and even marked his triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, how inconsistent must avarice, ambition, and 'the pride of life be with the character of his subjects, and especially of his ministers.—His servants must unreservedly obey his orders, however opposite to the opinions and fashions of the world; and in so doing, He will order every circumstance for their good, and give them continual experience of his foreknowledge, truth, and love. He has every heart in his hand, and He can, when He pleases, dispose the multitude to favor his cause, and to honor his ministers. But of how little value in general is popular applause! It is the way of the unstable multitude, in every

are the motions in the minds of men on the approach of Christ's kingdom!

Upon this commotion, we are further told,
(1.) What the citizens said, v. 10. [1.] They were, it seems, ignorant concerning Christ. Though the *Glory of his people Israel*, distinguished by many miracles, yet the *daughters of Jerusalem* knew Him not, Cant. 6: 9. The Holy One unknown in the holy city! In places where the clearest light shines, and the greatest profession of religion is made, there is more ignorance than we are aware of. [2.] Yet they were inquisitive concerning Him. Who is this that is thus cried out, and comes with so much observation? *Who is this King of glory?* Ps. 24: 8. Isa. 63: 1.

(2.) How the multitude answered them, v. 11. The multitude were better acquainted with Christ than the great ones. *The voice of the people*, is sometimes the *voice of God*. Now, in the account they give of Him, [1.] They were right in calling Him the *Prophet, that great Prophet*. Hitherto He had been known as a prophet, teaching and working miracles; now they attend Him as a King; Christ's priestly office was, of all the three, last discovered. [2.] Yet they missed it, in saying He was of *Nazareth*; and it helped to confirm some in their prejudices against Him. Note, Some, that are willing to honor Christ, yet labor under mistakes concerning Him, which would be rectified, if they would take pains to inform themselves.

V. 12-17. When Christ came into Jerusalem, He went not to the court or the palace, but into the temple, for his kingdom is spiritual, and not of this world. Now, what did He do there?

I. Thence He drove the buyers and sellers. Abuses must first be purged out, before that which is right can be established. The great Redeemer appears as a great Reformer, that turns away ungodliness, Rom. 11: 26. Here we are told,

1. What He did; v. 12. He had done this once before, (John 2: 14, 15.) but there was occasion to do it again.

(1.) The abuse was, buying and selling, and changing money, in the temple. Note, Lawful things, ill timed and ill placed, may become sinful things. What was done, though rectified, yet had the pretence of being for spiritual pur-

Verses 9-11.
It was owing, in great measure, to the miracle of Lazarus's resurrection, which took place not long before, that the people came thus to meet Christ, and welcome Him to Jerusalem: (See John 12: 12-19.) and He was pressed to accede to it, both as a reward of his character, and in order to accelerate his crucifixion, now that 'his time was come.' Some of the multitude might use one expression, and some another; but all meaning the same for substance. Part of them were true disciples; numbers were far less disposed, and act under no immediate impulse; and many might scarcely advert to the meaning of their own words: only, in joint with the rest, as it is customary on such occasions. No wonder, therefore, that when his disciples and favorers were intimidated and retired, and persons of another character came to hear the multitude, they as loudly cried out, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him.' (See 27: 19-23.) They were perhaps likewise disappointed, as to their expectations of a temporal kingdom immediately to be set up; and they might be willing to atone to their rulers for their former

offence, by joining them against Jesus. For it gave the latter great umbrage to see the city in such commotion, and every body inquiring who this was, and ready to receive 'Jesus of Nazareth, the prophet of Galilee,' as their promised Messiah. (Marg. Ref.—See Mark 11: 1-11, v. 10.) (9.) *Hosanna*.] Note, Ps. 118: 25, 26. SCOTT.

(9.) *Hosanna*.] Dr. A. Clarke considers this as an acknowledgment of Christ as King, and as equivalent to, 'Redress our grievances, and give us help from oppression!' and refers to 2 Sam. 14: 4. 2 Kings 6: 26, and Ps. 118: 25.

(10.) This entry into Jerusalem has been termed the *triumph of Christ*. It was, indeed, the triumph of *humility over pride* and worldly grandeur; of *poverty over affluence*; and of *meekness and gentleness over rage and malice*. He is coming now, meek, full of kindness, and compassion to those who were plotting his destruction! He comes to deliver up Himself into their hands: their King comes to be murdered by his subjects, and to make his death a ransom price for their souls! Dr. A. CLARKE.

in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves.

13 And said unto them, ^aIt is written, ^cMy house shall be called the house of prayer; but ^eye have made it a den of thieves.

14 And ^fthe blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and ^hhe healed them.

15 And ^hwhen the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, ⁱHosanna to the Son of David; ^kthey were sore displeased;

b Deut. 14:24-26.
c Lev. 1:14, 5:7, 11, 12:6, 8, 14:22, 20, 15:14, 22, Luke 2:24.
d 23 John 15:25.
e Ps. 93:5, Is. 56:7.
f Jer. 7:11, Mark 11:17, Luke 19:46.
g 9:35, 11:4, Is. 35:5, 6, Acts 3:1-3, 10:38.
h 23, 26:53, 27:1, 30, Is. 26:11, Mark 11:18, Luke 19:38, 40, 20:1, 22:65, John 2:13, 49, 57, 12:19.
i 9, 22:65, John 7:42.
k Jon. 4:1.

raptured ordinances are reduced to their primitive institution.

[1.] He shows, from a Scripture prophecy, (Isa. 56:7.) what the temple should be, and was designed to be; v. 13. Note, All the ceremonial institutions were intended to be subservient to moral duties; the temple was in a special manner sanctified to be a house of prayer, so that the prayers made in or toward that house had a particular promise of acceptance, (2 Chron. 6:21,) as it was a type of Christ: therefore Daniel looked that way in prayer; and in this sense, no house or place is now, or can be, a house of prayer; for Christ is our Temple; yet in some sense the appointed places of our religious assemblies may be so called, as *places where prayer is wont to be made*, Acts 16:13.

[2.] He shows, from a Scripture reproof, how they had abused the temple, and perverted the intention of it, v. 13. *Is this house become a den of robbers in your eyes?* Jer. 7:11. When dissipated piety is made the cloak and cover of iniquity, it may be said that *the house of prayer* is become a *den of thieves*. Markets are too often dens of thieves, so many are the corrupt and cheating practices in buying and selling; but markets in the temple are certainly so, for they rob God of his honor, the worst of thieving, Mal. 3:8. The priests lived plentifully on the altar; but, not content with that, they found other ways and means to squeeze money out of the people; and therefore Christ here calls them *thieves*, for they exacted that which did not belong to them.

II. There, in the temple, *He healed the blind and the lame*, v. 14. Christ, in the temple, by his word there preached, and in answer to the prayers there made, heals those that are spiritually blind and lame. It is good coming to the

Verses 12, 13.

It appears from Mark, that Jesus went to the temple and surveyed it, the same day on which He rode into Jerusalem; yet He relates the exactions of the traders, as if it had occurred on the next day: hence some conclude that He expelled them on two days in succession; the mercenary dealers returning to their occupation as soon as He was departed. (Mark 11:15.) But this is not probable. He found some of the precincts, probably the court of the Gentiles, turned into a market for cattle, and such things as were used in their sacrifices; and in part occupied by money-changers, who gave the current coin in exchange for that of other countries, for the sake of a premium; or gave money for bills of exchange or letters of credit, from merchants or bankers in the several countries whence the people came to worship. It may be supposed, that the persons concerned exacted on strangers, and thus joined iniquity to profanation: whilst the priests encouraged these scandalous transactions, doubtless for a share of the booty! At the same time, He reminded them of the words which God had spoken by his prophets concerning his temple, that it should be rendered a house of prayer and holy worship, not only to the Jews, but to persons of all nations: whereas, instead of allowing the Gentiles a place to worship in, they had converted the court intended for that purpose into a place of merchandise. The quotation from Isaiah, is in the words of the Septuagint; which exactly render the original Hebrew. The words of Jeremiah seem rather referred to, than quoted.

Scott.

(12.) *Amorice*, covered with the veil of religion, is one of those things on which Christ looks with the greatest indignation in his church. Merchandise of holy things, simoniacal presentations, fraudulent exchanges, a mercenary spirit in sacred functions; ecclesiastical employ-

poses. They sold beasts for sacrifice, for the convenience of those that could more easily bring their money with them than their beast; and they changed money for those that wanted the half-shekel, which was their yearly poll, or redemption-money; or, on bills of return; so that this might pass for the outward business of the house of God; and yet Christ will not allow of it. Note, Great corruptions and abuses come into the church by the practices of those whose *gain is godliness*, that is, who make worldly gain the end of their godliness, and counterfeit godliness in their way to worldly gain; (1 Tim. 6:5.) *from such turn away*.

(2.) The purging out of this abuse. Christ cast them out that sold. He did it before with a scourge of small cords; (John 2:13.) now with a look, a frown, a word of command. Some reckon this none of the least of Christ's miracles, and it is an instance of his power over the spirits of men, and the hold He has of them: by their own consciences. This was the only act of regal authority and coercive power that Christ did in the days of his flesh. Tradition says, that his face shone, and beams of light darted from his blessed eyes, which astonished these market-people, and compelled them to yield to his command; if so, the Scripture was fulfilled, Prov. 8:20. *The King that sitteth on the throne of judgment, scattereth away all evil with his eyes*. He overthrew the tables of the money-changers; He did not take the money to Himself, but scattered it, threw it to the ground, the fittest place for it. The Jews, in Esther's time, on the spoil laid not their hand, Esther 9:10.

(3.) What He said to justify Himself, and to convict them; (v. 13.) *It is written*. Note, In the reformation of the church, the eye must be on the Scripture, and that must be adhered to as the rule. Reformation is then right, when corrupted ordinances are reduced to their primitive institution.

temple, when Christ is there, who, *a*. He shows Himself jealous for the honor of his temple, *a*. expelling those who profane it, shows Himself, gracious to those who humbly seek Him; the blind and lame must keep their distance from princes' palaces, (2 Sam. 5:8.) but from God's temple only the wicked and profane. The temple was profaned when made a market-place, but honored when made an hospital; to be doing good in God's house, better becomes it, than to be getting money there. Christ's healing was a real answer to that question, *Who is this?* His works testified of Him more than the *hosannas*; and his healing in the temple was the fulfilling of the promise, that *the glory of the latter house should be greater than the glory of the former*.

There also He silenced the offence of the chief priests and scribes at the acclamations with which He was attended, v. 15, 16. They that should have been most forward to give Him honor, were his worst enemies.

1. They were vexed at the wonderful things He did, (as Acts 4:16, 5:33.) for they could not deny them to be true miracles. The works that Christ did, recommended themselves to every man's conscience. If they had any sense, they could not but own the miracle of them; and, if any good nature, could not but love the mercy of them; yet, because they were resolved to oppose Him, for these they envied Him, and bore Him a grudge.

(2.) They openly quarrelled at the children's hosannas; they thought that hereby an honor was given Him, which did not belong to Him, and that it looked like ostentation. Proud men cannot bear that honor should be done to any but themselves, and are uneasy at nothing more than at the just praises of deserving men. Thus Saul envied David the women's songs; and 'who can stand before envy?' When Christ is most honored, his enemies are most displeased.

Just now we saw Christ preferring the blind and the lame before the buyers and sellers; now (v. 16.) He takes part with the children against priests and scribes.

Observe, (1.) The children were in the temple, perhaps playing there; no wonder, when the rulers make it a *market-place*, that the children make it a place of pastime; but we are willing to hope that many of them were worshipping there. Note, It is good to bring children betimes to the house of prayer, *for of such is the kingdom of heaven*. Let children be taught to keep up the form of godliness, it will help to lead them to the power of it. Christ has a tenderness for the lambs of his flock.

(2.) They were there, *crying, Hosanna to the Son of David*. Thus they learned from those that were grown up. Little children say and do as they hear others say, and see others do; so easily do they imitate; and therefore great care must be taken to set them good examples, and no bad ones. *Our intercourse with the young should be conducted with the most scrupulous*

ments obtained by flattery, service or attendance, or by any thing which is instead of money; collations, nominations, and elections made through any other motive than the glory of God; these are all fatal and damnable profanations, of which those in the temple were only a shadow.

Quensel, in CLARKE.

(13.) *A den of thieves.* Our Lord alludes here to those dens and caves in Judea, in which the public robbers either hid, or kept themselves fortified. They who were placed themselves in the church of Christ to serve souls, and do it not, and they who enjoy the revenues of the church, and neglect the service of it, are *thieves and robbers* in more senses than one.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Thieves. As those Jews who came from distant countries to worship, often wanted the sacrifices required by the law, the priests took the advantage of buying up all the beasts appointed for that purpose, sold them to those who wanted them, and received them again at their hands. And as some who came were too poor to purchase even the smaller offerings, such as doves, &c. the priests placed bankers in the courts of the temple to lend money on security; but finding that they could not do this without transgressing the law, they appointed a kind of pawn-brokers instead of bankers—these, for the advance of a small sum, took fruits, herbs, and other commodities, instead of interest money. Our Lord, therefore, not only expelled their agents, but arraigned them also as a band of thieves.

Jerome, in HENLETT.

Vers 15.

The chief priests—were sore displeased. Strange as it may appear, the priesthood itself, in all corrupt times, has been over the most forward to prevent a reform in the church.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

6 And said unto him, 'Heardest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?"

[Practical Observations.]

17 ¶ And he left them, and went out of the city into ^o Bethany, and he lodged there.

18 Now ^a in the morning as he returned into the city, ^a he hungered.

19 And when he saw ^a a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, ^a and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, 'Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward forever. And presently the fig-tree withered away.'

20 And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, "How soon is the fig-tree withered away!"

1 Luke 19:39, 40. John 11:47, 48. Acts 4:16-18.

m 12:3. 19:4. 22:31. Mark 2:25.

n 12:35. 12:36. 12:37. 12:38.

o 16:4. Jer. 6:8. Hos. 9:12. Mark 3:27. Luke 3:37, 38.

p Mark 11:11, 19. Luke 10:39. John 11:11, 18. 12:1-3.

q Mark 11:12, 13.

r 4:2. 12:1. Luke 4:2. Heb. 4:15.

s ^a *gr. one fig-tree.*

t 4:4, 5. Luke 9:9. 19:6-9. John 15:2, 6. 2 Tim. 3:5. Tit. 1:6.

u Mark 11:14. Luke 19:42-44. Heb. 6:7, 8. 2 Pet. 2:20-22. Rev. 22:11.

v 1:40-6. Mark 11:20, 21. Jam. 1:10, 11.

care. Children will learn of those that are with them, either to curse and swear, or to pray and praise. The Jews did sometimes teach their children to carry branches at the feast of tabernacles, and to cry *hosanna*; but God taught them here to apply it to Christ. Note, *Hosanna to the Son of David* well becomes the mouths of little children, who should learn young the language of Canaan.

(3.) Our Lord Jesus not only allowed, but was pleased with it, and quoted a scripture which was fulfilled in it, (Ps. 8: 2.) or, at least may be accommodated to it; *Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise*; which, some think, refers to the children's joining in the acclamations of the people and the women's songs, with which David was honored when he returned from the slaughter of the Philistine; and therefore is very fitly applied here to the *hosannas* with which the Son of David was saluted, now that He was entering on his conflict with Satan, that Goliath. Note, [1.] Christ takes particular notice of the services of little children, and is well pleased with them. If God may be honored by babes and sucklings, much more by children, who are grown up to maturity and some capacity. [2.] Praise is perfected out of the mouth of such; it has a peculiar tendency to the honor and glory of God, for little children to join in his praises; the praise would be accounted defective and imperfect, if they had not their share in it; which is an encouragement for children to be good sometimes, and to parents to teach them to be so; the labor neither of the one nor of the other shall be in vain. In this psalm it is, *Thou hast ordained strength.* Note, God perfectly praise, by ordaining strength out of the mouths of babes and sucklings. When great things are brought about by weak and unlikely instruments, God is thereby much honored, for *his strength is perfected in weakness*; and the infirmities of the babes and sucklings serve for a foil to the divine power. That which follows in the psalm, *That Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger*, was very applicable to the priests and scribes, but Christ left it to them to apply it.

Lastly, Christ, having thus silenced them, forsook them, p. 17. He left them, in prudence, lest they should now have seized Him before his hour was come; in justice, because they had forfeited the favor of his presence. By repin-

ing at Christ's praises, we drive Him from us. He left them as incorrigible, and He went out of the city to Bethany, which was a more quiet retired place; not so much that He might sleep undisturbed, as that He might pray undisturbed. *Bethany was but two little miles from Jerusalem*; thither He now went on foot, to show that, when He rode, it was only to fulfil the Scripture. He was not lifted up with the *hosannas* of the people; but, as having forgot them, soon returned to his mean and toilsome way of travelling.

V. 18-22. Observe,

I. Christ returned in the morning to Jerusalem, v. 18. Some think He went out of the city over night, because none of his friends there durst entertain Him, for fear of the great men; yet, having work to do there, He returned. Note, We must never be driven from duty, either by the malice of foes, or the unkindness of friends.

II. As He went, He hungered. He was a Man, and submitted to the infirmities of nature; an active Man, so intent on his work, that He neglected his food, and came out fasting; a poor Man, for He had no present supply; a Man that pleased not Himself, for He would willingly have taken up with green raw figs for his breakfast, when it was fit that He should have had something warm.

Christ therefore hungered, that He might have occasion to work this miracle, in cursing, and withering, the barren fig-tree, and so give us an instructive instance both of his justice and power

1. See his justice, v. 19. He went to it, expecting fruit, because it had leaves; but, finding none, He sentenced it to a perpetual barrenness. The miracle had its significance, as well as his other miracles. All Christ's miracles hitherto were wrought for the good of men, and proved the power of his grace and blessing; (the sending of the devils into the herd of swine was but a permission;) but, now, at last, to show that all judgment is committed to Him, and that He is able not only to save, but to destroy, He would give a specimen of the power of his wrath and curse; yet this is only an *imitation* tree, that is set forth for an example; *Come, learn a parable of the fig-tree*, ch. 24: 32. The scope of it is the same with the parable of the fig-tree, Luke 13: 6.

(1.) This cursing of the barren fig-tree, represents the state of hypocrites in general; and

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

v. 12-16. When Zion's King shall come to enlarge his kingdom, He will begin with purging the church. If Christ should come into many parts of the visible church, how many recesses of iniquity and avarice would He discover and cleanse! And how many things which are daily practised under the guise of religion, would He show to be more suitable for 'a den of robbers,' than for 'the house of prayer!' (P. O. Rev. 18: 9-19.) May the Lord then come and purify the church; and may He stir up the spirit of such as have influence and authority, to check the progress of sacrilegious profanations.—It is indeed to be feared, that buying and selling in every way, are often connected with great dishonesty: yet certainly no merchandising is so iniquitous as that, which is conducted within

the precincts of the sanctuary.—No wisdom, holiness, or benevolence, can silence the clamors of interested men against those persons, who endeavor to put a stop so their iniquitous lucre: nor can we wonder at this, when we recollect, that even the miracles and holiness of the Son of God could procure Him no exemption; but, on the contrary, drew on Him the more desperate enmity. Those who hate his Gospel, because it interferes with their interests, reputation or authority, will be greatly displeased with such as show favor to it; but the Lord has often 'perfected his praise' out of the mouths of mere children, in age, abilities, learning, or estate, when chief priests and learned scribes, and rulers professing Christianity, have contradicted and blasphemed.

SCOTT.

Verse 16.

Out of the mouth of babes. 'The eighth Psalm, out of which these words are quoted, is applied to Jesus Christ in three other places in the new covenant, (1 Cor. 13: 29. Eph. 1: 22. Heb. 2: 6.) which proves it to be merely a prophetic psalm, relating to the Messiah. It was a common thing among the Jews for the children to be employed in public acclamations; and thus they were accustomed to hail their celebrated rabbins. Some imagine that babes and sucklings in the prophecy have a much more extensive meaning, and refer also to the first preachers of the Gospel of Christ.'

DR. A. CLARKE.

Have ye not read? 'The discourse in the psalm (Ps. 8: 3.) referred to, relates to the existence and providence of God, which are so manifest from the works of nature, that all, not obtuse and stupid men merely, but even children, may easily understand and acknowledge them.' This Jesus applies to the subject in hand. Even children, says He, may perceive and know that I am the Messiah.'

ROSEN.

Verse 17.

It does not appear, that any person in Jerusalem offered to entertain Christ on this occasion; at least, He chose to retire to Bethany. Accordingly, He spent the night there, probably at the house of Lazarus and his sisters; and in the morning, for the sake of retirement, and that He might be early at the temple, or that He might not disturb the family, He went away fasting.

SCOTT.

Bethany. 'A village to the east of the mount of Olives, on the road to Jericho, fifteen stadia, (John 11: 18.) or near two miles, as

Jerome states, from Jerusalem. This village is now small and poor, and the cultivation of the soil around it is much neglected; but it is a pleasant romantic spot, shaded by the mount of Olives, and abounding in vines and long grass. It consists of from thirty to forty dwellings, inhabited by about six hundred Mohammedans. Here they show the ruins of a sort of castle as the house of Lazarus, and a grotto as his tomb; and the house of Simon the leper, of Mary Magdalene, and of Martha, and the identical tree which our Lord cursed, are among the monkish curiosities of the place.'

Verse 19.

Fig-tree. 'The fig-trees are of three kinds; 1. The *untimely fig*, which puts forth at the vernal equinox, and comes to maturity about the latter part of June, and in relish surpasses the other kinds. 2. The *summer or dry fig*, which appears about the middle of June, and comes to maturity in August; and 3. The *winter fig*, which germinates in August, and does not ripen until the falling of the leaves about the end of November.' [See the notes on the parallel passage in Mark.]

JAHN.

'Christ was wont to teach by signs and symbols. Here He chose a fig-tree, the most worthless tree in Judea, and this not possessed as property by any one, but standing in the public road; a tree which neither bore fruit, nor promised it; this He chose as a fit emblem by which to show how great is his power, as well to punish the wicked, as to bless the righteous.'

ROSEN.

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, * If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done to the fig-tree*, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done.

22 And *all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

[Practical Observations.]

23 ¶ And *when he was come into the temple, *the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him

x 17:20. Mark 11:22, 23. Luke 17:6, 7. Rom. 4:19, 20. 1 Cor. 13:2. Jam. 1:6.

y 7:11. 18:19. Mark 11:24. Luke 11:8, 10. John 14:13. 15:7. 16:24. Jan. 6:16. 1 John 3:22. 5:14, 15.

z Mark 11:22, 23. Luke 19:47, 48. 20: 1, 2.

a 1 Chr. 21:1, &c.

fruit should grow upon them, or be gathered from them, from henceforward forever. Never any good came from them, (except the particular persons among them that believed,) after they rejected Christ; blindness and hardness grew upon them, till they were unchurched, unpeopled, and undone, and their place and nation rooted up; their beauty was defaced, their privileges and ornaments, their temple, and priesthood, and sacrifices, and festivals, and all the glories of their church and state, fell like leaves in autumn. How soon did their fig-tree wither away, after they said, *His blood be on us, and on our children!* And the Lord was righteous in it.

2. See the power of Christ; the former is wrapped up in the figure, but this more fully discoursed of; Christ intending thereby to direct his disciples in the use of their powers.

(1.) The disciples admired the effect of Christ's curse, v. 20. There was no visible cause of the fig-tree's withering, but it was a secret blast, a worm at the root; not only the leaves withered, but the body of the tree; it withered away in an instant, and became like a dry stick. Gospel curses are, on this account, the most dreadful—that they work insensibly and silently, by a fire not blown, but effectually. (2.) Christ empowered them by faith to do the like; (v. 21, 22,) as He said, (John 14:12,) *Greater works than these shall ye do.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17—22. It is best to shun needless allegations with malicious opposers, and to avoid all appearances of ostentation: and the genuine followers of Christ will cheerfully submit to the pinchings of poverty or the cravings of hunger, rather than be deprived of opportunities of usefulness; though their zeal and love will not prevent them from feeling the inconvenience as sensibly as other men.—But let us be peculiarly afraid of the doom denounced on 'the barren fig-tree.' The leaves of profession may impose on men: but the Lord will shortly come, and seek for fruit; and if to the last He finds none, the tree will fall under his curse of everlasting unfruitfulness: and how tremendous the sentence of being left to eternal unholiness and enmity against God! to be eternally contrary to Him, and the object of his holy abhorrence and indignation! Such considerations should excite us to more fervent prayer, and lead us to offer all our petitions in an unwavering reliance on the promises of God, and on the merits of our great Advocate, fully expecting that He will grant our requests, in every thing really good for us. In this way, no impediments need discourage us, for we may surmount or remove them all, by the power of faith and prayer. Thus we may go on with our Master's work, without regarding the objections of his enemies.—Those who are evidently destitute of faith and grace, will often demand of the Lord's servants, by what authority they act. As if men might do mischief in a variety of ways without asking leave of any one, or taking out any licence or commission; but might not

Observe, [1.] The description of this working faith; *If ye have faith, and doubt not.* Note, Doubting of the power and promise of God, is the great thing that spoils the efficacy and success of faith. 'If you have faith, and dispute not,' (so some read it) 'dispute not with yourselves, dispute not with the promise of God; if you stagger not at the promise,' (Rom. 4:20) for, as far as we do, so our faith is deficient; as certain as the promise is, so confident our faith should be.

[2.] The power and prevalence of it expressed figuratively; *If ye shall say to this mountain, (meaning the mount of Olives,) Be thou removed, it shall be done.* There might be a particular reason for his saying so of this mountain, for there was a prophecy, that the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem, should cleave in the midst, and then remove, Zech. 14:4. But this is a proverbial expression, intimating that we are to believe that nothing is impossible with God, and therefore that what He has promised shall certainly be performed, though to us it seem impossible. It was among the Jews a usual commendation of their learned rabbins, that they were removers of mountains, that is, could solve the greatest difficulties, now this may be done by faith acted on the Word of God, which will bring great and strange things to pass.

[3.] The way and means of exercising this faith, and of doing that which is to be done; i. v. 22. Faith is the soul, prayer the body; both together make a complete man for any service. Faith, if it be right, will excite prayer; and prayer is not right, if it do not spring from faith. This is the condition of our receiving; we must ask in prayer, believing. We have many promises to this purport from the mouth of our Lord Jesus, and all to encourage faith, the principal grace, and prayer, the principal duty, of a Christian. It is but ask and have, believe and receive; and what would we more? Observe how comprehensive the promise is—*all things, whatsoever ye shall ask*; this is like all and every the premises in a conveyance. *All things*, is general; *whatsoever*, is particular; though generals include particulars, yet such is the folly of our unbelief, that, though we think we assent to promises in the general, yet we fly off, when it comes to particulars, and therefore, that we might have strong consolation, it is thus copiously expressed, *All things whatsoever.*

endeavor to do good, without obtaining the permission of the enemies of all goodness! No doubt, order and regularity are in general expedient: but even where the external order of the church was of undoubted divine original; when its regular teachers and rulers degenerated, or evidently neglected their duty, God raised up extraordinary persons, to expose their crimes, and to call sinners to repentance, faith, and holiness. It is true that the sanction of miracles is requisite for those, who would introduce any new revelation; but it cannot be proved from Scripture, that these credentials are necessary to authorize such as only call on their perishing fellow-sinners 'to repent and believe the Gospel;' and if God evidently honor men in this work, as instruments in reviving true religion, and promoting the salvation of many souls, who are they, that shall deem themselves authorized to call them to account, about the supposed irregularity of their useful labors? (See Mark 9:38—40.) Indeed there have been characters of this kind, in different ages, of whom it would greatly embarrass objectors to give a decided opinion, whether they were sent by God, or not, without being sent; as either conclusion would involve them in perplexing difficulties. Many more, however, will give the eminent servants of God a good word, especially after their death, than are disposed to believe their doctrine, or obey their call to repentance and faith in Christ, and the obedience of faith.

SCOTT.

Verses 21, 22.

When Jesus observed the surprise of the disciples. He again showed them the energy of faith, with a special reference to the power of working miracles in his name. To this our Lord subjoined, that they ought not to doubt, but verily believe, that they should receive whatever they asked in prayer. This too specially refers to the case of miracles, but not exclusively. Whenever any person offers suitable petitions, in a right manner, and grounded on God's express promise, he ought not to doubt of his power or willingness to grant them, on account either of his own unworthiness, or of any difficulty in the way. 'If you

'have such a faith, as puts no difference between things you can, and things you cannot do, but makes you fully persuaded, you can do any thing which tends to the glory of God, and is requisite for the promotion of the Christian faith, you shall be able to perform the most difficult things: for that is the meaning of that phrase, to *ask in mountains.* (1 Cor. 13:2.)' Whitby.

Verses 23—27.

As our Lord now openly appeared in the character of the Messiah, the chief priests, and other leading persons of the nation, were exceedingly offended, especially as He had exposed these ce-

SCOTT.

as He was teaching, and said, ^bBy what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, ^cI also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

25 The ^dbaptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, ^eWhy did ye not then believe him?

26 But if we shall say, Of men; ^fwe fear the people: ^gfor all hold John as a prophet.

27 And they answered Jesus, and said, ^hWe cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

V. 23-27. Our Lord Jesus (like Paul after Him) preached his Gospel with much contention. In this sense, he was like Jeremiah, a man of contention; not striving, but stripen with. The great contenders with Him were, the chief priests and the elders, the judges of two distinct courts: the chief priests in the ecclesiastical, the elders in the civil. See an idea of both, 2 Chron. 19: 5, 8, 11. These joined to attack Christ, thinking they should find or make Him obnoxious to the one or the other. See how wofully degenerate that generation was, when the governors both in church and state, who should have been the great promoters of the Messiah's kingdom, were the great opposers of it! Here we have them disturbing Him when He was preaching, v. 23. They would neither receive his instructions themselves, nor let others receive them. Observe,

I. As soon as He came to Jerusalem, He went to the temple, for there He had a fairer opportunity of doing good to souls than any where else in Jerusalem. Though He came hungry to the city, and was disappointed of a breakfast at the barren fig-tree, yet, for aught that appears, He went straight to the temple, as one that esteemed the words of God's mouth, the preaching of them, more than his necessary food.

II. In the temple He was teaching; He had called it a house of prayer, (v. 13.) and here we have Him preaching there. Note, in the solemn assemblies of Christians, praying and preaching must go together. To make up communion with God, we must not only speak to Him in prayer, but hear what He has to say to us by his word; ministers must *give themselves both to the word and to prayer*, Acts 6: 4. Now that Christ taught in the temple, that scripture was fulfilled, (Isa. 2: 3.) *Let us go up to the house of the Lord, and He will teach us his ways.* The priests of old often taught there the good knowledge of the Lord; but they never had such a teacher as this.

III. While He was teaching, the priests and elders came upon Him, and challenged Him to produce his orders; the hand of Satan was in it, to hinder Him in his work; yet good was brought out of this evil, for hereby occasion was given to Christ to dispel the objections that were advanced against Him, to the greater satisfaction of his followers; and, while his adversaries thought by their power to have silenced Him, He by his wisdom silenced them.

Now, in this dispute, observe,

1. How He was assaulted by their insolent demand; *By what authority doest Thou these things, and who gave Thee this authority?* Had they considered his miracles, they needed not to have asked this question. 'Thou ridest in triumph into Jerusalem, receivest the hosannas of the people, controllest in the temple, drivest out such as had licence to be there; Thou art here preaching a new doctrine; whence hadst Thou a commission to do all this? Was it from Cæsar, or from the high priest, or from God? Produce thy warrant, thy credentials. Dost not Thou take too much on Thee?' Note, It is good for all that take on them to act with authority, to put this question to themselves, 'Who gave us authority?' For unless a man be clear in his own conscience concerning that, he cannot act with any comfort or hope of success. They who run before their warrant, run without their blessing, Jer. 23: 21, 22.

Christ had often said and proved it, and Nicodemus, a master in Israel, had owned, that he was a Teacher sent of God; (John 3: 2.) yet, at this time of day, they came to Him with this question. (1.) In the ostentation of their own power, as chief priests and elders. How haughtily do they ask, *Who gave Thee this authority?* Intimating that He could have no authority, because He had none from them, 1 Kings 22: 24. Jer. 20: 1. Note, It is common for the greatest abusers of their power, to be the most rigorous asserters of it, and to take a pride and pleasure in any thing that looks like the exercise of it. (2.) To insnare and entangle Him. Should He refuse to answer, they would enter judgment against Him, and insinuate to the people, that his silence was a tacit confessing of Himself to be a usurper; should

He plead an authority from God, they would, as formerly, demand a sign from heaven, or accuse Him of blasphemy.

2. How He answered this demand. He declined a direct answer, lest they should take advantage against Him; but answers them with a question which would help them to answer it themselves; (v. 24, 25.) *I also will ask you one thing.* Those that are as sheep in the midst of wolves, have need to be wise as serpents: the heart of the wise studieth to answer. We must give a reason of the hope that is in us, not only with meekness, but with fear, (1 Pet. 3: 15.) with prudent caution, lest truth be damaged, or ourselves endangered.

Now this question is concerning John's baptism, here put for his whole ministry, preaching as well as baptizing; 'Was this from heaven, or of men?' One of the two it must be. Gamaliel's argument turned on this hinge: Acts 5: 38, 39. Either this counsel is of men, or of God. Though that which is manifestly bad, cannot be of God, yet that which is seemingly good, may be of men, nay, of Satan, when he transforms himself into an angel of light. This question was not at all shuffling, to evade theirs; but (1.) If they answered it, it would answer theirs: should they say, against their consciences, that John's baptism was of men, yet it would be easy to answer, *John did no miracles*, (John 10: 41.) Christ did many; but, should they say, as they could not but own, that John's baptism was from heaven, (which was supposed in the quest. a sent him, John 1: 21. *Art thou Elias, or that prophet?*) then their demand was answered, for he bare testimony to Christ.

(2.) If they refused to answer it, that would be a good reason why He should not offer proofs of his authority; it was but to cast pearls before swine. Thus He taketh the wise in their own craftiness; (1 Cor. 3: 19.) and those that would not be convinced of the plainest truths shall be convicted of the vilest malice, against John first, then against Christ, and in both against God.

3. How they were hereby baffled. Observe, (1.) *How they reasoned with themselves.* Not what proofs there were of the divine original of John's baptism; but how to make their part good against Christ. Two things they considered; their credit, and their safety.

(1.) Their credit, which they would encourage, if they should own John's baptism to be of God; for then Christ would ask them, before all the people, *Why did ye not believe him?* And to acknowledge that a doctrine is from God, and yet not to receive and entertain it, is the greatest absurdity and iniquity. Many that will not be kept by the fear of sin from neglecting and opposing that which they know to be true and good, are kept by the fear of shame from owning that to be true and good which they neglect and oppose. Thus they reject the counsel of God against themselves, in not submitting to John's baptism, and were left without excuse.

(2.) Their safety, that they would expose themselves to the resentments of the people, if they should say that John's baptism was of men; *We fear the people, for all hold John as a prophet.* It seems, then, 1st, That the people had truer sentiments of John than the chief priests and the elders had, or, at least, were more free and faithful in declaring their sentiments. This people, of whom they said in their pride, that they knew not the law, and were cursed, (John 7: 49.) it seems, knew the Gospel,

which they had convinced. They therefore came to Him in a body, to demand ^aby what authority He did these things. He did not directly answer his divine prerogative, or appeal to his miracles, or reproach them with ^bcarelessness and hypocrisy; though He did the latter, on other occasions, in the character of the heart-searching Judge; but He left them on this occasion to condemn themselves. Being thus pressed on every hand, they were constrained to allow that they were incompetent to examine who was, and who was not, sent by God; that is, that they were 'blind guides,' who could only mislead those who depended on them. 'They could not own the baptism of John to be from heaven, but they must also own Christ to be the Son of God, and Him concerning whom God had testified by "a voice from heaven," and by the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him, that He was "the beloved Son, in

whom He was well pleased;" whence these great doctors chose rather to pretend ignorance, than to confess that truth which would condemn them.' *Whitby*. (Marg. Ref.—See Luke 20: 1-8. *John*: 5. 31-33.) (25.) *From heaven.* (See Dan. 4: 24-26, v. 26.)

(27.) *We cannot tell.* 'Simplicity gives a wonderful confidence and peace of mind; but double dealing causes a thousand inquietudes and troubles. We cannot tell, said they; which, in the words of truth should be, *We will not tell*, for we will not have this man for the Messiah. Pharisaical pride, according to its different interests, either pretends to know every thing, or affects to know nothing.'

Dr. A. CLARK.

28 ¶ But what think ye? ¹ A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, 'Son, go work to-day in my vineyard.'

29 He answered and said, 'I will not: but afterward he repented and went.'

30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir: and went not.'

1:26. 22:17. Luke 13:4. 1 Cor. 15.
1 Luke 15:11-32.
1 20:5-7. Mark 13:34. 1 Cor 15:58.
31 Jer. 44:16. Eph. 4:17-19.
32-3. 2 Cor. 13:10-19. 1e. 1:16-
19. 35:6,7. Ec. 18:28-32. Dan.
4:34-37. Jon. 3:8-10. Luke 15:
17,19. Acts 26:20. Eph. 2:1-10.
33:3. Ec. 33:31. Rom. 2:17-25.
T. 1:16.

dropt the question. They fairly confessed, *We cannot tell*; that is, 'We will not';—*We never knew*. The more shame for them, while they pretended to be leaders of the people, and by their office were obliged to take cognizance of such things. And observe by the way, when they said, *We cannot tell*, they told a lie, for they knew that John's baptism was of God. Note; There are many who are more afraid of the *shame* of lying than of the *sin*, and therefore scruple not to speak that which they know to be false concerning their own thoughts and apprehensions, their affections and intentions, or their remembering or forgetting of things, because in those things they know nobody can disprove them.

Thus Christ avoided their snare, and justified Himself in refusing to gratify them; *Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things*. If they be so wicked as either not to believe, or not to confess, that the baptism of John was from Heaven, they are not fit to be discoursed with concerning Christ's authority; for men of such a disposition could not be convinced of the truth, and therefore *he that is thus ignorant, let him be ignorant still*. Note, Those that imprison the truths they know, in unrighteousness, are justly denied the further truths they inquire after, Rom. 1:18, 19. Take away the talent from him that buried it; those that *will not see*, shall not see.

V. 23-32. The scope of this parable is to show, that they who knew not John's baptism to be of God, were shamed even by the publicans and harlots, who knew it, and owned it. Here is,

1. The parable itself, which represents two sorts of persons; some that prove better than they promise: others that promise better than they prove.

1. They had both the same father, which signifies that God is a common Father to all mankind; *Have we not all one Father?* Yes, and yet there is a vast difference between men's characters.

2. They had both the same command given them, v. 28, 30. Parents should not bring up their children in idleness; nothing is more pleasing, and yet nothing more pernicious, to youth than that, Lam. 3: 27. God sets his children to work, though they are all heirs. This command is given to every one of us. Note, (1.) The Gospel-call to work in the vineyard, requires present obedience; *Son, go work to-day*, while it is called to-day, because the night comes when no man can work. While we were not sent into the world to be idle, nor had we daylight given us to play by; therefore, if ever we mean to do any thing for God and our souls, why not now? Why not to-day? (2.) The exhortation to go *work to-day in the vineyard*, speaketh unto us as unto children; Heb. 12:5. *Son, go work*. It is the command of a Father, which carries with it both authority and affection, a Father that pities his children, and considers their frame, and will not overtask them, (Ps. 103:13, 14.) a Father that is very tender of his *Son that serves Him*, Mal. 3: 17. If we work in our Father's vineyard, we work for ourselves.

3. Their conduct was very different.

(1.) One of the sons proved better than he promised.

(1.) Here is the untoward answer he gave his father; he said, flat and plain, *I will not*. See to what a degree of impudence the corrupt nature of man rises, to say, *I will not*, to the command of a father! Those that will not bend, surely they cannot blush; if they had any modesty left them, they could not say, *We will not*, Jer. 2: 25. Excuses are bad, but downright denials are worse; yet such peremptory refusals do the calls of the Gospel often meet with. First, Some love their ease, and will not work; they would live in the world, as leviathan in the waters, to play therein; (Ps. 104: 26.) they do not love working. Secondly, Their hearts are so much on their own fields, that they are not for working in God's vineyard. They love the business of the world better than the business of their religion. Thus some by the delights of sense, and others by the employments of the world, are kept from doing that great work which they were sent into the world to do, and so stand all the day idle.

2.] Here is the happy change of his mind, and of his way, upon second thoughts; *Afterward he repented, and went*. Note, Many in their beginning are wicked and wilful, who afterward repent and mend, and come to something. Some, that God hath chosen, are suffered for a great while to run to a great excess of riot: *Such were some of you*, 1 Cor. 6: 11. These are set forth for patterns of long suffering, 1 Tim. 1: 16. *Afterward he repented*. Repentance is an *after-act*, and an *after-care*. Better late than never. Observe, When he repented, he went; that was the *fruit meet for repentance*. The only evidence of our repentance is, immediately to comply; and then what is past shall be pardoned, and all shall be well. See what a kind Father God is; He resents not the affront of our refusals, as justly He might. He that told his father to his face, that he would not do as he bid him, deserved to be turned out of doors, and disinherited; but our God *wants to be gracious*: blessed be God, we are under a covenant that leaves room for such a repentance.

(2.) The other son promised better than he proved. To him the father said *likewise*, v. 30. The Gospel-call, though very different, is, in effect, the same to all, and is carried on with an even tenor. We have all the same commands, engagements, encouragements, though to some they are a savor of life unto life, to others of death unto death. Observe,

[1.] How fairly this other son promised; *He said, I go, sir*. He gives his father a title of respect, *go, sir*. Note, It becomes children to speak respectfully to their parents. It is one branch of that honor which the fifth commandment requires. He professes a ready obedience *I go*; not, 'I will go by and by, but, 'Ready, sir, you may depend on it, I go just now.' This answer we should give from the heart heartily to all the calls and commands of the Word of God. See Jer. 3: 22. Ps. 27: 8.

[2.] How he failed in the performance; *He went not*. Note, Many give good words, and make fair promises, in religion, and those from some good motions for the present, that rest there, and go no further, and so come to nothing. Many there are that say, and do not; like the Pharisees, ch. 23: 3. Many with their mouths show much love, but their heart goes another way. They had a good mind to be religious, but they met with something to be done, that was too hard, or something to be parted with, that was too dear, and so their purposes are to no purpose.

II. A general appeal on the parable; *Whether of them did the will of his father?* v. 31. They both had their faults, one was rude, and the other false; such variety of excises parents sometimes have in the different humors of their children, and they have need of a great deal of wisdom and grace to know what is the best way of managing them. But the question is, Which was the better of the two, and the less faulty? And it was soon resolved; the first, because his actions were better than his words, and his latter end than his beginning. This they had learned from the common sense of mankind, who would much rather deal with one that will be better than his word, than with one that will be false to his word. And, in the intention of it, they had learned from the account God gives of the rule of his judgment, (Ezek. 18: 21, 22.) that if the sinner turn from his wickedness, he shall be pardoned; and if the righteous man turns from his righteousness, he shall be rejected. The tenor of the whole Scriptures gives us to understand, that those are accepted as doing their Father's will, who wherein they have missed it, are sorry for it, and do better.

III. A particular application of it to the matter in hand, v. 31, 32. The primary scope of the parable is, to show how the publicans and harlots, who never talked of the Messiah

Verſes 23-32.

The principal persons who professed a zealous regard to religion, and who were the apparent supporters of it, among the Jews, were more inveterate enemies to the truth, than the vilest profligates in the nation.

This Jesus showed in a parable. Some think that the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, were also thus intimate. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, 19: 29, 30, v. 30. Luke 15.)

Score

31 Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto him, 'The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.

32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not; but the publicans and the harlots believed him and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

[Practical Observations.]

33 ¶ Hear another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

p 7:21. 12:50. Ez. 33:11. Luke 15: 10. Acts 17:30. 2 Pet. 3:9.
q 2:12. 19:5. Job 15:5. Luke 7: 40-42. 19:22. Rom. 3:19.
r 5:18. 6:5. 18:3.
s 9:10. 16:16. Luke 7:37-50. 15:1, 2. 19:10. Rom. 5:20. 9:30-33. 1 Tim. 1:13-16.
t 2:1-3. Is. 35:3. Jer. 6:16. Luke 3:8-13. 12:21. 2 Pet. 2:21.
u 25. 11:18. Luke 7:29, 30. John 5: 33-38. Acts 13:25-29.
x Ps. 81:11, 12. Zech. 7:11, 12. John 5:27-10. 2 Tim. 2:25. Heb. 3:12. 6:5-8.
y 13:18. 1 Kings 22:19. Is. 1:10. Jer. 19:3. Hos. 4:1.
z Ps. 30:5-16. Cant. 8:11, 12. Is. 5: 1-4. Jer. 2:21. Mark 1:11. Luke 20:9. John 15:1.
aa 23:2. Deut. 1:15-17. 16:18. 17:9 -12. 33:9-10. Mal. 2:4-9.
ab 25:14, 15. Mark 13:34. Luke 19:12.

gate; and yet many of them were wrought upon by the ministry of John, Luke 7: 29. These fitly represented the Gentile world; for, as Whitby observes, the Jews generally ranked the publicans with the heathen; nay, and the heathen were represented by the Jews as harlots, and born of harlots, John 8: 41.

(2.) The scribes and Pharisees, the chief priests and elders, and indeed the Jewish nation in general, were like the other son that gave good words; they made a specious profession of religion, and yet, when the kingdom of the

and his kingdom, yet entertained the doctrine, and submitted to the discipline, of John the Baptist, his forerunner, when the priests and elders, who were big with expectations of the Messiah, and seemed very ready to go into his measures, slighted John the Baptist, and run counter to the designs of his mission. But it has a further reach; the Gentiles were sometimes disobedient, like the other son; (Tit. 3: 3, 4.) yet, when the Gospel was preached to them, they became obedient to the faith; whereas the Jews, who said, *I go, sir, promised fair*, (Exod. 24: 7. Josh. 24: 24.) yet went not; they did but flatter God with their mouths, Ps. 78: 36.

In Christ's application of this parable, observe,

1. How He proves that John's baptism was from heaven, and not of men. 'If you cannot tell, you might tell.'

(1.) By the scope of his ministry; *John came to you in the way of righteousness*. Would you know whether John had his commission from heaven, remember the rule of trial, *By their fruits ye shall know them*; the fruits of their doctrines, the fruits of their doings. Now it was evident that John came in the way of righteousness. He taught people to repent, and to work the works of righteousness; he was a great example of strictness, and seriousness, and contempt of the world, denying himself, and doing good to every body else. Now, if John thus came in the way of righteousness, could they be ignorant that his baptism was from heaven, or make any doubt of it?

(2.) By the success of his ministry; *The publicans and the harlots believed him*; he did abundance of good among the worst sort of people. Paul proves his apostleship by the seals of his ministry, 1 Cor. 9: 2. If God had not sent John the Baptist, He would not have crowned his labors with such wonderful success, nor have made him so instrumental as he was for the conversion of souls. The people's profiting is the minister's best testimonial.

2. How he reproves them for their contempt of John's baptism. To shame them for it, He sets before them the faith, repentance, and obedience, of the publicans and harlots, which aggravated their unbelief and impenitence. As He shows, (ch. 11: 21) that the less likely would have repented, so here, that the less likely did repent.

(1.) The publicans and harlots were like the first son in the parable, from whom little religion was expected. Their disposition was generally rude, and their conversation profligate; and yet many of them were wrought upon by the ministry of John, Luke 7: 29. These fitly represented the Gentile world; for, as Whitby observes, the Jews generally ranked the publicans with the heathen; nay, and the heathen were represented by the Jews as harlots, and born of harlots, John 8: 41.

(2.) The scribes and Pharisees, the chief priests and elders, and indeed the Jewish nation in general, were like the other son that gave good words; they made a specious profession of religion, and yet, when the kingdom of the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V 29-32. The whole human race are like children, whom the Lord has brought up; but they have rebelled against Him: only some are more plausible and decent in disobedience, than others. It however often happens, that the daring rebel is brought to repentance, and becomes the servant of God, while the decent formalist is hardened in pride and enmity to the Gospel. It was by no means peculiar to the days of Christ, that publicans and harlots entered the kingdom of heaven,

before proud Pharisees and learned scribes. But it exceedingly aggravates the guilt of such men, when the evident reformation of the vilest transgressors 'by the foolishness of preaching,' serves only to render them more outrageous in scorn and opposition. In these circumstances, it is peculiarly incumbent on those, who 'come in the way of righteousness,' to exemplify, as well as to explain, the holy tendency of their doctrine.

SCOTT.

(32.) *In the way of righteousness.* [It simply signifies, he came to you in the practice of righteousness, practising righteousness, and teaching true religion. *Piscator, Maldonat, and Campbell* understand by *righteousness*, that singular sanctity and austerity of John, as exhibited in his manner, dress, fasting, &c. all which the Jews especially accounted righteousness.]

VERSES 33-39.

From time to time God sent prophets, to call the Jews to repentance, and to direct their attention to the promises of a Messiah who was to come: thus the fruits were demanded in their season. But the rulers and teachers, in every age, had been exasperated by these faithful monitors. In applying the parable, it is not needful to inquire how far such a measure would have been prudent in a householder; for it was faultless in infinite wisdom, as well as love, that 'the Father sent his Son, to be the Savior of the world.' On the other hand, He certainly did so, to expect, that the Jews would 'reverence Him,' for He had, for ages before, predicted how they would reject, abhor, and persecute Him.

BLOOMFIELD.

They, however, ought to have adored Him and submitted to Him, and their usage of one so excellent and honorable, and manifested to us by all his miracles, his words and conduct, formed the grand aggravation of their atrocious wickedness.

SCOTT.

(33.) *Wine-press.* [This consisted of two receptacles, which were either built of stones and covered with plaster, or hewn out of a large rock. The upper receptacle, as it is constructed at the present time in Persia, is nearly eight feet square, and four feet high. Into this the grapes are thrown and trodden out by five men. The juice flows out into the lower receptacle, through a grated aperture, which is made the side near the bottom of the upper one.]

Dug a wine-press. [In Persia they still dig their wine-presses, for they form them in hollow places dug in the ground, which they line with mason's work.]

A tower. [Where the wine-dresser might lodge, to overlook and watch the vineyard.]

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34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise.

37 But last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

39 And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him.

40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen?

41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never

church for the due oversight of it, and for the promoting of its fruitfulness. What could have been done more to make it every way convenient?

2. How He intrusted these visible church privileges with the nation and people of the Jews, especially their chief priests and elders, as husbandmen. When in Judah God was known, and his name great; when they were taken to be God for a people, and for a name, and for a praise; (Jer. 13: 11.) when He revealed his Word unto Jacob; (Ps. 147: 19.) when the covenant of life and peace was made with Levi; (Mal. 2: 4, 5.) then this vineyard was let out. See an abstract of the lease, Cant. 8: 11, 12. The Lord of the vineyard was to have a thousand pieces of silver, (compare Isa. 7: 13.) the main profit; the keepers to have two hundred, a competent and comfortable encouragement. And then he went into a far country. When God had in a visible appearance settled the Jewish church at mount Sinai, He in a manner withdrew; they had no more such open vision, but were left to the written Word. Or, they imagined that he was gone into a far country, as Israel, when they made the calf, fancied that Moses was gone. They put far from them the evil day.

II. God's expectation of rent from those husbandmen, v. 34. Note, From those that enjoy church privileges, both ministers and people, God looks for fruit accordingly. 1. His expectations were not hasty; he staid till the time of the fruit drew near, as it did now that John preached the kingdom of heaven is at hand. God waits to be gracious, that He may give us time. 2. They were not high; He did not require them to come on penalty of forfeiting their lease if they ran behindhand; but He sent his servants to them, to mind them of the rent day, and to help them in gathering in the fruit, and making return of it. These servants were the prophets of the Old Testament. 3. They were not hard; it was only to receive the fruits. He did not demand more than they could make of it, but some fruit, an observance of the laws and statutes He gave them. What could have been done more reasonable? Israel was an empty vine, nay, it was become the degenerate plant of a strange vine, and brought forth wild grapes.

III. The husbandmen's baseness.

1. When he sent them his servants, they abused them. Note, The calls and reproofs of the world, if they do not engage, will but exasperate. See here what hath all along been the lot of God's faithful messengers, more or less; (1.) To suffer; so persecuted they the prophets. They not only despised and reproached them, but treated them as the worst of malefactors. They beat Jeremiah, killed Isaiah, stoned Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, in the temple. If they that line godly in Christ Jesus themselves, suffer persecution, much more they that press others to it. This was God's old quarrel with the Jews, misusing his prophets, 2 Chr. 36: 16. (2.) To suffer from their master's own tenants; they were the husbandmen that treated them thus, the chief priests and elders that sat in Moses' chair, that professed religion and relation to God; these were the most bitter enemies of the Lord's prophets, that cast them out, and killed them, and said, Let the Lord be glorified, Isa. 66: 5. See Jer. 20: 1, 2. 26: 11.

Now see, [1.] How God persevered in his goodness to them. He sent other servants, though the first sped not, but were abused. He sent them John the Baptist, and then his disciples. Oh the riches of the patience and forbearance of God, in keeping up in his church a despised, persecuted ministry! [2.] How they persisted in their wickedness. They did unto

them likewise. One sinner is for another of the same kind. They that are drunk with the blood of the saints, and drunkenness to thirst, and still cry, Give, give.

2. At length He sent them his Son.

(1.) Never did grace appear more gracious than in sending the Son. This was done last of all. Note, All the prophets were harbingers and forerunners to Christ. He was sent last; for if nothing else would work on them, surely this would; it was therefore reserved for the last expedient. Surely they will reverence my Son, and therefore I will send Him. Note, It might reasonably be expected that the Son of God, when He came to his own, should be revered; and reverence to Christ would be a powerful and effectual principle of fruitfulness and obedience, to the glory of God; if they will but reverence the Son, the point is gained. Surely they will reverence my Son, for He comes with more authority than the servants could; judgment is committed to Him, that all men should honor Him. There is greater danger in refusing Him, than in despising Moses' law.

(2.) Never did sin appear more sinful than the abusing of Him, which was now to be done in two or three days. Observe,

[1.] How it was plotted; (v. 38.) When they saw the Son: when He came, whom the people owned and followed as the Messiah, who would either have the rent paid, or distrained for; this touched their copy-hold, and they were resolved to make one bold push for it, by taking Him out of the way, who was their only rival. This is the heir; come, let us kill him. Pilate, and Herod, the princes of this world, knew not; for if they had known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory, 1 Cor. 2: 8. But the chief priests and elders knew that this was the Heir, at least, some of them; and therefore Come, let us kill Him. The chief thing they envied, hated and feared Him for, was his interest in the people, and their hosannas. They pretended He must die, to save the people from the Romans; (John 11: 50,) but really He must die, to save their hypocrisy and tyranny from reformation. He drives the buyers and sellers out of the temple; and therefore let us kill Him; and then, as if the premises must of course go to the occupant, let us seize on his inheritance. They thought, if they could but get rid of this Jesus, they should carry all before them in the church, might impose what traditions, and force the people to what submissions, they pleased. Thus they take counsel against the Lord and his Anointed; but He that sits in heaven, laughs to see them outshin in their own bow; for, while they sought to kill Him, and so to seize on his inheritance, He went by his cross to his crown, and they were broken in pieces with a rod of iron, and their inheritance seized, Ps. 2: 2, 3, 6, 9.

[2.] How this plot was executed, v. 39. While they were so set on killing Him, in pursuance of their design to secure their own pomp and power, and while He was so set on dying in pursuance of his design to subdue Satan, and save his chosen, no wonder if they soon caught Him and slew Him, when his hour was come. Though the Roman power condemned Him, yet it is still charged on the chief priests and elders; for they were not only the prosecutors, but the principal agents, and had the greater sin. Ye have taken, Acts 2: 23. Nay, looking on Him to be as unworthy to live, as they were unwilling He should, they cast Him out of the vineyard; for He was crucified without the gate, Heb. 13: 12. As if He had been the shame and reproach, who was the greatest Glory, of his people Israel. Thus they who persecuted the servants, persecuted the Son; as men treat

2 Kings 17: 13, 14. 2 Chr. 36: 15, 16.
Neh. 9: 29, 30. Jer. 25: 7, 35: 15.
Zech. 1: 3-5. 7: 9-13. Mark 12: 2-5. Luke 20: 10-19.
Cant. 8: 11, 12. Is. 54.
Ezra. 2: 31. 2 Chr. 18: 14, 15.
1 Chr. 10: 22, 24. 2 Chr. 16: 10, 24.
21: 22, 35: 15, 16. Jer. 2: 30, 29: 21-24. Luke 13: 34, 44. Acts 7: 52. 1 Thes. 2: 16. Heb. 11: 6, 37.
1 Tim. 1: 17. Mark 12: 6. Luke 20: 13. John 1: 18, 34. 3: 15, 35, 36. Heb. 1: 12.
Is. 54. Jer. 36: 3. Zeph. 3: 7.
2: 13-16. 29: 3, 4. 27: 1, 2. Gen. 37: 15-40. Ps. 22-8. Mark 12: 7, 8. Luke 20: 14. John 11: 47-53. Acts 4: 27, 28. 5: 24-28.
1 Chr. 9: 37. Mark 14: 46-53. Luke 22: 52-54. John 18: 24, 24. Acts 2: 42.
Ezra. 13: 11-13.
1 Chr. 2: 23. 2: 14, 15. 4: 10. 5: 30. 7: 52. Jam. 5: 6.
Mark 12: 9. Luke 20: 15, 16. Heb. 10: 29.
Ps. 112: 7. 2 Chr. 33: 35. 24: 21, 22. Lev. 23: 11, 12. Jer. 25: 33. 33: 15. 5: 5-7. Dan. 9: 26. Zech. 11: 8-10. 13: 8. 14: 2, 3. Mal. 4: 1-6. Luke 17: 32-37. 19: 41-44. 21: 32-34. 1 Thes. 2: 16. Heb. 2: 3. 12: 25.
1 Chr. 8: 11. 1 Chr. 49: 5-7. 65: 15. 69: 19-21. Luke 13: 28, 29. 14: 23, 24. Acts 12: 16-18. 15: 7. 18: 6. 28: 28. Rom. 9: 11. 11: 15, 16, 24.
Ps. 16.

[34.] Receive the fruits.] Alluding to the ancient custom of paying the rent of a farm in kind; i. e. by a part of the produce of the farm.

[35.] More.] 'Or, more honorable; [so also Markland,] 'for as the fulness of the time approached, each prophet more clearly and fully pointed out the coming of Christ.' [So in Num. 22: 15.] In.

[37.] The design is to show the patience of God, and the wickedness of the Jews, by this emblem, than which nothing could be more expressive.

DODDIDGE.

They will reverence my Son.] 'Numberless predictions in the Old and New Testament plainly show, that God foresaw Christ's death as a certain event. This, therefore, like many others, is merely an ornamental circumstance, which cannot without absurdity be applied to the interpretation of the parable.' In.

[38.] Said among themselves.] Alluding to the conspiracies which were then forming against the life of our blessed Lord, in the councils of the Jewish elders and chief priests. See ch. 27: 1.

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read in the scriptures, 'The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?'

43. Therefore say I unto you, 'The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.'

44 And 'whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; *but on whosoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.'

45 And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard his parables, 'they perceived that he spake of them.'

46 But when 'they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, *because they took him for a prophet.

q P. 118:22, 23. Is. 28:16. Zech. 3:9. Mark 12:10, 11. Luke 20:17, 18. Act. 4:11. Rom. 9:33. Eph. 2:20. 1 Pt. 2:4-6.
r Hab. 1:5. Act. 13:40, 41. Eph. 3:3-9.
s 41. 8:11, 12. 12:28. Luke 17:20, 21. John 9:3, 5. Ex. 19:6, 5. Is. 98:2. 1 Pt. 2:9.
t P. 2:12. Is. 8:14, 15. 60:12. Zech. 12:3. Luke 20:18. Rom. 9:33. 2 Cor. 1:23, 4. 1 Pt. 2:9.
u 24:24. 27:25. Ps. 9:9. 2:3-9. 110:5-9. Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45. John 19:11. 1 Thes. 2:16.
v Mark 12:12. Luke 11:45. 20:19.
w 18:am. 12:7-13. Prov. 9:7-9. 15:11. Is. 29:11. John 7:7.
x 11. Luke 7:16, 39. John 7:40, 41. Acts 2:22.

not because He needs them. ment, God could build a flourishing church on our ruins; for He is never at a loss what to do for his great name, whatever becomes of us, and of our place and nation.

V. The further illustration and application of this by Christ Himself, telling them in effect, that they had right v. judged.

1. He illustrates it by referring to a scripture fulfilled in this; (v. 42.) *Did ye never read in the Scripture?* Yes, m doubt, they had often read and sung it, but had not considered it. We lose the benefit of what we read, for want of meditation. The scripture He quotes, is Ps. 118:22, 23. the same context out of which the children fetched their hosannas. The same word yields matter of praise and comfort to Christ's friends, which speaks conviction and terror to his enemies. Such a two-edged sword is the Word of God. That scripture, *The Stone which the builders refused is become the Head-stone of the corner*, illustrates the preceding parable, especially that part of it which refers to Christ.

(1.) The builders rejecting the stone is the same with the husbandmen's abusing the son that was sent to them. The chief priests and the elders were the builders: and they would not allow Christ a place in their building, would not admit his doctrine or laws into their constitution; they threw Him aside as a despised broken vessel, a stone that would serve only for a stepping-stone, to be trampled on.

(2.) The advancing of this stone to be the head of the corner, is the same with *letting out the vineyard to other husbandmen*. He who was rejected by the Jews, was embraced by the Gentiles; and to that church where there is no

God's ministers, they would treat Christ Himself, if He were with them.

IV. Here is their doom read out of their own mouths; v. 40, 41. He puts it to themselves, for their stronger conviction, that, *knowing the judgment of God against them which do such things, they might be the more inexcusable*. Note, God's proceedings are so unexceptionable, that there needs but an appeal to sinners themselves concerning the equity of them. God will be justified when He speaks. They could readily answer, *He will miserably destroy these wicked men*. Note, Many can easily prognosticate the dismal consequences of other people's sins, that see not what will be the end of their own.

1. Our Savior, in his question, supposes that *the lord of the vineyard will come, and reckon with them*. God is the Lord of the vineyard, and He will come. Persecutors say in their hearts, *He delays his coming, He doth not see, He will not require; but they shall find, though He bear long with them, He will not bear always*. It is comfort to abused saints and ministers, that *the Lord is at hand, the Judge stands before the door*. When He comes, what will He do to carnal professors? What will He do to cruel persecutors? They must be called to account, they have their day now; but He sees that *his day is coming*.

2. They, in their answer, suppose that it will be a terrible reckoning; the crime appearing so very black, you may be sure,

(1.) That He will miserably destroy those wicked men. This was fulfilled on the Jews, in that miserable destruction which was brought on them by the Romans, and was completed about forty years after this; an unparalleled ruin, attended with all the most dismal aggravating circumstances. It will be fulfilled on all that tread in the steps of their wickedness; hell is everlastingly destructive, and will be the most miserable destruction to them of all others, that have enjoyed the greatest share of church privileges, and have not improved them.

(2.) That He will let out his vineyard to other husbandmen. Note, God will have a church in the world, notwithstanding many abuse the privileges of it. The unbelief and forwardness of man shall not make the word of God of no effect. If one will not, another will. The Jews' leaveings were the Gentiles' feast. Persecutors may destroy the ministers, but cannot destroy the church. The Jews imagined that, no doubt, they were the people, and wisdom and holiness must die with them. But when God makes use of any to bear up his name, it is

as if we were made a desolation and an astonishment, God could build a flourishing church on our ruins; for He is never at a loss what to do for his great name, whatever becomes of us, and of our place and nation.

Verse 43

Pruning forth the fruits. 'As in v. 34. an allusion is made to pruning the land in kind, so here the Gentiles are represented as paying God thus. The returns which He expects for his grace are, the fruits of grace; nothing can ever be acceptable in the sight of God that does not spring from Himself.'

Verse 44

Some (with Henry) suppose there is an allusion to the manner of stoning among the Jews; see Henry above; but John remarks thereupon, *The assertion of the Talmudists (Sanhedrim 6:1-4.) that the criminal*

was first thrown off from an elevated scaffolding, and then stoned, is mere fable.'

Verses 45, 46.

The chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees, now fully understood the parables; but they were the more exasperated by them, and determined, as soon as they could, to apprehend Him, and put Him to death, whatever the consequence might be: yet they would not do it openly. At least the multitude should excite a tumult, as the people were generally of opinion that He was at least a prophet of God. (Marg. Ref. Notes, 26: 3-5.)

difference of circumcision or uncircumcision Christ is all and in all. His authority over the gospel-church, and influence on it, his ruling 1 as the Head, and uniting it as the Corner-stone, are the great tokens of his exaltation. Thus in spite of the malice of the priests and elders, He divided a portion with the great, and received his kingdom, though they would not have Him to reign over them.

(3.) The hand of God was in all this; *This is the Lord's doing*. Even the rejecting of Him by the Jewish builders, was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; He permitted and overruled it; much more was his advancement to the Head of the corner; his right hand and his holy arm brought it about; it was God Himself that highly exalted Him, and gave Him a name above every name; and it is marvellous in our eyes. The wickedness of the Jews that rejected Him, is marvellous; that men should be so prejudiced against their own interest, see Isa. 29: 9, 10, 14. The honor done Him by the Gentile world, notwithstanding the abuses done Him by his own people, is marvellous; that He whom men despised and abhorred, should be adored y kings! Isa. 49: 7. But it is the Lord's doing.

2. He applies it to them, and application is the life of preaching.

(1.) He applies the sentence which they had passed, (v. 41.) and turns it on themselves. Know then,

[1.] That the Jews shall be unchurched, v. 43. This turning out of the husbandmen speaks the same doom with that of dismantling the vineyard, and laying it common, Isa. 5: 5. To the Jews had long pertained the adoption and the glory; (Rom. 9: 4.) to them were committed the oracles of God, (Rom. 3: 2.) and the sacred trust, bearing the name of God in the world; (Ps. 76: 1, 2.) but now it shall be so no longer. They were not only unfruitful, but opposed to the Gospel, and so forfeited their privileges; nor was it long ere the forfeiture was taken. Note, It is a righteous thing with God, to remove church privileges from those that not only sin against them, but sin with them, Rev. 2: 4, 5. The kingdom of God was taken from the Jews, not only by temporal, but by spiritual judgments, as blindness of mind, hardness of heart, and indignation at the Gospel, Rom. 11: 8-10, 1 Thess. 2: 15.

[2.] That the Gentiles shall be taken in. God needs not ask us leave, whether He shall have a church in the world; though his vine be plucked up in one place, He will find another to plant it in. He will give it to the Gentile world, that will bring forth the fruit of it. They who had not been a people, and had not obtained mercy, became favorites. This is the mystery which blessed Paul was so much affected with, (Rom. 11: 30, 33.) and which the Jews were so much affronted by, Acts 22: 21, 22. At the first planting of Israel in Canaan, the fall of the Gentiles was the riches of Israel; (Ps. 135: 10, 11.) so, at their extirpation, the fall of Israel was the riches of the Gentiles, Rom. 11: 12. It shall go to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. Note, Christ knows beforehand who will bring forth gospel-fruits in the use of gospel-means; because our fruitfulness is all the work of his own hands, and known unto God are all his works. They shall bring forth the fruits better than the Jews had done; God has had more glory from the New-Testament church, than from that of the Old-Testament; for, when He changes, it shall not be to his loss.

(2.) He applies the Scripture He had quoted, (v. 42.) to their terror; (v. 44.) and we have here the doom of two sorts of people, for whose fall it proves that Christ is set.

Ed.

CHAP. XXII.

Jesus speaks in the parable of the marriage-supper, and the wedding garment, 1-14; answers the Pharisees and Herodians about paying tribute to Caesar, 15-22; the Sadducees about the resurrection and future state, 23-32; and a lawyer concerning the chief commandment in the law, 34-40; and inquires how the Messiah could be David's Son, and yet his Lord, 41-45.

AND Jesus answered, and spake unto them again by parables, and said,

The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

9:15-17. 12:43-45. 13:3-11. 20:1-16. 21:28-46. Mark 4:33, 34. Luke 8:10. 15:24, 31-33. 44-47. 25:1-14. 25:1-13. Ps 45:10-16. John 3:29, 8c. 2 Cor. 11:2. Eph. 5:24-32. Rev. 19:7-9.

strayed by falling on this stone, it shall fall on, and so destroy them. He will strike through kings, He will fill the places with dead bodies, Ps. 110: 5, 6. None ever hardened his heart against God, and prospered.

Lastly, The entertainment which this discourse of Christ met with among the chief priests and elders.

1. They perceived that He spake of them, (v. 45.) and that, in what they said, (v. 41.) they had but read their own doom. Note, A guilty conscience needs no accuser, and sometimes will save a minister the saying, *Thou art the man*. Change but the name, the tale is told of thee. So quick and powerful is the Word of God, and such a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, that it is easy for bad men (if conscience be not quite seared) to perceive that it speaks of them.

2. They sought to lay hands on Him. Note, When those who hear the reproofs of the Word, perceive that it speaks of them, if it do not do them a great deal of good, it will certainly do them a great deal of hurt. If they be not picked to the heart with conviction and contrition, as they were, (Acts 2: 37.) they will be cut to the heart with rage and indignation, as they were, Acts 5: 33.

3. They durst not do it, for fear of the multitude, who took Him for a prophet, though not for the Messiah; this served to keep the Pharisees in awe. The fear of the people restrained them from speaking ill of John, (v. 26.) and here from doing ill to Christ. Note, God has many ways of restraining the remainders of wrath, as He has of making that which breaks out to redound to his praise, Ps. 76: 10.

CHAP. XXII. v. 1-14. This chapter is a continuation of Christ's discourses in the temple, two or three days before He died. His discourses then are largely recorded, as being of special weight and consequence.

We have here the parable of the guests invited to the wedding feast. In this it is said, (v. 1.) Jesus answered to what his opposers thought, when they were

[1.] Some, through ignorance, stumble at Christ, when this Stone lies on the earth, where the builders threw it; they, through their blindness and carelessness, fall on it, fall over it, and shall be broken; Isa. 8: 14. 1 Pet. 2: 7, 8. The unbelief of sinners will be their ruin.

[2.] Others, through malice, oppose Christ, when this Stone is advanced to the head of the corner; and on them it shall fall, for they pull it on their own heads, as the Jews did, (His blood be on us and on our children,) and it will grind them to powder. The former seems to bespeak the sin and ruin of all unbelievers; this is the greater sin, and sorer ruin, of persecutors. Christ's kingdom will be a burthen some stone to all those that attempt to overthrow it, or heave it out of its place; see Zech. 12: 3. This Stone will break in pieces all opposing power, Dan. 2: 34, 35. Some make this an allusion to the manner of stoning to death among the Jews. The malefactors were first thrown down violently from a high scaffold on a great stone, which would much bruise them; but then they threw another great stone upon them, which would crush them to pieces: one way or other, Christ will utterly destroy all those that fight against Him: they are not destroyed by falling on this stone, it shall fall on, and so destroy them.

He will strike through kings, He will fill the places with dead bodies, Ps. 110: 5, 6. None ever hardened his heart against God, and prospered.

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wishing for an opportunity to lay hands on Him, ch. 21: 46. Note, Christ knows how to answer men's thoughts, for He is a Discerner of them. Or, He answered, that is, continued his discourse; for this parable, as the former, represents the gospel-offer, and the entertainment it meets with.

I. Gospel-preparations are here represented by a feast which a king made at the marriage of his son; such is the kingdom of heaven, or the new-covenant provision for precious souls. The King is God, a great King, King of kings. Now,

1. Here is a marriage made for his Son. Christ is the Bridegroom, the church the bride; the Gospel day, the day of his espousals, Cant. 3: 11. Behold by faith the church of the first born, that are written in heaven, and were given to Christ; and in them you see the bride, the Lamb's wife, Rev. 21: 9. The Gospel covenant is a marriage covenant betwixt Christ and believers. This branch of the similitude is only mentioned, and not prosecuted here.

2. A dinner prepared for this marriage, v. 4. All the privileges of church membership, and all the blessings of the new covenant, pardon of sin, the favor of God, peace of conscience, the promises of the Gospel, and all the riches contained in them, access to the throne of grace, the comforts of the Spirit, and a well-grounded hope of eternal life. These are the preparations for this feast; God has prepared it in his counsel, in his covenant. It is a dinner, denoting present privileges in the midst of our day, beside the supper at night in glory.

(1.) It is a feast. Gospel preparations were prophesied of as a feast, (Isa. 25: 6.) and typified by the many festivals of the ceremonial law; (1 Cor. 6: 8.) Let us keep the feast. A feast is a good day, (Esth. 8: 7.) so the Gospel is a continual feast, founded in the death of Christ. A feast was made for love, it is a reconciliation feast. It was made for laughter, (Eccl. 10: 19.) it is a rejoicing feast. It was made for fulness, to fill every hungry soul with good things. It was made for fellowship, to maintain an intercourse between heaven and earth. We are sent for to the banquet of wine, that we may tell what is our petition, and what is our request.

(2.) It is a wedding feast. Wedding feasts are usually rich, free, and joyful. The first miracle Christ wrought was, to make plentiful provision for a wedding feast; (John 2: 7.) surely then He will not be wanting in provision for his own wedding feast, when the marriage of the Lamb is come, and the bride has made

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 33-46. We have parable after parable, to show us the rage and enmity of the human heart, against the religion of the Savior. How can we then, if faithful to his cause, expect a favorable reception from a wicked world, or from ungodly professors of Christianity, when the holy prophets and the well-beloved Son of God Himself, were thus rejected with contempt, and treated with outrageous cruelty by his professed worshippers? How can we expect to convince or conciliate them, merely with our reasonings and persuasions, when the words of Christ only exasperated those to whom they were addressed, even when they felt the truth of his reproofs, and the energy of his arguments? The awful doom of the hypocritical rulers and unbelieving nation of the Jews, was recorded for our warning. They slew the prophets and crucified the Lord of glory; but they were destroyed with tremendous vengeance, and the kingdom of God was taken from them and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. We now have the vineyard and all its advantages; but do we, as a nation, render the fruits in due season? Here we must be silent, or answer, No. Yet amidst all our abominations, the monster persecution is chained up by authority: and while this is the case, we still hope for the continuance of our privileges. Numbers, however,

'stumble at the Word, being disoedient,' and thus fall on the Corner-stone, and are broken: alas! numbers likewise cause others to stumble by their wicked lives. Some use all their abilities in opposing the Gospel and dishonoring Christ, apparently in order to obtain reputation and distinction for themselves: it is to be feared, even many professed builders thus reject the 'Head-stone of the corner;' and that some are restrained in their opposition by no higher motive than the fear of man. Alas! few consider, that we are accountable for all our privileges, and shall be the more deeply condemned on account of them, if not made fruitful. Yet, blessed be God, there is a remnant, and we trust an increasing remnant, of such as adorn the Gospel by their holy lives: may we be found among them; may we attend to the voice of those whom the Lord sends to reprove or exhort us, in order to our increasing fruitfulness; may we reverence and obey the beloved Son of God; may He become more and more precious to our souls, as the firm Foundation and tried Corner-stone of the church; may we be willing to be despised and hated for his sake; and may we be faithful and obedient even unto death: and so, when He shall come to destroy his enemies, we shall receive a crown of glory which fadeth not away.'

SCOTT

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. v. 1-14. (See Luke 14: 15-24.) Our Lord, proceeding to show the priests and people the criminality and consequences of their unbelief, stated the case to them in another parable: or in parables, for two are connected together. The preceding parable represented the sufferings of Christ, and the guilt and punishment of those who put Him to death: but this shows the motive of his humiliation, and the effects of it to Himself to his people, and to unbelievers and hypocrites. The union of the Son of God with our race, by assuming human nature: the endearing relation, into which He receives his redeemed church, and every true member of it; the spiritual honors,

riches, and blessings, to which they are advanced by this sacred relation: the comforts which they receive from his condescending and faithful love, and from communion with Him; and the reciprocal duties of their relation to Him, are all intimated by this metaphor. (Marg. Ref. c.) The abundant and rich provision, which the Lord has made for our perishing souls in the Gospel, is here represented. They 'who made light of' the invitation, as well as the persecutors, were 'not worthy.' None else are put among them. (9.) Highways.] The passages from one road into another; or places where several roads meet. Used here only in the New Testament.

(2.) A marriage.] The early commentators understood a mar-

3 And ^asent forth his servants to call them ^athat were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come.

4 Again, he sent forth ^aother servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, ^bBehold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, ^cand all things are ready: come unto the marriage.

5 But ^kthey made light of it, and went their ways, ^lone to his farm, another to his merchandise:

6 And ^mthe remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them.

d 32 10:5,7. Prov. 9:1-3. Is. 55:1-2. Mark 9:7-11. Luke 9:1-6. 14:15-17.
e 1 Sam. 9:13. Zeph. 1:7.
23:37. Ps. 91:10-12. Prov. 1:24-32. Is. 30:15. Jer. 6:16,17. Hos. 11:2,7. Luke 13:34. 15:28. 19:27. John 5:40. Acts 13:45. Rom. 10:21. Heb. 12:25.
f Luke 10:1-16. 24:46,47. Acts 1:8. 1:19-20. 13:46. 28:17, &c.
g Prov. 9:1,2. Cant. 5:1. John 6:50-57. Rom. 9:32. 1 Cor. 5:7,8.
h 8. Neh. 9:17. Ps. 86:5. Luke 14:17.
i Gen. 19:14. 25:34. Ps. 106:24,25. Lev. 17:7. Acts 2:13. Rom. 2:4. Heb. 2:3.
j 13:32. 24:38,39. Luke 14:18-20. 17:36-37. Rom. 8:6. 1 Tim. 6:9,10. 2 Tim. 3:4. 1 John 3:15,16.
k 5:10-12. 10:12. 18:22-25. 21:35-39. 23:34-37. John 15:19,20. 16:2,3. Acts 4:1-3. 5:40-41. 7:51-57. 8:1. 1 Thes. 2:14,15.

not, and therefore desires not, to accept the call by his most powerful inducements, drawn with the cords of man, and all the bonds of love. If the repetition of the call will move us, Behold, the Spirit saith, Come; and the bride saith, Come; let him that hears say, Come; let him that is athirst, come, Rev. 22:17. If the reason of the call will work on us, Behold the dinner is prepared, the oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; the Father is ready to accept of us, the Son to intercede for us, the Spirit to sanctify us; pardon is ready, peace is ready, comfort is ready; the promises are ready, as wells of living water for supply; ordinances are ready, as golden pipes for conveyance; angels are ready to attend us, creatures are ready to be in league with us, providences are ready to work for our good, and heaven, at last, is ready to receive us; it is a kingdom prepared, ready to be revealed in the last time. Is all this ready; and shall we be unready? Is all this preparation made for us; and is there any room to doubt of our welcome, if we come in a right manner? Come, therefore, O come to the marriage; we beseech you, receive not all this grace of God in vain, 2 Cor. 6:1.

III. The cold treatment which the Gospel often meets with among men, represented by the cold treatment this message met with, and the hot treatment the messengers met with, in both which the king himself and the royal bridegroom are affronted. This reflects primarily on the Jews, but looks further, to the contempt and opposition the Gospel would meet with from many in all ages.

1. The message was basely slighted; (v. 3.) *They would not come.* Note, The reason why sinners come not to Christ, and salvation by Him, is, not because they cannot, but because they will not; (John 5:40.) *Ye will not come unto Me.* This will aggravate their misery, that they might have had happiness, but that they refused it. *I would, and ye would not.* But this was not all; (v. 5.) *they made light of it;* they thought it not worth coming for;

herself ready; a victorious, triumphant feast, Rev. 19:7,17,18.

(3.) It is a *royal wedding feast*; at the marriage of a son; when, if ever, He will, like Ahasuerus, show the riches of his glorious kingdom, Esth. 1:4. The provision is not such as worthless worms had any reason to expect, but such as it becomes the *King of glory* to give. He gives like Himself, for He gives Himself to be to them *El-shaddai—a God that is enough*; a feast indeed for a soul.

II. Gospel calls and offers are represented by an invitation to this feast. Those that make a feast, will have guests to grace it. God's guests are the children of men. *Lord, what is man*, that he should be thus dignified! *The guests* first invited were the Jews; wherever the Gospel is preached, this invitation is given; ministers are the servants sent to invite, Prov. 9:4,5.

Now, 1. The guests are called, bidden. All within hearing are invited; and none are excluded but those that exclude themselves. *Those that are bidden to the dinner, are bidden to the wedding;* and they are bidden to the wedding, that they may go forth to meet the Bridegroom; for it is the Father's will that all men should honor the Son.

2. The guests are called on; for in the Gospel there are not only gracious proposals, but gracious persuasives. *We persuade men, we beseech them in Christ's stead*, 2 Cor. 5:11,20. See how much Christ's heart is set on the happiness of poor souls! He not only provides for them, but sends to them. When the invited guests were slack in coming, the king sent forth other servants, v. 4. When the prophets of the Old Testament prevailed not, nor John the Baptist, nor Christ himself, who told them the entertainment was almost ready, (the kingdom of God was at hand,) the apostles and ministers of the Gospel were sent, after Christ's resurrection, to tell them it was come, it was quite ready, and to persuade them to accept the offer. One would think it had been enough to give men an intimation that they had leave to come, and should be welcome; that, during the solemnity of the wedding, the king kept open house; but, because the natural man discerns the things of the Spirit of God, we are pressed

thought the messengers made more ado than needs; let them magnify the preparations ever so much, they could feast as well at home. Note, Making light of Christ, and of the great salvation wrought out by Him, is the damning sin of the world. *They were careless.* Note, Multitudes perish eternally through carelessness, not from any direct aversion, but a prevailing indifference, to the matters of their souls.

And the reason why they made light of the marriage feast, was, that they had other things they minded more, and had more mind to: they went their ways, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise. Note, The business and profit of worldly employments prove to many a great hindrance in closing with Christ: none turn their back on the feast, but with some plausible excuse, Luke 14:18. The country people have their farms to look after; the town's people must tend their shops, and be constant on the exchange; they must buy, and sell, and get gain. It is true, that both farmers and merchants must be diligent in their business, but not so as to keep them from making religion their main business. *These lawful things undo us*, when they are unlawfully managed; when we are so careful and troubled about many things, as to neglect the one thing needful. Observe, Both the city and the country have their temptations; so that, whatever we have of the world in our hands, our care must be to keep it out of our hearts, lest it come between us and Christ.

2. The messengers were basely abused; *The remnant*, that is, those who were neither husbandmen nor tradesmen, but ecclesiastics, the scribes and Pharisees, and chief priests; these were the persecutors, these took the servants, and treated them spitefully, and slew them. This, in the parable, is unaccountable, never any could be so rude and barbarous as this, to servants that came to invite them to a feast; but in the application of the parable, it was matter of fact; they, whose feet should have been beautiful, because they brought the glad tidings of the solemn feasts, (Nahum 1:15.) were treated as the *offscouring of all things*, 1 Cor. 4:13. The prophets and John the Baptist had been thus abused already, and the apostles and ministers of Christ must count on the same. The Jews were, either directly or indirectly agents in most of the persecutions of the first preachers of the Gospel; witness the history of the Acts, that is, the sufferings of the apostles.

IV. The utter ruin that was coming o, the Jewish church and nation, is here represented by the revenge which the king, in wrath, took on these insolent recusants; (v. 7.) *He was wroth.* The Jews, who had been the people of God's love and blessing, by rejecting the Gospel, became the generation of his wrath and curse. *Wrath came on them to the uttermost*, 1 Thess. 2:16. Now observe here,

1. The sin that brought the ruin; it was the *being murderers.* He does not say he destroyed those despisers of his call, but those murderers of his servants; as if God were more jealous for the lives of his ministers than for the honor of his Gospel; he that toucheth them, toucheth the apple of his eye. Note, Persecution of Christ's faithful ministers fills the measure of guilt more than any thing. *Filling Jerusalem with innocent blood*, was that sin of Manasseh which the Lord would not pardon, 2 Kings 24:4.

2. The ruin itself, that was coming; *He sent forth his armies.* The Roman armies were his armies, of his raising, of his sending; he gave

riage feast. The Syriac version renders it "feast." So also Alb. Kypke, and Dr. Marsh. The more recent ones, Michaelis, Rosenm., Kuinoel, and Schleusner, explain an *inaugural feast*, "an inauguration, or instalment in office. For, from the custom of the orientals, kings on the day of inauguration were considered as bridegrooms and aushands, and with due form and solemnity were joined to the state, and to their subjects, who were compared to a bride and a wife." Rosenm. Comp. Ps. 45: and 1 Kings 1: 5-9. Other examples of his sense see in Luke 12:36. 14:8. Esth. 2:19. 3:22."

BLOOMFIELD. *Wedding.* 'The nuptial banquet. It was sometimes customary to send two messages, as in the case here supposed.'

DODDRIDGE.

'Grotius, Brug. and Kuinoel observe that it was the custom among the ancients for two guests to be twice invited, or, rather first invited some time before, that they might prepare themselves; secondly, summoned a short time previous to the banquet, that they might be there at a proper time.'

BLOOMFIELD. (4.) 'The original term includes calves, sheep, and fowls and all such animals as are put up to feed.'
'Fattings.' It was agreeable to the simplicity of the ancient ages to mention these as the chief parts of a royal entertainment. Thus in Homer and other ancient writers, we see princes of the first rank and dignity feasting each other with nothing but the flesh of oxen, sheep, and swine. Comp. Is. 25:6.'

DODDRIDGE.

[217]

7 But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests.

21, 40, 41. Dan. 9:26. Zech. 14:1, 2. Luke 19:42-44. 21:21-24. 1 Thes. 2:16. 1 P. 4:17, 18. 5. 9:4-6. Is. 59:1-17. Mark 16:13, 16. Luke 14:21-24. 24:47. Acts 13:47. Eph. 8:18. Rev. 22:17. 21:12. 13:28, 47. 25:1-2. 1 Cor. 6:9-11. 2 Cor. 12:21. 1 John 2:19. Rev. 2:14, 15, 20-23. 9:10. Rev. 5:9. 7:9. 19:6-9.

2. The commission he gave to the servants, to invite other guests. The inhabitants of the city (v. 7.) had refused; *Go to the highways* then; into the way of the Gentiles, which at first they were to decline, ch. 10:5. Thus, by the fall of the Jews, salvation is come to the Gentiles, Rom. 11:11, 12. Eph. 3:8. Note, Christ will have a kingdom in the world, though many reject the grace, and resist the power, of that kingdom. *Though Israel be not gathered, He will be glorious.* The offer to the Gentiles, was, (1.) Unlooked for and unexpected; as an invitation to a wedding feast to wayfaring men on the road. The Jews had notice long before, and expected the Messiah; but to the Gentiles it was all new, what they had never heard of before, (Acts 17:19, 20.), and, consequently, what they could not conceive of as belonging to them. See Isa. 65:1, 2. (2.) It was universal and undistinguishing; *Go, and bid as many as you find.* The highways are public places, and there *Wisdom cries*, Prov. 1:20. 'Ask them that go by the way, ask any body, (Job 21:29.) high and low, rich and poor, bound and free, young and old, Jew and Gentile; tell them all, that they shall be welcome to gospel-privileges on gospel-terms; whoever will, let him come, without exception.'

3. The success of this second invitation; v. 10. The servants obeyed their orders. Jonah was sent into the highways, but was so tender of the honor of his country, that he avoided the errand; but Christ's apostles, though Jews, preferred the service of Christ before their respect to their nation; and Paul, though sorrowing for the Jews, yet magnifies his office, as the apostle of the Gentiles. *They gathered together all.* The design of the Gospel is, (1.) To gather souls together; not the nation of the Jews only, but all the children of God who are scattered abroad, (John 11:52.) the other sheep that were not of that fold, John 10:16. They were gathered into one body, one family, one corporation. (2.) To gather them together to the wedding feast, to pay their respect to Christ, and to partake of the privileges of the new covenant. Where the dole is, there will the poor be gathered together.

Now, the guests that were gathered, were, [1.] A multitude, *all, as many as they found*; so many, that the guest-chamber was filled. The sealed ones of the Jews were numbered, but those of other nations were without number, a very great multitude, Rev. 7:9. See Isa. 60:4, 8. [2.] A mixed multitude, *both bad and good*; some that, before their conversion, were sinner and well inclined, as the devout Greeks, (Acts 17:4.) and Cornelius; others, that had run

them a charge to tread the people under foot, Isa. 10:6. God is the Lord of men's hosts, and makes what use He pleases of them, to serve his own purposes, though they mean not so, neither doth their heart think so, Mic. 4:11, 12. *His armies destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city.* This points out the destruction of the Jews, by the Romans, forty years after this. No age ever saw a greater desolation than that, nor more of the direful effects of fire and sword. Though Jerusalem had been a holy city, the city that God had chosen to put his name there, *beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth*; yet that city being now become a harlot, righteousness being no longer lodged in it, but murderers, the worst of murderers, (as the prophet speaks, Isa. 1:21.) judgment came on it, and ruin without remedy; and it is set forth for an example to all that should oppose Christ and his Gospel. It was the Lord's doing, to avenge the quarrel of his covenant.

V. The replenishing of the church again, by the bringing in of the Gentiles, is here represented, by the furnishing of the feast with guests out of the highways, v. 8, 10.

Here is, 1. The complaint of the master of the feast concerning those that were first bidden; v. 8. *The wedding is ready, the covenant of grace ready to be sealed, a church ready to be founded; but they which were bidden, that is, the Jews, to whom pertained the covenant and the promises, by which they were of old invited to the feast of fat things, they were utterly unworthy, and, by their contempt of Christ, had forfeited all the privileges they were invited to.* Note, It is not owing to God that sinners perish, but to themselves. Thus, when Israel of old was within sight of Canaan, the land of promise was ready, but their unbelief and murmuring, and contempt of that pleasant land, shut them out, and their carcasses were left to perish in the wilderness; and these things happened to them for ensamples. See 1 Cor. 10:11. Heb. 3:16. 4:1.

to an excess of riot, as the Corinthians; (1 Cor. 6:11.) *Such were some of you; or some that, after their conversion, proved bad, that turned not to the Lord with all their heart, but feignedly; others, that were upright and sincere, and proved of the right class. Ministers, in casting the net of the Gospel, inclose good and bad; but the Lord knows them that are his.*

VI. The case of hypocrites is represented by the guest that had not on a wedding garment, one of the bad that were gathered in. Concerning this hypocrite observe,

1. His discovery; how he was found out, v. 11.

(1.) *The king came in to see the guests, to bid those welcome who came prepared, and to turn those out who came otherwise.* Note, The God of heaven takes particular notice of those who profess religion, and have a place and a name in the visible church. Our Lord Jesus walks among the golden candlesticks, and therefore knows their works. See Rev. 2:1, 2. Cant. 7:12. Let this be a warning to us against hypocrisy, that disguises will shortly be stripped off, and every man will appear in his own colors; and an encouragement to us in our sincerity, that God is a witness to it.

Observe, This hypocrite was never discovered to be without a wedding garment, till the king himself came in to see the guests. Note, It is God's prerogative to know who are sound at heart, and who are not. We may be deceived in men, but He cannot. The day of judgment will be the great discovering day, when all the guests will be presented to the king; (ch. 25:32.) *the secrets of all hearts will then be made manifest, and we shall infallibly discern between the righteous and the wicked.* It concerns all the guests to prepare for the scrutiny of the heart-searching God.

(2.) As soon as he came in, he espied the hypocrite; though but one, he presently had his eye on him; there is no hope of being hid in a crowd from the arrests of divine justice; he was not dressed as became a nuptial solemnity. Note, Many come to the wedding feast without a wedding garment. If the Gospel be the wedding feast, then the wedding garment is a frame of heart and a course of life worthy of the vocation whereunto we are called, (Eph. 4:1.) as becomes the Gospel of Christ, Phil. 1:27. *The righteousness of saints, their real holiness and sanctification, and Christ made Righteousness to them, is the clean linen.* Rev. 19:6. This man was not naked, or in rags; some raiment he had, but not a wedding garment. Those, and only those, who put on the Lord Jesus, that have a Christian temper of mind, and are adorned with Christian graces, who live by faith in Christ, and to whom He is All in all, have the wedding garment.

2. His trial; (v. 12.) and there we may observe,

1. How he was arraigned; v. 12. A startling question to one that was priding himself in the place he securely possessed. *Friend! That was a cutting word; a seeming friend, a friend in profession, under manifold ties and obligations to be a friend.* Note, There are many in the church who are false friends to Jesus Christ, who say that they love Him, while their hearts are not with Him. *How earnest thou in hither?* He does not chide the servants for letting him in; (the wedding garment is an inward thing, ministers must go according to that which falls within their cognizance;) but He checks his presumption in crowding in, when he knew that his heart was not upright; *How durst thou claim a share in gospel-bene-*

(8.) *Were not worthy.* 'Because they made light of it, and would not come; among the Mohammedans, refusal to come to a marriage feast, when invited, is considered a breach of the law of God. It was probably considered in this light among all the oriental nations. This observation is necessary, in order to point out more forcibly the iniquity of the refusal mentioned in the text.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(9.) 'Strange as this direction may seem, there is something that approaches very near it in the customs of the eastern nations, even in modern times. For Pococke informs us, that an Arab prince will often dine in the street before his door, and call to all that pass, even to beggars, in the name of God; and they come and sit down to table, and, when they have done, retire with the usual form of returning thanks. This

adds one more proof of the exact correspondence of the various facts and circumstances recorded in the sacred writings to the truth of history, and to ancient oriental customs and manners.'

(10.) *Gathered—all—both good and bad.* 'By the preaching of the Gospel, multitudes of souls are gathered into what is termed the visible church of Christ. This church is the floor, where the wheat and the chaff are often mingled, ch. 3:12. The field, where the bastard wheat and the true grain grow together, ch. 13:26, 27. The net, which collects of all kinds, both good and bad, ch. 13:48. The house, in which the wise and foolish are found, ch. 25:1, &c. And the fold, in which there are both sheep and goats, ch. 25:34, &c.'

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11 And "when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man," which had not on a wedding-garment :

12 And he saith unto him, "Friend, "how camest thou in hither, not having a wedding-garment ? " And he was speechless.

13 Then said the king to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness : " there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

14 For "many are

u 3:12, 13:30, 25:31, 32. 1 Cor. 4:5.
Heb. 4:12, 13. Rev. 2:23.
x 1 Sam. 10:22. Ps. 45:13, 14. Is. 52:1.
1. 61:3, 10. 64:5. Zech. 3:3, 4.
Luke 15:22. Rom. 3:22, 13:14.
Gal. 3:27. Eph. 4:24. Col. 3:10, 11.
Eph. 3:4, 5:18. 16:15. 19:3.
y 20:13, 26:50.
z 5:20. Acts 5:2-11. 8:20-22. 1 Cor. 4:5.
1 Sam. 2:8. Job 5:18. Ps. 107:42.
Jer. 2:23. Rom. 3:19. Tit. 3:11.
b 12:29, 13:30. Dan. 3:20. John 2:1.
Acts 21:11.
c 6:12, 25:30. 2 Thes. 1:9. 2 Pet. 2:4, 17. Jude 6, 13.
d 13:42, 50. 24:51. Ps. 37:12. 112:10.
Luke 13:28. Acts 7:54.
7:13, 14. 30:15. Luke 12:22, 24.

f.s. *How hast thou hadst no regard to gospel-rules ? What saith thou to do to declare my statutes ?* Ps. 50:16, 17. Such are spots in the feast, dishonor the bridegroom, affront the company, and disgrace themselves ; therefore, *How camest thou in hither ?* Note, Hypocrites will be called to an account for all their presumptuous intrusion into gospel-ordinances, and usurpation of gospel-privileges. *Who has required this at your hand ?* Isa. 1:12. Despised Sabbaths and abused sacraments must be reckoned for, and judgment taken out on an action of waste against all those who *received the grace of God in vain*. "How camest thou to the Lord's table, at such a time, unhumiliated and unsanctified ? What brought thee to sit before God's prophets, as his people do, when thy heart went after thy covetousness ? *How camest thou in ?* Not by the door, but *some other way, as a thief and a robber*. It was a tortuous entry, a possession without color of a title." Note, It is good for those that have a place in the church, often to put it to themselves, "How came I in hither ? Have I a wedding garment ?" If we would thus judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

(2.) How he was convicted ; *he was speechless*—muzzled ; (so the word is used, 1 Cor. 9:9.) the man stood mute, on his arraignment, being convicted and condemned by his own conscience. They who live within the church, and die without Christ, will not have one word to say for themselves in the judgment of the great day ; should they plead, *we have eaten and drunken in thy presence, as they do* (Luke 13:26,) that is, to plead guilty ; for, the crime they are charged with, is, thrusting themselves into the presence of Christ, and to his table, before they were called. They who never heard of this wedding feast will be more excusable, and their condemnation more tolerable.

3. His sentence ; (v. 13.) *Bind him hand and foot, &c.*

(1.) He is ordered to be pinioned, as condemned malefactors are, to be manacled and shackled. Those that will not work and walk as they should, may expect to be bound hand and foot. There is a binding in this world by the servants, the ministers, whose suspending of persons that walk disorderly, is called binding of them, *ch. 11:18*. "Bind them up from partaking of special ordinances, and the peculiar privileges of their church-membership ; bind them over to the righteous judgment of God." *In the day of judgment*, hypocrites will be bound ; *the angels shall bind up these tares in bundles for the fire, ch. 13:41*. Damned sinners are bound hand and foot by an irreversible sentence ; this signifies the same with the fixing of the great gulf ; they can neither resist nor outrun their punishment.

Verses 11—14.

The preceding part of the parable represented the replenishing of the church with professed Christians : this shows the difference between nominal and real disciples. According to the custom of those times, princes had large wardrobes, from which, on some occasions, they furnished numbers with suitable apparel ; it must be supposed, that a wedding garment was offered to each guest when he entered the banquetting house : for it could not be expected, that travellers from the highways should be properly habited for the royal entertainment, to which they were so unexpectedly invited. It is not material, whether we understand the wedding garment to mean the imputed righteousness of Christ, or "the sanctification of the Spirit," for both are alike necessary, and they always go together. No man can obtain either of these blessings, except from Christ, and by faith in Him : yet those who remain unrighteous and unholy, besides all their other crimes, are chargeable with refusing the blessing when offered them.

SCOTT.

(11.) *Wedding garment.* That persons making an entertainment sometimes furnished the habits in which the guests should appear, is evident from what Homer says of Ulysses being thus furnished by the Phœnicians. (Odys.) and from the account Diodorus gives us of the hospitality of Gelias, the Sicilian, who at once supplied with clothes five hundred horsemen, driven by a storm to take shelter with him.

DODDRIDGE.

"The kings of Persia have great wardrobes, where there are always many hundreds of habits ready designed for presents, and stored. More than forty tailors are always employed in this house—(the wardrobe)." CHARDIN.

"At the entertainment given by the grand vizier to lord Elgin and his suite, in the palace of the seraglio, pelisses were given to all the guests." PORTER.

ED.

Dr. A. Clarke refers to Zeph. 1:7, 8. *Had not on a wedding garment.* "It was usual, more especially at marriage feasts, for persons to appear in a sumptuous dress, adorned, as some writers tell us, with gold embroidery ; though many times white garments seem to have been used on such occasions. Rev. 19:8, 9. But as it could not be expected that travellers, thus pressed in, should themselves be provided with a suitable habit, we must therefore conclude, not only from the magnificence of the preparations, to which we must suppose the wardrobe of the prince corresponded, but likewise from the full-wing circumstance of resentment against this guest, that a robe was offered, but refused by him. And this is a circumstance which (as Calvin) is admirably suited to the method of God's deal-

(2.) He is ordered to be carried off from the wedding feast ; *Take him away*. When the wickedness of hypocrites appears, they are to be taken away from the communion of the faithful, to be cut off as withered branches. This bespeaks the punishment of loss in the other world ; they shall be taken away from the king, from the kingdom, from the wedding feast. *Depart from me, ye cursed*. It will aggravate their misery, that (like the unbelieving lord, 2 Kings 7:2,) *they shall see all this plerety with their eyes, but shall not taste of it*. Note, Those that walk unworthy of their Christianity, forfeit all the happiness they presumptuously lay claim to, and complimented themselves with a groundless expectation of.

(3.) He is ordered into a doleful dungeon ; *Cast him into outer darkness*. Our Savior here insensibly slides out of this payable into that which it intimates—the damnation of hypocrites in the other world. Hell is utter darkness, darkness out of heaven, the land of light ; extreme darkness, darkness to the last degree without the least ray or spark of light, or hope of it, like that of Egypt ; *darkness which might be felt ; the blackness of darkness, as darkness itself*, Job 10:22. Note, Hypocrites go by the light of the Gospel itself down to utter darkness ; and hell will be hell indeed to such, a condemnation more intolerable ; *there shall be weeping, and gnashing of teeth*. This our Savior often uses as part of the description of hell-torments, which are hereby represented, not so much by the misery itself, as by the perception sinners will have of it ; there shall be weeping, an expression of great sorrow and anguish ; not a gush of tears, which gives present ease, but constant weeping, which is constant torment ; and the *gnashing of teeth*, is an expression of the greatest rage and indignation ; they will be like a wild bull in a net, full of the fury of the Lord, Isa. 51:20. 8:21, 22. Let us therefore bear and fear.

Lastly, The parable is concluded with the remarkable saying which we had before, (*ch. 20:9, 10*) *Many are called, but few are chosen*, v. 14. Of the many that are called, if you set aside all those as unchosen, that made light of the feast, and avowedly prefer other things before it ; if then you set aside all that make a profession of religion, but the temper of whose spirits, and the tenor of whose conversation, is a constant contradiction to it ; if you set aside all the pro-

DODDRIDGE.

ing with us ; who indeed requires holiness in order to our receiving the benefits of the Gospel, but is graciously pleased to work it in us by his Holy Spirit, and therefore may justly resent and punish our neglect of so great a favor."

(13.) "In ancient times, the stewards of great families were slaves, as well as the servants of the lower class, being raised to that trust on account of their good qualities. If any steward, therefore, in the absence of his lord, behaved as is represented in the parable, it was a plain proof that the virtues on account of which he was raised, were counterfeited, and by consequence that he was an hypocrite. Slaves of this character, among other chastisements, were sometimes condemned to work in the mines. As this was one of the most grievous punishments, when they first entered, nothing was heard among them but weeping and gnashing of teeth on account of the intolerable fatigue to which they were subjected in these hideous caverns without hope of release."

MACKNIGHT.

"It is well known that banquets were generally celebrated in rooms that were finely illuminated and richly adorned. And considering how splendid and magnificent the entertainments of the eastern princes were, it cannot be thought an unnatural circumstance, that such an affront as this, offered to the king, his son, his bride, and the rest of the company, should be punished with bonds, and a dungeon."

DODDRIDGE.

"This man was meant to be the representative of those presumptuous persons, who intrude themselves into the Christian covenant, and expect to receive all the privileges and all the rewards annexed to it, without possessing any one of those Christian graces and virtues, which the Gospel requires from all those who profess to believe and to embrace it. Nothing is more common in Scripture than to represent the habits and dispositions of the mind, those which determine and distinguish the whole character, under the figure of bodily garments and external habits, as in Job 22:14, and Is. 61:10. In the same manner, we are commanded in the Gospel to "put on charity, to be clothed with humility," and in the book of Revelation, the elders are described as "sitting before the throne of God, clothed in white raiment."

PORTER.

(14.) *Many are called, &c.* "Many are called by the preaching of the Gospel into the outward communion of the church of Christ, but few comparatively are chosen to dwell with God in glory, because they do not come to the master of the feast for a marriage garment, for that holiness without which none can see the Lord."

Dr. A. CLARKE.

called, but few are chosen.

[Practical Observations.]

15 Then ^vwent the Pharisees, and took counsel ^hhow they might entangle him in his talk.

16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with ^hthe Herodians, saying, ⁱMaster, ^kwe know that thou art ^ltrue, and teachest the way of God in truth, ^mneither carest thou for any man; for thou regardest not the person of men.

f Ps. 9:2. Mark 12:13-17. Luke 20:21-25.

g Ps. 41:8. 58:5-7. 57:16. 59:3. Is. 23:21. Jer. 18:18. 20:10. Luke 11:53, 54. Heb. 12:3.

h 16:11. 12. Mark 3:5. 8:15.

i 24:35. 28:18, 49. Mark 10:17. Luke 7:40.

k Ps. 5:9. 12:2. 55:21. Prov. 29:5. Is. 59:13-15. Jer. 9:3-5. Ez. 33:30, 31.

l Mat. 2:6. John 7:18. 14:6. 18:37.

m Deut. 3:17. 4:2. 1 John 5:20.

n 2 Cor. 3:9. 1 Kings 22:14. Job 32:21, 22. Mic. 3:8-12. Mal. 2:9.

o Mark 12:14. Luke 30:21. 2 Cor. 5:16. Gal. 1:10. 2:6. 1 Thes. 2:4. Jam. 3:17.

speaking his mind, and hoped by that, if they could bring Him to some nice and tender point, to get an advantage against Him. It has been the old practice of Satan's agents and emissaries, to make a man an offender for a word, a word misplaced, or mistaken, or misunderstood: thus they lay a snare for him that *reprooeth in the gate*, (Isa. 29: 21.) and represent the greatest teachers as the greatest troublemakers of Israel: thus *the wicked plotteth against the just*, Ps. 37: 12, 13.

There were two ways by which the enemies of Christ might be rid of Him; either by law, or by force. But to do it by law, they must make Him obnoxious to the civil government; for *it was not lawful for them to put any man to death*; (John 18: 31.) and the Roman powers were not apt to concern themselves about *questions of words, and names, and their law*, Acts 18: 14. And to do it by force, they must make Him obnoxious to the people, who were always the hands, whoever were the heads, in such acts of violence; but the people took Christ for a prophet, and therefore his enemies could not raise ^hthe mob against Him. Now, then, the design was, to bring Him into such a dilemma, that He must make Himself liable to the displeasure, either of the Jewish multitude, or of the Roman magistrates.

II. The question which they put to Him, pursuant to this design, v. 16, 17. Having devised this iniquity in secret, they went forth to practise it. Observe,

1. The persons they employed: they did not go themselves, but they sent their disciples, who would look less like tempters, and more like learners. Note, Wicked men will never want wicked instruments to carry on their wicked counsels. Pharisees have their disciples at their beck, and they have this in their eye, when they are so industrious to make proselytes.

With them they sent the Herodians, a party among the Jews, who were

fane, and all the hypocritical, you will find that they are few, very few, that are chosen; many called to the wedding feast, but few chosen to the wedding garment, that is, to *salvation, by sanctification of the Spirit*. This is the *strait gate, and narrow way*, which *few find*.

V. 15-22. In these verses, we find Christ attacked by the Pharisees and Herodians, with a question about paying tribute to Cæsar. Observe,

1. What their design was, v. 15. Hitherto, his encounters had been mostly with the chief priests and the elders, who trusted more to their power than to their policy, and examined Him concerning his commission; (*ch. 21: 23*.) but now He is set upon from another quarter; the Pharisees will try whether they can deal with Him by their learning in the law, and in casuistical divinity. Note, It is vain for the best and wisest of men to think that, by their ingenuity, or interest, or industry, or even by their innocence and integrity, they can escape the hatred and ill-will of bad men, or screen themselves from the *strife of tongues*. See how unwearied the enemies of Christ and his kingdom are in their opposition!

1. *They took counsel*. It was foretold concerning Him, that the rulers would take counsel against Him; (Ps. 2: 2.) and so persecuted they the prophets. Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah. See Jer. 18: 18. 20: 10. Note, The more there is of contrivance and consultation about sin, the worse it is. There is a particular *woe to them that devise iniquity*. Mic. 2: 1.

2. What they aimed at, was, to entangle Him in his talk. They saw Him free and bold in

for a cheerful and entire subjection to the Roman emperor, and to Herod his deputy; and who made it their business to reconcile people to that government, and pressed all to pay their tribute. Some think that they were the collectors of the land tax, as the publicans were of the customs, and that they went with the Pharisees to Christ, with this blind on their plot, that, while the Herodians demanded the tax, and the Pharisees denied it, they were both willing to refer it to Christ, as a proper judge to decide the quarrel. Herod being obliged, by the charter of the sovereignty, to take care of the tribute, these Herodians, by assisting him in that, helped to endear him to his great friends at home. The Pharisees, on the other hand, were zealous for the liberty of the Jews, and did what they could to make them impatient of the Roman yoke. Now, if He should countenance the paying of tribute, the Pharisees would incense the people against Him; and if He should discountenance or disallow it, the Herodians would incense the government against Him. Note, It is common for those that oppose one another, to continue in an opposition to Christ and his kingdom. Samson's foxes looked several ways, but met in one firebrand. See Ps. 83: 3, 5, 7, 8. If they are unanimous in opposing, should we not be so in maintaining, the interests of the Gospel?

2. The preface to the question; it was highly complimentary to our Savior, v. 16. Note, It is a common thing for the most spiteful projects to be covered with the most specious pretences. Had they come to Christ with the most serious inquiry, and the most sincere intention, they could not have expressed themselves better. Here is *hatred covered with deceit*, and a *wicked heart with burning lips*; (Prov. 26: 23.) as Judas, who kissed and betrayed, as Joab, who kissed and killed.

Now, (1.) What they said of Christ was right, and, whether they knew it or no, blessed be God, we know it.

[1.] That Jesus Christ was a faithful Teacher; *Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth*. For Himself, *He is true, the Amen, the faithful Witness*; He is the Truth itself. As for his doctrine, the matter of his teaching was the way of God, the way that God requires us to walk in, the way of duty, that leads to happiness. The manner of it was in truth; He showed people the *right way, the way in which they should go*. He was a skilful Teacher, that knew the way; a faithful Teacher, that would be sure to let us know it. See Prov. 8: 6-9. This is the character of a good teacher, to preach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; not to suppress, pervert, or stretch it, for favor or affection, hatred or good-will, either out of a desire to please, or a fear to offend, any man.

[2.] That He was a bold Reprover. In preach-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-14. God has not only provided food, but a royal feast, for the perishing souls of his rebellious creatures; and there is 'enough and to spare' of every thing, which can conduce to our present comfort and everlasting felicity, in the salvation of his Son, Jesus Christ. Let none then think of religion, as of an unpleasant service, to which they are urged, but as a rich and magnificent feast, to which they are invited; and, whilst believers enjoy peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, communion with God, and the lively hope of glory, let them not forget at what a price the feast was prepared. 'All things are now ready,' the servants are continually employed in inviting guests, and they are commanded to invite all, 'as many as they find, both bad and good,' to renew their invitations to such as have repeatedly rejected them; and not to be wearied out by disappointments or ill usage, but to address others, and others still, that 'the wedding may be furnished with guests.' Yet, after all these invitations, numbers perish in their sins: not because they *may not come*; nor, properly speaking, because they *cannot*; but because they 'will not.' This is the effect of profane contempt of spiritual blessings, inordinate love of worldly objects, carnal dislike to the perfection, law, and government of God, and proud aversion to the humbling salvation of the Gospel. From such motives, numbers 'make light' of the invitations, and turn aside, perhaps pretending want of leisure, or purposing to come at 'a more convenient season.' Others are enraged at the warnings and

expostulations, with which the servants enforce the invitation; and treat them with insult and reproach; or even murder them if they have it in their power. Thus the Gospel of salvation occasions their deeper condemnation, because they hate the light through love of sin; and so God is provoked to give them up to temporal and eternal destruction. Sometimes they, who have been brought up under the Gospel, prove the greatest despisers and enemies of it; and the servants, who are sent forth into the highways and hedges, have most success in winning souls to Christ. No objections will be made to any man, on account of his previous character, who is desirous of admission to this feast: yet no man will actually partake of it, who does not seek and obtain an interest in the merits of Christ, or who remains a stranger to converting grace. (Notes, Rev. 3: 17-19.) Many find admission among believers, and continue with them to the last, who have not this 'wedding garment,' and whom the King will at length distinguish and separate from his chosen people: then their present pretences will be shown to be fallacious, and they will have nothing to plead in arrest of judgment, when He shall order them to be 'bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' As, therefore, 'many are called, and few chosen,' let us 'examine ourselves whether we be in the faith,' and seek above all things to be approved of by the King Himself, when He shall come in to see the guests.

SCOTT.

“Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?”

“But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, ‘Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites?’

“Shew me the tribute-money. And they brought unto him a penny.”

“And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and *superscription?”

“They say unto him, Cæsar’s. Then saith he unto them, ‘Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar’s,’ and unto God the things that are God’s.”

ing He cared not for any; He valued no man’s frowns or smiles, He did not court, or dread, either the great or the many, for He regarded not the person of man; He did not know faces; that Lion of the tribe of Judah turned not away for any, Prov. 30: 30. He reproveth with equity, (Isa. 11: 14.) and never with partiality.

(2.) Though what they said was true for the matter of it, yet there was nothing but flattery and treachery in the intention of it. They called Him *Master*, when they were contriving to treat Him as the worst of malefactors; they pretended respect, when they intended mischief; and they affronted his wisdom as Man, much more his omniscience as God, of which He had so often given undeniable proofs, when they imagine that they could impose on Him with these pretences, and that He could not see through them. It is the grossest atheism, that is, the greatest folly in the world, to think to put a cheat upon Christ, who searches the heart, Rev. 2: 23. Those that mock God, do but deceive themselves, Gal. 6: 7.

3. The proposal of the case; *What thinkest thou?* As if they had said, ‘Many men are of many minds in this matter; it is a case which relates to practice, and occurs daily; let us have thy thoughts freely in the matter, *Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?*’ This implies a further question; Has Cæsar a right to demand it? The nation of the Jews was lately, about a hundred years before this, conquered by the Roman sword, and so, as other nations, became a province of the empire; accordingly, toll, tribute, and custom, were demanded from them, and sometimes poll-money. By this it appeared that the *sceptre was departed from Judah*; (Gen. 49: 10.) and therefore, if they had understood the signs of the times, they must have concluded that *Shiloh was come*, and either that this was He, or they must find out another more likely to be so.

Now, the question was, Whether it was lawful to pay these taxes voluntarily, or, Whether they should not insist on the ancient liberty of their nation, and rather suffer themselves to be distressed upon? The ground of the doubt was, that they were *Abraham’s seed*, and should not by consent be in bondage to any man, John 8: 33. God had given them a law, that they should not set a stranger over them; did not that imply that they were not to yield any willing subjection to any prince, state, or potentate, that was not of their own nation and religion? This was an old mistake, arising from that *pride* and that *haughty spirit*, which bring destruction and a fall. Jeremiah, in his time, though he spake in God’s name, could not possibly beat them off it, nor persuade them to submit to the king of Babylon; and their obstinacy in that matter was then their ruin: (Jer. 27: 13.) and now again they stumbled at the same stone; and it was the very thing which, in a few years after, brought final destruction on them by the Romans. They quite mistook the sense both of the precept and of the privilege, and, under color of God’s word, contended with his providence, when they should have kissed the rod, and accepted the punishment of their iniquity.

However, by this question they hoped to entangle Christ, and, which way soever He solved it, to expose Him to the fury either of the jealous Jews or of the jealous Romans; they were ready to triumph, as Pharaoh did over Israel, that the *wilderness had shut Him in*, and his doctrine would be concluded either injurious to the rights of the church, or hurtful to kings and provinces.

III. The breaking of this snare by the wisdom of the Lord Jesus.

Verse 17.

Cæsar. ‘This was the general title given to the Roman emperors. *Theribus Cæsar* was at this time emperor.’ Dr. A. CLARKE.

‘Is it lawful?’ That is, may we do this without a breach of our duty to God?’ Bp. PEARCE.

Verse 18.

Ye hypocrites. [Note, 6: 1—4, v. 2.] ‘Christ justly calls these persons hypocrites, because they pretended to own Him as a just person, and one who bore no respect to persons; and yet came with design to accuse Him for an unjust decision. And because they (Luke 20: 20, 27, 28) ‘sighed themselves’ to be such as they were not.’ Whitby.

Verse 21.

‘Christians must obey their magistrates, although they be wicked and extortioners; but so that the authority of God may remain safe to Him, and his honor be not diminished.’ Beza, in Scott.

Render therefore, &c.] ‘There is scarcely any thing which proves both wisdom and rightness of mind more fully, than proper behavior on sudden occasions, and proper answers to unforeseen questions: for what a man shows himself to be at such times, we have, in general, great cause to believe that he really is. To this trial our Savior, living Him, was perpetually exposed; and his character not only did not suffer, but was exalted by every such occasion of showing his wisdom and wisdom, inasmuch that his enemies were amazed, and paid Him the unwilling tribute of public approbation.’ Anps. SECKLER and NEWCOMB.

1. He discovered it; (v. 19.) He perceived their wickedness; for, surely, it was in the net spread in the sight of any bird, Prov. 1: 17. A temptation perceived is half conquered, for our greatest danger lies from snakes under the green grass; and He said, *Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites?* Note, Whatever vizard the hypocrites put on, our Lord Jesus sees through it. He cannot be imposed on, as we often are, by flatteries and fair pretences. He that searches the heart, can call hypocrites by their own name, as Ahijah did the wife of Jeroboam, (1 Kings 14: 6.) *Why feignest thou thyself to be another?* *Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites?* Note, Hypocrites tempt Jesus Christ; they try his knowledge, whether He can discover them through their disguises; they try his holiness and truth, whether He will allow them in his church; but if they that of old tempted Christ, when He was but darkly revealed, were destroyed of serpents, of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy, who tempt Him now in the midst of gospel-light and love!

2. He evaded it; his convicting them of hypocrisy might have served for an answer: such captious, malicious questions deserve a reproof, not a reply: but our Lord Jesus gave a full answer to their question, and introduced it by an argument sufficient to support it, so as to lay down a rule for his church in this matter, and yet to avoid giving offence, and to break the snare.

(1.) He forced them, ere they were aware, to confess Cæsar’s authority over them, τ. 19, 20. In dealing with those that are captious, it is good to give our reasons, and, if possible, reasons of confessed cogency, before we give our resolutions. Thus, the evidence of truth may silence gainsayers by surprise, while they only stood on their guard against the truth itself, not against the reason of it; *Show me the tribute money.* He had none of his own to convince them by, not so much as one piece, it should seem; for, for our sakes, He emptied Himself and became poor; He despised the wealth of this world, and thereby taught us not to overvalue it; silver and gold He had none; why then should we covet to load ourselves with the thick clay? The Romans demanded their tribute in their own money, which was current among the Jews at that time: that, therefore, is called the *tribute money*; He does not name what piece, but the *tribute money*, to shew that He did not mind things of that nature, nor concern Himself about them; his heart was on better things, the kingdom of God, and the riches and righteousness thereof, and ours should be so too. They presently brought Him a penny, a Roman penny in silver, in value about seven pence halfpenny sterling, and the most common piece then in use; it was stamped with the emperor’s image and superscription, which was the warrant of the public faith for the value of the pieces so stamped; a method agreed on by most nations, for the more easy circulation of money with satisfaction. The coining of money has always been looked upon as a branch of the prerogative,

‘Amongst the peculiar qualities of our holy religion, is to be reckoned its complete abstraction from all views of civil policy. Christianity, while it declines every question relating to particular forms of government, is alike friendly to them all, by tending to make men virtuous and therefore easier to be governed; by statuting obedience to government in ordinary cases, to be not merely a submission to force, but a duty of conscience; and by inducing dispositions favorable to public tranquillity; and by recommending prayers for communities and governors, of every description, with a solicitude and fervency proportioned to the influence they possess upon human happiness.’ FALEY.

And to God the things which are God’s.] ‘Diodati, Ropheus, and some other commentators, interpret this as a caution against omitting the sacred tribute, on pretence of answering the demands of Cæsar, who (they say) had claimed it to himself. But I apprehend our Lord had a more extensive view; and that, as He cautions the Pharisees against using religion as a pretence to justify secession, so He also warns the Herodians that they should not, as they were too inclinable to do, make a compliment of their religion to the Romans, by complying with those things which were forbidden by the divine law, that they might ingratiate themselves with Cæsar’s party.’ DODDRIDGE.

‘The inserting a prince’s name in the khoutha, (or public prayer for the king,) and the inscribing it on the current coin, are reckoned in the East the most certain acknowledgments of sovereignty.’

ELPHINSTONE.

22 When they had heard *these words*, * they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

[Practical Observations.]

23 ¶ The same day came to him * the Sadducees, * which say

33.46. 10:16 Prov. 26:4,5. Luke 20:25,29. 21:15. Ac 5:10. Col. 4:8.

37. Mark 12:18, &c. Luke 20:27, &c.

37. 16:6. Acts 4:1. 5:17. 23:6.

1 Cor. 15:12-14. 2 Tim. 2:18.

re t in the country.' Some think that the superscription on this coin was, a memorandum of the conquest of Judea by the Romans, and that they admitted that, too.

(2.) From thence He inferred the lawfulness of paying tribute to Cæsar; (o. 21.) *Render therefore to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*; not 'Give it him,' (as they expressed it, v. 17) but 'Render it; Return,' or 'Restore it'; if Cæsar fill the purses, let Cæsar command them. It is too late now to dispute paying tribute to Cæsar, for you are become a province of the empire, and, when once a relation is admitted, the duty of it must be performed. *Render to all their due*; and, particularly, *tribute to whom tribute is due.* Now, by this answer,

[1.] No offence was given. It was much to the honor of Christ and his doctrine, that He did not interpose as a Judge or a Divider in matters of this nature, but left them as He found them, for *his kingdom is not of this world*; and in this He hath given an example to his ministers, who deal in sacred things, not to meddle with disputes about things secular, but to leave that to those whose proper business it is. Ministers that would mind their business and please their Master, must not *entangle themselves in the affairs of this life*; they forfeit the guidance of God's Spirit, and the convoy of his providence, when they thus go out of their way. Christ discusses not the emperor's title, but enjoins a peaceable subjection to the powers that be. The government therefore had no reason to take offence at his determination, but to thank Him, for it would strengthen Cæsar's interest with the people, who held Him for a Prophet; and yet such was the impudence of his prosecutors, that, though He had expressly charged them to *render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's*, they laid the direct contrary in his indictment, that He *forbade to give tribute to Cæsar*, Luke 23: 2. As to the people, the Pharisees could not accuse Him to them, because they themselves had, before they were aware, yielded the premises, and then it was too late to evade the conclusion. Note, Though truth seeks not a fraudulent concealment, yet it sometimes needs a prudent management, to prevent the offence which may be taken at it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15-22. While we carefully shun the hypocrisy and wickedness of the enemies of Christ, we may learn from their words what a minister of God ought to be. By their allowance, and in their unimpassioned judgment, he should be an upright, faithful man, 'teaching the way of God in truth'; able and bold 'to declare the whole counsel of God'; and not so caring for man, or fearing him, or respecting the person of any man, as to keep back, alter, or soften any part of his message. Who will deny in words, that this ought to be the character of a minister? Yet how few reduce it to practice! Who expects such unpliant faithfulness and unreserved honesty, towards all ranks and descriptions of men, from the ministers of Christ? Who does not censure that man; as rude, uncourtly, and intruding, who flatters no one, connives at no errors or sins of his patron, his friend, or his prince; and will not disguise his sentiments to please any party, or for fear of the frown of any man or multitude of men? The nearer any servant of God comes to this character, the more need he will have to pray for 'the meekness of wisdom,' and to copy the example of his Lord: for, many will seek for matter of accusation against him, that they may re-establish their own reputation by ruining his; and if his boldness be not evidently disinterested, benevolent, humble, harmless, and prudent, he will often be entangled in their snares. Few subjects are more perilous in this respect, than those which are in any degree connected with political con-

[2.] His adversaries were proved. *First*, Some of them would have had Him make it unlawful to give tribute to Cæsar, that they might have a pretence to save their money. Thus many excuse 'themselves from that which they must do,' by arguing whether they may do it or no. *Secondly*, They all withheld from God his dues, and are reproved for that: while they were vainly contending about their civil liberties, they had lost the life and power of religion, and needed to be put in mind of their duty to God, with that to Cæsar.

[3.] His disciples were instructed, and standing rules left to the church.

First, That the Christian religion is no enemy to civil government, but a friend to it. Christ's kingdom doth not clash or interfere with the kingdoms of the earth, in any thing that pertains to their jurisdiction. By Christ kings reign.

Secondly, It is the duty of subjects to render to magistrates that which, according to the laws of their country, is their due. The higher powers, being intrusted with the public welfare, the protection of the subject, and the conservation of the peace, are entitled, in consideration thereof, to a just proportion of the public wealth, and the revenue of the nation. *For this cause, pay we tribute*, because they attend continually to this very thing; (Rom. 13: 6.) and it is doubtless a greater sin to cheat the government than to cheat a private person. Though it is the constitution that determines what is Cæsar's, yet, when that is determined, Christ bids us render it to him; my coat is my coat, by the law of man; but he is a thief, by the law of God, that takes it from me.

Thirdly, When we render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, we must remember withal to render to God the things that are God's. If our purses be Cæsar's, our consciences are God's; He hath said, *My son, give me thy heart*; He must have the innermost and uppermost place there; we must render to God that which is his due, out of our time, and out of our estates; from them He must have his share, as well as Cæsar his; and, if Cæsar's commands interfere with God's, *we must obey God rather than men.*

tests: for it is difficult to touch on them, without giving advantage to one party or other, or without verging to some extreme. Yet ministers must teach the people *their duty*, though it should interfere with their own popularity, or incur the displeasure of their rulers: and to this they should confine their interposition. They must insist upon men's rendering tribute, honor, and civil obedience, without reserve, to 'the powers that be'; let Pharisees, or men of any creed or name, attempt to render religion the watchword of sedition, or the cloak of their depredations on the public revenue; or indulge their rebellion against the providence of God, by reviling the persons or measures of their rulers: and they must equally insist upon men's 'rendering to God the things that are God's'; let Herodians say what they will to prove that kings are authorized to lord it over the consciences of their subjects, and to model the Gospel and its ordinances as may best suit their interest, convenience, or caprice. Nor will it be very difficult to apply this general rule to particular cases, provided the heart be upright; except that it will sometimes expose a man to secular loss or persecution, if he determines to obey Cæsar as far as his duty to God will give him leave, and no farther.—But how broad is the rule of God's commandments! The enlightened soul can never seriously meditate on any one of them, without seeing cause to say, 'God be merciful to me, and write this law in my heart, I beseech thee.'

SCOTT.

Verses 23-33.

They purposed to embarrass Jesus with a difficulty, which probably had perplexed others of their opponents; though the case stated would not have been worth recording, had it not shown the cavilling, frivolous spirit of infidelity, and given our Lord an occasion of returning a most instructive answer. The inference which they meant to insinuate, was the impossibility of a resurrection. It is method of arguing by *insinuation*, from imagined difficulties, to *discredit* authentic revelation, or even stubborn facts, forms a species of logic for which infidels, ancient and modern, have shown a peculiar predilection; and indeed it is the best method, which can be taken, of perplexing weak minds, and amusing superficial inquirers. (Marg. Ref. e. f.—Mark 12: 18-27, v. 27.) Among other egregious errors, the Sadducees took no notice of a state of *punishment*, in the future world, but spake as if those who believed in the resurrection thought all was (at least

all Jews) to be of one character, and to go to one place. The argument (31, 32.) seems at first sight more immediately to prove, that the souls of the patriarchs were, at that time, in existence and felicity, than to evince the resurrection of their bodies: but if we consider, that man is constituted of soul and body, we shall perceive that it proves both. For if JEHOVAH gave Himself, by an everlasting covenant, to be the God and Portion of any person, it implied that He would finally render him happy, in body and soul, by bringing him to the complete enjoyment of his presence and favor; and this could not be done, unless the body be restored from the grave. The whole reasoning shows that the doctrine of the resurrection, and the future state, is as certainly contained in the Old Testament, when properly understood, as in the New. The resurrection of the wicked is revealed in other places; but the question proposed led Jesus rather to speak concerning that of the righteous.

SCOTT.

that there is no resurrection, and asked him,

24 Saying, O Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

25 Now there were with us seven brethren; and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother:

b 16, 39. 7, 21. Luke 6:46. c Gen. 38:8, 11. Deut. 25:5-10. Ruth 1:1. Mark 12:19. Luke 20:29. d Mark 12:19-23. Luke 20:29-33. Heb 9:27.

flourished about two hundred and eighty-four years before our Savior's birth. They lie under heavy censures among the writers of their own nation, as men of base and debauched conversations, which their principles led them to. They were the fewest in number of all the sects among the Jews, but generally persons of some rank. As the Pharisees and Essenes seemed to follow Plato and Pythagoras, so the Sadducees were much of the genius of the Epicureans, and denied the resurrection; they said, that, when the body dies, the soul dies with it; that there is no future state of rewards or punishments; no judgment to come in heaven or hell. They maintained, that, except God, there is no spirit, (Acts 23: 8.) nothing but matter and motion. They would not own the divine inspiration of the prophets, nor any revelation from heaven, but what God Himself spake on mount Sinai. Now, the doctrine of Christ carried that great truth, of the resurrection and a future state, much farther than it had yet been revealed, and therefore the Sadducees in a particular manner set themselves against it. The Pharisees and Sadducees were contrary to each other, and yet confederates against Christ. Christ's Gospel hath always suffered between superstitious, ceremonious hypocrites and bigots on the one hand, and profane deists and infidels on the other; the former abusing, the latter despising, the form of godliness, but both denying the power of it.

II. The objection they made against the truth; (v. 24-28.) they take it for granted, that, if there be a resurrection, it must be a return to such a state as this we are now in, and to the same circumstances, like the imaginary Platonic year; and if so, it is an invincible absurdity for this woman in the future state to have seven husbands, or else an insuperable difficulty which of them should have her.

1. They suggest the law of Moses in this matter, (v. 24.) that the next of kin should marry the widow of him that died childless; (Deut. 25: 5.) we have it practised, Ruth 4: 5. It was a political law, founded in the particular constitution of the Jewish commonwealth, to preserve the distinction of families and inheritances, of both which there was special care taken in that government.

2. They put a case upon this statute, which, whether it were a case in fact, or only a moot case, is not material; if it had not really occurred, yet possibly it might. It was of seven brothers, who married the same woman, v. 25-27. Now, this case supposes,

(1.) The desolations that death sometimes makes in families; how it often sweeps away a whole fraternity in a little time; seldom (as the case is put) according to seniority, (the land of darkness is without any order,) but heaps upon heaps; it diminishes families that had multiplied greatly, Ps. 107: 35, 39. When there were seven brothers grown up to man's estate, there was

Lastly, observe how they were nonplussed by this answer, v. 22. They admired his sagacity in discovering and evading a snare which they thought so craftily laid. Christ is, and will be, the Wonder, not only of his beloved friends, but of his baffled enemies. One would think, they should have marvelled and followed Him; but no, they marvelled, and left Him. Note, There are many in whose eyes Christ is marvellous, and yet not precious. They admire his wisdom, but will not be guided by it, his power, but will not submit to it. They went their way, as persons shamed, and made an inglorious retreat. The stratagem being defeated, they quitted the field. Note, There is nothing got by contending with Christ.

V. 23-33. We have here Christ's dispute with the Sadducees concerning the resurrection; it was the same day on which He was attacked by the Pharisees about paying tribute. Satan was now more busy than ever to ruffle and disturb Him; it was an hour of temptation, Rev. 3: 10. Observe here,

I. The opposition which the Sadducees made to a very great truth of religion, v. 23. These heretics were called Sadducees, from one Sadoc, a disciple of Antigonus Sochoas, who was a Sadducee. The Pharisees, who professed to believe a resurrection, had very gross and carnal notions concerning the future state, which perhaps drove the Sadducees to deny the thing itself; for nothing gives greater advantage to atheism and infidelity, than the carnality of those that make religion a servant to their sensual appetites and secular interests; while those that are erroneous deny the truth, those that are superstitious betray it to them. Now they, in this objection, went on the Pharisees' hypothesis. Note, It is not strange that carnal minds have very false notions of spiritual and eternal things. The natural man receiveth not these things, for they are foolishness to Him, 1 Cor. 2: 14. Let truth be set in a clear light, and then it appears in its full strength.

III. Christ's answer to this objection. 1. He reproves their ignorance; (v. 29.) *Ye do err*. Note, Those do greatly err, in the judgment of Christ, who deny the resurrection and a future state. Here Christ reproves with the meekness of wisdom, and is not so sharp as sometimes He was on the chief priests and elders; *Ye do err, not knowing*. Note, Ignorance is the cause of error: those that are in the dark, miss their way. The patrons of error do, therefore, resist the light, and do what they can to take away the key of knowledge; *Ye do err* in this matter, *not knowing*. Note, Ignorance is the cause of error about the resurrection and the future state. *What it is*, the wisest and best know not; but that it is, is a thing about which we are not left in the dark; blessed be God, we are not; and those who deny it, are guilty of a willing and affected ignorance. It seems there were some such monsters, among professing Christians, some who said, *There is no resurrection of the dead*; (1 Cor. 15: 12.) turning it into an allegory, and saying, *The resurrection is past already*. Now observe,

(1.) *They know not the power of God*; which would lead men to infer, that there may be a resurrection and a future state. Note,

a family very likely to be built up, and yet this numerous family leaves neither son nor nephew, nor any remaining in their dwellings Job 18: 19. Well may we say then, *Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it*. Let none be sure of the advancement and perpetuity of their names and families.

(2.) The obedience of these seven brothers to the law, though they had a power of refusal under the penalty of a reproach, Deut. 25: 7. Note, Discouraging providences should not keep us from doing our duty; because we must be governed by the rule, not by the event.

But, last of all, the woman died also. Note, Survivorship is but a reprieve; they that live long, and bury their relations and neighbors one after another, do not thereby acquire an immortality. Death's bitter cup goes round, and sooner or later, we must all pledge in it, Jer. 25: 26.

3. They propose a doubt on this case; (v. 28.) *In the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven?* You cannot tell whose; and therefore we must conclude there is no resurrection. The Pharisees, who professed to believe a resurrection, had very gross and carnal notions concerning the future state, which perhaps drove the Sadducees to deny the thing itself; for nothing gives greater advantage to atheism and infidelity, than the carnality of those that make religion a servant to their sensual appetites and secular interests; while those that are erroneous deny the truth, those that are superstitious betray it to them. Now they, in this objection, went on the Pharisees' hypothesis. Note, It is not strange that carnal minds have very false notions of spiritual and eternal things. The natural man receiveth not these things, for they are foolishness to Him, 1 Cor. 2: 14. Let truth be set in a clear light, and then it appears in its full strength.

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(1.) *They know not the power of God*; which would lead men to infer, that there may be a resurrection and a future state. Note,

(33.) *Who say there is no resurrection.* [Rather, no future life. The original word, when applied to the dead, properly denotes no more than a renewal of life to them, in whatever manner this may happen. Nay, that the Pharisees themselves did not universally mean, by this term, re-union of soul and body, is evident from Josephus and the gospels. To say, therefore, in English, (in giving the tenets of the Sadducees,) that they deny the resurrection, is, at least, to give a very defective account of their sentiments on this very topic. It is notorious, not only from Josephus, and other Jewish writers, but from what is said, Acts 23: 8, that they denied the existence of angels, and all separate bodies, whereas the pagans did indeed deny what Christians call the resurrection of the body, but acknowledge that the souls existed after death in a state of rewards and punishments. [The version here given makes our Lord's argument appear pertinent, and levelled against the doctrine He wished to refute.] Our Lord brings an argument to prove — that they shall be re-united, (to this it has not even the most distant relation,) but that the soul survives the body, and subsists after the body is dissolved. This many would have admitted, who denied the resurrection. Yet so evidently did it strike at the root of the scheme of the Sadducees, that they were silenced by it, and to the conviction of the hearers, confuted.' Campbell. 'After all, however, there is perhaps no sufficient reason to deviate from the common interpretation. Let us always bear in mind, that the language of Scripture is and must be, popular language; and therefore to handle it metaphysically, will be to miss its real sense. There seems little doubt but that the original

expression denoted, in common acceptance, not only the resurrection of the body, but the survival of the soul, i. e. a future life. The Sadducees, in fact, held the doctrines of what is now called materialism. Throughout the whole of this narration, the original phrase translated 'resurrection of the dead,' plainly denotes the restitution of bodies, and their conjunction with souls; so that marriages, &c. might exist, as the Pharisees maintained, whose opinion it seemed to have been the especial purpose of the Sadducees to expose to derision.' BLOOMFIELD.

The opinions of the Sadducees were peculiar. They believed that besides God, there was no other spiritual being, whether good or bad. They rejected the doctrine of fate, or of an overruling Providence, and maintained that the events which happened depended on the free and unconstrained actions of men. They held that the traditions were not binding, but did not, as some suppose, receive merely the Pentateuch, and reject all the other books of the Old Testament. In the progress of time, they appear to have admitted the existence of angels, and also to have embraced the belief of the immortality of the soul; and in the eighth century, they were distinguished as a sect, merely by rejecting the authority of traditions. Whence they were at length called Caraites, a sect of comparatively recent origin, as they are not mentioned by Josephus. [But see notes v. 31, and 16: 1. Ed.] JAHN. (24.) *Seed*. [Deut. 25: 5. The meaning is, that the children by this marriage should be reckoned in the genealogy of the deceased brother, and enjoy his estates. The word seed should be always translated children or posterity.]

Dr. A. CLARKE.

26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the * seventh.

27 And last of all the woman died also.

28 Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

* Gr. seven.
 J. 19:25-27. Ps. 16:9-11. 17:15.
 J. 19:11, 15. 73:25, 25. Is. 25:8. 26:19.
 57:1, 2. Dan. 12:2, 3. Hos. 13:14.
 Luke 24:44-47. John 20:9. Rom. 15:4.
 Gen. 18:14. Jer. 32:17. Luke 1:37. Acts 26:8. Phil. 3:21.
 E. Mark 12:24, 25. Luke 20:34-36.
 John 5:23, 22. 1 Cor. 7:29-31. 1 John 3:2.
 13:43. Ps. 103:20. Zach. 3:7. Rev. 5:9-11. 19:10.

Christ rose again according to the Scriptures; (1 Cor. 15: 3.) and so shall we. Those, therefore, who deny it, either have not conversed with the Scriptures, or do not believe them, or do not take the true sense and meaning of them. Note, Ignorance of the Scripture is the rise of abundance of mischief.

2. He rectifies their mistake, v. 30. Observe,

(1.) The future state is not like the state we are now in on earth; *They neither marry, nor are given in marriage.* Marriage was instituted in innocence, and was never laid aside, nor will be to the end of time. In the old world, they were *marrying, and giving in marriage*; the Jews in Babylon, when cut off from other ordinances, yet were bid to take them wives, Jer. 29: 6. All civilized nations have had a sense of the obligation of the marriage covenant; and it is requisite for the gratifying of the desires, and recruiting the deficiencies, of the human nature. But, in the resurrection, there is no occasion for marriage; whether in glorified bodies there will be any distinction of sexes, some too curiously dispute; (the ancients are divided in their opinions about it;) where God will be *All in all*, there needs no other *meet-help*; the body will be *spiritual*, and there will be in it no carnal desires to be gratified: when the mystical body is completed, there will be no further occasion to seek a *golly seed*, which was one end of the institution of marriage, Mal. 2: 15. In heaven there will be no decay of the individuals, and therefore no eating and drinking; no decay of the species, and therefore no marrying; *where there shall be no more deaths*, (Rev. 21: 4.) there needs be no more births. The married state is a composition of joys and cares; those that enter on it, are taught to look upon it as subject to changes, *richer and poorer, sickness and health*; and therefore it is fit for this mixed, changing world; but, as in hell, where there is no joy, the voice of the bridegroom and the voice of the bride shall be heard no more at all; so in heaven, where there is all joy, and no care, or pain, or trouble, there will be no marrying. The joys of that state are pure and spiritual, and arise from the marriage of all of them to the Lamb, not of any of them to one another.

(2.) It is like the state angels are now in, in heaven; *They are as the angels of God in heaven*; they are so, that is, undoubtedly they shall be so. They are so already in Christ their Head, who has made them *sit with Him in heavenly places*, Eph. 2: 6. The spirits of just men already made perfect, are of the same corporation with the innumerable company of angels, Heb. 12: 22, 23. Man, in his creation, was *made a little lower than the angels*; (Ps. 8: 5.) but, in his complete redemption and renovation, will be as the angels; pure and spiritual as the angels, knowing and loving as they, ever praising God, like them and with them. The bodies of the saints shall be raised incorruptible and glorious, like the uncompounded vehicles of those pure and holy spirits, (1 Cor. 15: 42, &c.) swift and strong like them. We

should therefore desire and endeavor to do the will of God now, as the angels do it in heaven because we hope shortly to be like the angels who always behold our Father's face. He saith nothing of the state of the wicked in the resurrection; but, by consequence, they shall be like the devils, whose lusts they have done.

IV. Christ's argument to confirm this great truth of the resurrection and a future state. Now observe,

1. Whence He fetched his argument—from the Scripture; that is the great magazine, or armory, whence we may be furnished with spiritual weapons, offensive and defensive. *It is written*, is Goliath's sword. *Have ye not read that which was spoken to you by God?* Note, (1.) What the Scripture speaks; God speaks. (2.) What was spoken to Moses, was spoken to us; it was spoken and *written for our learning*. (3.) It concerns us to read and hear what God hath spoken, because it is spoken to us. It was spoken to you Jews, in the first place, for to them were committed the oracles of God. The argument is fetched from the books of Moses, because the Sadducees received them only, as some think, or, however, them chiefly, for canonical Scriptures. The latter prophets have more express proofs of a future state than the law of Moses has; which supposes the immortality of the soul and a future state, but yet contains no express revelation of it; because much of that law was peculiar to that people, and the more express revelation of a future state was reserved for the latter days; but our Savior finds a very solid argument for the resurrection, even in the writings of Moses. Much scripture-treasures under ground, that must be digged for.

2. What his argument was, v. 32. This was not an express proof, in *so many words*; and yet it was really a conclusive argument. Consequences from Scripture, if rightly deduced, must be received as Scripture; for it was written for those that have the use of reason.

Now the drift of the argument is to prove,

(1.) That there is a future state, in which the righteous shall be truly and constantly happy. This is proved from what God said; *I am the God of Israel*.

[1.] For God to be any one's God, supposes some very extraordinary privilege and happiness; unless we know fully what God is, we cannot comprehend the riches of that word, *I will be to thee a God*, that is, a Benefactor like Myself. The God of Israel is a God to Israel, (1 Chron. 17: 24.) a spiritual Benefactor; for He is the Father of spirits; an all-sufficient Benefactor; a God that is enough, an eternal Benefactor; for He is Himself an everlasting God, and will be to those that are in covenant with Him an everlasting Good. This great word God had often said to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and it was intended as a recompense for their singular faith and obedience, in quitting their country at God's call. The Jews had a profound veneration for those three patriarchs, and would extend the promise God made them to the uttermost.

[2.] It is manifest that these good men had no such extraordinary happiness in this life, as might look any thing like the accomplishment of so great a word as that. They were strangers in the land of promise, wandering, pinched with famine; they had not a foot of ground of their own but a burying-place, which directed them to look for something beyond this life. In present enjoyments, they came far short of their neighbors that were strangers to this cove-

(28.) *Whose wife shall she be, &c.* The rabbins have said, that if a woman have two husbands in this world, she shall have the first only restored to her in the world to come.

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(29.) When the Pharisees asked Him respecting matters which regarded this life, Christ did not choose to concern Himself with what did not belong to Him. Now, however, when the Sadducees moved this question concerning eternal life, He felt that, having come from the bosom of his Father, to bring life and immortality to light by the Gospel, He ought no longer to be silent.

WETSTEIN.

(30.) Enthusiasm is wont to expatiate on the condition of the departed, above all other subjects, and with a wild particularity. The Koran is half made up of such descriptions. How different is the solemn reserve here maintained by our Savior!

PALEY.

Similar to the angels, in not being subject to the appetites of the body, and in being immortal. The nature of those future bodies is described in 1 Cor. 15: 42, seq. From this comparison, therefore, if man beings restored to life, with angels, it does not follow that we shall be destitute of bodies; for what Jesus says is not to be referred to the mind.

Maimonides, in BLOOMFIELD.

BLOOMFIELD

31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, I have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,

32 I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? I God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.

33 And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at his doctrine.

[Practical Observations.]

34 ¶ But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

1. 9:13. 12:3, 7. 21:16, 42.
2. Ex. 3:6, 16. Act. 7:32. Heb. 11:16.
3. 1:10. 1:28, 27. Luke 20:37, 38.
4. 22: 7:28, 29. Mark 6:3. Luke 2:
47. 4:22. 20:39, 40. John 7:48.
5. Mark 12:28.
6. 12:14. 52:5-5. Is. 41:5-7. John
11:47-50. Acts 5:24-28. 19:23-
28. 21:28-30.

likewise of God's relation to him as his God; but, at that time, when God spake to Moses, He was the God of Abraham, and therefore Abraham must be then alive; which proves the immortality of the soul in a state of bliss; and that, by consequence, infers the resurrection of the body; for there is such an inclination in the human soul to its body, as would make a final and eternal separation inconsistent with the bliss of those that have God for their God. The Sadducees' notion was, that the union between body and soul is so close, that, when the body dies, the soul dies with it. Now on the same hypothesis, if the soul lives, as it certainly does, the body must, some time or other, live with it. And besides, the Lord is for the body, it is an essential part of the man; there is a covenant with the dust, which will be remembered, otherwise the man would not be happy. The charge which the dying patriarchs gave concerning their bones, and that in faith, was an evidence that they had some expectation of the resurrection of their bodies. But this doctrine was reserved for a more full revelation after the resurrection of Christ, who was the first fruits of them that slept.

Lastly, We have the issue of this dispute. The Sadducees were put to silence, (v. 34.) and so put to shame. They thought, by their subtlety, to put Christ to shame, when they were preparing shame for themselves. But the

nant. If no happiness had been reserved for them on the other side death, that melancholy word of poor Jacob's, when he was old, (Gen. 47: 9.) *Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been*, would have been an eternal reproach to the wisdom, goodness, and faithfulness of that God who had so often called Himself the God of Jacob.

[3.] Therefore there must certainly be a future state, in which, as God will ever live to be eternally rewarding, so Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob will ever live to be eternally rewarded. That of the apostle, (Heb. 11: 16.) is a key to this argument; *Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; because He has provided for them a city, a heavenly city; implying, that if He had not provided so well for them in the other world, considering how they sped in this, He would have been ashamed to have called Himself their God; but now He is not, having done that for them which answers it in its true intent and full extent.*

(2.) That the soul is immortal, and the body shall rise again, to be united; if the former point be gained, these will follow; but they are likewise proved by considering the time when God spake this; it was to Moses at the bush, long after Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were dead and buried; and yet God saith not, *'I was; or have been; but I am, the God of Abraham.* Now, God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. He is a living God, and communicates vital influence to those to whom He is a God. If, when Abraham died, there had been an end of him, there had been an end him as his God; but, at that time, when God

multitude were astonished at his doctrine, v. 33. 1. Because it was new to them. See to what a sad pass the exposition of Scripture was come among them, when people were astonished at it as a miracle, to fear the fundamental promise applied to this great truth; they had sorry scribes, or this had been no news to them. 2. Because it had something in it very good and great. Truth often shows the brighter, and is the more admired, for its being opposed. Observe, Many gainsayers are silenced, and many hearers astonished, without being savingly converted; yet, even in the silence and astonishment of unsanctified souls, God magnifies his law, magnifies his Gospel, and makes both honorable.

V. 34—40. Here is a discourse which Christ had with a Pharisee lawyer, about the great commandment of the law. Observe,

I. The combination of the Pharisees against Christ, v. 34. They heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, though their understandings were not opened; and they were gathered together, not to thank Him, as they ought to have done, but to tempt Him, in hopes to get the reputation of puzzling Him who had puzzled the Sadducees. They were more vexed that Christ was honored, than pleased that the Sadducees were silenced; being more concerned for their own tyranny and traditions, than for the doctrine of the resurrection and a future state. Note, It is an instance of Pharisaical envy and malice, to be displeased at the maintaining of a confessed truth, when it is done by those we do not like; to sacrifice a public good to private piques and prejudices. Blessed Paul was otherwise minded, Phil. 1: 13.

II. The lawyer's question, which he put to Christ. The lawyers were students and teachers of the law of Moses, as the scribes were; but some think they dealt more in practical questions than the scribes; they studied and professed casuistical divinity. This lawyer asked Him a question, tempting Him; not with any design to ensnare Him, as appears by Mark's relation of the story, where we find that this was he to whom Christ said, *Thou art not far from the kingdom of God*, (Mark 12: 34.) but only to see what He would say, and to draw on discourse with Him, to satisfy his own and his friends' curiosity.

1. The question was *'Laster which is the great commandment of the law?'* A needless question, when all the things of God's law are

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 23—33. Those who are most proud of their reasoning powers, and most disposed to boast of them, often form the grossest conceptions of spiritual things; so that they are commonly fighting with shadows, when they start objections to the doctrines of the Gospel. If they understood the plain meaning of the Scriptures, or had any proper ideas of the divine power, they must be convinced of the futility of their own arguments; which seldom need any other answer, than a fair statement of the truths which they oppose. Indeed all our errors result from 'not knowing the Scriptures and the power of God'; and this should excite us to redouble our diligence in searching the sacred oracles, and our earnestness in prayer to be led into a right understanding of them.—We are continually reminded what a dying world this is. The history of men in general resembles the account here given of one family: death removes one after another, and so terminates all their carnal hopes, joys, cares, sorrows, and connections. (P. O. Gen. 5.) How wretched then must they be, who have all 'their good things' here, and

can expect nothing but misery beyond the grave! And how grovelling the soul of an infidel, who can be content, and even hope, to die like a beast, for the sake of living 'without God in the world!' Yet, even of this forlorn hope, he will most certainly be disappointed.—The whole Scripture 'warns us to flee from the wrath to come,' and calls us to expect a far better and happier state; and the thoughts of that felicity will be the more welcome to the spiritual man, (however comfortable in his relative connections,) from the consideration, that there will be 'neither marrying nor giving in marriage.' For he aspires to a higher state of existence, and emulates the worship, the holiness, and the blessedness of angels; compared with which, the most rational and honorable of earthly comforts are mean and of no estimation. In that happy world, the God of Abraham will be the portion of all his believing children; and they will, in body and soul, live to Him and with Him, and have the unalloyed fruition of that 'fulness of joy which is at his right hand forevermore.'

SCOTT.

(31.) 'The Sadducees are thought by many to have agreed with the Samaritans in rejecting all the other parts of holy Scripture but the five books of Moses, which is particularly contended for by Serrarius; but this is questioned by Drusius and Reland, and Scaliger maintains the contrary, and shows that the passage from Josephus, which is commonly alleged in defence of that opinion, only relates to their rejecting all traditions. And, indeed, as it appears from the Talmud that other parts of the Old Testament were often quoted by the Sadducees, and arguments were brought from thence against them by the Pharisees to prove the resurrection, which they endeavored only to evade, without disputing the authority of the texts, though they were not taken from the law of Moses, it is more reasonable to believe, with Dr. Lightfoot, that they did not reject the other books of the Old Testament, but only gave a preference to the five books of Moses; and, laying it down as a principle, to receive nothing as an article of faith which could not be proved from the law. If any thing was urged from other parts of Scripture that could not be deduced from Moses, they would explain it in some other way. And this might be sufficient to induce our Lord to bring his argument to prove the resurrection from what Moses had said, and

to confirm it by that part of Scripture which was most regarded by the Sadducees, and upon which they grounded their objections to it.'

DODDIDGE.

'Our Lord, by confuting them from these books, proved the second part of his assertion, 'Ye are ignorant of these very Scriptures, which ye profess to hold sacred.''

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(32.) 'The manner of argumentation, pursued by Jesus, is quite agreeable to the usual method of the Jewish doctors, who used slightly to allude to passages of Scriptures, and left their auditor to find the consequence of any proposition, omitting in argumentation the transitions and conclusions, the use and applications.'

KUINOEL, in BLOOMFIELD.

(33.) 'The multitude were astonished.' 'God uses the infidelity of some for the edification of others. Had no false doctrine been broached in the world, we had not seen the full evidence of the true teaching. The opposition of deists and infidels has only served to raise up men in behalf of the truth of God, who not only have refuted them, but shown at the same time, that the sacred testimonies are infinitely amiable to themselves, and worthy of all acceptance. Truth always gains by being opposed.'

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35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

37 Jesus said unto him, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

¶ Luke 7:30, 10:25, 11:45, 46, 52, 14:3, Tit. 3:13.
¶ 18, Mark 10:2.
¶ 5:19, 20, 15:6, 23:23, 24, Hos. 8:12.
¶ Mark 12:28-33, Luke 11:42.
¶ Deut. 6:5, 10:12, 30:6, Mark 12:29, 30, 33, Luke 10:27, Rom. 8:7, Heb. 10:16, 17, 1 John 5:2-5.
¶ 18:19, Lev. 19:18, Mark 12:31, Luke 10:27, 38, Rom. 13:9, 10, Gal. 5:14, Jam. 2:8.
¶ Luke 10:29-37, Rom. 15:2, Gal. 6:10.
¶ 7:12, John 1:17, Rom. 3:19-21, 1 Tim. 1:5, 1 John 4:7-11, 1:9-21.

begins in the affections, and nothing in religion is done right, that is not done there first. Love is the leading affection, and therefore to be first secured and garrisoned for. Man is a creature cut out for love; thus then is the law written in the heart, that it is a law of love. Love is a short and sweet word; and if that be the fulfilling of the law, surely the yoke of the command is very easy. Love is the rest and satisfaction of the soul; if we walk in this good old way, we shall find rest.

(2.) The love of God is the first and great commandment of all, the summary of all the commands of the first table. The proper act of love being complacency, good is the proper object of it. Now God, being good infinitely, originally and eternally, is to be loved in the first place, and nothing loved beside Him, but what is loved for Him. Love is the first and great thing that God demands from us, and therefore the first and great thing that we should devote to Him. Now here we are directed,

[1.] To love God as ours; *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God* as thine. The first commandment is, *Thou shalt have no other god*; which implies, that we must have Him for our God, and that will engage our love to Him. Those that made the sun and moon their gods, loved them, Jer. 8:2. Judges 18:24. To love God as ours, is to love Him because He is ours, our Creator, Owner, and Ruler, and to conduct ourselves to Him as ours, with obedience to Him, and dependence on Him. We must love God as reconciled to us; and made ours by covenant; that is the foundation of this, *Thy God*.

Verse 35.

One of them which was a lawyer.] 'Lawyers and scribes appear to be synonymous terms, importing one and the same order of men. Compare Mark 12:28. Dr. Macknight conjectures the scribes to have been the public expounders of the law, and that the lawyers studied in private; perhaps, as Dr. Lardner supposes, they taught in the schools.'

HORNE.

'It seems very probable to me that the discourse here, and that in Mark 12:28-34 are not of the same individual. The lawyer here was from among the Pharisees, who came to Jesus for the purpose of ensnaring Him. But the scribe in Mark came of his own accord, after Jesus' dispute with the Sadducees, and therefore with upright intentions, knowing that He had answered the Sadducees well.'

ROSENEM.

Verse 36.

'It seems to have been a maxim among the scribes and Pharisees, that such a multitude of precepts as the law contained, was too great for any one to observe; and therefore all that could be required was, that each should select to himself one or two great and important duties, on account of which, if invariably observed, his transgressions in other respects would be overlooked.'

PORREUS.

Which is the great commandment, &c.] 'This was a point that was often disputed by the Jewish doctors; some contending for the law of circumcision, others for that of sacrifices, and others for that of the phylacteries. Christ quotes in answer a passage written in those very phylacteries.'

DODDRIDGE.

Verse 37.

The quotation of this first and great commandment varies considerably from the Septuagint in words, but accords in meaning with [29]

great things, (Hos. 8:12.) and the wisdom from above, (Mal. 2:9.) hath respect to them all. Yet, it is true, there are some commands more extensive and inclusive than others. Our Savior speaks of the weightier matters of the law, ch. 23:23.

2. The design was to try, not so much his knowledge as his judgment. It was a question disputed among the critics in the law. Some would have the law of circumcision to be the great commandment; others, the law of the Sabbath, others the law of sacrifices; now they would try what Christ said to this question, hoping to incense the people against Him, if He should not answer according to the vulgar opinion; and if He should magnify one commandment, they would reflect on Him as vilifying the rest. The question was harmless enough, and it appears by comparing Luke 10:27, 28, that it was an adjudged point among the lawyers, that the love of God and our neighbor is the great commandment, and the sum of all the rest, and Christ had there approved it; so that the putting of it to Him, here, seems rather a scornful design to catechize Him as a child, than a spiteful design to dispute with Him as an adversary.

III. Christ's answer to this question. It is no disparagement to great men to answer plain questions. Observe,

1. Which these great commandments are; (p. 37-39.) not the judicial laws, those could not be the greatest, now that the people of the Jews, to whom they pertained, were so little; not the ceremonial laws, those could not be the greatest, now that they were waxen old, and were ready to vanish away; nor any particular moral precept; but the love of God and our neighbor, the spring and foundation of all the rest, which (these being supposed) will follow of course.

(1.) All the law is fulfilled in one word, and that is love. See Rom. 13:10. All obedience

[2.] To love Him with all our heart, and soul, and mind. Some make these to signify one and the same thing, to love Him with all our powers; others distinguish them; the heart, soul, and mind, are the will, affections, and understanding; or the vital, sensitive, and intellectual faculties. Our love of God must be sincere, not in word and tongue only, as theirs is, who say they love Him, but their hearts are not with Him. It must be a strong love, more in the most intense degree; as we must prize Him, so we must love Him, with all that is within us, Ps. 103:1. It must be a singular and superlative love; we must love Him more than anything else; this way the stream of our affections must entirely run. The heart must be united to love God, in opposition to a divided heart. All our love is too little to bestow on Him, and therefore all the powers of the soul must be engaged for Him, and carried out toward Him. This is the first and great commandment; for obedience to this, is the spring of obedience to all the rest; which is then only acceptable, when it flows from love.

(3.) To love our neighbor as ourselves, is the second great commandment; p. 39. It is like unto that first, inclusive of all the precepts of the second table, as that is of the first. It is like it, for it is founded on it, and flows from it; and a right love to our brother, whom we have seen, is both an instance and an evidence of our love to God, whom we have not seen, 1 John 4:20.

[1.] It is implied that we do, and should, love ourselves. There is a self-love which is corrupt, and the root of the greatest sins, and it must be put off and mortified; but there is a self-love which is natural, and the rule of the greatest duty, and it must be preserved and sanctified. We must love ourselves, that is, have a due regard to the dignity of our own natures, and a due concern for the welfare of our own souls and bodies.

[2.] It is prescribed, that we love our neighbor as ourselves. We must honor and esteem all men, and wrong and injure none; must have a good will to all, and good wishes for all, and, as we have opportunity, do good to all. We must love our neighbor as ourselves, as truly and sincerely and in the same instances; nay, in many cases we must deny ourselves for the good of our neighbor, make ourselves servants to the true welfare of others, and be willing to spend and be spent for them, to lay down our lives for the brethren.

2. Observe what the weight and greatness of these commandments is; p. 40. This is the sum and substance of all those precepts relating to practical religion, which were written in men's hearts by nature, revived by Moses, and enforced by the prophets. All hang on the law of love; take away this, and all falls to the ground, and comes to nothing. Rituals and ceremonies must give way to these, as must all spiritual gifts, for love is the more excellent way. This is the spirit of the law, which animates it, the cement of the law, which joins it; it is the root

it; as it does with the original Hebrew. Indeed, as the passage is found but once in the Old Testament, and is referred to repeatedly in the New, with variation in words, but not in meaning, it is most manifest that no quotation was intended. The Septuagint seems to be a more literal translation of the Hebrew, than any of those found in the New Testament.

SCOTT.

That is, thou shalt employ every propensity, sentiment and faculty in such a way, as that the love of God shall be the supreme rule and regulator of all thy affections, feelings and intellectual powers; thou shalt make religion the governing principle of thy whole animal, moral and intellectual nature.

EN.

Verse 39.

'If the worst, the most despicable, and most disobliging of our enemies must be by the Christian be thus loved, and therefore owned as a neighbor, what man can be excluded from that appellation? Wholly (See Luke 10:25-37.)

SCOTT.

Verse 40.

The law, duly interpreted, required this love of God and man; the prophets enforced the law, and foretold 'Christ, as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth: and the whole of revelation is intended to bring fallen sinners, by regeneration, repentance, and faith in the Savior, to love God supremely, and man unfeignedly and fervently on earth, and perfectly forever in heaven. The whole system of revelation will generally be comprehended, in proportion as these two commandments are understood: perhaps every error in religion may well be said to depend on them. (Marg. Ref.—Note, to 23:20-25, p. 23-25.)

SCOTT.

4 ¶ While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

42 Saying, "What think ye of Christ? whose Son is he? They say unto him, "The Son of David.

43 He saith unto them, How then doth David ^bin Spirit call him Lord, saying,

44 The ^cLORD said unto ^amy Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool?

45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son?

46 And ^eno man was able to answer him a word, ^bneither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions.

1:54. Mark 12:25. Luke 20:41. 2:4-6. 14:33. 16:13-17. John 1:49. 6:68, 69. 20:28. Phil 2:9-11. 3:7-10. Col. 3:1. 1 Pet. 2:4-7. Rev. 5:12-14.

a 11. 21:9. Is. 7:13, 14. 9:6, 7. 11:1-4. Jer. 23:5. Ez. 34:23, 24. Am. 9:11. Luke 1:69, 70. John 7:41, 42. Acts 13:22-23.

b 2 Sam. 23:2. Mark 12:36. Luke 2:26, 27. Acts 1:16. 2:30, 31. Heb. 3:7. 1 Pet. 1:21. Rev. 4:2.

c Ps. 110:1. Acts 2:34. 1 Cor. 15:25. Heb. 1:13, 14. 10:12, 13. 12:2.

d John 20:28. 1 Cor. 12. Phil. 3:8. e Gen. 3:15. Ps. 2:8, 9. 21:9. Is. 63:1-6. Luke 19:27. Rev. 19:19-21. 20:1-3, 11-15.

f John 8:58. Rom. 1:3, 4. 9:5. Phil. 2:6-8. Tim. 5:16. Heb. 2:14. Rev. 22:16.

g 21:27. Luke 32:15. Is. 50:2-9. John 13:17. 14:8. John 8:7-9. Acts 4:14.

h Mark 12:34. Luke 30:40.

'By the first direction, Christ suggested the only motive which acts equally and uniformly, in sight and out of sight, in familiar occurrences, and under pressing temptations; and in the second, He corrected that which, of all tendencies in the human character, stands most in need of correction, selfishness, or a contempt of other men's convenience and satisfaction. And the precepts are our Savior's own, for though they existed before in the code of Moses, yet He singled them out from that voluminous institution, and stated them as the great rule and sum of all the others—the great rule and principle of conduct to all.'

PALEY.

Verses 41-46.

If Jesse had lived till David was established in the kingdom, David might, in some good sense, have been called Jesse's lord, though Jesse's son: but could David, with any propriety, be called the lord of Boaz, Judah, Abraham, Noah, and Adam, his progenitors? Yet this would be quite as reasonable, as to call the Messiah David's Lord, if He had no existence till a thousand years after David's death; and who, even if existing at that time, could be called David's lord, at the summit of his exaltation, as the Lord's anointed king of Israel, except the Lord of all? The modern Jews, unable to answer this argument, affirm that David did not write Psalm 110: but those to whom Jesus spoke did not attempt such an evasion, or they would not have been silent. This question, which is equally interesting to modern Socinians, the Pharisees could not answer; and they were so baffled in their endeavors to entangle Jesus, that they never after dared to put another question to Him. (Marg. Ref. g, h.) Nor can any man solve the difficulty proposed, in a satisfactory manner, except he allow the Messiah to be truly and properly 'the Son of God'; and, equally with the Father, 'David's Lord' at the time when his progenitor thus spake of Him; and that the Lord's anointed king of Israel, except the Lord of all, and the Son of God, manifested 'in the flesh'; and in this sense 'the Son of man,' and 'the Son of David.' To this the Old Testament had given abundant testimony: but the Pharisees, blinded by carnal prejudices, overlooked all that had been said of Immanuel, and of 'the mighty God' becoming 'a Child born,' and expected a mere man and a temporal deliverer, instead of a divine and spiritual Redeemer. (Marg. Ref.—See also Mark 12:35-37. Luke 20:41-44.)

SCOTT.

(41.) 'Jesus asks this question to show the people, that the source of all the captious questions of his opponents, was their ignorance of the prophecies relative to the Messiah.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(42.) 'The Son of David.' This was a thing well known among the Jews, and universally acknowledged: (see John 7:42.) and is a most powerful proof against them that the Messiah is come. Their families are now so perfectly confounded, that they cannot trace back any of

and spring of all other duties, the compendium of the whole Bible, not only of the law and the prophets, but of the Gospel too, only supposing this love to be the fruit of faith, and that we love God in Christ, and our neighbor for his sake. All hangs on these two commandments, as the effect doth both on its efficient and on its final cause; for the fulfilling of the law is love, (Rom. 13:10.) and the end of the law is love, 1 Tim. 1:5. The law of love is the nail in the sure place, fastened by the masters of assemblies, (Eccl. 12:11.) on which is hung all the glory of the law and the prophets, (Isa. 22:24.) a nail that shall never be drawn; for on this nail 'all the glory of the new Jerusalem shall eternally hang. Love never faileth.' Into these two great commandments, therefore, let our hearts be delivered as into a mould; in the defence and evidence of these, let us spend our zeal, and not in notions, names, and strifes of words, as if those were the mighty things on which the law and the prophets hung, and to them the love of God and our neighbor must be sacrificed; but to the commanding power of these, let every thing else be made to bow.

Christ to the Pharisees, when together, v. 41. He did not take some one of them apart from the rest; but, to shame them the more, He took them all together, when they were in confederacy and consult against Him. Note, God baffles his enemies when they most strengthen themselves; Associate yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces, Isa. 3:9, 10. Now here,

I. Christ proposes a question to them, which they could easily answer; v. 42. 'Whose son do you expect the Messiah to be?' To this they could readily reply, The Son of David. It was the common periphrasis of the Messiah; they called Him the Son of David. So the scribes, who expounded the Scripture, had taught them, from Ps. 89:35, 36, 'I will not lie unto David; his seed shall endure forever, (Isa. 9:7.) upon the throne of David. And Isa. 11:1. A rod out of the stem of Jesse. The covenant of royalty made with David, was a figure of the covenant of redemption made with Christ, who, as David, was made King with an oath, and was first humbled and then advanced. If Christ was the Son of David, He was really and truly man. Israel said, We have ten parts

in David; and Judah said, He is our bone and our flesh; what part have we then in the Son of David, who took our nature upon Him?

What think ye of Christ? They had put questions to Him out of the law; but his question to them is on the promise. Many are so full of the law, that they forget Christ, as if their duties would save them without his merit and grace. It concerns each of us seriously to ask ourselves, What think we of Christ? Some think not of Him at all, He is not in all, not in any of their thoughts; some think meanly, and some think hardly, of Him; but, to them that believe—He is precious; and how precious then are the thoughts of Him! While the daughters of Jerusalem think no more of Christ than of another beloved, the spouse thinks of Him as the Chief of ten thousands.

II. He starts a difficulty on their answer which they could not easily solve, v. 43-45. Many think they have knowledge enough to be proud of, who show they have ignorance enough to be ashamed of. The objection Christ raised was, If Christ be David's son, how then doth David, in spirit, call Him Lord? He did not thereby design to ensnare them, as they did Him, but to instruct them in a truth they were loath to believe—that the expected Messiah is God.

1. It is easy to see that David calls Christ Lord, and this, being divinely inspired, for it was the Spirit of the Lord that spake by him, 2 Sam. 23:1, 2. David was one of those holy men that spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, especially in calling Christ Lord; for it was then, as it is still, (1 Cor. 12:3.) no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now, to prove that David, in spirit, called Christ Lord, He quotes Ps. 110:1, which psalm the scribes themselves understood of Christ; of Him it is certain, the prophet there speaks, and of no other man; and it is a prophetic summary of the doctrine of Christ; it describes Him executing the offices of a Prophet, Priest, and King, both in his humiliation and also in his exaltation.

Christ quotes the whole verse, which shows the Redeemer in his exaltation; (1.) Sitting at the right hand of God. His sitting denotes both rest and rule; his sitting at God's right hand, superlative honor and sovereign power.

their genealogies with any degree of certainty, nor have they been capable of ascertaining the different families of their tribes, for more than sixteen hundred years. Why then should the Spirit of prophecy assert so often, and in such express terms, that Jesus was to come from the family of David, if He should only make his appearance when the public registers were all demolished, and it would be impossible to ascertain the family? Is it not evident that God designed, that the Messiah should come at a time when the public genealogies might be expected, to prove that it was He who was prophesied of, and that no other was to be expected? The evangelists Matthew and Luke were so fully convinced of the conclusiveness of this proof, that they had recourse to the public registers; and thus proved to the Jews, from their own records, that Jesus was born of the family mentioned by the prophets. Nor do we find that a scribe, Pharisee, or any other, ever attempted to invalidate this proof, though it would have essentially subverted their cause, could they have done it. But as this has not been done, we may fairly conclude it was impossible to do it.

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(43.) How then does David in the Spirit. This, by the Holy Spirit. Our Lord, we see, always takes it for granted in his arguments with the Jews, that the writers of the Old Testament were under such an extraordinary guidance of the Holy Spirit, as to express themselves with the strictest propriety on all occasions. Compare John 10:33. And I look on this as no contemptible argument for the inspiration of the New Testament: for we can never think the apostles of Christ to have been less assisted by the Divine Spirit in their writings, when they were in other respects so much more endowed with it.

DODDRIIDGE.

(44.) 'From this quotation of Ps. 110:1, these two points are clear—that David wrote it by the inspiration of God; and that it is a prophetic declaration of the Messiah.'

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'The passage is expressly referred to the Messiah by several of the Jews. Rabbi Joden (on Ps. 18:35) says, "In the world to come, the holy blessed God shall cause the King Messiah to sit at his right hand, as it is written, The Lord said to my Lord," &c. So Rabbi Moses Hadarson, (on Gen. 15:1.) and Saadiah Gaon, (on Dan. 7:13.) say, "This is Messiah our righteousness, as it is written, The Lord said to my Lord, &c."'

GREENFIELD.

Under thy feet.] 'The image is taken from the ancient custom of putting the foot on the neck of a subjugated adversary.' [Compare Josh. 10:24.]

BLOOMFIELD.

(45.) 'This verse implies both the existence of David in a future state, and the authority of the Messiah over that invisible world, into which that prince was removed by death: else, how great a Monarch soever the Messiah might have been, He could not have been properly

CHAP. XXIII.

Jesus exhorts the people to regard the scriptural instructions of the Scribes and Pharisees; but not to follow their bad example, and especially not to imitate their ambition, 1-12. He denounces divers woes on them, for their blindness, hypocrisy, and iniquity, 13-36. He predicts the destruction of Jerusalem, and the calamities of the Jews for their atrocious crimes, 37-39.

THEN spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

15-10, &c. Mark 7:14. Luke 12:1, 57, 26-43.

calls the Messiah *his Lord*; *The Lord*, Jehovah, said unto my Lord. This intimates that, in expounding Scripture, we must notice, not only the main scope and sense of a verse, but the words and phrases, by which the Spirit chooses to express that sense, which have often a very useful and instructive significance. Here is a good note from that word, *My Lord*.

2. It is not so easy for those who believe not the Godhead of the Messiah, to clear this from an absurdity, if Christ be David's Son. It is incongruous for the father to speak of his son, the predecessor of his successor, as his Lord. If David call him Lord, that is laid down, (p. 45.) as the more evident truth; for whatever is said of Christ's humanity and humiliation, must be construed and understood in consistency with the truth of his divine nature and dominion. We must hold this fast, that He is David's Lord, and by that explain his being David's Son. The seeming differences of Scripture, as here, may not only be accommodated, but contribute to the beauty and harmony of the whole. *The differences observable in the Scriptures are of a friendly kind; would to God that our differences were of the same kind!*

III. We have here the success of this gentle trial which Christ made of the Pharisees' knowledge, in two things.

1. It puzzled them; v. 46. Either it was their ignorance, that they did not know, or their impety that they would not own, the Messiah to be God; which truth was the only key to unlock this difficulty. What those rabbies could not then answer, blessed be God, the plainest Christian can now account for; that Christ, as God, was David's Lord; and Christ, as man, was David's Son. This He did not now Himself explain, but reserved it till the proof of it was completed by his resurrection: but we have it fully explained by Him in his glory; (Rev. 22: 16.) *I am the root and offspring of David*. Christ, as God, was David's root; Christ, as man, was David's offspring. If we hold not fast this truth, that Jesus Christ is over all, God blessed forever, we run ourselves into inextricable difficulties. And well might David, his remote ancestor, call Him Lord, when Mary, his immediate mother, after she had conceived Him, called Him Lord, and God, her Savior, Luke 1: 46, 47.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 34-46. While Pharisees, Sadducees, and scribes are perplexing each other, and trying to disconcert us, by curious questions and frivolous disputes, let us remember that the love of God with all our heart, and the love of our neighbor as ourselves, though the ministration of condemnation to the sinner, is our perfect rule of obedience; and that 'Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth.' It behoves us, sinners, therefore, above all things, to inquire seriously, what we think of Christ. What are our views of his person, his priesthood, his atonement, his intercession, his power, truth, and love? Is He altogether glorious in our eyes, and precious to our hearts? Do we trust in Him as the incarnate Son of God, and submit to Him as the anointed King of Israel? Do we seek Him in all his characters and offices? Do we desire that 'all his enemies should be put under his feet,' without excepting any of our own sinful passions? Do we deem Him entitled to all the service and honor which we can possibly render Him, and far more? According to a man's practical

judgment in these matters, are his state and character; and his conduct will eventually prove this. His judgment of the perfections, law, and government of God, of sin and holiness, of this world and the next, of himself, his life past, and present, and of his heart, in short, of every object around him, will be influenced by his view of this subject. The temper of his mind will be humble, meek, patient, compassionate, thankful, spiritual, or the contrary, according to his thoughts of Christ, and his whole conduct will be habitually influenced by it. May Christ then be our Joy, our Confidence, our All; may we daily see more of his glory and preciousness, and experience more of his love; and may we daily be more conformed to his image, and devoted to his service. Then our words and works will confute and shame those who would falsely accuse us, and effectually silence the malicious objections and subtle insinuations of Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians, however distinguished. SCOTT.

called David's Lord, any more than Julius Cæsar could have been called the lord of Romulus, because he reigned in Rome seven hundred years after his death, and vastly extended the bounds of that empire which Romulus founded.

(46.) We see here three kinds of enemies and false accusers of Christ and his disciples; and three sorts of accusations brought against them. 1. The *Herodians*, or politicians and courtiers, who form their questions and accusations on the rights of the prince, and matters of state, v. 16. 2. The *Sadducees*, or libertines, who found their upon matters of religion and articles of faith, which they did not credit, v. 23. 3. The *Pharisees*, lawyers, scribes or *Karaites*, hypocritical pretenders to devotion, who found theirs on that vital and practical godliness, (the love of God and man) of which they wished themselves to be thought the sole proprietors, v. 36.

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Thus our Lord put the four great seats of the Jews to silence in one day, successively. The Herodians and Pharisees wanted to know whether they might lawfully pay tribute to Cæsar or not. The Sadducees were inquisitive to know whose wife the woman should be of the seven brethren, in the resurrection, who had her to wife. Then comes the scribe, (or *Karaites*), who owned no authority beyond or besides the written law and asked which was the great commandment in the law. This lawyer deserves to be mentioned here, because he not only acquiesced in, but commended what our Lord had said in answer to his ques-

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2. It silenced them, and all others that sough occasion against Him. Note, God will glorify Himself in silencing many, whom He will not glorify Himself in saving. Many are convinced, that are not converted, by the Word. Had these been converted, they would have asked Him more questions, especially that great question, *What must we do to be saved?* But, since they could not gain their point, they would have no more to do with Him. But thus all that strive with their Master shall be convinced, as these Pharisees and lawyers here were, of the inequality of the match.

CHAP. XXIII. v. 1-12. In the foregoing chapter, we had our Savior's discourses with the scribes and Pharisees. Here we have his discourse concerning them, or rather against them.

We no where find Christ so severe on any sort of people, as on the scribes and Pharisees; who, though made up of pride, worldliness and tyranny, under a cloak and pretence of religion, were yet the idols and darlings of the people, who thought, if but two men went to heaven, one would be a Pharisee. Now Christ directs his discourse, here, to the multitude and to his disciples, (v. 1.) to rectify their mistakes concerning these men, and so to take off the prejudice which some of the multitude had conceived against Him and his doctrine, because it was opposed by those men of their church, who called themselves the people's guides. Note, It is good to know the true characters of men, that we may not be imposed upon by great names, titles and pretensions. People must be told of the wolves, (Acts 20: 29, 30.) the dogs, (Phil. 3: 3.) the deceitful workers, (2 Cor. 11: 13.) that they may know where to stand on their guard. And not only the mixed multitude, but even the disciples need these cautions; for good men are apt to have their eyes dazzled with worldly pomp.

Now, in this discourse,

I. Christ allows their office as expositors of the law; *The scribes and Pharisees*, (that is, the whole sanhedrim, called scribes, and some of whom were Pharisees,) they sit in Moses' seat; (v. 2.) the law of Moses being the muni-

'Thus did the wisdom of God triumph over the cunning of men. From this time we do not find that our Lord was any more troubled with their captious questions: their whole stock, it appears, was expended, and now they coolly deliberate on the most effectual way to get Him murdered. He that resists the truth of God, is capable of effecting the worst purpose of Satan.'

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NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII. v. 1-4. It is probable, that our Lord continued still at the temple, and addressed Himself to the disciples and the multitude, in the presence of 'the scribes and Pharisees.' They 'sat in Moses' seat,' for they explained the law of Moses, and enforced obedience to it. Whatever therefore, from this source, they inculcated, the people ought to attend to and practise. This limitation must be admitted; otherwise their traditions and perversions of the law, and even their opposition to Christ, would have been included; for they taught these to the people. He evidently meant, that whatever they enforced or required, according to the law of Moses, or the writings of the prophets, was to be obeyed. No argument can fairly be formed on this, to prove that men are obliged to follow the instructions, or obey the commands, of any teachers or rulers, further than they consist with the Word of God: (See 15: 1-14. 16: 5-12.) yet, on the other hand the bad character of rulers and teachers should not induce men to disobey their lawful commands, or to reject their scriptural instructions. SCOTT.

2 Saying, 'The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works; ' for they say, and do not.

4 For ' they bind heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

e Neh. 8:4-8. Mal. 2:7. Mark 12:38. Luke 20:46.
f 15:2-9. Ex. 18:19, 20, 23. Deut. 4:5. 17:17. 17:22. 2 Chr. 30:12.
g 11:5-27. Ro. 13:1.
h 21:30. Ps. 50:1-20. Rom. 2:19-24. 2 Tim. 3:5. Tit. 1:16.
i 53. 11:28-30. Luke 11:46. Acts 15:10, 28. Gal. 6:13. Rev. 2:24, 25.

not therefore pull down Moses' seat, because scribes and Pharisees have got possession of it; rather than so, let both grow together until the harvest, ch. 13:30.

Hence He infers, (v. 3.) *Whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.* The scribes and Pharisees made it their business to study the Scripture, and were well acquainted with the language, history, and customs of it, and its style and phraseology. Now Christ would have the people to make use of the helps they gave them for the understanding of the Scripture, and do accordingly. As long as their comments did illustrate the text, and not pervert it; did make plain, and not make void the commandment of God; so far they must be observed and obeyed, but with caution, and a judgment of discretion. Note, We must not think the worse of good truths for their being preached by bad ministers; nor of good laws for their being executed by bad magistrates. Though it is most desirable to have our food brought by angels, yet, if God sends it us by ravens, if it be good and wholesome, we must take it, and thank God for it. Our Lord Jesus premiseth this, to prevent the cavil which some would be apt to make at his following discourse; as if, by condemning the scribes and Pharisees, He designed to bring the law of Moses into contempt, and to draw people off from it; whereas He came not to destroy, but to fulfil. Note, It is wisdom to obviate the exceptions which may be taken at just reports, especially when there is occasion to distinguish between officers and their offices, that the ministry be not blamed, when the ministers are.

II. He condemns the men. He had ordered the multitude to do as they taught, but here He annexeth a caution to beware of their leave; *Do not ye after their works.* Their traditions were their works, their idols, the works of their fancy. Or, 'Do not according to their example.' Doctrines and practices are spirits that must be tried, and, where there is occasion, carefully separated and distinguished; and, as we must not swallow corrupt doctrines for the sake of any laudable practices of those that teach them, so we must not imitate any bad examples for the sake of the plausible doctrines of those that give them. The scribes and Pharisees boasted as much of the goodness of their works, as of the orthodoxy of their teaching, and hoped to be justified by them; (Luke 18:11, 12.) and yet these things which they valued themselves so much upon, were an abomination in the sight of God.

Our Savior specifies particulars wherein we must not imitate them. In general, they are charged with hypocrisy, dissimulation, or double dealing, in religion; a crime which can be judged of by God only, who searcheth the heart; though nothing is more displeasing to Him, for He desireth truth.

Four things are here charged on them.

1. Their saying and doing were two things.

They teach out of the law that which is good, but their conversation gives them the lie; and they seem to have found another way to heaven for themselves than what they show to others. See this illustrated and charged on them, Rom. 2:17-24. Those are of all sinners most inexcusable, that allow themselves in the sins they condemn in others, or in worse. This especially touches wicked ministers, who will be sure to have their portion appointed them with hypocrites; (ch. 24:51.) for what greater hypocrisy can there be, than to press that on others to be believed and done, which they themselves disbelieve and disobey; pulling down in their practice, what they build

up in their preaching; when in the pulpit, preaching so well, that it is pity they should ever come out; but when out, living so ill, that it is pity they should ever come in; like bells, that call others to church, but hang out of themselves; or guide posts, that point the way to others, but stand still themselves. Such will be judged out of their own mouths.

It is applicable to all others that say, and do not; that make a plausible profession of religion, but do not live up to that profession; that make fair promises, but do not perform the promises; are full of good discourse, but empty of good works; great talkers, but little doers. *Jacob's voice, but Esau's hands—mere sound.* They speak fair, *I go, sir*; but there is no trusting them, for there are seven abominations in the heart.

2. They were very severe in what they imposed on others, (v. 4.) not only insisting on the minute circumstances of the law, which is called a yoke, (Acts 15:10.) and pressing the observation of them with more strictness and severity than God Himself did, but by adding to his words, and imposing their own inventions and traditions, under the highest penalties. They loved to show their authority, and say to men's souls, *Now down, that we may go over*; witness their many additions to the law of the fourth commandment, by which they made the Sabbath a burden on men's shoulders, though designed to be the joy of their hearts. Thus, with force and cruelty, did those shepherds rule the flock, as of old. Ezek. 34:4.

But see their hypocrisy; v. 4. (1.) They pressed on the people a strictness in religion, which they themselves would not be bound by; secretly transgressing their own traditions which they publicly enforced: popish priests, that fast with wine and sweetmeats, while they force the people to fast with bread and water, and decline the penances they enjoin the laity. (2.) They would not ease the people in these things, nor put a finger to lighten their burthen, when they saw it pinched them. They could find out loose constructions to put upon God's law, and dispense with that, but would not bate any thing of their own impositions, nor dispense with a failure in the least punctilio of them. How contrary to this was the practice of Christ's apostles, who would allow to others that use of Christian liberty, which, for the peace and edification of the church, they would deny themselves! They would lay no other burden (than necessary things, and those easy, Acts 15:23.) How carefully doth Paul spare those to whom he writes! 1 Cor. 7:28. 9:12.

3. They were all for show, and nothing for substance, in religion; v. 5. We must do such good works, that they who see them may glorify God; but we must not proclaim our good works with design that others may see them, and glorify us; which our Savior here chargeth on the Pharisees. All their end was to be praised of men, and therefore all their endeavor was to be seen of men, to make a fair show in the flesh. In those duties of religion which fall under the eye of men, none were so constant and abundant as they; but in what lies between God and their souls in retirement, they desire to be excused. The form of godliness will get them a name to live, and therefore they trouble themselves with the power of it. He that doth all to be seen, doth nothing to the purpose.

He specifies two things which they did to be seen of men. (1.) They made 'read their phylacteries. These were little scrolls of paper or parchment, wherein were written, with great care, these four paragraphs of the law, Exod. 13:2-11

(2.) Scribes.] The word scribe in general signifies any one conversant about books and writings; and is sometimes put for a civil officer, whose business probably resembled that of a secretary of state: 2 Sam. 8:17. 1 Kings 4:3. 2 Kings 19:2.) [and secretary of war, 2 Kings 25:19. Is. 33:18 Jennings.] at other times it is used at large for a man of learning and ability, [as sage, *Sauve*, 1 Chron. 27:22. Jer. 36:26. Ezra 7:6. Matt. 23:34. 1 Cor. 1:20. But as biblical learning was most esteemed among the Jews, the word in the N. T. seems to be chiefly appropriated to those that applied themselves to the study of the law; perhaps including those whose business it was to transcribe it. [Some of these were probably under-secretaries and

clerks to the principal scribes, or even common scribes. Jennings.] Of these the public professors, who read lectures upon the law, were called doctors or lawyers; and, probably, they who were invested with some public offices in the sanhedrim or other courts, scribes of the people. Matt. 2:4. But that the scribes were Karaites or exarites, who rejected those traditions which the Pharisees inculcated, seems from this text especially, utterly improbable. (The Karaites Jews call the rabbinical Jews "bridled asses," says Calmet, because they wear the tephillin. Note, v. 5.) Our Lord commonly joins them with the Pharisees, and probably most of them were of that sect. Jennings

5 But 'all their works they do for to be seen of men: & they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

f 6:1,2,5,16. 2 Kings 10:16. Luke 16:15. 24:47. 21:1. John 5:44. 7:15. 12:43. Phil. 1:15. 2:3. 2 Thea. 24.
g Deut. 6:8. Prov. 2:3. 6:21-23.
h 9:20. No. 1. 15:38-39. Deut. 22:22.
i 20:21. -rov. 25:6,7. Mark 12:38.
j 32. Luke 11:43. 14:7-11. 20:46.
k John 8. Rom. 12:10. Jam. 2:1-4. 3 John 9.

ears, or fringes, on their garments, (Num. 15:38.) to distinguish them from other nations, and to be a memorandum to them of their being a peculiar people; the Pharisees were not content to have these borders like other people's, but they must be larger than ordinary, as if they were more religious than others. Those who thus enlarge their phylacteries, and the borders of their garments, while their hearts are straitened, and destitute of the love of God and their neighbor, though they may now deceive others, will in the end deceive themselves.

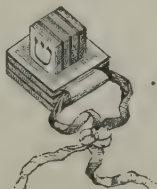
4. They much affected pre-eminence and superiority, and prided themselves extremely in it. Pride was the darling, reigning sin of the Pharisees, the sin that did most easily beset them, and which our Lord Jesus takes all occasions to witness against.

(1.) He describes their pride, v. 6, 7. They courted and coveted,

(1.) Places of honor and respect. In all public appearances, they expected, and had, to their hearts' delight, the uppermost rooms, and the chief seats. They took place of all others, and precedence was adjudged to them, as persons of the greatest note and merit; and it is easy to imagine what a complacency they took in it: they loved to have the pre-eminence, 3 John 9. It is not possessing the uppermost rooms, nor sitting in the chief seats, that is condemned, (somebody must sit uppermost,) but loving them; for men to value such a little piece of ceremony as sitting highest, going first, taking the wall, or the better hand, and to value themselves on it, to seek it, and to feel resentment if they have it not; what is that but making an idol of ourselves, and then falling down and worshipping it?—the worst kind of idolatry! It is bad any where, but especially in the synagogues. There to seek honor to ourselves, where we appear in order to give glory to God, and to humble ourselves before Him, is indeed to mock God, instead of serving Him. David would willingly lie at the threshold in God's house; so far was he from coveting the chief seat there, Ps. 84:10. It savors much of pride and hypocrisy, when people do not care for going to church, unless they can look fine, and make a figure there.

Verse 5.

[Phylacteries.] Or, 'preservatives,' being superstitiously considered as amulets, to protect from dangers. SCOTT. 'They were prepared with a great multitude of ceremonies to be used specially in their prayers.' HAMMOND. 'An original phylactery,' says Dr. A. Clarke, 'was now before me. It is a piece of fine vellum, about eighteen inches long, and an inch and a quarter broad. It is divided into four unequal compartments: in the first is written the first ten verses of Ex. 13; in the second, from the eleventh to the sixteenth verse inclusive; in the third, from the fourth to the ninth verse, inclusive, of Deut. 6, beginning, *Hear, O Israel*, &c.; in the fourth, from the thirteenth to the twenty-first verse, inclusive, of Deut. 11.' 'Thoses for the arms were two rolls of parchment (written in square letters) rolled up to a point, and inclosed in a case of black calf-skin. They then were put upon a square bit of the same leather, but something stiffer, whence hung a thong of the same, of about a finger's breadth, and a cubit and a half long. These rolls were placed at the bending of the left arm, and after the thong had made a little knot in the form of the letter yodh, it was wound about the arm, in a spiral line, which ended at the top of the middle finger. This was called the *Teffila* of the hand.



The *Teffila* of the hand was formed of four pieces of parchment tanned together, and a square formed of them, on which a Hebrew letter *yodh*, is written: then a little square of hard calf-skin is put at the top this square is placed on the middle of the forehead, and the strings

Exod. 13:11-16. Deut. 6:4-9. Deut. 11:13-21. These were sewn up in leather, and worn on their foreheads and left arms. It was a tradition of the elders, which had reference to Exod. 13:9. and Prov. 7:3. where the expressions seem to be figurative, intimating no more than that we should bear the things of God in our minds as carefully, as if we had them bound between our eyes. Now the Pharisees made broad these phylacteries, that they might be thought more holy, and strict, and zealous for the law, than others. It is a gracious ambition, to covet to be really more holy than others, but it is a proud ambition to covet to appear so. It is good to excel in real piety, but not to exceed in outward shows; for overdoing is justly suspected of design, Prov. 27:14. It is the guise of hypocrisy, to make more ado than needs in external services, more than is needful either to prove, or to improve, the good affections and dispositions of the soul.

(2.) They enlarged the borders of their garments. God appointed the Jews to make for-

[2.] Titles of honor and respect. They loved greetings in the markets, love to have people put off their hats to them, and show them respect when they met them in the streets. Oh how it pleased them, and fed their vain humors to be pointed out, and to have it said, *This is he*, to have way made for them in the crowd of market-people. 'Stand off, here is a Pharisee coming!' and to be complimented with the high and pompous title of *Rabbi, Rabbi!* They took as great a satisfaction in it as Nebuchadnezzar did in his palace, when he said, *Is not this great Babylon that I have built?* The greetings would not have done them half so much good, if they had not been in the markets, where every body might see how much they were respected, and how high they stood in the opinion of the people. It was but a little before Christ's time, that the Jewish teachers, the masters of Israel, had assumed the titles of *Rabbi, Rab* and *Rabban*, which signifies *great, or much*; and was construed as *Doctor, or My lord*. And they laid such a stress on it, that they gave it for a maxim, that 'he who salutes his teacher, and does not call him *Rabbi*, provokes the Divine Majesty to depart from Israel.' So much religion did they place in that which was but a piece of good manners! For him that is taught in the Word, to give respect to him that teaches, is commendable enough in him that it gives it; but for him that teaches, to love it, and demand it, and affect it, to be puffed up with it, and to be displeased if it be omitted, is sinful and abominable; and, instead of teaching, he has need to learn the first lesson in the school of Christ, which is, humility.

(2.) He cautions his disciples against being herein like them; herein they must not do after their works; 'But be not ye called so, for ye shall not be of such a spirit,' v. 8, &c.

Here is, [1.] A prohibition of pride. They are forbidden,

First, To challenge titles of honor and dominion to themselves, v. 8, 10. It is repeated twice; *Be not called Rabbi, neither be ye called Master or Guide*; not that it is unlawful to give civil respect to those that are over us in the Lord; nay, it is an instance of the honor and esteem which it is our duty to show them; but, 1. Christ's ministers must not affect the name of *Rabbi*, or *Master*, by way of distinction from other people; it is not agreeable to the simplicity of the Gospel, for them to covet or accept of the honor which they have that are in kings' pa-

being girt about the head, make a knot in the form of another Hebrew letter; they are then brought before, and fall on the breast."

CAULMET

'The Targum on Cant. 8:3. introduceth the Jews speaking thus: "I am chosen above all people, because I bind my frontals to my head and my left hand; and my parchment is fixed to the right side of my gate or door, so that a third part of it comes up to my bed, that the evil spirits may not hurt me."'

WHITBY, in SCOTT.

'Our Lord gives us the distinguishing characteristics of all false teachers. They live not according to the truths they preach. They are severe to others, point out the narrowest road to heaven, and walk in the broad road themselves. They affect to appear righteous, and are strict observers of certain rites, &c. while destitute of the power of godliness. They love worldly entertainments, go to feasts wherever they are asked, and seek church preferments. They love and seek public respect and high titles; salutations in the market place, (for they are seldom in their studies,) and to be called of men, *rabbi—eminent teacher*, though they have no title to it, either from the excellence or fruit of their teaching. When these marks are found in a man who professes to be a minister of Christ, charity itself will assert, *he is a thief, and a robber—he has climbed over the wall of the sheepfold, or broken it down in order to get in.*'

DR. A. CLARKE.

Verse 6.

[Rooms.] 'Rather, places. The middle couch, which lay along the upper end of the table, and was therefore accounted the most honorable place, and that which the Pharisees are said particularly to have affected, was distinguished by the name, "the first couch," or "seat," and so it is considered at our public entertainments now.'

CAMPBELL.

[Chief seats.] 'The doctors had seats by themselves, with their backs towards the pulpit in which the law was read, and their faces towards the people.'

DODDRIDGE.

'According to the most ancient custom among the Jews, those who had no office in the synagogue, sat in the order of age. But, in many places, it came to be the practice, at length, that they who had acquired some reputation for learning, should occupy a more honorable seat as here. And there are extant in the books of the Hebrews, &c. several rules on this subject, from which it appears that the doctors of the law ranked the same as the Pharisees.'

ROBINSON

7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.'

[Practical Observations.]

S But 'be not ye called Rabbi: for 'one is your Master, even Christ; and 'all ye are brethren.

9 And 'call 'to man your father upon the earth; 'for one is your Father, which is in heaven.

1 John 1:38,49. 3:26. 6:25. 20:16.
10. 2 Cor. 1:24. 4:5. Jam. 5:1. 1 Pet. 5:3.
10:25. 17:5. 28:49. John 13:13,14. Rom. 14:9,10. 1 Cor. 1:12,13. 3:8.
1 Luke 22:32. Eph. 3:15. Col. 1:1,2. Rev. 1:9. 19:14. 22:29.
2 Kings 2:12. 2:21. 19:14. John 3:21. 2:22. Acts 22:1. 1 Cor. 4:15. 1 Tim. 5:1,2. Heb. 12:9.
6:8,9,32. Mal. 1:8. Rom. 8:14-17. 2 Cor. 6:18. 1 John 3:1.

but their brethren; yea, and we are all younger brethren, otherwise the eldest might claim an excellency of dignity and power, Gen. 49: 3. But, to preclude that, Christ Himself is the first-born among many brethren, Rom. 8: 29. Ye are brethren, as ye are all disciples of the same Master. If we are all brethren, we must not be many masters, James 3: 1.

Secondly, They are forbidden to ascribe such titles to others; (v. 9.) constitute no man the father of your religion, that is, the founder, author, director, and governor of it. The fathers of our flesh must be called fathers, and as such

laces. 2. They must not assume the authority and dominion implied in those names; they must not be magisterial, nor domineer over their brethren, or over God's heritage, as if they had dominion over the faith of Christians: what they received of the Lord, all must receive from them; but in other things they must not make their opinions and wills a rule and standard to all other people, to be admitted with an implicit obedience. The reasons for this prohibition are,

(1.) *One is your Master, even Christ, v. 8, 10.* Note, [1.] Christ is our Master, our Teacher, our Guide. Mr. George Herbert, when he named the name of Christ, usually added, *My Master.* [2.] Ministers are but ushers, Christ only is the Master, that great Prophet whom we must hear, and be ruled and overruled by; whose word must be an oracle and a law to us. And if He only be our Master, then for his ministers to set up for dictators, and to pretend to a supremacy, and an infallibility, is a daring usurpation of that honor of Christ which He will not give to another.

(2.) *All ye are brethren.* Ministers are brethren, not only to one another, but to the people; and therefore it ill becomes them to be masters, when there are none for them to master it over

we must give them reverence: but God only must be owned as the Father of our spirits, Heb. 12: 9. We are born again to the spiritual and divine life, not of corruptible seed, but by the word of God; not of the will of the flesh, or the will of man, but of God. Now the will of man, not being the rise of our religion, must not be the rule of it. We must not swear to the dictates of any creature, not the wisest or best; nor pin our faith on any man's sleeve, because we know not, whether he will carry it. Paul calls himself a father to those whose conversion he had been an instrument of; (1 Cor. 4: 15. Phil. 10.) but he pretends to no dominion over them, and uses that title to denote, not authority, but affection; therefore he calls them not his obliged, but his beloved sons, 1 Cor. 4: 14.

The reason given is, *One is your Father, who is in heaven.* God is our Father, and is all in all in our religion. He is the Fountain of it, and its Founder; the Life of it, and its Lord. He is the Father of all lights, (Jam. 1: 17.) that one Father, from whom all things, and we in Him, Eph. 4: 6. Christ having taught us to say, *Our Father, who art in heaven, let us call no man father upon earth;* for man on earth is a sinful worm; there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and smeth not, and therefore no one is fit to be called Father.

[2.] Here is a precept of humility and mutual subjection, (v. 11.) *He that is greatest among you, shall be your servant;* not only call himself so, (we know of one that styles himself servant of the servants of God, but acts as rabbi, and father, and master, and [has been impiously called] the Lord our God,) but be so. Take it

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-7. It has been too common in every age, for those who fill the highest stations in the visible church, to be strangers and enemies to 'the power of godliness,' and to be entirely the reverse of those to whom they seem to succeed in their sacred functions. We must not, however, think the worse of the truths and ordinances of God on that account, but must 'observe and do' whatever they scripturally command and teach. Yet we should guard against their perversions, and not imitate any part of their ungodly conduct; for, loose as the principles of such men are, their lives are still worse; and they are far from practising even the scanty measure of duty which they teach. Indeed, if the human inventions and uncommanded austerities which some of this description enforce, with great rigor, on men's consciences, be taken into the account, they may be said to 'bind up heavy burdens, and grievous to be borne, and to lay them on men's shoulders;' but their negli-

gence and self-indulgence often evidence, that they disdain to 'move them with one of their fingers;' except as ambition and vain-glory lead them to observe some worthless externals 'to be seen of men,' and to amuse and dazzle superficial observers, with a splendid superstition, and thus to render appearances of piety subservient to their love of homage, distinction, and authority. How contrary is all this to the humble, unassuming, and self-abasing spirit of Christianity!—He who is consistently a disciple of Christ, courts privacy for his duties, and delights most to commune with his Father in secret: he steps forth into notoriety with reluctance; and instead of 'loving,' is pained by, 'the chief places,' either in private houses, or in public congregations; as he is disposed to make choice of the lowest place, and 'in honor to prefer others to himself.'

SCOTT.

Verse 7.

Rabbi.] A word importing the variety of their learning, and the greatness of their religious knowledge. 'It signifies one that is above his fellows, and is as good as a number of them; and we may see by the repeating of it, how proud a title it was.' The learned Jews said, the words of the rabbins were the words of God.

Nitch, in BLOOMFIELD. 'Simon, the son of Hillel, who succeeded his father as president of the sanhedrin about the time of the birth of Christ, was the first Jewish rabbi. The title was generally conferred with a great deal of ceremony. When a person had gone through the schools, and was thought worthy of the degree of rabbi, he was first placed in a chair, a little raised above the company; then were delivered to him a key as a symbol of the power and authority conferred upon him, to teach others, and a table book as a symbol of diligence in his studies. The key he afterward wore as a badge of honor, and when he died was buried with him. On the same occasion also, the imposition of hands, by the delegates of the sanhedrin was practised. After this, they proclaimed his title.'

WITSIUS and ALTING.

Verse 8-10.

Rabbi.] Even the apostles, though the most eminent persons who ever appeared on earth, were commanded not to accept of the title 'rabbi,' because they had one Master, even Christ Himself; and they were all brethren, without any pre-eminence or authority over each other; being all equally dependent on their common Lord, and equally subject to Him. This is twice repeated, perhaps to show how prone men are to forget it. And, as the disciples were not to affect worldly authority or worldly honor, they were required not to 'call any man our father upon earth.' This cannot be supposed to forbid men from expressing respect, affection, and gratitude to those, who have been instrumental to their spiritual good; any more than to interfere with the duties of children to their parents. If these rules were proper for the apostles and primitive disciples, they must be still more suitable to the case of all other teachers and Christians: and it is evident, that they were given with a prophetic view to the enormous abuses and fatal effects, which have since been witnessed in the Christian church, from the ambition and lust of dominion in some, and the abject submission of others, to their assumed authority and pretensions to infallibility. The astonishing degree to which these evils have proceeded, especially in the church of Rome, the exorbitant claims, and high-sounding titles of ecclesiastics, and servile submission of the people, are well known to

but the same heaven still works; and many things are found, among different bodies of Protestant Christians, which by no means comport with these rules, and which do not at all savor of the simplicity and humility of the Gospel, or consist with believing and obeying no teacher, church-ruler, learned doctor, or head of a sect, in the least matter, further than he evidently declares the truth and will of Christ, our common Teacher and Lord. It is observable, that assuming priests of all religions have been ambitious of being called 'father,' or of some such name; importing rather what they are conscious they ought to have been, than what they really were.

SCOTT.

(8.) Rabbi, Master.] 'Many MSS., with most of the ancient versions, sustain teacher or master, rather than guide or leader; it is approved by the most eminent critics, and appears to be genuine, as it exactly answers to the title rabbi, which the Jewish doctors ostentatiously assumed, claiming excessive deference and regard, and requiring to be implicitly followed in the traditions which they taught.'

GREENFIELD.

Even Christ.] 'Griesbach has left this out of the text, because it is wanting in many of the most excellent MSS., versions, or fathers Mill and Bengel approve of the omission. It might have been brought into this verse, from verse 10. Our Lord probably alludes to Is. 54: 13. All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

All ye are brethren.] 'It is observable that not one word is said about Peter's authority over the rest, either here or on the application made by Zebedee's children; though, had such an authority been intended, nothing could have been more natural or necessary, than it had been mentioned and adjusted to.'

DODDRIE.

(9.) Father.] 'Our Lord probably alludes to the "father" of the sanhedrin, who was the next after the president. See on ch. 20: 21. By which He gives his disciples to understand, that He would have no second, after Himself, established in his church, of which He alone was the head; and that a perfect equality must subsist among them.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'They who followed any rabbi as chief of a school, &c. were called sons of the sage, and they themselves called him 'my father.' Therefore, in the sense in which the Jews called these wise men fathers, Christians ought to call no one father. In another sense, however they are rightly called fathers, who have, as Paul says, (1 Cor. 4: 16. begotten us in the Gospel.' BLOOMFIELD, after GROTIUS and ROSEN-
'By "calling a man father" here, our Savior plainly means having regard to human authority in matters of faith, or in doctrines of religion.

Dr. S. CLARKE.

10 Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, even Christ.

11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

[Practical Observations.]

13 ¶ But woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

q 26:27, 28. Mark 10:43, 44. Luke 22: 26, 27. John 13:14, 15. 1 Cor. 9:19. 2 Cor. 4:5. 11:23. Gal. 5:13. Phil. 2:5-8.
e 5:3. 18:4. John 22:29. Ps. 138:6. Prov. 15:33. 16:18, 19. 29:23. 1a. 37:15. Dan. 4:37. Luke 13:32. 14: 11. 18:14. Jam. 4:6. 1 Pet. 5:5. 14:15, 27:29. 1a. 9:14, 15. 33:14. Zech. 11:17. Luke 11:43, 44. 11:52, 53. Luke 11:52. John 7:46- 9:22, 24, 34. Acts 4:17, 18. 5:28. 40. 8:1. 13:8. 1 Thes. 2:15, 16. 2 Tim. 9:8. 4:15.

with the holy God, and respected by all wise and good men; of being qualified for, and often called out to, the most honorable services; for honor is like the shadow, which flees from those that pursue it, and grasp at it, but follows nose that flee from it. However, in the other world, they that have humbled themselves in contrition for their sin, in compliance with their God, and in condescension to their brethren, shall be exalted to inherit the throne of glory; shall be not only owned, but crowned, before angels and men.

v 19-33. In these verses we have eight woes against the scribes and Pharisees, like so many claps of thunder, or flashes of lightning, from mount Sinai. The Gospel has its woes as well as the law, and gospel-curses are of all others the heaviest. These woes are the more remarkable, not only because of the authority, but because of the meekness and gentleness, of Him that denounced them. He came to bless, and loved to bless; but, if his wrath be kindled, there is surely a cause: and who shall entreat for him the great Intercessor pleads against? A woe from Christ is a remediless woe.

This is here the burthen of the song, and it is a heavy burthen, v. 13. Note, 1. The scribes and Pharisees were hypocrites; this is the sum of their character; it was the leaven which gave the relish to all they said and did. A hypocrite is a stage-player in religion; (that is the primary signification of

as a promise: *He shall be accounted greatest, and stand highest in the favor of God, that is most submissive and serviceable:* or as a precept; 'He that is advanced to any place of dignity, trust, and honor in the church, let him be your servant.' Paul, who knew his privilege as well as duty, though free from all, yet made himself servant of all; (1 Cor. 9:19.) and our Master frequently pressed it on his disciples, to be humble and self-denying, mild and condescending, and to abound in all offices of Christian love, though mean, and to the meanest; and of this He hath set us an example.

[3.] Here is a good reason for all this, v. 12. Consider,

First, The punishment intended for the proud; *Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased.* If God give them repentance, they will be abased in their own eyes, and abhor themselves; if they repent not, sooner or later they will be abased before the world. Nebuchadnezzar, in the height of his pride, was turned to be a fellow-commoner with the beasts; Herod, to be a feast for the worms; and Babylon, that sat as a queen, to be the scorn of nations. God made the proud and aspiring priests contemptible and base, (Mal. 2:9.) and the lying prophet to be the tail, Isa. 9:15. But, if proud men have not marks of humiliation set on them in this world, there is a day coming, when they shall rise to everlasting shame and contempt; (Dan. 12:2.) so plentifully will He reward the proud doer! Ps. 31:23.

Secondly, The preferment intended for the humble; *He that shall humble himself shall be exalted.* Humility is that ornament which is in the sight of God of great price. In this world the humble have the honor of being accepted

the word;) he personates, or acts, the part of one that he neither is, nor may be; or, perhaps would be. 2. Hypocrites are in a woful state; while they live, their religion is vain; when they die, their ruin is great.

Now each of these woes has a reason annexed to it, containing a separate crime, and justifying the judgment of Christ in pronouncing them.

1. These scribes and Pharisees were sworn enemies to the Gospel of Christ, and consequently to the salvation of the souls of men (v. 13.) they did all they could to keep people from believing in Christ, and so entering into his kingdom. Christ came to open the kingdom of heaven, that is, to open a new and living way into it. Now the scribes and Pharisees ought to have contributed their assistance here in, by opening those scriptures of the Old Testament, which pointed to the Messiah and his kingdom, in their true proper sense; they that undertook to expound Moses and the prophets, should have showed the people how they testified of Christ; that Daniel's weeks were expiring, the sceptre was departed from Judah, and therefore now was the time for the Messiah's appearing. Thus they might have facilitated that great work, and helped thousands to heaven; but, instead of this, they shut up the kingdom, and made it their business to press the ceremonial law, which was now in the vanishing, to suppress the prophecies, which were now in the accomplishing, and to heget and nourish prejudices against Christ and his doctrine.

2. They would not go in themselves; *Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on Him?* John 7: 48. No; they were too proud to stoop to his meanness, too formal to be reconciled to his plainness; they did not like a religion which insisted so much on humility, self-denial, contempt of the world, and spiritual worship. Repentance was the door of admission into this kingdom, and nothing could be more disagreeable to the Pharisees, who justified and admired themselves, than to repent, that is, accuse, abase, and abhor themselves; therefore they went not in themselves; but that was not all.

3. They would not suffer them that were entering, to go in. It is bad to keep away from Christ ourselves, but worse to keep others from Him; yet that is commonly the way of hypocrites: they do not love that any should go beyond them in religion, or be better than they. Their not going in themselves, was a hindrance to many; for, they having so great an

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 8-12. Who, that looks around him into the visible church, could think that a lowly, unassuming spirit was essential to Christianity, and expressly required by its divine Author? Who could suppose, that his disciples were forbidden to be called Rabbi, or Master? to assume, or to receive, high-sounding pompous titles, to usurp dominion over others, or submit to such usurpation? It is evident that there are many antichrists, and some measure of this spirit prevails perhaps in every religious society. Much remains to be done, in all parts of the church, before Christians will live together as brethren, the children of one common Father, the disciples and subjects of one common Lord and Master, in the equality of genuine humble love and harmony, and before no one aspires to be greatest. In any other way, than by becoming the servant of the whole fraternity for Jesus' sake. (Note, 2 Cor. 4: 5, 6.) We have all very much to learn, and to unlearn, before we can be completely qualified to form a part of such a company: while we therefore lament the horrid evils, the spiritual tyranny and abject slavery, the damnable heresies, superstitions, idolatries, persecutions, and bloody contentions, which have resulted from

the spirit of pride and ambition, let us watch against it in our own hearts: let us aspire after no honor, except that of being accepted by our Master; of being useful to our brethren; and known as 'the children of our Father which is in heaven.' But let us by no means 'call any man Father upon earth,' or so attach ourselves to any leader or teacher, as to be more properly his disciples, than the disciples of Christ; and let us believe and follow no man, any further than he follows our common Lord. This will consist with the deepest humility; which must never be lost sight of, if we would be truly wise, honorable, or happy. In proportion as men endeavor to exalt themselves into consequence and eminence, the Lord will surely abase them; He will save none who continue proud and ambitious; He seldom employs self-sufficient instruments; He will expose to disgrace even his own servants, if they begin to be aspiring, and desirous of honor from men; but He will exalt to real eminence, usefulness, and felicity, those who are abased as sinners in his sight, and are humbly willing to be despised of men, and to attend to the meanest service of love to his people.

SCOTT.

(10.) *Masters.* [i.e. *Rather, leaders.* God is in all these respects jealous of his honor. To Him alone it belongs to guide and lead his church, as well as to govern and defend it.]

DR. A. CLARKE

'It is feigned that when king Jehoshaphat saw a disciple of the wise man, he rose up out of his throne, and embraced him, and said, *Wise man, Father! Lord, Rabbi! Master, Master!* the three titles which our Lord condemns, and which the Jewish doctors greatly affected.'

LIGHTFOOT,

verse 13.

Our Lord next addressed the scribes and Pharisees, who stood around Him: and, without any reserve, in the character of their heart-searching Judge, He exposed their hypocrisy and wickedness, and denounced [232]

sentence against them, as He had before done, in some measure, on another occasion. Luke 11: 39-52.

SCOTT.

'Jesus here and in the next verse, apostrophizes the scribes, as if present, though indeed they were not so, as appears from verse 1. The commentators justly remark on the force and beauty of the figure as it is here used.'

'Literally, "shut the door in the face of." *Blasphemy.* That is, by suppressing the true interpretation, and the daily inclusion of passages which treat of repentance, faith and unfeigned charity, omitting which, you bestow all your pains on urging rites and external ceremonies, thereby obstructing the approach of those who are willing to enter.'

ROSEN.

4 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves.

16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, 'Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

interest in the people, multitudes rejected the Gospel only because their leaders did; but, besides that, they opposed both Christ's entertainment of sinners, (Luke 7: 39.) and sinners' entertaining of Christ; they perverted His doctrine, confronted his miracles, quarrelled with his disciples, and represented Him, and his institutes and economy, in the most disingenuous, disadvantageous, manner imaginable; they excommunicated those that confessed Him, and used all their wit and power to serve their malice against Him; thus they shut up the kingdom of heaven, so that they who would enter into it must suffer violence, (ch. 11: 12.) and press into it, (Luke 16: 16.) through a crowd of scribes and Pharisees, and all the obstructions and difficulties they could contrive to lay in their way. How well is it for us, that our salvation is not intrusted in the hands of any man, or company of men; if it were, we were undone. They that shut out of the church, would shut out of heaven; but the malice of men cannot make the promise of God to his chosen of no effect; blessed be God, it cannot.

II. They made religion and the form of godliness, a cloak to their covetousness, v. 14. Observe here,

1. Their wicked practices; they devoured widows' houses, either by quartering themselves on them for entertainment; or by getting to be the trustees of their estates, which they could make an easy prey of. The chief thing they aimed at, was, to enrich themselves; all considerations of justice therefore were laid aside, and even widows' houses were sacrificed. Widows are of the weaker sex in its weakest state, easily imposed on; and therefore they fastened on them, to make a prey of. They devoured those whom, by the law of God, they were particularly obliged to protect, patronize, and relieve. There is a woe in the Old Testament.

2. That those that made widows their prey; (Isa. 10: 1, 2.) and Christ here seconded it with his woe. God is the Judge of the widows; they are his peculiar care. He establisheth their border, (Prov. 15: 25.) and espouseth their cause: (Exod. 22: 22, 23.) yet these were they whose houses the Pharisees devoured, which denotes not only covetousness, but cruelty, Mic. 3: 3. They eat the flesh, and flay the skin; and, doubtless, they did all this under color of law; for they did it so artfully, that it passed uncensured, and did not at all lessen the people's veneration for them.

3. The cloak with which they covered these wicked practices; for a pretence they made long prayers; very long indeed, the Jewish writer tells us, three hours at a time, and thrice every day, which is more than an upright soul, that makes conscience of being inward with God in the duty, dare pretend ordinarily to do. By this craft they got their wealth, and maintained their grandeur. It is not probable that these long prayers were extemporary, but rather that they were stated forms of words in use among them, which they said over by tale, as the papists drop their beads. Christ doth not here condemn long prayers, as in themselves hypocritical; nay, if there were not a great appearance of good in them, they would not have been used for a pretence; and the cloak must be very thick to cover such wicked practices. Christ himself continued all night in prayer to God [alone], and we are commanded to pray, without ceasing to soon; where there are many sins to be confessed, and many wants to pray for the supply of, and many mercies to give thanks for, there is occasion for long prayers. But the Pharisees' long prayers were made up of vain repetitions, and (which was the end of them) they were for a pretence; by them they got the reputation of pious, devout men, that loved prayer, and were the favorites of heaven; and by this mean, people were made to believe it was not possible that such men as they should cheat them; and, therefore, happy the widow that could get a Pharisee for her trustee, and guardian to her children! Thus, while they seemed to soar heavenward, on the wings of prayer, their eye, like the kite's, was all the while on their prey on the earth, some widows' house or other that lay convenient for them. Thus circumcision was a cloak of the Shechemites' covetousness, (Gen. 34: 22, 23,) the payment of a vow in Hebron the cover of Absa-

lom's rebellion, (2 Sam. 15: 7.) a fast in Jezreel must patronize Naboth's murder, and the ex-tirpation of Baal is the footstool of Jehoi's ambition. Popish priests, under pretence of long prayers for the dead, masses, and dirges, and I know not what, enrich themselves by devouring the houses of the widows and fatherless. Note, It is no new thing for the show and form of godliness to be made a cloak to the greatest enormities. But dissembled piety however it passeth now, will be reckoned for as double iniquity, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men.

3. The doom passed on them for this, Therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. (1.) There are degrees of damnation; there are some, whose sin is more inexcusable, and whose ruin will therefore be more irreparable. (2.) The pretences of religion, with which hypocrites disguise, or excuse, their sin now, will aggravate their condemnation shortly. Such is the deceitfulness of sin, that that very thing by which sinners hope to expiate and atone for their sins, will come against them, and make their sins more exceeding sinful. But it is sad for the criminal, when his plea (We have prophesied in thy name, and in thy name made long prayers,) heightens the charge against him.

III. While they were such enemies to the conversion of souls to Christianity, they were very industrious in the perversion of them to their faction, v. 15. Observe here,

1. Their industry in making proselytes; for one such, though but one, they compass sea and land, had many a cunning reach, and laid man a plot, rode and run, and sent and wrote, and labored unweariably. And what did they air at? The credit of making them proselytes and the advantage of making a prey of them when they were made. Note, (1.) The making of proselytes to the truth and serious godliness, with a good design, is a good work, well worthy of the utmost care and pains. Such is the value of souls, that nothing must be thought too much to do to save a soul. The industry of the Pharisees herein may show the negligence of many, who would be thought to act from better principles, but will be at no pains or cost to propagate the Gospel. (2.) To make a proselyte, sea and land must be compassed; all ways and means must be tried; first one and then another, all little enough; but all well paid, if the point be gained. (3.) Carnal hearts seldom shrink from the pains necessary to carry on their carnal purposes; when a proselyte is to be made to serve a turn, they will compass sea and land to make him.

2. Their impiety in abusing their proselytes when they were made; 'Ye make him the disciple of a Pharisee presently, and he sucks in all a Pharisee's notions; and so ye make him two-fold more the child of hell than yourselves.' Note, (1.) Hypocrites, while they fancy themselves heirs of heaven, are, in the judgment of Christ, children of hell. The rise of their hypocrisy is from hell, and its tendency is toward hell; that is the country they belong to, the inheritance they are heirs to; they are called children of hell, because of their rooted enmity to the kingdom of heaven, which was the principle and genius of Pharisaism. (2.) Though all that maliciously oppose the Gospel are children of hell, yet some are two-fold more so than others, more furious, and bigoted, and

Verse 14.

[Devour.] 'Devour entirely.' This was done, it should seem, (from Sct. Hieros. f. 20: 1.) partly by caballing with the children, in order to deprive the widow of a portion of her aliment; but more especially by making them devotees, and thereby readily brought under contribution; and, indeed, this would be the easier, since it has been truly observed by Jamblichus V. P. 2, "because indeed sentiments of religion are most natural to women." That this was sometimes done is plain from rabbinical writers.

BLOOMFIELD.

'The softer feelings and the religious sentiments are commonly,' it has been said 'stronger in women than in men. Females therefore become easily the favorite tools of [a seeking] priesthood.' 2 Tim. 3: 6.

Verse 15.

'Two-fold,' 'Double.' Doddridge, 'More deceitful—fraudulent.' Cygne, Dr. A. Clarke. 'The proselytes did not only disbelieve Jesus's doctrine, but were abundantly more blasphemous against

Him than the Jews themselves, endeavoring to torment and cut off the Christians wherever they could, they being in this the instruments of the scribes and Pharisees.' Bloomfield, after Justin Martyr, 'Children of hell.' 'Equivalent' to 'worthy of hell,' in phrases of this kind, as 2 Sam. 12: 5, where the phrase, translated 'shall surely die,' is in the original—'is a son of death.'

Verses 16—22.

Dur Lord had before disallowed all such oaths. they are profane in common conversation, and not solemn enough on important occasions. But He here shows, that they imply an appeal to God for the truth of what is thus declared or promised.

SCOTT.

(18.) 'The Jews divided oaths into great (such as, by God, and Corban) and small, such as, by the temple, altar, &c.' ROSENKR. 'With the former they reckoned oaths sworn by any thing offered to God, which they accounted the same as swearing by God himself. There was a superstition not dissimilar among the Persians.'

BLOOMFIELD.

7 Ye fools and blind; for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it he is *guilty.

19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?

20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

21 And whoso shall swear by the temple sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

19. Ex. 30:26-29. Num. 16:38,39. Or, debr. 15. or, bound. Ec. 29:37. 1 Kings 8:13,27. 2 Chr. 6:2. 7:2. Ps. 93:5. 132:13,14. Eph. 2:22. Col. 3:9. 5:34. Ps. 11:4. Is. 66:1. Acts 7:49. Rev. 4:2,3.

[1.] They allowed swearing by creatures, provided they were consecrated to the service of God, as the temple and the altar. But an oath is an appeal to God, and to make this appeal to any creature, is to put that creature in the place of God. See Deut. 6:13.

[2.] They distinguished between an oath by the temple, and by the gold of the temple; by the altar, and by the gift upon the altar; making the latter binding, but not the former. Here was a double wickedness; First, That there were some oaths which they dispensed with, and made light of, and reckoned a man was not bound by to assert the truth, or perform a promise. They ought not to have sworn by the temple, or the altar; but, when they had so sworn, they were taken in the words of their mouth. That doctrine cannot be of the God of truth, which gives countenance to the breach of faith, in any case whatsoever. Oaths are not to be jested with. Secondly, That they preferred the gold before the temple, and the gift before the altar, to encourage people to bring gifts to the altar, and gold to the treasurers of the temple, which they hoped to be gainers by. They who had made gold their hope, and whose eyes were blinded by gifts in secret, were great friends to the Corban; and gain being their godliness, by a thousand artifices they made religion truckle to their worldly interests. Corrupt church-guides make things to be sin or no sin, as it serves their purposes, and lay a much greater stress on that which concerns their own gain, than on that which is for God's glory and the good of souls.

(2.) He shows the folly and absurdity of this distinction; v. 17, 19. It was in the way of a necessary reproof, not an angry reproach, that Christ here called them fools. Let it suffice us, from the word of wisdom, to show the folly of sinful opinions and practices; but, for the fastening of the character on particular persons, leave that to Christ, who knows what is in man, and has forbidden us to say, *Thou fool*.

To convict them of folly, He appeals to themselves, *Whether is greater, the gold, (the golden vessels and ornaments, or the gold in the treasury,) or the temple that sanctifies the gold; the gift, or the altar that sanctifies the gift?* Any one will own, *That that, on account of which any thing is qualified in a particular way, must itself be much more qualified in the same way.* They that swear by the gold of the temple, had an eye to it as holy; but what made it holy but the holiness of the temple, to the service of which it was appropriated? And therefore the temple cannot be less holy than the gold, but must be more so, Heb. 7:7. The temple and altar were dedicated to God, fixedly, the gold and gift but secondarily. Christ is our Altar, (Heb. 13:10.) our Temple; (John 2:21.) for it is He that sanctifies all our gifts,

(18.) Perhaps the manner of swearing by other things rather than God, was introduced out of a too superstitious reverence for his name. Our Savior's decision is, that such distinctions are frivolous; and that oaths, as such, are binding, as carrying in them an appeal to God.

ADAM.

(20.) By the altar &c. 'As an oath always supposes a person

malignant. (3.) Perverted proselytes are commonly the greatest bigots; the scholars out-did their masters. [1.] In fondness of ceremony; the Pharisees themselves saw the folly of their own impositions, and in their hearts smiled at the obsequiousness of those that conformed to them; but their proselytes were eager for them. Note, Weak heads commonly admire those shows and ceremonies which wise men (however for public ends they may countenance them) cannot but think meanly of. [2.] In fury against Christianity; the proselytes readily imbibed the principles which their crafty leaders possessed them with, and so became extremely hot against the truth. The most bitter enemies the apostles met with in all places, were, the Hellenist Jews, who were mostly proselytes, Acts 13:45. 14:2, 19. 17:5. 18:6. Paul, a disciple of the Pharisees, was exceedingly mad against the Christians, (Acts 26:11.) when his master Gamaliel seems to have been more moderate.

IV. Seeking their own worldly gain and honor more than God's glory, they coined false and unwarrantable distinctions, with which they led the people into dangerous mistakes, particularly in the matter of oaths; which, as an evidence of a universal sense of religion, have been by all nations accounted sacred; (v. 16.) *Ye blind guides.* Note, 1. It is sad to think how many are under the guidance of those, who undertake to show others that way they are themselves willingly ignorant of. *His watchmen are blind;* (Isa. 56:10.) and too often the people love to have it so, and say to the seers, *See not.* But the case is bad, when the leaders of the people cause them to err, Isa. 3:16. 2. Though the condition of those whose guides are blind is very sad, yet that of the blind guides themselves is yet more sad. Christ denounces a woe to the blind guides, that have the blood of so many souls to answer for.

Now, to prove their blindness, He specifies the matter of swearing, and shows what corrupt casuists they were.

(1.) He lays down the doctrine they taught.

[1.] They allowed swearing by creatures, provided they were consecrated to the service of God, as the temple and the altar. But an oath is an appeal to God, and to make this appeal to any creature, is to put that creature in the place of God. See Deut. 6:13.

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and puts an acceptableness in them, 1 Pet. 2:5. Those that put their own works into the place of Christ's righteousness in justification, are guilty of the Pharisees' absurdity, who preferred the gift before the altar. Every true Christian is a living temple; and by virtue thereof, common things are sanctified to Him: *who the pure all things are pure,* (Tit. 1:15.) and *the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife,* 1 Cor. 7:14.

(3.) He rectifies the mistake, (v. 20-22.) by reducing all the oaths they had invented to the true intent of an oath, which is, By the name of the Lord: so that though an oath by the temple, or the altar, or heaven, be formally bad, yet they are binding. A man shall never take advantage of his own faults, Ps. 15:4.

[1.] He that swears by the altar, let him not think to shake off the obligation of it by saying, 'The altar is but wood, and stone, and brass;' for his oath shall be construed most strongly against himself; because he was culpable, and so as that the obligation of it may be preserved, the obligation being hereby strengthened rather than destroyed. And therefore an oath by the altar should be interpreted by it and by all things thereon; for the appurtenances pass with the principal. And the things thereon being offered up to God, to swear by it and them, was, in effect, to call God Himself to witness: for it was the altar of God; and he that went to that, went to God, Ps. 43:4. 26:6.

[2.] He that swears by the temple, does so, not because the temple is a fine house, but because it is the house of God, dedicated to his service: therefore he swears by it, and by Him that dwells therein; there He was pleased in a peculiar manner to manifest Himself, and give tokens of his presence; so that who swears by it, swears by Him who had said, *This is my rest, here will I dwell.* Good Christians are God's temples, and the Spirit of God dwells in them, (1 Cor. 3:16. 6:19.) and God takes what is done to them as done to Himself; he that grieves a gracious soul, grieves it, and the Spirit that dwells in it, Eph. 4:30.

[3.] If a man swears by heaven, he sins; (Job. 5:34.) yet he shall not therefore be discharged from the obligation of his oath; no, God will make him know, that the heaven he swears by is his throne; (Isa. 66:1.) and he that swears by the throne, appeals to Him that sits on it; who, as He resents the affront done to Him in the form of the oath, so He will certainly avenge the greater affront done to Him by the violation of it. Christ will not countenance the evasion of a solemn oath, though ever so plausible.

V. They were very strict and precise in the smaller matters of the law, but as careless and loose in the weightier matters, v. 23, 24. They were partial in the law, (Mal. 2:9.) would pick and choose their duty, according as they were interested or stood affected. Sincere obedience is universal, and he that from a right principle obeys any of God's precepts, will have respect to them all, Ps. 119:6. But hypocrites, who act in religion for themselves, and not for God, will do no more than may serve a turn for themselves. The partiality of the scribes and Pharisees appears here, in two instances:

1. They observed smaller duties, but omitted greater: they were very exact in paying tithes, till it came to mint, anise, and cummin their exactness in tithing of which would not cost them much, but would be cried up, and they should buy reputation cheap. The Pharisees boasted of this, *I give tithes of all that I possess,* Luke 13:12. But it is probable they had ends of their own to serve, and would find their own account in it; for the priests and Levites, to whom the tithes were paid, were in their interests, and knew how to return them

who witnesses it, and will punish perjury; whether they swore by the temple, or the gold, or by the altar, or the gifts laid on it, the oath necessarily supposed the God of the temple—the altar, and of the gift, who witnessed the oaths, and would even, in their exempt cases, punish the perjury.

Dr. G. v. 22

23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: ^m these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

k Luke 11:42.
s. J. 12:17, 22:37-40. 1 Sam. 15: 2. Prov. 21:3. Hos 6:8. Mic. 6: 5. Gal. 5:22, 23.
m. 11:20.
n. 7: 15:2-6. 19:24. 27:6-8. Luke 6:7-10. John 18:28, 40.

yet to cheat and defraud every body else, is but to mock God, and deceive ourselves. Mercy also is preferred before sacrifice, Hos. 6: 6. To feed those who made themselves fat with the offerings of the Lord, and at the same time to shut up the bowels of compassion from a brother or a sister that is naked, and destitute of daily food, to pay tithe-mint to the priest, and to deny a crumb to Lazarus, is to be open to that judgment without mercy, which is awarded to those who pretended to judgment, and showed no mercy; nor will judgment and mercy serve without faith in divine revelation; for God will be honored in his truths as well as in his laws.

2. They avoided lesser sins, but committed greater; (v. 24.) Ye blind guides; so He had called them before (v. 16.) for their corrupt teaching; here He calls them so for their corrupt living; they strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel. In their doctrine they strained at gnats, warned people against every the least violation of the tradition of the elders. In their practice they strained at gnats, as if they had a great abhorrence of sin, and were afraid of it in the least instance; but they made no difficulty of those sins which, in comparison with them, were as a camel to a gnat; when they devoured widows' houses, they did indeed swallow a camel; when they gave Judas the price of innocent blood, and yet supposed to put the returned money into the treasury; (ch. 27: 6.) when they would not go into the judgment-hall, for fear of being defiled, and yet would stand at the door, and cry out against the holy Jesus; (John 18: 28.) when they quarrelled with the disciples for eating with unwashed hands, and yet, for the filling of the Corban, taught people to break the fifth commandment, they strained at gnats, or lesser things, and yet swallowed camels. It is not the scrupling of a little sin that Christ here reproves; if it be a sin, though but a gnat, it must be strained at; but the doing of that, and then swallowing a camel. In the lesser matters of the law to be superstitious, and to be profane in the greater, is the hypocrisy here condemned.

VI. They were all for the outside, and not at all for the inside, of religion. They were more solicitous to appear pious than to be so in reality. This is illustrated by two similitudes:

1. They are compared to a vessel that is clean on the outside, but all dirt within, v. 25, 26. The Pharisees placed religion in that which at best was but a point of decency—the washing of cups, Mark 7: 4. They were in care to eat their meat in clean cups and platters, but made no conscience of getting their meat by extortion, and using it to excess. Now, what a foolish thing would it be for a man to wash only the outside of a cup, which is to be looked at, and to leave the inside dirty, which is to be used? so they do, who only avoid scandalous sins that would spoil their reputation with men, but allow

themselves in heart-wickedness, which renders them odious to the pure and holy God. In reference to this, observe,

(1.) The practice of the Pharisees; they made clean the outside. In those things which fell under the observation of their neighbors they seemed very exact, and carried on their wicked intrigues with so much artifice, that their wickedness was not suspected; people generally took them for very good men. But within, in the recesses of their hearts, and the close retirements of their lives, they were full of extortion and excess; of violence and incontinence; (so Dr. Hammond;) that is, of injustice and intemperance. Their inward part was very wickedness; (Ps. 5: 9.) and that we are really, which we are inwardly.

(2.) The rule Christ gives, in opposition to this practice, v. 26. It is addressed to the blind Pharisees. They thought themselves the *seers of the land*, but (John 9: 40.) Christ calls them blind. Note, Those are blind, in Christ's account, who, (how quick-sighted soever they are in other things) are strangers, and no enemies, to the wickedness of their own hearts. Self-ignorance is the most shameful and hurtful ignorance, Rev. 3: 17. The rule is, *Cleanse first that which is within*. Note, The principal care of every one of us should be to wash our hearts from wickedness, Jer. 4: 14. The main business of a Christian lies within, to get cleansed from the filthiness of the spirit. Corrupt affections and inclinations, the secret lusts that lurk in the soul, unseen and unobserved; those must first be mortified and subdued. Those sins must be conscientiously abstained from, which the eye of God only is a witness to, who searcheth the heart.

Observe the method prescribed; *Cleanse first that which is within*; not that only, but that first; because, if due care be taken concerning that, the outside will be clean also. External motives and inducements may keep the outside clean, while the inside is filthy; but if renewing, sanctifying grace make clean the inside, that will have an influence on the outside, for the commanding principle is within. If the heart be well kept, all is well, for out of it are the issues of life.

2. They are compared to whitened sepulchres, v. 27, 28.

(1.) Some make it refer to the custom of the Jews to whiten graves, only to mark them, especially if they were in unusual places, that people might avoid them, because of the ceremonial pollution contracted by the touch of a grave, Num. 19: 16. And it was part of the charge of the overseers of the highways, to repair that whitening when it was decayed. Sepulchres were thus made remarkable, 2 Kings 23: 16, 17. The formality of hypocrites doth but make all wise and good men the more careful to avoid them, for fear of being defiled by them. Beware of the scribes, Luke 20: 46. It rather alludes to the custom of whitening the

Verses 23, 24.

These were the most weighty requirements of the moral law, which must be obligatory under every dispensation: and if they had attended to them, it would then have been proper to observe the more minute requirements of the ritual law: (Note, Lev. 27: 30-34.) but to be exact in trifles, and devoid of conscience in matters of the highest importance, was egregiously absurd.

(23.) *Anise and cummin.* 'Anise' or dill is a species of plant of the centaurid diglyna class, growing native in Spain and Portugal. The root is fusiform and long; stems, erect-grooved, jointed, branched, and about two feet in height; leaves doubly pinnated, sweet and odorous; flowers, flat, terminal umbels; corolla, five ovate, concave yellow petals, with apex inflexed; germin, like that of fennel; seeds, scarcely the length of a caraway seed, but broader and flatter, of a brown color, aromatic, sweetish odor, and warmish, pungent taste. Cummin is a fruit of the same class as dill, which rises eight or ten inches on a slender round, procumbent, branching stem; leaves, a dark green, narrow, linear and pointed; flowers, purple, in numerous four-rayed umbels; corolla, five unequal petals, inflexed and notched at the apex; seeds, long, striated of a brown color, strong heavy odor, and warm bitterish taste.

A question arose how far the command (Deut. 14: 23, 29.) to give the tithe of the increase of their lands for the Levites and the poor extended? Some thought the precept was not to be pressed so rigorously as to take in every trifling herb of the garden. But these rigid interpreters would take it in the severest sense. They were nice and scrupulous, busy and vehement, about these little and dubious points, boast-

ing loudly of it, (Luke 18: 12.) while yet they showed no conscience towards men in matters of a thousand times greater importance.'

Emlyn, in HEWLETT.

'The rabbins are fond of distinguishing between the weightier and lighter-matters of the law. See *Weststein*. The words following seem to be taken from Micah 6: 8. and mean justice, equity and right, mercy, humanity, benevolence, fidelity, probity, and truth towards God and man.'

Path. 'The original word has the signification of fidelity in many places: (comp. Tit. 2: 10. Gal. 5: 22. and Rom. 3: 3.) but there are many more in which it signifies the confidence reposed in another; and it is of great importance to observe this. See Col. 1: 4. and 1 Pet. 1: 21.'

DODDIDGE.

(24.) *Strain at.* 'A misprint for strain out. It first entered into the edition of 1611, and has been regularly continued ever since. In William Powell's Bible—1547, it is "strayne out." Dr. A. CLARE.

'In southern countries, these gnats swarm, and therefore may easily fall into wine vessels, and are sometimes bred in them. Hence, both Gentiles and Jews strained their wine. The former for cleanliness the latter from cleanliness mixed with religious scruples the "gnat" being unclean.'

Passing the liquor through a strainer, that no gnat or part of one might remain, grew into a proverb for exactness about little matters.'

'The Arabs have a proverb, "He swallows an elephant, and is strange by a flea."'

The Geneva version has, 'strain out.'

Ed.

235.

27 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

[Practical Observations.]

28 Thou blind Pharisee! cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

1 Cor. 13: 12. Mark 7: 4. Luke 11: 35. 2 Cor. 13: 12. 1 Tim. 5: 22. 2 Cor. 13: 12. 1 Tim. 5: 22. 2 Cor. 13: 12. 1 Tim. 5: 22.

all the host of heaven, Jer. 8: 1, 2. For it is the day when God shall judge, not the shows, but the secrets, of men. It will then be small comfort to them, who have their portion with hypocrites, to remember, how creditably they went to hell, applauded by their neighbors.

VII. They pretended a deal of kindness for the memory of the prophets that were dead, while they hated and persecuted those that were alive. This is put last because it was the blackest part of their character. God is jealous for his honor in his laws and ordinances, and resents it if they be profaned and abused; but He has often expressed an equal jealousy for his honor in his prophets and ministers, and resents it more, if they be wronged and persecuted: and therefore, when our Lord Jesus comes to this head, He speaks more fully than on any of the others; (v. 29—37.) for he that toucheth his ministers, toucheth his Anointed. Observe here,

1. The respect which the scribes and Pharisees pretended for the prophets that were gone, v. 29, 30.

(1.) They honored the relics of the prophets, built their tombs, and garnished their sepulchres. It seems, the places of their burial were known, David's sepulchre was with them, Acts 2: 29. There was a title on the sepulchre of

sepulchres of eminent persons, for the beautifying of them. It is said here, (v. 29.) that they garnished the sepulchres of the righteous; as if it were with respect to monuments over the graves of great persons, and to strew flowers on the graves of dear friends. Now the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees was like the ornaments of a grave, or the dressing up of a dead body only for show.

(2.) They were foul within, like sepulchres, full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness, so vile are our bodies, when the soul has deserted them! Thus were they full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Hypocrisy is the worst of all iniquities. Note, It is possible for those that have their hearts full of sin, to have their lives free from blame, and to appear very good. But what will it avail us, to have the good word of our fellow servants, if our Master doth not say, Well done? When all other graves are opened, these whitened sepulchres will be looked into, and the dead men's bones, and all the uncleanness, shall be brought out, and be spread before

the man of God. (2 Kings 23: 17.) and Josiah thought it respect enough not to move his bones, v. 18. But they would do more, rebuild and beautify them. Now consider this, [1.] As an instance of honor done to deceased prophets, who, while they lived, were counted as the off-scouring of all things, and had all manner of evil spoken against them falsely. Note, God can extort, even from bad men, an acknowledgment of the honor of piety and holiness. Them that honor God, He will honor, and sometimes with those from whom contempt is expected, 2 Sam. 6: 22. The memory of the just is blessed, when the names of those that hated and persecuted them shall be covered with shame. The honor of constancy and resolution, in the way of duty, will be a lasting honor; and those that are manifest to God, will be manifest in the consciences of those about them. [2.] As an instance of the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees who paid their respect to them. Note, Carnal people can easily honor the memories of faithful ministers that are dead, because they do not reprove them, nor disturb them, in their sins, Rev. 11: 10. They can pay respect to the writings of the dead prophets which tell them what they should be; but not the reproofs of the living prophets, which tell them what they are. Let there be saints, but let them not be living here. The extravagant respect which the church of Rome pays to the memory of saints departed, especially the martyrs, dedicating days and places to their names, enshrining their relics, praying to them, and offering to their images, while they make themselves drunk with the blood of the saints of their own day, is a manifest proof that they not only succeed, but exceed, the scribes and Pharisees in a counterfeit, hypocritical religion, which builds the prophets' tombs but hates the prophets' doctrine.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 12—25. It gives great offence, yet on some occasions it is absolutely necessary, to expose the hypocrisy, wickedness, and blindness of false teachers; especially when they have acquired extensive influence, and are eminent for learning, reputation, or authority. In such circumstances, they often mislead very great numbers into fatal errors, and harden them in sin. It does not, indeed, become us to speak in that decisive language concerning their characters, or in that authoritative manner of their state and punishment, which He did, 'who knew what was in man,' and to whom all judgment belongs. But it is common for such men to lay themselves so open, by their egregious absurdities or enormous crimes, as to make it obvious that they are 'blind guides,' or subtle deceivers; who are going on the broad road, and leading their disciples in the same destructive course.—What discoveries then will Christ make in the great day of account, when He shall strip off the mask from every character, and show every man exactly as he is!—They who are appointed by office to guide men into the way of salvation, often use all their influence 'to shut the kingdom of heaven against them: hating the Gospel themselves, they instil their proud carnal prejudices into others; and they are most observant of those who seem about to enter, that by reasoning, ridicule, calumny, menaces, flatteries, or promises, they may deter them from becoming the real disciples of Christ. Woe be to such deceivers! they are Satan's agents, and share with that old murderer in the guilt of destroying immortal souls.—Many enemies of the Gospel, nay, professed believers, are notoriously defective in common honesty; for in various ways there has always been a race of men, who have used religion as a mask, or pretext, to obtain confidence and to get money. Long prayers, demure countenances, religious phrases and gestures, have gained them the opportunity of 'devouring widows' houses,' or of plundering the public, and practising

manifold frauds, impositions, and oppressions, and have for a time screened them from investigation and conviction; but such scandals to all godliness 'shall receive the deeper damnation,' and be more severely punished than robbers of a less sanctimonious cast.—Hypocrites also find their account in bestowing much pains to make proselytes to their party; while every one whom they win over, becomes more callous in enmity to true religion than before, and even vies with his tutor in pride and bigotry. It is also observable, that new converts to any superstition, or to any sect, are generally more intolerant and vehement than such as have been brought up in it; for they aim to evince the sincerity of the change, and to vindicate what they have done, and the importance of the contested points, by an excess of zeal for their new opinions. Scott.

God forbid that our devotions should ever be intended as a cloak of maliciousness, or as the instrument of serving any mean and vile purpose! Such prayers would return in curses on our own heads, and draw down on them aggravated damnation. God forbid that we should spend that time, and that ardency of spirit, in making proselytes to our own peculiar notions and party, which ought to be laid out in making them the servants of God through Christ! God forbid that we should delude ourselves or others by such idle distinctions in matters of conscience, as those which our blessed Redeemer has with so much reason and spirit exposed!—Let us retain the greatest reverence for an oath, and not accustom ourselves to trifle with any thing that looks like it. Let us consider heaven as the throne of God, and often think of the majesty and glory of that illustrious Being that sits thereon; for a sense of his continual presence will form us to a better temper, and engage us, with a righteousness far exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees, to walk before Him in all his commandments and ordinances blameless. DODDIDGE.

Verse 25—28.

These scribes and Pharisees, who trusted in themselves that they were right, and despised others; and proudly rejected the salvation of Christ, were mere hypocrites. They were careful to maintain a decent exterior, but paid no attention to their imaginations, motives, or affections: so that avarice, pride, and sensuality reigned in uncontrolled dominion in their hearts; and induced them covertly to grasp at wealth by extortion, and to spend it in inordinate self-indulgence. This proved them blind, and ignorant of God, of his law, of true religion, and of themselves: for common sense might have directed them, to begin first with their hearts. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, 12: 33—37. Jer. 4: 3, 4. Ez. 10: 30—32. v. 31. Luke 11: 37, 40. Jam. 4: 4—10.) The touch of a grave communicated a ceremonial uncleanness. (Notes, Num. 19: 11. Ez. 39: 11—16.) The Jews, therefore, used to wash their hands with lime, or other materials of that kind; and some were of opinion, that the word beautiful, does not refer to the grave when whitened, but when grown over with grass and flowers. [236]

But this does not at all agree with the text; for the Pharisees were like whitened sepulchres, and so appeared beautiful, not like those which were grown over with grass; and in those days, as well as in modern times, those who could afford it, adorned and beautified the tombs of their deceased friends. (29.) Scott.

(25.) Clean the outside. 'This censure carries a double sting; what filled their cups was procured by injustice, and used with intemperance.' ROBINSON.

(26.) 'The sepulchres were painted white the last month of every year, i. e. the month of Adar. The object of the practice was, by a timely warning, to prevent those who came to the feast of the passover, from approaching them, and thus becoming contaminated.' JAMN. 'The passover was at hand when our Lord made this censure, and therefore, it is likely they were just then white as fresh, when the rainy and bad weather was over, and the time for Israel to assemble in Jerusalem was at hand—as all or nearly all their solemnities were held in the dry part of the year.' HARMAN.

27 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

29 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

1. 18, 21, 22, Luke 11:44. Acts 23:3. Num. 19:16.
1. 18, 21, 22, Luke 11:44. Acts 23:3. Num. 19:16.
1. 18, 21, 22, Luke 11:44. Acts 23:3. Num. 19:16.
1. 18, 21, 22, Luke 11:44. Acts 23:3. Num. 19:16.
1. 18, 21, 22, Luke 11:44. Acts 23:3. Num. 19:16.
1. 18, 21, 22, Luke 11:44. Acts 23:3. Num. 19:16.
1. 18, 21, 22, Luke 11:44. Acts 23:3. Num. 19:16.
1. 18, 21, 22, Luke 11:44. Acts 23:3. Num. 19:16.
1. 18, 21, 22, Luke 11:44. Acts 23:3. Num. 19:16.
1. 18, 21, 22, Luke 11:44. Acts 23:3. Num. 19:16.

Rom. 1:32 2:1. They knew they ought not to have been partakers with persecutors, and yet were the followers of them. Such self-contradictions now will amount to self-condemnations in the great day. Christ puts another construction on their building the tombs of the prophets than what they intended; as if by beautifying their graves they justified their murderers, (Luke 11:48.) for they persisted in the sin.

[2.] By their own confession, these notorious persecutors were their ancestors; *Ye are the children of them.* They meant no more than that they were their children by blood and nature; but Christ turns it upon them, that they were so by spirit and disposition; *You are the sons of those fathers, and their lusts you will do.* As your fathers did, so do ye, Acts 7: 51. They came of a persecuting race, were a seed of evil doers, (Isa. 1: 4.) risen up in their fathers' stead, Num. 32: 14. Malice, envy, and cruelty were bred in the bone with them, and they had formerly espoused it for a principle, to do as their fathers did, Jer. 44: 17. And it is observable here, (v. 30.) how careful they are to mention the relation; 'They were our fathers, men in honor and power, whose sons and successors we are.' If they had detested the wickedness of their ancestors, as they ought to have done, they would not have been so fond to call them *their fathers*; for it is no credit to be akin to persecutors, though they have ever so much dignity and dominion.

Verses 29—33.

By the just judgment of God, hypocrites, when they most seek to cover their crimes, most expose themselves to disgrace. *Beza.* It is probable, that some allusion was in these verses intended to the preceding comparison: It is remarkable, that the most severe and awful things contained in Scripture, were spoken by Jesus Christ Himself. (Marg. Ref. c. d.—Notes, 3: 7—10. Gen. 3: 14, 15.) SCOTT.

(29.) 'We may not doubt but that the synagogues were built at first after the sepulchres of distinguished men, thus to perpetuate their memory with posterity. For if ever men were inclined to "build the tombs of the prophets and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous," the Jews were to use men. Thus we read in the Cippis Hebraicus, that they were accustomed to honor the tomb of Mordecai by a certain annual religious celebration. "From over all that region the Jews congregated together on the day of Purim, and proceeded towards his sepulchre, chanting canticles and eulogies, with drums and choirs exulting

(2.) The sentence passed on them. Christ here proceeds,

[1.] To give them up to sin, as irreclaimable; v. 32. If Ephraim be joined to idols, and hate to be reformed, let him alone. *He that is filthy, let him be filthy still.* Christ knew they were now contriving his death, and in a few days would accomplish it; 'Well,' saith He 'go on with your plot, walk in the way of your heart, and in the sight of your eyes, and see what will come of it. *What thou doest, do quickly.* You will but fill up the measure of guilt, which will then overflow in a deluge of wrath.' Note, *First*, There is a measure of sin to be filled up, before utter ruin comes on persons and families, churches and nations. God will bear long, but the time will come, when He can no longer forbear, Jer. 44: 22. We read of the measure of the Amorites that was to be filled, (Gen. 15: 16.) of the harvest of the earth being ripe for the sickle, (Rev. 14: 15, 19.) and of sinners making an end to deal treacherously arriving at a full stature in treachery, Isa. 33: 1. *Secondly*, Children fill up the measure of their fathers' sins when they are gone, if they persist in the same, or the like. That national guilt which brings national ruin, is made up of the sin of many in several ages, and in the successions of societies there is a score going on; for God justly visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children that tread in the steps of it. *Thirdly*, Persecuting Christ and his people and ministers; is a sin that fills the measure of a nation's guilt sooner than any other. This was it that brought wrath without remedy on the fathers, (2 Chron. 36: 16.) and wrath to the utmost on the children too, 1 Thess. 2: 16. This was that fourth transgression, of which, when added to the other three, the Lord would not turn away the punishment, Amos 1: 3, 6, 9, 11, 13. *Fourthly*, It is just with God to give those up to their own hearts' lusts, who obstinately persist in the gratification of them. Those who will run headlong to ruin, let the reins be laid on their neck; and it is the saddest condition a man can be in on this side hell.

[2.] He proceeds to give them up to ruin as irrecoverable, v. 33. These are strange words from the mouth of Christ, into whose lips grace was poured. But He can and will speak terror, and in those words He explains and sums up the eight woes He had denounced against the scribes and Pharisees.

Here is, *First*, the description; *Ye serpents.* Doth Christ call names? Yes, but this doth not warrant us to do so. He infallibly knew what was in man, and knew them to be subtle as serpents cleaving to the earth, feeding on dust; they had a specious outside, but were within malignant, had poison under their tongues; the seed of the old serpent. They were a generation of vipers; they, and those that went before them, they, and those that joined with them, were envenomed, enraged, spiteful adversaries to Christ and his Gospel. They loved to be called of men, *Rabbi, rabbi*, but Christ calls them *serpents and vipers*; for He gives men their true characters, and delights to put contempt on the proud.

Secondly, Their doom. He represents their condition as very sad and desperate; *How can ye escape the damnation of hell?* Christ Himself preached hell and damnation, for which his ministers have often been reproached by those that care not to hear of it. Note, 1. The dam-

and rejoicing, because a miracle was there performed." The same is said of the tomb of Esther. Benjamin of Tudela says, "Before one of the synagogues are the tombs of Mordecai and Esther." The opinion was prevalent, at that time, that the souls of the dead hovered about the tombs which inclosed the bodies, and that help from God could be obtained with more facility by their intercession. The sepulchre of Moses was concealed, lest this folly should take place." YTRINGA.

'Herod built, at great expense, a monument of white stone upon the mouth of the sepulchre of David, which he had plundered, to appease the Deity, whom he thought he had offended by his robbery.' JOSEPHUS.

'It was a custom among the Greeks, as well as among the Jews, not only to erect, but also to repair and adorn the monuments of those who had merited well of them, or who had suffered an undeserved death. The Turks to the present day adorn the tombs of their holy men, with long ropes of wooden beads, &c. &c.' BAKER.

33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

[Practical Observations.]

34 ¶ Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:

c 3.7. 12.34. Gen. 3:15. Ps. 38:3-5. Is. 57:3-4. Luke 3:7. John 8:44. 2 Cor. 11:13. Rev. 12:9.
d 14. Heb. 2:3. 10:29. 12:25.
e 10:12. 28:19.30. Luke 11:49. 24: 47. John 20:21. Acts 1:3. 1 Cor. 12:3-11. Eph. 4:8-12.
f 12:17. 13:1. 15:32. Rev. 11:10.
g Rev. 11:30. 1 Cor. 2:5. 3:10. Col. 1:28.
h 13:52.
i 10:16,17. John 16:2. Acts 5:40. 7: 31.32.38.59. 9:12. 12:2. 14:19. 22:19.30. 2 Cor. 11:24,25. 1 Thes. 2:16.

ance; 'Ye are a generation of vipers,' not likely to escape the damnation of hell; one would think it should follow, 'Therefore you shall never have a prophet sent to you any more;' but no, 'Therefore I will send unto you prophets, to see if you will yet at length be wrought upon, or else to leave you inexcusable, and to justify God in your ruin.' It is therefore ushered in with a note of admiration, behold! Observe,

It is Christ that sends them; I send. By this, He avows Himself to be God, having power to gift and commission prophets. It is an act of kingly office; He sends them as ambassadors to treat with us about the concerns of

nation of hell will be the fearful end of all impenitent sinners. This doom, coming from Christ, was more terrible than coming from all the prophets and ministers that ever were; for He is the Judge into whose hands the keys of hell and death are put, and his saying they were damned, made them so. 2. There is a way of escaping this damnation implied here; some are delivered from the wrath to come. 3. Of all sinners, those who are of the spirit of the scribes and Pharisees are least likely to escape this damnation; for repentance and faith are necessary to that escape; and how will they be brought to these, who are so conceited of themselves, and so prejudiced against Christ and his Gospel, as they were? How could they be healed and saved, who would not bear to have their wound searched, nor the balm of Gilead applied? Publicans and harlots, who were sensible of their disease, and applied to the Physician, were more likely to escape the damnation of hell than those, who, though they were in the high road to it, were confident they were in the way to heaven.

V. 34-39. We have left the blind leaders fallen under Christ's sentence, into the damnation of hell; let us see what will become of the blind followers, the body of the Jewish church, and particularly Jerusalem.

I. Christ designs yet to try them with the means of grace; v. 34. The connection is

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 26-33. There is no tracing all the absurdities of 'blind guides' and hypocritical professors of religion. In general, they inculcate a peculiar regard to the gold of the temple and to the oblations; in which their own interest and credit are more concerned, than in the purity of doctrine, and the due administration of sacred ordinances. They often teach men to trifle with oaths, subscriptions, and solemn engagements; and to disregard important duties, in order to attend on comparatively little matters, which distinguish them from other parties. But they must be 'blind guides,' who on any pretence, by doctrine or example, teach men to neglect the weightier matters of the law, and dispense with justice, mercy, and truth, that they may draw their attention to disputed sentiments, forms, and external observances, and thus 'strain at a gnat and swallow a camel.' The important matters ought surely first to be attended to: yet the others ought not to be left undone, provided they be agreeable to the word of God.—Too many, who seem to be religious, cleanse only 'the outside' by a decent behavior before men; whilst their hearts are full of covetousness, pride, sensuality, malice, and all uncleanness; their secret actions are infected by these evils, and all their duties corrupted with them. But let us seek to have our 'hearts washed from wickedness,

that evil thoughts may not lodge within;' and then our outward conduct will become clean also. Otherwise we shall be like painted sepulchres; and God will at length lay us open, and expose the filthiness contained within to the view of the whole world.—We should, however, at the same time, recollect, that religion must be very valuable, to be thus worth counterfeiting. A hypocrite could not make so good a mask of the appearance, if the reality were not sterling gold in the secret judgment of men in general. Indeed this appears by the conduct of many wicked men, who hate the living servants of God, yet honor the memories of those who lived in other ages and nations. They are ready to build their sepulchres, or be lavish in their commendation; but not to copy their examples, or to profit by their instructions. Thus, notwithstanding their avowed respect to their memories, and exclamations against their persecutors, they continually testify against themselves, that 'they are the children of those who killed the prophets;' and their temper and conduct often evince it to their own consciences; and when the whole shall be made known, the severest language, and most tremendous sentence, of the Judge against them, will appear most just and reasonable, nor will there be any possible way for them of 'escaping the damnation of hell.'

SCOTT.

(33.) *Escape.* 'The original properly signifies to evade conviction in a court of judicature.'

Verses 34-36.

It has been before observed, that there are reasons, which may induce us to think, that Zechariah the prophet is here meant. (*Note, Zech. 1:1.*) But it is objected, that 'this Zechariah could not be one of the minor prophets: he lived when the temple was in ruins, and neither altar nor temple were set up again.' *Whitby*. Dr. Hammond makes the same objection. Now the fact is, that the altar was set up immediately after the Jews came from Babylon. (*Ezra 3:2.*) and the temple was finished in the sixth year of Darius. (*Ezra 4:14, 15.*) No prophecy indeed of Zechariah is expressly dated later than the fourth year of Darius; (*Zech. 7:1.*) but nothing is said of his death; he delivered many important prophecies, recorded in the latter part of his book, which are not dated; he was a young man, in the second year of Darius; (*Zech. 2:4.*) there is great reason to think that he lived many years afterwards; and certainly some of his concluding prophecies were exceedingly calculated to exasperate the hypocritical Jews. A second objection against this, (that Zechariah the son of 'Jehoiada is meant,' is, that he being slain by Joash so long ago, could not fitly be set down as the last of that catalogue whose blood brought down judgment on the Jews; it being reasonable that beginning so high as righteous Abel, the speech should descend much lower than Zechariah; and it is not easy to give a probable answer to this.) *Hammona*. 'All the martyrs from Abel to Zechariah, seems to have been a proverb; and it might naturally arise from observing, that Abel was the first, and Zechariah in Chronicles the last eminently good man, of whose murder the Scripture speaks.' *Doddridge*. (*Note, Chron. 24:19-22.*) But here is not the shadow of a proof, that such

a proverb was used; and it is worthy of notice, that the Old Testament in general terms speaks of the prophets being murdered; but mentions very few particular instances. In fact, I cannot recollect a single specified instance from Abel to Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada; and but one after him, namely, Urijah the son of Shemaiah. (*Jer. 26:20-23.*) This shows, that the silence of the Scripture respecting Zechariah, the son of Baruch, is no conclusive proof that he was not martyred, and the other Zechariah might more properly be called the first eminently good man, whom the Jews, as distinguished from the kingdom of Israel, murdered, than the last; as we have reason to conclude, that far greater numbers were slain between his time and the Babylonian captivity, than before his days; that is, in Judah. 'When Jeremiah introduced the Jews speaking thus, "Behold, O Lord, &c." (*Lam. 2:20.*) the Targum introduces the house of judgment answering, Was it fit for you, even in the day of propitiation, to kill a priest and a prophet, as you did Zechariah, the son of Iddo, in the house of the sanctuary of the Lord, because he would have withdrawn you from your evil ways?' *Whitby*. Whatever the compilers of this Targum meant, it is plain, that a tradition prevailed when it was written, that one Zechariah, the son of Iddo, had been thus slain. Now Zechariah, the son of Baruch, is repeatedly called the son of Iddo; but Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, is never called so. (*Ezra 5:1. 6:14. Zeph. 1:1,7.*)

SCOTT.

(34.) 'By prophets, wise men, and scribes, our Lord intends the evangelists, apostles, deacons, &c. who should be employed in proclaiming his Gospel: men who should equal the ancient prophets; the wise men, and scribes, in all the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zecharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.

36 Verily I say unto you, "All these things shall come upon this generation."

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

1 Gen. 9:5-6. Num. 35:33. Deut. 21:7, 8. Kings 21:16, 24:1. Is. 26:21. Jer. 26:23, 28:15, 34. Lam. 4:13, 14. Rev. 18:24.
2 Gen. 4:8. Heb. 11:4. 12:24. 1 John 1:2. Ch. 23:32. Zech. 1:1. Luke 11:51.
3 Mark 14:21. 12:1-28. Mark 13:30, 31. Luke 21:32-33.
4 Jer. 4:14. 6:8. Luke 13:34. Rev. 11:8.
5 80:5-12. 21:35, 36. 22:6. 2 Chr. 24:21. Jer. 2:26. Jer. 2:30. 26:23. Mark 12:3-6. Luke 20:11-14. Acts 7:51, 52. 1 Thes. 2:15. Rev. 11:7, 17:9.
6 2 Chr. 36:15, 16. Ps. 81:8-11. Jer. 6:16, 17. 11:7, 8. 25:3-7. 35:15. 42:9-13. 44:4. Zech. 1:4.
7 19:1. 32:11. Ruth 2:12. Ps. 17:8. 36:7. 57:1. 63:7, 91:4.
8 22:3. Prov. 1:24-31. Is. 50:2. Hos. 11:2, 7. Luke 14:17-20. 15:28. 19:14-44.

Zecharias, the father of John Baptist, as others say; but, as is most probable, Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, who was slain in the court of the Lord's house; 2 Chron. 24: 20, 21. His father is called Barachias, which signifies much the same with Jehoiada; and it was usual among the Jews for the same person to have two names; whom ye slew, ye of this nation, though not of this generation. This is specified, because the requiring of that is particularly spoken of, (2 Chron. 24: 22) as that of Abel's is. The Jews imagined that the captivity had sufficiently atoned for that guilt; but Christ lets them know that it was not yet fully accounted for, but remained on score. And some think that this is mentioned with a prophetic hint, for there was one Zecharias, the son of Baruch, whom Josephus speaks of, (*De Bello Judaico*, lib. 5. cap. 1.) who was a just and good man, killed in the temple, a little before it was destroyed by the Romans. Archbishop Tillotson thinks that Christ both alludes to the history of the former Zecharias in *Chronicles*, and

kill and crucify them. It is no less than the life-blood that they thirst after; their lust is not satisfied with any thing short, Exod. 15: 9. They killed the two James's, crucified Simon, son of Cleophas, and scourged Peter and John; thus did the members partake of the sufferings of the Head; He was killed and crucified, and so were they. Christians must expect to resist unto blood.

2. Their unwearied industry; Ye shall persecute them from city to city. As the apostles went from city to city, to preach the Gospel, the Jews haunted them, and stirred up persecution against them, Acts 14: 19. 17: 13. They that did not believe in Judea, were more bitter than any other, Rom. 15: 31.

3. The pretence of religion in this; they scourged them in their synagogues, as a piece of service to the church; cast them out, and said, Let the Lord be glorified, Ps. 66: 5. John 16: 2.

III. He imputes the sin of their fathers to them, because they imitated it, v. 35, 36. Though God bear long with a persecuting generation, He will not bear always; and patience abused, turns into the greatest wrath. The longer sinners have been heaping up treasures of wickedness, the deeper and fuller will the treasures of wrath be; and the breaking of them up will be like breaking up the fountains of the great deep.

Observe, 1. The extent of this imputation; it takes in all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, that is, the blood shed for the goodness' sake, which has been laid up in God's treasury, and not a drop of it lost, for it is precious, Ps. 72: 14. He dates the account from the blood of righteous Abel, called righteous Abel, because he obtained witness from heaven that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts. How early did martyrdom come into the world!

The first that died, died for his religion, and, being dead, he yet speaketh. His blood not only cried against Cain, but continues to cry against all that walk in the way of Cain, and hate and persecute their brother, because his works are righteous. He extends it to the blood of Zecharias, the son of Barachias, (v. 36.) not Zecharias the prophet, (as some would have it,) though he was the son of Barachias, (Zech. 1: 1.) nor

foretells the death of this latter in Josephus. Though the latter was not yet slain, yet, before this destruction comes, it would be true that they had slain him; so that all shall be put together from first to last.

2. The effect of it; All these things shall come; all the guilt of this blood, all the punishment of it, shall come upon this generation. The misery and ruin coming on them shall be so very great, that, though, considering the evil of their own sins, it was less than even those deserved; yet, comparing it with other judgments, it will seem to be a general reckoning for all the wickedness of their ancestors, especially their persecutions, to all which God declared this ruin to have special reference and relation. The destruction shall be so dreadful, as if God had once for all arraigned them for all the righteous blood shed in the world. It shall come upon this generation; which intimates that it shall come quickly; some here shall live to see it. Note, The sorer and nearer the punishment of sin is, the louder is the call to repentance and reformation.

IV. He laments the wickedness of Jerusalem, and justly upbraids them with the many kind offers He had made them, v. 37. See with what concern He speaks of that city; O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! The repetition is emphatical, and bespeaks abundance of commiseration. A day or two before, Christ had wept over Jerusalem, now He sighed and groaned over it. Jerusalem, the vision of peace, (so it signifies,) must now be the seat of war and confusion. Jerusalem, that had been the joy of the whole earth, must now be a hissing, and an astonishment, and a by-word: Jerusalem, that has been a city compact together, shall now be shattered and ruined by its own intestine broils. Jerusalem, the place that God has chosen to put his name there, shall now be abandoned to the spoil and the robbers, Lam. 1: 1. 4: 1. But wherefore will the Lord do all this to Jerusalem? Why? Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, Lam. 1: 8.

1. She persecuted God's messengers; Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee. This sin is especially charged on Jerusalem, because there the sanhedrim, or great council, sat, who took cognizance of church-matters, and therefore a prophet could not perish but in Jerusalem, Luke 13: 33. It is true, they had not now a power to put any man to death, but they killed the prophets in popular tumults, mobbed them, as Stephen, and set on the Roman powers to kill them. At Jerusalem, where the Gospel was first preached, it was first persecuted, (Acts 8: 1.) and that place was the head-quarters of the persecutors; thence warrants were issued to other cities, and thither the saints were brought bound, Acts 9: 2. Thou stonest them; a capital punishment, in use only among the Jews. By the law, false prophets and seducers were to be stoned, (Deut: 13: 10.) under color of which law, they put true prophets

(35.) That upon you may come.] 'Rather, as if upon you had come.'

Upon the earth.] 'Upon this land of Judea.' Dr. A. CLARKE. Barachias.] Dr. A. Clarke thinks there is a reference to 2 Chron. 24: 20, and states that Jehoiada and Barachias have the same meaning—the praise or blessing of Jehovah, and are probably but different names for the same person. Ed.

(36.) Generation.] 'This race of men, viz. the Jews.'

Dr. A. CLARKE. All these things shall come upon this generation.] "It may justly aggravate the guilt of a criminal, if, though he have seen a long series of misdeeds punished, yet he has not even suffered himself to be deterred from similar delinquencies; and this, as it evinces a most incorrigible mind, so it is worthy of severer punishment." Wetstein. Now assuredly this the Jews did evince, inasmuch that (as Josephus says) they permitted no kind of wickedness to be peculiar to those who had preceded them, but had carefully imitated, and even exceeded, all the most atrocious deeds of their ancestors. That there is no hyperbole in these words his own history shows. Wetstein observes, that they contain a prediction of what the Jews should commit and suffer in the temple. He then produces the following passages from Josephus, which are most strikingly illustrative of the predictions. Jos. B. 4: 3, 12. 6: 1, 4. 6: 3. 1: 3. 9: 4. 6: 2, 1. 4: 4, 6, and 5: 1.

BLOOMFIELD.

Verses 37—39.

'He speaketh of the outward ministry; and, as He was promised for the saving of this people, so was He also careful for it, even from the time that the promise was made to Abraham.' Beza. (Marg. Ref. a, o.—Notes, 4: 5-7, v. 5 Is. 1: 21-24. Es. 22: 3-6. Zeph. 3:

1-4.) Our Lord, with immense tenderness and dignity, declares the miseries, which the inhabitants of Jerusalem were bringing on themselves by crucifying Him; without taking the least notice of the sufferings which He Himself was so soon to endure. The emblem of a hen gathering her chickens under her wings' is similar to what is said, with respect to JEHOVAH, in several places of the Old Testament, (Marg. Ref. q.—Note, Ruth 2: 11, 12.) Nor does all nature afford a more apt emblem of the Savior's tender love, and faithful care of his redeemed people; but his power is also adequate to the confidence imposed in Him. He bore the storm of divine justice against our sins, in order to save us from it; and 'suffered being tempted, that He might succor us when tempted.' He calls sinners to take refuge under his protection; and there keeps them safe, and nourishes them unto eternal life. He had for ages, by his prophets, repeatedly invited the children of Jerusalem, or the Jews, to take shelter under his almighty wings, before He came to call them by his personal ministry; 'but they would not come;' so that their ruin was wholly owing to their obstinate unbelief and rebellion. (Marg. Ref. p.) Does not this language manifestly show, that He who used it was truly 'the Lord God of Israel,' who sent his prophets to that people? Many indeed, during his personal ministry, came to Him for spiritual and eternal salvation; and great numbers afterwards did; but the ruin of the nation was absolutely determined; the temple would soon be levelled with the ground, together with the city; and the Jews would be cast out of the church, and excluded from the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, till they became willing to submit to Him who came to them 'in the name of the Lord, and to be thankful for his spiritual kingdom and salvation. No doubt but that their present dispersion and unbelief and their future conversion to Christ, are here predicted.

Scott.

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38 Behold, 'your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, 'Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

24:2. 2 Chr. 7:20, 21. Ps. 69:24, 25.
Is. 64:10-12. Jer. 7:3-14. Dan. 9:
23, 27. Zech. 11:1-2. 14:1, 2. Mark
13:14. Luke 13:35. 19:43, 44. 21:8,
20, 24. Acts 6:15, 14.
Ho. 3:4, 5. Luke 2:28-30. 10:22.
23. 22. John 8:21, 24, 56. 14:9, 19.
a. 21:3. Ps. 118:26. Is. 40:9-11. Zech.
12:10. Rom. 11:25, 26. 2 Cor. 3:
14-18.

chickens under her wings! Thus kind and condescending are the offers of gospel-grace, even to Jerusalem's children, the little ones not excepted, bad as the inhabitants are.

[1.] The favor proposed, was the gathering of them. Christ's design is, to gather poor souls to Himself, as the Centre of unity; for to Him must the gathering of the people be. He would have taken the whole body of the Jewish nation into the church, and so gathered them all (as the Jews used to speak of proselytes) *under the wings of the Divine Majesty*. It is here illustrated by a humble similitude; as a hen clucks her chickens together. Christ would have gathered them, *First*, With such a tenderness of affection as the hen does, which has, by instinct, a peculiar concern for her young ones. Christ's gathering of souls comes from his love, Jer. 31:3. *Secondly*, For the same end. *The hen gathereth her chickens under her wings*, for protection and safety, warmth and comfort; poor souls have in Christ both refuge and refreshment. The chickens naturally run to the hen for shelter, when threatened by birds of prey; perhaps Christ refers to that promise, (Ps. 91:4.) *He shall cover thee with his feathers. There is healing under Christ's wings;* (Mal. 4:2.) that is more than the hen has for her young.

[2.] The forwardness of Christ to confer this favor. His offers are, *First*, Very free; *I would have done it*. Jesus Christ is truly willing to receive and save poor souls that come to Him. He desires not their ruin, He delights in their repentance. *Secondly*, Very frequent; *How often!* Christ often came up to Jerusalem, preached, and wrought miracles there, and the meaning of all this was, He would have gathered them. He keeps account how often his calls have been repeated. As often as we have heard the sound of the Gospel, or felt the strivings of the Spirit, so often Christ would have gathered us.

[3.] Their wilful refusal of this grace and favor; *Ye would not*. How emphatically is their obstinacy opposed to Christ's mercy! *I would, and ye would not*. He was willing to save, but they were not willing to be saved. Note, It is wholly owing to the wicked wills of sinners, that they are not gathered under the wings of the Lord Jesus. They did not like the terms on which Christ proposed to gather them; they loved their sins, and yet trusted to their righteousness; they would not submit either to the grace of Christ or to his government.

V. He reads Jerusalem's doom; (v. 33, 39.) *Therefore behold, your house is left unto you desolate*. Both the city and the temple, God's house and their own, all shall be laid waste. But it is especially meant of the temple, which they boasted of, and trusted to; that holy mountain because of which they were so haughty. Note, They that will not be gathered by the love and grace of Christ, shall be consumed and scattered by his wrath; *Israel would none of Me, so I gave them up*, Ps. 81:11, 12.

1. Their house shall be deserted; Christ was now departing from the temple, and never came into it again, but by his word abandoned it to ruin. They doated on it, would have it to themselves; Christ must have no room or interest there. 'Well,' saith Christ, 'it is left to you; I will never have any thing more to do with it.' They had made it a house of merchandise, and a den of thieves, and so it is left to them. Not long after this, the voice was heard in the temple, 'Let us depart hence.' When Christ went, *Ichabod, the glory departed*. Their city also was left to them, destitute of God's presence and grace; He was no longer a Wall of fire about them, nor the Glory in the midst of them.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 31-39. What a lamentable proof of human depravity does the history of the church exhibit! What men have ever hated, persecuted, and murdered, like the prophets and apostles of the Lord? And this has been more frequently perpetrated by professed worshippers of God, than by avowed idolaters; so that the guilt of all 'the righteous blood, which hath been shed from the days of Abel,' will fall, rather on the visible church, than on the world at large. Jerusalem and her children had a great share of this guilt, and their punishment has been made a signal for a warning to all others. But the Christian church, so called, has far exceeded them, the crucifixion of Christ alone excepted; and ere long that generation will arise, on whom the accumulated guilt will fall of all the blood shed by antichristian persecutors of every name, and in every age.

2. It shall be desolate; *It is left unto you desolate; it is left a wilderness*. (1.) It was immediately, when Christ left it, in the eyes of all that understood themselves, a very dismal place. Christ's departure makes the best furnished, best replenished place a wilderness. (2.) It is the temple, the chief place of concourse; for what comfort can there be where Christ is not? Though there may be a crowd of other contentments, yet if Christ's special spiritual presence be withdrawn, that soul, that place, is become a wilderness, a land of darkness, as darkness itself. This comes of men's rejecting Christ, and driving Him from them.

(2.) It was, not long after, destroyed and ruined, and not one stone left upon another. The lot of her enemies will now become Jerusalem's lot, to be made of a city a heap, of a defended city a ruin, (Isa. 25:2.) a lofty city laid low, even to the ground, Isa. 26:5. The temple, that holy and beautiful house, became desolate. When God goes out, all enemies break in.

Lastly, Here is the final farewell that Christ took of them and their temple; *Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh*. This bespeaks,

1. His departure. The time was at hand, when He should leave the world to go to his Father, and be seen no more. After his resurrection, He was seen only by a few chosen witnesses, and they saw Him not long, but He soon removed to the invisible world, and there will be till the time of the restitution of all things, when his welcome at his first coming will be repeated with loud acclamations. *Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord*. Christ will not be seen again till He come in the clouds, and every eye shall see Him; (Rev. 1:7.) and then, even they, who, when time was, rejected and pierced Him, will be glad to come in among his adorers; then every knee shall bow to Him, even those that had bowed to Baal; and even the workers of iniquity will then cry, *Lord, Lord*, and will own, when his wrath is kindled, that *blessed are all they that put their trust in Him*. Would we have our lot in that day with those that say, *Blessed is He that cometh*, let us be with them now, with them that truly worship, and truly welcome, Jesus Christ.

2. Their continued blindness and obstinacy; *Ye shall not see Me*, that is, not see Me to be the Messiah, (for otherwise they did see Him on the cross,) nor see the light of the truth concerning Me, nor the things that belong to your peace, till ye shall say, *Blessed is He that cometh*. They will never be convinced, till Christ's second coming convince them, when it will be too late to make an interest in Him, and nothing will remain but a fearful looking for of judgment. Note, (1.) Wilful blindness is often punished with judicial blindness. If they will not see, they shall not see. With this word He concludes his public preaching. After his resurrection, which was the sign of the prophet Jonas, they should have no other sign given them, till they should see the sign of the Son of man, ch. 24:30. (2.) When the Lord comes with ten thousand of his saints, He will convince all, and force acknowledgments from the proudest of his enemies of his being the Messiah.

SCOTT.

(55.) Desolate. 'Josephus' description of the effects of the famine at the siege of Jerusalem, is perhaps the most affecting representation

of misery ever penned. One in Italy, A. D. 539, as described by B. Bloomfield, is almost a parallel.'

CHAP. XXIV.

Christ foretells the destruction of the temple, 1, 2; and the preceding signs and attendant calamities, including counsels and warnings, 3-23; also the subsequent revolutions and miseries, in figurative language, which may be understood of the end of the world, 23-31. By the parable of a fig-tree, He shows the certainty of the prediction, 32-33. No man knows the day or hour, which shall come suddenly, 34-41. All ought to watch, as vigilant servants who expect their master, 42-51.

AND Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to him for to shew him the buildings of the temple.

2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? Verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

a 23:39. Jer. 6:8. Ez. 8:6. 10:17-19. 11:22,23. Hos. 9:12.
b Mark 13:1,2. Luke 21:5,8. John 2:20.
c 1 Kings 9:7,9. Jer. 26:18. Ez. 7:20-22. Dan. 9:24,27. Mic. 3:12. Luke 19:44. 2 Pet. 3:11.

run themselves into confusion Here is,

1. Christ's quitting the temple, and his public work there. He had said, (ch. 23. 38.) *Your house is left unto you desolate*; and here He made his words good, v. 1. The manner of expression is observable: He not only went out of the temple, but departed from it, took his final farewell of it; and then immediately follows a prediction of its ruin. Note, That house is left desolate indeed, which Christ leaves. *Woe unto them when I depart*, Hos. 9: 12, Jer. 6: 8. It was now time to groan out their *Ichabod*, *The glory is departed, their defence is departed*. Three days after this, the veil of the temple was rent; when Christ left it, all became common and unclean; but Christ departed not till they drove Him away; did not reject them, till they first rejected Him.

II. His private discourse with his disciples. When He left the temple, his disciples left it too, and came to Him. Note, It is good being where Christ is, and leaving what He leaves. They came to Him, to be instructed in private, when his public preaching was over; for the secret of the Lord is not to them that fear Him. He had spoken of the destruction of the Jewish church to the multitude in parables, which here, as usual, He explains to his disciples. Observe,

1. His disciples came to Him, to show Him the buildings of the temple. It was a stately and beautiful structure, one of the wonders of the world. It came short of Solomon's, and its beginning was small, yet its latter end did greatly increase. It was richly furnished with gifts and offerings, to which continual additions were made. They desired Christ to notice these things, either,

NOTES

CHAP. XXIV. v. 1, 2. According to Josephus, these [the buildings] were exceedingly magnificent and beautiful, and constructed with the greatest stability; so that it was extremely improbable they should be entirely destroyed, except in a very long course of time: no one, therefore, who was not conscious of speaking with divine authority, would have ventured to deliver such a prediction, as that which follows. (See Luke 21:5.) But the Redeemer, with a peculiar dignity, as one conversant with spiritual and heavenly glories, and regardless of exterior splendor, simply assured the disciples, that 'not one stone would be left upon another,' of all this magnificent and stately pile of buildings. When Jerusalem was taken, Titus, the Roman general, desired exceedingly to preserve the temple, either from regard to its sanctity, or as a monument of his victory; but the pertinacity of the infuriated Jews, and the fierce revenge of the soldiers, defeated his purpose. The temple was repeatedly set fire to, contrary to his strict orders and menaces; and at last the fire could not be extinguished: and when it had done its utmost, the residue of the structure was demolished, and the materials removed, in order to search for the treasure which was buried under its ruins: so that, in the event, the very foundations were subverted, and the ground on which it stood was ploughed up. Thus the prophecy received an exact and literal accomplishment, in less than forty years after it was uttered. (Marg. Ref. b, c.—See Luke 21: 6.)

(1.) It is a very common practice in the prophetic writings, to carry on two subjects together, a principal and a subordinate one. In Isaiah, says Lowth, there are no less than three subjects, the restoration of the Jews from Babylonish captivity, the call of the Gentiles to the Christian covenant, and the redemption of man by the Messiah, which are frequently adumbrated under the same figures and images, and are so blended and interwoven together, that it is extremely difficult to separate them from each other. In the same manner, our Savior seems to

ah, and even they shall be found liars to Him. They that would not now come at his call, shall then be forced to depart with his curse. The chief priests and scribes were displeased with the children for crying *hosanna* to Christ; but the day is coming, when proud persecutors would gladly be found in the condition of the meanest and poorest they now trample on. They who now reproach and ridicule the *hosannas* of the saints, will be of another mind shortly; it were therefore better to be of that mind now. Some make this to refer to the conversion of the Jews to the faith of Christ; then they shall see Him, and own Him, and say, *Blessed is He that cometh*; but it seems rather to look further, for the complete manifestation of Christ, and conviction of sinners, are reserved to be the glory of the last day.

CHAP. XXIV. v. 1-3. Christ's preaching was mostly practical; yet, in this chapter, we have a prophetic discourse, but of a practical tendency, and intended, not to gratify the curiosity of his disciples, but to guide their consciences and conversations; it is therefore concluded with a practical application. The church has always had particular prophecies, beside general promises, both for direction and for encouragement to believers: but it is observable, Christ preached this prophetic sermon in the close of his ministry, as the Apocalypse is the last book of the New Testament, and the prophetic books of the Old Testament are placed last, to intimate to us, that we must be well grounded in plain truths and duties, and those must first be well digested, before we dive into those things that are dark and difficult; many by beginning their Bible at the wrong end.

(1.) As being greatly pleased with them themselves, and expecting He should be so too. They had lived mostly in Galilee, at a distance from the temple, had seldom seen it, and therefore were the more struck with admiration at it, and thought He should admire, as much as they did, *all this glory*; (Gen. 31: 1.) and they would have Him divert Himself, after his preaching, and from his sorrow, perhaps, with looking about Him. Note, Even good men are apt to be too much enamored with outward pomp and gayety, and to overvalue it, even in the things of God. The temple was indeed glorious, but, [1.] Its glory was sullied and stained with the sin of the priests and people; that wicked doctrine of the Pharisees, which preferred the gold before the temple that sanctified it, was enough to deface the beauty of all its ornaments. [2.] Its glory was eclipsed by the presence of Christ in it, who was the *Glory of this latter house*, (Hag. 2: 9.) so that the buildings had no glory, in comparison with that Glory which exelled.

Or, [2.] As grieving that this house should be left desolate; they showed Him the buildings, as if they would move Him to reverse the sentence; 'Lord, let not this holy and beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, be made a desolation.' They forgot how many providences, concerning Solomon's temple, had manifested how little God cared for that outward glory which they had so much admired, when the people were wicked, 2 Chron. 7: 21. *This house, which is high, sin will bring low*. Christ had lately looked on the *precious souls and wept for them*, Luke 19: 41. The disciples look on the pompous buildings, and are ready to weep for them. In this, as in other things, *his thoughts are not like ours*. It was weakness, and meanness of spirit, in the disciples, to be so fond of fine buildings. *To a great mind nothing is great*. Seneca.

2. Christ, hereupon, foretells the utter ruin and destruction that were coming on this place, v. 2. Note, A believing foresight of the defacing of all worldly glory, will help to take us off from admiring and overvaluing it. The most beautiful body will be shortly food for worms, the most beautiful building a ruinous heap. And shall we then set our eyes on that which so soon is not, and look on that with so much admiration, which ere long we shall certainly look upon with so much contempt? *See ye not all these things?* They would have Christ look on them, and be as much in love with them as they were; He would have them look on them, and be as dead to them as He was. There is such a sight of these things as will do us good.

Christ, instead of reversing the decree, ratifies it, v. 2.

He speaks of it as a certain ruin; 'I say unto

hold out the destruction of Jerusalem, which is his principal subject, as a type of the dissolution of the world, which is the under-part of the representation. By thus judiciously mingling together these two important catastrophes, He gives at the same time a most interesting admonition to his immediate hearers, the Jews, and a most awful lesson to all his future disciples; and the benefit of his predictions, instead of being confined to one occasion, or to one people, is by this admirable management extended to every subsequent period of time, and to the whole Christian world.'

PORTRETS.

(2.) 'It seemed exceedingly improbable that this should happen in that age, considering the peace of the Jews with the Romans, and the strength of their citadel, which forced Titus himself to acknowledge that it was the singular hand of God which compelled them to relinquish fortifications, that no human power could have conquered. Chandler justly observes, that no impostor would have foretold an event so unlikely and so disagreeable.'

DODDRIGE.

'The temple was destroyed justly, because of the sins of the Jews mercifully, to take away from them the occasion of continuing in Judaism; and mysteriously, to show that the ancient sacrifices were abolished, and that the whole Jewish economy was brought to an end, and the Christian dispensation introduced.'

DR. A. CLARKE.

'We shall perceive still more the force of the expression, "not one stone shall be left upon another;" if we bear in mind that these *king-stones*, fifty feet long, twenty-four broad and sixteen thick, Josephus says were bound together with lead, and fastened with strong iron cramps, [See notes, Mark 13: 1.]

Josephus says, 'Cesar gave orders that they should demolish the whole city and temple, except the western wall of the city, and the three highest towers. Phasaelus, Hippicus, and Mariamne; but all the rest was laid so completely even with the ground, by those who dug it up from the foundation, that there was nothing left to make those who came thither believe it had ever been inhabited.'

ED.

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3 ¶ And as ⁴ he sat upon the mount of Olives, ⁵ the disciples came unto him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?'

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Take heed that no man deceive you :

d 211. Mark 13:3,4.
e 13:10,11,36. 15:12. 17:19.
f Dan. 12:8-9. Luke 21:7. John 21:21,23.
g Acts 1:7. 1 Thes. 5:1.
h 13:33,43.
i 13:39,41. j 28:20. H-b. 9:26.
k 28:38. Mark 13:35,32. Luke 21:28.
l 2 Cor. 11:14-15. Eph. 4:14. 5:1.
m 2 Thes. 2:3. 2 Pet. 2:1-3. 1 John 4:1.

the foundation they laid, and frightened away the builders. Now this prediction of the final and irreparable ruin of the temple, includes a prediction of the period of the Levitical priesthood and the ceremonial law.

3. The disciples inquire more particularly of the time when it should come to pass, and the signs of its approach, v. 3. Observe,

(1.) Where they made this inquiry; privately, as *He sat upon the mount of Olives*; probably, He was returning to Bethany, and there sat down by the way to rest Him; the mount of Olives directly faced the temple, and from thence He might have a full prospect of it at some distance; there He sat, and thus passed sentence on the temple and city. We read (Ezek. 11: 23.) of the removing of the glory of the Lord from the temple to the mountain; so Christ, the great Shechinah, here removes to this mountain.

(2.) What the inquiry itself was; v. 3. Here are three questions.

[1.] Some think, they all point to one and the same thing—the destruction of the temple, and the period of the Jewish church and nation, (spoken of ch. 16: 28.) and which would be the consummation of the age, (for so it may be read,) the finishing of that dispensation. Or, they thought the destruction of the temple must needs be the end of the world; for the rabbins used to say, that the house of the sanctuary was one of the seven things for the sake of which the world was made; and they think, if so, the world will not survive the temple.

[2.] Others think their question, *When shall these things be?* refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the other two to the end of the world; or Christ's coming may refer to his setting up his gospel-kingdom, and the end of the world to the day of judgment. I incline to think their question looked to further than the event Christ now foretold; but it appears, by other passages, that they had very confused thoughts of future events; so that perhaps it is not possible to put any certain construction on their question.

But Christ, in his answer, though He does not expressly rectify the mistakes of his disciples, (that must be done by the pouring out of the Spirit,) yet looks further than their question, and instructs his church, not only concerning the great events of that age, the destruction of Jerusalem, but concerning his second coming at the end of time, which here he insensibly slides into a discourse of, and of that, it is plain, He speaks in the next chapter, which is a continuation of this sermon.

Verse 3.

Perhaps they had a general idea, that He would go from them for a time, before He set up his kingdom; that He would at length come in a very glorious manner, according to several intimations which He had given them; that He would then execute the predicted vengeance on his enemies, destroy the temple, terminate that dispensation, and introduce his own glorious reign as the Messiah. Some expositors suppose that to be the meaning of the phrase translated, 'the end of the world.' (*Marg. Ref. h.*) But it is difficult to determine what opinions the disciples held at this time concerning that subsequent dispensation: and perhaps they scarcely knew the precise meaning of their own questions; for their views were as yet very obscure and perplexed. Some suppose, that they thought the day of judgment, and 'the end of the world,' should be immediately connected with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, and that our Lord did not see good explicitly to undeceive them. Indeed, this is not improbable; for the latter part of the chapter is couched in language very applicable to those events; and it is proper for prophecy to be in some measure obscure, till it is accomplished. The general import, however, of their inquiry was, when the events before intimated would take place; and what signs would indicate their approach. 'Being asked by the disciples, when these things, which He had intimated concerning the desolation of the temple, should take place, He set before them the order of the times, first concerning the Jews, till the destruction of Jerusalem; and then concerning men in general, till the end of the world.' *Tertullian.* (*Marg. Ref.*—See Mark 13: 1-8, v. 3, 4. Acts 1: 4-8, c. 7. 3: 19-21.)

End of the world.] 'Or, present age. Abp. Tillotson and many other excellent writers would retain our translation, and suppose here are two distinct questions: *What should be the sign of his coming to punish the ungrateful inhabitants of Jerusalem?* and *What the sign of his final appearance to the universal judgment?* And that Christ answers the first question in the former, and the second in the latter [242]

V. 4-31. The disciples had asked concerning the times, *When these things should be.* Christ gives them no answer to that, for it is not for us to know the times; (Acts 1: 7.) but they had asked, *What shall be the sign?* and to that He answers fully, for we are concerned to understand the signs of the times, ch. 16: 3. Now the prophecy primarily respects the events near at hand—the destruction of Jerusalem, the period of the Jewish church and state, the calling of the Gentiles, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom in the world; but as the prophecies of the Old Testament, which have an immediate reference to the affairs of the Jews and the revolutions of their state, under the figure of them, do certainly look further, to the gospel-church and the kingdom of the Messiah, and are expounded in the New Testament; and such expressions are found in those predictions as are peculiar thereto, and not applicable otherwise; so this prophecy, under the type of Jerusalem's destruction, looks as far forward as the general judgment; and, as is usual in prophecies, some passages are most applicable to the type, and others to the antitype; and toward the close, as usual, it points more particularly to the latter. It is observable, that what Christ here saith to his disciples, tends more to engage their caution than to satisfy their curiosity; more to prepare them for the events that should happen, than to give them a distinct idea of the events themselves. This is that good understanding of the times we should all covet, thence to infer what Israel ought to do: and so this prophecy is of lasting use to the church, and will be so to the end of time; for the thing that has been, is that which shall be, (Eccl. 1: 5, 6, 7, 9.) and the series, connection, and presages of events, are much the same still that they were then; so that upon the prophecy of this chapter, pointing at that event, moral prognostications may be made, and such constructions of the signs of the times, as the wise man's heart will know how to improve.

I. Christ here foretells the going forth of deceivers; *Take heed that no man deceive you.* They expected to be told when these things should be; but this caution is a check to their curiosity; 'What is that to you? Mind your duty, and be not seduced from following Me.' Those that are most inquisitive concerning the secret things which belong not to them, are most easily imposed on by seducers, 2 Thess. 2: 3. The disciples, when they heard that the Jews, their most inveterate enemies, should be destroyed, might be in danger of falling into security; 'Nay,' saith Christ, 'you are more exposed other ways.' Seducers are more dangerous enemies to the church than persecutors.

Three times in this discourse He mentions the

part of the chapter; though where the transition is made, has been much debated. Others have supposed the apostles took it for granted the world was to be at an end when Jerusalem was destroyed; and that Christ was solicitous to undeceive them, as their error might make them so much the more watchful; and therefore answers in ambiguous terms, which might suit either of these events. But it seems much more natural to conclude, that they expected the wicked persecutors of Christ (in which number most of the magistrates and priests were) would by some signal judgment be destroyed; and that hereupon He would erect a most illustrious kingdom, and probably a more magnificent temple, which they might think described in Ezekiel: an expectation they did not entirely quit even to the day of his ascension. See Acts 1: 6. Our Lord, with perfect integrity and consummate wisdom, gives them an account of the prognosticating and concomitant signs of the destruction of Jerusalem; and then, without saying one word of any temporal kingdom to be erected, raises their thoughts to the final judgment, (to which the figures used in the former description might be applied, and sets before them a heavenly kingdom, and eternal life, as the great object of their pursuit. Matt. 25: 34, 46. This I take to be the key to this whole discourse.)

Verse 5.

In the reign of Nero, when Felix was procurator of Judea, such a number of these impostors made their appearance, that many of them were seized and put to death every day. *Ep. Porcius.* These deceivers, promising the Jews deliverance from the Roman yoke, and temporal dominion, drew after them many followers, and excited great insurrections. This exasperated the Romans: numbers perished miserably, and the siege and destruction of Jerusalem were accelerated by these commotions. At the same time, they took off men's attention from the Gospel, and occasioned many to perish by neglecting so great salvation. (*Marg. Ref.*—Notes, 23-25. Luke 21: 7-11, 8.)

DODDRIDGE.

SCOTT.

(2.) The proof they should offer for making good these pretences. (v. 24.) not true miracles, those are a divine seal, and with those the doctrine of Christ stands confirmed: therefore, if any offer to draw us from that, by signs and wonders, we must have recourse to that rule given of old, Deut. 13: 1, 2, 3. *If the sign or wonder come to pass, yet follow not him that*

extraordinary prophecy in this chapter, with deep conviction of the truth of our divine religion, let us apply it to our edification, by considering the events predicted as typical of far more important transactions.—In prospect of the approaching season of final retribution, we must grieve, if we be indeed real Christians, to see such innumerable multitudes deceived into a presumptuous hope and fallacious peace. Wars, insurrections, famines, pestilences, earthquakes, which desolate nations, will also excite our sympathizing concern; yet we should not be too much discomposed at bearing of them; for the Lord is thus carrying on his grand designs, in perfect wisdom, justice, truth, and mercy. (See *John 14: 1, 27, 28, p. 27*.) It is a vain superstition to conclude from such events, that the end of the world is at hand; for they have occurred, again and again, in different ages, to answer some wise and righteous purposes: but we are not competent to know the designs of God, in his mysterious dispensations.—To ungodly men, the most tremendous temporal calamities are but "the beginnings of sorrows" and the prevalence of impiety is, in fact, a far more awful dispensation than any other judgment.

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'Matthew and Mark were incontestably dead before the event foretold by this prophecy, as Luke also probably might be; and as for John, the only evangelist who survived it, it is remarkable that he says nothing of it, lest any should say the prophecy was forged after the event happened.'

West, in Doddridge

9 Then 'shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

10 And then 'shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

10:17-22. 22:5. 23:34. Mark 13: 9-13. Luke 19:49. 21:12-16. Mark 13: 15:19, 20. 16:2. Acts 4:23, 5: 40, 41. 7:59. 12:2. 21:31, 32. 22:19-22. 23:28. 1 Thes. 2:14-16. Rev. 2:10. 6:5-11. 7:14. 11:6. 13:21-57. 26:31-34. Mark 4:17. John 6:50, 61, 68, 67. 2 Tim. 1: 15. 4:10, 16. 10:21. 13:38. 26:21-24. Mic. 7:5, 8. Mark 13:12. Luke 21:16.

it, even those that were thought to stand fast. Men's knowledge, gifts, learning, eminent station, and long profession, will not secure them; nothing but the almighty grace of God, pursuant to his eternal purpose, will be a protection. Secondly, The safety of the elect, which is taken for granted in that parenthesis, *If it were possible*, plainly implying that it is not possible, for they are kept by the power of God, that the purpose of God, according to the election, may stand. It is possible for those that have been enlightened to fall away, (Heb. 6: 4, 5, 6.) but not for those that were elected. If God's chosen ones be deceived, God's choice is defeated, which is not to be imagined, for whom He did predestinate, He called, justified, and glorified, Rom. 8: 30. They were given to Christ; and of all that were given to Him, He will lose none, John 10: 28. Grotius will have this to be meant of the great difficulty of drawing the primitive Christians from their religion, and quotes it as used proverbially by Galen; when he would express a thing very difficult and morally impossible, he saith, 'You may sooner draw away a Christian from Christ.'

(4.) The repeated cautions our Savior gives to his disciples to stand on their guard against them, p. 25. He that is told before where he will be assaulted, may save himself, as the king of Israel did, 2 Kings 6: 9, 10. Note, Christ's warnings are designed to engage our watchfulness; and though the elect shall be preserved from delusion, yet it shall be by the use of appointed means, and a due regard to the cautions of the word; we are kept through faith, faith in Christ's word, which He has told us before.

[1.] We must not believe those that say, *Lo, here is Christ*; or, *Lo, He is there*, v. 23. We believe that the true Christ is at the right hand of God, and that his spiritual presence is where two or three are gathered together in his name; believe not those therefore who would draw you off from a Christ in heaven, by telling you He is any where on earth; or draw you off from the true church on earth, by telling you He is here, or there; believe it not. Note, There is not a greater enemy to true faith than vain credulity. The simple believes every word, and runs after every cry. Beware of believing.

[2.] We must not hearken to every empiric and pretender, nor follow every

Verses 9-14.

The persecutions, to which the disciples would themselves be exposed, formed the next sign of the times. (Marg. Ref. s.) When these should be excited, many professed believers would be stumbled, and apostatize for fear of suffering; and then, to ingratiate themselves with the persecutors, they would become traitors, and bitter enemies to the Christians, and concur in apprehending them, and exercising cruelties on them. (Marg. Ref. u.—Notes, 10: 16-23. 13: 20, 21. Mark 13: 9-13.) At the same time, many false prophets would appear among the Christians, as distinct from the false Christs above mentioned, 'speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them.' These would deceive many souls, and bring an additional odium on the cause by their corrupt tenets and practices. (Note, 2 Pet. 2: 1-3.) And, through the prevalence of treachery, injustice, cruelty, and all kinds of wickedness, many, who did not openly apostatize, would become lukewarm: they would lose their apparent zeal for the cause, and love to their brethren, and become shy of them, and afraid of showing them any favor. (Notes, Rev. 2: 2-5, v. 4. 3: 14-16.) Yet some would continue steadfast in the midst of these multiplied and varied difficulties; and they would be preserved from all real evil, and saved for ever. (Marg. Ref. a.) Notwithstanding all these commotions and scandals, the Gospel would soon be preached through the various nations of the Roman empire, and in the different parts of the then known world; for a witness to them, that the Messiah was come, to be 'a Light to lighten the Gentiles,' and 'to be for salvation to the ends of the earth;' and when this should be accomplished, the end of the Jewish church and state would come. 'It appears from the most credible records, that the Gospel was preached in Idumea, Syria, and Mesopotamia, by Jude; in Egypt, Marmarica, Mauritania, and other parts of Africa, by Mark, Simon, and Jude; in Ethiopia, by Candace's eunuch and Matthias; in Pontus, Galatia, and the neighboring parts of Asia, by Peter; in the territories of the seven Asiatic churches, by John; in Parthia, by Matthew; in Scythia, by Philip and Andrew; in the northern and western parts of Asia, by Bartholomew; in Persia, by Simon and Jude; in Media, Carmania, and several eastern parts, by Thomas; through the vast tract from Jerusalem round about unto Illyricum, by Paul, as also in Italy, and probably in Spain, Gaul, and Britain; in most of which places Christian churches were planted, in less than thirty years after the death of Christ, which was before the destruction of Jerusalem.' Doddridge. 'The world and Satan furiously raving in no purpose; the Gospel shall be every where propagated,

would draw you to serve other gods, or believe in other Christs, for the Lord your God proeth you. But these were lying wonders wrought by Satan, (God permitting him,) 2 Thess. 2: 9. It is not said, *They shall work miracles*, but, *They shall show great signs*; they are but a show; either they impose on men's credulity by false narratives, or deceive their senses by tricks of legerdemain, or arts of divination, as the magicians of Egypt by their enchantments.

(3.) Their success.

[1.] *They shall deceive many*, (v. 5.) and again, v. 11. Note, The devil and his instruments may prevail far in deceiving souls; few find the strait gate, but many are drawn into the broad way. Note, Neither apparent miracles nor multitudes are certain signs of a true church; for all the world wonders after the beast, Rev. 13: 3.

They shall deceive, if it were possible, the very elect, v. 24. This bespeaks, First, The strength of the delusion; many shall be carried away by

one that puts up the finger to point us to a new Christ, and a new gospel; 'Go not forth, you are in danger of being taken by them; therefore keep out of harm's way, be not carried about with every wind; many a man's vain curiosity to go forth hath led him into a fatal apostasy; your strength at such a time is to sit still, to have the heart established with grace.'

II. He foretells wars and great commotions among the nations, v. 6, 7. When Christ was born, there was a universal peace in the empire, the temple of Janus was shut; but think not that Christ came to send, or continue, such a peace; (Luke 12: 51.) no, his city and his wall are to be built in troublesome times, and even wars shall forward his work. From the time that the Jews rejected Christ, the sword never departed from their house, because He had given it a charge against a hypocritical nation and the people of his wrath, and by it brought ruin on them.

Here is, 1. A prediction of the events of the day. You will now shortly hear of wars and rumors of wars: every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, Isa. 9: 5. See how terrible it is, (Jer. 4: 10.) *Thou hast heard, O my soul, the alarm of wars!* Even the quiet, and the least inquisitive, cannot but hear the rumors of war. See what comes of refusing the Gospel! Those that will not hear the messengers of peace, shall be made to hear the messengers of war. God has a sword ready to avenge the quarrel of his covenant, his new covenant. *Nation shall rise up against nation*, that is, one part or province of the Jewish nation against another; (2 Chron. 15: 5, 6.) so that they shall be destroyed one of another, Isa. 9: 19, 21.

2. A prescription of the duty of the day; *See that ye be not troubled*. Is it possible to hear such sad news, and not be troubled? Yet, where the heart is fixed, trusting in God, it is kept in peace, and is not afraid, no, not of the evil tidings of wars, and rumors of wars. *Be not troubled; Be not put into confusion or commotion*. Note, It is against the mind of Christ, that his people should have troubled hearts even in troublous times, and there is need of constant care and watchfulness accordingly.

We must not be troubled, for two reasons:

(1.) Because we are bid to expect this; the Jews must be punished; the justice of God and the honor of the Redeemer must be asserted; therefore all those things must come to pass; the word is gone out of God's mouth, and it

'and they that constantly believe it shall be saved. When Jerusalem shall be utterly destroyed, the church, so far from being desolated, shall be extended to the utmost borders of the earth.' Beza. (Marg. Ref. b-d.)

(9.) *Shall deliver you up, &c.* 'Peter and John were called before the sanhedrim, (Acts 4: 6, 7.) James and Peter before Herod, (Acts 12: 2, 2.) and Paul before Nero, as well as before Gallio, Felix and Festus.'

DODDRIDGE. 'In the persecution under Nero, Peter and Paul, besides numberless others, suffered martyrdom; and it was, as Tertullian says, a war against the very name.'

Ye shall be hated by all, &c. 'That not only the apostles but all the primitive Christians were in general more hated and persecuted than any other religious sect, is notorious to all acquainted with ecclesiastical history: a fact which might seem unaccountable, when we consider what their temper and conduct was, and how friendly an aspect their tenets had on the security of any government under which they lived. Warburton has shown, that the true reason of this opposition was, that while the different pagan religions, like the confederated demons honored by them, sociably agreed with each other, the Gospel taught Christians, not only, like the Jews, to bear their testimony to the falsehood of them all, but also with the most fervent zeal to urge the renunciation of them as a point of absolute necessity; requiring all men, on the most tremendous penalties, to believe in Christ, and in all things to submit themselves to his authority. A demand which bore so hard on the pride and licentiousness of their princes, and the secular interests of their priests, that it is no wonder they raised such a storm against it; which, considering the character and prejudices of the populace, it must be very easy to do.'

DODDRIDGE. (10.) *And shall betray one another.* 'Tacitus, speaking of the persecution under Nero, says, "At first several were seized, who confessed, and then, by their discovery, a great multitude of others were convicted and executed."

BURDER. Offended.] 'Will abandon their Christian profession. Thus Phygellus, Hermogenes, Demas, and many more, doubtless, not on record.'

GROSVENOR. 'None are more bitter enemies to true religion than those who have abandoned it: either because God avenges their contempt of the light, by permitting them to fall into the grossest mental darkness; or because they omit nothing that may free them from suspicion of attachment to their former principles.'

11 And *many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

5:24, 7:15, Mark 13:22, Acts 20:30, 1 Tim. 4:1, 2 Pet. 2:1, 1 John 2:19, 36, 41, Jude 4, Rev. 19:20, Jan. 4:1-4, 5:1-6, Rev. 2:1-5, 3:15-16, 6:10, 10:2, Mark 13:13, Luke 8:15, Rom. 2:7, 1 Cor. 13, Heb. 3:14, 10:39, Rev. 2:10.

more judgments than one to bring down the Jewish power; more vials of wrath must yet be poured out; but one woe is past, more woes are yet to come; therefore sink unto the present burthen, but rather gather in all the strength and spirit you have, to encounter what is yet before you. Be not troubled to hear of wars and rumors of wars; for then what will become of you when the famines and pestilences come? If it be a vexation to be to understand the report, (Isa. 28: 19.) what will it be to feel the stroke, when it toucheth the bone and the flesh? If we be frightened at a little brook in our way, what shall we do in the swellings of Jordan? Jer. 12: 5.

III. He foretells other judgments more immediately sent of God—*Famines, pestilences, and earthquakes*. Famine is often the effect of war, and pestilence of famine. These were the three judgments which David was to choose one out of; and he was in a great strait, for he knew not which was the worst: but what dreadful desolations will they make, when they all pour in together! Beside war, there shall be,

1. *Famine*, signified by the black horse under the third seal, Rev. 6: 5, 6. We read of a famine in Judea, not long after Christ's time, which was very impoverishing; (Acts 11: 28, 29.) but the sorest famine was in Jerusalem during the siege. See Lam. 4: 9, 10.

2. *Pestilences*, signified by the pale horse, and Death on him, and the grave at his heels, under the fourth seal, Rev. 6: 7, 8. This destroys without distinction, and in a little time lays heaps upon heaps.

3. *Earthquakes in divers places*, or from place to place, pursuing those that flee from them, as in the days of Uzziah, Zech. 14: 5. Great desolations have sometimes been made by earthquakes. In the apocalyptic visions, it is observable, that earthquakes bode good, and no evil, to the church, Rev. 6: 12. Compare v. 15. 11, 12, 13, 19. 16: 17—19. When God shakes terribly the earth, (Isa. 2: 21.) it is to shake the wicked out of it, (Job 38: 13.) and to introduce the Desire of all nations, Hag. 2: 6, 7. But here they are spoken of as dreadful judgments, and yet but the beginning of sorrows, of travelling pains, quick, violent, yet tedious too. Note, When God judgeth, He will overcome; when He begins in wrath, He will make a full end, 1 Sam. 3: 12. When we look forward to the eternity of misery that is before the obstinate refusers of Christ and his Gospel, we may truly say, concerning the greatest temporal judgments, 'They are but the beginning of sorrows.'

IV. He foretells the persecution of his own people and ministers, and a general apostasy and decay in religion, thereupon, v. 9, 10, 12, 13. Observe,

1. The cross itself foretold, v. 9. Note, Of all future events, we are as much concerned, though commonly as little desirous, to know of our own sufferings as of any thing else. Then, when famines and pestilences prevail, then they shall impute them to the Christians, and make that a pretence for persecuting them; *Away with Christians to the lions*. Christ had told his disciples what hard things they should suffer, but they had hitherto experienced little of it; now, He reminds them, that the less they had suffered, the more there was behind to be filled up, Col. 1: 24.

(1.) They shall be afflicted with bonds and imprisonments, cruel mockings and scourges, as blessed Paul; (2 Cor. 11: 23, 25.) not killed outright, but killed all the day long, in deaths often, killed so as to feel themselves die, made a spectacle to the world, 1 Cor. 4: 9, 11.

(2.) They shall be killed; so cruel are the church's enemies, that nothing less will satisfy them than the blood of the saints, which they thirst after, suck, and shed, like water.

(3.) They shall be hated of all nations for Christ's name's sake, as He had told them before, ch. 10: 22. The world was generally leavened with enmity and malignity to Christians; the Jews, though spiteful to the heathen, were never persecuted by them so as the Christians were; they were hated by the Jews that were dispersed among the nations, were the common butt of the world's malice. What shall we think of this world, when the best men had the worst usage in it? It is the cause that makes the martyr, and comforts him; it was for Christ's sake that they were thus hated; their professing and preaching his name increased the nations so much against them; the devil finding a fatal shock thereby given to his kingdom, and that his time was likely to be short, came down having great wrath.

2. The offence of the cross, v. 10, 12. Satan thus carries on his interest by force of arms, though Christ, at length, will bring glory to Himself out of the sufferings of his people and ministers. Three ill effects of persecution are here foretold:

(1.) False prophets. (2.) False teachers. It appears probable these were Jews, but Rosenmüller interprets this of Christians to whom it may be added, for even in that early age they had begun grievously

shall be accomplished in its season. Note, The consideration of the unchangeableness of the divine counsels, which govern all events, should compose and quiet our spirits, whatever happens. God is but performing the thing that is appointed for us, and our inordinate trouble is an interpretative quarrel with that appointment. Let us therefore acquiesce, because these things must come to pass; not only as the product of the divine counsel, but as a mean in order to a further end. The old house must be taken down, (though it cannot be done without noise, and dust, and danger,) ere the new fabric can be erected; the things that are shaken, must be removed, that the things which cannot be shaken may remain, Heb. 12: 27.

(2.) Because we are still to expect worse; The end is not yet, and while time lasts, we must expect trouble; the end of one affliction will be but the beginning of another; or, The end of these troubles is not yet; there must be

(1.) The apostasy of some. When the profession of Christianity begins to cost men dear then shall many be offended; they will begin to quarrel with their religion, sit loose to it, grow weary of it, and at length revolt from it. Note, [1.] It is no new thing (though a strange thing) for those that have known the way of righteousness, to turn aside out of it. Paul often complains of deserters. They were with us, but went out from us, because not truly of us, 1 John 2: 19. We are told of it before. [2.] Suffering times are shaking times; and those fall in the storm, that stood in fair weather, like the stony-ground hearers, ch. 13: 21. Many will follow Christ in the sunshine, who will shift for themselves, and leave Him to do so too, in the cloudy, dark day. They like their religion while they can have it cheap, but, if their profession cost them any thing, they quit it presently.

(2.) The malignity of others. When persecution is in fashion, envy, enmity, and malice are strangely diffused into the minds of men by contagion; and charity, tenderness, and moderation are looked on as singularities. Then they shall betray one another, that is, 'Those that have treacherously deserted their religion, shall hate and betray those who adhere to it, for whom they have pretended friendship.' Apostates have commonly been the most bitter and violent persecutors. Note, Persecuting times are discovering times. Wolves in sheep's clothing will then throw off their disguise, and appear wolves: they shall betray one another, and hate one another. The times must needs be perilous, when treachery and hatred, two of the worst things that can be, because directly contrary to two of the best, (truth and love,) shall have the ascendant. This seems to refer to the barbarous treatment which the several contending factions among the Jews gave to one another; and justly were they left thus to bite and devour one another, till they were consumed one of another; or it may refer to the mischiefs done to Christ's disciples by those that were nearest to them, as ch. 10: 21. The brother shall deliver up the brother to death.

(3.) The general declining and cooling of most, v. 12. In seducing times, when false prophets arise, in persecuting times, when the saints are hated, expect these two things:

[1.] The abounding of iniquity; the world always lies in wickedness, yet there are times in which it may be said, that iniquity doth in a special manner abound; as when violence is risen up to a rod of wickedness, (Ezek. 7: 11.) so that hell seems to be broke loose in blasphemies against God, and enmities to the saints.

[2.] The abating of love; this is the consequence of the former; v. 12. Understand it in general of true godliness, which is all summed up in love; it is too common for professors of religion to grow cool in their profession, when the wicked are hot in their wickedness; as the church of Ephesus in bad times left her first love, Rev. 2: 4. Or, it may be understood more particularly of brotherly love. When iniquity abounds, this grace commonly waxes cold. Christians begin to be shy and suspicious one of another, affections are alienated, distances created, parties made, and so love comes to nothing. The devil is the accuser of the brethren, not only to their enemies which makes persecuting iniquity abound, but of one to another, which makes the love of many to wax cold.

This gives a melancholy prospect of the times, that there shall be such a great decay of love; but, First, It is of the love of many, not of all. In the worst times, God has his remnant that hold fast their integrity, and retain their zeal, as in Elijah's days, when he thought himself left alone. Secondly, This love is grown cold, but not dead; it abates, but is not quite cast off. There is life in the root, which will show itself when the winter is past. The new nature may wax cold, but shall not wax old, for then it would decay and vanish.

3. Comfort administered in reference to this offence of the cross, for the support of the

to corrupt the orthodox doctrines. Grotius instances Hymeneus and Philetus, Simon Magus, Carpocrates, Cerinthus, Ebion, and others.

14 And ^bthis gospel of the kingdom ^cshall be preached in all the world, for a witness unto all nations; ^dand then shall the end come.

15 When ^eye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of ^fby Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place; (^gwhoso readeth, ^hlet him understand:)

[Practical Observations.]

t 1:23. 9:35. 10:7. Acts 20:25.
c 23:19. Mark 16:15, 16. Luke 24:47.
d Acts 13:8. Rom. 10:18. 15:18-21.
16:25, 26. Col. 1:28, 29.
e 3:6. Ez. 7:5-7, 10.
f Mark 13:14. Luke 19:43. 21:20.
g Dan. 9:27. 12:11.
h Ez. 4:14. Dan. 9:3, 25. 10:12-14.
Heb. 2:1. Rev. 1:3. 3:22.

receive the end of their faith and hope, *even the salvation of their souls*, 1 Pet. 1:9. Rom. 2:7. Rev. 3:20. The crown of glory will make amends for all; and a believing regard to that will enable us to choose rather to die at a stake with the persecuted, than to live in a palace with the persecutors.

V. He foretells the preaching of the Gospel in all the world; v. 14. Observe here, 1. It is called the *Gospel of the kingdom*, because it reveals the kingdom of grace, which leads to the kingdom of glory, sets up Christ's kingdom in this world, and secures ours in the other. 2. This Gospel, sooner or later, is to be preached in all the world, to every creature, and all nations are to be disciplined by it; for in it Christ is to be *Salvation to the ends of the earth*; for this end the gift of tongues was the *first fruits of the Spirit*. 3. The Gospel is preached *for a witness to all nations*, that is, a faithful declaration of the mind and will of God, concerning the duty which God requires from man, and the recompense which man may expect from God. It is a *record*, (1 John 5:11.) a *witness*, for those who believe, that they shall be saved, and against those who persist in unbelief, that they shall be damned. See Mark 16:16. But how does this come in here?

(1.) It is intimated that the Gospel should be, if not heard, yet at least heard of throughout the then known world, before the destruction of Jerusalem; it at the Old-Testament church should not be quite dissolved till the New-Testament was pretty well settled. Better is the face of a corrupt degenerate church than none at all. Within forty years after Christ's death, the sound of the Gospel was *gone forth to the ends of the earth*, Rom. 10:13. Paul *fully preached the Gospel from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum*; and the other apostles were not idle. The persecuting of the saints at Jerusalem helped to disperse them, so that they *went every where preaching the word*, Acts 8:1, 4. And when the tidings of the Redeemer are sent over all parts of the world, then shall come the end of the Jewish state. Thus, that which they thought to prevent, by putting Christ to death, they thereby procured; *all men believed on Him, and the Romans came, and*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9-15. In this evil world, believers must experience, as well as witness, afflictions; not only in common with other men, but many peculiar to themselves. If we escape persecution, we must expect contempt, reproach, and hatred. This sharp trial is often increased, by our being called to weep over such as are fallen, and to tremble for ourselves lest we also be offended.—Apostates often prove the most treacherous and rancorous enemies of those with whom they formerly associated: for the evil spirit has returned with seven others more wicked than himself; and their last state must be worse than the first. (Notes, 12:43-45. 2 Pet. 2:20-22.) These things loudly call upon us to pray for ourselves and our brethren, and to dread the least beginning of negligence, in attending on the great concerns of our souls.—But besides the greedy wolves, sometimes let loose to waste the flock, men ^dalso arise from among ourselves speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them; ^ewhose pernicious tenets and unholy lives bring still greater scandal on the cause of Christ. (Note, Acts 20:29-31.) When iniquity thus abounds, ^f'the love of many,'

nay, of most professors of the Gospel, is apt to wax cold; they grow lukewarm and selfish, devoid of heavenly zeal or brotherly affection; and only warm in fierce disputes and controversies with each other, instead of uniting against their common enemies. Yet, in the midst of all these evils, there is a remnant, who endure every trial, as gold abides the fire; these, and these only, continue unto the end, and are saved, being ^g'kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.'—Notwithstanding all the efforts of earth and hell, and all the evils in the church, the Gospel must be preached in all the world, and with most glorious success through all nations, before ^h'the end come'; and let us endeavor so to understand the prophecies relating to these events, as to know our duty according ⁱ'to the signs of the times' we live in.—While we remember that the abominations of idolatry, within the Christian church, are sure indications of approaching desolations, or spiritual judgments still more to be dreaded, let us learn to separate from the corruptors, and shun all approaches to these corruptions of our holy faith.

SCOTT.

(14.) *The world.* (Luke 2:1. 4:5. 21:26. Acts 11:28. Rom. 10:18. Heb. 1:6. Rev. 3:10.) It properly signifies the whole inhabitable earth, whether inhabited or not: but it is sometimes used for the Roman empire: (See Luke 2:1.) and is by many restricted to that sens. in this place, perhaps improperly. (Mark 16:15. Col. 1:6, 23.)

VERSES 15-18.

'An abomination' is the scriptural term for idols and idolatry, and in various ways these tended to desolate the church; but 'the abomination of desolation' here signifies, the Roman armies with their idolatrous standards, encamping on the holy ground, which was supposed to extend to some furlongs distance from Jerusalem, on every side. (Marg. Ref. c. f.—Luke 21:20.) This approach of the Roman armies to besiege the city was pointed out to the Christians, as the signal for them to retire to a place of safety, and they were exhorted to apply [246]

took away their place and nation. John 11:43. Paul speaks of the Gospel *being come to all the world, and preached to every creature*, Col. 1:6, 23.

(2.) It is likewise intimated, that, even in times of temptation, trouble, and persecution, the Gospel shall be preached and propagated, and force its way through the greatest opposition, though enemies grow very hot, and many friends very cool. And even then, when many fall by sword and flame, and many do wickedly, and are corrupted by flatteries, yet then the people that know their God shall be strengthened to do the greatest exploits of all, in instructing many; see Dan. 11:32, 33. and see an instance, Phil. 1:12-14.

(3.) That which seems chiefly intimated here, is, that the end of the world shall not be till the Gospel has done its work in the world; *then cometh the end, when the kingdom shall be delivered up to God, even the Father*; whe. the mystery of God shall be finished, the mystica body completed, and the nations either converted and saved, or convicted and silenced; *then shall the end come*, of which He had said before, (v. 6, 7.) *not yet*, not till those intermediate counsels be fulfilled.

VI. He foretells more particularly the ruin that was coming on the Jews, their city, temple, and nation, v. 15, &c. Here He comes more closely to answer their question concerning the desolation of the temple; and what He said here would be of use to his disciples, both for their conduct and for their comfort, in reference to that great event; He describes the several steps of that calamity, such as are usual in war.

1. The Romans *setting up the abomination of desolation in the holy place*, v. 15. Now, (1.) Some understand by this, an image, or statue, set up in the temple by some of the Roman governors, which was very offensive to the Jews, provoked them to rebel, and so brought the desolation upon them. The image of Jupiter Olympius, which Antiochus caused to be set on the altar of God, is called, *The abomination of desolation*, the very word here used by the historian, 1 Mac. 1:54. Since the captivity in Babylon, nothing was, nor could be, more distasteful to the Jews, than an image in the holy place, as appeared by the mighty opposition they made when Herod offered to set up his statue there; but Herod did set up an eagle over the temple-gate; and, some say, the statue of Titus was set up in the temple. (2.) Others choose to expound it by the parallel

their minds, that they might understand what they read. 'By the special providence of God, after the Romans under Cestius Gallus, n. a. s. their first advance towards Jerusalem, they suddenly withdrew again, in a most unexpected, and indeed impolitic manner; at which Joseph *psestifles* his surprise, since the city might then have easily been taken. By this mean, they gave, as it were, a signal to the Christians to retire: which in regard to this admonition they did, save to Pella, and others to mount Libanus, and thereby preserved their lives. Doddridge. 'Josephus also informs us, that when Vespasian was drawing his forces towards Jerusalem, a great multitude fled from Jericho into the mountainous country, for their security.' Bp Porteus. 'Then the Christians fled to Pella, a mountainous country and other places under the government of King Agrippa, where they found safety.' Whittly. (Marg. Ref. g-k.—Notes Mark 13:14-23, v. 14. Luke 17:33-37. 21:20-24.)

SCOTT.

16 Then ^h let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:

17 Let him ⁱ which is on ^k the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house;

18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

19 And ^l woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

^h Gen. 19:15-17. Ex. 9:20, 21. Prov. 23:3. Jer. 6:1. 37:11, 12. Luke 21:21, 22. Heb. 11:7. 16:23. Job 24. Prov. 8:4-5. Mark 13:15, 16. Luke 17:31-33. ^k 19:27. Dent. 2:3. Deut. 28:3-56. 2 Sam. 44. 2 Kings 15:16. Lam. 4:24, 10. Hos. 13:16. Mark 13:17, 18. Luke 21:23. 23:29, 30.

would both confirm his prediction, and take off the odium of it. They might likewise from thence gather the time of it—soon after the cutting off Messiah the Prince; the sin that procured it—their rejecting Him, and the certainty of it—it is a desolation determined. As Christ by his precepts confirmed the law, so by his predictions He confirmed the prophecies of the Old Testament, and it will be of good use to compare both together.

Reference being here had to a prophecy, which is commonly dark and obscure, Christ inserts this memorandum, 'Whoso readeth let him understand; whoso readeth the prophecy of Daniel, let him understand that it is to have its accomplishment now shortly in the desolations of Jerusalem.' Note, Those that read the Scriptures should labor to understand them, else their reading is to little purpose; we cannot use that which we do not understand. See John 5:39. Acts 8:30. The angel, that delivered this prophecy to Daniel, stirred him up to know and understand, Dan. 9:25. And we must not despair of understanding even dark prophecies; the great New-Testament prophecy is called a revelation, not a secret. Now, things revealed belong to us, and therefore must be humbly and diligently searched into. Or, Let him understand, not only the Scriptures which speak of those things, but, by the Scriptures, let him understand the times, 1 Chron. 12:32. Let him observe and take notice; so some read it; let him be assured, that, notwithstanding the vain noises with which the deluded people feed themselves, the abominable armies will make desolate.

2. The means of preservation which thinking men should betake themselves to: (v. 16, 20.) Then let them which are in Judea flee. We may take this,

(1.) As a prediction of the ruin itself; that it should be irresistible. It speaks that which Jeremiah so much insisted on, but in vain, when Jerusalem was besieged by the Chaldeans, that it would be to no purpose to resist, but that it was their wisdom to yield and capitulate; so Christ here, to show how fruitless it would be to stand it out, bids every one make the best of his way.

(2.) We may take it as a direction to the followers of Christ what to do, not to say, A confederacy with those who fought and warred against the Romans for the preservation of their city and nation, only that they might consume the wealth of both on their lusts; (for to this very affair the struggles of the Jews against the Roman power, some years before their final overthrow, the apostle refers, (Jam. 4:1-3,) but let them acquiesce in the decree that was gone forth, and with all speed quit the city and country, as they would quit a falling house or a sinking ship, as Lot quitted Sodom, and Israel the tents of Dathan and Abiram; He shows them,

[1.] Whither they must flee—from Judea to the mountains; not the mountains round about Jerusalem, but those in the remote corners of the land, which would be some shelter to them, not so much by their strength as by their secrecy. Israel is said to be scattered upon the mountains; (2 Chron. 18:16.) and see Heb. 11:38. It would be safer among the lions' dens, and the mountains of the leopards, than among the seditious Jews, or the enraged Romans. Note, In times of imminent peril and danger, it is not only lawful, but our duty, to seek our own preservation by all good and honest means; and if God opens a door of escape, we ought to make our escape, otherwise we do not trust God, but tempt Him. There may be a time when even those that are in Judea, where God is known, and his name is great, must flee to the

mountains; and while we only go out of the way of danger, not out of the way of duty, we may trust God to provide a dwelling for his outcasts, Isa. 16:4, 5. In times of public calamity, when it is manifest that we cannot be serviceable at home, and may be safe abroad, Providence calls us to make our escape.

[2.] What haste they must make, v. 17, 18. The life will be in danger, in imminent danger, the scourge will slay suddenly; and therefore he that is on the house-top, when the alarm comes, let him not come down into the house, to look after his effects there, but go the nearest way down, to make his escape; and so he that shall be in the field will find it his wisest course to run immediately, and not return to fetch his clothes or the wealth of his house; for, First, Packing up his things would delay his flight. Note, When death is at the door, delays are dangerous; it was the charge to Lot, Look not behind thee. Those that are convinced of their sin and ruin, and, consequently, of the necessity of fleeing to Christ, must take heed, lest, after all, they perish eternally by delays. Secondly, The carrying of his clothes, and his other movables and valuables, would but burthen him, and clog his flight. The Syrians, in their flight, cast away their garments, 2 Kings 7:15. At such a time we must be thankful if our lives be given us for a prey, though we can save nothing, Jer. 45:4, 5. For the life is more than meat, ch. 6:25. Those who carried off least, were safest in their flight. The penniless traveller can lose nothing by robbers. It was to his own disciples that Christ recommended this forgetfulness of their house and clothes, who had a habitation in heaven, treasure there, and durable clothing, which the enemy could not plunder them of. I have all my property with me, said Bios the philosopher, in his flight, empty-handed. He that has grace in his heart, carries his all along with him, when stripped of all.

Now, of all the twelve, John only lived to see this dismal day; the rest needed not to be hidden in the mountains, (Christ hid them in heaven;) but they left the direction to their successors in profession, who pursued it, and it was of use to them; for, when the Christians in Jerusalem and Judea saw the ruin coming on, they all retired to a town called Pella, on the other side Jordan, where they were safe; so that, of the many thousands that perished in the destruction of Jerusalem, there was not so much as one Christian. See Euseb. Eccl. Hist. lib. 3. cap. 5. Thus the prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself, Prov. 22:3. Heb. 11:7. This warning was not kept private. Matthew's Gospel was published long before that destruction, so that others might have taken the advantage of it; but their perishing through their unbelief of this, was a figure of their eternal perishing through their unbelief of the warnings Christ gave, concerning the wrath to come.

[3.] Whom it would go hard with at that time; v. 19. To this same event that saying of Christ at his death refers, Luke 23:29. They shall say, Blessed are the wombs that never bare, and the paps that never gave suck. Happy are they that have no children to see the murder of; but most unhappy they whose wombs are then bearing, their paps then giving suck; they of all others will be in the most melancholy circumstances. First, To them the famine would be most grievous, when they should see the tongue of the sucking child cleaving to the roof of his mouth for thirst, and themselves by the calamity made more cruel

[15.] Flee to the mountains. For defence as well as refuge, for which purpose we perpetually find the mountains used. There is mention made in Josephus of the hill-fortresses, which were so strong, that Titus thought they would have been impregnable, without the help of God.

[16-18.] Judea. All the southern parts of Palestine, both the plain and the hill countries, which at this time had received the appellation of Judea. Mountains. The countries on the eastern side of the river Jordan.

[17.] Not come down. In the eastern walled cities, the narrowest houses had stairs on the outside, and usually formed continued terraces from one end of the city to the other: which terraces ter-

minated at the gates. So that it was not necessary to come down into the street or the house.

[18.] Turn back. To take up his clothes which he had deposited at the other end of the field, perhaps to work with greater ease, [this adds force to the words,] an image of great liveliness.

Verse 19.

Mothers, during the extremities of the siege, literally killed and ate their own children: so that the blessing of being fruitful, which the Jewish women greatly valued, was turned into the greatest woe.

Scott.

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the sabbath-day.

21 For when shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, nor ever shall be.

¶ Ps. 16:23. Acts 1:12.
¶ Pa. 99:23-25. Is. 65:12-16. 66:15.
¶ 16. Dan. 9:25. 12:1. Joel 1:2. 2:2.
2. Zech. 11:8, 9. 14:3, 5. Mal. 4:1.
Mark 13:19. Luke 19:43, 44. 21:20.
1 Thes. 2:16. Heb. 10:28-29.

away his wrath, no, not if Noah, Daniel, and Job stood before Him. Let it suffice thee, speak no more of that matter, but labor to make the best of that which is; and when you cannot in faith pray that you may not be forced to flee, yet pray that the circumstances of it may be graciously ordered. Christ's bidding them pray for this favor, intimates his purpose of granting it; and in a general calamity we must not overlook a circumstantial kindness, but see and own wherein it might have been worse. Christ still bids his disciples to pray for themselves and their friends, that, whenever they were forced to flee, it might be in the most convenient time. Note, When trouble is in prospect, it is good to lay in a stock of prayers beforehand; they must pray, *First*, That their flight, if it were the will of God, might not be in the winter, when the days are short, the weather cold, the ways dirty, and therefore travelling very uncomfortable, especially for whole families. Paul hastens Timothy to come to him before winter, 2 Tim. 4: 21. Note, Though the ease of the body is not to be mainly consulted, it ought to be duly considered; though we must take what God sends, and when He sends it; yet we may pray against bodily inconveniences, and are encouraged to do so, in that the Lord is for the body. Secondly, That it might not be on the Sabbath day; not on the Jewish sabbath, because travelling then would give offence to them who were angry with the disciples for plucking the ears of corn on that day; not on the Christian Sabbath, because being forced to travel on that day would be a grief to themselves. This intimates Christ's design, that a weekly Sabbath should be observed in his church, after the preaching of the Gospel to all the world. We read not of any of the ordinances of the Jewish church, which were purely ceremonial, that Christ ever expressed any care about, because they were all to vanish; but for the Sabbath He often showed a concern. It intimates likewise that the Sabbath is ordinarily to be observed as a day of rest from travel and worldly labor; but that, according to his own explication of the fourth commandment, works of necessity were lawful on the Sabbath day, as this of fleeing from an enemy to save our lives: had it not been lawful, He would have said, 'Whatever becomes of you, do not flee on the Sabbath day, but abide by it, though you die by it.' For we must not commit the least sin, to escape the greatest trouble. But it intimates, likewise, that it is very uneasy and uncomfortable to a good man, to be taken off by any work of necessity from the solemn service and worship of God on the Sabbath day. We should pray that we may have quiet, undisturbed Sabbaths, and may have no other work than sabbath work to do on Sabbath days; that we may attend on the Lord without distraction. It was desirable, that, if they must flee, they might have the benefit and comfort of one Sabbath more to help to bear their charges. To flee in the winter is uncomfortable to the body; but to flee on the Sabbath day is so to the soul, and the more so when it remembers former Sabbaths, as Ps. 42: 4.

3. The greatness of the troubles which should immediately ensue; (v. 21.) then when the measure of iniquity is full; then when the servants of God are sealed and secured, come the troubles; nothing can be done against Sodom till Lot is entered into Zoar, and then look for fire and brimstone immediately. There shall be great tribulation. Great indeed, when with-

Verse 20.

'The Lord showed mercy to Israel: they should have been carried away to Babylon in the tenth month, when all would have perished by the winter; but God prolonged the time, and they were led away in the summer.' Talmud. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Hos. 9: 11—14. Luke 23: 26—31. Jam. 5: 15, 16.)

SCOTT.
'In the winter.' The fifth part of the year, extending from the middle of December to the middle of February, constitutes the winter. The snows, which are then not unfrequent, scarcely continue through the day, except on the mountains; the ice is thin and melts as soon as the sun ascends to any considerable height. The north winds are chill, and the cold, particularly on the mountains, which are covered with snow, is intense. The roads are slippery, and travelling is both tedious and dangerous, particularly through the declivities of the mountains, Jer. 13: 16. 23: 12. Sirach 43: 22.

JAHN.
'Sabbath.' It is clearly ascertained that not more than two thousand cubits were allowed for a sabbath-day's journey, except by a particular permission, (which few would even accept,) and that given only in case of extreme necessity.' BLOOMFIELD.

Verses 21, 22.

At the predicted season, there would be such tribulations, for extremity, variety and continuance, as no nation had ever experienced from the beginning of the world, or ever would to the end of it. (Marg. Ref. n.—Notes, Dan. 9: 12. 12: 1. Luke 21: 20—24. v. 22.) For indeed all history cannot furnish us with a parallel to the calamities and miseries of the Jews: rapine and murder, famine and pestilence, within, fire and sword, and all the terrors of war, without. Our Savior wept at the foresight of these calamities; and it is almost impossible for persons of any humanity, to read the relation of them in [298]

in the city plague and famine raged, and (worse than either) faction and division, so that every man's sword was against his fellow; then, and there, it was, that the hands of the pitiful women flayed their own children. Without the city was the Roman army, ready to swallow them up, with a particular rage against them, not only as Jews, but as rebellious Jews. This was the only one of the three sore judgments that David excepted against; but that was it by which the Jews were ruined; and there were famine and pestilence in extremity, besides. Josephus's History of the Wars of the Jews has in it more tragical passages than perhaps any history whatsoever.

(1.) It was a desolation unparalleled, such as was not since the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be. Many a city and kingdom has been made desolate, but never any like this. Let not daring sinners think that God has done his worst. He can heat the furnace seven times, and yet seven times hotter, and will, when He sees greater and still greater abominations. The Romans, when they destroyed Jerusalem, were degenerated from the honor and virtue of their ancestors, which had made even their victories easy to the vanquished. And the wilfulness and obstinacy of the Jews themselves contributed much to the increase of the tribulation. No wonder that the ruin of Jerusalem was an unparalleled sin, when the sin of Jerusalem was an unparalleled sin—even their crucifying Christ. The nearer any people are to God in profession and privileges, the greater and heavier will his judgments be on them, if they abuse those privileges, and he false to that profession, Amos 3: 2.

(2.) It was a desolation which, if it should continue long, would be intolerable, so that no flesh should be saved, v. 22. So triumphantly would death ride, in so many dismal shapes, and with such attendants, that there would be no escaping, but, first or last, all would be cut off. He that escaped one sword, would fall by another, Isa. 24: 17, 18. The computation which Josephus makes of those that were slain in several places amounts to above two millions. No flesh shall be saved; He doth not say, 'No soul shall be saved,' for the destruction of the flesh may be for the saving of the spirit in the day of the Lord Jesus; but temporal lives will be sacrificed so profusely, that one would think, if it last a while, it would make a full end.

But here is one word of comfort in the midst of all this terror—that, for the elect's sake these days shall be shortened, not made shorter than what God had determined, (for that which is determined shall be poured upon the desolate, Dan. 9: 27.) but shorter than what He might have decreed, if He had dealt with them according to their sins; shorter than what the enemy designed, who would have cut all off, if God, who made use of them to serve his own purpose, had not set bounds to their wrath; shorter than one, who judged by human proba-

'Josephus, without weeping too' Bp. Newton. 'If the misfortune of all, from the beginning of the world, were compared with those of the Jews, they would appear much inferior upon the comparison.' Josephus. 'Is not this precisely what our Savior says, "There shall be great tribulation, such as was not from the beginning of the world to this time, nor, nor ever shall be"?' It is impossible, one would think, 'even for the most stubborn infidel, not to be struck with the great similarity of the two passages; and not to see, that the prediction of our Lord, and the accomplishment of it as described by the historian, are exact counterparts of each other, and seem almost as if they had been written by the same person. Yet Josephus was not born, till after our Savior was crucified; and he was not a Christian, but a Jew, and certainly never meant to give any testimony to the truth of our religion.' Bp. Porteus. Eleven hundred thousand Jews are recorded to have perished in this siege; besides immense numbers slain in other parts of the world about the same time. So that 'no flesh could have been saved;' that is, the whole nation must have been extirpated, had these calamities continued much longer. But as God intended to bring forth 'an elect people' in after-ages, of their descendants. He was pleased to shorten these days, and to preserve a remnant of that nation, as a separate people, even to this day. (Marg. Ref. o. p.—Notes, Is. 6: 13. 65: 3—16.) Many learned men explain this last clause, of the Jews who had embraced Christianity; but it does not appear, that the continuance of these tribulations, in the smallest degree, tend to exterminate them; indeed it is not known, that any Christians lost their lives by means of them. The Jews, therefore, and their descendants, who should in any age of the world embrace Christianity, must be meant by 'the elect;' a remnant according to the election of grace. (Notes, Mark 13: 14—23, p. 20.)

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, 'Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders: insomuch that, 'if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

o Mark 13:20.

1. Is. 61:3. 65:9,9. Zech. 13:9,9. 14: Rom. 9:11. 11:25-31. 2 Tim. 2:18.

o Mark 13:21. Luke 17:23,24. 21:8. John 5:43.

2. 1 Pet. 2:1-3. 3:17. 1. Dent. 13:1,2. 2 Thes. 2:9-11. Rev. 19:20,21. 19:20.

1. John 8:19. 10:30-39. Rom. 8:22-27. 2. 2 Tim. 2:18. 1 Pet. 1:10. 1 John 4:3. 5:1. Rev. 12:9-11. 19:7,14.

o Mark 13:42. 1. Is. 26:15. Rom. 12:18. Gal. 4:15.

the Gospel in the world, about the time of these great events; v. 27, 28. It comes in here, as an antidote against the poison of those seducers that said, *Lo, here is Christ, or, Lo, He is there*; compare Luke 17:23, 24. Hearken not to them, for the coming of the Son of man will be as the lightning.

1. It seems primarily to be meant of his coming to set up his spiritual kingdom in the world; where the Gospel came in its light and power, there the Son of man came, and in a way quite contrary to the fashion of the seducers and false Christs, who came *creeping in the desert, or the secret chambers*; (2 Tim. 3:6.) whereas Christ comes not with such a *spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind*. The Gospel would be remarkable for two things:

(1.) Its swift spreading; as the lightning; so shall the Gospel be preached and propagated. The Gospel is light; (John 3:19.) and it is not in this as the lightning, that it is a sudden flash, and away; but it is as lightning in these respects:

(1.) It is light from heaven, as the lightning. It is God, and not man, that sends the lightnings, that they may go, and say, *Here we are*, Job 38:35. It is God that directs it; Job 37:3. To man it is one of nature's miracles, above his power to effect, and one of nature's mysteries, above his skill to account for, but is from above; Ps. 97:4.

(2.) It is visible and conspicuous as the lightning. The seducers carried on their depths of Satan in the desert, and the secret chambers, shunning the light; heretics were called *light-shunners*. But truth seeks no corners, however it may sometimes be forced into them as the *woman in the wilderness*, though clothed with the sun, Rev. 12:1, 6. Christ preached his Gospel openly, (John 18:20.) and his apostles on the *house-top*, (ch. 10:27.) not in a corner, Acts 26:26. See Ps. 98:2.

(22.) Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved, &c. ["There were many circumstances which seemed likely to protract and delay the siege. On the one hand, the rebellion of the chiefs, and the departure of Vespasian from Judea, to enter upon the imperial dignity: on the other hand, the obstinacy of the Jewish nation, together with their hatred of the Romans: a successful engagement with Cestius, and the then increased hope of assistance from God, and their countrymen on the other side of the Euphrates; Jerusalem, a city of extreme strength, both by nature and art, and well provided with every requisite for sustaining a long siege: add to this, the counsels of Titus's generals, who advised him to wait for famine to do the work." Josephus. "All these circumstances threatened utter extinction to the Jews, but by the interposition of Divine Providence, affairs took another direction. For, as says Tacitus, the siege did indeed come on, and somewhat than any expected, since the Jewish tyrants fell by mutual slaughter, burnt up their provisions, and miserably deserted places most strongly fortified, of their own accord." Welsheim. It is justly remarked by Grotius, that unless a speedy period had been put to the siege of the city, into which were collected all the worst soldiers, not only of Judea, but also of Galilee and Idumea, and unless the whole war had been finished in six months' time (one season) without doubt, every soul in Judea would have perished either by secret assassins, or mutual slaughter. The consequence of long-protracted hostilities would probably have been the universal destruction of the Jews: first at home by the Romans, who were exceedingly enraged against them; and even by their own countrymen, the Sicarii, zealots, &c. who put a death upon him who did not unite in the same desperate hostility with them. Welsheim. (says Josephus,) who agreed in nothing but in butchering all this war: worthy of being preserved, and were peaceably inclined. But for the preservation of the sound portion, however small, of the Jews, and especially the Christians, God by his providence shortened the duration of the war, as by the same providence, He had before ordained the commencement of it, in order to give the Christians time to escape."] Bloomfield.

hilities would have imagined. Note, [1.] In times of common calamity, God manifests his favor to the elect remnant; his jewels which He will then make up; his peculiar treasure, which He will secure when the lumber is abandoned to the spoiler. [2.] The shortening of calamities is a kindness God often grants for the elect's sake. Instead of complaining that our afflictions last so long, if we consider our defects, we shall see reason to be thankful that they do not last always; when it is bad with us, it becomes us to say, 'Blessed be God that it is no worse; blessed be God that it is not hell, endless and remediless misery.' It was a lamenting church that said, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed*; and it is for the sake of the elect, lest their spirit should fail before them, if He should contend forever, and lest they should be tempted to put forth, if not their heart, yet their hand, to iniquity.

And now comes in the repeated caution, which was opened before, to take heed of being insinuated by false Christs, and false prophets, (v. 23, &c.) who would promise them deliverance, as the lying prophets in Jeremiah's time, (Jer. 14:13. 23:16. 17:27. 28:2.) but would delude them. Times of great trouble are times of great temptation, and therefore we have need to double our guard then. If they shall say, *Here is a Christ, or there is one*, that shall deliver us from the Romans, do not heed them, it is all but talk; such a deliverance is not to be expected, and therefore not such a deliverer.

VII. He foretells the sudden spreading of the Gospel in the world, about the time of these great events; v. 27, 28. It comes in here, as an antidote against the poison of those seducers that said, *Lo, here is Christ, or, Lo, He is there*; compare Luke 17:23, 24. Hearken not to them, for the coming of the Son of man will be as the lightning.

(2.) Its strange success in those places to which it was spread; it gathered in multitudes, not by external compulsion, but as it were, by such a natural instinct, as brings the birds of prey to their prey; for where the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together, (v. 28.) where the slain are, there is she, (Job 39:30.) where Christ is preached, souls will be gathered in to Him. The lifting up of Christ from the earth, that is, the preaching of Christ crucified, which, one would think, should drive all men from Him, will draw all men to Him, (John 12:32.) according to Jacob's prophecy, that to Him shall the gathering of the people be, Gen. 49:10. See Isa. 60:8. Eagles are said to have a strange sagacity and quickness of scent to find out the prey, and then fly swiftly to it, Job 9:26. So those, whose spirits God shall stir up, will be effectually drawn to Jesus Christ, and as eagles will distinguish what is

Verses 23-25.

The artifice of man, and the power of Satan, if permitted, can doubt less produce effects which appear miraculous, though they will not bear to be compared with the incontestable miracles wrought by Christ and his apostles. (Marg. Ref. q-a.-Notes. Deut. 13:1-5. 2 Thes. 2:8-12, v. 9, 10.) Professed Christians in general cannot here be meant by 'the elect' for many of these actions were described and apostatized. (Note. 9-14.) Their election of God, and that grace by which He effected his merciful purposes concerning them, were the security of real Christians; and the same cause would secure from fatal deception those, whom 'God had foreknown' and chosen, but who were not yet called to the knowledge of Christ and his salvation. (See Luke 22:31-34, v. 32. John 10:26-31. Rom. 8:23-39. 1 Thes. 1:1-4, v. 3, 4. 2 Thes. 2:13, 14. 1 Pet. 1:3-5.) The arguments against this interpretation, which some learned men have used, go on the erroneous suppositions, that all the elect know themselves to be so; that there are other methods of 'making our calling and election sure,' and possessing 'the full assurance of hope unto the end,' besides vigilance and diligence in every duty and means of grace; and that God preserves his elect, without their own willing concurrence, instead of 'working in them to will and to do of his good pleasure,' and so exciting *in us* 'to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling.' (See John 6:36-40. Phil. 2:12, 13. 2 Pet. 1:10, 11.) The instances in Scripture, in which this expression, 'if it be possible,' is used, are not many; but they all imply that the persons spoken of, at least doubted, whether it would be possible for them to obtain their requests, or accomplish their purposes, in the thing might not be in itself impossible. (Marg. Ref. t. u.) Scott.

(24.) False Christs. [This is not merely a repetition of v. 5 but relates to the impostors who appeared during the siege.]

Signs, &c. [We learn from Jerome that Earchochabai pretended to vomit flames.] Bloomfield.

25 Behold, *I have told you before.

26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, ^{he is in the} desert; go not forth: behold, ^{he is in the} secret chambers; believe ^{it} not.

27 For *as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also *the coming of the Son of man be.

x Isa. 44:7, 8. 46:10, 11. 43:5, 6. Luke 21:33. John 16:7.
y 31:1. Isa. 40:3. Luke 3:2, 3. Acts 21:38.
z Job 37:3. 38:35. Isa. 30:30. Zech. 9:14. Luke 17:37.
a 16:28. Mal. 3:2. 4:5. Jam. 5:8. 2 Pet. 3:4.

The Jews were so corrupt and degenerate, that they were become a carcass, obnoxious to the righteous judgment of God: they were also so factious and seditious, and every way so provoking to the Romans, that they had made themselves obnoxious to their resentments, and an inviting prey to them. [2.] The Romans were as an eagle, and the ensign of their armies was an eagle. The army of the Chaldeans is said to fly as the eagle that hasteth to eat, Hab. 1:8. The ruin of the New-Testament Babylon is represented by a call to the birds of prey to come and feast on the slain, Rev. 19: 17, 18. Notorious malefactors have their eyes eaten out by the young eagles, Prov. 30: 17. The Jews were hung up in chains, Jer. 7: 33. 16: 4. [3.] The Jews can no more preserve themselves from the Romans, than the carcass can secure itself from the eagles. [4.] The destruction shall find out the Jews, wherever they are, as the eagle scents the prey. Note, When a people by their sin make themselves carcasses, putrid and loathsome, nothing can be expected, but that God should send eagles among them, to devour and destroy them.

3. It is very applicable to the day of judgment, the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ in that day, and *our gathering together unto Him*, 2 Thess. 2: 1. Now see here,

(1.) How He shall come; as the lightning. The time was now at hand, when He should depart out of the world, to go to the Father. Therefore those that inquire after Christ must not go into the desert or the secret places, nor listen to every one that beckons them to a sight of Christ; but let them look up, for the heavens must contain Him, and thence we look for the Saviour (Phil. 3: 20.) He shall come in the clouds, as the lightning doth, and every eye shall see Him, as they say it is natural for all living creatures to turn their faces toward the lightning, Rev. 1: 7. Christ will appear to all the world, from one end of heaven to the other; nor shall any thing be hid from the light and heat of that day.

(2.) How the saints shall be gathered to Him; as the eagles are to the carcass by natural instinct, and with the greatest swiftness and alacrity imaginable. Saints, when they shall be fetched to glory, will be carried as on eagles' wings, Exod. 19: 4. *They shall mount up with wings, like eagles*, and, like them, renew their youth.

VIII. He foretells his second coming at the end of time, v. 29, 30, 31. *The sun shall be darkened, &c.*

1. Some understand this only of the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation; the darkening of the sun, moon, and stars, denotes the eclipse of the glory of that state, its convulsions, and the general confusion that attends that desolation. Great slaughter and devastation are in the Old Testament thus set forth; (as Isa. 13: 10. 34: 4. Ezek. 32: 7. Joel 2: 31.) or by the sun, moon, and stars, may be meant the temple, Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah, which should all come to ruin. The sign of the Son of man, (v. 30.) means a signal appearance of the power and justice of the Lord Jesus in it, avenging his own blood on them that imprecated the guilt of it on them and their children; and the gathering of the elect, (v. 31.) signifies the delivering of a remnant from this sin and ruin.

2. It seems rather to refer to Christ's second coming. The destruction of the particular enemies of the church was typical of the complete con-

proper for them from that which is not; so those who have spiritual senses exercised, will know the voice of the good shepherd from that of a thief and a robber. This is applicable to the desires that are wrought in every gracious soul after Christ, and communion with Him. A living principle of grace is a kind of natural instinct in all the saints, drawing them to Christ.

2. Some understand these verses of the coming of the Son of man to destroy Jerusalem, Mal. 3: 1, 2, 5. So much was there of an extraordinary display of divine power and justice in that event, that it is called the coming of Christ.

Now here are two things intimated concerning it.

(1.) That to the most it would be as unexpected as a flash of lightning, which indeed gives warning of the clap of thunder which follows, but is itself surprising.

(2.) That it might be as justly expected as that the eagle should fly to the carcasses; though they put far from them the evil day, yet the desolation will come as certainly, as the birds of prey to a dead carcass in the open field. [1.]

[2.] That there shall be then a great and amazing change of the creatures, and particularly the heavenly bodies; v. 29. The moon shines with a borrowed light, and therefore if the sun, from whom she borrows her light, is turned into darkness, she must fail of course. *The stars shall fall*; they shall lose their light, and disappear, and be as if they were fallen; and the powers of heaven shall be shaken. This intimates,

1st, That there shall be a great change, in order to the making of all things new. Then shall be the restitution of all things, when the heavens shall not be cast away as a rag, but changed as a resture, to be worn in a better fashion, Ps. 102: 26. They shall pass away with a great noise, that there may be new heavens, 2 Pet. 3: 10, 13.

2dly, It shall be a visible change, such as shall be noticed of all the world; like the darkening of the sun and moon, an amazing change; for the heavenly bodies are not so liable to alteration as the creatures of this lower world. The days of heaven, and the continuance of the sun and moon, express that which is lasting and unchangeable; (as Ps. 89: 29, 36, 37.) yet they shall thus be shaken.

3dly, It shall be a universal change. If the sun be turned into darkness, and the powers of heaven be shaken, the earth cannot but be turned into a dungeon, and its foundation made to tremble. *Hovel, fir-trees, if the cedars be shaken*. When the stars of heaven drop, no marvel if the everlasting mountains melt, and the perpetual hills bow. Nature shall sustain a general shock and convulsion, which yet shall be no hindrance to the joy and rejoicing of

quest of them all; and therefore what was done really, at the great day, may be applied metaphorically to those destructions: but still we must attend to the principal scope of them; and, while we are all agreed to expect Christ's second coming, what need is there to put such strained constructions, as some do, on these verses, which speak of it so clearly, and so agreeably to other Scriptures, especially when Christ is here answering an inquiry concerning his coming at the end of the world, which Christ was never shy of speaking of to his disciples?

The only objection against this, is, that it is said to be immediately after the tribulation of those days; but, as to that, (1.) It is usual, in the prophetic style, to speak of things great and certain as near and just at hand, only to express the greatness and certainty of them. Enoch spake of Christ's second coming as within ken, *Behold, the Lord cometh*, Jude 14. (2.) *A thousand years are*, in God's sight, *but as one day*, 2 Pet. 3: 8. It is there urged, with reference to this very thing, and so it might be said to be immediately after. The tribulation of those days includes not only the destruction of Jerusalem, but all the other tribulations which the church must pass through; while the nations are torn with wars, and the church with schisms, delusions, and persecutions, we cannot say that the tribulation of those days is over; but when the church's tribulation is over, her warfare accomplished, and what is behind of the sufferings of Christ filled up, then look for the end.

Now, concerning Christ's second coming, it is here foretold,

[1.] That there shall be then a great and amazing change of the creatures, and particularly the heavenly bodies; v. 29. The moon shines with a borrowed light, and therefore if the sun, from whom she borrows her light, is turned into darkness, she must fail of course. *The stars shall fall*; they shall lose their light, and disappear, and be as if they were fallen; and the powers of heaven shall be shaken. This intimates,

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Verses 26—28.

The apostles were here cautioned, and instructed to caution the converts to Christianity to disregard all the reports, which were circulated to this effect: whether they were informed, that the Messiah was in the desert, waiting to be joined by the people, in order to march for the deliverance of Jerusalem; or whether He was said to be in some 'secret chamber,' among his friends, and about to make his more public appearance. We find from history that such deceivers actually arose, some collecting followers in the wilderness, and others caballing with their adherents in secret chambers; and that they greatly accelerated and aggravated the ruin of their country. Josephus mentions one of 'these pretenders, who declared to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, that God commanded them to go up into some particular part of the temple, and there they should receive the signs of deliverance. A multitude of men, women, and children went up accordingly; but instead of deliverance, the place was set on fire by the Romans, and six thousand perished miserably in the flames, or by endeavoring to escape them.' Bp. Porteus. The Christians, if they had not been

forewarned, might have been deceived on another ground; for they expected their Lord to come, not to deliver, but to destroy Jerusalem; they were therefore reminded that his coming, for this purpose, would not be secret, or local; but like the 'lightning, which shineth' at once from east to west; for in his righteous providence, He would, with conspicuous and irresistible energy, desolate the whole land. The Roman armies entered Judea by the east, and carried their victorious ravages to the west, in a very rapid and tremendous manner. Our Lord further aided, 'Wherever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.' The Jewish nation, spiritually dead and about to be given up to destruction, was the carcass, which was doomed to be the prey of the Roman armies: these were represented by the most ravenous birds of prey, to denote their force and fury, and perhaps because they had eagles for their standards. The history of those times records the multiplied massacres and devastations of the Jews, in different parts of the world; as if they had attracted the destroying sword of the Romans, wherever they resided, or whithersoever they flit for safety. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Deut. 28: 49—57 Job 39: 26—30.) SCOTT

28 For whosoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

[Practical Observations.]

29 ¶ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

1 Deut. 28:49, Job 39:27-30. Jer. 16:16. Am. 9:1-4. Luke 17:37. e. 6. Mark 13:24, 25. 4 Is. 13:10. 34:23. Jer. 4:23-28. Ez. 32:7, 8. Joel 2:30, 31. 3:15. Am. 5: 20. Zeph. 1:14, 15. Luke 21:25, 26. Acts 2:19, 20. Rev. 6:12-17.

6thly, The sun and moon shall be then darkened, because there will be no more occasion for them. To sinners that choose their portion in this life, all comfort will be eternally denied; as they shall not have a drop of water, so not a ray of light. Now God causeth his sun to rise on the earth, but then darkness must be their portion. To the saints that had their treasure above, such light of joy and comfort will be given, as shall supersede that of the sun and moon. What need is there of vessels of light, when we come to the Fountain and Father of light? See Isa. 60: 19. Rev. 22: 5.

[2.] That then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven, v. 30. At his first coming. He was set for a sign that should be spoken against; (Luke 2: 34.) but, at his second coming, a sign that should be admired. Ezekiel was a son of man, set for a sign, Ezek. 12: 6. Some make this a prediction of the harbingers and forerunners of his coming, a light

shining before Him, and the fire devouring. (Ps. 50: 3. 1 Kings 19: 11, 12.) the beams coming out of his hand, where had long been the hiding of his power, Hab. 3: 4. It is a groundless conceit of some of the ancients, that this sign of the Son of man will be the sign of the cross displayed as a banner. It will certainly be such a clear convincing sign, as will dash in fidelity quite out of countenance, and fill their faces with shame, who said, Where is the promise of his coming?

[3.] That then all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, v. 30. See Rev. 1: 7. 'All the kindreds of the earth shall then wail because of Him; some of all tribes and kindreds; for the greater part will tremble at his approach, while the chosen remnant, one of a family and two of a tribe, shall lift up their heads with joy, knowing that their redemption draws nigh, and their Redeemer. Note, Sooner or later, all sinners will be mourners: penitent sinners after a godly sort; impenitent sinners after a devilish sort, in endless horror and despair.

[4.] That then they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. Note, 1st, The judgment of the great day will be committed to the Son of man, both in pursuance, and in recompense, of his great undertaking for us as Mediator, John 5: 22, 27. 2dly, The Son of man will at that day come in the clouds of heaven. Christ went to heaven in a cloud, and will in like manner come again, Acts 1: 9, 11. Behold He cometh in the clouds, Rev. 1: 7. A cloud will be the Judge's chariot, (Ps. 104: 3.) his robe, (Rev. 10: 1.) his pavilion, (Ps. 18: 11.) his throne, Rev. 14: 14. When the world was destroyed by water, the judgment came in the clouds of heaven, for the windows

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16-23. If the danger of temporal calamities render it reasonable for men to leave all and flee for their lives, how proper is it for us to forsake all, 'that we may win Christ,' and be 'delivered from the wrath to come!' He that believes will take warning, and without delay 'flee for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before him;' but the unbeliever, having been often warned in vain, will at length perish without remedy. (Note, Prov. 29: 1.)—If a man would rather save his life, without money or clothes, than be slain in going back to fetch them, what is he profited, who gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? (See Luke 24-23, v. 26.) We should then avoid even those lawful things, which have an evident or a probable tendency to prevent our eternal good: and we ought to pray earnestly to the great Disposer of events, 'to keep us from all things hurtful to our salvation, and give us all things profitable to the same.' The greatest tribulation which ever was or ever shall be witnessed on earth, befel those who 'crucified the Lord of glory,' and persisted in rejecting his Gospel. How then shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, as is set before us in his Word! The future punishment of un-believers will doubtless be so dire, that all the complicated miseries ever known on earth cannot give us an adequate idea of it: nor will the days of that only evil be shortened; as

none of the elect will be exposed to it, that for their sake it should be mitigated or terminated. Let us then 'give diligence to make our calling and election sure;' then we may know that no enemy or deceiver shall ever prevail against us; and 'let us abide in Christ, and seek to have his words abide in us,' that we may be aware of the various methods Satan and his instruments will take to impose on us. If we remember what He 'has told us before,' we shall not listen to those deceivers, who, having new modelled the Gospel, cry out, 'Lo, here is Christ!' or, 'lo, He is here!' when in fact He is to be found only in his word and ordinances, and on his 'throne of grace.' Such persons as deal in imposition or pretended miracles, love to perform their exploits in unfrequented deserts, or secret chambers; for their ambiguous performances shrink from investigation, which real miracles have ever challenged. This suffices to convince the judicious Christian, that he ought to disregard them. In whatever way Christ comes, light, not darkness, is his garment: his operations are conspicuous and illustrious: the establishment of his kingdom will illuminate the earth from east to west, and from pole to pole; and wherever the obstinate enemies of his cause are found, there will the executioners of his vengeance be gathered together, with speed and rapacity like the eagles's.

SCOTT.

(23.) Eagle.] The Greek word here used is the same with the Hebrew, (Gen. 15: 11. Is. 13: 6. 46: 11. Ezek. 39: 4.) translated 'fowls,' a ravenous bird, and collectively 'ravenous birds.' But the Sept. does not, in these texts, use the word translated 'eagle' in the N. T., but uniformly applies it in the translation of Job. 39: 27. Lev. 11: 13. Deut. 32: 11. Ezek. 17: 3, 7. Deut. 32: 49. Jer. 4: 13. &c. and Mic. 1: 16. where it is said to have a bald head, and seems to be the 'bearded eagle,' of Linnaeus, called by Bruce the 'golden eagle,' by the Ethiopians 'father long beard,' from a tuft of hair which grows below his beak, and by Salt, 'the African bearded eagle.' The eagle proper is unknown in Palestine—while this bird, a sort of eagle, is common. The assertion, however, of some, that the eagle does not feed on carcasses, is disproved by Michaelis, says Bloomfield. Eo.

It is the opinion of most interpreters, that the prophecy respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, containing an answer to the first and second question of the disciples, closes here, on account of Mark 13: 21. and Luke 21: 25. Christ had spoken thus far of those things which were to precede the destruction of the city. But now follows a poetic description of the overthrow of that and of the Jewish state.

ROSENEM.

Verses 29-31.

The clause, 'Immediately after the tribulation of those days,' restricts the primary sense of these verses to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the events consequent to it. (Marg. Ref. 1. m.—Notes, Is. 13: 9, 10. 34: 3-7. Jer. 4: 19-27, v. 23-25. Joel 2: 23-32, v. 31, 32. Acts 2: 14-21, v. 19, 20.) The darkening of the sun and moon, the falling of the stars, and the shaking of the powers of the heavens, denote the utter extinction of the light of prosperity and privilege to the Jewish nation; the unbinding of their whole constitution in church and state; the violent subversion of the authority of their princes and priests; the abject miseries to which the people in general, especially their chief

persons, would be reduced; and the moral or religious darkness to which they would be consigned. This would be an evident 'sign' and demonstration of the Son of man's exaltation to his throne in heaven; whence He would come in his divine providence, as ruling on 'the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory,' to destroy 'his enemies, who would not have Him to reign over them,' at which events 'all the tribes of the land' would mourn and lament, whilst they saw the tokens, and felt the weight, of his terrible indignation. (Marg. Ref. e.g.—Notes, Dan. 7: 13, 14. Rev. 1: 7.) At the same time, He would send forth his angels, (or messengers, the preachers of the Gospel, Marg. Ref. 1. k.) as with a great sound of a trumpet, proclaiming the year of jubilee, 'the acceptable year of the Lord.' Thus He would 'gather his elect' into his church, from every quarter, all over the world. (Marg. Ref. 1. m.—Note, Is. 65: 1-3.) The remarkable appearances in the heavens which attended these transactions, might be alluded to, and the extensive promulgation of the Gospel, about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, was predicted; but the whole passage will have a more literal and far more accurate accomplishment, at the day of judgment. (Notes, Mark 13: 24-31. Luke 21: 25-28.)

SCOTT.

(29.) The sun shall be darkened.] It was customary with the prophets, as it still is with the Eastern writers, to describe the utter ruin of states and kindreds, not only in general by a universal darkness, but also by such strong figures as those here used, which all have their foundation in that way of speaking. Comp. Is. 13: 10. 34: 4, 10. 60: 20. Jer. 15: 9. Ezek. 32: 7, 8. Joel 2: 30, 31. 3: 15. and Amos 8: 9.

DODDRIEGE.

The powers of heaven.] Host of heaven, or periphrasically heaven, shall be shaken. The people on the earth being in motion, the heavens have the appearance of motion.

KITTO.

30 And then shall appear ^a the sign of the Son of man in heaven: ^b and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall ^c see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and a great glory.

31 And ^b he shall send ^d his angels ^e with ^f a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, ^g from one end of heaven to the other.

32 ¶ Now learn ^a a parable of the fig-tree: When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh:

33 So likewise ye, ^b when ye shall see all these things, ^c know that ^d it is near, ^e even at the doors.

^a 3. Dan. 7:13. Mark 13:4.
^b Zech. 12:10. Rev. 1:7.
^c 16:27, 28. 26:64. Mark 13:26, 14:62-64. Luke 21:27. Acts 1:11. 2. Cor. 12:10.
^d 28:18. Mark 16:15, 16. Luke 21:27. Acts 26:19, 20.
^e 18:41. 25:31. Rev. 1:20. 2:1. 14:4.
^f Num. 10:1-10. Ps. 81:3. Is. 27:13. 1. Cor. 15:52. 1. Thes. 4:16.
^g Or, a trumpet and a great voice.
^h Is. 11:12. 49:18. 60:4. Mark 13:27. John 11:52. Eph. 1:10. 2. Thes. 2:1. 1. Pet. 2:27. 67:7. Is. 13:5. 42:10. 43:6. 45:22. Zech. 9:10. Rom. 10:18.
ⁱ Mark 13:23, 29. Luke 21:23, 29.
^j 3.
^k E. 7:2, 8:2. Heb 10:37. Jam. 5:9.
^l 1. Pet. 4:7.
^m Or, he.

ered, the chosen remnant, who are but few in comparison with the many that are only called. This is the foundation of the saints' eternal happiness, that they are God's elect. The gifts of love to eternity follow the thoughts of love from eternity; and *The Lord knows them that are his*. 2dly. The angels shall be employed to bring them together, as Christ's servants, and as the saints' friends; we have the commission given them, Ps. 50: 5. *Gather my saints together unto me*; nay, it will be said to them, *These are your brethren*; for the elect will then be equal to the angels, Luke 20: 36. 3dly. *They shall be gathered from one end of heaven to the other*; the elect of God are scattered abroad, (John 11: 52.) there are some in all places, in all nations; (Rev. 7: 9.) but when that great gathering day comes, there shall not one of them be missing; distance of place shall keep none out of heaven, if distance of affection do not. *Heaven is equally accessible from every place*. See ch. 8: 11. Isa. 43: 6. 49: 12.

V. 32-51. We have here the practical application of the foregoing prediction; in general, we must expect and prepare for the events here foretold.

I. We must expect them; v. 32, 33. There is a certain series in the works of Providence, as there is in the works of nature. The signs of the times are compared with the prognostics of the face of the sky, (ch. 16: 3.) so here with those of the face of the earth; when that is renewed, we foresee that summer is coming, not immediately, but at some distance; it is com-

ing; 'so likewise ye, when the gospel-day shall dawn, count upon it, that through this variety of events, which I have told you of, the perfect day will come. The things revealed must shortly come to pass; (Rev. 1: 1.) they must come in their own order, in the order appointed for them. *Know that it is near*.' He does not here say, what, but it is that which the hearts of his disciples are upon, and which they are inquisitive after, and long for; *the kingdom of God is near*, so it is expressed in the parallel place, Luke 21: 31. Note, When the trees of righteousness begin to bud and blossom, when God's people promise faithfulness, it is a happy presage of good times. In them God begins his work, first prepares their heart, and then He will go on with it; for, as *for God, his work is perfect*; and He will *revive it in the midst of their years*.

Now, touching the events foretold here, which we are to expect,

1. Christ here assures us of the certainty of them; v. 35. Note, The word of Christ is more sure and lasting than heaven and earth. See 1. Pet. 1: 24, 25. *It is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than the word of Christ*; so it is expressed, Luke 16: 17. Compare Isa. 54: 10. The accomplishment of these prophecies might seem to be delayed, and intervening events to disagree with them; but do not think that therefore the word of Christ is fallen to the ground, for that shall never pass away: though it be not fulfilled, either in the time or in the way that we have prescribed; yet, in God's time, and in God's way, which are the best, it shall certainly be fulfilled. Every word of Christ is very pure, and therefore very sure.

2. He instructs us as to the time of them, v. 34, 36. As to this, it is well observed by the learned Grotius, that there is a manifest distinction made between these things, (v. 34.) and *that day and hour*, (v. 36.) which will help to clear this prophecy.

(1.) As to these things—the wars, seditions, and persecutions, here foretold, and especially the ruin of the Jewish nation; 'There are those now alive (v. 34.) that shall see Jerusalem destroyed, and the Jewish church brought to an end.' Because it might seem strange, He backs it with a solemn asseveration; *Verily, I say unto you*, these things are at the door. Christ often speaks of the nearness of that desolation, the more to affect people, and quicken them to prepare for it. Note, There may be greater trials and troubles yet before us, in our own day, than we are aware of. They that are old, know not what sons of Anak may be reserved for their last encounters.

(2.) But as to *that day and hour* which will put a period to time, *that knows no man*, v. 36. Therefore take heed of confounding these two, as they did, who, from the words of Christ, and the apostles' letters, inferred, that *the day of Christ was at hand*, 2 Thess. 2: 2. No, it was not; *this generation*, and many another, shall pass, before *that day and hour* come. Note, [1.] There is a certain day and hour fixed for the judgment to come; it is called *the day of the Lord*, because so unalterably fixed. None of God's judgments are adjoined, *without the appointment of a certain day*. [2.] That day and hour are a great secret. *No man knows it*; nor the wisest, nor the best; nor do even the angels; they dwell at the fountain head of light, and are

(30.) *In the clouds of heaven*. 1. 'Sudden and irresistible destruction, in which much of the hand of God evidently appears, is often expressed by God's coming in the clouds.' Whitley, Comp. Ps. 18: 9. 50: 3, 4. 97: 2. 3. 104: 3. Is. 19: 1. 26: 21. 66: 15. But I think the celestial appearances described by Josephus, lead us into the exactest interpretation of this text, and greatly illustrate the propriety of these expressions here.

'A splendid image, familiar to the Hebrew poets, signifying to come with majesty, &c.'

Verses 32-35.

Our Lord here answers the former part of the apostles' question, concerning the time when these events would take place (3.) In general He assured them, that the approach of them would be as certainly determined, by the signs which He had mentioned, as the approach of summer was by the budding, and the tender branch, of the fig-tree; and that they would all be accomplished, before that generation had passed away. This absolutely restricts our primary interpretation of the prophecy to the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place within forty years. To this I^a added, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.' The performance and effects of his words would

be found more stable and durable, than the visible creation; which would at length wax old, and vanish away; but not a tittle of his word would fail of its accomplishment, and the effects of it will suit to all eternity. This is as applicable to all the words of Christ as to this prediction, and to every part of the Word of God. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Ps. 102: 25-28. Is. 51: 4-6. 55: 10. Matt. 5: 17, 18. Heb. 1: 10-12. 2. Pet. 3: 10-13. Rev. 20: 11-15.) It is indisputable that the three gospels, in which the substance of this prophecy is given, were extant and widely dispersed, a considerable time before the siege of Jerusalem was begun, and that the Christians, believing the words of their Lord, left Judea and were preserved.

(32.) *Tender*. And succulent, from the rising of the sap from the roots. Dr Dru.
(33.) *It is nigh, &c.* 'I now think it more agreeable to this phrase in Scripture, to understand the word translated "it," to mean "He," the Son of man, &c. "He," the Son of man mentions I verse 30, stands at the doors. (Jam. 5: 8, 9.) Whitley, in Scott's *It is near*. 'That is, the kingdom of the Messiah, or his more urgent manifestation. For, after the destruction of the Jewish state, the Christian religion would be propagated more widely.'

ROSENM

34 Verily I say unto you, [¶] This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

35 [¶] Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

(1) *Practical Observations.*
36 [¶] But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

g 12:45. 16:28. 23:36. Mark 13:30.
91. Luke 11:30. 21:32, 33.
91:1. Ps. 102:26. Is. 34:4. 51:6.
94:0. Jer. 31:35, 36. Heb. 1:11, 12.
2 Pet. 5:7-12. Rev. 6:14. 20:11.
9 Nua. 23:19. Ps. 19:7. 89:34, 35.
Prov. 30:5. Is. 40:8. 55:11. Tit. 1:2.
1 Pet. 1:25. Rev. 3:14.
12:14. 26:13. Zech. 14:7. Mark 13:2, 33. Acts 1:7. 1 Thes. 5:2. 2 Pet. 3:10. Rev. 3:3. 16:15.

get: there were presages of it, yet it found them secure, crying, *Peace and safety*, 1 Thes. 5:3. The siege was laid to Jerusalem by Titus Vespasian, when they were met at the passover in the midst of their mirth: like the men of Laish, they dwelt careless when the ruin arrested them, Judg. 18:7, 27. The destruction of Babylon, both that in the Old Testament, and that in the New, comes, when she saith, *I shall be a lady forever*, Isa. 47:7-9. Rev. 18:7. Therefore the plagues come in a moment, in one day. Note, Men's unbelief shall not make God's threatenings of no effect.

(2.) *To the eternal judgment*; so the judgment of the great day is called, Heb. 6:2. Though notice has been given of it from Enoch, yet, when it comes, it will be unlooked for by most men; the latter days, which are nearest to that day, will produce scoffers, that say, *Where is the promise of his coming?* 2 Pet. 3:3, 4. Luke 13:8. Thus it will be when the world that now is shall be destroyed by fire; for thus it was when the old world, being

overflowed by water, perished, 2 Pet. 3:6, 7. Christ here shows what were the temper and posture of the old world when the deluge came.

[1.] They were sensual and worldly, v. 38. It is not said, they were killing and stealing, and whoring and swearing; (these were indeed the horrid crimes of some of the worst of them; *the earth was full of violence*;) but they were all of them, except Noah, over head and ears in the world, and regardless of the word of God; and this ruined them. Note, Universal neglect of religion is a more dangerous symptom to any people, than particular instances here and there of daring in religion. *Eating and drinking* are necessary to the preservation of man's life; *marrying, and giving in marriage*, to the preservation of mankind; but these *lawful things* undo us, unlawfully managed. First, They were unreasonable and inordinate; wholly taken up with these things; they were in them as in their element, as if they had their being in no other end, (Isa. 56:12.) eating and drinking, when they should have been repenting and praying. This was to them, as to Israel afterwards, the unpardonable sin, (Isa. 22:12, 14.) especially, because, in defiance of those warnings, by which they should have been awakened, '*Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die*; if it must be a short life, let it be a merry one.' The apostle James speaks of this as the general practice of the wealthy Jews, before the destruction of Jerusalem; when they should have been weeping for the miseries they were coming upon them, *they were living in pleasure, and nourishing their hearts as in a day of slaughter*, Jam. 5:1, 5.

[2.] They were secure and careless, v. 39. *Know not!* Surely, they could not but know. Did not God, by Noah, give them fair warning of it? Did He not call them to repentance while his long-suffering waited? 1 Pet. 3:19

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 29-35. Ere long the expected end shall come: then the 'sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, the stars shall fall from heaven,' and nature seem to expire in convulsions. The tokens of the Savior's coming will be perceived. He will come, with divine power and glory, in the clouds of heaven; and 'all the tribes of the earth shall mourn because of Him' whom now they despise and disobey. But before He executes his righteous vengeance on his enemies, He will employ his holy 'angels to gather his elect' from every part of the earth, as with the sound of a mighty trumpet, that they may 'be forever with the Lord.' It is not for us 'to know the times and seasons' of this grand event: but we may

easily perceive the token of our own approaching dissolution. Within the space of thirty or forty years, or probably in a far shorter time, the writer, and most of the readers, of these observations, will have done with all things here below, and be fixed in an eternal and unchangeable state. Let this thought induce us to attend more diligently to the words of Christ and, whilst we meditate on his declarations concerning 'the things which accompany salvation,' on his promises, his denunciations, and his discoveries of the final event, respecting the righteous and the wicked, let us still recollect, that 'heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away.'

SCOTT.

Verse 34.

All these things.] 'That is, all those, concerning which Christ had spoken, v. 7-37.'

ROSENM.

For the complete conquest of Jerusalem, Titus had a triumphal arch erected at Rome to his honor, which still exists. On it are represented the spoils of the temple of God, such as the golden table of the shewbread, the golden candlestick, with its seven branches, the ark of the covenant, the two golden trumpets, &c. On this occasion, a medal was

the legend, *JUDÆA CAPTA*. Senatus Consultus, at the bottom. This is not only an extraordinary fulfilment of our Lord's prediction, but a literal accomplishment of a prophecy delivered about eight hundred years before; (Is. 3:25.) *And she desolate shall sit on the ground.*

BURDER.

Verse 35.

'The New Testament, given by the inspiration of God,' and handed down uncorrupted from father to son, by both friends and enemies, perfect in its credibility and truth, inexhaustible in its evidences, and astonishingly circumstantial in details of future occurrences, which the wisdom of God alone could foreknow—that New Testament is the record of these predictions. *The history of the Romans*, written by so many hands, that of the Jews, written by one, of themselves; *triumphal arches, coins, medals, and public monuments* of different kinds, are the evidence by which the fulfilment of the record is demonstrated.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 36-41.

Some expositors explain these words exclusively of the day of judgment, as being emphatically 'that day'; and the context denotes that Christ intended to lead the thoughts of the hearers, and of those who should ever read this prediction, to that solemn occasion: (Notes, 42-51, 25.) but might not this be done, with reference also to the precise day and hour of Jerusalem's destruction? Even this was not declared either to man or angel, so far as we can learn; but the disciples were warned to expect and be ready for its approach, and to mark the signs which had been given them. (Note, Mark 13:32.) For it would resemble the deluge, in that it was expressly predicted, and some general intimations were given concerning the appointed season when it would take place, with instructions how to escape. Yet men in general would not believe, or take warning; but, being occupied about the employments and satisfactions of life, they would be overwhelmed and destroyed by its unexpected coming; just as the inhabitants of the old world had been by the flood. Even when two persons were in the same place, or about the same business, one of them would be destroyed, and the other escape; as one would be watching and observing 'the signs of the times,' and the other carelessly neglecting them. This is more emphatically applicable to the day of judgment, or the time of death, which is to every one in effect the same thing. (Mrg. Ref., Notes, Gen. 7:10-23. Ez. 9:20, 21. Luke 17:24-37. Heb. 11:7. 1 Pet. 3:19-22.)

SCOTT.

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erected with the following inscription round a laureated head of the emperor: IMPERATOR JULIUS CÆSAR VESPASIANUS AVGVSTVS PONTIFEX MAXIMVS, TRIBVNTIA POTESTATE, PATER PATRIÆ, CONSVL VIII.

On the obverse, are represented a palm-tree, the emblem of the land of Judea; the emperor with a trophy standing on the left; Judea, under the figure of a distressed woman, sitting at the foot of the tree, weeping, with her head bowed down, supported by her left hand, with



37 But "as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark;

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

a Gen. 6:7. Job 22:15-17. Luke 17: 35, 37. Heb. 11:7. 1 Pet. 3:20, 21. 2 Pet. 2:5, 6.

x 1 Sam. 25:36-38. 30:16, 17. Is. 22: 12-14. Ex. 16:49, 50. Am. 6:3-6. Luke 12:19, 20, 45. 14:13-20. 17:26 -28. 21:34, 35. Rom. 13:13, 14. 1 Cor. 7:29-31.

y 13:13-15. Judg. 20:34. Prov. 23: 35. 24:12. 29:7. Is. 42:25. 44:18, 19. Luke 18:41. John 3:20. Acts 13:41. Rom. 1:28. 2 Pet. 3:5. z 2 Cor. 33:12, 13, 19, 22, 24. Luke 17:34 -37. 23:39-43. 1 Cor. 4:7. 2 Pet. 2:5, 7-9.

a Ex. 11:5. Is. 47:2.

be like the coming of the deluge, a destruction from which there is no fleeing.

2. It will be a separating day; v. 40, 41. Then shall two be in the field.

Two ways this may be applied.

(1.) We may apply it to the success of the Gospel, especially at the first preaching of it; it divided the world; some believed the things which were spoken, and were taken to Christ; others believed not, and were left to perish in their unbelief. Those of the same age, place, capacity, employment, and condition, those of the same family, nay, joined in the same bond of marriage, were, one effectually called, the other passed by, and left in the gall of bitterness. This is that division, that separating fire, which Christ came to send. Luke 12: 49, 51. This renders free grace the more obliging, that it is distinguishing; to us, and not to the world, (John 14:22.) nay, to us, and not to those in the same field, the same mill, the same house.

When ruin came on Jerusalem, a distinction was made by Divine Providence, according to that which had been before made by divine grace; for all the Christians among them were saved from perishing in that calamity, by the special care of Heaven. Thus the meek of the earth are hid in the day of the Lord's anger, (Zeph. 2: 3.) either in heaven, or under heaven. Note, Distinguishing preservations, in times of general destruction, are special tokens of God's favor, and ought to be acknowledged. If we are safe when

20. But they know not, that is, they believed not; they might have known, but would not know. First, Therefore they were sensual, because they were secure. Note, The reason why people are so eager in the pursuit, and so entangled in the pleasures of this world is, because they do not know, and believe, and consider, the eternity which they are on the brink of. Secondly, Therefore they were secure, because they were sensual; therefore they knew not that the flood was coming, because they were so taken up with things seen and present, that they had neither time nor heart to mind the things not seen as yet, which they were warned of. Note, As security bolsters men up in their brutal sensuality, so sensuality rocks them asleep in their carnal security. They knew not until the flood came. 1. The flood came, though they would not foresee it. Note, Those that will not know by faith, shall be made to know by feeling, the wrath of God revealed from heaven against their ungodliness and unrighteousness. The evil day will be the further off for men's putting it far off from them. 2. They did not know it till it was too late to prevent it, as they might have done, if they had known it in time, which made it so much the more grievous. Judgments are most terrible and amazing to the secure, and those that have made a jest of them.

The application of this, concerning the old world, we have in these words; So shall the coming of the Son of man be; that is, (1.) In such a posture shall He find people, eating and drinking, and not expecting Him. Note, Security and sensuality are likely to be the epidemical diseases of the latter days. All slumber and sleep, and at midnight the bridegroom comes. (2.) With such a power, and for such a purpose, will He come upon them. As the flood took away the sinners of the old world, irresistibly and irrecoverably, so shall secure sinners, that mocked at Christ and his coming, be taken away by the wrath of the Lamb, when the great day of his wrath comes; which will be like the coming of the deluge, a destruction from which there is no fleeing.

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(1.) We may apply it to the success of the Gospel, especially at the first preaching of it; it divided the world; some believed the things which were spoken, and were taken to Christ; others believed not, and were left to perish in their unbelief. Those of the same age, place, capacity, employment, and condition, those of the same family, nay, joined in the same bond of marriage, were, one effectually called, the other passed by, and left in the gall of bitterness. This is that division, that separating fire, which Christ came to send. Luke 12: 49, 51. This renders free grace the more obliging, that it is distinguishing; to us, and not to the world, (John 14:22.) nay, to us, and not to those in the same field, the same mill, the same house.

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thousands fall on our right hand and on our left, so that we are as brands plucked out of the fire, we have reason to say, It is of the Lord's mercies, and it is a great mercy.

(2.) We may apply it to the second coming of Jesus Christ, and the separation which will be made on that day. He had said before, (v. 31.) that the elect will be gathered together. Here He tells us, that, in order to that, they will be distinguished from those who were nearest to them in this world; the choice and chosen ones taken to glory, the other left to perish eternally; two in the same grave, one taken to everlasting life, the other left to shame and everlasting contempt, Dan. 12: 2. Here it is applied to them who shall be found alive. Christ will come unlooked for, will find people busy at their usual occupations, in the field, at the mill; and then, according as they are vessels of mercy, prepared for glory, or vessels of wrath, prepared for ruin, so it will be with them; the one taken to meet the Lord and his angels in the air, to be forever with Him and them; the other left to the devil and his angels, who, when Christ has gathered out his own, will sweep up the residue. This aggravates the condemnation of sinners, and speaks abundance of comfort to the Lord's people. [1.] Are they mean and despised in the world, as the man-servant in the field, or the maid at the mill? Exod. 11: 5. Yet they shall not be forgotten or overlooked in that day. The poor in the world, if rich in faith, are heirs of the kingdom. [2.] Are they dispersed in distant and unlikely places, where one would not expect to find the heirs of glory, in the field, at the mill? Yet the angels will find them there, (hidden, as Saul among the stuff, when they are to be enthroned,) and fetch them thence; and well may they be said to be changed, for a very great change will it be, to go to heaven from ploughing and grinding. [3.] Are they weak, and unable of themselves to move heavenward? They shall be taken, or laid hold on, as Lot was taken out of Sodom, by a gracious violence, Gen. 19: 16. Those whom Christ had once apprehended and laid hold on, He will never lose his hold of. [4.] Are they linked with others, in the same habitations; societies, employments? Let not that discourage any true Christian; God knows how to separate between the precious and the vile, the wheat and the chaff, in the same floor.

III. Here is a general exhortation, to watch and be ready against that day comes, enforced by divers weighty consideration; v. 42, &c. Observe,

1. The duty required; Watch, and be ready, v. 42, 44.

(1.) Watch therefore, v. 42. Note, It is the great duty and interest of all the disciples of Christ, to watch. As a sinful state and way is compared to sleep, senseless, and inactive, (1 Thess. 5: 4.) so a gracious state and way is compared to watching and waking. We must watch for our Lord's coming to us, at our death, the

(37.) 'What follows may be understood both of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the final judgment. But the connection with what precedes favors the former reference. Christ seems to have spoken these things at different times, and on different occasions.'

(40.) Doddridge thinks the transition, from the destruction of Jerusalem to the final judgment, takes place immediately after these two verses.

Taken.] 'Taken away captive.' BLOOMFIELD.

(41.) The mill.] 'This was a hand-mill composed of two stones; the uppermost of which is turned round by a small handle of wood or iron

each other with the mill-stone between them, we may see not only the propriety of the expression, (Ex. 11: 5.) but the force of this.'

Dr. Shaw, by GREENFIELD.



placed in the rim. When this stone is large, or expedition requires, a second person is called to assist; and as it is usual for women alone to be concerned in this employment, they seat themselves over against

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, 'My Lord delayeth his coming;

49 And shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

50 The Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of;

51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

mt 18:32. 25:26 Luke 19:22.
n Deut. 9:4. 15:9. 2 Kings 5:26. Is. 5:26. Mark 7:21. Luke 12:45. John 3:2. Acts 5:3. 8:22.
e Ec. 8:11. Ez. 12:22, 27. 2 Pet. 3:5.
p Is. 68:5. 2 Cor. 11:20. 1 Pe. 5:3. 3 John 9:10. Rev. 13:7. 16:6. 17:6. 19:2.
q 7:15. 1 Sam 2:13-16, 29. Is. 56:12. Ez. 34:3. Mic. 3:5. Rom. 16:18. Phil. 3:19. Tit. 1:11, 12. 2 Pet. 2:13, 14. Jude 12.
r Ec. 4:4. Prov. 29:1. 1 Thes. 5:2. Rev. 3:3.
s Or, not him off.
t Job 20:29. Is. 33:14. Luke 12:46. 12:12. 22:15. 25:30. Luke 13:28.

ful and wise servant?—which supposes that there are but few who answer this character; *one of a thousand*. Those who thus distinguish themselves now by humility, diligence, and sincerity in their work, Christ will in the great day both dignify and distinguish.

2. He shall be blessed; and Christ's pronouncing him blessed makes him so. All the dead that die in the Lord are blessed, Rev. 14: 13. But there is a peculiar blessedness secured to them that approve themselves faithful stewards, and are found so doing. Next to the honor of those who die in the field of battle, suffering for Christ as the martyrs, is the honor of those that die in the field of service, ploughing, and sowing, and reaping for Christ.

3. He shall be preferred; *v. 47*. The allusion is to the way of great men, who, if the stewards of their house conduct themselves well in that place, commonly prefer them to be managers of their estates: thus Joseph, Gen. 39: 4, 6. But the greatest honor the kindest master ever did to his most tried servants in this world, is nothing to that weight of glory which the Lord Jesus will confer on his faithful, watchful servants in the world to come. What is here said by a similitude, is the same that is said more plainly, John 12: 26. *Him will my Father honor*. And God's servants, when thus preferred, shall be perfect in wisdom and holiness, to bear that weight of glory, so that there is no danger from these servants when they reign.

[2.] Concerning the *evil servant*. We have, *First*, His description given, (*v. 48, 49*), the wretch is drawn in his own colors. The vilest of creatures is a wicked man, the vilest of men a wretched Christian, and the vilest of them a wicked minister. *What is best, when corrupted becomes the worst*. Wickedness in the prophets of Jerusalem is a horrible thing indeed, Jer. 23: 14. Here is,

1. The cause of his wickedness; and that is, a practical disbelief of Christ's second coming; He hath said in his heart, *My Lord delays his coming*; and therefore he begins to think He will never come. Observe, (1.) Christ knows what they say in their hearts, who with their lips cry, *Lord, Lord*, as this servant here. (2.) The delay of Christ's coming, though it is a gracious instance of his patience, is greatly abused by wicked people, whose hearts are thereby hardened in their wicked ways. When Christ's coming is looked upon as doubtful, or a thing at an immense distance, the hearts of men are fully set to do evil, Eccl. 8: 11. See Ezek. 12: 27. They that walk by sense, are ready to say of the unseen Jesus, as the people did of Moses, when he tarried in the mount, *We wot not what is become of him*, and therefore up, make us gods, the world a god, the belly a god, any thing but Him that should be.

2. The particulars of his wickedness; and they are sins of the first magnitude; he is a slave to his passions and his appetites.

(1.) Persecution is here charged on him. He begins to smite his fellow-servants. Note, [1.] Even the stewards of the house are to look on all the servants of the house as their fellow-servants, and therefore are forbidden to lord

reproves the greatest, and doth not respect persons.

2. He is wise to understand his duty, and the proper season of it; and in guiding of the flock there is need, not only of integrity of heart, but skilfulness of the hands. Honesty may suffice for a good servant, but wisdom is necessary to a good steward; for it is profitable to direct.

3. He is doing, so doing, as his office requires. The ministry is a good work, and they whose office it is, have always something to do; they must not indulge themselves in ease, nor leave the work undone, or carelessly turn it off to others, but be doing, and doing to the purpose; so doing, giving meat to the household, minding their own business, and not meddling with that which is foreign; so doing, as the Master has appointed, as the office imports, and as the case of the family requires; not talking, but doing. It was the motto Mr. Perkins used, *You are a minister of the Word*. Not only *Be doing*; but, *Be so doing*.

4. He is found doing when his master comes; which intimates, (1.) Constancy at his work. Ministers should not leave empty spaces in their time, lest their Lord should come in one of those empty spaces. As with a good God the end of one mercy is the beginning of another, so with a good man, a good minister, the end of one duty is the beginning of another. When Calvin was persuaded to remit his ministerial labors, he answered with some resentment, *What, would you have my Master find me idle?* (2.) Perseverance in his work till the Lord come. *Hold fast till then*, Rev. 2: 25. *Continue in these things*, 1 Tim. 4: 16. 6: 14. Endure to the end.

Thirdly, The recompense of reward intended him for this, in three things:

1. He shall be taken notice of. This is intimated in these words, *Who then is that faithful*. Those who thus distinguish themselves now by humility, diligence, and sincerity in their work, Christ will in the great day both dignify and distinguish.

2. He shall be blessed; and Christ's pronouncing him blessed makes him so. All the dead that die in the Lord are blessed, Rev. 14: 13. But there is a peculiar blessedness secured to them that approve themselves faithful stewards, and are found so doing. Next to the honor of those who die in the field of battle, suffering for Christ as the martyrs, is the honor of those that die in the field of service, ploughing, and sowing, and reaping for Christ.

3. He shall be preferred; *v. 47*. The allusion is to the way of great men, who, if the stewards of their house conduct themselves well in that place, commonly prefer them to be managers of their estates: thus Joseph, Gen. 39: 4, 6. But the greatest honor the kindest master ever did to his most tried servants in this world, is nothing to that weight of glory which the Lord Jesus will confer on his faithful, watchful servants in the world to come. What is here said by a similitude, is the same that is said more plainly, John 12: 26. *Him will my Father honor*. And God's servants, when thus preferred, shall be perfect in wisdom and holiness, to bear that weight of glory, so that there is no danger from these servants when they reign.

[2.] Concerning the *evil servant*. We have, *First*, His description given, (*v. 48, 49*), the wretch is drawn in his own colors. The vilest of creatures is a wicked man, the vilest of men a wretched Christian, and the vilest of them a wicked minister. *What is best, when corrupted becomes the worst*. Wickedness in the prophets of Jerusalem is a horrible thing indeed, Jer. 23: 14. Here is,

1. The cause of his wickedness; and that is, a practical disbelief of Christ's second coming; He hath said in his heart, *My Lord delays his coming*; and therefore he begins to think He will never come. Observe, (1.) Christ knows what they say in their hearts, who with their lips cry, *Lord, Lord*, as this servant here. (2.) The delay of Christ's coming, though it is a gracious instance of his patience, is greatly abused by wicked people, whose hearts are thereby hardened in their wicked ways. When Christ's coming is looked upon as doubtful, or a thing at an immense distance, the hearts of men are fully set to do evil, Eccl. 8: 11. See Ezek. 12: 27. They that walk by sense, are ready to say of the unseen Jesus, as the people did of Moses, when he tarried in the mount, *We wot not what is become of him*, and therefore up, make us gods, the world a god, the belly a god, any thing but Him that should be.

2. The particulars of his wickedness; and they are sins of the first magnitude; he is a slave to his passions and his appetites.

(1.) Persecution is here charged on him. He begins to smite his fellow-servants. Note, [1.] Even the stewards of the house are to look on all the servants of the house as their fellow-servants, and therefore are forbidden to lord

it over them. If the angel call himself *fellow servant* to John, (Rev. 19: 10.) no marvel if John have learned to call himself *brother* to the Christians of the churches of Asia, Rev. 1: 9. [2.] It is no new thing to see evil servants smiting their fellow-servants; both private Christians and faithful ministers. He smites them, either because they reprove him, or because they will not bow and do him reverence he smites them with the tongue, as they smote the prophet, Jer. 18: 18. And if he get power into his hand, or can press those into his service that have, as the ten horns on the head of the beast, it goes further. Pashur the priest, smote Jeremiah, and put him in the stocks, Jer. 20: 1. The revolvers have often been, of others, most profound to make slaughter, Hos. 5: 2. The steward, when he smites his fellow-servants, does it under color of his master's authority, and in his name; he says, *Let the Lord be glorified*; (Isa. 66: 5.) but he shall know that he could not put a greater affront on his master.

(2.) Profaneness and immorality; *He begins to eat and drink with the drunken*. [1.] He associates with the worst of sinners, walks in their counsel, sits in their seat, and sings their songs. The drunken are the merry, jovial company he is for, and thus he hardens them in their wickedness. [2.] He does like them; *eats, and drinks, and is drunken*; so it is in Luke. This is an inlet to all manner of sin. Drunkenness is a leading wickedness; they who are slaves to that, are never masters of themselves in any thing else. The persecutors of God's people have commonly been the most vicious and immoral men. Persecuting consciences, whatever the pretensions be, are commonly the most profligate and debauched consciences. What will not they be drunk with, that will be drunk with the blood of saints? Well, this is the description of a wicked minister, who yet may have the common gifts of learning, and utterance above others.

Secondly, His doom read, *v. 50, 51*. The coat and character of wicked ministers will not only not secure them from condemnation, but will greatly aggravate it. They can plead no exemption from Christ's jurisdiction, whatever they pretend to in the church of Rome, from that of the civil magistrate; there is no benefit of clergy at Christ's bar. Observe,

1. The surprise that will accompany his doom; (*v. 50*.) *The Lord of that servant will come*. Note, (1.) Our putting off the thoughts of Christ's coming, will not put off his coming. Whatever fancy he deludes himself with, his Lord will come. (2.) The coming of Christ will be a most dreadful surprise to secure and careless sinners, especially to wicked ministers; *He shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him*. Note, Those that have slighted the warnings of the Word, and silenced those of their own consciences concerning the judgment to come, cannot expect any other warnings; and no unfairness can be charged on Christ, if He come suddenly, without giving other notice. Behold, He has told us before.

2. The severity of his doom, *v. 51*. It is not more severe than righteous, but carries in it utter ruin, in two dreadful words, *death and damnation*.

(1.) Death. His Lord shall cut him asunder, 'He shall cut him off from the land of the living,' from the congregation of the righteous, shall separate him unto evil; which is the definition of a curse, (Deut. 29: 21.) shall cut him down as a tree that cumbereth the ground; perhaps it alludes to the sentence often used in the law, *That soul shall be cut off from his people*; denoting an utter extirpation. Death cuts off a good man, to be grafted in a better stock; but a wicked man as a withered branch for the fire. Cuts him off from this world, which he set his

(51.) *And cut him asunder*. 'If this expression be understood in its primary and literal sense, it must denote that most horrible punishment of being cut in sunder whilst alive, which there is a tradition that the prophet Isaiah suffered. There are many instances in ancient writers of this method of executing criminals, and it is still practised by some nations, particularly by the western Moors in Barbary, as we are assured by Dr. Shaw. Calmet says this punishment was not un-

known among the Hebrews. It came originally from the Persians or the Chaldeans. It is still in use among the Swissers, and they practised it not many years ago on one of their countrymen, guilty of a great crime, in the plain of Grenelles near Paris. Instances of it among the Persians, Thracians, and Romans, are recorded.' BURDER. Bloomfield thinks, with Doddridge and many other commentators, that the expression is hyperbolical—for *severe flagellation*. Ed.

CHAP. XXV.

parable of the wise and foolish virgins, 1-13. That of the talents committed to servants of different characters, 14-30; and a most solemn representation of the day of judgment, and of its infinitely important proceedings and consequences, 31-46.

THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, ^a which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

2 And ^b five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

3 They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them:

^a 24:42-51. Luke 21:34-38.
^b 2:13-24. 13:24, 35, 44, 45, 47. 20:1. 22:2. Dan. 2:44.

^c 5:16. Luke 12:35-38. Phil. 2:15, 16.
^d 2 Tim. 4:8. Tit. 2:13. 2 Pet. 1:13-15. 3:12, 13.

^e 9:16. 22:2. Ps. 15:9-11. Is. 54:5. 62:4, 5. Mark 2:19, 20. Luke 5:34, 35. John 3:29. 2 Cor. 11:2. Eph. 5:25-33. Rev. 19:7. 21:2, 3.

^f 7:24-27. 13:19-23. 38:13, 47, 48. 22:10, 11. Jer. 24:1. 1 Cor. 10:1-5. 1 John 2:18. Jude 1:6. 5.

^g 23:25, 26. Is. 49:1, 2. 59:2. Es. 63:1, 2. 2 Tim. 3:5. Heb. 12:15. Rev. 3:1, 15, 16.

that have the form, but hate the power, of godliness. [4.] Wicked ministers will have their portion in the other world with the worst of sinners, even with hypocrites, and justly, for they are the worst of hypocrites. The blood of Christ, which they have by their profaneness trampled under their feet, and the blood of souls, which they have by their unfaithfulness brought on their heads, will bear hard on them in that place of torment. *Son, remember, will be as cutting a word to a minister, if he perish, as to any other sinner whatsoever.* Let them, therefore, who preach to others, fear, lest they themselves be cast away.

CHAP. XXV. v. 1-13. This chapter continues and concludes our Saviour's discourse, concerning his second coming, and the end of the world. This was his farewell-sermon of caution, as that, John 14:15, and 16, was of comfort to his disciples; and they had need of both in such a world of temptation and trouble. The application of that discourse, was, Watch therefore, and be also ready. In prosecution of these serious, awakening cautions, we have here three parables, the scope of which is the same—

V. 36-51. After all the warnings and instructions of heavenly wisdom, men in general copy the example of the unbelievers in the days of Noah: they 'eat and drink, plant and build, marry and are given in marriage;' and act in every respect as if this world were all, or as if they were to live here forever. Thus death and judgment come upon them unawares, and with as terrible a surprise as the deluge came upon the inhabitants of the old world: and then, too late, they wish to be with the believer in his desired ark. Even from the same families and religious societies, death is continually taking one to heaven, and another to hell. Men labor and live together, nay, they associate in the same acts of worship: yet they are the subjects of two opposite kingdoms; and at death they are removed to the capital, so to speak, of that kingdom to which they belong. As we therefore know that our Lord will speedily come to take us hence, but cannot know when, or how soon, 'let us watch and be sober.' To us, at least, 'the end of all things is at hand;' and as we should be overwhelmed with confusion, if found, at that solemn season, indulging sloth, or sinful passions, or in the places of fashionable dissipation, and could rather wish to be found in the path of duty, or pouring out our hearts in prayer; so let us never venture on the former,

NOTES.

CHAP. XXV. v. 1-13. This chapter continues our Lord's discourse to his disciples; and relates to the general concerns of death and judgment, rather than to the particular events which were coming on the Jewish nation. Towards the close of the foregoing chapter, our Lord made a gradual transition, from the latter to the former of these subjects; and He here more directly enforces the need of constant vigilance, which He connects with the conclusion of the foregoing chapter, by the introductory word 'Then.' In this respect, 'the kingdom of heaven shall,' &c. (*Marg. Ref. a, b.*—*Note, 3:2.* The circumstance of the parable were taken from the customs of the Jews, in cele-

to quicken us all with the utmost diligence to get ready for Christ's second coming, of which, in all his farewells to his church, mention was made, as in that before He died, (John 14:2.) and that at his ascension, (Acts 1:11.) and in that at shutting up the canon of Scripture, Rev. 22:20. Now it concerns us to prepare for Christ's coming: I. That we may then be ready to attend on Him; showed in the parable of the ten virgins, v. 1-13. II. That we may then be ready to give up our account to Him; showed in the parable of the three servants, v. 14-30. III. That we may then be ready to receive from Him our final sentence, and that it may be to eternal life; and this is showed in a description of the judgment, v. 31-46. These are things of awful consideration, because of everlasting concern, to every one of us.

Here, I. That in general illustrated, is, the kingdom of heaven, the external kingdom of Christ, its administration and success. Some of Christ's parables had showed us what it is like now, as ch. 13. This tells us what it shall be like, when the mystery of God shall be finished, and that kingdom delivered up to the Father. The administration of Christ's government toward the ready and the unready, in the great day, may be illustrated by this similitude; or, the professors of Christianity shall then be likened to these ten virgins, and shall be thus distinguished.

II. It is illustrated by a marriage solemnity. It was a custom sometimes among the Jews, on that occasion, that the bridegroom came, attended with his friends, late in the night, to the house of the bride, where she expected him, attended with her bride maids; who, upon notice given of the bridegroom's approach, were to go out with lamps in their hands, to light him into the house with ceremony and formality, in order to the celebration of their nuptials with great mirth. And some think that on these occasions they had usually ten virgins; for the Jews never held a synagogue, circumcised, kept the passover, or contracted marriage, but ten persons at least were present. Boaz, when he married Ruth, had ten witnesses, Ruth 4:2. Now in this parable,

1. The *Bridegroom* is our Lord Jesus Christ so represented in the 45th Psalm, Solomon's Song, and often in the New Testament. It speaks his singular and superlative love to, and his inviolable covenant with, his spouse, the church. Believers are now betrothed to Christ; (Hos. 2:19.) but the solemnizing

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

or neglect the latter. 'We are not in darkness, that that day should overtake us as a thief;' therefore let us, as 'children of light,' be always expecting the coming of our Lord. (*Note, 1 Thess. 5:4-11.*)—Above all, the stewards of the Lord's house hold should continually be looking to Him, to make them wise, faithful, and assiduous; and to enable them to avoid all interested or ambitious pursuits and worldly pleasures; nay, even all literary avocations or engagements, not intimately connected with the grand object, that they may wholly give up themselves to their most important work. Blessed will that servant be, however neglected or despised in this vain world, 'whom his Lord, when He cometh, shall find so doing;' for He will delight to honor that servant, whose pleasure it was to do his Master's work, and seek his glory. But woe be to the presumptuous infidel, the mercenary hireling, the lordly oppressor, or the voluptuous sensualist, in the garb of a priest! The Lord of that evil 'servant will come in a day when he looketh not for Him;' and what will all his preferences, distinctions, and enjoyments do for him, when God shall cut him off, and appoint him 'his portion with the hypocrites, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth?' Scott.

brating nuptials. Christ is the Bridegroom of the church; they who profess his Gospel are as the companions of his bride, who wait for his coming; and their continuance in this world constitutes the time of their waiting. (*Marg. Ref. c.*—*Notes, Ps. 45:13-15. Cant. 1:5, 6. 8:13, 14. John 3:27-36. v. 29. 2 Cor. 11:1-6. v. 2, 3. Rev. 19:7, 8. 21:1-4. v. 2, 9-21, v. 9.*) It must not, however, be supposed, that all nominal Christians are intended. Those who make a credible profession of the Gospel, and act in such a manner as to give real Christians a favorable opinion of them, and so gain admittance into their society, are exclusively meant. Scott.

4 But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, 'Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

10. Ps. 45:7. Zech. 4:2,3. John 1:16. 3:34. Rom. 8:9. 2 Cor. 1:12. Gal. 5:22,23. 1 John 2:20,27. Jude 19. 24:48. Hab. 2:3. Luke 12:45. Rev. 2:25.

12:40,43. Cant. 3:1. 5:2. Jon. 1:5. 6: Mark 14:57,58. Luke 18:8. Rom. 13:11. Eph. 5:14. 1 Thes. 5:6-8. 1 Pet. 5:8.

24:44. Mark 13:33-37. Luke 12:38-40,46. 1 Thes. 5:1-3. Rev. 16:15.

24:31. John 5:28,29. 1 Thes. 4:16. 2 Thes. 3:10.

31. Ps. 50:3-6. 96:13. 98:9. 2 Thes. 1:7-10. Jude 14,15.

1. Is. 26:9. Am. 4:12. Mal. 3:1,2. Rev. 18:7-9.

12:35. 2 Pet. 3:14. Rev. 24. 5. 32,19,20.

3:9. Luke 16:24. Acts 8:24. Rev. 3:9.

13:20,21. Job 8:13,14. 18:5. 21:17. Prov. 4:18,19. 13:9. 20:20. Luke 8:13.

10. *Go, going out.* Heb. 4:1.

Now, concerning these ten virgins, we may observe, (1.) Their different character, its proof and evidence.

[1.] *Five were wise, and five foolish.* v. 2. Note, Those of the same denomination among men, may yet be of characters vastly different in the sight of God. Sincere Christians are the wise, and hypocrites the foolish virgins, as in another parable they are represented by wise and foolish builders.

Note, Those are wise or foolish indeed, that are so in the affairs of their souls. True religion is true wisdom, sin is folly, but especially the sin of hypocrisy, for those are the greatest fools that are wise in their own conceit, and those the worst of sinners, that *feign themselves just men*. Some observe, from the equal number of the wise and foolish, what a charitable decorum (it is App. Tillotson's expression) Christ observes, as if He would hope that the number of true believers were near equal to that of hypocrites, or, at least, would lead us to hope the best concerning those that profess religion, and to think of them with a bias to the charitable side. Though, in judging of ourselves, we ought to remember that the gate is strait, and few find it, yet, in judging of others, we ought to remember, that the Captain of our salvation brings many sons to glory.

[2.] The evidence of this character was in the very thing they were to attend to.

First, It was the folly of the foolish virgins, that they took their lamps, and took no oil with them, v. 3. They had just oil enough to make their lamps burn for the present, to make a show with, as if they intended to meet the bridegroom; but no cruse or bottle of oil with them for a recruit, if the bridegroom tarried; thus hypocrites,

1. They have no principle within. They have a lamp of profession in their hands, but have not in their hearts that stock of sound knowledge, rooted dispositions, and settled resolutions, necessary to carry them through the services and trials of the present state. They act under the influence of external inducements, but are void of spiritual life; like a tradesman, that sets up without a stock, or seed on stony ground, wanting root.

2. They have no prospect of, nor make provision for, what is to come. This incontinuity is the ruin of many professors; all their care is to recommend themselves to their neighbors now, not to approve themselves to Christ, whom they must hereafter appear before; as if any thing will serve, provided it will but serve for the present. Tell them of things not seen as yet, and you are like Lot to his sons-in-law, as one that mocked. They do not provide for hereafter, as the ant, nor lay up for the time to come, 2 Cor. 12:14.

the marriage is reserved for the great day, when the bride, the Lamb's wife, will have made herself completely ready, Rev. 19:7,9.

2. The virgins are the professors of religion, members of the church: here represented as *her companions*, (Ps. 45:14.) as elsewhere *her children*, (Isa. 54:1.) *her ornaments*, Isa. 49:18. They that follow the Lamb, are said to be virgins; (Rev. 14:4.) this denotes their beauty and purity; they are to be presented as chaste virgins to Christ, 2 Cor. 11:2. The bridegroom is a king; so these virgins are *maids of honor*, *virgins without number*, (Cant. 6:8.) yet here said to be ten.

3. The office of these virgins is to meet the bridegroom, which is as much their happiness as duty. They wait on the bridegroom when he appears, and in the mean time wait for him. See here the nature of Christianity, As Christians, we profess ourselves to be, (1.) Attendants on Christ, to do Him honor, as the glorious Bridegroom, to be to Him for a name and a praise. We must follow Him as honorary servants to their masters, John 12:26. Hold up the name, and hold forth the praise, of the exalted Jesus; this is our business. (2.) Expectants of Christ, and of his second coming.

As Christians, we profess, not only to believe and look for, but to love and long for, the appearing of Christ, and to act in our whole conversation with regard to it. The second coming of Christ is the centre in which all the lines of our religion meet, and to which the whole of the divine life hath a constant reference and tendency.

4. Their chief concern is, to have lights in their hands, when they attend the bridegroom, thus to do him honor and to do him service. Note, Christians are children of light. The Gospel is light, and they who receive it, must not only be enlightened by it themselves, but must shine as lights, must hold it forth, Phil. 2:15, 16. This in general.

Secondly, It was the wisdom of the wise virgins, that they took oil in their vessels with their lamps, v. 4. They had a good principle within, which would maintain and keep up their profession. 1. The heart is the vessel, which it is our wisdom to get furnished; for out of a good treasure there, good things must be brought; but if that root be rottenness, the blossom will be dust. 2. Grace is the oil which we must have in this vessel; in the tabernacle there was constant provision made of oil for the light, Exod. 35:14. Our light must shine before men in good works; but this cannot be, or not long, unless there be a fixed active principle in the heart, of faith in Christ, and love to God and our brethren, from which we must act in every thing we do in religion, with an eye to what is before us. They that took oil, did it on supposition that perhaps the bridegroom might tarry. Note, In looking forward, it is good to prepare for the worst, to lay in for a long siege. But remember that this oil, which keeps the lamp burning, is derived to the candlestick from Jesus Christ, the great and good Olive, by the golden pipes of the ordinances, as represented, Zech. 4:2, 3, 12. explained John 1:16. *Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.*

(2.) Their common fault, during the bridegroom's delay; They all slumbered and slept, v. 25. Observe here,

[1.] The bridegroom tarried, that is, he did not come out so soon as they expected. What we look for as certain, we are apt to think is very near; many in the apostles' times imagined the day of the Lord was at hand. Christ, as to us, seems to tarry, and yet really does not, Hab. 2:3. There is good reason for the Bridegroom's tarrying; there are many intermediate counsels and purposes to be accomplished, the elect must all be called in, God's patience must be manifested, and the saints' patience tried, the harvest of the earth ripened, and the harvest of heaven too. But, though Christ tarry past our time, He will not tarry past the due time.

[2.] While he tarried, those that waited for him grew careless, and forgot what they were attending; They all slumbered and slept. The wise virgins slumbered, and the foolish slept; so some distinguish it; however, they were both faulty. The wise virgins kept their lamps burning, but did not keep themselves awake. Note, Too many good Christians, when they have been long in profession, grow remiss in preparations for Christ's second coming; they intermit their care, abate their zeal, their graces are not lively, nor their works found perfect before God; and though all love be not lost, yet the first love is left. If it was hard to the disciples to watch with Christ an hour, much more an age. I sleep, saith the spouse, but my heart wakes. Observe, First, They slumbered, and then slept. Note, One degree of carelessness and remissness makes way for another. Those that allow themselves in slumbering, will scarcely keep themselves from sleeping; therefore dread the beginning of spiritual decays; attend to the first symptoms of disease. The ancients generally understood the virgins' slumbering and sleeping, of their dying; they all died, wise and foolish, (Ps. 49:10.) before judgment-day. So *Rever.* Before the Bridegroom come, all must sleep, that is, die. So Calvin.

(3.) The surprising summons given them, v. 6. Note, [1.] Though Christ seem slow, He is sure. In his first coming, He was thought long by those that waited for the consolation of Israel; yet in the fulness of time he came; so his second coming, though long deferred, is not forgotten; his enemies shall find, to their cost, that forbearance is no acquittance; and his friends shall find, to their comfort, that the

(4.) Oil in their vessels. In many parts of the East, and particularly in the Indies, it is the custom, instead of torches and flambeaux, to carry a pot of oil in one hand, and a lamp, which is thus supplied with oil, in the other.

Mention is made in "The Customs of the East Indians and the Jews compared," of flambeaux (used at bridal ceremonies) made of pieces of linen squeezed hard together into a round form. Those who hold them in the hands, have in the other a bottle of oil, and pour out of it from time to time. In the linen, which otherwise gives no light.

D'OYLE and MANT.

Verbes 5-9.

The delay of the bridegroom represents the intermediate space between the real or supposed conversion of professed believers, and the coming of Christ; their slumbering and sleeping shows that the difference between real Christians and hypocrites, in many instances, consists more in the state of their hearts, than in their external conduct; (Marg. Ref. k. l.) though this at length discovers the difference between them as wise and foolish virgins. (Marg. Ref. l. v.—Notes Ps. 49: 6-9.)

(8.) Gone out.] 'Rather, "go out." BLOOMER. SCOTT

9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so: lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.*

10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut.

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

(Ps 49:7-9. Jer. 15:1. Ez. 14:14-16, 20.
Isa. 55:1-3, 6, 7. Acts 8:22. Rev. 3:17, 18.
2. Rev. 17. 22:12, 13.
7. 20-23. Luke 12:35-37. Col. 1:12.
2 Tim. 4:8. 1 Pet. 1:13.
3 Gen 7:16. Num. 14:23-24. Ps. 95:11.
Luke 13:25. Heb. 3:18, 19.
4 7:21-23. Heb. 12:16, 17.

world; Every eye shall see Him. There will be a cry from heaven, for He shall descend with a shout, Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment; and a cry from the earth too, a cry to rocks and mountains. Rev. 6: 16.

(4.) The address they all made to answer this summons: (v. 7.) *They all arose, and trimmed their lamps*, snuffed them, and supplied them with oil, and with all expedition put themselves in a posture to receive the bridegroom. Now, [1.] This, in the wise virgins, bespeaks an actual preparation for the Bridegroom's coming. Note, Even those that are best prepared for death, have, upon the immediate arrests of it, work to do to get themselves actually ready, that they may be found in peace; (2 Pet. 3: 14.) *found doing*; (ch. 24: 46.) and not found naked, 2 Cor. 5: 3. When we see the day approaching, we must address ourselves to our dying work with all seriousness, renewing our repentance for sin, our consent to the covenant, our farewells to the world, and our souls must be carried out toward God in suitable breathings. [2.] In the foolish virgins, it denotes a vain confidence, and conceit of the goodness of their state, and their readiness for another world. Note, Even counterfeit graces will serve a man to make a show of when he comes to die, as well as they have done all his life long; the hypocrite's hopes blaze when they are just expiring, like a lightning before death.

(5.) The distress of the foolish virgins, v. 8, 9. This bespeaks, [1.] The apprehensions some hypocrites have of their misery, even on this side death, when God opens their eyes to see their folly, and themselves perishing with a lie in their right hand. Or, however, [2.] The real misery of their state on the other side death, and in the judgment; how far their fair, but false, profession of religion, will be from availing them any thing in the great day; see what comes of it.

1st. Their lamps are gone out. The lamps of hypocrites often go out in this life; when they who have begun in the Spirit end in the flesh, and the hypocrisy breaks out in open apostasy, 2 Pet. 2: 20. The profession withers, and the credit of it is lost; the hopes fail, and the comfort of them is gone; how often is the candle of the wicked thus put out! Job. 21: 17. Yet many a hypocrite keeps up his credit, and the comfort of his profession, such as it is, to the last; but what is it when God takes away his soul? Job 27: 8. If this candle be not put out before him, it is put out with him, Job 18: 5, 6. He shall lie down in sorrow, Isa. 50: 11. The gains of a hypocritical profession will not follow a man to judgment, ch. 7: 22, 23. The lamps are gone out, when the hypocrite's hope proves like the spider's web, (Job 8: 11, &c.) and like the giving up of the ghost, Job 11: 20.

2dly. They wanted oil. Note, Those that take up short of true grace, will certainly find the want of it one time or other. An external profession, well humored, may carry a man far, but will not carry him through; it may light him along this world, but the damps of the valley of the shadow of death will put it out.

3dly. They would not be beholden to the wise virgins for a supply; Give us of your oil. Note, The day is coming, when carnal hypocrites would gladly be found in the addition of true Christians. Those who now hate the strictness of religion, will, at death, wish for the solid comforts of it. Those who care not to live the life, would yet die the death, of the righteous.

Verse 10.

and the door was shut. At a marriage procession I saw, the bridegroom came at a distance, and the bride lived at Serampore, to which place the bridegroom was to come by water. After waiting two or three hours, at length, near midnight, it was announced, as if in the very words of scripture, Behold the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. All the persons employed, now lighted their lamps, and ran with them in their hands to fill up their stations in the procession; and those who had lost their lights, and were unprepared; but it was then too late to seek them, and the cavalcade moved forward to the house of the bride. [Sometimes the assembly consists of two thousand persons, all richly dressed in gold or silver tissue. At intervals during the

The day is coming, when those who now look with contempt on humble, contrite saints, and gladly get an interest in them, and would be those as their best friends and benefactors, whom now they set with the dogs of the street. Give us of your oil; that is, 'Speak a word for us;' so some; but there is no occasion for vouchers in the great day, the Judge knows what is every man's true character. But is it not well that they are brought to say this? It is so; but, 1. This request was extorted by sensible necessity. Note, Those who will see their need of grace hereafter, when it should save them, who will not see their need now, when it should sanctify and rule them. 2. It comes too late. God would have given them oil, had they asked in time; but there is no buying when the market is over.

4thly. They were denied a share in their companions' oil. It is a sad presage of a rupture with God, when they were thus repulsed by good people. The wise answered, Not so; these wise virgins would rather give a season, without a positive refusal, than (as many do) give a positive refusal, without a reason. They were well inclined to help their neighbors in distress; but, We must not, we cannot, we dare not, do it lest there be not enough for us and you; charity begins at home; but go, and buy for yourselves. Note, 1. Those that would be saved, must have grace of their own. Though we have benefit by the communion of saints, and the faith and prayers of others may now redound to our advantage, yet our own sanctification is indispensably necessary to our own salvation. The just shall live by his faith. Every man shall give account of himself, and therefore let every man prove his own work; for he cannot get another to muster for him in that day. 2. Those that have most grace have none to spare; all we have is little enough for ourselves to appear before God in. The best have need to borrow from Christ. The church of Rome, which dreams of works of supererogation, and the imputation of the righteousness of saints, forgets that it was the wisdom of the wise virgins to understand that they had but oil enough for themselves, and none for others. But observe, These wise virgins did not upbraid the foolish with their neglect, nor boast of their own forecast, nor torment them with suggestions tending to despair, but gave them the best advice the case will bear, Go ye, rather to them that sell. Note, Those that deal foolishly in the affairs of their souls are to be pitied, and not insulted over; for who made thee to differ? When ministers attend such as have been mindless of God and their souls all their days, but are under death-bed convictions; and, because true repentance is never too late, direct them to repent, and turn to God, and close with Christ; yet, because late repentance is seldom true, they do but as these wise virgins did by the foolish; they can but tell them what is to be done, if it be not too late; but whether the door may not be shut before it is done, is an unspeakable hazard. It is good advice now, if it be taken in time, Go to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. Note, Those that would have grace, must have recourse to, and attend on, the means of grace. See Isa. 55: 1.

(6.) The coming of the bridegroom, and the issue of all this different character of the wise and foolish virgins.

[1.] While they went out to buy, the bridegroom came. Note, With regard to time that put off their great work to the last, it is as thou said to one, they have not time to do it then. Getting grace is a work of time, and cannot be

procession, guns and rockets are fired, and the spectacle is rendered grand beyond description, by a prodigious number of lighted torches and the sound of musical instruments. BURDER.] Then the company entered a large and splendidly illuminated area, before the house, covered with an awning, where a great multitude of friends, dressed in their best apparel, were seated upon mats. The bridegroom was carried in the arms of a friend, and placed in a superb seat in the midst of the company, where he sat a short time, and then went into the house, the door of which was immediately shut and guarded by Sepoys and others expostulated with the door-keepers, but in vain.

WARD'S View of the Hindoos.

BLOOMFIELD

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15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents.

17 And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two.

18 But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

19 After a long time, the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

f 12-24. Luke 12:48. 19:13,14.
g 2 Sam. 7:1-3. 1 Chr. 13:1-3. 22-26:28,3,4c. 29:1-17. 2 Chr. 19:10. 18:3-15. 17:3-8. 19:4-10. 31:3-8.
21. 33:15,16. 34:25. Neh. 5:14-19.
Is. 23:18. 49:23. 60:5-16. Acta 13:35. Rom. 15:18,19. 1 Cor. 9:16.
22. 15:10. 1 Tim. 6:17,18. 2 Tim. 2:6. 4:5-8. Philm. 6:7. 3 John 6-8.
h 34:18,19. 2 Sam. 19:32. 1 Kings 18:34. 2 Kings 4:8-10. Job 29:11-17. 31:16-22. Prov. 3:9-10. Ec. 11:1-6. Mark 14:3-8. Acta 9:36.
39. 10:2. 11:29,30. 2 Cor. 8:12. 9:11-14. Gal. 6:9,10. Eph. 5:16. Col. 4:17. 1 Tim. 5:12. 2 Tim. 1:18-18. Heb. 6:10,11. 1 Pet. 4:10.
i Prov. 18:1. 25:13-16. Hag. 1:2-4. Mal. 1:10. Luke 19:20. Heb. 6:12. 2 Pet. 1:8.
j 34:18.
k 13:24. Luke 16:12,13,4c. Rom. 14:7-12. 1 Cor. 3:12-15. 2 Cor. 5:10. Jam. 3:1.

factors to our Master's stock.

The endowments of the world—estate, credit, interest, power, preferment, must be improved for the honor of Christ. The ordinances of the Gospel, and opportunities of attending them, bibles, ministers, sabbaths, sacraments, must be improved for the end, for which they were instituted, and communion with God kept up by them, and the gifts and graces of the Spirit must be exercised; and this is trading with our talents.

(2.) They were successful; they doubled their stock, and in a little time made cent. per cent. of it: he that had five talents soon made them other five. Trading with our talents is not always successful with others, but, however it shall be so to ourselves, Isa. 49: 4. Note, The hand of the diligent makes rich in graces, and comforts, and treasures of good works. There is a great deal to be got by industry in religion.

Observe, The returns were in proportion to the receivings. [1.] From those to whom God hath given five talents, He expects the improvement of five. The greater gifts any have, the more pains they ought to take. [2.] From those to whom He has given but two talents, He expects only the improvement of two; if they lay out themselves to do good according to the best of their capacity and opportunity, they shall be accepted, though they do not so much good as others.

2. The third did ill; v. 18. Though the parable represents but one in three unfaithful, yet, in a history that answers this parable, we find the disproportion quite the other way, when ten lepers were cleansed, nine hid the talent, and only one returned to give thanks, Luke 17: 17, 18. The unfaithful servant was he that had but one talent; doubtless, there are many that have five, and bury them all; but Christ would hint to us, (1.) That, if he that had but one talent be reckoned with thus for burying that one, much more will they be accounted offenders that have many, and bury them. If he that was but of small capacity was cast into outer darkness, because he did not improve as he might what he had, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, that tramples under foot the greatest advantages? (2.) That those who have least to do for God, frequently do least of what they have to do. Some make it an excuse for their laziness, that they have not the opportunities of serving God that others have; and, because they have not where-

withal to do what they say they would they will not do what they are sure they can, and so do nothing: it is really an aggravation of their sloth, that when they have but one talent to care about, they neglect that one.

He hid the talent, for fear it should be stolen. he did not misspend, misemploy, embezzle, or squander it, but hid it. Money is like manure, (so Bacon used to say,) good for nothing in the heap, but it must be spread; yet it is an evil we have often seen under the sun, treasure heaped together, (Jam. 5: 3. Eccl. 6: 1, 2.) benefiting nobody; and so in spiritual gifts; many have them, and make no use of them for the end for which they were given. Those that have estates, and do not lay them out in works of piety and charity; that have power and interest, and do not with it promote religion in the places where they live; ministers that have capacities and opportunities for doing good, but do not stir up their gift, are slothful servants, that seek their own things more than Christ's.

He hid his lord's money; he did but his own, he might have done as he pleased; but whatever abilities and advantages we have, they are not our own, we are but stewards of them, and must give account to our Lord, whose goods they are. It was an aggravation of his slothfulness, that his fellow-servants were busy and successful in trading, and their zeal should have provoked his. Are others active, and shall we be idle?

III. The account of this improvement, v. 19. 1. The account is deferred; it is not till after a long time that they are reckoned with; not that the master neglects his affairs, or that God is slack concerning his promise; (2 Pet. 3: 9.) no he is ready to judge; (1 Pet. 4: 5.) but every thing must be done in its time and order. 2. Yet the day of account comes at last, v. 19. Note, The stewards of the manifold grace of God must shortly give account of their stewardship. We must all be reckoned with—what good we have got to our own souls, or done to others, by the advantages we have enjoyed. See Rom. 14: 10, 11. Here is,

(1.) The good account of the faithful servants; observe,

[1.] The servants giving up the account; (v. 20, 22.) 'Lord, thou deliverest to me five talents, and to me two; behold, I have gained five talents, and I two talents more.'

1st. Christ's faithful servants acknowledge with thankfulness his vouchsafements to them. Note, 1. It is good to keep a particular account of our receivings from God, and remember them, that we may know what is expected from us, and may render accordingly. 2. We must never look on our improvements but with a general mention of God's favor to us, of the honor He has put on us, in intrusting us with his goods, and of that grace which is the spring and fountain of all the good in us, or done by us. For the truth is, the more we do for God, the more we are indebted to Him for making use of us, and enabling us for his service.

2dly. They produce, as an evidence of faithfulness, what they have gained. Note, God's good stewards have something to show for their diligence: Show me thy faith by thy works. He that is a good man, let him show it, Jam. 3: 13. If we be careful in our spiritual trade, it will soon be seen by us, and our works will follow us, Rev. 14: 13. Not that the saints will, in the great day, make mention of their own good deeds; no, Christ will do that for them; (v. 35.) but it intimates, that they who faithfully improve their talents shall have boldness in the day of Christ; 1 John 2: 28. 4: 17. And it is observable, that he who had but two talents, gave up his account as cheerfully as he who had five; for his comfort, in the day of account, will be according to our faithfulness, not our usefulness; our sincerity, not our success; according to the uprightness of our hearts, not the degree of our opportunities

Verbes 19-23.

Unbelievers either conclude that Christ will never come to judgment, or that event appears to them so doubtful and distant, that it has no influence on their conduct: (Note, 24: 45-51.) and believers have need of patience, that, after they have done the will of God, they may

receive the promise.' (Note, Heb. 10: 35-39, v. 35.) (M-Te. Ref. q. r.—See 18: 23-27, v. 23, 24. 24: 45-51, v. 46, 47. Luke 12: 35-46, v. 44. 16: 1-8, v. 1, 2. 19: 11-27, v. 10-13. Rev. 2: 24-28. 3: 4-6, 12, 13, 20-22.)

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20 And so he that had received five talents came, and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: ^{behold,} I have gained besides them five talents more.

21 His lord said unto him, ^{Well done,} thou good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, ^{I will} make thee ruler over many things: ^{enter} thou into the joy of thy Lord.

22 He also that had received two talents came, and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: ^{behold,} I have gained two other talents besides them.

23 His lord said unto him, ^{Well done,} good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, ^{I will} make thee ruler over many things: ^{enter} thou into the joy of thy Lord.

¶ Luke 19:16, 17. Acts 20:24. 1 Cor. 15:10. Col. 1:29. 2 Tim. 4:1-8. Jam. 2:18.

¶ 2 Chr. 31:20, 21. Luke 16:10. Rom. 2:29. 1 Cor. 4:5. 2 Cor. 5:9. 10:18. 1 Pet. 1:7.

¶ 24-40. 10:40-42. 24:47. Luke 12:44. 22:28-30. Rev. 2:10, 26-28. 3:21. 21:7.

¶ 33. Ps. 16:10, 11. John 12:26. 14:2. 17:24. Phil. 1:23. 2 Tim. 2:12. Heb. 12:2. 1 Pet. 1:8. Rev. 7:17.

¶ Luke 19:18, 19. Rom. 12:6-8. 2 Cor. 8:1-7. 13:12.

¶ 21. Mark 13:41-44. 14:9, 3.

thou into the joy of thy Lord. Note, (1.) The state of the blessed is a state of joy, not only because all tears shall then be wiped away, but all the springs of comfort shall be opened, and the fountains of joy broken up. Where there are the vision and fruition of God, a perfection of holiness, and the society of the blessed, there cannot but be a fulness of joy. (2.) This joy is the joy of our Lord; the joy He Himself has purchased and provided; the joy of the redeemed, bought with the sorrow of the Redeemer. It is the joy He Himself is in possession of, and which He had his eye on when He endured the cross, and despised the shame, Heb. 12: 2. It is the joy of which He Himself is the Fountain and Centre. It is the joy of our Lord, for it is joy in the Lord, who is our exceeding Joy. Abraham was not willing that the steward of his house, though faithful, should be his heir; (Gen. 15: 3.) but Christ admits his faithful stewards into his own joy, to be joint-heirs with Him. (3.) Glorified saints shall enter into this joy; shall have a full and complete possession of it, as the heir, when he comes of age, enters on his estate, or as they that were ready vented in to the marriage feast. Here the joy of our Lord enters into the saints, in the earnest of the Spirit; shortly they shall enter into and be in it to eternity, as in their element.

(2.) The bad account of the slothful servant. Observe,

[1.] His apology for himself, v. 24, 25. Though he had received but one talent, for that one he is called to account. The smallness of our receiving will not excuse us from a reckoning.

[2.] The master's acceptance and approbation of their account, v. 21, 23.

1st. He commended them, v. 21. Note, The diligence and integrity of those who approve themselves the faithful servants of Christ, will be found to praise, and honor, and glory, at his appearing, 1 Pet. 1: 7. Those that own and honor God now, He will own and honor shortly.

1. Their persons will be accepted; *Thou good and faithful servant.* He that knows the integrity of his servants now, will witness to it in the great day. Perhaps they were censured by men, as *righteous overmuch*; but Christ will give them their just characters of *good and faithful*. 2. Their performances will be accepted; *Well done.* Christ will call those only, *good servants*, that have done well; for it is by *patient continuance in well-doing*, we seek for this glory and honor; and if we seek, we shall find; if we do that which is good, and do it well, we shall have *praise of the same*. Some masters are so morose, that they will not commend their servants, though they do their work ever so well; it is thought enough not to chide; but Christ will commend his servants that do well; and if we have the good word of our Master, the matter is not great what our fellow-servants say of us; as, on the contrary, not he who commendeth himself, or whom his neighbors commend, is approved, but whom the Lord commends.

2dly. He rewards them, which is here expressed two ways.

1. In one expression agreeable to the parable, v. 21. Christ is a Master that will prefer his servants who acquit themselves well. Christ has honor in store for those that honor Him—a crown, (2 Tim. 4: 8.) a throne, (Rev. 3: 21.) a kingdom, ch. 25: 34. Here they are beggars, in heaven they shall be rulers. The upright shall have dominion; Christ's servants are all princes.

Observe the disproportion between the work and the reward; there are but few things in which the saints are serviceable to the glory of God, but there are many things wherein they shall be glorified with God. What charge we receive from God, what work we do for God in this world, is but little, very little, compared with the joy set before us. Put together all our services, sufferings, improvements, all the good we do to others, all we get to ourselves, and they are but few, next to nothing, not worthy to be compared, not fit to be named, with the glory to be revealed.

2. In another expression, which slips out of the parable into the thing signified by it; *Enter* into the joy of thy Lord. Note, (1.) The state of the blessed is a state of joy, not only because all tears shall then be wiped away, but all the springs of comfort shall be opened, and the fountains of joy broken up. Where there are the vision and fruition of God, a perfection of holiness, and the society of the blessed, there cannot but be a fulness of joy. (2.) This joy is the joy of our Lord; the joy He Himself has purchased and provided; the joy of the redeemed, bought with the sorrow of the Redeemer. It is the joy He Himself is in possession of, and which He had his eye on when He endured the cross, and despised the shame, Heb. 12: 2. It is the joy of which He Himself is the Fountain and Centre. It is the joy of our Lord, for it is joy in the Lord, who is our exceeding Joy. Abraham was not willing that the steward of his house, though faithful, should be his heir; (Gen. 15: 3.) but Christ admits his faithful stewards into his own joy, to be joint-heirs with Him. (3.) Glorified saints shall enter into this joy; shall have a full and complete possession of it, as the heir, when he comes of age, enters on his estate, or as they that were ready vented in to the marriage feast. Here the joy of our Lord enters into the saints, in the earnest of the Spirit; shortly they shall enter into and be in it to eternity, as in their element.

(21.) *The joy.* 'That is, "Share the joyful banquet prepared by 'his master'." Or, "Receive the means of happiness, which thy Lord can give as a reward." The word here translated "joy," is used in the Greek of Esther 9: 19, for "banquet." *Le Clerc.* Ignorius says that banqueting-rooms have the word joy inscribed on them.' HEWLETT.

The joy of the Lord. 'The happiness of heaven is represented under the notion of pleasure. The pleasures of this life seldom satisfy; and when they do, they surfeit. They enfeeble the body, and relax the soul. Corruption and shame mix with them. They begin in anxiety, and end in repentance. They were given to answer certain ends in this present state: we pursue them beyond those natural ends to our confusion and ruin. But the happiness of heaven shall be that of an

Observe, 1st. What he confides in. He comes to the account with great assurance, relying on the plea, *'Lo, there thou hast that is thine; if have not made it more, as the others, yet this I can say, I have not made it less.'* Thus, he thinks, may serve to bring him off, if not with praise, yet with safety.

Note, Many a one goes very securely to judgment, presuming on the validity of a plea that will be overruled as vain and frivolous. Slothful professors, that are afraid of doing too much for God, yet hope to come off as well as those that take so much pains in religion. Thus the sluggard is wiser in his own conceit, than seven men that can render a reason, Prov. 26: 16. This servant thought his account would pass well enough, because he could say, *Thou hast that is thine.* 'Lord, I was no spendthrift, no prodigal, no profaner of sabbaths, no opposer of good ministers and good preaching; Lord, I never ridiculed my Bible, nor bantered religion, nor abused my power to persecute any good man; I never drowned my parts, nor wasted God's good creatures in drunkenness and gluttony, nor ever, to my knowledge, did injury to any.' Many, that are called Christians, build great hopes for heaven on their being able to make such an account; yet all this amounts to no more than, *There thou hast that is thine; as if no more were required, or could be expected.*

2dly. What he confesses. He owns the burying of his talent, *I hid thy talent in the earth.* He speaks as if that were no great fault; nay, as if he deserved praise for his prudence in putting it in a safe place, and running no hazards with it. Note, It is common for people to make a very light matter of that which will be their condemnation in the great day. Or, if conscious of fault, it intimates how easily slothful servants will be convicted in the judgment; there will need no great search for proof, for *their own tongue shall fall on them.*

3dly. What he makes his excuse; *I knew that thou wast a hard man, and I was afraid.* Good thoughts of God would beget love, and that love would make us diligent and faithful; but hard thoughts of God beget fear, and that fear makes us slothful and unfaithful. His excuse he speaks,

1. The sentiments of an enemy; *I knew thee, that thou art a hard man.* This was like that wicked saying of the house of Israel, *The way of the Lord is not equal*, Ezek. 18: 25. Thus the foolishness of man perverteth his way, and then, as if that would mend the matter, his heart fretteth against the Lord. This is covering the transgression, as Adam, who implicitly laid the fault on God Himself; *The woman which Thou gavest me.* Note, Carnal hearts are apt to conceive false and wicked opinions of God, and with them to harden themselves in their evil ways. Observe how confidently he speaks; *I knew thee to be so.* How could he know Him to be so? *What iniquity have we or our fathers found in Him?* Jer. 2: 5. Wherein has He wearied us with our work, or deceived us in his wages? Mic. 6: 3. Has He been a wilderness to us, or a land of darkness? Thus long God has governed the world, and may as, with more reason than Samuel himself could, *Whom have I defrauded, or whom oppressed?* Does not all the world know the contrary, that He is so far from being a hard Master, that the earth is full of his goodness: so far from reaping where He sowed not, that He sows a great deal where He reaps nothing? For He causes the sun to shine, and his rain to fall, upon the evil and unthankful, and fills their hearts with food and gladness, who say to the Almighty

24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, "Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed :

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast *that* is thine.

26 His lord answered and said unto him, "Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed ;

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents.

29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath.

• 7:21. Luke 6:45.
• 20:12. Jer. 21:14-15. Is. 5:3. Jer. 41:18-19. Ez. 18:25-29. Mal. 1:12-13. 3:14, 15. Luke 15:29. 19:20-22. Rom. 8:7. 9:20.
• 2 Sam. 6:9-10. Is. 57:11. Rom. 8:15. 2 Tim. 1:5, 7. Rev. 2:18.
• 12:13. Joh. 15:5, 6.
• Luke 19:20-23. Rom. 3:19. Jude 15. 4. Deut. 23:19, 20.
• Luke 10:42. 19:24.
• 13:12. Mark 4:25. Luke 8:18. 16:9-12. 19:25-26. Joh. 15:9.
• 21:41. 1. am. 2:6. Hos. 2:9. Luke 12:19-21. 16:1-3, 30-35. Joh. 11:48. Rev. 2:5.

loss, yet thou mightest have put it into the hands of the exchangers, or goldsmiths, mightest have brought it into the bank, and then at my coming, if I could not have had the greater improvement, by trade and merchandise, (as of the other talents,) yet I might have had the lesser improvement, of bare interest, and should have received *my own with usury.* Note, If we could not, or durst not, do what we would, yet that excuse will not serve, when it will be made to appear that we did not do what we could and durst. Something is better than nothing, and our Master will not despise the day of small things. Or thus, (3.) 'Suppose I did reap where I sowed not, yet that is nothing to thee, for I had sowed upon thee, and the talent was my money, which thou wast intrusted with, not only to keep, but to improve.' Note, At the day of account, wicked and slothful servants will be left quite without

Depart from us. This suggestion bespeaks the common reproach wicked people cast on God, as if all the blame of their sin and ruin lay at his door, for denying them his grace; whereas it is certain that never any, who faithfully improved the common grace they had, perished for want of special grace; nor can any show what could in reason have been done more for an unfruitful vineyard, than God has done in it. God does not demand brick, and deny straw; no, whatever is required in the covenant, is promised in it; so that if we perish, it is owing to ourselves.

2. The spirit of a slave; *I was afraid.* This ill affection toward God arose from false notions of Him; and nothing is more unworthy of God, nor more hinders our duty to Him, than slavish fear. This has bondage and torment, and is directly opposite to that entire love which the great commandment requires. Note, Hard thoughts of God drive us from, and cramp us in, his service. Those who think it impossible to please Him, and in vain to serve Him, will do nothing to purpose in religion.

(2.) His Lord's answer to this apology. His plea is overruled, nay, made to turn against him. Here we have

1st. His conviction, v. 26, 27. He is convicted of two things:

1. Slothfulness, v. 26. Note, Slothful servants are wicked servants, and will be reckoned with as such by their Master; for he that is slothful in his work, and neglects the good that God has commanded, is *brother to him that is a great traitor*, by doing the evil that God has forbidden, Prov. 18:9. He that is careless in God's work, is near akin to him that is busy in the devil's work, *To do no good is to incur very serious blame.* Omissions are sins, and must come into judgment; slothfulness makes way for wickedness; all become filthy, *for there is none that doeth good*, Ps. 14:3. When the house is empty, the unclean spirit takes possession. Those that are idle in the affairs of their souls, are not only idle, but sometimes worse, 1 Tim. 5:13. When men sleep, the enemy sows tares.

2. Self-contradiction, v. 26, 27. Note, The hard thoughts sinners have of God, so far from justifying their wickedness and slothfulness, will rather aggravate and add to their guilt. Three ways this may be taken; (1.) 'Suppose I had been so hard a Master, shouldst not thou therefore have been the more diligent and careful to please Me, if not for love, yet for fear, and for that reason oughtest not thou to have minded thy work?' If our God be a consuming fire, in consideration of that, let us study how to serve Him. Or, thus, (2.) 'If thou didst think me to be a hard Master, and therefore durst not trade with the money thyself, for fear of losing by it, and being made to stand to the

excuse; frivo. ms. pleas will be overruled, and every mouth stopped; and those who now stand so much on their own justification, will not have one word to say for themselves.

2dly. His condemnation. The slothful servant is sentenced,

1. To be deprived of his talent, v. 28. The talents were first disposed of by the master, as an absolute owner, but this was now disposed of by him as a judge; he takes it from the unfaithful servant, to punish him, and gives it to him that was eminently faithful, to reward him. And the meaning of this part of the parable we have in the reason of the sentence, v. 29. This may be applied, (1.) To the blessings of this life. These we are intrusted with, to be used for the glory of God, and the good of those about us. Now he that hath these things, and useth them for these ends, he shall have abundance; perhaps abundance of the things themselves, at least, abundance of comfort in them, and of better things: but from him that hath not, that is, that hath these things as if he had them not, had not power to eat of them, or to do good with them, (*The miser may be considered as destitute of what he has, as well as of what he has not,*) they shall be taken away. Solomon explains this, (Prov. 11:24.) *There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty.* Giving to the poor, is trading with what we have, and the returns will be rich; it will multiply the meal in the barrel, and the oil in the cuseb; but the sordid, and niggardly, and uncharitable, will find that riches, so got, *perish by evil travel*, Eccl. 5:13, 14. Sometimes Providence strangely transfers estates from those that do no good with them, to those that do; they are gathered for him that will pity the poor, Prov. 28:8. See Prov. 13:22. Job 27:19, 17. Eccl. 2:26. (2.) We may apply it to the means of grace. They who are diligent in improving the opportunities they have, God will enlarge them, will set before them an open door, (Rev. 3:8.) but they who know not the day of their visitation, shall have the things that belong to their peace hid from their eyes. For proof of this, go see what God did to Shiloah, Jer. 7:12. (3.) We may apply it to the common gifts of the Spirit. He that hath these, and doeth good with them, shall have abundance: these gifts improve by exercise, and brighten by use; the more we do, the more we may do, in religion; but those who stir not up their gift, who do not exert themselves according to their capacity, their gifts decay, and go out like a neglected fire. From him, that hath not a living principle of grace in his soul, shall be taken away the common gifts he hath, as the lamps of the foolish virgins went out for want of oil, v. 8. Thus the man of the idle shepherd, which he had sluggish, folded up in his bosom, comes to be dried up, and his right eye, which he had carelessly or wilfully shut, becomes utterly darkened, as is threatened, Zech. 11:17.

2. He is sentenced to be cast out, v. 30. Here,

(1.) His character is that of an *unprofitable servant*. Note, Slothful servants will be reckoned with as unprofitable servants, who do nothing to the purpose of their coming into the world, nothing to answer the end of their birth, who are no way serviceable to the glory of God, the good of others, or the salva-

Verses 24, 25.

These verses describe the heart and inward workings of many decent and plausible hypocrites, and the motives of their slothfulness. They are 'carnally minded,' and at enmity with the holy character and law of God; they murmur against his providence, sovereignty and method of salvation; they disbelieve his promises, suppose his service to be perilous, unprofitable, and detrimental; they complain that He requires more than they are capable of performing, and that he punishes men for what they cannot help; they pervert the oracles of revelation to support these conclusions, and confound the want of inclination to what is good, with a want of natural ability. Thus they excuse their sloth and selfishness, and cast the blame of their misconduct, on God; and they suppose their unfruitfulness to be justifiable, because they are no outwardly so immoral as some other persons. *Marg. Ref. s—u—See. Luke 15:25-32, p. 29, 30.* Scott.

(24.) He that received the one talent. 'Our Lord placed the example of negligence in him to whom the least was committed, probably intimate,' says Doddridge, 'that we are accountable for the small-

est with which we are intrusted: but it cannot imply, that they who have received much will ordinarily pass their account best; for it is too plain, in fact, that most of those whose dignity, wealth and genius give them the greatest opportunities of service, seem to forget that they have a Master in heaven to serve, or any future reckoning to expect; and many render themselves much more criminal than this wicked and slothful servant, who hid his talent in the earth.' GREENFIELD.

Verses 27.

Exchangers.] 'These discharged not only the office of our bankers, that of receiving and giving out money, or of taking or giving interest upon it, but also of exchanging coins, and distinguishing genuine from forged money.'

Usury.] 'Rather, its produce.'

Sciently, the import of the word usury, was no other than prof., whether great or small, allowed to the lender for the use of borrowed money. But as this practice often gave rise to great extortion, the very name at length became odious.'

CAMPBELL.

30 And ^a cast ye the unprofitable servant into ^b outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

[Practical Observations.]

31 ¶ When ^c the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, ^d then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

32 And ^e before him shall be gathered all nations; and ^f he shall separate them one from another, as a

tion of their own souls. A slothful servant is a withered member in the body, a barren tree in the vineyard, an idle drone in the hive, he is good for nothing. In one sense, we are all *unprofitable servants*; (Luke 17: 10,) we cannot profit God, Job 22: 2. But to others, and to ourselves, it is required that we be profitable; if we be not, Christ will not own us as his servants; it is not enough not to do hurt, we must do good, must bring forth fruit, and though thereby God is not profited, yet He is glorified, John 15: 8.

(2.) His doom is, to be cast into outer darkness. Here, as in what was said to the faithful servants, our Savior slides insensibly out of the parable into the thing intended by it, and it serves as a key to the whole; for, *outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth*, is, in Christ's discourse, the common periphrasis of the miseries of hell. The state is, [1.] Very dismal; outer darkness. Darkness is uncomfortable and frightful; it was one of the plagues of Egypt. In hell there are *chains of darkness*, 2 Pet. 2: 4. In the dark *no man can work*, a fit punishment for a slothful servant. It is *outer darkness, out from the light of heaven, out from the joy of their Lord*, into which the faithful servants were admitted; *out from the feast*. Compare ch. 18: 12. 22: 13. [2.] Very doleful; there is weeping, which bespeaks great sorrow; and gnashing of teeth, which bespeaks great vexation and indignation. This will be the portion of the slothful servant.

V. 31—46. We have here a description of the process of the last judgment. Some passa-

ges in it are parabolical; as the separating between the sheep and the goats, and the dialogues between the Judge and the persons judged: but there is no thread of similitude carried through the discourse, and therefore it is rather to be called a draught or delineation of the final judgment, than a parable; it is, as it were, the explanation of the former parables. And here we have,

1. The placing of the Judge on the judgment seat; v. 31. Observe here,

1. That there is a judgment to come, in which every man shall be sentenced, by the rule of the everlasting Gospel, to a state of everlasting happiness, or misery, in the world of retribution, according to what he did in this world of probation.

2. The administration of the judgment is committed to the Son of man; for by Him God will judge the world, (Acts 17: 31.) and to Him all judgment is committed. Here, as elsewhere, when the last judgment is spoken of, Christ is called the *Son of man*, because He is to judge the sons of men; and because his wonderful condescension to take on Him our nature, will be recompensed by his exaltation in that day, and an honor put on the human nature.

3. Christ's appearing to judge the world will be splendid and glorious; the Sun of righteousness shall then shine in his meridian lustre, and the Prince of the kings of the earth shall show the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the honors of his excellent majesty; and all the world shall see what only the saints now believe—that He is the brightness of his Father's glory.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14—30. In some respects, 'the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man travelling into a far country, and delivering his goods unto his own servants.' Whatever any one possesses is intrusted to him by the great Lord of all, who will at length call him to an account for the use which he has made of it. The holy law requires us to devote the whole, in perfect love, to the service of God, and to the benefit of our neighbor, and denounces its awful curse on every one who, in any instance, or at any time, fails of so doing; but the Gospel inwardly teaches and disposes the true believer to attempt this sincerely, though feebly, from the time when he begins in any degree to experience 'the joy of God's salvation.' He believes his word respecting the future judgment, and its important consequences; and he gives implicit credit to his promises and threatenings. By faith he perceives his danger as a sinner, and fears and flees from it; and at the same time he discovers his Refuge, and in hope repairs to it. Having obtained peace with God, and peace of conscience, through the atoning blood of Christ, his 'faith works by love,' and his language is, 'What shall I render to the Lord, for all his benefits?' This humble love and gratitude, uniting with hatred of sin, contempt of the world, love to the brethren, and compassion for perishing sinners, impel him to devote himself, and all his abilities and advantages, to the service of Christ, and to do good in his church and in the world, according to his opportunity, and in exact proportion to the vigor of his faith and hope. This obedience distinguishes the real disciple of Christ from every other man: the self-righteous Pharisee, the self-wise infidel, the careless sinner, the formal professor of the Gospel, are alike unacquainted with these evangelical principles of devoted diligence, in the service of a crucified Savior.—It is the real Christian's liberty, privilege, honor, interest, and satisfaction, to be employed as the Redeemer's servant, and as his instrument in promoting his glory and the benefit of his people: and 'the love of Christ even constrains him, to live no longer to himself, but to Him that died for him, and rose again.' (2 Cor. 5: 13—15.) According to the number of his talents, he be-

come a blessing to others, by his example, influence, conversation and labors; by the use which he makes of his time, money and abilities; by his relative conduct in his family; and by serving the Lord, as a minister, magistrate or private Christian: and whether he has had five talents, two, one, or only a small portion of one, 'he will not be ashamed, but have confidence before Christ at his coming.' Nay, he may now humbly 'rejoice in the testimony of his conscience;' and, giving the Lord all the glory, he may look forward to death and judgment, assured of being then received with 'Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.' 'Let us not then be weary of well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.'—But let every one dread the doom of the unprofitable servant; for it is not enough, that men do not spend their Lord's goods on their lusts, or waste their time and talents in sin; even those who 'bury them in the earth,' will be left without excuse. Whatever they may profess, they dislike the character and word of the Lord; they count his service irksome and unprofitable; they dare not trust his promise, and they are dissatisfied with his providence; and, because they may not have the pre-eminence, or take the lead, and manage things in their own way, they sit down in sullen discontent, and will do nothing, because they cannot do every thing. But many of those excuses and objections which pass current here, will be refuted and silenced at last; and every unfruitful professor will be condemned out of his own mouth, and consigned to 'outer darkness, where is weeping and gnashing of teeth.' For whatever else men may possess, who are destitute of sanctifying grace, they will soon be deprived of it, and have nothing but the additional condemnation of having been ungrateful for so many mercies. But the most indigent believer is rich, and shall have abundance, and his felicity will be forever increasing. Let us not then envy sinners, or covet any of their perishing and dangerous possessions.

SCOTT

(14.—30.) Many arguments are held concerning, and even against, man's responsibility to God. We do not hear of these objections in the natural world; men obey from necessity and with alacrity the 'laws of nature,' as they are called, knowing it would be the height of folly and even insanity not to obey; why then refuse a *willing service* and obedience to the rest of the system of the almighty Legislator? What but misery can result, if happiness be thus thrown away? We are to use every talent to know and do his will, whether revealed in his *works or word*. Eo.

Verses 31—33.

In order more fully to explain and confirm the foregoing parabolical representations, our Lord next spake one of the most interesting and sublime discourses, which we meet with even in the holy Scriptures; and it is wonderful, that any person can read it, and yet suppose the Speaker to be *an ordinary man*: when there is such a divine authority and dignity in it, as, we may venture to say, could never have, with propriety, been assumed by any mere creature, however exalted. Having previously, and by degrees, drawn the attention of the disciples

to the great season of retribution, He here spake concerning it in the character of the sovereign Judge. (Marg. Ref. f. g.) There will not be the least danger of his mistaking any man's character, motives, or state; nor any possibility of opposition or escape; nor any danger lest any one should be overlooked, or remain disguised before Him. (See John, 6: 36—40. v. 39, 40.) What less than omnipotence and omniscience can effect such an exact separation of the whole human species? This being done, He will set the sheep (the proper emblem of his harmless, gentle, useful, and holy people) on his right hand, in token of their acceptance and honor; and the goats (the emblem of the unholiness and character of unbelievers,) at his left hand, as rejected and exposed to condemnation. (Marg. Ref. h—l.)

(31.) When the Son of man, &c. Comparing these words with ch. 24: 30, 31, it may seem that Christ teaches his disciples to expect of his first coming to the destruction of Jerusalem, as a kind of emblem of his final appearance in judgment; and consequently we are authorized to use some of the texts in the former chapter, as an discourse of that great and important day.

DODDGE

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sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink?

38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee?

39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

40 And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

41 Then shall he say [Practical Observations.]

x 43. Ez. 34:4. Acts 20:35. 28:9, Jam. 1:27. 5:14, 15.
v Phil. 4:10-14. 2 Tim. 1:16-18.
v Heb. 10:34. 13:1.
v 6:3. 1 Chr. 19:14. Prov. 15:33. Is. 1:16. 1 Cor. 15:10. 1 Pet. 5:5, 6.
v 84. Prov. 25:5, 7.
v 64:2. 3 Sam. 9:1, 7. Mark 9:41. John 1:28, 27. 21:15-17. 1 Cor. 16: 21, 22. 2 Cor. 4:15. 5:14, 15. 8:7-9. Gal. 5:13, 22. 1 Thes. 4:9, 10. 1 Pet. 1:22. 1 John 3:14-19. 4:7-12. 20:21.
v 12:49, 50. 13:5, 10. 28:10. Mark 3:34, 35. John 20:17. Heb. 2:11-15. 6:10.
v Acta 9:4, 5. Eph. 5:30

were chosen to salvation through sanctification.

4. It is prepared from the foundation of the world. This happiness was designed for the saints, and they for it, before time began, from all eternity, Eph. 1:4. The end, which is last in execution, is first in intention: Infinite Wisdom had an eye to the eternal glorification of the saints, from the first founding of the creation; *All things are for your sakes*, 2 Cor. 4:15. Or, it denotes the preparation of the place of this happiness, which is to be the seat and habitation of the blessed, in the very beginning of the work of creation, Gen. 1:1. There, in the heavens of heavens, the morning stars were singing together, when the foundations of the earth were fastened, Job 38:4-7.

2ly. The good tenure by which they shall hold it. What we come to by inheritance, is not got by any procurement of our own, but purely by the act of God. It is God that makes heirs, heirs of heaven. We come to an inheritance by virtue of our sonship, our adoption; *if children, then heirs*. A title by inheritance is the sweetest and surest title; it alludes to possessions in

owed Me, hearing the cross, now come with Me wearing the crown. The blessed of my Father are the beloved of my soul, that have been too long at a distance from Me; come now, come into my bosom, come into my arms, come into my dearest embraces! Oh, with what joy will this fill the hearts of the saints in that day! We now come boldly to the throne of grace, but we shall then come boldly to the throne of glory; and this word holds out the golden sceptre, with an assurance that our requests shall be granted to more than half of the kingdom. Now the Spirit saith, *Come*, in the word; and the bride saith, *Come*, in prayer; and the result hereof is a sweet communion: but the perfection of bliss will be, when the King shall say, *Come*.

[2.] The admission of the saints into the blessedness and kingdom of the Father, v. 34.

1st. The happiness they shall be possessed of, is very rich; we are told what it is by Him who had reason to know it, having purchased it for them, and possessed it Himself.

1. It is a kingdom: which is reckoned the most valuable possession on earth; yet this is but a faint resemblance of the felicities of the saints in heaven. They that here are beggars, prisoners, accounted as the off-scouring of all things, shall then inherit a kingdom, Ps. 143:7. Rev. 2:26, 27.

2. It is a kingdom prepared: the happiness must be great, for it is the product of the divine counsels. Note, Great preparation is made for the entertainment of the saints in the kingdom of glory. The Father designed it for them in his thoughts of love, and provided it for them in the greatness of his wisdom and power. The Son purchased it for them, and is entered as the Forerunner to prepare a place, John 14:2. And the blessed Spirit, in preparing them for the kingdom, in effect, is preparing it for them.

3. It is prepared for them. This bespeaks, (1.) Its suitability; it is in all points adapted to the nature of a soul, and to the new nature of a sanctified soul. (2.) Their property and interest in it. It is prepared on purpose for them; not only for such as you, but for you, you by name, you personally and particularly, who

the land of Canaan, which passed by inheritance, and would not be alienated longer than to the year of jubilee. Thus is the heavenly inheritance indefeasible, and unalienable. Saints, in this world, are as heirs under age, tutored and governed till the time appointed of the Father; (Gal. 4:1.) and then they shall be put in full possession of that which now through grace they have a title to; *Come*, and inherit it.

(2.) The ground of this, (v. 35, 36.) *For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat*. We cannot hence infer that any good works of ours merit the happiness of heaven, by any intrinsic worth or excellency in them, our goodness extends not to God; but it is plain that Jesus Christ will judge the world by the same rule by which He governs it, and therefore will reward those that have been obedient to that law; and mention will be made of their obedience, not as their title, but as their evidence of an interest in Christ and his purchase. This happiness will be adjudged to obedient believers, not on an estimate of merit, but upon the promise of God purchased by Jesus Christ. An estate made by deed or will on condition, when the condition is performed, according to the true intent of the donor or testator, becomes absolute; and then, though the title be built purely upon the deed or will, yet the performing of the condition must be given in evidence; and so it comes in here; for Christ is the Author of eternal salvation to those only that obey Him, and patiently continue in well-doing.

Now, the good works here mentioned are such as we commonly call works of charity to the poor; one instance of sincere obedience being put for all the rest; teaching us this in general, that faith working by love is all in all in Christianity; *Show me thy faith by thy works*. The good works here described imply three things, which must be found in all that are saved.

[1.] Self-denial, and contempt of the world reckoning the things of the world good no further than as we are enabled to do good with them. and those who have not wherewithal to do good must show the same disposition, by being contentedly and cheerfully poor. Those are fit for heaven that are mortified to earth.

[2.] Love to our brethren; the second great commandment, the fulfilling of the law, and an excellent preparative for the world of everlasting love. We must give proof of this love by our readiness to do good, and to communicate good wishes are but mockeries without good works, Jam. 2:15, 16. 1 John 3:17. Those that have not to give, must show the same disposition some other way.

[3.] A believing regard to Jesus Christ. That which is here rewarded, is the relieving of the poor for Christ's sake, out of love to Him, and with an eye to Him. This puts an excellency on the good work, when in it we serve the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 31-40. When we hear of pious persons being sick, or in prison, and wanting advice, attendance, or other relief, we should suppose that Jesus is in these circumstances, and sends to us, by name, to come and minister unto Him. Let us then renounce our own ease, interest, convenience, indulgence and decoration, that we may show our ardent gratitude for his salvation, by abounding in this work of faith, and labor of love; and should we even be mistaken in the character of those, for whom we thus deny ourselves from love to Christ, He will certainly accept and recompense our services.—But alas! how little do we see of these fruits of the Spirit even among professed Christians! Who does not think, that he

should have counted it an honor to have entertained Christ when on earth? But how few are willing to *retrench greatly* from their unnecessary expenses, to relieve these his representatives and brethren! Many, however, will even part with their money, who will not subject themselves to the hardship and inconvenience of visiting the sick, and such as are in prisons, or other recesses of misery and distress; by which means their bounty is distributed at random, does comparatively little good, and will often be shown to spring, rather from an easy temper, than from a disinterested, self-denying love of others, for the sake of Christ.

SCOTT.

(36.) Visited.] 'Looked after.' DODDRIDGE. 'Assisted.'

CAMPBELL.

Verses 41-46.

This fire will be 'everlasting' which would be an unmeaning addition, if the wicked were not to continue in it eternally. (Marg. Ref. f.-i.) No doubt, impenitent sinners of every age and nation will then be judged; but those, to whom the Scriptures are sent, are here chiefly concerned: therefore our Lord represents nothing more than the ground on which false professors of Christianity will be condemned. These however will be as ready to deny or palliate their guilt, as true believers to disclaim all merit in their services; but the Judge will prove his charge, and stop their mouths. 'It is not sufficient to preserve us from that dreadful sentence, "Depart from Me," &c. that we have done no evil, if we have been deficient in those acts of charity and mercy we owe to the members of Christ's body.' Theophylact. Re.

ing therefore evidently proved to be under the condemnation of the law, and entitled to no benefit from the Gospel; nay, exposed to deeper condemnation for their neglect of it, or their hypocrisy and abuse of their privileges; they will be left without plea, or the least power of resistance or escape, and be constrained to 'go away into everlasting punishment,' whilst the righteous will be received into everlasting life and felicity. (Marg. Ref. k.-o.) The original word is the same in both clauses; and he must be blinded by Satan in no ordinary degree, who will risk his immortal soul and its eternal interests in interpreting the same word temporary in one clause, and eternal in another, of the same verse; and if the punishment be eternal, there can be no place for annihilation, or for final restitution. The contrast also between 'punishment,' and 'life,' is carefully to be observed. (Notes, Rom. 8:20, 21. 6:21-23.)

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also unto *them on the left hand, 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels :

42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink ;

43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in; naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

Lord Christ, which those may do, that work for their own living, as well as those that help to keep others alive. See Eph. 6: 5-7. Those good works shall then be accepted, which are done in the name of the Lord Jesus, Col. 3: 17.

I was hungry, that is, my disciples and followers were so, and you gave them meat. Note, 1st. Providence so variously orders the circumstances of his people in this world, that while some are in a condition to give relief, others need it. It is no new thing for those that are feasted with the dainties of heaven to want daily food; for those at home in God, to be strangers in a strange land; for those that have put on Christ, to want clothes to keep them warm; for those that have helpful souls, to have sickly bodies; and for those to be in prison, that Christ has made free. 2dly. Works of charity and beneficence, according to our ability, are necessary to salvation; and there will be more stress laid on them in the judgment of the great day, that is commonly imagined; these must be the proofs of our love, and of our professed subjection to the Gospel of Christ, 2 Cor. 9: 13. But they that show no mercy shall have judgment without mercy.

Now this reason is modestly excepted against by the righteous, but is explained by the Judge Himself.

1. It is questioned by the righteous, (v. 37-39) not as if they were loath to inherit the kingdom, or ashamed of their good deeds, or had not the testimony of their own consciences concerning them; but, (1.) The expressions are parabolical, designed to introduce and impress these great truths, that Christ has a mighty regard to works of charity, and is especially pleased with kindnesses done to his people for his sake. Or, (2.) They speak the humble admiration of glorified saints, that such poor worthless services, as theirs, are so highly celebrated and richly rewarded; v. 37. Note, Gracious souls are apt to think meanly of their own good deeds; especially as unworthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed. Far from this is the temper of those who said, *Wherefore have we fasted, and 'hous seest not?* Isa. 58: 3. Saints in heaven will wonder what brought them thither, and that God should so regard them and their services. 'It even put Nathanael to the blush, to hear Christ's encomium of him: *Whence knowest thou me?* John 1: 47, 48. See Eph. 3: 20. *When saw we Thee an hungred?* We have seen the poor in distress many a time; but when saw we Thee? Note, Christ is more among us than we think He is; surely the Lord is in this place, by his Word, his ordinances, his ministers, his Spirit, yea, and his poor, and we know it not; *When wast under the fig tree, I saw thee,* John 1: 48.

2. It is explained by the Judge Himself; v. 40. The good works of the saints, when they are produced in the great day, (1.) Shall all be remembered; nor one of the least be overlooked, no, not a cup of cold water. (2.) They shall be interpreted most to their advantage, and the best construction be put on them. As Christ

2. Here is the process concerning the wicked those or the left hand. And in that we have,

(1.) The sentence passed on them, v. 41 Every word has terror in it, like that of the trumpet at mount Sinai, waxing louder and louder, every accent more and more doleful, and exclusive of comfort.

[1.] In this world they were often called to come to Christ for life and rest; but they turned a deaf ear to his calls; justly therefore are they now bid to depart from Christ. 'Depart from me, the Fountain of all good, from me the Savior, and therefore from all hope of salvation; I will never have any thing more to say to you, or to do with you.' Now they say to the Almighty, *Depart from us;* then He will say to them, *Depart from Me.* Note. It is the hell of hell to depart from Christ.

[2.] If they must depart from Christ, might they not be dismissed with a blessing. No, *Depart, ye cursed.* They that would not come to Christ, to inherit a blessing, must depart from Him, under the burthen of a curse, Gal. 3: 10. *As they loved cursing, so it shall come unto them.* But observe, The righteous are called the blessed of my Father: for their blessedness is owing purely to the grace of God and his blessing, but the wicked are called only *ye cursed,* for their damnation is of themselves. Hath God sold them? No, they have sold themselves, have laid themselves under the curse Isa. 50: 1.

[3.] If they must depart with a curse, may they not go into some place of ease and rest? Will it not be misery enough for them to bewail their loss? No, there is a punishment of sense as well as loss; they must depart into fire, into torment as grievous as that of fire is to the body and much more. This fire is the wrath of the eternal God, fastening on the guilty souls and consciences of sinners, that have made themselves fuel for it. Our God is a consuming Fire, and sinners fall immediately into his hands, Heb. 10: 21. Rom. 2: 8, 9.

[4.] If into fire, may it not be some light or gentle fire? No, it is prepared fire; it is a punishment ordained of old, Isa. 33: 33. The damnation of sinners is often spoken of as an act of the divine power; *He is able to cast into hell.* In the vessels of wrath He makes his power known: it is a destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.

[5.] If into prepared fire, oh, let it be but of short continuance, let them but pass through fire! No, the fire of God's wrath will be an ever lasting fire; a fire, that, fastening and preying on immortal souls, can never go out for want of fuel; and, being kindled and kept burning by the wrath of an immortal God, can never go out for want of being blown, and stirred up; and, the streams of mercy and grace being forever excluded, there is nothing to extinguish it.

[6.] If they must be doomed to such a state of endless misery, yet may they not have some good company there? No, none but the devil and his angels, their sworn enemies, that helped to bring them to this misery, and will triumph over them in it. They served the devil while they lived, and therefore are justly sentenced to be where he is, as those that served Christ are taken to be with Him where He is. Observe here, First, Christ intimates that there is a prince of the devils, and the rest are his angels by whose agency He supports his kingdom. Christ and his angels will in that day triumph over the dragon and his, Rev. 12: 7. Secondly, The fire is said to be prepared, not primarily for the wicked, as the kingdom for the righteous; but originally for the devil and his angels; if sinners make themselves associates with Satan,

* 23. 7:23. Ps. 6:8. 119:115. 139:19. Luke 13:27. Dent. 27:15-26. 28:16, &c. Ps. 1:24. Jer. 17:5. Mal. 3:10-13. Heb. 6:5. 4:48. 3:12. 13:50. Mark 9:43-48. 2 Thes. 1:9. Rev. 14:10, 11. 20:10. 1 John 4:4. Rom. 9:22, 23. 2 Pet. 2:4. 1 John 3:10. Jude 6. Rev. 12:7-9. 35. 10:37, 38. 12:30. Amos 6:6. John 5:23. 8:42-44. 14:21. 1 Cor. 13:22. 2 Thes. 1:8. Gal. 2:15-24. 1 John 3:13-17. 4:20. 1:24-27. 1:22. Sam. 15:13-15, 20. 1:23. 2:23, 3. Mal. 1:5. 2:17. 3:13. Luke 10:23. 10:24. 10:25. 10:26. 10:27. 10:28. 10:29. 10:30. 10:31. 10:32. 10:33. 10:34. 10:35. 10:36. 10:37. 10:38. 10:39. 10:40. 10:41. 10:42. 10:43. 10:44. 10:45. 10:46. 10:47. 10:48. 10:49. 10:50. 10:51. 10:52. 10:53. 10:54. 10:55. 10:56. 10:57. 10:58. 10:59. 10:60. 10:61. 10:62. 10:63. 10:64. 10:65. 10:66. 10:67. 10:68. 10:69. 10:70. 10:71. 10:72. 10:73. 10:74. 10:75. 10:76. 10:77. 10:78. 10:79. 10:80. 10:81. 10:82. 10:83. 10:84. 10:85. 10:86. 10:87. 10:88. 10:89. 10:90. 10:91. 10:92. 10:93. 10:94. 10:95. 10:96. 10:97. 10:98. 10:99. 10:100. 10:101. 10:102. 10:103. 10:104. 10:105. 10:106. 10:107. 10:108. 10:109. 10:110. 10:111. 10:112. 10:113. 10:114. 10:115. 10:116. 10:117. 10:118. 10:119. 10:120. 10:121. 10:122. 10:123. 10:124. 10:125. 10:126. 10:127. 10:128. 10:129. 10:130. 10:131. 10:132. 10:133. 10:134. 10:135. 10:136. 10:137. 10:138. 10:139. 10:140. 10:141. 10:142. 10:143. 10:144. 10:145. 10:146. 10:147. 10:148. 10:149. 10:150. 10:151. 10:152. 10:153. 10:154. 10:155. 10:156. 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makes the best of their infirmities, so He makes the most of their services.

We see what recompenses Christ has for those that feed the hungry, and clothe the naked; but what will become of the godly poor, that had not wherewithal to do so? Must they be shut out? No, [1.] Christ will own them, even the least of them, as his brethren, Heb. 2: 11. Thus He will confess them. ch. 10: 32. [2.] He will take the kindnesses done to them, as done to Himself; *Ye have done it to Me.* Note, Christ espouses his people's cause, and interests Himself in their interests, and reckons Himself received, and loved, and owned in them. If Christ Himself were among us in poverty, how readily would we relieve Him? In prison, how frequently would we visit Him? We are ready to envy the honor they had, who ministered to Him of their substance, Luke 8: 4. Wherever poor saints and poor ministers are, there Christ is ready to receive our kindnesses in them, and they shall be put to his account.

(41.) *Prepared for the devil and his angels.* There is a remarkable difference between our Lord's expression here and in v. 34. There the kingdom is said to have been prepared for the righteous from the foundation of the world; whereas here the everlasting fire is said to have been prepared for the wicked, but for the devil and his angels. Compare Rom. 9: 22, 23.

DODDRIIDGE.

(42.) *Everlasting punishment.* [No appeal, no remedy, to all eternity;] no end to the punishment of those, whose final impenitence manifests in them an eternal will and desire to sin. By dying in a state of opposition to God, they cast themselves into a necessity of continuing in an eternal aversion from Him. But some are of opinion that this punishment shall have an end this is as likely as that the glory

of the righteous shall have an end; for the same word is used to express the duration of the punishment, as is used to express the duration of the state of glory. I have seen the best angels that have been written in favor of the final redemption of damned spirits; but I never saw an answer to the argument against that doctrine, drawn from this verse, but what sound learning and criticism should be ashamed to acknowledge. The original word, is certainly to be taken in its proper grammatical sense, continued being, NEVER ENDING. Some have gone a middle way, and think that the wicked shall be annihilated. This I think, is contrary to the text: if they go into punishment, they continue to exist; for that which ceases to be, ceases to suffer.

Dr. A. CLARKE.
1867

CHAP. XXVI.

Jesus foretells his crucifixion after two days, 1, 2. The chief priests conspire against Him, 3-5. A woman pours precious ointment on his head; the disciples censure, but Jesus commends her, 6-13. Judas bargains with the chief priest to betray Him, 14-16. Jesus eats the passover and marks out the traitor, 17-25. He institutes the Lord's supper, 26-27; and foretells that all his apostles would forsake Him, and Peter deny Him, 30-35. His agony and prayer in the garden, 38-46. He is betrayed and apprehended, 47-50. A disciple cuts off the high priest's ear, and is wounded, 51-54. He is arraigned before Caiaphas, falsely accused, condemned, and treated with insult and indignity, 57-68. Peter thrice denies Him, with peculiar aggravations; but going out, he weeps bitterly, 69-75.

AND it came to pass, ^a when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples,

a 19d.

the affliction of Joseph,¹ Amos 6: 4-6. Note, Omissions are the ruin of thousands.

[2.] They are not sentenced for omitting their sacrifices and burnt offerings, (they abounded in these, Ps. 50: 8.) but for omitting the weightier matters of the law, *judgment, mercy, and faith*. The Ammonites and Moabites were excluded the sanctuary, because they *met not Israel with bread and water*, Deut. 23: 3, 4. Note, Uncharitableness to the poor is a damning sin. If we will not be brought to works of charity by the hope of reward, let us be influenced by fear of punishment; for they shall have judgment without mercy, *that have shewed no mercy*. Observe, He doth not say, 'I was sick, and you did not cure Me; in prison, and you did not release Me;' (perhaps that was more than they could do;) but, 'You visited me not, which you might have done.' Note, Sinners will be condemned, at the great day, for the omission of that good which it was in the power of the hand to do. But if the doom of the uncharitable be so dreadful, how much more intolerable will the doom of the cruel be, the doom of persecutors! This reason of the sentence is,

1st, Objected against by the prisoners, v. 44. Condemned sinners, though they have no plea that will bear them out, will yet offer vain excuses. Now, 1. The manner of their pleading bespeaks their present precipitation. They cut it short, as men in haste; *When saw we Thee hungry, or thirsty, or naked?* They care not to repeat the charge, as conscious to themselves of their own guilt, and unable to bear the terrors of the judgment. Nor will time be allowed them to insist on such frivolous pleas; for it is all (as we say) but 'trifling with the court.' 2. The matter of their plea bespeaks former inconsideration of that which they might have known, but would not, till now that it was too late. They, that had slighted and persecuted poor Christians, would not own that they had slighted and persecuted Christ: no, they never intended any affront to Him, nor expected that so great a matter would have been made of it. They imagined it was only a company of poor, weak, silly, and contemptible people who made needless ado about religion, that they slighted; but they who do so will be made to know, either in the day of their conversion, as Paul, or of their condemnation, as these here, that it was *Jesus whom they persecuted*. And if they say, *Behold, we know it not; doth not He that pondereth the heart consider it?* Prov. 24: 11, 12.

2dly, Justified by the Judge, who will convince all the ungodly of the hard speeches spoken against Him in those that are his, Jude 15: v. 45. Note, What is done against the faithful disciples and followers of Christ, even the least of them, He takes as done against Himself. He is reproached and persecuted in them, for they are reproached and persecuted for his sake, and in all their afflictions *He is afflicted*. He that touches them touches Him in a part no less tender than the apple of his eye.

Lastly, Here is the execution of both these sentences, v. 46.

1. *The wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment*. Sentence will then be executed speedily, and no reprieve granted, nor any time al-

by indulging their lusts, they may thank themselves if they become sharers in that misery, which was prepared for him and his associates. Calvin notes upon this, that *therefore* the torment is said to be for the devil and his angels, to cut off all hope of escaping it; they are already made prisoners in that pit, and can worms of the earth think to escape?

(2.) The reason of this sentence assigned. God's judgments are all just, and He will be justified in them. He is Judge, *therefore the heavens shall declare his righteousness*.

Now, [1.] All the charge on which the sentence is grounded is, omission: *as the servant was condemned, not for wasting his talent, but for burying it*; so here, He doth not say, 'I was hungry and thirsty, for you took my meat and drink from Me; I was a stranger, for you banished Me; naked, for you stripped Me; in prison, for you laid Me there:' but, 'When I was in these distresses, you were so selfish, so taken up with your own ease and pleasure, made so much of your labor, and were so loath to part with your money, that you did not minister, as you might have done, to my relief and succor. You were like those epicures that were at ease in Zion, and were not grieved for

lowed to move in arrest of judgment. The execution of the wicked is first mentioned; for first the tares are gathered and burned. Note, (1.) The punishment of the wicked in the future state will be everlasting, for that state is unalterable. It can neither be thought that sinners should change their own natures, nor that God should give his grace to change them, when in this world the day of grace was mispent, the Spirit of grace resisted, and the means of grace abused and baffled. (2.) The wicked go away, not voluntarily, no they are *driven* from light into darkness; but it bespeaks an irresistible conviction of guilt, and a final despair of mercy.

2. *The righteous shall go away into life eternal*; that is, they shall inherit the kingdom, v. 34. Note, (1.) Heaven is life, it is all happiness. The life of the soul results from its union with God, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, as that of the body from its union with the soul, by the animal spirits. The heavenly life consists in the vision and fruition of God, in a perfect conformity to Him, and an immediate, uninterrupted communion with Him. (2.) It is *eternal* life. There is no death to put a period to the life itself, nor old age to put a period to the comfort of it, or any sorrow to embitter it. Thus life and death, good and evil, the blessing and the curse, are set before us, that we may choose our way; and so shall our end be. Even the heathen had some notion of these different states of good and bad in the other world. Cicero, in his *Tusculan Questions*, (lib. 1.) brings in Socrates thus speaking, *Two paths open before those who depart out of the body: Such as have contaminated themselves with human vices, and yielded to their lusts, occupy a path that conducts them far from the assembly and council of the gods; but the upright and chaste, such as have been least defiled by the flesh, and have imitated, while in the body, the gods, these find it easy to return to the sublime beings from whom they came*.

CHAP. XXVI. v. 1-5. The narrative of the death and sufferings of Christ is more particular and full in all the four evangelists than any part of his history; for what should we determine, and desire to know, but Christ, and Him crucified? This chapter begins that memorable narrative. The year of the redeemed was now come, the seventy weeks accomplished, when transgression must be finished, reconciliation made, and an everlasting righteousness brought in, by the cutting off of the Messiah the Prince, Dan. 9: 24, 26. That awful scene is to be read with reverence and holy fear.

1. Christ gave his disciples notice of the approach of his sufferings, v. 1, 2. He had told them of sufferings at a distance, now He speaks of them as at the door; *after two days*. Note, After many former notices of trouble, we still need fresh ones. Observe,

(1.) *The time*, v. 1. [1.] Not till He had finished all He had to say. Note, Christ's witnesses finish their testimony. When Christ had gone through his undertaking as a Prophet, He entered on his office as a Priest. [2.] He had bid his disciples expect sad times, and now

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 41-46. What tongue can describe, what words can express, or even convey a faint idea, of the horror and despair of the wicked, when placed at the left hand of their omnipotent and omniscient Judge! While conscious of their guilt, and calling in vain 'on the rocks and mountains to fall on them,' they shall behold his awful countenance clouded with an indignant frown, and hear his mouth, which used to invite the weary sinner to come to Him, sternly say to them, 'Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!' Then all their works will be produced, to demonstrate the justice of the tremendous sentence; and their omissions alone, will prove them unbelievers, and deprive them of all relief from the mercy of the Gospel. They may avow, that they would gladly have ministered unto Christ, had they seen Him in his

humiliation; but, inasmuch as they refused to 'do it: his brethren, they did it not to Him.' If this alone will prove a man, otherwise moral and decent, to be an enemy of Christ a child of the devil, and 'a vessel of wrath fitted for destruction,' where will oppressors, persecutors, blasphemers, and profligates appear? But the reflection is too tremendous to dwell upon. Let us then take warning, 'from the wrath to come,' and seek that faith in Christ, which 'worketh by love of Him, and his people and cause, and by obedience to his commandments; that we may abound in all the fruits of righteousness here, and that, when 'the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment,' we may be 'numbered with his saints in glory everlasting.'

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVI. v. 1, 2. Our Lord had closed his public ministry, when He left the temple; He had afterwards given his disciples many

important warnings and instructions; and after the sublime representation, which He had made of his future coming to judgment, He formed them of the immediate approach of his sufferings. He had

2 Ye know that after two days is ^{the} feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

3 ¶ Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him

5 But they said, 'Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

6 ¶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster-box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head as he sat at meat.

8 But when his disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, 'To what purpose is this waste?

tells them, *The Son of man is betrayed*; to intimate that they should fare no worse than he, and that his sufferings should take the sting out of theirs. Note, Thoughts of a suffering Christ are great supports to a Christian suffering with and for Him.

(2.) The thing itself He gave them notice of, v. 2. It was not only so sure, but so near, that it was as good as done. Note, It is good to make sufferings, that are yet to come, as present to us. He is betrayed, for Judas was then contriving and designing to betray Him.

3. The plot against the life of our Lord Jesus, v. 3-5. Many consultations had been held, but this plot was deeper than any, for the grandees were all engaged in it. The chief priests, who presided in ecclesiastical affairs; the elders, who were judges in civil matters; and the scribes, who, as doctors of the law, were directors to both—these composed the sanhedrim, that governed the nation, and were confederate against Christ. Observe, (1.) The place where they met; *in the palace of the high priest*, who was the centre of their unity in this wicked project. (2.) The plot; *to take Jesus by subtlety, and kill Him*; nothing less would serve their turn. So cruel and bloody have been the designs of Christ's and his church's enemies.

(3.) Their policy; *Not on the feast-day*. Why not? Was it in regard to the holiness of the time, or because they would not be disturbed in the religious services of the day? No, but *lest there be an uproar among the people*. They knew Christ had a great interest in the common people, who would be in danger of taking arms against their rulers, should they offer to lay violent hands on Christ, whom all held for a prophet. They were awed, not by the fear of God, but of the people; all their concern was for their own safety, not God's honor. They would have it done at the feast; for it was a tradition of the Jews, that malefactors should be put to death at one of the three feasts, especially rebels and impostors, that *all Israel might see and fear*; but *not on the feast-day*.

V. 6-13. In this passage we have,

I. The singular kindness of a good woman to our Lord, v. 6, 7. It was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper. Probably, he was one miraculously cleansed from leprosy by our Lord Jesus, and would express his gratitude to Christ by entertaining Him; nor did Christ disdain to converse with him, come in to Him, and sup with him. Though cleansed, yet he was called *Simon the leper*. Those who are guilty of scandalous sins, will find, that, though the sin be pardoned, the reproach will hardly be wiped away. The woman is supposed to have been Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Lightfoot thinks, *Mary Magdalene*. She had a box of ointment very precious, which she poured on the head of Christ as He sat at meat. This, among us, would be a strange compliment. But it was then accounted the highest piece of respect; for the smell was very grateful, and the ointment refreshing to the head. David had his head anointed, Ps. 23: 6. Luke 7: 46. Now this may be looked on,

1. As an act of faith in Christ. To signify that she believed in Him as God's Anointed, whom He had set King; she anointed Him, and made Him her King. They shall appoint themselves one Head, Hos. 1: 11. This is kissing the Son.

2. As an act of love and respect to Him. Some think this was she who *loved much* at first, and *washed Christ's feet with her tears* (Luke 7: 47.) and that she had not left her love, but was now as affectionate, in the devotions of a grown Christian, as she was in those of a young beginner. Note, Where there is true love to Christ, nothing will be thought too good, no, nor good enough, to bestow on Him.

II. The offence the disciples took. They had indignation, (v. 8, 9.) were vexed to see this ointment thus spent, which they thought might have been better bestowed.

1. See how they expressed their offence at it. *To what purpose is this waste?* This bespeaks,

(1.) Want of tenderness toward this good woman, in interpreting her over-kindness (suppose it was so) to be wastefulness. Charity teaches us to put the best construction on every thing, especially on the words and actions of persons *zealously affected in doing a good thing*; though we may think them not altogether so discreet as they might be. There may be over-doing in well-doing; thence we must learn caution, lest we run into extremes, but not to be censorious; because what we may impute to want of prudence, God may accept as an instance of abundant love. We must not say, Those do too much in religion, who do more than we, but rather aim to do as much as they.

(2.) Want of respect to their Master. The best we can make of it, is, they knew their Master was dead to the delights of sense; He that was grieved for the affliction of Joseph, cared not for being anointed with the chief ointments, Amos 6: 6. And therefore they thought such pleasures ill bestowed on One who took so little pleasure in them. Yet it did not become them to call it waste, when they perceived that He accepted it as a token of love. Note, We must not think any thing bestow'd on the Lord Jesus a waste: not time spent in His service, nor money laid out in any work of piety, for, though it seem to be cast on the waters, we shall find it again, to advantage, after many days, Eccl. 1: 1.

2. See how they excuse their offence at it, and what pretence they made, v. 9. Note, It is no new thing for bad affections to shelter themselves under specious covers; for people to shift off works of piety under color of charity.

III. The reproof given; (v. 10, 11.) *Why trouble ye the woman?* Note, It is a great trouble to good people to have their good works censured as ill misconstrued; and a thing Christ takes very ill. He here took part with a zealous, well-meaning woman, against all his disciples, though they seem to have so much reason on their side; so heartily does He espouse the cause of the *offended little ones*, ch. 18: 10.

o Mark 11:2. Luke 22:1, 15. John 13:1.
e Ex. 12:11-14. 34:25. John 2:13. 11:55. 14:26.
d 24:45. 17:22. 20:19, 19. 27:4. Luke 21:8, 7. John 13:2. 18:2.
e 21:45, 46. Ps. 21:2. 56:6. 64:4-6. 94:20, 21. Jer. 11:19. 18:18-20. John 11:47-52, 57. Acts 1:4-23.
d 57. Jer. 17:37. Mark 14:51.
e 57. John 11:59. 18:12, 14, 26. Acts 4:15.
d 23:33. Gen. 31:1. Acts 7:19. 13:10. 2 Cor. 11:3.
i Ps. 78:10. Prov. 19:21. 21:30. Is. 40:10. Lam. 1:37. Mark 14:2, 12. 27:1. Luke 22:7. John 13:28. Acts 4:28.
l 14:5. 21:36. Luke 20:10.
l 12:1, 2. Mark 11:13. John 11:12. 12:1, 2.
m Mark 14:3.
n John 12:2, 3.
e Ex. 30:22-34. Ps. 133:2. Ec. 9:8. 19:1. Can. 4:3. Is. 57:9. Luke 7:37, 38, 46.
f 1 Sam. 26:29. Ec. 4:4. Mark 14:21. John 12:4-6.
g Ex. 5:17. Am. 8:5. Hag. 2:4. Mal. 1:7-10, 13.

along a perfect knowledge of his approaching sufferings, though He met them with the most entire calmness and serenity. This seems to have been peculiar to Him; none of the prophets or apostles knew, beforehand, what they should be called to suffer. Even Paul said, 'I go up to Jerusalem, not knowing the things which shall befall me there.' This peculiarity should be carefully noted, when the intrepid and cool courage and resolution of Jesus, in the complete foreknowledge of his unparalleled sufferings, is the subject of our meditation. The contrast between the words of our Lord concerning Himself, as 'the Son of man,' in these verses, and those in the foregoing chapter. 'The Son of man shall come in his glory,' is peculiarly worthy of our observation.

SCOTT.

Verses 3-5.

The sanhedrim having agreed to put Christ to death, concluded it would be better to defer it till after the feast of the passover, lest the people, whom they supposed to favor Him, should make an insurrection for his rescue, if He were apprehended, while such numbers from all quarters were assembled in the city. (*Marg. Ref.*) But it pleased God to defeat this intention; as it was proper that Christ, the true paschal lamb, should be sacrificed at that season; and that his death and resurrection should be rendered the more extensively known. 'Maimonides saith, it was the custom among the Jews to punish those who rebelled against the sentence of the judge, or the high priest, or who notoriously criminal, at one of the three feasts, because then only, by reason of the public congress of the people, all might hear and fear.

'(Deut. 17: 12, 13.) From this received custom, the fathers of the sanhedrim seem willing to recede, for fear of the multitude; but having 'so often an offer from Judas, they embrace that season.' *Whitby*. God has, and not man, appointed the time in which Christ should be crucified.' *Beza*. (*Note*, Ps. 76: 10.) *SCOTT*.

Verses 6-13.

John (12: 1.) fixes the date of this transaction to six days before the passover; and as it is utterly improbable, that it should have occurred twice in so short a time, and with exactly the same circumstances, we must conclude that the other evangelists have related it out of the order of time in which it happened. Our Lord was at this time entertained at Bethany, by 'Simon the leper'; but Lazarus was a guest, and Martha waited on them. Mary, the sister of Martha, doubtless was the woman, who anointed Him; and the late extraordinary favor conferred on her, in the resurrection of her brother, excited those fervent and grateful affections which influenced her conduct. Costly and fragrant ointment was used about the persons of the wealthy, according to the custom of those days. (*Marg. Ref.* 1-6.—*Note*, Mark 14: 3-9, v. 3.) We find that Judas, from bad motives, started the objection, yet it is probable the other disciples joined in it, in a manner, not only discouraging to Mary, but highly disrespectful to Christ. (*John* 12: 1-3.) (13.) This may be considered a most remarkable prophecy: He would influence the evangelists to record this incident, which might appear trivial, among the important actions of his public life, and take care it should never be erased.

SCOTT

9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

10 When Jesus understood it, he said unto them, 'Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.'

11 For 'ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always.

12 For 'in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial.

13 Verily I say unto you, 'Whosoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.'

14 ¶ Then 'one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

Josh 7:20, 21. 1 Sam. 15:9, 21. 2 Kings 5:20. Mark 14:5. John 12:5, 6. 2 Pet. 3:15.
 Job 13:7. Mark 14:5. Luke 7:44—50. Gal. 1:7. 5:12. 6:17.
 Neh. 2:10. 2 Cor. 9:8. Eph. 2:10. Col. 1:10. 2 Thes. 2:17. 1 Tim. 3:1. 5:10. 2 Tim. 2:21. Tit. 1:15. 2:14. 3:1, 9, 14. Heb. 13:21. 1 Pet. 2:12.
 c 25:34—40, 42—45. Deut. 15:11. Mark 14:7. John 12:8. Gal. 2:19. 1 John 3:17.
 18:30. 28:50. John 13:33. 14:19. 15:26, 28. 17:11. Acts 3:21.
 y 2 Cor. 15:14. Mark 14:8. 16:1. Luke 23:56. 24:1. John 12:7. 19:39, 40.
 z 24:14. 28:19. Ps. 98:2, 3. Is. 52:10. Mark 13:13. 16:45. Luke 24:47. Rom. 10:18. 15:19. Col. 1:6, 23. 1 Tim. 2:6. Rev. 1:15.
 a 1 Sam. 2:30. Ps. 112:5. Mark 14:9. 2 Cor. 10:18. Heb. 6:10.
 b Mark 14:10. Luke 22:3—6. John 13:2, 30.
 10:4. John 6:70, 71. 18:2.

his passion, could not but notice and perpetuate the memorial of it. And being once enrolled in these records, it was *graven as with an iron pen and lead in the rock forever*. None of all the trumpets of fame sound so loud and so long as the everlasting Gospel. Note, (1.) The story of the death of Christ, though a tragic one, is gospel glad-tidings, because He died for

us. (2.) The Gospel was to be preached in the whole world; not in Judea only, but in every nation, to every creature. Let the disciples note this, for their encouragement, that their sound should go to the ends of the earth. (3.) Though the honor of Christ is principally designed in the Gospel, yet the honor of his saints and servants is not altogether overlooked. The memorial of this woman was to be preserved, not by dedicating a church to her, or keeping an annual feast in honor of her, or preserving a piece of her broken box for a sacred relic; but by mentioning her faith and piety in the preaching of the Gospel, for example to others, Heb. 6:12. Hereby honor redounds to Christ Himself, who, in this world, as in that to come, will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.

Observe his reason; *You have the poor always with you*. Note,
 1. There are some opportunities of doing and getting good, which are constant, and constantly to be improved. Those who have a heart to do good, never need complain for want of opportunity. The poor never ceased even out of the land of Israel, Deut. 15:11. We cannot but see some who call for our charitable assistance, some poor members of Christ, to whom He will have kindness shown as to Himself.

2. There are other opportunities of doing and getting good, which come but seldom, are short and uncertain, require peculiar diligence in the improvement of them, and ought to be preferred; '*Me ye have not always*, therefore use Me while ye have Me.' Note, (1.) Christ's constant bodily presence was not to be expected here; it was expedient He should go away; his real presence in the eucharist is a fond and groundless conceit, and contradicts what He here said, *Me ye have not always*. (2.) Sometimes special works of piety and devotion should take place of common works of charity. The poor must not rob Christ; we must do good to all, but especially to the household of faith.

IV. Christ's approbation and commendation of the kindness. The more his servants and their services are cavilled at, the more He manifests his acceptance of them. He calls it a *good work*, (v. 10.) and says more in praise of it than could have been imagined; particularly,

1. That its meaning was mystical; (v. 12.) *She did it for my burial*. (1.) Some think she intended it so, and better understood Christ's frequent predictions of his death and sufferings than the apostles did; for which she was recompensed with the honor of being the first witness of his resurrection. (2.) However, Christ interpreted it so, and is always willing to make the best, and the most, of his people's well-meant words and actions. This was, as it were, the embalming of his body. The disciples thought the ointment wasted. 'But,' saith He, 'if so much ointment were poured on a dead body, according to the custom of your country, you would not grudge it, or think it waste. Now the body she anoints is as good as dead, and her kindness very reasonable; therefore, rather than call it waste, put it on that score.'

2. That the memorial of it should be honorable, v. 13. This act of faith and love was so remarkable, that the preachers of Christ crucified, and the inspired writers of the history of

us. (2.) The Gospel was to be preached in the whole world; not in Judea only, but in every nation, to every creature. Let the disciples note this, for their encouragement, that their sound should go to the ends of the earth. (3.) Though the honor of Christ is principally designed in the Gospel, yet the honor of his saints and servants is not altogether overlooked. The memorial of this woman was to be preserved, not by dedicating a church to her, or keeping an annual feast in honor of her, or preserving a piece of her broken box for a sacred relic; but by mentioning her faith and piety in the preaching of the Gospel, for example to others, Heb. 6:12. Hereby honor redounds to Christ Himself, who, in this world, as in that to come, will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.

V. 14—16. Immediately after an instance of the greatest kindness to Christ, follows an instance of the greatest unkindness; such mixture is there of good and bad among his followers; He hath some faithful friends, and some false ones.

I. The traitor was Judas Iscariot; he is said to be one of the twelve, as an aggravation of his villany. When the number of the disciples was multiplied, (Acts 6:1.) no marvel if there were some among them that were a shame and trouble to him; but when there were but twelve, and one of them was a devil, surely we must never expect any society perfectly pure on this side heaven. The twelve were Christ's chosen friends, his constant followers, that on all accounts had reason to love and be true to Him; and yet one of them betrayed Him. Note, No bonds of duty or gratitude will hold those that have a devil, Mark 5:3, 4.

II. Here is the proffer He made to the chief priests, v. 15. They did not send for Him, nor make the proposal to Him; they could not have thought that one of Christ's own disciples should be false to Him. Note, There are those, even among Christ's followers, that are worse than any can imagine them to be, and want nothing but opportunity to show it.

Observe, 1. What Judas promised; '*I will deliver Him unto you*. I will let you know where He is, and undertake to bring you to Him, at such a convenient time and place, that you may seize Him without noise, or danger of an uproar.' This was it they were at a loss about, v. 4, 5. They durst not meddle with Him in public, and knew not where to find Him in private. The difficulty was insuperable, till Judas offered them his service. Note, Those that give up themselves to be led by the devil, find him readier than they imagine, to help them at a dead-lift, as Judas did the chief priests. Though the rulers could kill Him, when in their hands, none but a disciple could betray Him. Note, The greater profession men make

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—13. Amidst the distressing events which take place in the world, we should always advert to the 'determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,' as over-ruling all for the purposes of his own glory, and the benefit of those who trust in him. There are many devices in the heart of man; and yet, contrary to his intentions, he is led to arrange or alter them, in subserviency to the secret counsel of the Lord!—The enmity of the carnal heart against God, is irreconcilable and mortal; it rages with greater violence in hypocrites, than in other men, but most of all in covetous and ambitious churchmen. Thus power and policy have, in every age, combined against the person and cause of Jesus; yet they have not prevailed. But there has always been a remnant of another character—the humble, penitent, and believing; they reverence and love the Redeemer; deem themselves under infinite obligations to Him; long to express their love and gratitude, and zeal for his glory; and count nothing too valuable to be renounced for his sake, or employed in his service. These principles operate differently, as circumstances vary; but they

always produce such actions as honor Christ, and as He will accept and commend: for He judges of men's conduct by their motives, and will not reject a well-meant service, springing from humble faith and love, though it may appear to us informal. But covetous hypocrites are ready to exclaim, 'To what purpose is this waste?' When they see others liberal in honoring Christ, even the fraudulent and unjust will plead for charity; and too often their plausible pretences seduce injudicious, or less zealous disciples, to censure those services which Christ accepts. But He will plead the cause of his followers, and rebuke those who trouble them for their good works. It is his plan, that there should be poor persons, and poor Christians, as his stated representatives, in order to make trial of the faith and love of his disciples; that, whenever they will, they may relieve them for his sake. This is the ordinary method; but extraordinary expressions of our love and gratitude are sometimes proper; and these will not be found inconsistent with each other, or materially to interfere with one another.

SCOTT.

Verses 14—16.

Judas, notwithstanding his plausible conduct and apostolical office, was a hypocrite, and a covetous, dishonest man. (Marg. Ref. b, c.) Knowing, therefore, that the chief priests and rulers greatly desired to get Jesus into their hands, without disturbance, he framed the design of conducting their officers to Him, in the absence of the people. Probably, he hoped to ingratiate himself, and to obtain further advantages, beyond the present recompense. Perhaps he expected that Jesus would

miraculously liberate Himself; and so no fatal consequences would ensue from his treachery. The reproof implied in our Lord's commendation of the woman's conduct, which from base motives he had condemned, seems also to have exasperated him; and thus Satan found access to hurry him forward to the execution of his infamous design. He agreed to do it for thirty pieces of silver, the price of a slave. (Marg. Ref. d, e.) 'So true is that of St. Paul, that Christ took on Him the form of a servant.' Hammond.

SCOTT.

15 And said unto them, ^a What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

17 ¶ Now ^b the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

^a Gen. 38:15. Judg. 16:5. 17:10. 18:19, 20. 1 Sam. 17:1. 1 Tim. 3:3. 6:19. 10: 2 Pet. 3:3, 14. 5. 27:3-5. Gen. 37:26-28. Ex. 21:32. Zech. 11:12, 13. Acts 1:18. ^b 1 Cor. 16:1. Luke 22:8. Ex. 12:18-20. 13:8-8. Lev. 23:5, 6. Num. 28:17, 17. Deut. 16:1-4. Mark 14:12. Luke 22:7. 3:13. 17:24, 25. Luke 22:8, 9. Mark 14:13-16. Luke 22:10-13. 49. 21:3. 23:8, 10. Mark 5:35. John 11:29. 20:16. 2:2. Luke 22:53. John 7:6, 30. 12:23. 13:1. 17:1. 21:8. John 25. 15:14. 1 Ex. 12:4-8. 2 Chr. 35:10, 11.

2 Tim. 4:10. Satan tempted our Savior with this bait. *All this will I give thee*; (ch. 4: 9.) but Judas offered himself to be tempted with it; he asks, *What will ye give me?* as if his Master was a commodity that stuck on his hands.

III. Here is the bargain made, (v. 15.) for thirty shekels; about £3 8s. so some; £3 15s., so others. It should seem, Judas referred himself to the chief priests, and was willing to take what they were willing to give; he catches at the first offer, lest the next should be worse. Judas had not been wont to trade high, and therefore a little money went a great way with him. By the law, (Exod. 21:32.) thirty pieces of silver was the price of a slave—a goodly price, at which Christ was valued! Zech. 11:13. No wonder that Zion's sons, though comparable to fine gold, are esteemed as earthen pitchers, when Zion's King Himself was thus undervalued. They covenanted with him, paid it down; so some; gave him his wages in hand, to secure and encourage him.

IV. Here is the industry of Judas, in pursuance of his bargain; v. 16. Note, 1. It is very wicked to seek opportunity to sin, and to devise mischief, for it argues the heart fully set to do evil. 2. Those that are in, think they must out. After he had made that wicked bargain, he had time to repent, and revoke it; but now, by his covenant, the devil has one hand more on him than he had, and tells him he must be true to his word, though ever so false to his Master, as Herod must behead John for his oath's sake.

V. 17-25. We have here an account of Christ's keeping the passover. Being made under the law, He submitted to all its ordinances; it was kept in remembrance of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, the birth-day of that people; it was a tradition of the Jews, that in the days of the Messiah they should be redeemed on the very day of their coming out of Egypt, and it was exactly fulfilled, for Christ died the day after the passover, in which day they began their march.

I. The time when Christ ate the passover, was the usual time appointed by God, and observed by the Jews; (v. 17.) which that year happened on the fifth day of the week, our Thursday. Some have suggested that our Lord celebrated the passover at this time of day sooner than others did; but Whitby has largely disproved it.

Verses 17-19.

The person here mentioned, was probably a concealed friend and disciple of Christ, who, He knew, would be glad to accommodate Him and his apostles. Christ points out a certain person, as known to Him, whose name and house He does not mention to the disciples; but divinely foretells, that He would be discovered to them, by the events

of religion, and the more they are employed in the study and service of it, the greater opportunity they have of doing mischief, if their hearts be not right with God. If Judas had not been an apostle, he could not have been a traitor; if men had not known the way of righteousness, they could not have abused it.

I will deliver Him unto you. He did not offer himself, nor did they tamper with him, to be a witness against Christ, though they wanted evidence, v. 59. Had there been any thing to be alleged against Him, which had but the color of proof that He was an impostor, Judas was the likeliest person to have attested it; but this is an evidence of the innocence of our Lord Jesus, that his own disciple, who knew so well his doctrine and manner of life, and was false to Him, could not charge Him with any thing criminal, though it would have served to justify his treachery.

2. What he asked; *What will ye give me?* He hoped to get money by it: his Master had not given him any provocation; though He knew from the first that he had a devil, yet, for aught that appears, He showed the same kindness to him as to the rest, and put no mark of disgrace on him that might disoblige him; He had placed him in a post that pleased him, and made him purse-bearer; though he had embezzled the common stock, for he is called a thief, (John 12: 6.) yet we do not find he was in danger of being called to account for it; nor does it appear that he had any suspicion that the Gospel was a cheat: no, it was not the hatred of his Master, nor any quarrel with Him, but purely the love of the money; that, and nothing else, made Judas a traitor.

What will ye give me? Why, what did he want? Neither bread nor raiment, necessities or conveniences. Was not he welcome wherever his Master was? Did he not fare as He fared? Had he not been but just now nobly entertained at a supper in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, and a little before at another, where no less a person than Martha herself waited at table? And yet this covetous wretch could not be content, but comes basely cringing to the priests with, *What will ye give me?* Note, It is not the lack but the love of money, that is the root of all evil, and particularly of apostasy from Christ; witness Demas,

II. The place where, was particularly appointed by Himself to the disciples, on their inquiry, v. 17. Perhaps Judas was one that asked this question, that he might know better to lay his train; but the rest asked it as usual, that they might do their duty.

1. They took it for granted their Master would eat the passover, though at this time persecuted by the chief priests, and his life sought; they knew He would not be put off by duty. Those do not follow Christ's example, who make it an excuse for their not attending his supper, our gospel-passover, that they have many troubles, and enemies, are full of care and fear: for, if so, they have the more need of that ordinance, to help to silence their fears, and comfort them under their troubles, to help them in forgiving their enemies, and casting all their cares on God.

2. They knew there must be preparation made, and that it was their business, as his servants, to make it. *Where wilt thou that we prepare?* Note, Before solemn ordinances, there must be solemn preparation.

3. They knew He had no house of his own wherein to eat; for *our sakes He became poor*. Among all Zion's palaces there was none for Zion's King; but his kingdom was not of this world. See John 1: 11.

4. They would not select a place without direction, and from Him they had direction to such a man, (v. 13.) probably a friend and follower, and to his house he invited Himself and disciples.

(1.) Tell him, *My time is at hand*; the time of his death, elsewhere called *his hour*; (John 8: 20. 13: 1.) the hour fixed in the counsel of God, which his heart was upon, and of which He had so often spoken. He knew when it was at hand, and was busy accordingly; *we know not our time*, (Eccl. 9: 12.) and must never be off our watch; *our time is always ready*, (John 7: 6.) and we must be always ready. Observe, Because his time was at hand, He would keep the passover. Note, The consideration of the near approach of death should quicken us to diligent improvement of all opportunities for our souls. Is our time at hand, and an eternity just before us? *Let us then keep the feast with the unleavened bread of sincerity*. Observe, When our Lord Jesus invited Himself to this good man's house, He sent him intelligence, that his time was at hand. Note, Christ's secret is with them that entertain Him in their hearts. Compare John 14: 21 with Rev. 3: 20.

(2.) Tell him, *I will keep the passover at thy house*. An instance of authority, as the Master, which probably this man acknowledged. Thus, when Christ by his Spirit comes into the heart, He demands admission, as One whose own the heart is; and gains admission, as One who has all power in the heart, and cannot be resisted; if He saith, 'I will keep a feast in such a soul,' He will do it; for He works, and none can hinder; his people shall be willing, for He makes them so. *I will keep the passover with my disciples*. Note, Wherever Christ is welcome, He expects his disciples should be too. When we take God for our God, we take his people for our people.

III. The disciples made preparation; v. 19. Note, Those who would have Christ's presence with them in the gospel-passover, must strictly observe his instructions; *They made ready the passover*: got the lamb killed in the court of the temple, roasted, the bitter herbs provided, bread and wine, the cloth laid, and every thing set in readiness for such a sacred, solemn feast.

IV. They ate the passover according to the law; (v. 20.) *He sat down*. It was only the first passover in Egypt, as most think, that was eaten with their loins girded, shoes on their feet, and staff in their hand, though all that might be in a sitting posture. His sitting down

they would meet with, as they entered the city. This was done to convince the disciples more and more clearly, that nothing would happen to their Lord by chance; but that He had the most exact foreknowledge of every minute circumstance. Thus they would be confirmed, by this example of divine Providence, against the great offence of his 'cross.' Beza. (Marg. Ref.—Mark 14: 12-16.)

SCOTT

20 ¶ Now when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve.

21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

23 And he answered and said, He that dipeth his hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

24 The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him; but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered, and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

Practical Observations

o Mark 14:17, 18. Luke 22:14-16.
p Ps. 141:1. Cant. 1:12.

denotes composure of mind. *He sat down with the twelve*, Judas not excepted. By the law, they were to take a lamb for a household, (Exod. 12: 3, 4,) which were to be not less than ten, nor more than twenty; Christ's disciples were his household. Note, They whom God has charged with families, must have their houses with them in serving the Lord.

V. We have here Christ's discourse at the passover supper. The usual subject at that ordinance was, the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt; (Exod. 12: 26, 27,) but the great Passover is now ready to be offered, and the discourse of that, swallows up all talk of the other, Jer. 16: 14, 15. Here is,

1. The general notice Christ gives his disciples of the treachery that should be among them, v. 21. Observe, (1.) Christ knew it. We know not what troubles will befall us, nor whence they will arise; but Christ knew all his, which, as it proves his omniscience, so it magnifies his love, that He knew all that should befall Him, and yet did not draw back; would pay the price of our redemption, though He foresaw some would deny the Lord and buy Him; and shed his blood, though He knew it would be trodden under foot as an unholy thing. (2.) When there was occasion, He let those about Him know it. He had often told them, that the Son of man should be betrayed; now He tells them that one of them should do it, that, when they saw it, they might not only be the less surprised, but have their faith in Him confirmed, John 13: 19. 14: 29.

2. The disciples' feelings on this occasion, v. 22.

(1.) They were exceeding sorrowful. [1.]

q 2:14-16. Ps. 55:12-14. John 6:70, 71. 13:21. Heb. 4:13. Rev. 2:23.
r 38. Mark 14:19, 20. Luke 22:23.
John 13:22-25. 21:17.
s Ps. 41:9. Luke 22:21. John 13:18, 28-29.

t 64:56. Gen. 3:15. Ps. 22:1-21.
u 18:7. 50:5, 6. 63. Dan. 9:1.
v 28. Zach. 12:10. 13:7. Mark 9:12.
Luke 24:36-48. John 19:34, 35.
w 37. Acts 18:27-29. 17:23. 26:22.
x 23. 28:23. 1 Cor. 15:3. 1 Pet. 1:11.

y Luke 22:22. Acts 2:23. 4:28.
z 18:7. 27:3-5. Ps. 55:15, 22. 108:6-19. Mark 14:21. John 17:12.
a Acts 1:16-20.
b 2 Kings 5:25. Prov. 30:20.
c 64. 27:11. John 19:37.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14-25. Upright persons, when betrayed into a mistake, will take reproof in good part; but it often proves the detection of hypocrisies: thus the discovery of their secret motives, and the commendation of those whom they dislike, or the actions which they disapprove, exasperate them, and push them forward to still baser attempts: and, while those whom they censured are had in perpetual and honorable remembrance, themselves sink into final infamy and misery.—But, with what scrupulous care and vigilance should every one guard against the first workings of avarice, and shun the most minute deviations from strict equity! For when dishonesty in comparatively little things has rendered the conscience callous, and given energy to temptation, men become capable of the most shameless injustice without hesitation; and the common question is, 'What will ye give me?' Then the most endeared or sacred ties will be broken, for even paltry, filthy lucre, by men who set their consciences and their souls to sale. And by those means, scheming villains, who were at a loss how to accomplish their intended iniquities, are furnished with instruments as detestable as themselves, and they mutually assist, and yet abhor and despise, each other.—But let us follow the steps of our divine Master, whatever man may devise against us. His disciples may inquire when, where, and with what preparation He would have them attend on his institutions:

but they should take it for granted, He will not neglect in any, as He Himself attended on all then in for Every heart is in his hands; He knows those hidden ones who favor his cause, and will graciously visit all who are willing to receive Him; and He will take care to procure from them entertainment for his disciples also.—But divine ordinances are seldom administered, even to a few, without the intrusion of some hypocrite; and the cause of Christ is often most betrayed by some, who seem most entirely to belong to Him. This consideration may often make us 'exceedingly sorrowful,' and should always render us very diligent in self-examination.—When a few persons are met for social prayer, religious conversation, or at the Lord's table, it may probably occur to each of them to suppose, that their heart-searching Savior is saying to the company, 'Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.' They should not, however, look round on others with suspicion; but with self-examination and prayer should say, 'Lord, is it I?' We ought to be the more earnest in this investigation, because the doom of such domestic enemies will be most dreadful; so that it may be said of them especially, that 'it would have been good for them, if they had never been born;' and what heart can conceive the tremendous import of those words! (Ps. 90: 11.) SCOTT.

Verses 20-24.

Without doubt, our Lord ate the passover at the time appointed by the law, and customary among the Jews. (Ex. 12: 3-10.) Mark says expressly, 'when they killed the passover;' and Luke, 'when the passover must be killed.' (Mark 14: 12. Luke 22: 7.) The passover was celebrated at the close of the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, and just when the fifteenth day began; for the Jews reckoned from evening to evening. 'The first day of unleavened bread,' strictly speaking, began at the very time when the Jews were eating the paschal lamb. But, in a more general sense, the whole fourteenth day, in which, among other preparations for the passover, leaven was put out of their houses, might be so called. (Ex. 12: 15-20.) 'Jesus seems not to have gone to Jerusalem that morning; so that it is probable He spent most of the day in retirement for meditation and prayer.'

Doddridge. (23.) Dippeth his hand with Me in the dish. Probably others of them did this from time to time, but Judas might be doing so at that instant; this, however, was intended to expose the baseness of his conduct, as well as to mark him out to the disciples; and afterwards (I apprehend) Jesus distinguished him more plainly by giving him a sop. (Marg. Ref. o.—Ps. 41: 9. 55: 12-15. John 13: 18-30, v. 18, 26, 27.) (24.) It had been good for that man if he had not been born. (Marg. Ref. v.—x.—Luke 22: 21-23.) This could not have been the case, if he should ever be liberated from punishment, and made partaker of eternal happiness; for that would infinitely overbalance all possible temporary suffering, of whatever acuteness and

continuance; and would therefore prove his existence, on the whole, to be an invaluable blessing. 'The prediction of this event, that Jesus should suffer, and by the treachery of Judas, did lay on Judas no antecedent necessity of doing this action; because it did not lessen the 'woe due to him for it; but only doth suppose in God a knowledge, how the will of man, left to his own freedom, will determine or incline 'itself.' *Whitby*. Surely, it implies also, that God determined to leave Judas to himself; and if this foreknowledge and predetermination did not interfere with Judas's free agency and accountability, it does not appear how any foreknowledge and predetermination could leave men to themselves, can interfere with their free agency and accountability. It is wonderful that thinking and studious men do not see that the whole system of prophecy is a direct and full confutation of all objections, on this ground, against the doctrine of predetermination. The predicted events cannot possibly fail of accomplishment; they must therefore either be absolutely decreed by the all-wise God, or there must be some necessity which cannot be overcome even by the Deity Himself. The first is *Christian predestination*, the latter is *heathen fatalism*; but neither interferes with man's free agency and accountability; for he still acts voluntarily, according to the prevailing inclinations of his heart. SCOTT.

(24.) *Goeth*. 'That is, is about to die. *Going*, going away, departing, &c. are frequently used in the best Greek and Latin writers, for death, or dying. The same words are often used in the Scriptures in the same sense.'

P. A. CLARKE

26 ¶ And as they were eating, * Jesus took bread, and * blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; * this is my body.

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it:

MARK 14:22. Luke 22:19.
b Luke 24:30. 1 Cor. 11:23—25.
Many Greek copies have, *gave it unto*.
10. 541.
c Acts 2:48. 20:7. 1 Cor. 10:16, 17.
d John 6:33—35, 47—52. 1 Cor. 11:26
e Ez. 54:5. Luke 22:20. 1 Cor. 10:14.
Gal. 4:24, 25.
f Mark 14:23, 24. Luke 22:20.
g Ps. 68:13. Cant. 5:1. 7:9. Is. 25:1.
h Ez. 55:1. 1 Cor. 10:16. 11:28.

bring him to repent, and revoke his bargain, but for warning to all others; though God can serve his own purposes by the sins of men, that doth not make the sinner's condition less woful; *It had been good for that man if he had not been born.*

4. The conviction of Judas, v. 25. (1.) He asked, *Is it I?* to avoid coming under suspicion of guilt by silence. He knew very well it was he, and yet wished to appear a stranger to such a plot. Note, Many, whose consciences condemn them, are very industrious to justify themselves before men, and put a good face on it, with, *Lord, is it I?* He could not but know that Christ knew, and yet trusted so much to his courtesy, because he had hitherto concealed it, that he had the impudence to challenge Him to tell; or, perhaps, he was so much under the power of infidelity, that he imagined Christ did not know it, as those who said, *The Lord shall not see*, (Ps. 94: 7.) and asked, *Can He judge through the dark clouds?* (2.) Christ soon answered his question; *Thou hast said*, that is, It is as thou hast said. This is not spoken of so plain as Nathan's, *Thou art the man*; but was enough to convict him, and, if his heart had not been wretchedly hardened, to have broken his plea, when he saw it was known to his Master. Note, Those

Verses 26—28.

When the paschal lamb had been eaten, the Lord's supper was appointed; for this was substituted to be a commemorative observance, 'without shedding of blood,' of redemption already made, as the passover had been a *prefigurative* ordinance, with 'shedding of blood,' of redemption to be made in the fulness of time. Nothing can be more simple in its nature and use, than this sacred institution: yet nothing has ever been more obscured, perplexed, misunderstood, and perverted. The language our Lord used, in instituting this ordinance, is manifestly figurative, and cannot admit of a literal interpretation, unless any say, the cup was literally the blood of Christ, or the new covenant; and this renders it the more wonderful, that any should be so adventurous and absurd, as to require all Christians to believe, in contradiction to their senses and I understandings, that the bread in the sacrament, after consecration, becomes the real, entire, living body of Christ, together with his deity, and therefore a proper object of divine adoration. (*Marg. Ref. c—e*, 55. Luke 22: 19, 20. 1 Cor. 10: 4. 11: 25. Gal. 4: 24, 25.) The Scripture gives no intimation of any mystery, or difficulty, in this institution. By comparing passages, relating to this subject, it appears that our Lord commanded his disciples to meet in his name; a aid with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, to break, distribute, and eat bread, the most salutary and universal of all viands, by which life is sustained; and to pour out and drink wine, the most valuable and refreshing of cordials. This was to be performed 'in remembrance of Him,' and of his love and sufferings for them; and as a representation of 'his body broken, and his blood shed' for their sins, to purchase the blessings of the new covenant; and of the method, by which they might take this salvation, even by receiving and 'feeding' on Him in their hearts, by faith with thanksgiving. By his body and blood we are doubtless to understand his human nature, joined in person to union with his deity; and the separation of the blood from the body, the immediate cause of death, must be understood to include all his expiatory sufferings. The holiness and dignity of the Redeemer, his humiliation and his agonies; his compassion and condescension; the deplorable condition from which He redeemed his people; the efficacy of his one oblation; the honor and happiness to which He exalts believers; and the discovery made, in that great transaction, of the justice and love of God, the excellency of his law, the evil of sin, the vanity of the world, and the importance of eternal things; require peculiar consideration, without mention, when the death of Christ is commemorated, through the medium of these emblems. The bread and wine were, probably, received by the apostles *sitting or reclining, and in the evening*; yet no command was given about the time, place, and posture. (*Ex. 12: 11—14*.) The action of communicating seems to imply a confession of our guilt and ruin, as justly condemned criminals, who could have no hope of pardon or salvation, from any thing we could do of ourselves: a profession of our faith, respecting the person, incarnation, suretyship, and atonement of Christ, and the necessity, reality, and suitability of his sacrifice and vicarious sufferings; a dependence on this atonement, and the mercy of God according to the covenant thus mediated; an acknowledgment of our unpayable obligation to our gracious Benefactor, who has given his life for us; a strong, open expression of our love and gratitude to Him; a sacramental engagement to submit to and obey Him, as our beloved Lord and Savior; and a public joining of ourselves to Him and his people, to walk with them in Christian fellowship, in

who are contriving to betray Christ, will some time or other, betray themselves, and *their own tongues will fall on them.*

V. 26—30. We have here the institution of the great gospel ordinance of the Lord's supper, which was received of the Lord. Observe,

I. The time—as they were eating. At the latter end of the passover-supper, because, as at least on a sacrifice, it was to come in the room of that ordinance. Christ is to us the Passover-Sacrifice, by which atonement is made; (1 Cor 5: 8.) *Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us*. This ordinance is to us the passover-supper, by which application is made, and commemoration celebrated, of a much greater deliverance than that of Israel out of Egypt. All the legal sacrifices of propitiation being summed up in the death of Christ, and so abolished, all the legal feasts of rejoicing were summed up in this sacrament, and so abolished.

II. The institution itself. A sacrament must be instituted; it is no part of moral worship, nor dictated by natural light, but has both its being and significance from the institution, from a divine institution: it is his prerogative, who established the covenant, to appoint the seals of it. Hence the apostle, (1 Cor. 11: 23., &c.) in that discourse of his concerning this ordinance, calls Jesus Christ *the Lord*, because as Lord, Lord of the covenant, of the church, He appointed it. In which,

1. The body of Christ is signified and represented by bread; He had said formerly, (John 6: 35.) *I am the Bread of life*, on which metaphor this sacrament is built: as the life of the body is supported by bread, which is therefore put for all bodily nourishment, (*ch. 4: 4. 6: 11.*) so the life of the soul is supported and maintained by Christ's mediation.

(1.) *He took bread—the loaf*; probably unleavened bread; but that circumstance not being taken notice of, we are not to bind our-

sacred ordinances, and devotedness to the Redeemer. No man can therefore sincerely and intelligently partake of this ordinance, who is not self-condemned and penitent; who does not, with application to his own case, believe the peculiar doctrines of the Gospel; who does not awfully in secret, earnest prayer for an interest in the salvation of Christ; who lives in allowed sin, or neglect of known duty; whose heart is under the dominion of pride, malice, avarice, or any evil propensity; who makes it merely a step to preferment, or compensation for sin, a covering of iniquity or infidelity, a self-righteous service, or excuse for licentiousness; for such men are 'guilty of the body and blood of Christ.' But the humble penitent, the trembling believer, who relies on a crucified Savior, and longs to live in his glory, should fear no shame in this institution: it is his duty and privilege to come to it, as he has opportunity; and he will find it admirably suited to increase every holy disposition and consolation. This obvious and intelligible effect shows it to be as well suited to strengthen and refresh the soul and its graces, as bread and wine are to nourish and cheer animal life. They, who are not prepared to receive the Lord's supper, cannot be fit for death and heaven; nay, acceptable prayer cannot be offered without similar preparation of heart. It has been disputed, whether Judas partook of the Lord's supper, or not; but the controversy seems of no great consequence. If he did, his presence encourages no intruders; but solemnly warns every man previously to examine the state of his soul: nor can it sanction the admission of openly wicked persons; and no discipline can exclude specious hypocrites. (*John 13: 30*.) Some have endeavored to prove the resurrection of Christ, to be the chief doctrine, the belief of which constitutes a Christian; and that this is the grand proof of all other doctrines, and the evidence that the atonement was accepted. The appointment, however, of this ordinance, 'to show forth the Lord's death till He come,' evinces the belief of that doctrine to distinguish essentially a real Christian; and that reliance on the atonement of Christ, for remission of sins, and the blessings of salvation, and thus spiritually eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, forms the great peculiarity of the life of faith in the Son of God. (*Marg. Ref.—John 6: 52—58. 1 Cor 10: 14—17. 11: 23—34*.) Why did our blessed Redeemer so distinguish this mournful scene? Why 'should not his followers rather celebrate his birth, his resurrection or ascension, than his death? The mode is yet more surprising. It is by a *feast*, not *fast*. It is a celebration of praise and thanksgiving, not mourning. It purports to be a feast upon the body and blood of Him, whose death is commemorated! Assuredly, the most singular commemoration of a venerated deceased character, ever heard of in the world! Familiarity with the ceremony has laid our attention asleep; otherwise it must appear most extraordinary. Deny the atonement, and the communion of the soul with the Savior by faith, and I conceive, such an observance inexplicable. But, admit these doctrines, and all is easy, natural, and in the highest degree significant.' *Sermons by Rev. J. Scott.* The papists, who refuse the cup to the laity and give an unbroken wafer, instead of broken bread, in effect disannul our Lord's institution, and substitute another in its place.

(2.) *Wine*. Wine and water was used in the paschal cup, and the rabbins say, over wine unmixed with water no blessing is asked. This custom of mixing the wine with water was adopted by the first Christians, and is still continued by the Romanists. See *Justin Martyr, Clement, Cyprian*, cited by *Grotius*. BLOOMFIELD.

28 For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

b Ex. 24:7-8. Lev. 17:11. Jer. 31:31. Zech. 9:11. Mark 14:24. Luke 22:20. 1 Cor. 11:25. Heb. 9:14-22. 10:14-16. 12:28.
 1:20-28. Rom. 5:15, 19. Eph. 1:7. Col. 1:14, 20. Heb. 9:22-28. 1 John 2:2. Rev. 7:9, 14.
 14:17. 17:14-15. 18:24-9. 11. Mark 14:25. Luke 2:15-18.
 18:20. 23:26. Ps. 40:3 Cant. 5:1. Is. 53:11. Zeph. 3:17. Zech. 9:17. Luke 13:5, 23-25. 22:32. John 15:11. 16:22. 17:13. Acts 10:41. Heb. 12:2. Rev. 5:8-10. 14:3.
 m 13:43. 16:28. 25:34. Luke 12:32. 22:18, 29, 30. Rev. 17:17.

requires *breach for breach*, (Rev. 24:20.) and Christ was broken to satisfy that demand. [2.] The breaking of Christ's body to us, as the father of the family breaks the bread to the children. The breaking of Christ to us is to facilitate the application; every thing is made ready to us by the grants of God's Word, and the operations of his grace.

(4.) *He gave it to his disciples*, as the Master of the family, and of this feast; not to the apostles, though they were apostles, and had been often called so, but to the disciples, because all the disciples of Christ have a right to this ordinance; and those shall have the benefit of it who are his disciples indeed; yet He gave it to them as He did the multiplied loaves, by them to be handed to all his other followers.

(5.) *He said, Take, eat; this is my body*, v. 26. He here tells them,

[1.] What they should do with it: 'Take, eat; accept of Christ as offered to you, receive the atonement, approve of, consent to it, come up to the terms on which the benefit of it is proposed to you; submit to his grace and government.' Believing on Christ is expressed by *receiving Him*, (John 1:12.) and *feeding on Him*, John 6: 57, 58. Meat will not nourish us, unless it be fed upon, so the doctrine of Christ.

[2.] What they should have with it; *This is my body, not this bread, but this eating and drinking*. Believing carries all the efficacy of Christ's death to our souls. *This is my body*, spiritually and sacramentally; this signifies and represents my body. He employs sacramental language, like that, (Exod. 12:11.) *It is the Lord's passover*. On a carnal and much mistaken sense of these words, the church of Rome builds the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, which makes the bread to be changed into the substance of Christ's body, only the accidents of bread remaining: which affronts Christ, destroys the nature of a sacrament, and gives the lie to our senses.

2. The blood of Christ is signified and represented by wine; to make it a complete feast, here is not only bread to strengthen, but wine to *make glad the heart*, v. 27, 28. *He took the cup*, the grace-cup, (set ready to be drunk, after thanks returned, according to the custom of the Jews,) and made it the sacramental cup, and so altered the property. It was intended for a *cup of blessing*, (so the Jews called it,) and therefore Paul studiously distinguished between the cup of blessing which *we* bless, and that which they bless. *He gave thanks*, to teach us, not only in every ordinance, but in every part of it, to have our eyes up to God.

This cup He gave to the disciples,

(1.) With a command; *Drink ye all of it*. Thus He welcomes his guests to his table, obliges them all to drink of his cup. Why should He so expressly command them all to drink, and to see that none let it pass them, and press that more expressly in this than in the other part of the ordinance? Surely it was because He foresaw how in after-ages this ordinance would be dimembered, by the prohibition of the cup to the laity, notwithstanding the command.

(2.) With an explication; *for this is my blood of the New Testament*. Therefore drink it with appetite, delight, because it is so rich a cordial. Hitherto the blood of Christ had been represented by real blood; but, after it was actually shed, it was represented by the blood of grapes, metaphorical blood; so wine is called in an Old-Testament prophecy of Christ, Gen. 49:10, 11.

Now observe, Christ saith,

[1.] *It is my blood of the New Testament*. The Old Testament was confirmed by the blood of bulls and goats; (Heb. 9:16, 17. Exod. 24:8.) but the New, with the blood of Christ; *It is my blood of the New Testament*. The covenant God is pleased to make with us, and all its benefits and privileges, are owing to the merits of Christ's death.

Verse 29.

'The passover a type of the redemption, shall be fulfilled and completed by my death and resurrection. The shadow passes away; the substance takes place; and when you eat this supper in remembrance of Me, there will be virtually present among you; and your souls shall be nourished and refreshed by my grace, as your bodies by the bread and wine.' Bp. Porteus *Wine* is the scriptural emblem of

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selves to that, as some of the Greek churches do. His taking the bread was a solemn action, and was probably done in such a manner as to be observed by them that sat with Him, that they might expect something more than ordinary to be done with it. Thus was the Lord Jesus set apart in the counsels of divine love for the working out of our redemption.

(2.) *He blessed it*; he set it apart for this use by prayer and thanksgiving. We do not find any set form of words used by Him on this occasion; but what He said, no doubt was accommodated to the business in hand, that New Testament, which by this ordinance was to be sealed and ratified. This was like God's blessing the seventh day, Gen. 2:3. Christ could command the blessing, and we, in his name, are ennobled to beg it.

(3.) *He brake it*; which denotes, [1.] The breaking of Christ's body for us; *He was bruised for our iniquities*; (Isa. 28:28.) though a *bone of Him was not broken*, yet his flesh was broken with *breach upon breach*, and his wounds were multiplied, John 19:36. 11:17. God complains that He is broken with the *whorish heart of sinners*; (Ezek. 6:9.) his law broken, our covenants with Him broken; now justice

requires *breach for breach*, (Rev. 24:20.) and Christ was broken to satisfy that demand. [2.] The breaking of Christ's body to us, as the father of the family breaks the bread to the children. The breaking of Christ to us is to facilitate the application; every thing is made ready to us by the grants of God's Word, and the operations of his grace.

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[1.] What they should do with it: 'Take, eat; accept of Christ as offered to you, receive the atonement, approve of, consent to it, come up to the terms on which the benefit of it is proposed to you; submit to his grace and government.' Believing on Christ is expressed by *receiving Him*, (John 1:12.) and *feeding on Him*, John 6: 57, 58. Meat will not nourish us, unless it be fed upon, so the doctrine of Christ.

[2.] What they should have with it; *This is my body, not this bread, but this eating and drinking*. Believing carries all the efficacy of Christ's death to our souls. *This is my body*, spiritually and sacramentally; this signifies and represents my body. He employs sacramental language, like that, (Exod. 12:11.) *It is the Lord's passover*. On a carnal and much mistaken sense of these words, the church of Rome builds the monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, which makes the bread to be changed into the substance of Christ's body, only the accidents of bread remaining: which affronts Christ, destroys the nature of a sacrament, and gives the lie to our senses.

2. The blood of Christ is signified and represented by wine; to make it a complete feast, here is not only bread to strengthen, but wine to *make glad the heart*, v. 27, 28. *He took the cup*, the grace-cup, (set ready to be drunk, after thanks returned, according to the custom of the Jews,) and made it the sacramental cup, and so altered the property. It was intended for a *cup of blessing*, (so the Jews called it,) and therefore Paul studiously distinguished between the cup of blessing which *we* bless, and that which they bless. *He gave thanks*, to teach us, not only in every ordinance, but in every part of it, to have our eyes up to God.

This cup He gave to the disciples,

(1.) With a command; *Drink ye all of it*. Thus He welcomes his guests to his table, obliges them all to drink of his cup. Why should He so expressly command them all to drink, and to see that none let it pass them, and press that more expressly in this than in the other part of the ordinance? Surely it was because He foresaw how in after-ages this ordinance would be dimembered, by the prohibition of the cup to the laity, notwithstanding the command.

(2.) With an explication; *for this is my blood of the New Testament*. Therefore drink it with appetite, delight, because it is so rich a cordial. Hitherto the blood of Christ had been represented by real blood; but, after it was actually shed, it was represented by the blood of grapes, metaphorical blood; so wine is called in an Old-Testament prophecy of Christ, Gen. 49:10, 11.

Now observe, Christ saith,

[1.] *It is my blood of the New Testament*. The Old Testament was confirmed by the blood of bulls and goats; (Heb. 9:16, 17. Exod. 24:8.) but the New, with the blood of Christ; *It is my blood of the New Testament*. The covenant God is pleased to make with us, and all its benefits and privileges, are owing to the merits of Christ's death.

[2.] *It is shed*; it was not shed till next day, but it was now on the point of being shed it as good as done. 'Before you come to repeat this ordinance yourselves, it will be shed.' He was now ready to be offered, and his blood to be poured out as the blood of the sacrifices which made atonement.

[3.] *It is shed for the remission of sins*. Christ came to confirm a covenant with many. (Dan. 9:27.) and the intent of his death agreed. The blood of the Old Testament was shed for a few; it confirmed a covenant which (saith Moses) the Lord has made with you, (Exod. 24:8.) The atonement was made only for the children of Israel; (Lev. 16:34.) but Jesus Christ is a Propitiation for the sins of the whole world, 1 John 2:2.

[4.] *It is shed for the remission of sins*, that is, to purchase remission of sins for us. The redemption we have through his blood, is the remission of sins, Eph. 1:7. The new covenant, which is procured and ratified by the blood of Christ, is a charter of pardon, an act of indemnity, in order to a reconciliation between God and man; for sin was the only thing that made the quarrel, and without shedding of blood is no remission, Heb. 9:22. The pardon of sin is that great blessing which is, in the Lord's supper, conferred on all true believers; the foundation of all other blessings, and the spring of everlasting comfort, ch. 9:2, 3. A farewell is now hidden to the fruit of the vine, v. 29. Christ and his disciples had now feasted together, with much comfort, in both an Old-Testament and a New-Testament festival, the connecting tie of both Testaments. How amiable were these tabernacles! How good to be here! Never such a heaven on earth as was at this table; but it was not intended for a perpetuity; He now told them, (John 16:17.) that yet a little while, and they should not see Him; and again, a little while, and they should see Him, which explains this here.

1st. He takes leave of such communion; (v. 29.) that is, Now that I am no more in the world, (John 17:11.) Farewell, this fruit of the vine, this passover cup, this sacramental wine. Dying saints take their leave of sacraments, and the other ordinances of communion they enjoy in this world, with comfort, for the joy and glory they enter into supersede them all.

2dly. He assures them of a happy meeting again at last. It is a long, but not an everlasting farewell; until that day, when I drink it new with you. 1. Some understand it of the interviews He had with them after his resurrection, which was the first step of his exaltation into the kingdom of his Father; and though during those forty days He did not converse with them so constantly as He had done, yet He did eat and drink with them, (Acts 10:41.) which, as it confirmed their faith, so doubtless it greatly comforted their hearts, Luke 24:41. 2. Others understand it of the joys and glories of the future state, which the saints shall partake of, in everlasting communion with the Lord Jesus, represented here, by the pleasures of a banquet of wine. That will be the kingdom of his Father, for unto Him shall the kingdom be then delivered up: the wine of consolation (Jer. 16:7.) will there be always new.

Lastly, Here is the close of the solemnity with a hymn; (v. 30.) *They sang a hymn*, or psalm; whether the psalm the Jews usually sung at the close of the passover-supper, called the great hallel, i. e., Ps. 113. and the five that follow it, or some new hymn, more closely adapted to the occasion is uncertain; I rather think the former; had it been new, John would not have omitted it. Note, 1. Singing of psalms is a gospel ordinance. Christ's removing the hymn from the close of the passover to the close of the Lord's supper, plainly inti-

glatness; (Judg. 9:8-15, v. 13. Ps. 104:14, 15. Is. 25:6-8. 55:1-3. Zech. 9:13-17.) The joy of his disciples in Him, and his in them, both in the church on earth, and in the heavenly state, may be figuratively intended. Our Lord calls this wine, after consecration, 'the fruit of the vine.'

'To drink new wine,' was to enter in a new year, epoch, or period

WANTO

20 ¶ And "when they had sung an * hymn, * they went out into the mount of Olives.

31 Then saith Jesus unto them, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, "I will smite the Shepherd, "and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

32 But after "I am risen again, "I will go before you into Galilee.

33 Peter answered and said unto him, "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, * yet will I never be offended.

34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, "That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

35 Peter said unto him, "Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. * Likewise also said all the disciples.

[Practical Observations.]

¶ Ps. 81:1-4. Mark 14:28. Eph. 5:19. John. Col. 3:16, 17.
Or, psalm.
¶ Luk. 21:27. 22:29. John 14:31. 18:26.
¶ 11:8. 11:8. 24:10. Mark 14:27, 28. Luk. 22:31. 23:1. John 16:32.
¶ 14:33.10. Zech. 13:7.
¶ Joh. 6:15-22. 19:13-16. Ps. 38:11.
¶ 69:1. 89:18. Lam. 1:19. Ez. 34:5-6.
¶ 16:21. 50:19. 27:53, 64. Mark 9:9, 10. Luk. 18:33, 34.
¶ 28:9, 16. Mark 16:7. John 21:1, 6-7. 1 Cor. 15:9.
¶ Mark 14:9. Luk. 22:33. John 13:38-39. 21:15.
¶ Ps. 118. 118:116, 117. Prov. 16:18, 19. 20:8. 28:25, 26. Jer. 17:9. Rom. 12:10. Phil. 2:3. 1 Pet. 5:5, 6.
¶ Mark 14:30, 31. Luk. 22:34. John 13:38.
¶ 20:22, 23. Prov. 29:14. 99:23. Rom. 11:20. 1 Cor. 10:12. Phil. 2:12. 1 Pet. 1:17.
¶ 30:24. Ex. 19:8.

the Shepherd, in the sufferings of Christ. God awakens the sword of his wrath against the Son of his love, and He is smitten. [2.] The scattering of the sheep, thereupon, in the flight of the disciples. When Christ fell in to the hands of his enemies, his disciples ran, one way, and another

mates that He intended that ordinance should continue in his church, that, as it had not its birth with the ceremonial law, so it should not die with it. 2. It is very proper after the Lord's supper, as an expression of our joy in God through Jesus Christ, and a thankful acknowledgment of that great love, wherewith God has loved us in Him. 3. It is not unreasonable, no, not in times of sorrow and suffering; the disciples were in sorrow, and Christ was entering on his sufferings, and yet they could sing a hymn together. Our spiritual joy should not be interrupted by outward afflictions.

When this was done, they went out into the mount of Olives. He would not stay in the house to be apprehended, lest He should bring the master of the house into trouble; nor would He stay in the city, lest it should occasion an uproar; but He retired into the adjacent country, the mount of Olives, the same mount that David in his distress went up weeping, 2 Sam. 15:30. Note, After we have received the Lord's supper, it is good for us to retire for prayer and meditation, and to be alone with God.

V. 31-35. Observe here,

I. Christ foretells,

1. A dismal scattering storm just arising, v. 31.

(1.) They should all be offended because of Him that very night; that is, they would all be so frightened with the sufferings, they would not have courage to cleave to Him in them, but would all basely desert Him; *Because of Me this night; because of Me, even because of this night*; so it might be read; that is, because of what happens to Me this night. Note, [1.] Offences will come among disciples of Christ, in an hour of trial and temptation; for they are weak, Satan is busy; God permits offences; even they whose hearts are upright may sometimes be overtaken with an offence. [2.] There are some temptations and offences, the effects of which are general among Christ's disciples; *All you shall be offended*. Christ had lately discovered to them the treachery of Judas; but let not the rest be secure; though there be but one traitor, they will all be deserters. This He saith to alarm them all, that they might all watch. [3.] We have need to prepare for sudden trials, how may come to extremity in a very little time. How soon may a storm arise! We know not what a day or a night may bring forth, nor what great event may be in the teeming womb of a little time, Prov. 27:1. [4.] The cross of Christ is the great stumbling-block to many, that pass for his disciples; both the cross He bare for us, (1 Cor. 1:23.) and that which we are called to bear for Him, ch. 16:24.

(2.) That herein the scripture would be fulfilled; *I will smite the Shepherd*. It is quoted from Zech. 13:7. [1.] Here is the smiting of

another; each shifting for himself, and happy he that could get furthest from the cross.

2. He gives them the prospect of a comfortable gathering together again after this storm, v. 32. "Though you will forsake Me, I will not forsake you; though you fall, I will take care you shall not fall finally: we shall meet again in Galilee; *I will go before you* as the shepherd before the sheep." Some make the last words of that prophecy, (Zech. 13:7.) a promise equivalent to this here; *And I will bring my hand again to the little ones*. There is no bringing them back, but by bringing his hand to them. Note, The Captain of our salvation knows how to rally his troops, when, through cowardice, they have been put in disorder.

II. The presumption of Peter, that he should keep his integrity, whatever happened, v. 33. Peter had a great stock of confidence, and was on all occasions forward to speak, especially for himself; sometimes it did him a kindness, but at other times it betrayed him, as here. Where observe,

1. He bound himself with a promise, that he would never be offended in Christ; not only not this night, but at no time. If this promise had been made in a humble dependence on the grace of Christ, it had been an excellent word. Before the Lord's supper, Christ's discourse led his disciples to examine themselves with, *Lord, is it I?* For that is our preparatory duty after the ordinance, his discourse leads them to engage themselves to a close walk, for that is the subsequent duty.

2. He fancied himself better armed against temptation than any one else; this was his weakness and folly. Peter supposes it possible that *some*, nay that *all*, might be offended, and yet he escape better than any. Note, It argues great self-conceit and self-confidence, to think ourselves either safe from the temptations, or free from the corruptions, common to men. Rather say, If it be possible that others may be offended, there is danger that I may be. But it is common for those who think too well of themselves, easily to admit suspicions of others. See Gal. 6:1.

III. The particular warning to Peter of what he would do, v. 34. He imagined that he should come off better than any; Christ tells him he should come off worse. The warning is introduced with a solemn asseveration; *Verily, I say unto thee*; take my word for it, who know thee better than thou knowest thyself. He tells him,

1. That he should deny Him. Peter promised that he would not be so much as offended in Him, nor desert Him; but Christ tells him he will go further, will disown Him. He said, "Though all men, yet not I;" and did it sooner than any.

2. How quickly he should do it; *this night* before to-morrow, nay, *before cock-crowing*. Satan's temptations are compared to darts, (Eph. 6:16.) which wound ere we are aware;

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 26-35. Self-examination and fervent prayers are peculiarly proper before "the Lord's supper," in order that, "as Christ our Passover is now sacrificed for us," we may "keep this commemorative feast, not with the old leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth;" and that we may, every time we partake of it, renew our repentance, our faith in his blood, our consent to his covenant, our lively exercise of admiring, grateful love to Him, and love to his people, and our surrender of ourselves to his service, as "bought with a price, to glorify Him with our bodies and our spirits, which are his." While we contemplate the outward signs of "his body broken and his blood shed for the remission of our sins," let us recollect, that the feast was as expensive to Him, as if He had literally "given us his flesh to eat, and his blood to drink;" that there must be a real (though a spiritual) participation of Him, and appropriation of his salvation to our souls, or we shall have no benefit from his sacrifice; and that by a continued reliance on Him, in lively faith, we must be strengthened and recruited for our conflict, our work, and "the race set before us." Whilst multitudes profane this sacred ordinance, by a proud, pharisaical, infidel, or licentious attend-

ance, and numbers, by statedly absenting themselves, confess their consciousness that they have no part or lot in the blessings of salvation; even many true Christians are guilty of ingratitude, and hard suspicions of the gracious Redeemer, and do great harm to their own souls, by refusing this profession of their faith and love, or by so seldom joining with his people in thus remembering Him. It may be that some are alarmed by the ease and doom of Judas; and the conscious hypocrite may well be called upon to pause and tremble at the thought: but the feeble Christian should remember, that all the apostles were offended, during that very night in which they had eaten both the passover and the Lord's supper, and that Peter fell in a more dreadful manner; yet their guilt was not unpardonable, nor their fall irrecoverable. Our communicating, indeed, ought to excite us to redouble our watchfulness; but the fear of afterwards being overcome by temptation, should never induce any man to neglect obedience to the express command of Christ. Rather we should seek, in this affecting ordinance, to enjoy his "love, which is better than wine;" (Cant. 1:2, 4.) and to anticipate the felicity of heaven, when we shall rejoice with the Savior, and He with us, unspeakably and eternally. SCOTT.

36 ¶ Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder.

37 And he took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

b Mark 14:32. Luke 22:39. John 18:1.
c 39, 42. Ps. 22:1, 2. 69:1-3, 13-15.
Heb. 5:7.
d 1:18, 21. 17:1. 20:26. Mark 5:37.
e Mark 14:33, 34. Luke 2:44. John 12:27.

false to his Master, whatever it cost him; yet, it proved, he was. It is easy to talk boldly and carelessly of death at a distance; 'I will rather die than do such a thing'; but it is not so soon done as said, when death shows itself in its own colors.

What Peter said, the rest subscribed to, v. 35. Note, 1. There is a prudence in good men to be over-confident of their own strength and stability. We are ready to think ourselves able to grapple with the strongest temptations, to go through the hardest and most hazardous services, and to bear the greatest afflictions for Christ; but it is because we do not know ourselves. 2. Those often fall soonest and foulest, that are most confident of themselves. Those are least safe, that are most secure. Satan is most active to seduce such; they are most off their guard, and God leaves them to themselves, to humble them. See 1 Cor. 10: 12.

V. 35-45. Hitherto, we have seen the preparatives for Christ's sufferings; now, we enter on the bloody scene. Now the sword of the Lord began to awake against the man that was his Fellow; and how should it be quiet, when the Lord had given it a charge? The clouds had been long gathering. He had said, some days before, *Now is my soul troubled*, John 12: 27. But now the storm began in earnest. He put Himself into this agony, before his enemies gave Him any trouble, to show that He was a Free-will-offering; that his life was not forced from Him, but He laid it down of Himself, John 10: 18. Observe,

I. The place, *Gethsemane*. The name signifies, an olive-mill, a press for olives, like a wine-press, Mic. 6: 15. And this was the proper place for such a thing, at the foot of the mount of Olives. There our Lord Jesus began his passion, there it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. There He trod alone the wine-press of his Father's wrath.

II. The company He had with Him.

1. He took all the twelve to the garden, except Judas, who was at this time otherwise employed. Though late at night, they kept with Him, as Elisha, who, when told his master should shortly be taken from his head, declared he would not leave him, though he led him about; so these follow the Lamb, wheresoever He goes.

2. He took only Peter, James and John, into that corner of the garden where he suffered his agony. He left the rest at some distance, with this

Verses 35-39.

The word 'Gethsemane' signifies the valley of fatness; and this seems to have been a pleasant and fruitful garden, to which Jesus frequently resorted with his disciples, for retirement, devout conversation, and religious exercises. (33.) The words used, are the most expressive imaginable, and denote the greatest dejection, amazement, anguish, and horror of mind, which can be conceived; the state of one surrounded with sorrows, overwhelmed with miseries, and almost swallowed up with consternation. (39.) *Cap.* Some refer this to the present anguish and horror He felt, and not to his approaching crucifixion; but, whatever we understand by it, it expressed his strong aversion to suffering, even when the glory of God and the good of man required it; and it showed that He had all the innocent feelings of our nature, in the most exquisite degree; that, had it been 'possible,' that is, consistent with the justice, truth, holiness, and mercy of God, to have mitigated or remitted his sufferings, He would have desired it, as much as we should in similar circumstances; and the subsequent retraction showed his perfect resignation and willingness to bear that unspeakable burden, which must otherwise have sunk us into everlasting destruction. (*Marg. Ref.*—See Mark 14: 32-45, v. 39. John 12: 27-39. 18: 10-14. v. 11. Heb. 5: 7-10, v. 7.) Luke records, that when Jesus was at prayer, an angel was sent to strengthen his mind for the conflict; and that, though the night was cold, his whole frame was agitated to such a degree, 'that his sweat became as great drops of blood falling to the ground.' (*Note.* Luke 22: 39-45, v. 43, 44.) It is here we learn here to inquire, with diffidence and caution, into the causes of our Lord's agony. To mention the treachery and fate of Judas, or the misconduct of Peter and the other apostles, or the unbelief of the Jews, as causes of this surprising effect, must fail to give the reflecting mind the least satisfaction. We must also exclude many of those things, which cause the most exquisite misery to the human mind of which it is capable; for there could be in the holy Jesus no horrors of a guilty conscience, no conflict of sinful passions, no despair as to the final event of his sufferings.

It is not indeed possible for us fully to understand or explain this subject; yet we may point out the light, which the Scriptures afford us upon it. Christ sustained the character of our Surety, who undertook to be answerable for our sins; accordingly 'our iniquities were laid upon Him,' and 'He was made sin for us,' and 'suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust,' and the Scripture ascribes the heaviest of his sufferings to be immediate hand of God; 'It pleased the Lord to bruise

suddenly doth he shoot. As we know not how near we may be to trouble, so we know not how near we may be to sin; if God leave us to ourselves, we are always in danger.

3. How often he should do it; *thrice*. He thought that he should never once do such a thing; but Christ tells him that he would do it again and again; for, when once our feet begin to slip, it is hard to recover our standing. *The beginnings of sin are as the letting forth of water.*

IV. Peter's repeated assurances of fidelity, v. 35. He supposed the temptation strong, when he said, *Though all men do it, yet will not I*. But here he supposeth it stronger, when he puts it to the peril of life; *Though I should die with thee*. He knew what he should do—rather die with Christ than deny Him, it was the condition of discipleship; (Luke 14: 26.) and he thought what he would do—never be

charge, *Sit ye here, while I go pray yonder*, like that of Abraham to his young men, Gen. 22: 5. (...) Christ went to pray alone, though He had lately prayed with his disciples, John 17: 1. Note, Our prayers with our families must not excuse us from secret devotions. (2.) He ordered them to sit here. Note, We must take heed of disturbing or interrupting those who retire for secret communion with God. He took these three with Him, because they had been witnesses of his glory in his transfiguration, (ch. 17: 1, 2,) and that would prepare them to be the witnesses of his agony. Note, Those are best prepared to suffer with Christ, that have by faith beheld his glory, and conversed with the glorified saints on the holy mount. *If we suffer with Christ, we shall reign with Him*; and if we hope to reign, why not expect to suffer with Him?

III. The agony itself, (v. 37.) called (Luke 22: 44.) a conflict. It was not any bodily pain, but from within; He troubled Himself, John 11: 33. The words here used are very emphatic. He began to be *sorrowful*, and in a *consternation*. The latter word signifies, such a sorrow as makes a man neither fit for desirous of company. He had like a weight of lead on his spirits. Physicians use a word near akin to it, to signify the disorder the man is in, in a fit of an ague, or beginning of a fever. Now was fulfilled Ps. 22: 14. *I am poured out like water, my heart is like wax, it is melted*; and all those passages in the Psalms, where David complains of the sorrow of his soul, (Ps. 18: 4, 6. 42: 7. 55: 4, 5. 69: 1-3. 88: 3. 116: 3.) and Jonah's complaint, ch. 2: 4, 5.

But what was the cause of all this? *Why art Thou cast down, blessed Jesus, and why disquieted?* Certainly, nothing of despair or distrust of his Father, much less any conflict or struggle with Him. As the Father loved Him because He laid down his life for the sheep, so He was entirely subject to his Father's will in it. But,

1. He engaged in an encounter with the powers of darkness; so he intimates; (Luke 22: 53.) *This is your hour, and the power of darkness*; and He spake of it just before; (John 14: 30, 31.) *The prince of this world comes*. I see him rallying his forces, and preparing for a general assault; but he has nothing in me, no garrisons in his interest, none that secretly hold correspondence with him; and therefore his attempts, though fierce, will be fruitless; but as the Father gave Me com-

Him, He made his soul a sacrifice for sin.' The sword of divine justice was commanded to 'awake against the Shepherd, and smite Him'; and God 'spared not his own Son.' (Is. 53: 9, 10. Zech. 13: 7. Rom. 8: 32-34, v. 32.) From these scriptures we may conclude, that the human nature of Christ was, on this occasion, left wholly destitute of all consolatory communications from the Holy Spirit; though supported by its union with the Deity, to endure the unknown anguish without sinking under it, and an assured confidence of a glorious event. Probably, some degree of the same darkness and horror oppressed his mind, during the whole subsequent scene, till on the cross He said, 'it is finished.' Accordingly we do not read, that He uttered any complaint about his outward sufferings, but He most dolefully exclaimed, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?' Nor is it at all improbable, that his great enemy and ours, the prince of darkness, whom He came to overthrow, and with whom He maintained a constant conflict through life, and triumphed over by his death, should exert his utmost power, by presenting real, or raising up imaginary terrors, to shake the constancy of his soul, and deter Him from the great work He had undertaken. These, and a multitude of other agonizing distresses, unknown and inconceivable to us, with might and energy spring from so vast, so stupendous a work, as the salvation of a whole world, made a plain distinction between our Savior's situation, and that of any other martyr to the cause of truth; and most clearly prove that there never was a sorrow in every respect like 'unto his sorrow.' *Ep. Porteus*. 'Christ dreaded not death in itself' but the wrath of God against sin, the weight of which for our sakes must be sustained.' *Beza*.

SCOTT

28 Then saith he unto them, 'My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: & tarry ye here, and watch with me.'

39 And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, 'O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.'

40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, 'What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

f Job 6:2-4. Ps. 83:1-7, 14-16. 116:3. Is. 53:10. Rom. 8:32. 2 Cor. 5:21. Gal. 3:13. 1 Pet. 2:24. 3:18. 4:10. 2 Tim. 1:10. 1 Pet. 4:7. 1 John 1:7-9. 1 John 14:5. 16:22. 1 Chr. 21:16. Ex. 12:8. Luke 17:16. Acts 10:25. Rev. 19:10. Mark 14:35-39. Luke 22:41, 42. 1 John 11:41. 12:27. 1 John 24:24. Mark 13:22. 1 John 18:11. 1 John 18:26. John 12:28. 14:31. Rom. 15:1-3. Phil. 2:8. 43. 25:5. Cant. 5:2. Mark 14:37. Luke 9:32. 22:45. p. 35. Jer. 9:38. 1 Sam. 26:15, 16. 1 Kings 20:11.

scourged, spit upon, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross; death, in its most dreadful appearances, looked Him in the face; and this made Him sorrowful, especially because it was the wages of our sin. He had undertaken to satisfy for. It is true, the martyrs that have suffered for Christ have entertained the greatest torments, and the most terrible deaths, without any such sorrow and consternation; have called their prison their delectable orchards, and a bed of flames a bed of roses: but then, (1.) Christ was now denied the supports and comforts which they had; that is, He denied them to Himself, and his soul refused to be comforted, not in passion, but in justice to his undertaking. Their cheerfulness under the cross was owing to the divine favor, which, for the present, was suspended from the Lord Jesus. (2.) His sufferings were of another nature from theirs. Paul, when he is to be offered on the sacrifice and service of the saints' faith, can joy and rejoice with them all; but to be offered a sacrifice, to make atonement for sin, is quite a different case. On the saints' cross there is a blessing pronounced, which enables them to rejoice under it; (ch. 5:10, 12.) but to Christ's cross there was a curse annexed, which made Him sorrowful and very heavy under it. And his sorrow under the cross was the foundation of their joy under it.

IV. His complaint. Finding Himself under the arrests of his passion, 1. He acquaints his disciples with his condition; (v. 38.) *My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death.* 'It gives some ease to a troubled spirit, to have a friend ready to unbosom itself to, and give vent to its sorrows. Christ here tells them, (1.) What was the seat of his sorrow, his soul. This proves that Christ had a true human soul; for he suffered, not only in body, but in soul. We had sinned against both our bodies and our souls; therefore Christ suffered in soul, as well as in body. (2.) What was the degree of his sorrow. He was *exceeding sorrowful, compassed about with sorrows on all hands.* It was sorrow in the highest degree, even unto death; a killing sorrow, such as no mortal could bear and live. He was ready to die for grief; they were sorrows of death. (3.) The duration of it; it will continue even unto death. 'My soul will be sorrowful as long as it is in this body; I see no outlet but death.' He now began to be sorrowful, and never ceased to be so till He said, *It is finished*; that grief is now finished, which began in the garden. It was prophesied of Christ, that He should be a *Man of sorrows*: (Isa. 53:3.) He was so all along, we never read that He laughed; but all his sorrows hitherto were nothing to this.

2. He bespeaks their company and attendance, v. 39. Surely He was destitute indeed of help, when He entreated theirs, who, He knew, would be but miserable comforters; but He would hereby teach us the benefit of the communion of saints. It is good to have, and therefore to seek, the assistance of our brethren, when at any time we are in an agony; for two are better than one. What He said to them, He saith to all, *Watch*, Mark 13:37. Not only watch for Him, in expectation of his future coming, but watch with Him, in application to our present work.

V. What passed between Him and his Father when He was in this agony, v. 39. Prayer is never out of season, but it is especially seasonable in an agony.

(39.) *Let this cup pass, &c.* 'I do not suppose our Lord here prayed to be excused entirely from sufferings and death. Such a petition appears to me inconsistent with that steady constancy He always showed and with that "eliv turn (John 12:27, 28.) in which He seems

Observe, 1. The place where He prayed; *He went a little further*, withdrew from them, *thence the scripture might be fulfilled, I have trod the wine-press alone*: He retired for prayer; a troubled soul finds most ease when alone with God, who understands the broken language of sighs and groans. Calvin devoutly remarks on this, *It is useful to pray apart; for then the faithful soul develops itself more familiarly and with greater simplicity pours forth its petitions, groans, cares, fears, hopes, and joys into the bosom of God.* Christ has hereby taught us that secret prayer must be made secretly. Yet some think that even the disciples, whom He left at the garden door, overheard Him; for, it is said, (Heb. 5:7.) they were strong cries.

2. His posture; (v. 39.) his lying prostrate denotes, (1.) Agony, and extremity of sorrow. Job, in great grief, *fell on the ground*; and great anguish is expressed by *rolling in the dust*, Mic. 1:10. (2.) His humility in prayer. This posture expressed *His reverential fear*; (spoken of, Heb. 5:7.) he hereby accommodated himself to his state of humiliation.

3. The prayer itself; wherein we may observe three things:

(1.) The title He gives to God; *O my Father*. Thick as the cloud was, He could see God as a Father through it. Note, In all our addresses to God, we should eye Him as a Father, our Father; and it is in a special manner comfortable to do so when in an agony; whither should the child go, when any thing grieves him, but to his father?

(2.) The favor He begs; v. 39. His sufferings might be called a cup, because allotted Him, as at feasts a cup was set to every mess. He begs that this cup might pass from Him, that is, that He might avoid the sufferings now at hand; or, at least, that they might be shortened. This intimates no more, than that He was really and truly Man, and as a man He could not but be averse to pain and suffering; This is the first and simple act of man's will - to start back from what is sensibly grievous, and desire the prevention and removal of it. The law of self-preservation is impressed or the innocent nature of man, and rules there, till overruled by some other law; therefore Christ admitted, and expressed, a reluctance to suffer, to show that He was taken from among men, (Heb. 5:1.) was touched with the feeling of our infirmities, (Heb. 4:15.) and tempted as we are; yet without sin. Note, The prayer of faith may very well consist with the patience of hope. When David had said, *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it*; his very next words were, *Remove thy stroke away from me*, Ps. 39:9, 10. But observe the proviso; *If it be possible*. If God may be glorified, man saved, and the ends of his undertaking answered, without his drinking of this bitter cup, He desires to be excused; otherwise not. What we cannot do with the security of our great end, we must reckon to be in direct impossibility; Christ did so. We can do nothing, not only we may do nothing, against the truth.

(3.) His entire submission to, and acquiescence in, the will of God; *Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt*. Not that the human will of Christ was averse to the divine will; it was only, in its first act, diverse from it; in the second, which compares and chooses, He freely submits Himself. Note, [1.] Our Lord Jesus though He had a quick sense of the extreme bitterness of the sufferings He was to undergo, yet was freely willing to submit to them for our redemption and salvation, and offered Himself, and gave Himself, for us. [2.] He grounds his own willingness on the Father's will, and resolves the matter wholly into that, Ps. 40:7. This He had often referred to, as that which put Him upon, and carried Him through, his whole undertaking; *This is the Father's will*, John 6:39, 40. This He sought; (John 5:30,) it was his meat and drink to do it, John 4:34.

It appears to me much safer to expound it, as Sir Matthew Hale does, as relating to the terror and severity of the combat, in which He was now actually engaged. This throws great light on Heb. 5:7.

11 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done.

43 And he came and found them asleep again; for their eyes were heavy.

44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

3.] In conformity to this example of Christ, we must drink of the bitter cup God puts into our hands, be it ever so bitter; though nature struggle, grace must submit. We then are disposed as Christ was, when our wills are in every thing melted into the will of God, though ever so displeasing to flesh and blood; *The will of the Lord be done*, Acts 21: 14.

4. The repetition of the prayer, (v. 42, 44,) and all to the same purport; only, He did not, in the second and third prayer, expressly ask, as in the first, that the cup might pass from Him. Note, Though we may pray to God to prevent and remove an affliction, yet our chief errand, and that we should most insist on, must be, that He will give us grace to bear it well. It should be more our care to get our troubles sanctified, and our hearts satisfied under them, than to get them taken away. *He prayed, saying, Thy will be done.* Note, Prayer is the offering up, not only of our desires, but resignations, to God. It amounts to an acceptable prayer, at any time we are in distress, to refer ourselves to God, and to commit our way and work to Him; *Thy will be done.* The third time He said the same words, the same word, that is, matter or argument; He spake to the same purport. We have reason to think that this was not all He said, for it should seem, by v. 40, that He continued an hour in his agony and prayer; but, whatever more He said, it was to this effect, awfully impressed with the thought of his approaching sufferings, and yet resigned to God's will in them.

But what answer had He to this prayer? Certainly, He that heard Him *always*, did not deny Him *now*. It is true, the cup did not pass from Him, for He withdrew that petition, and did not insist on it; but He had an answer to his prayer; for, (1.) *He was strengthened with strength in his soul*, in the day when He cried; (Ps. 138: 3.) and that was a real answer, Luke 22: 43. (2.) He was delivered from that which He feared, which was, lest by impatience and distrust He should offend, and disabie Himself to go on with his undertaking, Heb. 5: 7. In answer to his prayer, God provided He should not fail or be discouraged.

VI. What passed between Him and his three disciples at this time.

1. The fault they were guilty of; that when He was in his agony, sorrowful and heavy, and praying, they were so little concerned, as not to keep awake, v. 40. The strangeness of the thing should have roused their spirits, to turn aside now, and see this great sight—the bush burning, and yet not consumed; much more should their love to their Master, and their care concerning Him, have obliged them to a more close and vigilant attendance on Him. It is well for us, that our salvation is in the hand of One who *nei ther slumbers nor sleeps*. Christ engaged them to watch with Him, as if He expected some succor from them, and yet they slept; surely it was the unkindest thing that could be. When David wept at this mount of Olives, all his followers wept with him; (2 Sam. 15: 30.) but when the Son of David was here in tears, his followers were asleep: his enemies, wakeful enough; (Mark 14: 43.) but his disciples, asleep. Lord, what is man! What the best of men, when God leaves them to themselves! Note, Carelessness and carnal security, especially when Christ is in his agony, are great faults in any, but especially in those who profess to be nearest in relation to Him. The church of Christ, which is his body, is often in agony, fightings without, and fears within, and shall we sleep then, like Gallio, that *cared for none of these things*; or those (Amos 6: 6.) that *lay at ease, and were not grieved for the affliction of Joseph*?

2. Christ's favor to them, notwithstanding. Persons in sorrow are too apt to be cross and peevish, and to lay it grievously to heart, if those about them do but seem to neglect them; but Christ in his agony is as meek as ever, and as patient toward his followers as toward his Father, and is not apt to take things ill.

When Christ's disciples put this slight on Him,

(1.) He came to them, as if He expected to receive some comfort from them; and if they had put Him in mind of what they had heard from Him concerning his resurrection and glory, perhaps it might have been some help to Him; but, instead, they added grief to his sorrow; and yet He came to them, more careful for them than they were for themselves; when He was most

engaged, yet He came to look after them; for those that were given Him, were on his heart, living and dying.

(2.) He gave them a gentle reproof, for as many as He loves He rebukes; He directed it to Peter, who used to speak for them; let him now hear for them. The reproof was very melting; *What! could ye not watch with Me one hour?* He speaks as one amazed to see them so stupid; every word, when closely considered, shows the aggravated nature of the case. Consider, [1.] *Who they were*; 'Could not ye watch—ye, my disciples and followers?' No wonder if others neglect Me, if the earth still be *still and be at rest*; (Zech. 1: 11.) but from you I expected better things. [2.] *Who He was*; 'Watch with Me. If one of yourselves were ill and in an agony, it would be very unkind, but it is unkindful not to watch with your Master, who has long watched over you for good, has led you, and fed you, and taught you, borne you, and borne with you; do ye thus requite Him?' He awoke out of his sleep, to help them when they were in distress; (ch. 8: 26.) and could not they keep awake, at least to show their good-will to Him, especially considering that He was now suffering for them,—in an agony for them? [3.] How small a thing He expected—only to watch with Him. If He had bid them do some great thing, be in an agony with Him, or die with Him, they thought they could have done it; and yet they could not watch with Him, 2 Kings 5: 13. [4.] How short a time He expected it—but one hour; they were not set on guard whole nights, as the prophet was, Isa. 21: 8. When He continued all night in prayer, He did not expect his disciples should watch; only now, when He had but one hour to spend in prayer.

(3.) He gave them good counsel, v. 41. [1.] An hour of temptation was drawing on, and very near; the troubles of Christ were temptations to his followers to disbelieve, distrust, deny and desert Him, and renounce all relation to Him. [2.] There was danger of their entering into the temptation, as into a snare or trap; o, their entering into parody with, or of a good opinion of it, of their being influenced by, an inclination to comply with it; which is the first step toward being overcome by it. [3.] He therefore exhorts them to watch and pray. *Watch with Me, and pray with Me.* While sleeping, they lost the benefit of joining Christ's prayer. 'Watch yourselves, and pray yourselves.' Watch and pray against this present temptation to drowsiness and security; pray that you may watch; beg of God by his grace to keep you awake, now that there is occasion. When we are drowsy in the worship of God, we should pray, as a good Christian once did, 'The Lord deliver me from this sleepy devil! Lord, quicken Thou me in thy way. Or, 'Watch and pray against further temptation; watch and pray, lest this sin prove the inlet of many more.' Note, When we find ourselves entering into temptation, we have need to watch and pray.

(4.) He kindly excused for them, v. 41. We do not read of one word they had to say for themselves; (the sense of their own weakness stopped their mouth;) but He had a tender word to say on their behalf, for it is his office to be an Advocate; in this He sets us an example of that love which covers a multitude of sins. He considered their frame, and did not chide them, for He remembered that they were but flesh, and the flesh is weak, though the spirit be willing, Ps. 78: 38. Note, [1.] Christ's disciples, as long as they are here in this world, have bodies as well as souls, and a principle of remaining corruption as well as of reigning grace, like Canaanites and Israelites in the same land,

Verse 41.

In spirit, &c. Most expositors understand the clause as a kind excuse, which the Lord made for their present conduct; but He was never used to excuse a thing wrong in them; and their sleeping on this occasion was so utterly unreasonable and criminal. It seems therefore more proper to consider the words as a caution respecting the future, and a warning, that self-confidence and neglect of watching and prayer, would leave their defenceless to the threat of danger, and that

they would fall, notwithstanding their most sincere and determined resolutions to the contrary. Indeed, it is evident, that Peter's conduct in the willingness of his spirit, and his overlooking 'the weakness of the flesh,' occasioned his neglect of means, induced him to thrust himself into perilous circumstances, and so made way for his awful fall. The words are not meant as an excuse or mitigation of their sins; but as a motive to their prayer and vigilance

46 Rise, ^a let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

[Practical Observations.]

47 ¶ And while he yet spake, ^b lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, ^c Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; ^d hold him fast.

^a 1 Sam. 17:48. Luke 9:51. 12:70.
^b 22:15. John 14:31. Acts 21:13.
^c 25. Mark 14:43. Luke 22:47, 48.
^d John 18:1—8. Acts 1:16.
^e 2 Sam. 3:27. 20:9, 10. Ps. 28:3. 55:20, 21.
^f Mark 14:44.

[2.] When He came the third time, He left them to be alarmed with the approaching danger; (v. 45, 46.) *Sleep on now, and take your rest.* This is spoken ironically; 'Now sleep if you can, if you dare; I would not disturb you, if Judas and his band would not.' See here how Christ deals with those that suffer themselves to be overcome by security, and will not be awakened out of it; 1st. Sometimes He gives them up to the power of it; *Sleep on now.* He that will sleep, let him sleep still. The curse of spiritual slumber is the just punishment of the sin of it, Rom. 11: 8. Hos. 4: 17. Many times He sends some startling judgment to awaken those that would not be wrought upon by the Word; and those who will not be alarmed by reasons and arguments, had better be alarmed by swords and spears, than left to perish in their security. Let those that would not believe, be made to feel.

As to the disciples here, 1. Their Master gave them notice of the near approach of his enemies, who, it is likely, were now within sight or hearing, for they came with candles and torches, and, probably, made a great noise; *The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.* And again, *He is at hand, that doth betray me.* 2. He called them to rise, and be going; not, 'Rise, and let us flee from the danger;' but, 'Rise, and let us go meet it;' before He had prayed, He feared his sufferings, now He had overcome his fears. 3. He intimates to them their folly, in sleeping away the time

Mal. 5: 17, 24. [2.] It is the unhappiness and burthen of Christ's disciples, that their bodies cannot keep pace with their souls in works of piety and devotion; but are often a cloud and clog to them; that, when the spirit is free, and disposed to good, the flesh is averse and indisposed. This Paul laments; (Rom. 7: 22.) *With my mind I serve the law of God, but with my flesh the law of sin.* Our impotency in the service of God is the great iniquity and infidelity of our nature, and it arises from the sad remainders of corruption, the constant grief and burthen of God's people. [3.] Yet it is our comfort, that our Master graciously considers this, and accepts the willingness of the spirit, and pities and pardons the weakness and infirmity of the flesh; for *we are under grace, and not under the law.*

(5.) Though they continue dull and sleepy, He did not any further rebuke them for it; for, though we daily offend, yet He will not always chide. [1.] When He came the second time, we do not find that He said any thing to them. v. 43. One would have thought He had said enough to keep them awake; but it is hard to recover from a spirit of slumber. Carnal security, when once it prevails, is not easily shaken off. *Their eyes were heavy,* which intimates that they strove against it as much as they could, but were overcome by it, and therefore their Master looked on them with compassion.

[2.] When He left them to be alarmed with the approaching danger; (v. 45, 46.) *Sleep on now, and take your rest.* This is spoken ironically; 'Now sleep if you can, if you dare; I would not disturb you, if Judas and his band would not.' See here how Christ deals with those that suffer themselves to be overcome by security, and will not be awakened out of it; 1st. Sometimes He gives them up to the power of it; *Sleep on now.* He that will sleep, let him sleep still. The curse of spiritual slumber is the just punishment of the sin of it, Rom. 11: 8. Hos. 4: 17. Many times He sends some startling judgment to awaken those that would not be wrought upon by the Word; and those who will not be alarmed by reasons and arguments, had better be alarmed by swords and spears, than left to perish in their security. Let those that would not believe, be made to feel.

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they should have spent in preparation, now it found them unready, and was a terror to them.

V. 47—56. We are here told how the blessed Jesus was seized, and taken into custody; this immediately followed his agony, while *He yet spake.* His trouble aitherto was raised within Himself; but now the scene is changed; *the Breath of our nostrils, the Anointed of the Lord, is taken in their pits,* Lam. 4: 20.

Now, concerning the apprehending: the Lord Jesus, observe,

I. Who were the persons employed.

1. *Judas, one of the twelve, was guide to them that took Jesus;* (Acts 1: 16.) without whose help they could not have found Him. 2. *A great multitude;* Ps. 3: 1. Made up partly of a detachment of the guards, posted in the tower of Antonia, who were Gentiles, sinners, as Christ calls them, v. 45. The rest were Jews, the servants and officers of the high priest; they that were at variance with each other, agreed against Christ.

II. How they were armed.

1. *They came with swords and staves.* The Roman soldiers, no doubt, had swords; the servants of the priests, those of them that had not swords, brought staves or clubs. *Their rage supplied arms.* They were not regular troops, but a tumultuous rabble. But wherefore this ado? They could not have taken Him, had He not yielded; and, his hour being come for Him to give up Himself, this force was needless.

2. *Their warrant; They came from the chief priests and elders of the people.* He was taken up by a warrant from the great sanhedrin. Pilate, the Roman governor, gave them no warrant, for he had no jealousy of Him; but they were men who pretended to religion, and presided in the affairs of the church, that were active in this prosecution. Pilate upbraided Him with it; *Thine own nation, and the chief priests, delivered Thee to me,* John 18: 35.

III. The manner of it.

1. How Judas betrayed Him; he did his business effectually, and his resolution in this wickedness may shame us, who fail in that which is good. Observe,

(1.) The instructions he gave to the soldiers, (v. 48.) as commander of the party. What abundance of caution was here, not to miss Him—*That same is He;* and when in their

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 36—46. While we with thankfulness take the cup of salvation, let us never forget that cup of wrath, which the Redeemer drank off to the very dregs, for the remission of our sins. If we were not shamefully and surprisingly drowsy in spiritual things, we never could read or meditate about Gethsemane, without the most lively affections and most instructive recollections. Here let us look attentively, that we may learn to distinguish between the sufferings of a martyr, and those of our atoning Sacrifice. View a poor, frail, sinful man, under the smiles of his reconciled Father, serene and cheerful in the prospect and endurance of every possible torture; then behold the incarnate Son of God, 'the holy, undefiled,' 'well beloved' of the Father, 'in whom He was well pleased,' prostrate on the earth, 'exceedingly sorrowful even unto death,' and 'sweating great drops of blood, rolling to the ground;' and with this scene before our eyes, let it be determined, whether He was not then enduring the wrath and tremendous frown of God, as our Surety and the vicarious Sacrifice for our sins. And let the careless and impenitent ask themselves, Did God's own hand inflict these insupportable strokes, in fulfilment of his ancient prophecies, on his 'beloved Son,' who was more valued by Him, than the whole visible creation; and will He break his word, in order to spare a determined rebel and enemy, who takes encouragement to sin from the very persuasion of God being merciful? Most vain and destructive presumption! (*Note, Deut. 29: 19, 20.*) Did the load of imputed guilt so weigh down the soul of Him, concerning whom it is said, that 'He upholdeth all things by the word of his power?' Into what an abyss of misery unknown than most they sink, whose iniquities are left upon their own heads! 'How will they escape who neglect so great salvation?' What a forlorn hope must that of the Pharisee or the infidel be, who expects happiness in his own way, despising that which infinite wisdom has devised, and infinite grace effected, at a price which baffles the powers of computation itself! Assuredly it will end in black despair; with the presumption of every one, who perverts the doctrine of a free salvation as an excuse for indulged wickedness.—But the same one discovers a cheerful dawn of hope to the trembling,

desponding penitent: here we see the infinite hatred of sin of our holy Lord God, and his infinite love of sinners; his determination to satisfy his justice, and his delight in exercising mercy. In short, we must resort to Gethsemane, to learn repentance, hatred of sin, humility, hope, love, patience, meekness, and self-denying obedience, and to find comfort under dejection and temptations. Here we see our pattern, our motives, or encouragements; here we learn the vanity of the world, the evil of sin, and our obligations to live devoted to Him, and willingly to suffer for his glory, who agonized and died for our salvation. While here we abide, we should beware of drowsiness: when 'our souls are sorrowful,' we should pour them out in prayer; and when nature would shrink from suffering, and would say, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me,' we should learn to add, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.' We should also remember, that even our merciful High Priest will rebuke those whom He loves; and if we promise great things, and come evidently short in little things, He will, as it were, say to us, 'What! could ye not watch with Me one hour?' We must all indeed be tempted; yet we should be exceedingly afraid of 'entering into temptation,' by being drawn into such circumstances, as give our enemies an opportunity of coming specially near to us, and obtaining their advantage against us. To be secured from this, we should watch and pray without ceasing; for though, in the regenerate, 'the spirit is willing' for service or suffering, yet we carry about us the remains of a carnal mind, our 'heart' is deceitful above all things, we are 'weak through the flesh,' and should continually be looking to the Lord, to 'hold us up that we may be safe.' But, after repeated warnings and rebukes, how dull and inattentive do we often remain! This causes our compassionate Lord to employ other means and instruments, to rouse us from our fatal lethargy; and when sharp afflictions or persecutions come upon us, He will, as it were, say to us, 'Sleep on now, and take your rest' if you are able: yet, if even then we arise and follow Him, He will preserve us from all permanent or fatal evil.

SCOTT.

49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, 'Hail, Master; and kissed him.

50 And Jesus said unto him, 'Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

51 And, behold, 'one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear.

52 Then said Jesus unto him, 'Put up again thy sword into his place: for all *they that take the sword shall perish with the sword.

* 27-29, 30. Mark 15:18. John 19:3. Gen. 27:26. 1 Sam. 10:1. Prov. 27:6. Mark 14:45-46. Luke 7:45. 1 Thes. 5:26. 20:13. 2 Sam. 17:17. Ps. 41:9. 55:13, 14. Luke 22:48. 35. Mark 14:47. Luke 9:55. 24:36. 38-49-S1. John 18:10, 11, 36. 2 Cor. 10:4. 5:39. Rom. 12:9. 1 Cor. 4:11, 12. 1 Thes. 5:15. 1 Pet. 2:21-23. 3:9. 2 23:24-25. Gen. 9:6. Ps. 55:23. Eccl. 2:5-6. Lev. 19:10. 16:5.

tu. He would teach us, under the greatest provocation, to forbear bitterness and evil speaking, and to show all meekness. *Friend*, for a friend he had been, and should have been, and seemed to be. Thus Abraham, when he called the rich man in hell, son. He calls him *friend*, because he furthered his sufferings, and so befriended him; whereas he called Peter *Satan* for attempting to hinder them.

[2.] He asks him, 'Wherefore art thou come? Is it peace, Judas? Explain thyself; if thou come as an enemy, what means this kiss? If as a friend, what mean these swords and staves? Wherefore art thou come? What harm have I done thee? Wherein have I wearied thee? Wherefore art thou present? Why hast thou not so much shame left thee, as to keep out of sight, which thou mightest have done, and yet have given the officers notice where I was?' This was an instance of great impudence, for him to be so barefaced in this wicked transaction. But it is usual for apostates from religion to be the most bitter enemies to it; witness Julian. Thus Judas did his part.

2. How the officers and soldiers secured Him, v. 50. *How were they not afraid to stretch forth their hands against the Lord's Anointed?* We may well imagine what rude and cruel hands they were; and now, it is probable, they handled Him the more roughly for their being so often disappointed when they sought to lay hands on Him. They could not have taken Him, if He had not surrendered Himself, and been delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, Acts 2:23. He who said concerning his anointed servants, *Touch them not, and do them no harm*, (Psa. 105:14, 15,) spared not his anointed Son, but delivered Him up for us all; and again, gave his Strength into captivity, his Glory into the enemies' lands, Psa. 78:61. See what was the complaint of Job, (ch. 16: 11.) *God hath delivered me to the ungodly, and apply that and other passages in that book of Job as a type of Christ.*

Our Lord Jesus was made a prisoner, because He would in all things be treated as a malefactor, punished for our crime, and as a surety under arrest for our debt. The yoke of our transgressions was bound by the Father's hand upon the neck of the Lord Jesus, Lam. 1: 14. He became a prisoner, that He might set us at liberty; for He said, *If ye seek Me, let these go their way*; (John 18: 8.) and those are free indeed, whom He makes so.

3. How Peter fought for Christ, and was checked for his pains. It is here only said to be one of them that was with Jesus in the garden; but (John 13: 10.) we are told that it was Peter who signalized himself on this occasion.

Observe, (1.) Peter's rashness; (v. 51.) *He drew his sword.* They had but two swords among them all, (Luke 22: 33.) and one of them fell to Peter. Now he thought it was time to draw it, and laid about him; yet all the execution he did, was cutting off an ear from a servant of the high-priest. But if he would be striking, in my mind he should rather have aimed at Judas. Peter had

hands, not to lose Him—*Hold Him fast*; for He had sometimes escaped from those who thought to secure Him; as Luke 4: 30. Though the Jews, who frequented the temple, could not but know Him, yet the Roman soldiers perhaps had never seen Him, and the sign was to direct them; and Judas by his kiss intended not only to distinguish Him, but to detain Him, while they came behind Him, and laid hands on Him.

(2.) The dissembling compliment he gave his Master. He came close to Jesus; surely now, if ever, his wicked heart will relent; surely, when he looks Him in the face, he will either be awed by its majesty, or charmed by its beauty. Dares he to come into his very sight and presence to betray Him? Peter denied Christ, but when the Lord turned and looked on him, he relented; but Judas comes up to his Master's face, and betrays Him, v. 49. It should seem, our Lord Jesus had been wont to admit his disciples to such a degree of familiarity with Him as to give them his cheek to kiss after they had been any while absent, which Judas villainously used to facilitate his treason. A kiss is a token of allegiance and friendship, Psa. 2: 12. But Judas, when he broke all the laws of love and duty, profaned this sacred sign to serve his purpose. Note, There are many that betray Christ with a kiss, and *Hail, Master*; who, under pretence of doing Him honor, betray and undermine the interests of his kingdom. *Honey in the mouth, gall in the heart.* To embrace is one thing, to love is another. *Philo Judaeus*. Joab's kiss and Judas' were much alike.

(3.) The entertainment his Master gave him, v. 50.

[1.] He calls him *friend*. If He had called him *villain and traitor, rascal, thou fool, and child of the devil*, He had not miscalled him;

He had not miscalled him; for a friend he had been, and should have been, and seemed to be. Thus Abraham, when he called the rich man in hell, son. He calls him *friend*, because he furthered his sufferings, and so befriended him; whereas he called Peter *Satan* for attempting to hinder them.

[2.] He asks him, 'Wherefore art thou come? Is it peace, Judas? Explain thyself; if thou come as an enemy, what means this kiss? If as a friend, what mean these swords and staves? Wherefore art thou come? What harm have I done thee? Wherein have I wearied thee? Wherefore art thou present? Why hast thou not so much shame left thee, as to keep out of sight, which thou mightest have done, and yet have given the officers notice where I was?' This was an instance of great impudence, for him to be so barefaced in this wicked transaction. But it is usual for apostates from religion to be the most bitter enemies to it; witness Julian. Thus Judas did his part.

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talked much of what he would do for his Master, he would lay down his life for Him; and now he would venture his life to rescue Him: and thus far was commendable, that he had a great zeal for Christ, his honor and safety; but it was not according to knowledge, nor guided by discretion; for, [1.] He did it without warrant; some of the disciples asked, indeed, *Shall we smite with the sword?* (Luke 22: 49.) But Peter struck before they had an answer. We must see not only our cause good, but our call clear, before we draw the sword; we must show by what authority we do it, and who gave us that authority. [2.] He indiscreetly exposed himself and his fellow-disciples to the rage of the multitude; for what could they with two swords do against a band of men?

(2.) The rebuke which our Lord Jesus gave him, v. 52. He does not command the officers and soldiers to put up their swords that were drawn against Him, He left them to the judgment of God, who judges them that are within; but he commands Peter to put up his sword, does not chide him indeed for what he had done, because done out of good will, but stops the progress of his arms, and provides that it should not be drawn into a precedent. Christ's errand into the world was to make peace. Note, *The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but spiritual*; and Christ's ministers, though his soldiers, do not war after the flesh, 2 Cor. 10: 3, 4. Not that the law of Christ overthrows either the law of nature or the law of nations, as far as those warrant subjects to stand up in defence of their civil rights and liberties, and their religion, when it is incorporated with them; but it provides for the preservation of public peace and order by forbidding private persons, as such, to resist the powers that are; nay, we have a general precept that we resist not evil, (ch. 5: 39.) nor will Christ have his ministers propagate his religion by force of arms; *Religion cannot be forced; and it should be defended, not by killing, but by dying*. Lactantius Instituit. As Christ forbade his disciples the sword of justice, (ch. 20: 25, 26,) so here the sword of war. Christ bade Peter put up his sword, and never bade him draw it again; yet that which Peter is here blamed for, is, his doing it unseasonably; the hour was come for Christ to suffer and die, He knew Peter knew it, the sword of the Lord was drawn against Him, (Zech. 13: 7.) and for Peter to draw his sword for Him, was like, *Master, spare Thyself*.

Three reasons Christ gives to Peter for this rebuke:

[1.] His drawing the sword would be dangerous to himself, and his fellow-disciples, v. 52. Men hasten and increase their troubles by blustering, bloody methods of self-defence. They that take the sword before it is given them, that use it without warrant or call, expose themselves to the sword of war, or public justice. Had it not been for the special care and providence of the Lord Jesus, Peter and the rest of them had, for aught I know, been cut in pieces immediately. Grotius gives another, and a probable, sense of this blow, making those that take the sword to be, not Peter, but the officers and soldiers that take the swords to take Christ; They shall perish with the sword. * Peter; thou needest not draw thy sword to punish them. God will certainly, shortly, and severely reckon with them. They took the Roman sword to seize Christ with, and by the Roman sword, not long after, they and their place and nation were destroyed. Therefore we must not avenge ourselves, because God will repay! (Rom. 12: 19.) and therefore we must suffer with faith and patience, because persecutors will be paid in their own coin. See Rev. 13: 10.

[2.] It was needless to draw his sword in defence of his Master, who could summon into his service all the hosts of heaven (v. 53.)

Verse 50.
Friend. "Rather, companion, against whom, (according to the reading of all the best MSS.) art thou come?" GREENFIELD.

"The paschal families or societies, that is, those that ate the passover together, were called brotherhoods, and the guests companions or [280]"

friends. Our Savior's reproof therefore of Judas, by calling him friend or companion, was both just and cutting, because he betrayed Him, after having eaten the passover with Him.

Blausot e, in Horw

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

[Practical Observations.]

1. 25:31. 2 Kings 6:17. Dan. 7:10. 2 Thes. 1:7. Jude 14.

2. 10:1, 2.

3. Luke 2:30.

4. 24. Ps. 22:69. Is. 53. Dan. 9:24-26. Zech. 13:7. Luke 24:44-46.

5. John 10:35. Acts 1:16.

6. Mark 14:49-50. Luke 22:52, 53.

7. Mark 12:35. Luke 21:37, 38. John 8:2. 18:20, 21.

8. 54. Is. 44:25. Acts 2:23.

9. 31. Mark 14:50-52. John 16:32.

10. 18:8, 16. 2 Tim. 4:16.

only with the cords of his own love that He was bound to the altar.

2dly. What a great interest He had in the heavenly hosts; *He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels*, amounting to above seventy-two thousand. Observe here, 1. There is an *innumerable company of angels*; (Heb. 12:22. See Dan. 7:10.) not a confused multitude, but regular troops; all know their post, and observe the word of command. 2. This innumerable company of angels are all at the disposal of our heavenly Father, and do his pleasure, Ps. 103:20, 21. 3. These angelic hosts were ready to come in to the assistance of our Lord Jesus in his sufferings, if He had needed or desired it. See Heb. 1:6, 14. They would have been to Him as to Elisha, *chariots of fire, and horses of fire*, not only to secure Him, but to consume those that set on Him. 4. Our heavenly Father is to be eyed and acknowledged in all the services of the heavenly hosts; *He shall give them Me*: therefore angels are not to be prayed to, but the Lord of the angels, Ps. 91:11. 5. It is matter of comfort to all that wish well to the kingdom of Christ, that there is a world of angels always at the service of the Lord Jesus, that can do wonders. He that has the armies of heaven at his beck can do what He pleases among the *inhabitants of the earth*: He shall *presently* give them Me. See how ready his Father was to hear his prayer, and the angels to observe his orders; they are willing servants, winged messengers, *they fly swiftly*. This is very encouraging to those that have the honor of Christ, and the welfare of the church, much at heart. Think they that they have more care and concern for Christ and his church, than God and the holy angels have?

[3.] It was no time to make any defence at all, or to offer to put by the stroke, v. 54. It was written, that Christ should be *led as a lamb to the slaughter*, Isa. 53:7. Should He summon the angels to his assistance, He would not be led to the slaughter at all; should He permit his disciples to fight, He would not be led as a lamb quietly and without resistance; therefore He and his disciples must yield to the accomplishment of the predictions. Note, In all difficult cases, the word of God must be conclusive against our own counsels, and nothing must be done, nothing attempted, against the fulfilling of the Scripture. If the easing of our pains, the breaking of our bonds, the saving of our lives, will not consist with the fulfilling of the Scripture, we ought to say, 'Let God's word and will take place, let his law be magnified and made honorable, whatever becomes of us.' Thus Christ encouraged Peter, when he set up for his champion.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 47-56. While we contemplate the insolence and enmity of those who assaulted the Prince of peace, and above all the treachery of Judas, with abhorrence, let us not forget, that such are we by nature, and so should we have acted, if left to ourselves. No enemies, however, deserve such decided execration, as those professed disciples, who 'betray Christ with a kiss.'—It behoves us assiduously to copy the meekness and forbearance of Christ, and very circumspectly to avoid the rashness and cowardice of Peter, and the other apostles. Whatever provocations we meet with from avowed adversaries or

4. We are next told how Christ reasoned with them that came to take Him; (v. 55.) though He did not resist them. Note, I. we consist with Christian patience under our sufferings, calmly to expostulate with our sinners and persecutors, as David with Saul, 1 Sam. 24:14, 26:18. *Are ye come out, (1.) With rage and enmity, as against a thief, as if I were an enemy to the public safety, and deservedly suffered this? (2.) With all this power and force as against the worst of thieves, that dare the law, bid defiance to public justice, and add rebellion to their sin? You are come out as against a thief, with swords and staves, as if there were danger of resistance; whereas ye have killed the just One, and He doth not resist you*, Jam. 5:6. If He had not been willing to suffer, it was folly to come with swords and staves, for they could not conquer Him; had He been minded to resist, He would have esteemed their iron as straw, and their swords and staves would have been as briars before a consuming fire; but, being willing to suffer, it was folly to come thus armed, for He would not contend with them.

He further postulates with them, by reminding them how He had behaved Himself hitherto toward them, and they toward Him. [1.] Of his public appearance; *I sat daily with you in the temple teaching*. And, [2.] Of their public connivance; *Ye laid no hold on Me*. How comes then this change? They were very unreasonable in treating Him thus. 1st. He had given them no occasion to look on Him as a thief, for He had taught in the temple. And such were the matter and such the manner of his teaching, that He was manifested in the consciences of all that heard Him, not to be a bad man. Such gracious words as came from his mouth, were not the words of a thief, or of one that had a devil. 2dly. Nor had He given them occasion to look on Him as one absconded from justice, that they should come in the night to seize Him; they might find Him every day in the temple, ready to answer all challenges, all charges, and there they might do as they pleased with Him; for the chief priests had the custody of the temple, and the command of the guards about it; but to come on Him thus clandestinely, in the place of his retirement, was base and cowardly.

But all this was done, (so v. 56.) that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. It is hard to say, whether these are the words of the sacred historian, as a comment on this story, and a direction to the Christian reader to compare it with the Scriptures of the Old Testament which pointed at it; or, whether they are the words of Christ Himself, as a reason why, though He could not but resent this base treatment, He yet submitted to it, that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled, to which He had just now referred Himself, v. 54. Note, The Scriptures are in the fulfilling every day; and all those Scriptures, which speak of the Messiah, had their full accomplishment in our Lord Jesus.

5. How He was, in the midst of this distress, shamefully deserted by his disciples; *They all forsook Him, and fled*.

(1.) This was their sin, and a great sin. It was unkind, considering the relation they stood in to Him, the favors they had received from Him, and the melancholy circumstances He was now in. There was unfaithfulness in it, for they had solemnly promised to adhere to Him, and never to forsake Him. He had intended for their safe conduct; (John 18:8.) yet they could not rely on that, but shifted for

57 And ^a they that had laid hold on Jesus, led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

53 But Peter followed him afar off, unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants to see the end.

59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death;

60 But ^a found none; yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. ^b At the last came two false witnesses,

61 And said, ^a This fellow said, ^b I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

¹ Ps. 56:5, 6. Mark 14:53-54. Luke 22:54, 55. John 11:49. 18:12-14, 24. John 18:15, 16, 25. ² Deut. 19:15-21. 1 Kings 21:8-13. Ps. 27:12. 53:1, 12. 94:20, 21. Prov. 13:18. Mark 14:53-56. Acts 6:11-13. 24:4-13. ³ Gen. 54:5. Tit. 2:8. 1 Pet. 3:15. ⁴ Deut. 19:15. Mark 14:57-59. ⁵ 11. 12:24. Gen. 19:9. 1 Kings 22:27. 2 Kings 9:11. Ps. 22:6, 7. Is. 49:7. 53:3. Luke 22:52. John 9:29. Acts 17:18. 18:13. 20:22. ⁶ 27:44. Jer. 28:11-16. 19. Mark 15:29. John 21:19-21. Acts 6:13.

^a now the patron of wickedness; his house should have been the sanctuary of oppressed innocence, but it is become the throne of iniquity; and no wonder, when even God's house of prayer was made a den of thieves.

II. The setting of the prisoner to the bar; they that had laid hold on Jesus, led him away, hurried him, no doubt, with violence, as a trophy of their victory, led him as a victim to the altar; He was brought into Jerusalem through that which was called the *sheep-gate*, for that was the way into town from the mount of Olives; and it was so called because the sheep appointed for sacrifice were brought that way to the temple; very fitly, therefore, is Christ led that way, who is the Lamb of God; that takes away the sin of the world. Christ was led first to the high priest, for, by the law, all sacrifices were to be first presented to the priest, and delivered into his hand, Lev. 17:5.

III. The cowardice and faint-heartedness of Peter, who (v. 23.) followed afar off. This comes in here with an eye to the story of his denying Him. He forsook Him, like the rest, when He was seized, and what is here said of his following Him is easily reconcilable with his forsaking Him; such following was no better than forsaking; for,

1. He followed Him, but *afar off*. Note, It looks ill and bodes worse, when those that are willing to be Christ's disciples, are not willing to be known to be so. Here began Peter's denying Him; for to follow Him afar off, is, by little and little, to go back from Him. There is danger in drawing back, nay, in looking back.

2. He followed Him, but he *went in and sat with the servants*. He should have attended on his Master, and gone up to the court; but he went in with the servants to screen himself. It was presumption thus to thrust himself into temptation; he that does so, throws himself out of God's protection. Christ had told Peter he could not follow Him now, and had particularly warned him of his danger *this night*; and yet he would venture into the midst of this wicked crew. It helped David to walk in his integrity; that he *hated the congregation of evil doers, and would not sit with the wicked*.

3. He followed Him, but it was only to see the end; more from curiosity than conscience; as an idle spectator rather than a disciple, a person concerned. He should have gone in, to do Christ some service, or to get some wisdom and grace to himself, by observing Christ's behavior under his sufferings; but he went in only to look about him, expecting, perhaps, that Christ would have made his escape miraculously; that, having so lately struck them

themselves by an inglorious flight. What folly was this, for fear of death, to flee from Him whom they themselves knew and had acknowledged to be the *Fountain of Life*? John 6: 67, 68. *Lord, what is man?*

(2.) It was a part of Christ's suffering, it added affliction to his bonds, as Job; (ch. 19: 13.) *He hath put my brethren far from me; and David; (Ps. 38: 11.) Lovers and friends stand aloof from my sore.* They should have stood with Him, to minister to Him, to countenance Him, and if need were, to be witnesses for Him at his trial; but they treacherously deserted Him, as, at Paul's first answer, *no man stood with him*. But there was a mystery in this.

[1.] Christ, as a Sacrifice for sins, stood thus abandoned. In this He was made a curse for us, being left as one separated to evil. [2.] Christ, as the Savior of souls, stood thus alone; as He heeded not, so He had not, the assistance of any other in working out our salvation; He bore all, and did all Himself. *He trod the wine-press alone, and when there was none to uphold, then his own arm wrought salvation*, Isa. 63: 3, 5. *So the Lord alone did lead his Israel, and they stand still, and only see this great salvation*, Deut. 32: 12.

V. 57-65. We have here the arraignment of our Lord Jesus, in the ecclesiastical court, the sanhedrim. Observe,

I. The sitting of the court; the scribes and the elders were assembled, though in the dead of night, when other people were fast asleep in their beds; to gratify their malice against Christ, they denied themselves natural rest.

See, 1. Who were assembled; the scribes, the principal teachers, and elders, the principal rulers of the Jewish church. Now the Scripture was fulfilled; (Ps. 22: 16.) *The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me*. Jeremiah complains of an assembly of treacherous men; and David of his enemies *gathering themselves together against him*, Ps. 35: 15.

2. Where; in the palace of Caiaphas, the high priest; there they assembled two days before, to lay the plot, (v. 3.) and now again, to prosecute it. *The high priest was Ab-beth-din—the father of the house of judgment*, but he

down, who came to seize Him, He would now have struck them dead, who sat to judge Him; and this he had a mind to see; if so, it was folly to think of seeing any other end than Christ had foretold, that He should be put to death. Note, It is more our concern to prepare for the end, whatever it may be, than curiously to inquire what the end will be. The event is God's, the duty is ours.

IV. The trial.

1. Though resolved, right or wrong, to condemn Him, yet, to put the better color on it, they would examine witnesses, and produce evidence against Him. The crimes properly cognizable in the court were, false doctrine and blasphemy; these they endeavored to prove upon Him. And observe here,

(1.) Their search for proof; v. 29. They had seized, bound, and abused Him, and after all seek for something to lay to his charge, and can show no cause for his commitment. They tried if any of them could allege seemingly from their own knowledge any thing against Him; and suggested one calumny and then another, which, if true, might touch his life. *Thus evil men dig up mischief*, Prov. 16: 27. Here they trod in the steps of their predecessors, who devised *deceits against Jeremiah*, Jer. 18: 18. 20: 10. They made proclamation that, if any one could give information against the prisoner at the bar, they were ready to receive it, and presently many bare false witness against Him; (v. 60.) for if a ruler hearken to lies, all his servants are wicked, and will carry false stories to him, Prov. 29: 12. This is an evil often seen under the sun, Eccl. 10: 5. If Naboth must be taken off, there are sons of Belial to swear against him.

(2.) Their success in this search; in several attempts they were baffled; the matters alleged were such palpable lies, as carried their own confutation along with them. This redounded much to the honor of Christ.

At last they met with two witnesses, who, it seems, agreed in their evidence, and therefore were hearkened to, in hopes that now the point was gained. The words they swore against Him were, that He should say, *I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days*, v. 61. Now by this they designed to accuse Him, [1.] As an enemy to the temple, and one that sought the destruction of it, which they could not bear to hear of; for they valued themselves by the temple of the Lord, (Jer. 7: 4.) and, when they abandoned other idols, made a perfect idol of that. Stephen was accused for *speaking against this holy place*, Acts 6: 13, 14. [2.] As one that dealt in witchcraft, or some such unlawful arts, by the help of which He could rear such a building in three days. They had often suggested that He was in league with Beelzebub; now, as to this, 1st. The words were misrecited; He said, *Destroy ye this temple*, (John 2: 19.) plainly intimating that He spake of a temple which his enemies would seek to destroy; they swore that He said, *I am able to destroy this temple*, as if the design against it were his. He said, *In three days I will raise it up*—a word properly used of a living temple; *I will raise it to life*. They swore that He said, *I am able to build it*; which is properly used of a house temple. 2dly, The words were misunderstood; *He spake of the temple of his body*, (John 2: 21.) and perhaps when He said, *this temple*, pointed to, or laid his hand on his own body; but they swore that He said, *the temple of God*, meaning this holy place. Note, There have been, and still are, such as wrest the sayings of Christ to their own destruction, 2 Pet. 3: 16. 3dly, Make the worst they could of it, it was no capital crime, even by their own law; if it had been, no question but He had been prosecuted for it, when He spake the words in a public discourse some years ago; nay, the words were capable of a laudable construction, and bespeak a kindness

Verses 59-64.

*The professed entertaining of false witnesses against Christ will not seem strange, if it be remembered, that among the Jews, in actions against seducers of the people, or false prophets, it was lawful to say any thing whether true or false: no man being permitted to say any

thing in defence of them.' Hammond. This extract from the Jewish writers shows the blindness and iniquity of their teachers to have been beyond conception great. (Ps. 35: 11, 12. Acts 6: 9-14, 9 11-13. 23: 12-22. 24: 1-9, 10-21, v. 13. 1 Pet. 4: 12-16.)

NOTE

62 And the high priest arose, and said unto him, 'Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, 'I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God.

64 Jesus saith unto him, 'Thou hast said; nevertheless I say unto you, 'Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, 'He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now, ye have heard his blasphemy.

c 27:12-14. Mark 14:60. Luke 22:67. 18:19-22. 18:61-11.
c 28:12-14. Is. 53:7. Dan. 3:16. Acts 8:32-35. 1 Pet. 2:23.
c Lev. 24:10. Num. 15:19-21. 1 Kings 22:16. 2 Chr. 18:15. Prov. 29:24.
Mark 14:61. Luke 22:66-71. John 9:25. 10:24. 18:37.
c 11:5. 27:40, 43, 54. Ps. 2:6, 7. 11. Job 7. John 13:39, 49. 3:16-18. 5:18-25. 6:62. 10:30, 36. 19:7. 20:31. 1 John 5:11-13.
b 22: 27:11. Mark 14:62. Luke 22:70. John 18:37.
c 16:27. 24:30. 25:31. Dan. 7:13. Luke 21:27. John 1:50, 51. Acts 1:1. Rom. 14:10. 1 Thes. 4:16. Rev. 17:20, 11.
c Ps. 110:1. Acts 7:56. Heb. 13:12.
c Lev. 24:10. 2 Kings 19:37. 19:1-3. Jer. 30:24. Mark 14:63, 64.
m 9:3. 1 Kings 21:10-13. Luke 5:21. John 10:33, 35.

the law of equity, to make Him accuse Himself.

(1.) Here is the interrogatory of the high priest.

Observe. [1.] The question itself; *Whether Thou be the Christ the Son of God?* that is, Whether Thou pretend to be so? The Messiah was to be the consolation of Israel, and glorious things were spoken concerning Him in the Old Testament, yet so strangely besotted were they with a jealousy of any thing that threatened their exorbitant power and grandeur, that they would never enter into the examination of the matter, whether Jesus was the Messiah or no; never once put the case, Suppose He should be so; they only wished Him to confess that He called Himself so, that they might on that indictment Him as a deceiver. What will not pride and malice carry men to?

[2.] The solemnity of the proposal of it; *I adjure Thee by the living God, that Thou tell us.* Not that he had any regard to the living God, but took his name in vain; 'If Thou hast any value for the blessed name of God, and reverence for his majesty, tell us this.' Should He refuse to answer when thus adjured, they would charge Him with contempt of the blessed name of God. Thus the persecutors of good men often take advantage against them by the consciousness, as Daniel's enemies, in the matter of his God.

(2.) Christ's answer, (v. 64.) in which,

[1.] He owns Himself to be the Christ, the Son of God. *Thou hast said; that is, 'It is as thou hast said,' for in Mark, it is, I am.* Hitherto, He seldom professed Himself expressly to be the Christ, the Son of God; his doctrine bespoke, and his miracles proved it: now He would not omit to confess it, because that would have looked, ist. Like disowning that truth He came unto the world to bear witness to: and 2dly, like declining his sufferings, when He knew the acknowledgment of this would give his enemies all the advantage they desired against Him. He thus confessed Himself, for example and encouragement to his followers, when they are called to it, to confess Him

for the temple; if destroyed, He would exert Himself to the utmost to rebuild it. But any thing that looked criminal, would serve to give color to their malicious prosecution. Now the Scriptures were fulfilled, which said, *False witnesses are risen up against me;* (Ps. 27:12.) and see Ps. 36:11. *Though I have redeemed them, they have spoken lies against me,* Hos. 7:13. We stand justly accused, the law accuseth us, Deut. 27:26. John 5:45. Satan and our own consciences accuse us, 1 John 3:20. The creatures cry out against us. Now, to discharge us from all these just accusations, our Lord Jesus submitted to this, to be unjustly and falsely accused, that in the virtue of his sufferings we may be enabled to triumph over all challenges; *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* Rom. 8:33, 34. He was accused, that we might not be condemned; and if at any time we suffer thus, have all manner of evil, not only said, but sworn against us falsely, let us remember that we cannot expect to fare better than our Master.

(3.) Christ's silence under all these accusations, to the amazement of the court, v. 62. The high priest, the judge of the court, arose in some heat, and said, 'Answerest Thou nothing?' Come, you the prisoner at the bar; you hear what is sworn against you, what have you now to say for yourself? What defence can you make? Or what pleas have you to offer in answer to this charge? *But Jesus held his peace,* (v. 63.) not as one sullen, or as one self-condemned, or as one astonished and in confusion; not because He wanted something to say, or knew not how to say it, but that the Scripture might be fulfilled; (Isa. 53:7.) *As the sheep is dumb before the shearer,* and before the butcher, so He opened not his mouth; and that He might be the Son of David, who, when his enemies spake mischievous things against him, was as *a deaf man that heard not,* Ps. 38:12-14. He was silent, because his hour was come; He would not deny the charge, because He was willing to submit to the sentence; otherwise, He could as easily have put them to silence and shame now, as He had done many a time before. If God had entered into judgment with us, we had been speechless, (ch. 22:12.) not able to answer for one of a thousand, Job 9:3. Therefore, when Christ was made sin for us, He was silent, and left it to his blood to speak, Heb. 12:24.

2. They examined our Lord Jesus Himself on oath, like that *ex officio*; and, since they could not accuse Him, they will try, contrary to

before men, whatever hazards they run by it. And, according to this pattern, the martyrs readily confessed themselves Christians, though they knew they must die for it, as the martyrs at Thebais, Euseb. Hist. l. 8. c. 9. That Christ answered out of a regard to the adjuration Caiaphas had profanely used, I cannot think any more than that He had any regard to the like adjuration in the devil's mouth, Mark 5:7.

[2.] He refers Himself for proof of this, to his second coming, and indeed to his whole estate of exaltation. It is probable that they looked on Him with a disdainful smile, when He said, *I am;* 'A likely fellow,' thought they, 'to be the Messiah, which is expected to come in so much pomp and power;' and to that this *nevertheless* refers. 'Though now you see Me in this low and abject state, and think it a ridiculous thing for Me to call Myself the Messiah, nevertheless, the day is coming when I shall appear otherwise.' Hereafter, shortly, for this exaltation began in a few days; ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power to judge the world; of which his coming shortly, to judge and destroy the Jewish nation, would be a type and earnest. Note, The terrors of the judgment-day will be a sensible conviction to the most obstinate infidelity, not to conversion, (that will be then too late), but to eternal confusion. Observe, 1st. Whom they should see; *the Son of man.* Having owned Himself the Son of God, even now in his estate of humiliation, He speaks of Himself as the Son of man, even in his estate of exaltation; for He had these two distinct natures in one person. The incarnation of Christ has made Him Son of God and son of man; for He is *Immanuel*, God with us. 2dly. In what posture. 1. *Sitting on the right hand of power,* according to the prophecy of the Messiah; (Ps. 110:1.) *Sit Thou at my right hand;* which denotes both the dignity and the dominion He is exalted to. Though now He stood at the bar, they should shortly see Him sit on the throne. 2. *Coming in the clouds of heaven;* this refers to another prophecy concerning the Son of man, (Dan. 7:13, 14.) which is applied to Christ, (Luke 1:33.) when He came to destroy Jerusalem; so terrible was the judgment, and so sensible the indications of the wrath of the Lamb in it, that it might be called a *visible appearance of Christ*; but, doubtless, it has reference to the general judgment; to this day He appeals, and summons them to an appearance, then and there to answer for what they are now doing. He had spoken of this day to his disciples awhile ago, for their comfort, Luke 21:27, 28. Now He speaks of it to his enemies, for their terror; for nothing is more comfortable to the righteous, nor more terrible to the wicked, than Christ's judging the world at the last day.

V. His conviction; *The high priest rent his clothes,* according to the custom of the Jews, when they heard or saw any thing done or said which they looked upon to be a reproach to God; as Isa. 38:12. 37:1. Acts 14:14. Caiaphas would be thought extremely tender of the glory of God; (*Come, see his zeal for the Lord of hosts;*) but, while he pretended an abhorrence of blasphemy, he was himself the greatest blasphemer; he now forgot the law which forbade the high priest in any case to rend his clothes, unless we will suppose this an excepted case.

Observe, 1. The crime He was found guilty of; *blasphemy.* He hath spoken blasphemy; that is, He hath spoken reproachfully of the living God; that is the notion we have of blasphemy; because we by sin had reproached the Lord, therefore Christ, when He was made sin for us, was condemned as a blasphemer for the truth He told them.

2. The evidence on which they found Him

(62.) 'Our Savior did not refuse to answer, which He would have done, had He disapproved of all asseverations upon oath, or all such solemn invocations of, and appeals to, the name of God, in cases where the truth is doubtful, or the testimony is suspected.'

Verse 64.

Hereafter (Luke 22:63.) From the present time. This implies

that the manifested effects of his exaltation would in a little time be conspicuous; but it did not exclude such as were very remote. Scott *Thou hast said.* 'We are informed by the traveller Aryda, that this is the prevailing mode of a person's expressing his assent or affirmation to this day, in the vicinity of mount Lebanon, especially where he does not wish to assert any thing in express terms.'

66 What think ye? They answered and said, "He is guilty of death."

67 Then ° did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote him with the palms of their hands,

68 Saying, a Prophesy unto us, ° thou Christ, Who is he that smote thee?

[Practical Observations.]

69 ¶ Now ° Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with ° Jesus of Galilee.

Lev. 24:11-16. John 19:7. Acts 7:52. 13:27, 28. Jam. 5:6.
 o 27:30. Num. 12:14. Deut. 25:9. Job 30:9-11. Is. 50:5. 22:14. 33:3. Mark 1:85. 15:19. 1 Cor. 4:13. Heb. 12:2.
 p 5:39. 1 Kings 22:4. Jer. 20:2. Lam. 3:30, 45. Jer. 18:22. Acts 23:2, 3. 2 Cor. 11:20, 21.
 q Or, rods. Mic. 5:1.
 r 27:39-44. Gen. 37:19, 20. Judg. 16:35. Luke 22:63-65.
 s 27:28, 29. Mark 15:18, 19. John 19:2, 3, 14, 15. 1 Pet. 2:4-8.
 t 88. 1 Kings 19:13. Ps. 111. Mark 14:68-69. Luke 22:53-67. John 18:25. 2 Pet. 2:7-9.
 u 1. 2:22, 23. 21:11. John 14:6. 7:41, 52. Acts 5:37.

made a man an *outlaw* among his people, and so exposed him to the fury, either of a popular tumult, as Stephen, or to be clamored against before the governor, as Christ. Thus was the Lord of life condemned to die, that through Him there may be no condemnation to us.

VII. The abuses and indignities done Him after sentence passed; (v. 67, 68.) *Then they spat in his face.* Because they had not power to put Him to death, and could not be sure that they should prevail with the governor to be their executioner, they would do Him all the mischief they could, now they had Him in their hands. Condemned prisoners are taken under the special protection of the law, which they are to make satisfaction to, and by all civilized nations have been treated with tenderness. But when they had passed sentence on our Lord Jesus, He was treated as if hell had broken loose on Him, as if death were too good for Him, and He were unworthy of the compassion showed to the worst malefactors. Thus *He was made a curse for us.* But who were thus barbarous? It should seem, the very same that had passed sentence on Him, v. 66, 67. The priests began, and then no wonder if the servants carried on the humor. See how they abused Him.

1. *They spat in his face.* Thus the Scripture was fulfilled, (Isa. 50: 6.) *He hid not his face from shame and spitting.* Job complained of this indignity done to him, and herein was a type of Christ; (Job 30: 10.) *They spare not to spit in my face.* It is an expression of the greatest contempt and indignation possible, a disgraceful punishment, Deut. 25: 9. When Miriam was under the leprosy, it was looked on as a disgrace to her, like that of *her father spitting in her face*, Num. 12: 14. That face fairer than the children of men, white and ruddy, which angels reverence, was thus filthily abused by the basest and vilest of the children of men. Thus was confusion poured upon his face, that ours might not be filled with everlasting shame and contempt. They who now profane his blessed name, abuse his Word, and hate his image on his sanctified ones, what do they better than spit in his face? They would do that if it were in their reach.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 57-68. Happy they, against whom their most malicious enemies can allege nothing, except by 'false witnesses!'—Let those who have the honor to 'suffer for his sake,' contemplate his calm behavior before the council, and his intrepid confession of his true character; and let them consider the crimes alleged against Him, the condemnation passed on Him, and the contempt, indignity, and insult He most patiently endured. For the Christian cannot reasonably expect so much tenderness and compassion, when suffering for the truth, as a thief or murderer might, when punished for his crimes; and if he look

Verse 67.

Spit in his face. 'This was done as a mark of the most profound contempt. See Job 16: 10. 30: 10. Is. 50: 6. Micah 50: 1. The judges now delivered Him into the hands of the mob. Buffeted. Smote Him with their fists, &c. Insults of this kind are never forgiven by the world. Jesus not only takes no revenge, though it be completely in his power, but bears all with meekness. Dr. A. CLARKE.

guilty; *Ye have heard the blasphemy; why trouble yourselves to examine witnesses further?* He owned the fact, that He did profess Himself the *Son of God*: and then they made blasphemy of it, and convicted Him on his confession. The high priest triumphs in the success of the snare he had laid; *Aha, so would we have it.* Thus was He *judged out of his own mouth* at their bar, because we were liable to be so judged at God's bar. There is no need of witnesses against us; our own consciences are instead of a thousand witnesses.

VI. His sentence passed, v. 66.

Here is, 1. Caiaphas' appeal to the bench; *What think ye?* See his base hypocrisy and partiality; when he had already prejudged the cause, and pronounced Him a blasphemer, then, as if willing to be advised, he asks the judgment of his brethren; but, hide malice ever so cunningly under the robe of justice, it will break out. If he would have dealt fairly, he should have collected the votes of the bench, begun with the junior, and have delivered his own opinion last; but he knew that, by the authority of his place, he could sway the rest, and therefore declares his judgment, and presumes they are all of his mind; he takes the crime as confessed; and the judgment as agreed to.

2. Their concurrence; *He is guilty of death;* perhaps they did not all concur, it is certain that Joseph of Arimathea, if he was present, dissented; (Luke 23: 51.) so did Nicodemus, and it is likely, others with them; however, the majority carried it: but, perhaps, this being an extraordinary council, or cabal, rather, none had notice to be present but such as they knew would concur, and so it might be voted *unanimously*. The judgment was, *'He is guilty of death;* by the law, He deserves to die.' Though they had not power now to put any man to death, yet, by such a judgment as this, they

2. *They buffeted Him, and smote Him with the palms of their hands.* This added pain to the shame, for both came in with sin. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, (Isa. 50: 6.) and 1 (Lam. 3: 30.) *He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth Him. He is filled with reproach, and keepeth silence,* (v. 28.) and (Mic. 5: 1.) *They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek;* here the margin reads it, *They smote Him with rods;* for so the original word signifies.

3. They challenged Him to tell who struck Him, having first blindfolded Him, v. 64. (1.) They made sport with Him, as the Philistines with Samson; it is grievous to those that are in misery, for people to make merry about them, but much more to make merry with them and their misery. Here was an instance of the greatest depravity and degeneracy of human nature, to show that there was need of a religion that should recover men to humanity. (2.) They made sport with his prophetic office. They had heard Him called a *prophet*, and that He was famed for wonderful discoveries; this they upbraided Him with, and pretended to make a trial of; as if the divine omniscience must stoop to a piece of children's play. They put a like affront on Christ, who profanely jest with the Scripture, and make themselves merry with holy things; like Belshazzar's revels in the temple-towers.

V. 69-75. We have here the story of Peter's denying his Master, and it comes in as a part of Christ's sufferings. Our Lord Jesus was now in the high priest's hall. But we do not find any friend He had about the court, save Peter only, and it would have been better if he had been at a distance. Observe how he fell, and how he rose again by repentance.

I. His sin, impartially related, to the honor of the penmen of Scripture, who dealt faithfully. Observe,

1. The immediate occasion of Peter's sin. He sat without, among the servants of the high priest. Note, Bad company is to many an occasion of sin; and those who needlessly thrust themselves into it, go on the devil's ground, venture into his crowds, and may expect to be tempted and insnared, as Peter was; they scarce can come out of such company, without guilt or grief, or both. He that would keep God's commandments and his own covenant, must say to evil-doers, *Depart from me*, Ps. 119: 115. Peter spake from his own experience, when he warned his new converts to *save themselves from that unlearned generation;* for he had like to have ruined himself by but going once among them.

2. The temptation to it. He was challenged as a retainer to Jesus of Galilee, v. 69, 71. The Galilean dialect and pronunciation differed from that of the other Jews. Happy he, whose speech bewrays him to be a disciple of Christ; by the holiness and seriousness of whose discourse it appears that he has been with Jesus! Observe how scornfully they speak of Christ—*Jesus of Galilee*, and of *Nazareth*, upbraiding Him with the country He was of; and how disdainfully they speak of Peter—*This fellow;* as if they thought it a reproach to them to have such a man in their

to the scene we are considering, he will perceive, that disdain, cruel mockings, and every expression of abhorrence, are the sure portion of the true disciple, from such men as spat in the face of the holy Jesus, and buffeted and derided the 'Lord of glory.' Yet let us boldly confess his name, and bear the reproach, and He will confess us before his Father's throne; whilst those, who pretend to do service to God, by murdering his saints, will be covered with shame and everlasting contempt. SCOTT.

Verses 69, 75.

Peter was so sure to fall in order to give him a more acquainted acquaintance with his own weakness, and render him more modest, humble, and dependent on God, and his work more successful.

70 But ^u he denied
before *them* all, saying,
I know not what thou
sayest.

71 And * when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, * This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

72 And again he denied * with an oath, * I do not know the man.

73 And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, ^b Surely thou also art *one* of them; ^c for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

74 Then ^d began he
to curse and to swear,
^e saying, I know not the
man. ^f And immedi-
ately the cock crew.

75 And Peter ^g remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. ^h And he went out, and wept bitterly.

company, and he was well enough served for coming among them; yet they had nothing to accuse him of, but that he was with Jesus.

3. The sin itself. When charged as one of Christ's disciples, he denied it, was ashamed and afraid to own it, and would have all about him believe that he had no knowledge of, nor kindness or concern for Him.

(1.) Upon the first mention of it, he said, *I know not what thou sayest*. A shuffling answer; he pretended he did not understand the charge, and knew not whom she meant by *Jesus of Galilee*, or what she meant by being with him; so making strange of that, which his heart was now as full of as it could be. [1.] It is a fault thus to misrepresent our own apprehensions, thoughts and affections, to serve a turn; to pretend we do not understand, or did not think of, or remember, that which yet we do apprehend, and did think of, and remember; this is a species of lying we are more prone to than any other, because in this a man is not easily discovered; for, *who knows the spirit of a man, save himself?* But God knows it, and we must be restrained from this wickedness by a fear of Him, Prov. 24: 12. [2.] It is yet a greater fault to be shy of Christ, to dissemble our knowledge of Him, and to shift off a confession of Him, when we are called to it; it is, in effect, to *deny Him*.

(2.) Upon the next attack, he said, flat and plain, *I know not the man*, and backed it with an oath, *v. 72*. This was, in effect, to say, *I will not own Him, I am no Christian; for Christianity is the knowledge of Christ. Why, Peter? Canst thou look on yonder prisoner at the bar, and say thou dost not know Him? didst thou not quit all to follow Him? And hast thou not been the man of his counsel? hast thou not known Him better than any one else?* *y. Didst thou not confess Him to be the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?* *Hast thou forgotten all the kind and tender looks thou hast had from Him, and all the intimate fellowship thou hast had with Him?* *Canst thou look Him in the face, and say that thou dost not know Him?*

(3.) Upon the third assault, *he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man, n. 74.* This was worst of all, for the way of *swearing* is downhill. He cursed and swore, [1.] To back what he said, that they might not any more call it in question; he did not only *say* it, but *swear* it; and yet what he said was false. Note, We have reason to suspect the truth of that which is backed with rash oaths and imprecations. None but the devil's sayings need the devil's proofs. He that will not be restrained by the third commandment from mocking

the ninth from deceiving his brother. [2.] He
t he was none of Christ's disciples, for this was
ing and swearing suffice to prove a man no dis-
age of his enemies, thus to *take his name in vain*.

to us, that we sin not as Peter; that we never deny Christ, the Lord that bought us, by his Spirit, dissembling our knowledge of Him, and his words, or afraid of suffering for Him,

4. The aggravations of this sin. Consider. (1.) Who he was—an apostle, one of the first three, on all occasions most forward to speak to the honor of Christ. The greater profession we make of religion, the greater is our sin, if in any thing we walk unworthily. (2.) What fair warning his Master had given him of his anger; had he regarded this as he ought, he would not have run himself into temptation. (3.) How solemnly he had promised to adhere to Christ in this time of trial; he had said again and again, *'I will never deny Thee; no, I will die with Thee first;'* yet he brake these bonds, and his word was yea and nay. (4.) How soon he fell into this sin after the Lord's supper. There to receive such an inestimable pledge of redeeming love, and yet, the same night, to disown his Redeemer, was indeed *turning aside quickly*. (5.) How weak, comparatively, the temptation; it was not the judge, or any officer of the court, that charged him with being a disciple of Jesus, but a silly maid or two, that probably designed him no hurt, nor would have done him any, if he had owned it. This was but *running with the footmen*, Jer. 12: 5. (5.) How often he repeated it; even after the cock had crowed once, he continued in the temptation, and a second and third time relapsed into the sin. Is this Peter? *How art thou fallen!*

Thus was his sin aggravated; out, on the other hand, there is this to extenuate it—that what he said, he said *in his haste*, Ps. 116: 11. He fell into the sin by surprise, not as Judas, with design; his heart was against it; he spoke very ill, but it was unadvisedly, and before he was aware.

II. Peter's repentance, *v.* 75. The former is written for our admonition, that we may not sin; this for our imitation, that, if at any time we be overtaken, we may hasten to repent. Observe.

1. What brought Peter to repentance.

(1.) *The cock crew;* (v. 74.) a common contingency; but Christ having mentioned the crowing of *the cock* in the warning, that made it a mean of bringing him to himself. The word of Christ can put a significance on whatever sign He shall please to choose. The crowing of a cock is to Peter, instead of the voice of one calling him to repentance. Conscience should thus put us in mind of what we had forgotten. When *David's heart smote him, the cock crew*. Where there is a living principle of grace in the soul, a little hint will serve to recover from a by-path. Here was the crowing of a cock made a happy occasion of the conversion of a soul. Christ comes sometimes in mercy at cock-crowing.

(2.) *He remembered the words of the Lord* ; this brought him to himself, and melted him to tears of godly sorrow ; a sense of his ingratitude to Christ, and the slight he had shown to his gracious warning. Note, A serious reflection on the words of the Lord Jesus, will be a powerful inducement to repentance, and will help to break the heart for sin. Nothing grieves a penitent more than that he has sinned against

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 60-75. Let all beware of vain-confidence and self-preference. It does not come to us to boast, or resolve what we will do; rather let us decline temptation, and trust in the Lord alone to uphold us. Let us also avoid rashness, and pray for victory over the fear of man. In all these respects, we need much forbearance from our gracious Lord: though we be not traitors, we are prone to decline the cross; though we do follow Christ, it is commonly at a great distance; and it is not unusual for even his disciples to be afraid of being known to belong to Him! But when self-confidence induces men to turn themselves uncalled into perilous circumstances, we may expect lamentable consequences.—Little do we know how we should act in very difficult situations, if left to ourselves: the snow does not more naturally melt before the fire, than our resolutions vanish in temptation. Who then can say,

what he will do, or not to do? Let us all distrust our own hearts, and rely wholly on God, according to his Word.—Let it also be noted, that Peter first lied wilfully; then he committed the most direct perjury to cover his lie; and then he uttered the most horrid execration on himself, equivalent to the worst language of those who delight in cursing. This is the common progress of men in such cases.—If any have fallen even in the most dreadful manner, let them think on Peter's recovery, and not despair; and let them recollect the words of Christ, as well as their own sins, that their tears, confessions, and humiliations may be mingled with hope. And let us all frequently remember our past follies, and manifold instances of ingratitude; that we may learn watchfulness, humility, caution, and compassion for the tempted and fallen, by the experience of our own numerous mistakes, sins, and recoveries. SCOTT.

duct showed, that he had exceedingly profited by the painful lesson. The event has also proved most instructive in various ways to believers ever since; and if infidels, Pharisees, and hypocrites will stumble at it, or abuse it, they do it at their peril. (2 Sam. 11: 27. P. O. 14—71.) 'Peter, by the wonderful providence of God, appointed to be a witness of all these things, is prepared to the example of singular con-

“stancy, by the experience of his own incredulity.” *Beza*. “I venture to say, that it is useful to proud men to fall into some open and manifest sin, that they may be displeased with themselves, as they had already fallen by their self-complacency. For Peter, being displeased with himself, *rept* in a more salutary manner, than he had *prevaricated*, when pleased with himself.” *Augustine*. — OTT.

CHAP. XXVII.

was delivered bound to Pilate, 1, 2. Jud., in remorse, restores the silver, and hangs himself, 3-5. The priests fulfil the scripture, in disposing of the money, 6-10. Christ is sent before Pilate, 11-14, who proposes to release him, according to the custom of the feast, 15-16. Pilate's wife, alarmed by a dream, warns him to desist, 19. He washes his hands, to clear himself; and, being urged by the people, with imprecations on themselves and their children, he releases Barabbas, and delivers Jesus up to be crucified, 20-25. He is mocked, and crowned with thorns by the soldiers, 27-31; crucified between two thieves, 32-33, and reviled by the people and rulers, 39-44. The land is darkened, 45; Jesus, calling on God, expires, 46-50. The veil of the temple is rent, the earth quakes, the tombs burst open, and the centurion confesses Him as the Son of God, 51-54. Certain women witness these scenes, 55-56. Joseph of Arimathea takes a body and buries it, 57-61. His tomb is sealed by the chief priests, and a watch placed at it, 62-66.

WHEN the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

2 And when they had bound him, they led him away; and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

3 ¶ Then * Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver, to the chief priests and elders,

4 Saying, 'I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood.' And they said, 'What is that to us? see thou to that.'

5 And he cast down

the grace of the Lord Jesus, and the tokens of his love.

2. How his repentance was expressed; *he went out and wept bitterly.*

(1.) His sorrow was secret; he went out, out of the high priest's hall to some place of solitude and retirement, where he might bemoan himself, like the doves of the valleys, Ezek. 6: 9. Jer. 9: 1, 2. He went out, that he might not be disturbed in his devotions on this sad occasion. We may then be most free in communion with God, when most free from the converse and business of this world. In mourning for sin, we find families apart, and their wives apart, Zech. 12: 11, 12.

(2.) His sorrow was serious; *He wept bitterly.* Sorrow for sin must be great and deep, like that for an only son; not to satisfy divine justice, but to evidence that there is a real change of mind, the essence of repentance, to make pardon more welcome, and sin for the future more loathsome. Peter, who wept so bitterly for denying Christ, never denied him again, but confessed Him often and openly, and in the mouth of danger; so far from ever saying, *I know not the man*, that he made all the house of Israel know assuredly that this same Jesus was Lord and Christ. True repentance for any sin will be best evidenced by our abounding in the contrary grace and duty. Some of the ancients say, that, as long as Peter lived, he never heard a cock crow without weeping. Those that have truly sorrowed for sin, will sorrow on every remembrance of it; yet not so as to hinder, but rather increase, their joy in God, and in his mercy and grace.

CHAP. XXVII. v. 1-10. A very affecting story is recorded in this chapter of the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus. Considering the thing itself, there cannot be a more tragical story told us; common humanity would melt the heart, to find an innocent and excellent person thus misused. But, considering the design and fruit of Christ's sufferings, it is Gospel, good news, that Jesus Christ was thus delivered for our offences; and there is nothing we have more reason to glory in, than the cross of Christ.

We left Christ in the hands of the chief priests and elders, condemned to die; but about two years before this, the Romans having taken from the Jews the power of capital punishment, they could put no man to death, and therefore, early in the morning, another counsel is held to consider what is to be done. And here we are told what was done.

I. Christ is delivered up to Pilate, that he might execute the sentence passed on Him. Judea having been, almost one hundred years before this, conquered by Pompey, had ever since been tributary to Rome, and was lately made part of the province of Syria, and subject to the government of the president of Syria, under whom there were several procurators, who chiefly attended the business of the revenues, but sometimes, as Pilate particularly, had the whole power of the president lodged in them. This was a plain evidence that the sceptre was departed from Judah, and that therefore now the *Shiloh* must come, according to Jacob's prophecy, Gen. 49: 10. Pilate is characterized by the Roman writers of that time, as a man of a rough, haughty spirit, wilful and implacable, and extremely covetous and oppressive; the Jews had a great enmity to his person, and were weary of his government; yet they made

use of him as the tool of their malice against Christ.

1. They bound Jesus. He was bound when He was first seized; but either He was loosed before the council and now bound again, or now He was bound more closely. Having found Him guilty, they tied his hands behind Him, as they usually do the hands of convicted criminals. He was already bound with the bonds of love to man, and of his own undertaking; but God had bound the yoke of our transgression on the neck of the Lord Jesus, (Lam. 1: 14, that we might be loosed by his bonds, as we are healed by his stripes.

2. They led Him away in a sort of triumph, as a lamb to the slaughter; so was He taken from prison and from judgment, Isa. 53: 7, 8. It was near a mile from Caiaphas's house to Pilate's. All that way they led Him through the streets of Jerusalem, when, in the morning, they began to fill, to make Him a spectacle to the world.

3. They delivered Him to Pontius Pilate; according to what He had often said, that He should be delivered to the Gentiles. Both Jews and Gentiles were obnoxious to the judgment of God, and concluded under sin, and Christ was to be the Savior of both; therefore He was brought into judgment of both, and both had a hand in his death. See how these corrupt church rulers abused the civil magistrate, making use of him to execute their unrighteous decrees, and inflict the grievance which they had prescribed, Isa. 10: 1. Thus have the kings of the earth been wretchedly imposed on by the papal powers, and condemned to the drudgery of extirpating with the sword of war, as well as that of justice, those whom they have marked for heretics, right or wrong, to the great prejudice of their own interests.

II. The money paid to Judas for betraying Christ, is delivered back, and he in despair hangs himself. The chief priests and elders supported themselves with this, that Christ's own disciple betrayed Him to them; but now, in the midst of the prosecution, that strength failed them, and even he is made to them a witness of Christ's innocency, and a monument of God's justice; which served, 1. For glory to Christ, and a specimen of his victory over Satan. 2. For warning to his persecutors, and to leave them the more inexcusable. Had not their heart been fully set to do this evil, what Judas said and did, one would think, should have stopped the prosecution.

(1.) See here how Judas repented; not like Peter, who repented, believed, and was pardoned: no, he repented, despaired, and was ruined. Now observe here,

[1.] What induced him to repent; *he saw that He was condemned.* Judas, it is probable, expected that Christ would either have made his escape out of their hands, or so have pleaded his own cause at their bar, as to have come off; and then Christ would have the honor, the Jews the shame, and he the money, and no harm done. This he had no reason to expect, because he had so often heard his Master say that He must be crucified; yet it is probable he did expect it, and when the event did not answer his vain fancy, then he fell into this horror. Note, Those who measure actions by the consequence of them, rather than by the divine law, will find themselves mistaken in their measures. He repented himself; i. e. was filled with grief, anguish, and indignation, at himself, when reflecting on what he had done. When he was

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVII. v. 5. It seems evident that Judas was his own executioner, by strangling himself; and this account may be reconciled with that of Peter, as recorded in the Acts, by supposing that he suspended himself in such a place and manner, that the rope, or wood to which it was fastened, broke; and that he fell from a great height, and so burst asunder; this coming to pass by the special purpose of God, to render his body a more terrible spectacle to all beholders, and to cause his death to be the more remarkable. (Murg. Ref. h-k—Nite, Acts 1: 16-18.) It admits of little doubt, that Judas's death preceded that of our injured Lord; so speedily did divine vengeance overtake him. Yet the rulers took no notice even of this alarming circumstance! It appears to me, that the acquittal or condemnation of Jesus never entered into Judas's contemplation. Al! he thought of was gain. Judas was the constant companion of our Saviour's ministry,

and witness to every thing He said or did. If there had been any plan concerted to impose a false religion on the world, Judas must have been in the secret. His testimony is invaluable, because it is the testimony of an unwilling witness; the testimony, not of a friend, but of an enemy. Bp. Porteus. 'The greatest enemy, with a choice of means for detection of fraud and collusion, could not have pointed out any thing better calculated to suit his purpose, than the placing of Judas among the apostles. It was a remarkable provision made by the Lord, for increasing, to the highest point, the value of the testimony of the twelve apostles. It was like the water which Elijah commanded to be poured around the altar, before the fire from heaven descended to consume the sacrifice. Judas also, as the other apostles, although in a different way, sealed his testimony with his blood.' *Huldane or Divine Revelation.*

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the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, "It is not lawful for us to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood."

7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in.

1 Judg. 9:54. 1 Sam. 31:4,5. 2 Sam. 17:23. 1 Kings 16:18. Job 29: 7,16. Acts 1:18,19. m 23:34. Luke 6:7-9. John 18:28. n Deut. 23:18. Is. 61:8.

man had he never been born. it be rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel, in the howels it will be turned into the gall of asps, (Job 20: 12-14.) like John's book, Rev. 10: 9.

[2.] What were the indications of his repentance.

1st. He made restitution; *He brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests*, when they were all together publicly. Now the money burned in his conscience, and he was as sick of it, as ever he had been fond of it. Note, That which is ill-gotten will never do good to those that get it, Jer. 13: 10. Job 20: 15. If he had repented, and brought the money back before he had betrayed Christ, he might have done it with comfort, then he had agreed while yet in the way; but now it was too late, now he cannot do it without horror, wishing ten thousand times he had never meddled with it. See Jam. 5: 3. He brought it again. Note, To keep what is unjustly gotten is a continuance in the sin, and an avowing of it inconsistent with repentance. He brought it to those from whom he had it, to let them know that he repented his bargain. Note, Those who have served and hardened others in sin, when God gives them repentance, should let them know it, whose sins they have partaken, that it may bring them to repentance.

2dly. He made confession; v. 4. 1. *To the honor of Christ*, he pronounces his blood innocent. Had he been guilty of any sinful practices, Judas, as his disciple, would certainly have known it, and, as his betrayer, would certainly have discovered it; but he, freely, and without being urged to it, pronounces Him innocent, to the face of those who had now pronounced Him guilty. 2. *To his own shame*, he confesses that he had sinned, in betraying this blood. He does not lay the blame on any one else; but takes it all to himself. Thus far Judas went toward his repentance, yet it was not to salvation. He confessed, but not to God, he did not go to Him, and say, *I have sinned, Father, against heaven*. He confessed the betraying of innocent blood, but not that love of money which was the root of this evil. Some betray Christ, and yet justify themselves in it, and so come short of Judas.

(2.) See here how the chief priests and elders entertained Judas's penitential confession; they said, *What is that to us? See thou to that*.

[1.] How carelessly they speak of the betraying of Christ. Judas had told them that the blood of Christ was innocent blood; and they said, *What is that to us?* Was it nothing to them that they had thirsted after this blood, sired Judas to betray it, and had now condemned it to be shed unjustly? Thus do fools make a mock at sin; thus light do many make of Christ crucified; what is it to them, that He suffered such things?

[2.] How carelessly they speak of the sin of Judas; he said, *I have sinned*, and they said, *What is that to us?* What are we concerned in thy sin, that thou tellest us of it? Note, It is folly for us to think that the sins of others are nothing to us, especially those sins we are any way accessory to, or partakers in. If the elders of Jezreel, to please Jezebel, murder Naboth, is that nothing to Ahab? Yes, *he has killed*, for he has taken possession, 1 Kings 21: 19. If there were guilt, they tell Judas he must look to it, he must bear it, 1st. Because he had betrayed Him to them. His was indeed the greater sin; (John 19: 11.) but it did not therefore follow that theirs was no sin. It is common to extenuate our own by the aggravation of other people's sins. But the judgment of God is according to truth, not comparison. 2dly. Because he knew and believed Him to be innocent. 'If He be innocent, see thou to it, that is more than we know; we have adjudged Him guilty, and justly prosecute Him as such.' Wicked practices are buoyed up by wicked principles, and particularly by this, that sin is sin only to those that think it so; that it is no harm to persecute a good man, if we take him to be a bad man; but those who thus think to mock God, will but deceive and destroy themselves.

[3.] See how carelessly they speak of the conviction, terror, and remorse, Judas was under. They were glad to make use of him in the sin,

but, now that his sin had put him into a fright, they slighted him, and turned him over to his own terrors; why trouble them with his melancholy fancies? But why so shy? 1st. Perhaps they feared lest the sparks of his conviction, brought too near, should kindle a fire in their own consciences. Note, Obstinate sinners stand on their guard against convictions; and, resolutely impenitent, look with disdain on the penitent. 2dly. However, they were in no concern to succor Judas; when they had brought him into the snare, they not only left him, but laughed at him. Note, Sinners, under convictions, will find their own companions in sin but miserable comforters. It is usual for those that love the treason, to hate the traitor.

(3.) Here is the utter despair that Judas was hereby driven to. If the chief priests had promised him to stay the prosecution, it would have been some comfort to him; but, seeing no hopes of that, he grew desperate, v. 5.

[1.] *He cast down the pieces of silver in the temple*. The chief priests would not take the money, for fear of taking thereby the whole guilt to themselves, which they were willing that Judas should bear the load of; Judas would not keep it, it was too hot for him to hold; he therefore threw it down in the temple, that, whether they would or no, it might fall into the hands of the chief priests. See what a drug money was, when the guilt of sin was tacked to it, it was thought to be so.

[2.] *He went, and hanged himself*. First, *he retired*; withdrew like the possessed man, Luke 8: 29. Woe to him that is in despair, and is alone. If Judas had gone to Christ, or to some of the disciples, perhaps he might have had relief, had as the case was; but, missing of it with the chief priests, he abandoned himself to despair; and the same devil that, with the help of the priests, drew him to the sin, with their help drove him to despair. 2dly. He became his own executioner; *he hanged himself*; was suffocated with grief, so Hammond, though Whithy is clear that our translation is right. Judas had a sight and sense of sin, but no apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, and so he pined away in his iniquity. His sin, we may suppose, was not, in its own nature, unpardonable, there were some of those saved, that had been Christ's betrayers and murderers; but he concluded, as Cain, that his iniquity was greater than could be forgiven, and would rather throw himself on the devil's mercy than on God's. And some have said, that Judas sinned more in despairing of the mercy of God, than in betraying his Master's blood. Now, the terrors of the Almighty set themselves in array against him. All the curses written in God's book now came into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones, as was foretold concerning him, (Ps. 109: 18, 19.) and drove him to this desperate shift, for the escaping of a hell within him, to leap into that before him, which was but the perfection and perpetuity of this horror and despair.

Now, in this story, 1. We have an instance of the wretched end of those into whom Satan enters, and particularly those that are given up to the love of money. This is the destruction in which many are drowned, 1 Tim. 6: 9, 10. Remember what became of the swine into which, and of the traitor into whom, the devil entered; and give no place to the devil. 2. We have an instance of the wrath of God revealed from heaven against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, Rom. 1: 18. As in the story of Peter we behold the goodness of God, and the triumphs of Christ's grace in the conversion of some sinners; so in the story of Judas we behold the severity of God, and the triumphs of Christ's power and justice in the

Verses 6-10.

This fulfilled an ancient prophecy, which is here said to have been spoken by Jeremiah. (*Jer. Zech. 11: 10-14*.) Various conjectures have been formed on the subject; but it is most natural to admit, that a trivial error has crept into the text; for the change of a single letter, according to the abbreviated manner in which names are written in the old manuscripts would suffice to occasion the mistake. The passage is quoted something differently than it stands in the prophecy; but the

meaning is, that the thirty shekels, the vile price at which the Jew valued and bargained for the Shepherd of Israel, as if He had been a slave, came into the hands of a potter. This was foretold and exactly accomplished. If this be, as it is by far most probable, intended as a quotation from Zechariah, or a reference to his prediction; the Septuagint must have been wholly disregarded by the evangelist. This version may be literally translated as follows: 'They appointed thirty pieces of silver as my hire; and the Lord said unto me, Place these in

8 Wherefore ° that field was called, The field of blood, & unto this day.

9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, ° And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they ° of the children of Israel did value ;

10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

[Practical Observations.]

o Acts 1:19.
p 28:15. Deut. 34:6. Josh. 4:9. Judg. 4:26. 2 Chr. 5:9.
q Zech. 11:12, 13.
r 28:15. Ex 21:32. Lev. 27:2-7.
° Or, bought of the children of Israel.

be a burying-place for strangers, that is, proselytes to the Jewish religion, who were of other nations, and, coming to Jerusalem to worship, happened to die there. [1.] It looks like an instance of their humanity, that they took care for the burying of strangers; and it intimates that they themselves allowed, (as Paul saith, Acts 24: 15.) that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and of the unjust; for we therefore take care of the dead body, not only because it has been the habitation of a rational soul, but because it must be so again. But, [2.] It was no instance of their humility that they would bury strangers in a place by themselves, as if they were not worthy to be laid in their burying-places; strangers must keep their distance, alive and dead, and that principle must go down to the grave, *Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou*, Isa. 65: 5. The sons of Heth were better affected to Abraham, though a stranger among them, when they offered him the choicest of their own sepulchres, Gen. 23: 6. But the sons of the stranger, that have joined themselves to the Lord, though buried by themselves, shall rise with all that are dead in Christ.

This buying of the potter's field took place not long after the crucifixion; for Peter speaks of it soon after Christ's ascension; and it is here recorded, 1st. To show the hypocrisy of the chief priests and elders. They were maliciously persecuting the blessed Jesus, and now,

1. They scruple to put that money into the treasury, or corban, of the temple, with which they had hired the traitor. Though, perhaps, they had taken it out of the treasury, pretending it was for the public good, and though they were great sticklers for the corban, and labored to draw all the wealth of the nation into it, yet they would not put that money into it, which was the price of blood. The hire of a traitor they thought parallel to the hire of a harlot, and the price of a malefactor, (such a one they made Christ to be,) equivalent to the price of a dog, neither of which was to be brought into the house of the Lord, Deut. 23: 13. Thus they that swallowed a camel, strained at a gnat.

2. They think to atone for what they had done by this public good act of providing a burying-place for strangers, though not at their own charge. Thus, in times of ignorance, people were made to believe that building churches and endowing monasteries would make amends for immoralities.

2dly. To signify the favor intended by the blood of Christ to strangers, and sinners of the Gentiles. Through the price of his blood, a refuge-place is provided for them after death. Thus many of the ancients apply this passage. The grave is the potter's field, where the bodies are thrown as despised, broken vessels. The Germans call burying-places *God's fields*; for in them God sows his people as a corn of wheat, John 12: 24. See Hos. 2: 23. Isa. 26: 19.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-10. The advantages attainable by sin, appear in prospect very desirable to the carnal mind; but they contain far more bitterness than satisfaction, when actually possessed. —The anguish and remorse of Judas, when he saw that Jesus was condemned, should impress our minds with some idea of what wicked men will feel hereafter, when they shall learn all the fatal effects of their infidelity, impiety, licentiousness, and iniquity. In this world, there is ground of hope for the vilest transgressors; and when deeply convinced of their guilt, they should be reminded, that their chief danger arises from temptation to despair of God's mercy. —When faith and hope are wanting, repentance cannot be genuine; and the enemy, who once persuaded his deluded servants that their sins were small, and that they had nothing to fear, will at length perhaps take occasion, from some special aggravations of their crimes, to represent them to their affrighted imaginations as absolutely

3dly. To perpetuate the infamy of those that bought and sold the blood of Christ. This field was commonly called *Aceldama—the field of blood*; not by the chief priests, they hoped in this burying-place to bury the remembrance of their own crime; but by the people; who took notice of Judas's acknowledgment that he had betrayed the innocent blood, though the chief priests made nothing of it. They fastened this name on the field for a perpetual memorial. Note, Divine Providence has many ways of entailing disgrace on the wicked practices even of great men, who, though they seek to cover their shame, are put to a perpetual reproach.

4thly. That we may see how the Scripture was fulfilled; v. 9, 10. The words quoted are found in the prophecy of Zechariah, ch. 11: 12. The Syriac version, which is ancient, reads only, *It was spoken by the prophet*, not naming any, whence some think that Jeremy was added by some scribe; others that the whole volume of the prophets, being in one book, and the prophecy of Jeremiah first, it might not be improper, to quote any passage out of that volume, under his name. The Jews used to say, *The spirit of Jeremiah was in Zechariah*, and so they were as one prophet. Some suggest that it was spoken by Jeremiah, but written by Zechariah; or that Jeremiah wrote the ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of Zechariah. Now this passage, in the prophet, is a representation of the great contempt of God among the Jews. But here that is really acted, which was there but figuratively expressed. The sum of money is the same—*thirty pieces of silver*, this they weighed for his price, at this rate they valued Him; a goodly price; and this was cast to the potter in the house of the Lord; which was here literally accomplished. Note, We should better understand the events of Providence, if we were better acquainted even with the language and expressions of Scripture. What David spake figuratively, (Ps. 42: 7.) Jonah made a literal application of; *All thy waves are as billows are gone over me*, John 2: 3.

The giving of the price of Him that was valued for the potter's field, bespeaks, 1. The high value that ought to be put on Christ. The price was given, not for Him; no, He cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, nor this unspeakable Gift be bought with money. 2. The low value that was put on Him. It added to the reproach of his being bought and sold, that it was at so low a rate. Cast it to the potter, so it is in Zechariah; a petty chapman, not the merchant that deals in things of value. And observe, they of the children of Israel thus undervalued Him; they who were his own people, that should have known better what estimate to put on Him, they to whom He was first sent, whose glory He was, and whom He had valued so highly, and bought so dear. He gave kings' ransoms for them, and the richest countries, (so precious were they in his sight, Isa. 43: 3, 4.) Egypt, and Ethiopia, and Seba; but they gave a slave's ransom for Him, (see Exod. 21: 32.) and valued Him but at the rate of a potter's field; so was that blood trodden under foot,

the refiner's furnace, and I will see whether it be approved, in the manner in which I have been proved by them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and I brought them into the house of the Lord, unto the refiner's furnace.' It accords much more nearly, though not exactly, to the Hebrew. (Note, Mark 7: 11, 12.)

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(9.) 'Jeremiah is omitted in two manuscripts of the twelfth century, in the Syriac, the Persian, and modern Greek versions, and in some later copies. What renders it likely that the original reading was by the prophet is, that Matthew frequently omits the name of the prophet in his quotations.'

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11 ¶ And * Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the king of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, 'Thou sayest.

12 And when * he was accused of the chief priests and elders, answered nothing.

13 Then saith Pilate unto him, * Hearst thou not how many things they witness against thee?

14 And he answered him to never a word; inasmuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

15 ¶ Now at that * feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.

10:18, 25. Mark 15:2. Luke 23:3.
John 18:32-39.
26:23-24. Matt. 14:62. John 18:37.
1 Tim. 6:13.
u 14. 26:33. Ps. 38:13, 14. Is. 53:7.
Mark 15:3-5. John 19:9-11. Acts 8:32. 1 Pet. 2:23.
26:52. John 18:35. Acts 22:24.
y Ps. 71:7. Is. 8:18. Zech. 3:8. 1 Cor. 4:8.
26:5. Mark 15:5-8. Luke 23:16, 17. John 18:38, 39. Acts 24:27. 25:9.

4. The evidence; (v. 12.) He was accused of the chief priests. Pilate found no fault in Him; whatever was said, nothing was proved, and, therefore what was wanting in matter, they made up in noise and violence, and followed Him with accusations, the same they had given in before; as if by repetitions to force a belief on the governor.

5. The Prisoner's silence; He answered nothing, (1.) Because there was no occasion; nothing was alleged but what carried its own confutation along with it. (2.) He was now taken up with the great concern that lay between Him and his Father, to whom He was offering up Himself a sacrifice, to answer the demands of his justice. 3. His hour was come, and He submitted to his Father's will; *Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.* He knew what his Father's will was, and therefore silently committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. We must not thus, by our silence, give away our lives, because we are not lords of our lives, as Christ was of his; nor can we know, as He did, when our hour is come. But hence we must learn, *not to render railing for railing*, 1 Pet. 2:23.

Now, [1.] Pilate pressed Him to make some reply, v. 13. What these things were, may be gathered from Luke 23:3, 5. and John 19:7. Pilate, having no malice against Him, was desirous He should clear Himself, urges Him to it, and believes He could do it; *Hearst Thou not?* Yes, He did hear; and still hears all that is witnessed unjustly against his truths and ways; but He keeps silence, because it is the day of his patience, and doth not answer, as He will shortly, Ps. 50:3. [2.] He wondered at his silence; which was not interpreted so much into contempt of the court, of himself. And therefore Pilate is not said to be angry, but to have marvelled greatly at it.

II. The outrage of the people, in pressing the governor to crucify Christ. The chief priests had a great interest in the people, who called them *Rabbi*, *Rabbi*, made idols of them, and oracles of all they said; and they made use of this, to incense them against Him, and by the power of the mob gained the point they could not otherwise carry. Here are two instances of their outrage.

1. Their preferring Barabbas before Him, and choosing to have him released rather than Jesus.

(1.) It seems, it was grown into a custom with the Roman governors, for the humoring of the Jews, to grace the passover with the release of a prisoner, v. 15. This, they thought, did honor to the feast, and was agreeable to the commemoration of their deliverance; but it was an invention of their own, and no divine institution; though some think that it was ancient, and kept up by the Jewish princes, before they became a province of the empire. However, it was a bad custom, an obstruction to justice, and an encouragement to wickedness. But our gospel-passover is celebrated with the release of prisoners, by Him who hath power on earth to forgive sins.

which bought the kingdom of heaven for us. But all this was as the Lord appointed; so the prophetic vision was, which typified this event, and so the event itself, as the other instances of Christ's sufferings, was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.

V. 11-25. We have here,

1. The trial Christ had in the morning before Pilate, in his judgment-hall.

1. His arraignment; Jesus stood before the governor, as the prisoner before the judge. He was arraigned that we might be discharged. Some think that this bespeaks his courage and boldness; He stood undaunted, unmoved by all their rage. He thus stood in this judgment, that we might stand in God's judgment.

2. His indictment; Art thou the King of the Jews? The Jews thought that whoever was the Christ must be the king of the Jews, must deliver them from the Roman power, restore to them a temporal dominion, and enable them to trample on all their neighbors. Accordingly they accused our Lord Jesus, as making Himself king of the Jews, in opposition to the Roman yoke; whereas, though He said that He was the Christ, He meant not such a Christ as this. Note, Many oppose Christ's holy religion through a mistake of its nature; they dress it in false colors, and then fight against it. They assuring the governor, that, if He made Himself Christ, He made Himself king of the Jews, the governor takes it for granted, that He goes about to pervert the nation and subvert the government. Art thou a king? It was plain that He was not so actually. But dost thou lay any claim to the government, or pretend a right to rule the Jews? Note, Religion has often unjustly fallen under suspicion of the civil powers, as if it were hurtful to kings and provinces, whereas it tends mightily to the benefit of both.

3. His plea; Jesus said unto him, 'Thou sayest.' It is as thou sayest, though not as thou meanest: I am a King, but not such a King as thou dost suspect Me to be.

(2.) The prisoner put in competition with our Lord Jesus, was Barabbas, here called a notable prisoner; (v. 16.) either because, by birth and breeding, he was of some note and quality, or because he had signalized himself by something remarkable in his crimes; whether he was so notable as to recommend himself the more to the favor of the people, and so the more likely to be interceded for, or whether so notable as to make himself more liable to their rage, is uncertain. Some think the latter, and therefore Pilate mentioned him, as taking it for granted that they would have desired any one's release rather than his. *Treason, murder, and felony*, are the three most enormous crimes that are usually punished by the sword of justice; and Barabbas was guilty of all three, Luke 23:19. John 18:40.

(3.) The proposal was made by Pilate, the governor, v. 17. It is probable the judge had the nomination of two, one of which the people were to choose. Pilate proposed Jesus; but would have Him released by the people's election, so he hoped to satisfy both his own conscience, and the people too; whereas, finding no fault in Him, he ought not to have put Him on the country, or brought Him into the peril of his life. But such little tricks and artifices as these, to trim the matter, and to keep in with conscience and the world too, are the common practice of those that seek more to please men than God. What shall I do, said Pilate, with Jesus, who is called Christ? He puts the people in mind, that Jesus was looked on by some as the Messiah, and had given pregnant proofs of it; 'Do not reject one, of whom your nation has professed such an expectation.'

The reason why Pilate labored thus to get Jesus discharged, was, because he knew that for envy the chief priests had delivered Him up; (v. 13.) that it was not his guilt, but his goodness, that provoked them. When David was envied by Saul, he was the darling of the people; and any one that heard the hosannas with which Christ was but a few days ago brought into Jerusalem, would have thought He had been so, and that Pilate might safely have referred this matter to the commonalty, especially when so notorious a rogue was set up, as a rival with Him for their favor. But it proved otherwise.

(4.) While Pilate was thus laboring the matter, he was confirmed in his unwillingness to condemn Jesus, by a message sent him from his wife, (v. 19.) by way of caution. Probably, this message was delivered to Pilate publicly, in the hearing of all that were present, for it was intended to be a warning not to him only, but to the prosecutors. Observe.

[1.] The special providence of God, in sending this dream to Pilate's wife; it is not likely that she had heard any thing before, concerning Christ, so as to occasion her dreaming of him, but it was immediately from God: perhaps she was one of the devout and honorable women, and had some sense of religion; yet God revealed Himself by dreams to some that had not, as to Nebuchadnezzar. She suffered many things in this dream; whether she dreamed of the cruel usage of an innocent person, or of the judgments that would fall on those that had any hand in his death, or both, it seems it was a frightful dream, and her thoughts troubled her, as Dan. 2:1. 4:5. Note, The Father of spirits has many ways of access to the spirits of men, and can seal their instruction in a dream, or vision of the night, Job 33:15. Yet, to those who have the written word, God more ordinarily speaks by conscience on a waking bed, than by dreams, when deep sleep falls upon men.

[2.] The tenderness and care of Pilate's wife in sending this caution to her husband; *Have nothing to do with that just Man.* 1st. This was an honorable testimony to our Lord; when his friends were afraid to appear in defence of Him, God made even strangers and enemies

16 And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, ^b Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, ^c or Jesus which is called Christ?

18 For ^d he knew that for envy they had delivered him.

[Practical Observations.]

^a Mark 15:7. Luke 23:18, 19, 25. John 18:40. Acts 3:14. Rom. 1:32.
^b 21. Josh. 24:15. Kings 18:24.
^c 122. Mark 15:8-12. John 18:15.
^d 1 Gen. 37:11. 1 Sam. 18:7-11. Ps. 106:16. Prov. 27:4. Ec. 4:4. Is. 58:11. Mark 15:10. Acts 1:7. 7:9. 13:45. Jam. 1:5.

to the soul. We are not told how Pilate turned this off, probably with a jest; but, by his proceeding against this just man, it appears that he did not regard it. Thus faithful admonitions are made light of, when given as warnings against sin, but will not be so easily made light of, when reflected on as aggravations of sin.

(5.) The chief priests and elders were busy, all this while, to influence the people in favor of Barabbas, v. 20. They persuaded the multitude, both by themselves and their emissaries, that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus; suggesting that this Jesus was a deceiver, in league with Satan, an enemy to their church and temple; that, if He were let alone, the Romans would come, and take away their place and nation; that Barabbas, though a bad man, yet, not having the interest Jesus had, could not do so much mischief. Thus they managed the mob, who otherwise were well affected to Jesus, and would never have done such a preposterous thing as to prefer Barabbas. Here, [1.] We cannot but look on these wicked priests with indignation; in matters of controversy between blood and blood, the people were to be guided by the priests, Deut. 17:8. This great power they wretchedly abused, and caused the people to err. [2.] We cannot but look on the deluded people with pity; I have compassion on the multitude, to see them hurried thus violently to so great wickedness, to see them thus falling into the ditch with their blind leaders.

(6.) Being thus overruled, at length they made their choice, v. 21. Pilate hoped he had gained his point, to have Jesus released. But, to his great surprise, they said, Barabbas; as if he less deserved to die, better deserved to live. The cry for Barabbas was so universal, that there was no color to demand a poll between the candidates. Be astonished, O heavens, at this, and thou, earth, be horribly afraid! Were ever men, that pretended to reason or religion, guilty of such prodigious madness, such horrid wickedness! This was what Peter charged on them; (Acts 3:14.) Ye desired a murderer to be granted you; yet multitudes who choose the world, rather than God, for their ruler and portion, thus choose their own delusions.

2. Their pressing earnestly to have Jesus crucified, v. 22, 23. Pilate, amazed at their choice of Barabbas, was willing to hope that it was rather from a fondness for him, than from an enmity to Jesus; and therefore he puts it to them, 'What shall I do then with Jesus? Shall I release Him likewise, for the greater honor of your feast, or will you leave it to me?' No, they all said, Let Him be crucified. That death they desired He might die, because it was looked upon as the most ignominious; and they hoped thereby to make his followers ashamed to own Him, and their relation to Him. It was absurd for them to prescribe to the judge what sentence he should pass; but their malice and rage made them forget all rules of order and decency, and turned a court of justice into a riotous, tumultuous, and seditious assembly. Now was truth fallen in the street, and equity could not enter; where one looked for judgment, behold oppression, the worst kind of oppression; for righteousness, behold, a cry, the worst cry that ever was, Crucify, crucify the Lord of glory. Though they that cried thus, perhaps, were not the same persons that the other day had cried Hosanna, yet see what a change was made on the mind of the populace in a little time: when He rode in triumph into Jerusalem, so general were the acclamations of praise, that one would have thought He had no enemies; but now, when He was led in triumph to Pilate's judgment-seat, so general were the outcries of enmity, that

one would think He had no friends. Such revolutions are there in this changeable world, through which our way to heaven lies, as our Master's did, by honor and dishonor, by evil report, and good report, counterchanged; (2 Cor. 6:8.) that we may not be lifted up by honor, as if, when we were applauded and caressed, we had made our nest among the stars, and should die in it; nor yet be dejected or discouraged by dishonor, as if, when we were despised and trampled on, we were trodden to the lowest hell, from which there is no redemption. You observe those who applaud you, either they are all your enemies, or, which is equivalent, they may become so. Seneca, de Vita Beat.

Now, as to this demand, we are further told,

(1.) How Pilate objected against it; *Why, what evil has He done?* A proper question to ask before we censure any in common discourse, much more for a judge to ask before he pass a sentence of death. Note, It is much for the honor of the Lord Jesus, that, though He suffered as an evil-doer, yet neither his judge nor his prosecutors could find that He had done any evil. This repeated assertion of his unspotted innocence, plainly intimates that He died to satisfy for the sins of others; for, if it had not been for our transgressions that He was thus wounded, and for our offences that he was delivered up, and that on his own voluntary undertaking to atone for them; I see not how these extraordinary sufferings of a person that had never thought, said, or done, any thing amiss, could be reconciled with the justice and equity of that Providence that governs the world, and at least permitted this to be done.

(2.) How they insisted on it; *They cried out the more, Let Him be crucified.* They do not show any evil He had done, but, right or wrong, He must be crucified. They resolved to make up in clamor, what was wanting in evidence.

III. Here is the devolving of the guilt of Christ's blood on the people and priests.

1. Pilate endeavors to transfer it from himself, v. 24.

(1.) He sees it to no purpose to contend. What he said, [1.] Would do no good; he could prevail nothing; he could not convince them what an unjust, unreasonable thing it was, for him to condemn a man whom he believed innocent, and whom they could not prove guilty. Nay, [2.] It was more likely to do hurt: He saw that rather a tumult was made; and this turbulent, tumultuous temper of the Jews, by which Pilate was awed to condemn Christ against his conscience, contributed more than any thing to the ruin of that nation not long after; for their frequent insurrections provoked the Romans to destroy them, though they had reduced them, and their inveterate quarrels among themselves made them an easy prey to the common enemy. Thus their sin was their ruin.

Observe how easily we may be mistaken in the inclination of the common people; the priests were apprehensive that their endeavors to seize Christ would have caused an uproar, especially on the feast day; but it proved that Pilate's endeavor to save Him caused an uproar, and that on the feast day; so uncertain are the sentiments of the crowd.

(2.) This puts him in a great strait, betwixt the peace of his own mind, and the peace of the city; he is loath to condemn an innocent man, and yet loath to disoblige the people. Had he

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V. 11-18. Alas! how often is Barabbas preferred to Jesus! When sinners reject his salvator, that they may retain their darling sins, they repeat the disgraceful transaction: when the society of pious ministers and Christians is forsaken, or the company of profligates and infidels, the preference is of the same nature: and indeed we are all apt, in some instances and in some measure, to prefer the friendship, and interest of the evil world, to the commands, glory, and approbation of the Son of God.—But we must also remember, that He was wounded for our transgressions: in this sense, we are all chargeable with the guilt of his crucifixion; and our sins were as the scourge, the thorns, and the nails, by which He suffered.

When his disciples act inconsistently with their character, and cause his enemies to revile or deride, they then deliver up the blessed Jesus to be again mocked, spit on, crowned with thorns, and loaded with every indignity; whilst they who treat his followers with cruelty and contempt, act over again the part of the Roman soldiers, and the Jewish rulers and people; and when professed Christians openly apostatize, they crucify the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame.—Embittered persecutors are often so hurried away by furious zeal, that even infidels can discern the malignant principles by which they are actuated; and the people of God may expect more favor from the most avowed profligates, than from hypocrites.

SCOTT.

19 'When he was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.'

20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus

21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas.

22 Pilate saith unto them, 'What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified.'

23 And the governor said, 'Why, what evil hath he done?' But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of

steadily and resolutely adhered to the sacred laws of justice, as a judge ought, he had not seen in any perplexity; the matter was plain and past dispute, that a man, in whom was found no fault, ought not to be crucified on any pretence whatsoever, nor must an unjust thing be done, to gratify any man, or company of men, in the world; the cause is soon decided; Let justice be done, though heaven and earth come together. If wickedness proceed from the wicked, though they be priests, yet my hand shall not be on them.

(3.) Pilate thinks to trim the matter, and to pacify both the people and his own conscience too, by doing it, and yet disowning it, acting the thing, and yet acquitting himself from it at the same time. Such absurdities and self-contradictions do they run on, whose convictions are strong, but their corruptions stronger. Happy is he (saith the apostle, Rom. 14: 22.) that condemneth not himself in that thing which he allows; or, which is all one, that allows not himself in that thing which he condemns.

Now Pilate endeavors to clear himself. [1.] By a sign; he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude; as if he had said, 'If it be done, bear witness that it is none of my doing.' He borrowed the ceremony from that law, which appointed it to be used for the clearing of the country from the guilt of an undiscovered murder; (Deut. 21: 6, 7.) and he used it, the more to affect the people with the conviction he was under of the prisoner's innocence; and, probably, such was the noise of the rabble, that, if he had not used some surprising sign, in the view of them all, he could not have been heard.

[2.] By a saying; in which, First, He clears himself; I am innocent of the blood of this just person. What nonsense to condemn Him, and yet protest that he is innocent of his blood! For men to protest against a thing, and yet to practise it, is only to proclaim that they sin against their consciences. Though Pilate professed his innocence, God charges him with guilt, Acts 4: 27. Some think to justify themselves, by pleading that their hands were not in the sin; but David kills by the sword of the elders of Jezreel. Pilate here thinks to justify himself, by pleading that his heart was not in the action; but this is an averment which will never be admitted. In vain does he protest against the deed, which at the same time he perpetrates. Secondly, He cast it on the priests and people; 'See ye to it; if it must be done, I cannot help it, do you answer it before God and the world.' Note, Many flatter themselves that they shall bear no blame, if they can but find any to lay the blame on; but it is not so easy a thing to transfer the guilt of sin, as many think it is. The condition of him, that is infected with the plague, is not the less dangerous for his catching the infection from others, or communicating it to others; we may be tempted to sin, but can-

not be forced. The priests threw it on Judas. See thou to it; and now Pilate throws it on them; See ye to it; for with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you.

2. The priests and people consented to take the guilt on themselves; they all said, 'His blood be on us and on our children.' They saw that the dread of guilt made Pilate hesitate, and that he was getting over his difficulty by a fancy of transferring it; to prevent the return of his hesitation, and to confirm him in that fancy, they, in the heat of their rage, agreed to it, rather than lose the prey they had in their hands, and cried, His blood be on us. Now,

(1.) By this they designed to indemnify Pilate, that is, to make him think himself indemnified, by becoming bound to divine justice to save him harmless. But those that are themselves bankrupts and beggars, will never be admitted security for others, nor taken as a bail for them. None could bear the sin of others, except He that had none of his own to answer for; it is a bold undertaking, and too big for any creature, to become bound for a sinner to Almighty God.

(2.) But they did really imprecate wrath and vengeance on themselves and their posterity. What a desperate word was this, and how little did they think what was its direful import, or to what an abyss of misery it would bring them, and theirs! Christ had lately told them, that on them would come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from that of the righteous Abel but, as if that were too little, they here imprecate on themselves the guilt of that blood, which was more precious than all the rest, and the guilt of which would lie heavier. On the daring presumption of wilful sinners, that run upon God, upon his neck, and defy his justice! John 15: 25, 26. Observe,

[1.] How cruel they were in their imprecation. They imprecated the punishment of this sin, not only on themselves, but on their children too, even those yet unborn, without so much as limiting the entail of the curse, as God Himself had been pleased to limit it, to the third and fourth generation. This was madness and the height of barbarity. Surely they were like the ostrich: they were hardened against their young ones, as though they were not theirs. What a dreadful conveyance was this of guilt and wrath to them and their heirs forever, and this by joint consent, as their own act and deed; amounting to a forfeiture and defeasance of that ancient charter, I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed. Their entailing the curse of the Messiah's blood on their nation, cut off the entail of the blessings of that blood from their families, that, according to another promise made to Abraham, in him all the families of the earth might be blessed. See what enemies wicked men are to their own children and families; those that damn their own souls, care not how many they take to hell with them.

[2.] How righteous God was, in his retribution

e Gen. 20:13-6. 31:24-29. Job 33:14-17. Prov. 29:1. f 4:24. Zech. 9:9. Luke 23:41, 47. 1 Mark 15:11. Acts 14:18, 19. 23-29. Luke 23:18-20. John 18:40. 19:15, 16. Job 31:14. Ps. 22:8, 9. Is. 49:7. 53:5. Zech. 11:8. Mark 14:55. 15:24. Luke 23:20-24. John 18:41, 45. Acts 19:29. e Gen. 37:18-19. 1 Sam. 19:15-20. 31-33. 22:14-19. 1 Acts 7:57. 17:5-7. 21:28-31. 22: 22-23. 23:10, 12-15. d Deut. 21:6-7. Job 9:30, 31. Ps. 26: 6. Jer. 22:7, 35.

Verses 20-23.

On other occasions, the condemnation of any Jew, not a slave, to this ignominious and cruel death, would have hazarded an insurrection; but the people had been disappointed in their expectations of a temporal kingdom; and many of them seem to have thought, that the Messiah of Jesus' character was worthy only of contempt and crucifixion. It has, however, often excited wonder, that the multitude, who but a short time before had welcomed Him with loud Hosannas, as the 'Son of David' and 'the King of Israel,' (See 21:8-11.) and who so much favored his cause, as to render the rulers afraid of openly proceeding against Him, should all at once be induced to demand his crucifixion with irresistible vehemence. Many, who before led the people and favored the cause of Christ, intimidated by late events, had no doubt retired; others were disappointed because He would not assume temporal dominion, and raise an army to liberate them from the Romans; and several persons who had been driven away by the popular torrent in his favor when He entered Jerusalem, no doubt at this time came forward, attended by emissaries from the scribes and priests. And those who remember, that in every multitude thus collected, 'the most part know not wherefore they are come together,' will readily perceive that a small company of considerable persons (a hundred out of ten thousand,) eager on the contrary part, and skilful in exciting men's passions and prejudices, would soon give a new direction to the populace; and that the change, from Hosanna to Crucify, was not materially different from other changes, which varying circumstances have made in large companies promiscuously assembled. (Marg. Ref. 2. 1.—Acte 19: 23-31.)

Verses 24, 25.

Pilate's struggle on this occasion shows the power of conscience in

the worst of men; and the horror which it often feels, (till injured to it,) of the wilful, deliberate murder. The whole process rambled the examination of a sacrifice, that might be proved to be without blemish, far more than the trial of a criminal for condemnation; and it is unprecedented in the annals of mankind, for a person condemned to so dreadful a death, to have been at the very time pronounced 'innocent,' or righteous, by the person who conducted those that apprehended Him; (2. 3.) by the judge who passed sentence on Him, and at length by the very officer who superintended his execution, (2. 54.) whilst they who clamorously demanded his death, could allege no reason for their conduct. No doubt, God providentially ordered all these circumstances, to make it evident that Jesus suffered for no fault of his own, but merely for the sins of his people. They put Jesus to death when the nation 'was assembled for the same purpose, Titus shut them up within the walls of Jerusalem.' The rejection of the true Messiah was their crime; and the following of false Messiahs to their destruction was their punishment. They bought Jesus as a slave, and they themselves were afterwards sold and bought as slaves, at the lowest prices. They put Jesus to death, lest the Romans 'should come and take away their place and nation;' and the Romans did come and take away their place and nation. And, what is still more striking, and still more strongly marks the judgment of God upon them, they were punished with 'that very kind of death which they were so eager to inflict on the Savior of mankind, the death of the cross; and that in such prodigious numbers, that Josephus assures us, there wanted word for crosses, and room to place them in.' Ep. Ponticus Marg. Ref. 2. 1.

the blood of this just person; see ye to it.

25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.

[Practical Observations.]

26 ¶ Then released he Barabbas unto them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.

14, 19, 54. 1 John 3:14. Acts 3:14. 2 Cor. 5:21. 1 Pet. 3:18. 23:30—37. Num. 35:33. Deut. 19:13. Josh. 21:7. 2 Sam. 3:28, 29. 2 Kings 24:3, 4. Ps. 109:12—19. Ez. 22:2—4, 24:7—9. Acts 5:28. 7:52. 1 Thes. 2:15, 16. Heb. 10:28—30.

Ex. 20:5. Ez. 18:1, 4, 6. Mark 15:15. Luke 23:25. 20:19. Is. 50:6. 53:5. Mark 10:34. Luke 18:32, 33. John 19:1. 1 Pet. 2:24.

Or, governor's house. Mark 15:16. John 18:28, 33. 19:9. Acts 23:35. 6:10.

John 18:3. Acts 10:1. 27:1.

28 Jesus was scourged; this was an ignominious, cruel punishment, especially as inflicted by the Romans, who were not under the moderation of the Jewish law, which forbade scourgings above forty stripes. Thus the Scripture was fulfilled, *The ploughers ploughed on my back*, (Ps. 129:3.) *I gave my back to the smiters*, (Isa. 50:6.) and, *By his stripes we are healed*, Isa. 53:5. He was chastised with whips, that we might not be forever chastised with scorpions.

3. He was then delivered to be crucified; though his chastisement was in order to our peace, yet there is no peace made but by the blood of his cross; (Col. 1:20,) therefore the scourging is not enough, He must be crucified; a kind of death used only among the Romans, and such as seems to be the result of wit and cruelty in combination, each putting forth itself to the utmost, to make death in the highest degree terrible and miserable. A cross was set up in the ground, to which the hands and feet were nailed, on which nails the weight of the body hung, till it died of the pain. This was the death to which Christ was condemned, that He might answer the type of the brazen serpent lifted up on a pole. It was a bloody death, a painful,

according to this imprecation; they said, *His blood be on us, and on our children*; and God said, *Amen*, so shall thy doom be; as they loved cursing, so it came on them. The wretched remains of that abandoned people feel it to this day; from the time they imprecated this blood on them, they were followed with one judgment after another, till they were quite laid waste, and made an astonishment, a hissing, and a hy-word; yet on some of them, and some of theirs, this blood came, not to condemn them, but to save them; divine mercy, on their repenting and believing, cut off this entail, and then the promise was again to them, and to their children. God is better to us and ours than we are.

V. 26—32. In these verses, we have the preparations for the crucifixion.

I. Here is,

1. The sentence passed, and the warrant signed for execution; and this immediately, the same hour.

1. Barabbas was released, that notorious criminal: had he not been put in competition with Christ, it is probable he had died for his crimes; but that proved the means of his escape; to intimate that Christ was condemned for this purpose, that sinners, even the chief of sinners, might be released: the common instance of Divine Providence is, that the wicked is a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright, Prov. 21:18. 11:18. In this unparalleled instance of divine grace, the upright is a ransom for the transgressors, the just for the unjust.

2. Jesus was scourged; this was an ignominious, cruel punishment, especially as inflicted by the Romans, who were not under the moderation of the Jewish law, which forbade scourgings above forty stripes. Thus the Scripture was fulfilled, *The ploughers ploughed on my back*, (Ps. 129:3.) *I gave my back to the smiters*, (Isa. 50:6.) and, *By his stripes we are healed*, Isa. 53:5. He was chastised with whips, that we might not be forever chastised with scorpions.

V. 19—25. The warnings God sends to deter men from wickedness, will eventually leave many of them the more inexcusable; but what will be the guilt and condemnation of those, who use authority, influence and ingenuity, to set men against the Gospel, and thus ruin multitudes of immortal souls!—Various and irrational are the means, by which men seek impunity in acting contrary to their own consciences: they sometimes plead necessity or compulsion, when nothing but unbelief, fear of man, and regard to worldly interest, compel them; and they often throw the blame on others, vainly hoping to have the pleasure or advantage of iniquity themselves, and to leave the punishment to be suffered by their tempters. But all the water in the ocean cannot wash away the guilt of murder from those rulers, who, even reluctantly, permit innocent blood to be shed for political purposes, as it is their bounden duty, at all

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hazards, to protect the oppressed.—Such as are bent on evil, are commonly most clamorous when their conduct is most unreasonable: persecutors are generally most ready to call for the instruments of torture or death, when it is inquired, 'What evil have these persons done?' and in every case, when arguments are wanting, men are prone to abound in vociferation, in order to silence both their opponents and their own consciences. But, who can reflect without terror at the awful imprecation of the Jewish multitude, and its tremendous accomplishment! Yet there is mercy in reserve for a remnant of that nation: let us then pray for them, that at length they may look to Him whom they have pierced, and mourn for their sins, in true repentance and with living faith. (Zech. 12:9—14, v. 13.)—All, however, who delight in anathemas and imprecations, will find that they rebound upon themselves. SCOTT.

(25.) *His blood be on us.* 'Among the Greeks, the persons on whose testimony others were put to death, used, by a very solemn exclamation, to devote themselves to the divine vengeance, if the person so condemned was not really guilty.'

VERSES 26—31.

BURDER.

The Jewish rulers, by using their influence in preserving a murderer from death, took an effectual method of bringing the vengeance of God on the land; though not so effectual, as by crucifying the Son of God. (Notes, 11—18, v. 16, 17. Num. 35:31—34. Mark 15:6—10, v. 7. Luke 23:21—25, v. 25.) John expressly mentions Christ's being scourged, and crowned with thorns, before Pilate finally passed sentence on Him; it is therefore conjectured, that He had been scourged some time before, by orders from Pilate, in hopes that this disgrace and torture would have appeased the rage of the multitude, or softened them into compassion, and so have made way for his release. It is well known, that the Romans used to scourge malefactors, just before they were crucified; 'as if the exquisite tortures of crucifixion were not sufficient, without adding to them those of the scourge.' Bp. Porcius. Possibly, the scourging might be twice repeated; but it is more probable, that Matthew and Mark introduced this account, not in the exact order of time in which it occurred. It is at least evident, that Pilate made an effort to save Jesus, after He had been scourged and crowned with thorns; and perhaps the soldiers, after sentence was finally passed, carried still further the indignities they had before committed. (Marg. Ref. r.—John 19:1—7. Scarlet or purple robe.) We may form some conception of this scene, if we consider the

haughtiness, and impiety of the idolatrous Roman soldiers; and how they were let loose on the mild and holy Jesus, to give full scope to their savage and cruel contempt, and to divert themselves with his sufferings, till they were even weary of mocking Him. Had He suffered as a murderer, they would not have thus insulted Him, but would have in some measure pitied his anguish, whilst they executed the sentence of the law upon him. Another meaning has been sought out for the word rendered *thorns*, as if *bearsfoot*, or some inoffensive vegetable, was intended. This criticism, however, has been proved, by the most competent scholars, wholly untenable. But why should the peculiar *reed or plant*, of which the contemptuous crown was made, be especially noted, if this had not been a circumstance particularly marking the cruelty of our Lord's enemies, and the variety and intenseness of his sufferings? SCOTT.

(26.) *Scourged.* 'The scourge was composed of flagella, which were extremely sharp, mostly interwoven with sheep-bones, sometimes composed of ox-nerves, and hence termed by Horace, "horrible." Such scourging preceded the capital punishment of slaves: rods were used with the free.'

(27.) *Common hall.* 'Rather, *Prætorium*, a magnificent edifice in the upper part of the city, which had been formerly Herod's palace, and from which there was an approach to the citadel *Antonia*, which adjoined to the temple. This the Roman procurators (whose ordinary residence was at Cæsarea) occupied, when at Jerusalem. In front of this edifice was the *tribunal*. Jesus was first led to the interior part of the *prætorium*, namely the *aula*, an open court.'

28 And they ^astripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

29 And when they had ^aplatted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, ^aHail, king of the Jews!

30 And ^athey spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, ^aand led him away to crucify him.

32 And ^aas they came out, ^bthey found a man of ^cCyrene, Simon by name, whom they compelled to bear his cross.

33 And when they were come unto a place called ^dGolgotha, that is to say, A place of a skull,

34 They ^agave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall; and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

35 And ^athey crucified him, and ^aparted his garments, casting lots: ^bthat it might be fulfilled which was

their houses to be places of abuse to any, nor their servants to make sport with the sins, or miseries, or religion, of others.

2. Who were concerned in it; *the whole band*; the whole regiment, at least five hundred, some think twelve or thirteen hundred. If Christ was thus made a *Spectacle*, let none of his followers think it strange to be so used, 1 Cor. 4: 9. Heb. 10: 33.

3. What particular indignities were done Him.

(1.) They stripped Him, v. 28. The shame of nakedness came in with sin; (Gen. 3: 7.) and therefore Christ, when He came to satisfy for sin, and take it away, was made naked, and submitted to that shame, that He might prepare for us *while raiment to cover us*, Rev. 3: 18.

(2.) They put on Him a scarlet robe, some old red cloak, such as the Roman soldiers wore, in imitation of the *scarlet robes* which kings and emperors wore; thus upbraiding Him with his being called a *king*. This was only to expose Him to the spectators, as the more *ridiculous*; yet there was something of *mystery* in it: this was He that was *red in his apparel*, (Isa. 63: 1, 2.) that *washed his garments in wine*; (Gen. 49: 10.) therefore He was dressed in a *scarlet robe*. Our sins were as *scarlet and crimson*. Christ being clad in a *scarlet robe*, signified his bearing our sins, to his shame, in his own body on the tree; that we might wash our robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb.

(3.) They platted a crown of thorns, and put it upon his head, v. 29. This was to carry on the humor of making Him a *mock king*; yet, had they intended it only for a *reproach*, they might have platted a crown of *straw, or rushes*, but they designed it to be painful to Him, and to be *literally*, what crowns are said to be figuratively; but there was a mystery in it. [1.] Thorns came in with sin, and were part of the curse that was the product of sin, Gen. 3: 18.

Therefore Christ, being made a *Curse* for us, and dying to remove the curse from us, felt the pain and smart of those thorns, nay, and binds them as a crown to Him; (Job 31: 36.) for his sufferings for us were his *glory*. [2.] Now He answered to the type of Abraham's ram that was caught in the thicket, and so offered up instead of Isaac, Gen. 22: 13. [3.] Thorns signify afflictions, 2 Chron. 33: 11. These Christ put into a crown; so much did He alter the property of them to them that are his, and give them cause to *glory in tribulation*, and made it to work for them a weight of glory. [4.] It was the custom of some heathen nations, to bring their sacrifices to the altars, crowned with garlands; these thorns were the garlands with which this great Sacrifice was crowned.

[5.] These thorns, it is likely, fetched blood from his blessed head, which trickled down his face, like the *precious ointment*, (typifying the blood of Christ, with which He consecrated Himself) on the head, which ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, Ps. 133: 2.

Thus, when He came to espouse to Himself his love, his dove, his undefiled church, his head was filled with dew, and his locks with the drops of the night, Cant. 5: 2.

(4.) They put a reed in his right hand; this was intended for a *mock sceptre*, another of the *insignia* of the majesty they jeered Him with; as if this were a sceptre good enough for such a King, as was like a reed shaken with the

wind; (ch. 11: 7.) like sceptre, like kingdom, both weak and wavering, and withering and worthless but they were quite mistaken, for his throne is *forever and ever*, and the sceptre of his kingdom is a *right sceptre*, Ps. 45: 6.

(5.) They bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews! Having made Him a sham king, they thus made a jest of doing homage to Him, thus ridiculing his pretensions to sovereignty, as Joseph's brethren; (Gen. 37: 8.) *Shall thou indeed reign over us?* But as they were afterward compelled to do obeisance to him, and fulfil his dreams, so these here bowed the knee, in scorn to Him, who was, soon after this, exalted to the right hand of God, that at his name every knee might bow, or break, before Him; it is ill jesting with that which, sooner or later will come in earnest.

(6.) They spit upon Him; thus He had been abused in the high priest's hall, ch. 26: 27. In doing homage, the subject kissed the sovereign, in token of his allegiance; thus Samuel kissed Saul, and we are bid to kiss the Son; but they in this mock-homage, instead of kissing Him, spit in his face; that blessed face which outshines the sun, and before which the angels cover theirs, was thus polluted. It is strange that the sons of men should ever do such a piece of villany, and that the Son of God should ever suffer such a piece of ignominy.

(7.) They took the reed, and smote Him on the head. That which they had made the mock-ensign of his royalty, they now make the real instrument of their cruelty, and his pain. They smote Him, it is probable, on the crown of thorns. Thus was He despised and rejected of men; a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. All this misery and shame He underwent, that He might purchase for us everlasting life, and joy, and glory.

III. The conveying of Him to the place of execution. After they had mocked and abused Him, as long as they thought fit, they then took the robe off from Him, to signify their divesting Him of all the kingly authority they had invested Him with, by putting it on Him; and they put his own raiment on Him, because that was to fall to the soldiers' share, that were employed in the execution. No mention is made of their taking off the crown of thorns, whence it is commonly supposed (though there is no certainty of it) that He was crucified with that on his head; for as He is a Priest on his throne, so He was a King on his cross. And here,

1. They led Him away to be crucified; He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter, as a Sacrifice to the altar. They led Him away out of the city; for Christ, that He might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate, (Heb. 13: 12.) as if He, that was the Glory of them that waited for redemption in Jerusalem, were not worthy to live among them. To this He Himself had an eye, when in the Parable He spake of his being cast out of the vineyard, ch. 21: 39.

2. They compelled Simon of Cyrene to bear his cross, v. 30. It seems, at first He carried the cross Himself, as Isaac the wood for the burnt-offering which was to burn him. And this was intended, as other things, both for pain and shame to Him. But after a while they took the cross off from Him, either,

Mark 15: 17. Luke 23: 11. John 19: 2-5.

v. 28. Ps. 35: 15, 16. 69: 7, 19, 20. Is. 49: 7, 53: 3. Jer. 20: 7. Heb. 12: 2, 3.

37. 26: 49. Mark 15: 18. Luke 23: 26, 37. John 19: 3.

26: 37. Job 30: 8-10. Is. 50: 6. 52: 14. Mic. 5: 1. Mark 15: 19. Luke 18: 32, 33.

e. 20: 19. 21: 39. Is. 53: 7. John 19: 16, 27.

e. Let. 4: 3, 12, 21. Num. 15: 35, 36. 1 Kings 21: 10, 13. Acts 7: 58. Heb. 13: 11, 12.

16: 24. Mark 15: 21. Luke 23: 26.

e. Acts 2: 10. E. 9: 11, 20. 13: 1.

e. Mark 15: 22. Luke 23: 27-33. John 19: 17.

e. 68: 2. Ps. 69: 21. Mark 15: 23. John 19: 28-30.

f. Ps. 22: 16. John 20: 20, 25, 27. Acts 4: 10.

Mark 15: 24. Luke 23: 34. John 19: 23, 24.

e. Ps. 22: 18.

(28.) Stripped Him.] 'The person subjected to this punishment, [crucifixion] was deprived of all his clothes, excepting something around his loins. In this state He was beaten, sometimes with rods, but more generally with whips. Such was the severity of this flagellation, that numbers died under it. Jesus was crowned with thorns, and made the subject of mocking, but insults of this kind were not among the ordinary attendants of crucifixion.'

(29.) Of thorns.] 'It is taken not only for thorns but likewise for briars and brambles, and any thing that hath pricks.' Leigh, in Scott.

Verse 34. It was customary to give those who were about to suffer this lingering and most painful death, a potion to numb their feelings, composed of wine mingled with myrrh or spices; and some compassionate persons seem to have prepared this cordial, which they offered to Jesus; but He would not taste it, as his purpose was to suffer death in all its bitterness. Others, full of contempt and malignity, had mingled 'vinegar with gall,' to render it most nauseous, and offered it to Him instead of 'the spiced wine, which, having tasted, He refused to drink' and thus a ancient prophecy of the Messiah was literally fulfilled. Note, Ps.

69: 21.) Those learned men who labor to prove that 'the vinegar mingled with gall' was in fact the same as 'the wine mingled with myrrh,' mentioned by Mark, seem to have forgotten this remarkable prophecy. (Marg. Ref. e.—Mark 15: 21—24, v. 23.) Scott

Vinegar mingled with gall.] 'Mark says, wine mingled with myrrh; but as the sour wine used by the Roman soldiers and common people was termed wine, and vinegar is sour wine; and as gall is applied to bitters of any kind, it is not difficult to reconcile the two accounts.' GREENFIELD.

Verse 35. The soldiers next proceeded to crucify Jesus. The foot of the cross going into a hole made for that purpose, with a violent jerk, often dislocated some of the bones of the crucified person; who, being suspended in this dreadful posture, hung in most exquisite torture, till at length loss of blood and excessive pain ended his life. It is plain, that Jesus hung in this manner for six hours before He expired; yet it was thought wonderful that He ^{did so soon} as many lived a whole day and night in this anguish, ^{and as some method were taken to shorten their pains.} Scott

spoken by the prophet. They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

36 And sitting down, they watched him there:

37 And set up over his head ^{his accusation} written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him; one on the right hand, and another on the left.

154. Mark 15:39, 44.
16. Luke 23:26. Luke 23:38. John 19:19-22.
14. 16. 53:12. Mark 15:27, 28. Luke 23:37. 23:32, 33, 39-43. John 19:18, 31-35.

Him we are called to; for those only shall reign with Him that suffer with Him; shall sit with Him in his kingdom, that drink of his cup, and are baptized with his baptism.

V. 38-49. We have here the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus.

I. The place.

1. They came to *Golgotha*, adjoining to Jerusalem, probably the common place of execution; where criminals were sacrificed to the justice of the government. There was our Lord Jesus sacrificed to the justice of God. Some think it is called the place of a skull, because it was the common charnel-house, where bones and skulls were laid together out of the way, lest people should touch them, and be defiled thereby.

2. There they crucified Him, (v. 35.) nailed his hands and feet to the cross, and then reared it up, and Him hanging on it; for so the manner of the Romans was to crucify. Let our hearts be touched with the feeling of that exquisite pain which our blessed Savior now endured, and let us look on Him who was thus pierced, and mourn. Was ever sorrow like unto his sorrow? And, when we behold what manner of death He died, let us in that behalf with what manner of love He loved us.

II The barbarous and abusive treatment they gave Him. As if death, so great a death, were not bad enough, they contrived to add to the bitterness and terror of it.

1. By the drink provided for Him before He was nailed to the cross, v. 34. It was usual to have a cup of spiced wine for those to drink of, that were to be put to death, according to Solomon's direction, (Prov. 31: 6, 7.) Give strong drink to him that is ready to perish; but this was with mingled wormwood and gall, to make it sour and bitter. This signified, (1.) The sin of man, which is a root of bitterness, bearing gall and wormwood, Deut. 29: 18. The sinner perhaps rolls it under his tongue as a sweet morsel, but to God it is grapes of gall, Deut. 32: 32. It was so to the Lord Jesus, when He bore our sins, and sooner or later it will be so to the sinner himself, Eccl. 7: 26. (2.) It signified the wrath of God, that cup which his Father put into his hand, a bitter cup indeed, like the bitter water which caused the curse, Num. 5: 13. This they offered Him, as was literally foretold, Ps. 69: 21. And, [1.] He tasted thereof, He let no bitter cup go by Him untasted, when He was making atonement for all our sinful tasting of forbidden fruit; now He was tasting death in its full bitterness. [2.] He would not drink it, because He would have nothing like an opiate, to lessen his sense of pain, for He would die so as to feel Himself die, because He had so much work to do, as our High Priest.

2. By the dividing of his garments, v. 35. When they nailed Him to the cross, they stripped Him at least of his upper garments; thus He purchased for us white raiment to cover us made naked by sin. If we be at any time stripped of our comforts for Christ, let us bear it patiently. He was stripped for us. Enemies may strip us of our clothes, but cannot of our best comforts, our garments of praise. The clothes of those that are executed are the executioner's fee: four soldiers were employed in crucifying Christ, and they must each of them have a share: his upper garment, if it were divided, would be of no use to any of them, and therefore they agreed to cast lots for it. (1.) Some think the garment was so fine and rich, that it was worth contending for; but that agreed not with the poverty Christ appeared in. (2.) Perhaps they had heard of those that had been cured by touching the hem of his garment, and they thought it valuable for some magic virtue in it. Or, (3.) They hoped to get money of his friends for such a sacred relic. Or, (4.) They would seem in derision to put a value on it, as a royal clothing. Or, (5.) It was for diversion; to pass away the time while they waited for his death; but, whatever they designed, the word of God is herein accomplished; (Ps. 22: 13.) they parted my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture. This was never true of David, but looks primarily at Christ, of whom David, in spirit, spake. Then is the offence of this part of the cross ceased; for it appears to have been by the determinate counsel and fore-

knowledge of God. Christ stripped Himself of his glories, to divide them among us.

They now sat down and watched Him, v. 36. The chief priests were careful, no doubt, in setting this guard, lest the people, whom they stood still in awe of, should rise, and rescue Him. But providence so ordered it, that those who were appointed to watch Him, thereby became unexceptionable witnesses for Him; having the opportunity to see and hear that which extorted from them that noble confession, (v. 54.) Truly this was the Son of God.

3. By the title set up over his head, v. 37. It was usual, for the vindicating of public justice, and putting the greater shame on malefactors that were executed, not only by a cry to proclaim before them, but by a writing also over their heads to notify, what was the crime for which they suffered; so they set up over Christ's head his accusation written, to give public notice of the charge against Him: This is Jesus the King of the Jews. This they designed for his reproach, but God overruled it to his honor. For, (1.) Here was no crime alleged against Him. It is not said that He was a pretended Savior, or a usurping King, though they would have it thought so; (John 19: 21.) but, This is Jesus, a Savior; surely that was no crime; and, This is the King of the Jews; nor was that a crime; for they expected that the Messiah should be so: so that, his enemies themselves being judges, He did no evil. Nay, (2.) Here was a very glorious truth asserted concerning Him—that He is Jesus the King of the Jews, that King whom the Jews expected, and ought to have submitted to; so that his accusation amounts to this, That He was the true Messiah and Savior of the world; as Balaam, when he was sent for to curse Israel, blessed them altogether, and that three times, (Num. 24: 10.) so Pilate, instead of accusing Christ as a criminal, proclaimed Him a King, and that three times, in three inscriptions. Thus God makes men to serve his purposes, quite beyond their own.

4. By his companions with Him in suffering, v. 38. There were two thieves crucified with Him at the same time, in the same place, under the same guard; two highwaymen, or robbers on the road, as the word properly signifies. It is probable that this was appointed to be execution-day; and therefore they hurried the prosecution of Christ in the morning, that they might have Him ready to be executed with the other criminals. Some think that Pilate ordered it thus, that this piece of necessary justice, in executing these thieves, might atone for his injustice in condemning Christ; others that the Jews contrived in it, to add to the ignominy of the sufferings of our Lord Jesus; however it was, the scripture was fulfilled in it, (Isa. 52: 12.) He was numbered with the transgressors.

(1.) It was a reproach to Him, that He was crucified with them; as if He had been a partaker with them in their sins; for He was made sin for us, and took on Him the likeness of sinful flesh. He was, at his death, numbered among the transgressors, and had his lot with the wicked, that we, at our death, might be numbered among the saints, and have our lot among the chosen.

(2.) It was an additional reproach, that He was crucified in the midst, between them, as if He had been the worst of the three, the principal malefactor. It was also intended to ruffle and discompose Him, in his last moments, with the shrieks, and groans, and blasphemies, of these malefactors, who, it is likely, made a hideous outcry when they were nailed to the cross; but thus would Christ affect Himself with the miseries of sinners, when He was suffering for their salvation. Some of Christ's apostles were afterward crucified, Peter, and Andrew, but none of them were crucified with Him, lest it should have looked as if they had been joint-under-takers with Him, in satisfying for man's sin, and joint-purchasers of life and

39 And they that passed by ^{re} reviled him, wagging their heads,

40 And ^{saying}, Thou ^{that} destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. ^{If} thou beest the Son of God, ^{come down from the cross}.

41 Likewise also the chief priests, mocking him, with the scribes and elders, said,

42 He ^{said} others, himself he cannot save. If he be ^{the} King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him.

Ps. 22:6, 7, 17. 31:11-13. 35:15-21. 40:7-12, 30. 109:23, 38. Lam. 1:12. 2:15-17. Mark 15:29, 30. Luke 23: 35-39. 1 Pet. 2:22-24. n. 4:1-9. 37:19, 20. Rev. 11:10. o. 28:51. Luke 14:29, 30. John 2:19-22. p. 34. 4:5, 8. 26:53, 54. q. 16:4. Luke 16:31. r. Ps. 22:12, 13. Is. 49:7. Zech. 11:8. Matt. 15:31, 32. Luke 22:52. 23:35. s. John 9:24. 40:47. Acts 4:14. t. Jt. 9:2. Luke 19:38. John 1:49.

up a good opinion of persons against. Every one is apt to say that which is in an ill name. The Roman rabble fluctuate with a man's fluctuating fortunes, and fail not to depress those that are sinking. Juv.

[2.] The gesture they used, in contempt of Him—wagging their heads; which signifies their triumph in his fall, and their insulting over Him, Isa. 37: 22. Jer. 18: 16. Lam. 2: 15. The language of it was, *Aha, so would we have it, Ps. 35: 25*. This very gesture was prophesied of; (Ps. 22: 8.) *They shake the head at me*. And Ps. 109: 25.

[3.] The taunts and jeers they uttered.

1st. They upbraided Him with his *destroying of the temple*. Though the judges themselves were sensible that what He had said of that was misrepresented, (as appears, Mark 14: 59.) yet they industriously spread it among the people, to bring an *odium* on Him, that He had a design to destroy the temple; than which nothing would more *incense* the people against Him. *Thou that destroyest the temple*, that vast and strong fabric, try thy strength now in plucking up that *cross*, and drawing those *nails*, and so *save Thyself*; if Thou hast the power Thou hast boasted of, this is a proper time to exert it, and give proof of it; for it is supposed that every man will do his utmost to *save himself*.¹ This made the cross of Christ such a *stumbling-block* to the Jews, that they looked upon it to be inconsistent with the *power* of the Messiah; He was crucified in *weakness*, (2 Cor. 13: 4.) so it seemed to them; but indeed Christ crucified is the *Power of God*.

2dly. They upbraided Him with his saying that He was *the Son of God*; *If Thou be so, come down from the cross*; and renewing the assault, (ch. 4: 3-6.) *If Thou beest the Son of God, &c.* They think that now, or never, He must prove Himself to be *the Son of God*; forgetting that He had proved it by the miracles He wrought; and unwilling to wait for the complete proof of it by his resurrection, to which He had so often referred; which, if they had observed it, would have anticipated the offence of the cross. This comes of judging things by the present aspect of them, without a due remembrance of what is *past*, and a patient expectation of *what may further be produced*.

(2.) The church-rulers and state-rulers mocked Him, v. 41. They did not think it enough to invite the rabble to do it, but did it in their own proper persons. They should have been in the temple at their devotion, for it was the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, when there was to be a *holy convocation*; (Lev. 23: 7) but they were here at the place of execution, spitting their venom at the Lord Jesus. How much below the grandeur and gravity of their character! Could any thing tend more to make them *contemptible and base before the people*? One would have thought, that common prudence should have taught them to keep as much as might be behind the curtain; and nothing is too mean for malice. Did they disparage themselves thus, to despise to Christ, and shall we be afraid of disparaging ourselves, by joining with the multitude to *do Him honor*, and not rather say, *If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile*?

Verses 39-44.

We may challenge universal history to furnish another instance, in which any person, expiring under the tortures of a cruel execution, was treated with such derision, contempt, and mockery, by all ranks and orders of men, and even by one at least of his fellow-sufferers. This was reserved for the holy Jesus, 'the Brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his Person.' 'God manifest in the flesh.' This transaction is a full demonstration of apostate man's rancorous

Two things the priests and elders upbraided Him with:

[1.] That He could not *save Himself*, v. 42. He had been before abused in his prophetic and kingly office, and He now is in his priestly. 1st. They take it for granted He could not *save Himself*, and therefore had not the power He pretended to, when really He would not *save Himself*, because He would die to *save us*. They should have argued, 'He *saved others*, therefore He *could save Himself*, and if He *do* not, it is for some good reason.' But 2dly. They would insinuate, that, because He did not now *save Himself*, therefore all his pretence to *save others* was but sham and delusion; though the truth of his miracles was demonstrated beyond contradiction. 3dly. They upbraided Him with being the *King of Israel*. They dreamed of the external pomp and power of the Messiah, and therefore thought the *cross* altogether disagreeable to the King of Israel, and inconsistent with that character. Many people could like the *King of Israel* well enough, if He would but *come down from the cross*, if they could have his kingdom without the tribulation through which they must *enter into it*. But the matter is settled; if no cross, then no Christ, no crown. Those that would reign with Him must be willing to suffer with Him. 4thly. They challenged Him to *come down from the cross*. And what had become of us then, and the work of our redemption and salvation? If He had been provoked by these scoffs to *come down from the cross*, and so have left his undertaking *unfinished*, we had been forever *undone*. But his unchangeable love and resolution fortified Him against this temptation, so that He did not *fail*, nor was *discouraged*. 5thly. They promised, that, if He would *come down from the cross*, they would *believe Him*. Let Him give them that proof of his being the Messiah, and they will own Him to be so. When they had formerly demanded a sign, He told them that the sign He would give them should be, not his *coming down from the cross*, but, his *coming up from the grave*, which they had not patience to wait for. If He had *come down from the cross*, they might with as much reason have said that the soldiers had juggled in nailing Him to it, as they said, when He was raised from the dead, that the *disciples came by night, and stole Him away*. But to promise ourselves that we would believe, if we had such means and motives of faith as we ourselves would prescribe, when we do not improve what God has appointed, is not only a gross instance of the deceitfulness of our hearts, but the sorry *subterfuge* of an obstinate, destroying infidelity.

[2.] That God, his *Father*, would not *save Him*; (v. 43.) *He trusted in God*, that is, He pretended to do so; for He said, *I am the Son of God*. Those who call God *Father*, and themselves *his children*, profess to put confidence in Him, Ps. 9: 10. Now they suggest, that He did but deceive Himself and others in his claims of Sonship; for, if He had been the Son of God, (as Job's friends argued concerning Him,) He would not have been *abandoned* to all this misery, much less in it. This was a *sword in his bones*, which David complains; (Ps. 42: 10.) a *two-edged sword*, intended, 1st. To *vilify Him*, and make the standers-by think Him a deceiver and an impostor; as if his saying, that He was *the Son of God*, were now effectually *disproved*. 2dly. To *terrify Him*, and drive Him to distrust his Father's power and love; which, some think, He *feared*, *religiously feared*, prayed against, and was *delivered from*, Heb. 5: 7. David complained *more* of the endeavors of his persecutors to *shake his faith*, and drive him from his hope in God, than of their attempts to *shake his throne*, and drive him from his kingdom: their saying, *there is*

enmity to the holy image, truth, and law of his Creator; and a sufficient confutation of all the flattering representations of those who know more of every thing, than of God and of themselves. Indeed prophets and martyrs, who were renewed to some measure of the same image, and stood up for the same truths, always met with an adequate portion of the same treatment; but it has been confined to them, and malefactors have almost universally been exempted from it. Scott

43 He "trusted in God: let him deliver him now, if he will have him: for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'

44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

[Practical Observations.]

45 ¶ Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

¶ Ps. 3:2, 14:5, 22:3, 42:10. Is. 36: 15, 18, 37:10.
 x. 40. John 3:16, 17, 5:17-25, 10:30, 19, 19:7.
 39. Job 30:7-9. Ps. 35:15, Mark 15:32. Luke 23:39, 40.
 1. Mark 15:25, 33, 34. Luke 23:44, 45.
 Is. 50:3, Am. 8:9. Rev. 8:12, 9:2.
 1. Mark 15:34. Luke 23:46. John 19: 23-30. Heb. 5:7.
 c. Ps. 22:1, 71:11.

III. We have here the frowns of Heaven, which our Lord Jesus was under, in the midst of all these injuries and indignities from men. Concerning which, observe,

1. How this was signified—by an extraordinary and miraculous eclipse of the sun, which continued for three hours, v. 45. There was darkness over all the earth; so most interpreters understand it, though our translation confines it to that land. Some of the ancients appealed to the annals of the nation concerning this extraordinary eclipse at the death of Christ, as a thing well known, and which gave notice to those parts of the world of something great then doing; as the sun's going back in Hezeki-

ah's time did. It is reported that Dionysius, a Heliopolis in Egypt, took notice of this darkness, and said, *Either the God of nature is suffering, or the machine of the world is tumbling into ruin.* An extraordinary light gave intelligence of the birth of Christ, (ch. 2:2.) and therefore it was proper that an extraordinary darkness should notify his death, for He is the *Light of the world.* The indignities done to our Lord Jesus made the heavens astonished. This amazing darkness was designed to stop the mouths of those blasphemers who were reviling Christ as He hung on the cross; and it should seem that, for the present, it struck such terror upon them, that though their hearts were not changed, yet they were silent, and stood doubting what this should mean, till after three hours the darkness scattered, and then, (as appears by v. 47.) like Pharaoh, when the plague was over, they hardened their hearts. But that which was principally intended in this darkness, was, (1.) Christ's present conflict with the powers of darkness. Now the prince and the rulers of the darkness of this world, were to be cast out, spoiled, and vanquished on their own ground. (2.) His present want of heavenly comforts; that dark cloud which the human soul of our Lord Jesus was now under. God makes his sun to shine on the just and on the unjust, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the sun; but when Christ was made Sin for us, because now his soul was exceeding sorrowful, and the cup of divine displeasure was filled to Him without mixture, even the light of the sun was suspended. When earth denied Him a drop of cold water, heaven denied Him a beam of light; being to deliver us from utter darkness, He Himself, in the depth of his sufferings, walked in darkness, and had no light, Isa. 50:10. During the three hours this darkness continued, we do not find that He said one word, but passed this time in silent retirement in his own soul, now in agony, wrestling with the powers of darkness, and taking in the impressions of his Father's displeasure, not against Himself, but the sin of man, which He was now making his soul an offering for. Never

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V 26-44. We are prone to complain under injuries, and even to retort or retaliate on those who offend us: but the Savior endured the most complicated indignities and cruelties, without a murmur, an angry word, or a menace! In the meekness and dignity of heavenly wisdom, He heard unmoved the false accusations with which He was pursued; the preference given to a murderer before Him; the ungrateful people, whose diseases He had healed, and whose wants He had supplied, demanding his crucifixion; the iniquitous sentence passed on Him; and the sarcasms and cruel derision of the soldiers, the people, the rulers, and even of the malefactors. Without the least impatience, He suffered his body to be torn with the scourge, his head to be wounded with the thorns, and his hands and feet to be pierced; and thus He met the horrors of the most excruciating death, and the shame of being numbered among the worst of criminals, with the most entire resignation to his Father's will, the most ardent love and zeal for his glory, and the deepest compassion even for his cruel murderers. He

was also as much superior to fear, as to anger or impatience; and He supported his sufferings with a demeanor equally distant from levity, and from sullen affectation of insensibility: so that all which has been admired in the death of heroes or philosophers, is no more comparable to the setting of this 'Sun of Righteousness,' than the glimmering taper is to the clear light of day.—But let us especially consider this conduct of the Savior as our pattern; and recollect that all our fretfulness, peevishness, bitterness and despondency, are indeed acts of rebellion, which could not have been pardoned, but through the shedding of his precious blood. Let us remember, that we are called to do good, and suffer evil, in this present world; let us keep a guard over our spirits, and at the door of our lips, when we are injured, insulted and afflicted; let us consider how 'light our afflictions' are, and how mixed with consolations, when compared with those of our divine Surety; and never expect or desire kind usage from such characters, as 'crucified the Lord of glory.'

SCOTT.

(43.) *If He will have Him.* 'If He love and favor Him.' Bloomfield. 'The Jews thought that God could not but deliver every pious worshipper from calamities, and that he who was borne down by them could not be such.'

KUINOEL.

Verse 45.

It is here supposed, and will hereafter be shown, that Christ was nailed to the cross at 'the third hour,' or by nine o'clock in the morning; but this darkness did not begin before the sixth hour, or noon; and it lasted in the ninth hour, or three o'clock in the afternoon. As the moon was then at the full, it could not be an eclipse from a natural cause; and probably it reached no further than the Holy Land, at least the language of the evangelists implies no more. (Notes, Mark 15: 25, 33.) Some infidels have greatly exulted, because Josephus and the pagan writers have not mentioned this phenomenon; but none have attempted to deny it, and every writer notices and records only what he sees proper. Josephus and the pagan authors were, in general, as little disposed to bear a favorable testimony to Christianity, as modern infidels are: the former could not but have heard of it, and his silence may be considered as the effect of his inability to deny the fact, and his unwillingness to admit the proper conclusion; but heathen authors would probably treat the report with contempt and neglect, as unworthy of regard. It deserves notice, that all the evangelists record the scoffs and insults of the spectators, before they mention this darkness, which, it is probable, for the time alarmed and silenced them. Many things have been conjectured concerning the intenseness of this gloom; but little can be known, probably it was neither so intense, nor so slight as different writers contending with each other, have represented.

sented it. There is no proof, that during it, Jesus saw and spoke to his mother and the apostle John, at a considerable distance, as some have supposed; for nothing appears from the narrative, why this might not take place either during the three hours which preceded the gloom, or just before Jesus expired, when it seems to have terminated. (See 50. John 19: 25-27.) We have, however, the testimony of three evangelists, authenticated by miracles and prophecy, that such a darkness took place; and may be sure it was sufficiently intense, to convince considerate persons, that it was an awful token of the wrath of God against the crucifiers of the holy Jesus.

SCOTT.

Verse 46.

(Ps. 22: 1.) The words are not exactly the same as they stand in the original of the psalm referred to, and are supposed to be quoted in the Syro-Chaldaic dialect; but the meaning is precisely the same. The doleful exclamation of Jesus showed that the total want of 'the light of God's countenance' on his soul, and the sense of his frowns and wrath against Him, as our Surety, were far more dreadful than all his complicated outward sufferings; that his confidence in his Father, treasured with his love, zeal, submission, and every holy affection, were exhausted and most perfectly gone, even in that dreadful hour; and that there was no cause in Him, why He should be thus forsaken, it being wholly through his willing answerableness for the sins of his people. (Marg. Ref. 26: 36-39. Mark 15: 34.)

SCOTT.

'From this and other passages it is collected, that Christ used the Hebrew-Syriac language, or rather the Hebrew-Chaldaic, which was then prevalent in Judea.'

ROSEN. in c. 26. v. 36.

47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, *This man calleth for Elias.*

48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

50 Jesus, when he had cried again and

were there three such hours since the day that God created man on the earth, never such a dark and awful scene; the crisis of man's redemption and salvation.

2. How He complained of it; (v. 46.) *about the ninth hour*, when it began to clear up, after a long and silent conflict, *Jesus cried, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?* The words are related in the Syriac tongue, in which they were spoken, because worthy of double remark, and for the sake of the perverse construction which his enemies put on them, in putting *Elias* for *Eli*. Now observe here,

(1.) Whence He borrowed this complaint—from Ps. 22: 1. It is not probable, (as some have thought) that He repeated the whole psalm; yet hereby He intimated that the whole was to be applied to Him. This, and that other word, *Into thy hands I commit my spirit*, He fetched from David's psalms, to teach us the use and benefit of the word of God in prayer.

(2.) How He uttered it—with a loud voice; which bespeaks the extremity of his pain and anguish, the strength of nature remaining in Him, and the great earnestness of his spirit in this expostulation. Now the Scripture was fulfilled,

(Joel 3: 15, 16.) *The sun and the moon shall be darkened. The Lord shall also roar out of Zion, and utter his voice from Jerusalem. David often speaks of his crying aloud in prayer.* Ps. 55: 17.

(3.) What the complaint was—*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?* A strange complaint to come from the mouth of our Lord Jesus, who, we are sure, was *God's elect, in whom his soul delighted*, (Isa. 42: 1.) and in whom He was always *well pleased*. Surely, never sorrow was like unto that sorrow, which extorted such a complaint from one who, being perfectly free from sin, could never be a terror to Himself; but the heart knows its own bitterness. No wonder it made the earth to quake, and rent the rocks; for it is enough to make both the ears of every one that hears it, to tingle, and ought to be spoken of with great reverence.

Note, [1.] That our Lord Jesus was, in his sufferings, for a time, *forsaken by his Father*. So He saith Himself, who, we are sure, was under no mistake concerning his own case. Not that the union between the divine and human natures was weakened; no, He was *now by the eternal Spirit offering Himself*: nor as if there were any abatement of his Father's love to Him, or his to his Father; we are sure that there was on his mind no horror of God, nor any thing of the torments of hell; but his Father forsook Him; that is, *first*, He delivered Him up into the hands of his enemies, and did not appear to rescue Him. He let loose the powers of darkness against Him, and suffered them to do their worst, worse than against Job. Now was that Scripture fulfilled, (Job 16: 9.) *God has turned Me over into the hands of the wicked*; and no angel is sent from heaven to deliver, no friend on earth raised up to appear for Him. Secondly, He withdrew the present comfortable sense of his placency in Him. When his soul was first troubled, He had a voice from heaven to comfort Him; (John 12: 27, 28.) in his agony in the garden, there appeared an angel from heaven, strengthening Him; but now He had neither. Thirdly, He let out upon his soul an afflicting sense of his wrath against man for sin. Christ was made *Sin* for us, a *Curse* for us; and therefore, though God loved Him as a Son, He frowned on Him as a Surety. These impressions He was pleased to admit, and to waive that resistance of them which He could have made: because He would accommodate Himself to this part of his undertaking, as He had done to all the rest.

[2.] That Christ's being *forsaken* of his Father, was the most grievous of his sufferings, and that which He complained most of. Here He laid the most doleful accents; He did not say, 'Why am I scourged?' And why spit on? And why nailed to the cross? But when his Father stood at a distance, He cried out thus; for this was it that put wormwood and gall into the affliction and misery. This brought the waters into the soul, Ps. 69: 1—3.

[3.] That our Lord Jesus, even when thus forsaken of his Father, kept hold of Him as his God; *My God, my God*, though forsaking Me, yet mine. Christ was God's servant in the work of redemption; to Him He was to make satisfaction, and by Him to be carried through and crowned, and on that account He calls Him his God; for He was now doing his will. See Isa. 49: 4, 9. This supported Him, that even in the depth of his sufferings God was his God, and this He resolves to keep fast hold of.

(4.) See how his enemies impudently ridiculed this complaint, v. 47. Some think this was the ignorant mistake of the Roman soldiers, who had heard talk of Elias, and of the Jews' expectation of his coming, but knew not the signification of *Eli, Eli*, and so made this blundering comment on these words of Christ, perhaps not hearing the latter part of what He said, for the noise of the people. Note, Many of the reproaches cast on the Word and people of God, rise from gross mistakes. Divine truths are often corrupted by ignorance of the language and style of the Scripture. Those

that hear by halves, pervert what they hear. Others think it was the wilful mistake of some of the Jews, who knew what He said, but were disposed to abuse Him, and misrepresent Him as one who, being forsaken of God, was driven to trust in creatures; perhaps hinting also, that He who had pretended to be Himself the Messiah, would now be glad to be beholden to Elias, who was expected to be only forerunner of the Messiah. Note, It is no new thing for the most pious devotions of the best men to be ridiculed by scoffers; nor are we to think it strange, if what is well said, in praying and preaching, be misconstrued, and turned to our reproach; Christ's words were so, though He spake as never man spake.

IV. The comfort his enemies administered. 1. Some gave Him vinegar to drink; (v. 48.) instead of some cordial to refresh Him under this heavy burthen, they tantalized Him with that which did not only add to the reproach they were loading Him with, but did too sensibly represent that cup of trembling which his Father had put into his hand. One of them ran to fetch it, seeming to be officious to Him, but really glad of an opportunity to abuse and affront Him, and afraid lest any one should take it out of his hands.

2. Others, with the same purpose of disturbing and abusing Him, refer him to Elias; (v. 49.) 'Come, let Him alone, his case is desperate, neither heaven nor earth can help Him; let us do nothing either to hasten his death, or to retard it; He has appealed to Elias, and to Elias let Him go.'

V. 50—56. Here is an account of the death of Christ.

1. The manner how He breathed his last; (v. 50.) between the third and the sixth hour, that is, between nine and twelve o'clock, as we reckon. He was nailed to the cross, and soon after the ninth hour, that is, between three and four o'clock in the afternoon, He died. That was the time of the offering of the evening sacrifice, and the time when the paschal lamb was killed, and Christ, our Passover, is sacrificed for us, and offered Himself in the evening of the world a sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savor. It was at that time of the day, that the angel Gabriel delivered to Daniel that glorious prediction of the Messiah Dan. 9: 21, 22. And some think that from that very time when the angel spake it, to this time when Christ died, was just seventy weeks, that is four hundred and ninety years, to a day, to an hour; as the departure of Israel out of Egypt was at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day, Exod. 12: 41.

Two things are here noted.

1. That He cried with a loud voice, as before, v. 46.

(1.) This was a sign, that, after all his pains and fatigues, his life was whole in Him, and nature strong. The voice of dying men is one of the first things that fails. But Christ, just before He expired, spake like a man in his full strength, to show that his life was not forced from Him, but was freely delivered by Him into his Father's hands, as his own act and deed, and to show that by the eternal Spirit He offered Himself, being the Priest as well as the Sacrifice, He cried with a loud voice.

(2.) It was significant. He was now spoiling principalities and powers, and in this loud voice He did, as it were, shout for mastery, as one mighty to save, Isa. 63: 1. Compare with this, Isa. 42: 13, 14. His crying with a loud voice, signified that his death should be published to all the world; all mankind being concerned in it, and obliged to take notice of it. Christ's loud cry was like a trumpet blown over the sacrifices.

Verses 47—49.

Some supposed He called on Elias to come and rescue Him: for as Elias was to be the forerunner of the Messiah, they probably thought He meant thus to assert his claim to that character, even to the last. *Marg. Ref. d*) About the same time He also said, 'I thirst.' being parched through excess of anguish and torture; and, as a vessel stood filled with vinegar, (which being mixed with water, was commonly drunk by the Roman soldiers,) one of them filled a sponge with vinegar, and putting it on a reed, or a stalk of hyssop, reached it to Him that He might drink.

SCOTT

Verses 50.

Perhaps the darkness continued nearly to the time when Jesus said 'It is finished'; and then the darkness and horror seem to have been removed also from his mind; and an inexpressible joy in the sense of his Father's love, the near approach of his glory, and the blessed effects of his sufferings, to have filled his soul. He therefore immediately after, 'cried out with a loud voice, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' His soul could have left the body, at the very beginning of his lingering agonies, had He so pleased, as these were necessary only for the expiation of our sins. This view of the case sug-

loud voice yielded up the ghost.

[Practical Observations.]

51 And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent,

20:29. Ps. 22:14, 15. Is. 53:9-12. Dr. 1: 9, 26. John 10:11, 15. Heb. 2: 14. 9:14. Ek. 26:31-37. 40:21. Lev. 16:2, 11-15. 9 Chr. 3:14. Mark. 15:33. Luke 23:45. Eph. 2:13-18. Heb. 6:19, 20. 10:19-22. 28:22. Ps. 18:7, 15. Mic. 1:3, 4. Nah. 1:13-5. Heb. 3:13. Heb. 12:25-27. Rev. 11:13, 19.

and on a solemn day, when the priests were officiating in the temple, and might themselves be eye-witnesses of it, the veil of the temple was rent by an invisible power; that veil which parted between the holy place and the most holy. They had condemned Him for saying, *I will destroy this temple, understanding it literally; now, by this specimen of his power, He let them know that, if He had pleased, He could have made his words good.* In this, as in others of Christ's miracles, there was a mystery.

(1.) It was in correspondence with the temple of Christ's body, which was now in the dissolving; when Christ cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost, and so dissolved that temple, the literal temple did, as it were, echo to that cry, and answer by rending its veil. Note, Death is the rending of the veil of flesh which interposes between us and the holy of holies; the death of Christ was so, the death of true Christians is so.

(2.) It signified the revealing and unfolding of the mysteries of the Old Testament. The veil of the temple was for concealment, as that on the face of Moses, therefore it was called the veil of the covering; for it was highly penal for any person to see the furniture of the most holy place, except the high priest, and he but once a year, with great ceremony, and through a cloud of smoke; all which signified the darkness of that dispensation, 2 Cor. 3: 13. But now, all was laid open. Now we see that the mercy-seat signified Christ, the great Propitiation; the pot of manna, Christ the Bread of life. Thus we all, with open face, behold as in a glass, (which helps the sight, as the veil hindered it,) the glory of the Lord. Our eyes see the salvation.

(3.) It signified the uniting of Jew and Gentile, by the removing of the partition-wall between them. Christ, in his death, repealed the ceremonial law, and, by abolishing those institutions, abolished the enmity, and made in Himself of twain one new man, so making peace, Eph. 2: 14-16. Christ died, to rend all dividing veils, and to make all his one, John 17: 21.

(4.) It signified the consecrating and laying open of a new and living way to God. The veil kept people off from drawing near to the most holy place, where the Shekinah was. But the rending of it signified that Christ, by his death, opened a way to God, [1.] For Himself. This was the great day of atonement, when our Lord Jesus, as the great High Priest, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, entered once for all into the holy place; in token of which the veil was rent, Heb. 9: 7, &c. Having offered his sacrifice in the outer court, the blood of it was now to be

sprinkled on the mercy-seat within the veil, wherefore lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; for the King of glory, the Priest of glory, shall come in. Now was He caused to draw near, and made to approach, Jer. 30: 21. Though He did not personally ascend into the holy place not mad with hands, till above forty days after, yet He immediately acquired a right to enter, and had a virtual admission. [2.] For us in Him: so the apostle applies it, Heb. 10: 19, 20. We have boldness to enter into the holiest, by that new and living way which He has consecrated for us through the veil. He died, to bring us to God, and, in order thereunto, to rend that veil of guilt and wrath which interposed between us and Him, to take away the cherubim and flaming sword, and to open the way to the tree of life. We have free access through Christ to the throne of grace, or mercy-seat, now, and to the throne of glory hereafter, Heb. 4: 16. 6: 16. The rending of the veil signified, (as that ancient hymn excellently expresseth it,) that, when Christ had overcome the sharpness of death, He opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers. Nothing can obstruct or discourage our access to heaven, for the veil is rent; a door is opened in heaven, Rev. 4: 1.

2. The earth did quake; not only mount Calvary, where Christ was crucified, but the whole land, and the adjacent countries. This earthquake signified two things.

(1.) The horrible wickedness of Christ's crucifiers. Never did the whole creation before groan under such a burthen, as the Son of God crucified, and the guilty wretches that crucified Him. The earth quaked, as if it feared to open its mouth to receive the blood of Christ, so much more precious than that of Abel, which it had received, and was cursed for it, Gen. 4: 11, 12. When the prophet would express God's great displeasure against the wickedness of the wicked, He asks, *Shall not the land tremble for this?* Amos 8: 8.

(2.) The glorious achievements of Christ's cross, the mighty shock, nay, the fatal blow, now given to the devil's kingdom. So vigorous was the assault that (as of old, when He went out of Seir, when He marched through the field of Edom) the earth trembled, Judg. 5: 4. Ps. 68: 7, 8. God shakes all nations, when the Desire of all nations is to come; and there is a yet once more, which perhaps refers to this shaking, Hag. 2: 7, 21.

3. The rocks rent; the firmest part of the earth was made to feel this mighty shock; pro-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 45-50. Our blessed Redeemer endured all his sufferings in silent submission: but the frown and wrath of the Father, which He bare for our sins, extorted the doleful exclamation, 'My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'—What then will be the misery of those, who shall forever be forsaken by God, and sink under his wrath and absolute despair! The believer, who has tasted a few drops of the cup which the Savior drank off to the very dregs, in the garden and on the cross—who has lost for a season the comfort of communion with God, and dreads lest he should come finally short of his favor, and is oppressed with a sense of his displeasure—can frame some feeble conceptions on this awful subject. Thence he learns to estimate in some degree the immensity of the Savior's love; thence he acquires deeper convictions of the evil and desert of sin, and of his obligations to Him 'who hath delivered us from the wrath to come'; and thence he is led to consider the words, 'Depart from Me,' which unbelievers little

regard or dread, as more tremendous than even the unquenchable fire prepared for the devil and his angels.—But, how must adoring angels have been filled with astonishment, when they witnessed their incarnate Lord and Creator thus despised and hated by sinful men! Nothing could more astonish these holy spectators, than the madness and wickedness of his foes; except it were his patience in bearing with them, when his frown must at once have sunk them into hell; his compassion for the souls of those who were by nature so deeply depraved, in thus agonizing and dying for them; and his power and grace, in thus triumphing over the prince of darkness, even in that deepest scene of his humiliation. Thus were the purposes and prophecies of God accomplished; thus was his 'law magnified,' his justice satisfied, and his holiness displayed; thus was the way opened for us sinners to 'the throne of grace' now, and to the kingdom of glory hereafter.

SCOTT.

gests an illustration of the love of Christ manifested in his death, beyond what is commonly observed. Inasmuch as He did not use this power to quit his body, as soon as ever it was fastened to the cross, leaving only an insensible corpse to the cruelty of his murderers; but continued his abode in it with a steady resolution, as long as it was proper; and then retired from it, with a majesty and dignity never known, or to be known, in any other death: dying, if I may so express it, like 'the Prince of life.' Doddridge. Yielded up the ghost.] Resigned, or dismissed the spirit.

VERSES 51-53.

Caaphas and the priests must have seen the veil which had been rent; yet this prodigy made no impression on their hardened hearts, any more than, the other events of that surprising day. This insensibility, amidst such astonishing miracles, appears to some persons almost incredible; and even beyond what human nature, depraved as it is, seems capable of. But it should be considered, that the most alarming and amazing scenes gradually lose their effect on the mind, when per-

sons become familiar with them. Men live among the dead and dying, often without terror or relection; and in an age when miracles were frequently wrought, many spectators would by habit grow familiar with them, as men do with scenes of carnage and dissolution; especially, when the astonishment, at first excited by witnessing a miracle, was attended by a conviction, which was resisted with deep aversion, and when every subsequent miracle was followed by a similar process. The minds of those who thus 'rebelled against the light,' would of course be employed, with all the ingenuity they possessed, in accounting for the wonderful events, without owing the hand of God in them, or the conclusion to be drawn from them, in favor of the Teacher whose doctrines condemned their conduct, and was contrary to their prejudices, and their ambition, avarice, and wickedness. Thus the heart and conscience would gradually become more and more callous as if 'seared with a hot iron'; and God in awful justice would obdurate rebels up to judicial hardness and a blindness.

SCOTT.

52 And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

54 Now when the centurion, and they that were with him watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

Is. 26:19. Hos. 13:14. John 5:25—29, 1 Cor. 15:20.
Dan. 12:2, 1 Cor. 11:30. 15:51. 1 Thes. 4:14, 5:10.
4:5. Neh. 11:1. Is. 48:2. Dan. 9:24. Rev. 11:2. 21:2. 22:19.
36. 8:5. Acts 10:1. 21:32. 23:17, 23. 27:43.
p Mark 15:39. Luke 23:47.
q 2 Kings 11:13, 14. Acts 2:37. 16:29.
r 40. Rev. 11:13.
u 40:43. 26:63. Luke 22:70. John 19:7. Rom. 1:4.

power of the Lord Jesus, and went into Jerusalem, the holy city, and appeared unto many. Now here,

(1.) We may raise many inquiries concerning it, which we cannot resolve; as, [1.] *Who these saints were, that did arise.* Some think, the ancient patriarchs, from reference to whom, Christ had lately proved the doctrine of the resurrection, ch. 22: 32. Others, modern saints, such as had seen Christ in the flesh, but died before Him; as his father Joseph, Zecharias, Simeon, John Baptist, and others, that had been known to the disciples, while they lived, and therefore were the fitter to be witnesses to them in an apparition after. What if we should suppose that they were the martyrs, who in the Old-Testament times had sealed the truths of God with their blood, that were thus dignified and distinguished? Christ particularly points at them as his forerunners, ch. 23: 35. And we find (Rev. 20: 4, 5.) that those who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, rose before the rest of the dead. Sufferers with Christ shall first reign with Him. [2.] It is uncertain whether (as some think) they arose to life, now at the death of Christ, and disposed of themselves elsewhere, but did not go into the city till after his resurrection; or whether, (as others think,) though their sepulchres, (ch. 23: 29.) were shattered now by the earthquake, yet they did not revive and rise till after the resurrection; only, for brevity-sake, it is mentioned here, on the mention of the opening of the graves, which seems more probable. [3.] Some think that they arose only to bear witness of Christ's resurrection, and, having finished their testimony, retired to their graves again. But it is more agreeable both to Christ's honor and theirs, to suppose, though we cannot prove, that they arose as Christ did, to die no more, and therefore ascended with Him to glory. [4.] To whom they appeared; (not to all the people it is certain, but to many;) whether enemies or friends, in what manner they appeared, how often, what they said and did, and how they disappeared, are secret things which belong not to us; we must not covet to be wise above what is written: we have a more sure word of prophecy. See Luke 16: 31.

(2.) Yet we may learn many good lessons from it. [1.] That even those who lived and died before the death and resurrection of Christ, had saving benefit thereby, as well as those who have lived since; for He was the same yesterday that He is to-day, and will be forever, Heb. 13: 8. [2.] That Jesus Christ, by dying, conquered, disarmed, and disabled death. These saints that arose, were the present trophies of the victory of Christ's cross over the powers of death, which He thus made a show of openly. Having by death destroyed him that had the power of death, He thus led captivity captive, fulfilling that Scripture, *I will ransom them from the power of the grave.* [3.] That, in virtue of Christ's resurrection, the bodies of all the saints

shall, in the fulness of time, rise again. This was an earnest of the general resurrection at the last day, when all that are in the graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God. And perhaps Jerusalem is therefore called here the holy city, because the saints, at the general resurrection, shall enter into the new Jerusalem, Rev. 21: 2. [4.] That all the saints do, by the influence of Christ's death, and in conformity to it, rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. They are raised up with Him to a divine and spiritual life.

III. The conviction of his enemies that were employed in the execution, (v. 54.) which some make no less than another miracle, all things considered. Observe,

1. The persons convinced, v. 54. (1.) They were soldiers, whose profession is commonly hardening, and whose breasts are commonly not so susceptible as some others, of the impressions either of fear or pity. But there is no spirit too big, too bold, for the power of Christ to break and humble. (2.) They were Roman Gentiles, who knew not the Scriptures which were now fulfilled; yet they only were convinced. A sad presage of the blindness that should happen to Israel, when the Gospel should be sent to the Gentiles, to open their eyes. Here were the Gentiles softened, and the Jews hardened. (3.) They were the persecutors of Christ, and those that but just before had reviled Him, as appears, Luke 23: 36. How soon can God, by the power He has over men's consciences, alter their language, and fetch confessions of his truths, to his own glory, out of the mouths of those that have boasted nothing but threatenings, and slaughter, and blasphemies!

2. The means of their conviction; the perceived the earthquake, and saw the other things that were done. These were designed to assert the honor of Christ in his sufferings, and had their end in these soldiers, whatever they had on others. Note, The dreadful appearances of God in his providence, sometimes works strangely for the conviction and awakening of sinners.

3. The expressions of this conviction, in two things:

(1.) *Their terror; they feared greatly;* feared lest they should have been buried in the darkness, or swallowed up in the earthquake. Note, Guilt puts men in fear; whereas there are those who will not fear, though the earth be removed, Ps. 46: 1, 2.

(2.) *The testimony extorted from them; Truly this was the Son of God;* a noble confession. Peter was blessed for it, ch. 16: 16, 17. It was the great matter now in dispute, the point on which He and his enemies had joined issue, ch. 26: 63, 64. His disciples believed it, but at this time durst not confess it; our Savior Himself was tempted to question it, when He said, *Why hast Thou forsaken Me?* The Jews, now that He was dying on the cross, looked on it as plainly determined against Him, that He was not the Son of God, because He did not come down from the cross. And yet now this centurion and the soldiers make this voluntary confession. Note, God can maintain and assert the honor of a truth then, when it seems to be crushed; for great is the truth, and will prevail.

IV. The attendance of his friends, that were witnesses of his death, v. 55, 56. Observe,

1. Who they were; not his apostles, (only elsewhere we find John by the cross, John

Verse 54.

The wonderful events attending the crucifixion of Christ, with his mild and patient suffering, and the confidence with which He commended his departing soul into the hands of God, had a powerful effect on the minds of the Roman soldiers, though the Jewish rulers remained unimpressed. Only four soldiers were employed in nailing Jesus to the cross; but a considerable number, commanded by a centurion, watched Him whilst He hung there. These were alarmed at what they saw and heard, and glorified God, perhaps by confessing their guilt and deprecating his vengeance; and acknowledged, that 'Truly this was the Son of God.' It is not to be supposed, that the soldiers who joined with the centurion in this confession, who seem to have been the same as had crowned Jesus with thorns and mocked Him, should understand the full meaning of these words; yet we may reasonably conclude, that this conviction terminated in the conversion at least of some of them, and perhaps of the very persons who nailed Him to the cross; according to his prayer, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what

they do.' (Luke 23: 34.) Some would interpret the words recorded by Matthew; 'Truly this was the Son of God,' by those of Luke, 'This was a righteous man.' But in fact that expression is explained by this; for as Jesus was crucified for saying that He was 'the Son of God'; so, if He was a righteous man and unjustly condemned, He must be 'the Son of God.' (Marg. Ref. r.) A son of a god, according to the notions of the pagans say some; but could the officers and soldiers who crucified Christ, be ignorant that He was put to death, for averting Himself to be 'the Son of God'? Surely then this supposed crime was referred to. He is condemned to death as a blasphemer, for saying, 'I am the Son of God'; but 'truly this was the Son of God.' (Mark 15: 39. Luke 23: 47.) The centurion could not fail to know the alleged blasphemy for which our Savior suffered; and had he intended, in heathen phraseology, to express his admiration of our Savior's conduct, he would not have used this expression. Ep. Mid dieton.

55 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him;

56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

57 ¶ When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus's disciple:

58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock; and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.

¶ Luke 23:27, 28, 48, 49. John 19:25-27.
 ¶ Luke 8:3.
 ¶ 1. 29:1. Mark 15:40, 41. 16:1, 9.
 ¶ Luke 24:10. John 20:1, 18.
 ¶ Mark 15:47. 16:1. John 19:25.
 ¶ 19:35. Mark 15:40, 16:1.
 ¶ 20:20, 21.
 ¶ Mark 15:42, 43. Luke 23:50, 51. John 19:38-42.
 ¶ 1 Sam. 1:1. 7:17.
 ¶ Mark 15:44-46. Luke 23:52, 53.
 ¶ 16:5.
 ¶ 68:22. Mark 16:3, 4. Luke 24:2.
 ¶ John 20:1.
 ¶ 55.

sufferings, the best of his friends were but lookers on, even the angelic guards stood trembling by, saith Mr. Norris; for He trod the vine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Him; so his own arm wrought salvation.

V. 57-66. We have here an account of Christ's burial, concerning which observe, 1. The kindness and good will of his friends. 2. The malice and ill will of his enemies.

I. His friends gave him a decent burial. Observe,

1. In general, Jesus Christ was buried; his body was deposited in the grave, that He might answer the type of Jonas, and fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah; He made his grave with the wicked. Thus in all things He must be made like unto his brethren, sin only excepted, and like us, to dust He must return. He was buried, to make his death the more certain, and his

19. 26.) their hearts failed them, they durst not appear, for fear of coming under the same condemnation. But here were a company of women, that boldly stuck to Christ, when the rest of his disciples had basely deserted Him. Note, Even those of the weaker sex are often, by the grace of God, made strong in faith, that Christ's strength may be made perfect in weakness. There have been women martyrs, famous for courage and resolution in Christ's cause. Now of these women it is said, (1.) That they had followed Jesus from Galilee, out of their great love to Him, and a desire to hear Him preach: otherwise, the males only were obliged to come up, to worship at the feast. Having followed Him such a long journey as from Galilee to Jerusalem, eighty or a hundred miles, they resolved not to forsake Him now. Note, Former services and sufferings for Christ should be an argument with us, faithfully to persevere to the end in attendance on Him, Gal. 3:3, 4. (2.) That they ministered to Him of their substance, for his necessary subsistence. How gladly would they have ministered to Him now, if they might have been admitted! But being forbidden that, they resolved to follow Him. When restrained from doing what we would, we must do what we can, in the service of Christ. Now He is in heaven, though out of the reach of our ministrations, He is not out of the reach of our believing views. (3.) Some of them are particularly named; for God will honor those that honor Christ. We have several times met with them before, and it was their praise, that we meet with them to the last.

2. What they did; they were beholding afar off.

(1.) They stood afar off; Good people, when they are in suffering, must not think it strange, if some of their best friends be shy of them. When Paul's danger was imminent, no man stood by him, 2 Tim. 4:16. If we be thus looked strangely upon, remember, our Master was so before us.

(2.) They were there beholding, in which they showed a concern and kindness for Christ; when debarr'd from any other office of love, they looked a look of love towards Him. [1.] It was a sorrowful look; they looked unto Him who was now pierced, and mourned; and, no doubt, were in bitterness for Him. We may well imagine how it cut them to the heart, to see Him in this torment; and what floods of tears it brought from their eyes. Let us with an eye of faith behold Christ and Him crucified, and be affected with that great love wherewith He loved us. But, [2.] It was no more than a look; they beheld Him, but they could not help Him. Note, When Christ was in his

sufferings, the best of his friends were but lookers on, even the angelic guards stood trembling by, saith Mr. Norris; for He trod the vine-press alone, and of the people there was none with Him; so his own arm wrought salvation.

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Verse 55.

'From these women, doubtless, Matthew derived the account of the words of the centurion and the soldiers.'

BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 57-61.

Joseph lived at Arimathea, or Ramah, the city of Samuel. (Marg. Ref. b.) He was a rich and honorable person; a counsellor, or member of the sanhedrim, and a pious man, who had not consented to the proceedings of the rulers against Jesus; for he probably absented himself when this was agitated, finding he could not make any effectual resistance. He also 'waited for the kingdom of God,' expecting the Messiah as a spiritual Redeemer, and he had secretly become a disciple of Jesus; but being timid, moving in a high rank in society, and knowing the malignity of the rulers, he had not openly confessed his faith. It pleased God to leave him thus far under the power of his unbelieving fears; because He intended him for a service from which he must have been precluded, if he had rendered himself obnoxious to the ruling powers. But when the courage of our Lord's stated followers failed them, he found himself animated to a more decided conduct; and his faith being originated by the circumstances attending the death of Christ, he determined no longer to conceal his opinion. He,

resurrection the more illustrious: while the witnesses lay unburied, there were some hopes concerning them, Rev. 11:8. But Christ, the great Witness, is as one free among the dead, like the slain that lie in the grave. He was buried, that He might take off the terror of the grave, and make it easy to us, might warm and perfume that cold, noisome bed for us, and that we might be buried with Him.

2. The particular circumstances.

(1.) The time when He was buried; when the even was come; the same evening that He died, before sunset, as is usual in burying malefactors; not the next day, because it was the sabbath; for, burying the dead is not proper work either for a day of rest, or for a day of rejoicing, as the Sabbath is.

(2.) The person that took care of the funeral, Joseph of Arimathea. The apostles were all fled, and none of them appeared to show this respect to their Master, which the disciples of John shewed to him after he was beheaded, ch. 14:12. The women that followed Him, durst not move in it; then did God stir up this good man to do it; for Joseph was a fit man; for, [1.] He had wherewithal to do it, being a rich man. Most of Christ's disciples were poor men, such were most fit to go about the country to preach the Gospel; but here was one that was a rich man, ready to be employed in a piece of service which required a man of estate. Note, Worldly wealth, though to many an obstacle in religion's way, yet, in some services to be done for Christ, is an advantage and an opportunity, and it is well for those who have it, if withal they have a heart to use it for God's glory. [2.] He was well affected to our Lord Jesus, for he was himself his disciple, though he did not openly profess it. Note, Christ has more secret disciples than we are aware of; seven thousand in Israel, Rom. 11:4.

(3.) The grant of the dead body procured from Pilate, ch. 58. Joseph went to Pilate, who had the disposal of the body; for in things wherein the power of the magistrate is concerned, due regard must be had to that power. What good we do must be done peaceably, not tumultuously. Pilate was willing to give the body to one that would inter it decently, that he might do something towards atoning for the guilt his conscience charged him with, in condemning an innocent person. In Joseph's petition, and Pilate's ready grant of it, honor was done to Christ, and a testimony borne to his integrity.

(4.) The dressing of the body in grave-clothes; (v. 59.) though an honorable consecration, he himself took the body, as it should seem, from the tree; (Acts 13:29.) where there is true love to Christ, no service will be thought too mean to stoop to for Him. Having taken it, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth; burying in which, was then common. Note, Care is to be taken of the dead bodies of good men, a glory being intended for them at the resurrection, which we must hereby testify our belief of, and wind up the dead body, as designed for a better place. This common act of humanity, if done after a godly sort, may be made an acceptable piece of Christianity.

(5.) The depositing of it in the sepulchre, v. 60. Here was nothing of pomp and solemnity

therefore, 'went boldly to Pilate,' and desired leave to take the body of Jesus, that he might give it an honorable interment; and that it might not be buried on the spot, as those of malefactors generally were. Accordingly, Pilate did not hesitate to order that the body should be delivered to Joseph, though he must have known that this would be highly displeasing to the Jewish rulers. Having obtained this permission, and being assisted by Nicodemus, Joseph took the body of Jesus from the cross, wrapped it in linen cloth, with myrrh, aloes, and other aromatics, and conveyed it into a new sepulchre prepared for himself, and situated in a garden near the spot. The interment of Christ was thus hastily performed, because the Sabbath was near; and probably Joseph and his friend proposed, afterwards, more carefully to embalm the body at the same time. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary before mentioned witnessed the transaction, and formed their plan for testifying their respect to the remains of their beloved and honored Master. (Marg. Ref. a, c, e—62-68. Mark 15:42-47. Luke 23:54-56. John 19:38-42.) This burial of Christ was an accomplishment of a remarkable prophecy; (Note, Is. 53:9, 10, v. 9.) and it is a way for the more complete proof of his resurrection.

Scott

62 ¶ Now the next day that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, 'After three days I will rise again.'

64 Command therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can.

66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

¶ 28:17. Mark 15:42. Luke 23:54—55. John 19:14, 42.
¶ 28:18. Matt. 27:62. Acts 4:27; 8.
¶ Luke 23:52. John 7:12, 47. 2 Cor. 6:8.
¶ 16:31. 17:23. 20:19. 26:61. Mark 8:31. 10:34. Luke 9:22. 18:33. 24:6, 7. John 2:19.
¶ 12:45.
¶ 28:41—15. Ps. 78:10. Prov. 21:30.
¶ Dan. 6:17. 2 Tim. 2:19.

behind, no, it is they that are

(6.) The company was very small and mean. Here were no relations in mourning, to follow the corpse, no formalities to grace the solemnity, but some good women that were true mourners, v. 55. These having attended Him to the cross, followed Him to the grave; as if they composed themselves to sorrow, they sat over against the sepulchre, not so much to fill their eyes with the sight of what was done, as to empty them in rivers of tears. Note, True love to Christ will carry us through, to the utmost, in following Him. Death itself cannot quench that divine fire, Cant. 8: 6, 7.

II. His enemies did what they could to prevent his resurrection; this was the next day that followed the day of the preparation, (v. 62.) the seventh day of the week, on the Jewish sabbath, yet not expressly called so, but described by this periphrasis, because it was now shortly to give way to the Christian Sabbath, which began the day after. All that day, Christ lay dead in the grave, on the seventh day He rested, and was refreshed; the chief priests and

ty with the grandees of the world, v. 11: 32. A private funeral best befitted Him whose kingdom came not with observation.

[1.] He was laid in a borrowed tomb, in Joseph's burying-place; as if he had not a house of his own, while He lived, so He had not a grave of his own, when He was dead; yet in this there might be some-what of a mystery. The grave is the peculiar heritage of a sinner. Job 24: 19. There is nothing we can truly call our own but our sins and our graves; He returneth to his earth, Ps. 146: 4. When we go to the grave, we go to our own place; but our Lord Jesus, who had no sin of his own, had no grave of his own; dying under imputed sin, it was fit that He should be buried in a borrowed grave; the Jews designed that He should have made his grave with the wicked, with the thieves with whom he was crucified; but God overruled it, so that He should make it with the rich in his death, Isa. 53: 9.

[2.] He was laid in a new tomb, which Joseph, it is likely, designed for himself; it would, however, be never the worse, but a great deal the better for his lying in it, who was to rise so quickly, who has altered the property of the grave, and made it a bed of rest, nay, a bed of spices, for all the saints.

[3.] In a tomb hewn out in a rock; the ground about Jerusalem was generally rocky. Shebna had his sepulchre hewn out thereabouts in a rock, Isa. 22: 16. Providence ordered it that Christ's sepulchre should be in a solid, entire rock, that no room might be left to suspect his disciples had access to it by some under-ground passage, to steal the body; there was no access to it but by the door, which was watched.

[4.] A great stone was rolled to the door of his sepulchre, according to the custom of the Jews in burying their dead, as at the grave of Lazarus, John 11: 38. The rolling of the stone to the grave's mouth was, with them, as filling up the grave is with us, it completed the funeral. It is the most melancholy circumstance in the funerals of our Christian friends, when we have laid their bodies in the dark and silent grave, to go home, and leave them behind; but, alas, it is not we that go home, and leave them gone to the better home, and left us behind.

(6.) The company was very small and mean. Here were no relations in mourning, to follow the corpse, no formalities to grace the solemnity, but some good women that were true mourners, v. 55. These having attended Him to the cross, followed Him to the grave; as if they composed themselves to sorrow, they sat over against the sepulchre, not so much to fill their eyes with the sight of what was done, as to empty them in rivers of tears. Note, True love to Christ will carry us through, to the utmost, in following Him. Death itself cannot quench that divine fire, Cant. 8: 6, 7.

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Pharisees, at the same time, dealing with Pilate about securing the sepulchre, and so adding rebellion to their sin. They that had so often quarrelled with Christ for works of the greatest mercy on that day, were themselves busied in a work of the greatest malice. Observe here,

(1.) Their address to Pilate; they were vexed that the body was given to one that would bury it decently; but, since it must be so, they desire a guard may be set on the sepulchre.

[1.] Their petition sets forth, that that deceiver (so they call Him who is Truth itself) had said, After three days I will rise again. He had said so, and his disciples remembered those very words, for the confirmation of their faith; as did his persecutors, for the provocation of their rage and malice. Thus the same word of Christ to the one was a savor of life unto life, to the other of death unto death. See how they compliment Pilate with the title of, Sir, while they reproach Christ with the title of deceiver. Thus the most malicious slanderers of good men are commonly the most sordid flatterers of great men.

[2.] It further sets forth their jealousy; lest his disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say, He is risen.

1st. That which really they were afraid of, was, his resurrection; that which is most Christ's honor, and his people's joy, is most the terror of his enemies. So the chief priests and Pharisees labored to defeat the predictions of Christ's resurrection, saying, as David's enemies of him, (Ps. 41: 8.) Now that he lieth, he shall rise up no more; if He should rise, that would break all their measures. Perhaps the priests were surprised at the respect showed to Christ's dead body by Joseph and Nicodemus, two honorable counsellors, and looked upon it as an ill presage; nor can they forget his raising of Lazarus from the dead, which so confounded them.

2dly. What they feared was, lest his disciples should come by night, and steal Him away, which was a very improbable thing; for, 1. They had not the courage to own Him while He lived. 2. What could they promise themselves by stealing away his body, and making people believe He was risen; when, if He should not rise, and so prove Himself a deceiver, his disciples, who had left all for Him in this world, in dependence on a recompense in the other world, would of all people suffer most by the imposture, and be of all men the most miserable? The chief priests apprehend that if the doctrine of Christ's resurrection be once preached and believed, the last error will be worse than the first; a proverbial expression, intimating no more than this, that we shall all be routed, all undone. They think that it was their error, that they had so long connived at his preaching and miracles, which error they thought they had rectified by putting Him to death; but if people should be persuaded of his resurrection,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 51—60. As 'God spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him freely give us all things?' 'Hereby we know his love' to sinful men: may we then prove our love to Him, by crucifying our lusts, and resigning our dearest earthly comforts, at his word, for his glory, or in submission to his providence. In short, let us, not only 'afar off,' but as nearly and closely as we can, contemplate this affecting scene; that our hearts may be melted into godly sorrow, weaned from this world, encouraged in hope, animated by love, admiration and gratitude; that we may glory in his cross alone, and be induced to yield ourselves most willingly to his service.—The Lord has a chosen remnant among various descriptions of men: and, whilst we find a Judas among the apostles, and a Joseph in the Jewish sanhedrim, we should learn not to condemn whole societies for the crimes, or to sanction them for the good conduct, of an individual, or even of several individuals belonging to them.—The heart-searching Savior knows even his secret disciples; and though we must not excuse the timidity of such as, for a time, are

afraid of confessing Him before his inveterate enemies, yet we should make allowances for difficult situations, and approve of conscientiousness and holy singularity, in men surrounded by the worst of examples: nor must we 'despise the day of small things.' But we should especially adore the mysteries of divine wisdom, in preparing men for particular services in the church; and the sovereign power of his grace, which sometimes gives courage to the fearful, when the most intrepid are intimidated. Thus He provides for the honor of his name and the support of his cause, and defeats the purposes of his most implacable and potent adversaries.—Let us then be willing to be accounted 'deceivers,' and to pass 'through evil report and good report,' as our Lord did: for if we be upright in the sight of God, all the suspicions and endeavors of men to disgrace us will tend to their confusion, and the manifestation of our integrity; even as the precautions of the Jewish rulers tended to prove the resurrection of Jesus, and to forward the success of the Gospel.

SCOTT.

Verses 62—66.

He had said repeatedly during his life-time, that He would rise again on the third day. This had always been in connection with predictions of his violent death; and the chief priests in fact had paid more attention to it than the disciples had done. (Marg. Ref. c.) As his friends therefore had been permitted to bury Him, the rulers desired that he

would give orders to secure the sepulchre 'until the third day,' (which shows what they understood by the words, 'after three days;') lest his disciples should come in a clandestine manner, steal away the body, spread the report that He was risen, and thus seduce the people into a more fatal error than ever. The number of soldiers or guard is supposed to have been sixty. (28: 1—8, v. 4, 11—15.)

CHAP. XXVIII.

Carry on the first day of the week, the women ^a to go to the sepulchre, 1. An earthquake, and an angel rolling away the stone, terrify the guard, 2. — 4. The angel declares the resurrection of Jesus to the women, and orders them to tell the disciples, 5. — 8. Jesus Himself ^b appears to them, 9, 10. The priests rise the soldiers to say, that the disciples had stolen the body while they slept, 11. — 15. Jesus appears to the disciples in Galilee, 16, 17. He sends them to preach the Gospel, and baptize all nations; and promises his presence with his church to the end of the world, 18—20.

IN ^a the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came ^b Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

2 And, behold, ^c there was a great earthquake: ^d for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

^a Mark 16:1, 2. Luke 23:56, 24:1, 22. John 20:1.
^b 27:56, 61.
^c 27:51—53. Acts 16:26. Rev. 11:19.
^d Or, had been.

^a Mark 16:9—5. Luke 24:2—5. John 20:1, 12, 13. 1 Tim. 3:16. 1 Pet. 1:12.
His own officer, of whom he would be apt to inquire how that just Man died, whom he had condemned with such reluctance; and that he gave him such an account of those things as made him conclude that truly *He was the Son of God*; and Pilate would give more credit to Him than to those spiteful priests that called Him a deceiver; and, if so, no marvel that He tacitly derides their project, in thinking to secure their sepulchre on Him who had so lately rent the rocks, and made the earth to quake. Tertullian, in speaking of Pilate, saith, *In his conscience, he was a Christian*; and it was possible he might be under such convictions at this time, on the centurion's report, and yet never be thoroughly persuaded, any more than Agrippa or Felix, to be a Christian.

(3.) The wonderful care they took, hereupon, to secure the sepulchre; (*v.* 66.) *They sealed the stone*; probably with the great seal of their *sanhedrim*, whereby they interposed their authority, for who durst break the public seal? But not trusting too much to that, withal they set a watch, to keep his disciples from coming to steal Him away, and, if possible, to hinder Him from coming out of the grave. So they intended, but God brought this good out of it, that they who were set to oppose his resurrection, thereby had an opportunity to observe it, and did so, and told the chief priests, who were thereby rendered the more inexcusable. Here was all the power of earth and hell combined to keep Christ a prisoner, but all in vain, when his hour was come; death, and all those sons and heirs of death, could then no longer have dominion over Him. To guard the sepulchre against the poor weak disciples was folly, because needless; but to think to guard it against the power of God, was folly, because fruitless, and to no purpose.

CHAP. XXVIII. v. 1—10. The resurrection of Christ being one of the main foundations of our religion, it is requisite we should have infallible proofs of it; four of which proofs we have in this chapter, which are but a few of many, for Luke and John give a larger account of them than Matthew and Mark do.

For the proof of Christ's resurrection, we have here the testimony of the angel, and of Christ Himself. We may think it would have been better, had a competent number of witnesses been present, and seen the stone rolled away by the angel, and the dead body reviving, as people saw Lazarus come out of the grave; but let us not prescribe to Infinite Wisdom, which ordered that the witnesses of his resurrection should see Him risen, but not see Him rise. His incarnation was a mystery; so was this second incarnation, (if we may so call it,) this new making of his body for his exalted state; it was therefore made in secret. Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. Christ gave such proofs of his resurrection as were corroborated by the Scriptures, and by the word He had spoken; (Luke 24: 6, 7, 44. Mark 16: 7.) for here we must walk by faith, not by sight. We have here, I. The coming of the good women to the sepulchre.

Observe, 1. When they came, *v.* 1. This fixes the time of Christ's resurrection.

(1.) He rose the third day after his death; the time He had often predicted. He was buried in the evening of the sixth day of the week, and arose in the morning of the first day of the following week, so that He lay in the grave about thirty-six or thirty-eight hours. He lay so long, to show that He was really and truly dead; and no longer, that He might not see corruption. He rose the third day, to answer the type of the prophet Jonas, (*ch.* 12: 40.) and to accomplish that prediction, (*Hos.* 6: 2.) *The third*

day He will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight.

(2.) He arose after the Jewish Sabbath, the passover Sabbath; all that day He lay in the grave, to signify the abolishing of the Jewish feasts and the other parts of the ceremonial law, and that his people must be dead to such observances. Christ on the sixth day finished his work. He said, *It is finished*; on the seventh day He rested, and then on the first day of the next week did, as it were, begin a new world, and enter on new work. Let no man therefore judge us now in respect of the new moons, or of the Jewish Sabbaths, which were indeed a shadow of good things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

(3.) He rose on the first day of the week; on the first day of the first week, God commanded the light to shine out of darkness; on this day therefore did He, who was to be the Light of the world, shine out of the darkness of the grave; and the seventh-day Sabbath being buried with Christ, rose again in the first-day Sabbath, called the Lord's day, (*Rev.* 1: 10.) and no other day of the week is henceforward mentioned in all the New Testament than this, and this often, as the day which Christians religiously observed in solemn assemblies, to the honor of Christ. John 20: 19, 26. Acts 20: 7. 1 Cor. 16: 2. The Sabbath was instituted in remembrance of the perfecting of the work of creation. Gen. 2: 1.

(4.) He rose, as it began to dawn toward that day; as soon as it could be said that the third day was come, the time prefixed for his resurrection, He rose; after his withdrawals from his people, He returns with all convenient speed. He had said to his disciples, that though within a little while they should not see Him, yet again, a little while, and they should see Him, and accordingly He made it as little a while as possible. Isa. 54: 7, 8. Christ rose, when the day began to dawn, because then the day-spring from on high did again visit us, Luke 1: 78. Those who address themselves early in the morning to the religious services of the Christian Sabbath, therein follow this example of Christ, and that of David, *Early will I seek Thee*.

2. Who came to the sepulchre; Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, the same that attended the funeral, and sat over against the sepulchre, as before they sat over against the cross; still they studied to express their love to Christ, still they were inquiring after Him. Then shall we know, if we thus follow on to know. No mention is made of the virgin Mary being with them; it is probable that the beloved disciple, who had taken her to his own home, hindered her from going to the grave to weep there.

3. What they came to do: the other evangelists say they came to anoint the body; Matthew saith they came to see the sepulchre, whether it was as they left it; hearing perhaps, but not being sure, that the chief priests had set a guard on it. They went to show their good will in another visit, and perhaps not without some thoughts of their beloved Master's resurrection. Note, Visits to the grave are of great use to Christians, and will help to make it familiar to them, and to take off the terror of it, especially visits to the grave of our Lord Jesus, where we may see sin buried out of sight, the pattern of our sanctification, and the great proof of redeeming love shining illustriously even in that land of darkness.

II. The appearance of an angel of the Lord to them, *v.* 2—4. We have here an account of the manner of Christ's resurrection, as far as it was fit that we should know.

1. There was a great earthquake. When He died, the earth, that received Him, shook for loss; now that He rose, the earth, that resigned Him, leaped for joy in his exaltation. This earthquake loosened, as it were, the bond of death, shook off the fetters of the grave, and introduced the Desire of all nations. Hag. 2: 6, 7.

2. The angel of the Lord descended from heaven. The angels frequently attended our Lord Jesus, at his birth, in his temptation, in his agony; but on the cross we find no angel attending Him; when his Father sent Him,

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

6 He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay:

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: To, I have told you.

17:2. Dan. 10:5, 6. Rev. 10:1. 18:1. Mark 9:3. 10:5. Acts 1:10. Luke 34:5.

17:3. 17:65, 66.

17:4. Job 4:14. Ps. 48:6. Dan. 10:7. Acts 9:3-7. 15:29. Rev. 1:17.

17:5. 35:4. 41:10-11. Dan. 10:12, 19.

17:6. Luke 1:12, 13, 30. Rev. 1:17, 18.

17:7. Ps. 105:3, 4. Luke 24:15. John 20:13-15. Heb. 1:14.

17:8. 16:31. 17:9, 23. 20:19. 26:31, 32. 27:53. Mark 8:31. Luke 24:6-8, 23, 34. John 2:19. 10:17.

17:9. Mark 16:8. Luke 24:12. John 20:1-9.

17:10. Mark 16:7, 8, 10, 13. Luke 24:9, 10, 22-24. Mark 16:7, 13, 18.

17:11. 17:23, 32. Mark 14:28. John 21:1, 2. 1 Cor. 15:6.

17:12. 1 Cor. 15:6. 15:44. 45:21. John 14:29, 16:4.

17:13. 16:4.

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17:62. 16:4.

17:63. 16:4.

the angel's withdrew from Him; but now that He is resuming the glory He had before the foundation of the world, now, behold, the angels of God worship Him.

3. He came, and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. He could have rolled back the stone Himself, but He chose to have it done by an angel, to signify, that, having undertaken to make satisfaction for our sin, imputed to Him, and being under arrest pursuant to that imputation, He did not break prison, but obtained his discharge from heaven, as He had made a full satisfaction; being delivered for our offences, He was raised again for our justification; He died to pay our debt, and rose again to take out our acquaintance: not that the angel raised Him from the dead, but thus he intimated the consent and joy of heaven in his release. The enemies of Christ had sealed the stone, resolving, like Balaam, not to open the house of the prisoner; shall the prey be taken from the mighty? For this was their hour; but all the powers of death and darkness are under the control of the God of life and light. An angel from heaven has power to break the seal, and roll away the stone. Thus the captives of the mighty are taken away. The angel's sitting on the stone, is observable, and bespeaks a secure triumph over all the obstructions of Christ's resurrection. The angel, having frightened away the enemies' guard, sat as a guard to the grave, expecting the women, and ready to give them an account of his resurrection.

4. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow, v. 3. This was a visible representation, by that which we call splendid and illustrious, of the glories of the invisible world, which know no difference of colors. His look upon the keepers was like flashes of lightning, he cast forth lightning, and scattered them. Ps. 144: 6. The whiteness of his raiment was an emblem not only of purity, but of joy and triumph. The glory of this angel represented the glory of Christ, to which He was now risen, for it is the same description that was given of Him in his transfiguration; (ch. 17: 2.) but when He conversed with his disciples after his resurrection, He drew a veil over the angels in their resurrection, when they shall be as the angels of God in heaven.

5. That for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men, v. 4. They were soldiers, that thought themselves hardened against fear, yet the very sight of an angel struck them with terror. Thus when the Son of God arose to judgment, the stout-hearted were spoiled, Ps. 76: 5, 9. Note, The resurrection of Christ, as it is the joy of his friends, so it is the terror and confusion of his enemies. They did shake; the word is the same with that used for the earthquake, v. 2. The keepers became as dead men. It struck a terror upon them, to see themselves baffled in their business here. They were posted to keep a dead man in his grasp—as easy a piece of service surely as was ever assigned them, and yet it proves too hard. They were told that they must expect to be assaulted by a company of feeble, faint-hearted disciples, but are amazed to find themselves attacked by a mighty angel, whom they dare not look in the face. Thus doth God frustrate his enemies by frightening them, Ps. 9: 20.

III. The message this angel delivered, v. 5-7.

1. He encourages them against their fears, v. 5. To come near to graves and tombs, especially in silence and solitude, has something in it frightful, much more was it so to these women, to find an angel at the sepulchre; but he soon makes them easy with the word, Fear not ye. The keepers shook, and became as dead men, but, Fear not ye. Let the sinners in Zion be afraid, for there is cause for it; but, Fear not, Abraham, nor any of the faithful seed of Abraham; why should the daughters of Sarah, that do well, be afraid with any amazement? 1 Pet. 3: 6. Fear not ye. Let not the news I have to tell you, be any surprise to you, for you were told before that your Master would rise; let it be no terror to you, for his resurrection will be your consolation; fear not any hurt that I will do you, nor any evil tidings I have to tell you. Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus. I know ye are friends to the cause; I do not come to frighten, but to encourage you. Note, Those that seek Jesus, have no reason to be afraid; for, if they seek Him diligently, they shall find Him, and shall find Him their bountiful Rewarder. All our believing inquiries after the Lord Jesus are observed, and taken notice of, in heaven; I know that ye seek Jesus; and shall certainly be answered, as these were, with good words, and comfortable words. Ye seek Jesus that was crucified. He mentions his being crucified, the more to commend their love to Him; 'You seek Him still, though He was crucified; you retain your kindness for Him notwithstanding.' Note, True believers love and seek Christ, not only though He was crucified, but because He was so.

2. He assures them of the resurrection of Christ; and there was enough in that to silence their fears, v. 6. To be told, He is not here, would have been no welcome news, to those who sought Him, if it had not been added, He is risen. Now, in all our inquiries after Christ, we must re-

member that He is risen; and seek Him as One risen. (1.) Not with any gross, carnal thoughts of Him. There were those that knew Christ after the flesh; but now henceforth know we Him so no more, 2 Cor. 5: 16. True, He had a body; but it is now a glorified body. They that make pictures and images of Christ, forget that He is not here, He is risen; our communion with Him must be spiritual, by faith in his Word, Rom. 10: 6-8. (2.) We must seek Him with great reverence and humility, and an awful regard to his glory, for He is risen. God has highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name, and therefore every knee and every soul must bow before Him. (3.) We must seek Him with a heavenly mind; when we are ready to make this world our home, and to say, It is good to be here, let us remember our Lord Jesus is not here, He is risen, and therefore let not our hearts be here, but let them rise too, and seek the things that are above, Col. 3: 1-3. Phil. 3: 20.

Two things the angel refers these women to, for the confirmation of their faith.

[1.] To this word now fulfilled, which they might remember. This He vouches as the proper object of faith: 'He said that He would rise, and you know that He is the Truth itself, and therefore have reason to expect that He should rise. Let us never think that strange, of which the word of Christ has raised our expectations whether the sufferings of this present time, or the glory to be revealed. If we remember what Christ hath said to us, we shall be the less surprised at what He doth with us. This angel makes it to appear that he preaches no other Gospel than they had already received, for he refers himself to the word of Christ; He is risen, as He said.

[2.] To his grave, now empty; 'Come, see the place where the Lord lay. Compare what you have heard, with what you see, and you will believe. Come, see the place, and you will see that He is not there, that He could not be stolen thence, and therefore must conclude that He is risen.' Note, It may have a good influence on us, to come, and with an eye of faith see the place where the Lord lay. When we look into the grave where we expect to lie, to take off the terror of it, let us look into the grave where the Lord lay; the place where our Lord lay, so the Syriac. The angels own Him for their Lord, as well as we; for the whole family, both in heaven and earth, is named from Him.

3. He directs them to go carry the tidings of it to his disciples, v. 7. Perhaps they were for entertaining themselves with the sight of the sepulchre, and discourse with the angels. It was good to be here, but they have other work appointed them: this is a day of good tidings, but they must not have the monopoly of it, must not hold their peace, any more than those lepers, 2 Kings 7: 9. Note, Public usefulness to others must be preferred before the pleasure of secret communion with God ourselves; for it is more blessed to give than to receive. Observe,

(1.) The disciples of Christ must first be told the news, not the chief priests and the Pharisees. God anticipates the joy of his friends more than the shame of his enemies, though the perfection of both is reserved for hereafter. Tell his disciples, [1.] That they may encourage themselves under their present sorrows and dispersions. What a cordial would this be to them now, to hear their Master is risen! [2.] That they may inquire further into it themselves. This alarm was sent them, to awaken them from stupidity, and raise their expectations to set them on seeking Him, and to prepare them for his appearance to them. Christ discovers Himself gradually.

(2.) The women are thus made, as it were the apostles of the apostles. This was an honor put on them, and a recompense for their constant, affectionate adherence to Him, at the cross, and in the grave, and a rebuke to the disciples who forsook Him. Still God chooses the weak things of the world, to confound the mighty, and puts the treasure, not only into earthen vessels, but here into the weaker vessels; as, the woman, being deceived by the sug-

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word.

9 ¶ And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'All hail. And they came and bowed him by the feet, and worshipped him.'

10 Then said Jesus unto them, 'Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go to Galilee, and there shall they see me.'

¶ *Ps. 132:13, Ps. 2:11, Mark 16:8, Luke 24:36-41, John 16:20, 22, 20:21, 21.*
 ¶ *Is. 64:5, Mark 16:9, 10, John 20:14-16.*
 ¶ *Luke 1:28, 2 Cor. 13:11, Greek text, 3:34, Luke 7:52, John 12:3, 20:27, Rev. 3:9.*
 ¶ *17, 14:33, Luke 24:38, John 20:28, Rev. 5:11-14.*
 ¶ *18, 14:27, Luke 24:38-39, John 6:20.*
 ¶ *7, Judg. 10:16, Ps. 103:3-13, Mark 16:7.*
 ¶ *12:48-50, 25:40, 45, Mark 3:33-35, John 20:17, Rom. 8:29, Heb. 2:11-18.*

the means of grace He will graciously manifest Himself. [2.] In consideration of the weakness of his disciples that were now at Jerusalem, who as yet were afraid of the Jews, and durst not appear publicly. Christ knows our fears, and considers our frame, and He made his appointment where there was least danger of disturbance.

Lastly, The angel solemnly affirms the truth of what he had related to them; 'Lo, I have told you.' The word spoken by angels was steadfast, Heb. 2. 2. God had been wont formerly to make known his mind to his people, by the ministration of angels, as at the giving of the law; but as He intended in gospel-times to lay aside that way of communication, (for unto the angels hath He not put in subjection the world to come, nor appointed them to be the preachers of the Gospel,) this angel was now sent to certify the resurrection of Christ to the disciples, and so leave it in their hands to be published to the world, 2 Cor. 4: 7. In saying, *Lo, I have told you*, he doth, as it were, discharge himself from the blame of their unbelief, if they should not receive this record; 'I have done my errand; whether you will hear or whether you will forbear, I have told you.' Note, Those messengers from God, that discharge their trust faithfully, may take the comfort of that, whatever the success be, Acts 20: 26, 27.

IV. The women's departure from the sepulchre, to bring notice to the disciples, v. 8. And observe,

1. What frame and temper of spirit they were in; they departed with fear and great joy; a strange mixture, in the same soul. To hear that Christ was risen, was matter of joy; but to be led into his grave, and to see an angel, and talk with him about it, could not but cause fear. It was good news, but they were afraid that it was too good to be true. But observe, it is said of their joy, it was great joy; it is not said so of their fear. Note, (1.) Holy fear has joy attending it. They that serve the Lord with reverence, serve him with gladness. (2.) Spiritual joy is mixed with trembling, Ps. 2: 11. It is only perfect love and joy that will cast out all fear.

2. What haste they made; the angel bid them go quickly, and they ran. Those that are sent on God's errand must not loiter, or lose time; where the heart is enlarged with the glad tidings of the Gospel, the feet will run the way of God's commandments.

3. Their errand; to bring his disciples word; and to comfort them with the same comforts wherewith they themselves were comforted of God. Note, The disciples of Christ should be forward to communicate to each other their experiences of sweet communion with Heaven; should tell others what God has done for their souls. Joy in Christ Jesus, like the ointment of the right hand, will betray itself by its odors.

V. Christ's appearing to the women, to confirm the testimony of the angel, v. 9, 10. These zealous, good women not only heard the first tidings, but had the first sight of Him after his resurrection. The angel directed those that would see Him, to go to Galilee, but before that time came, even as also, they looked after Him that lives and sees them. Note, Jesus

gestions of an evil angel, was first in the transgression, (1 Tim. 2: 14.) so these women, being duly informed by the instructions of a good angel, were first in the belief of the redemption from transgression by Christ's resurrection, that that reproach of their sex might be rolled away, by putting this in the balance against it, which is their perpetual praise.

(3.) They were bid to go quickly. What haste was there? Would not the news be welcome to them at any time? Yes, but they were now overwhelmed with grief, and Christ would have this cordial hastened to them; when Daniel was humbling himself before God for sin, the angel Gabriel was caused to fly swiftly with a message of comfort, Dan. 9: 21. We must always be ready and forward; [1.] To obey the commands of God, Ps. 119: 60. [2.] To do good to our brethren, and carry comfort to them, as those that felt for their afflictions; Say not, Go, and come again, and to-morrow I will give; but now quickly.

(4.) They were directed to appoint the disciples to meet Him in Galilee. There were other appearances of Christ to them before that in Galilee, which were sudden and surprising; but He would have one to be solemn and public, and gave them notice of it before. Now this general rendezvous was appointed in Galilee, eighty or a hundred miles from Jerusalem; [1.] In kindness to those of his disciples that remained in Galilee, and did not (perhaps could not) come up to Jerusalem. I know thy works, and where thou dwellest. Note, The exaltation of Christ doth not make Him forget the meaner and poorer sort of his disciples, but even to them that are at a distance from the plenty of

Christ is often better than his word, never worse; often anticipates, but never frustrates the believing expectations of his people.

Here is, 1 Christ's surprising appearance to the women, v. 9. Note, God's gracious visits usually meet us in the way of duty, and to those who use what they have for others' benefit, more shall be given. This interview with Christ was unexpected, or ever they were aware Cant. 6: 12. Note, Christ is nearer to his people than they imagine. They needed not descend into the deep, to fetch Christ hence; He was not there, He was risen; nor go up to heaven, for He was not yet ascended; but Christ was nigh them, and still in the Word is nigh us.

2. The salutation wherewith He accosted them; All hail. We use the old English form of salutation, wishing all health to those we meet; for so All hail signifies, and is expressive of the Greek form of salutation here used, answering to that of the Hebrew, Peace be unto you. And it bespeaks, (1.) The good will of Christ to us and our happiness, ever since He entered on his state of exaltation. (2.) The freedom and holy familiarity He used in his fellowship with his disciples: He called them friends. But the Greek word signifies, Rejoice ye. They were affected both with fear and joy; what He said to them tended to encourage their joy, (v. 9.) Rejoice ye, and to silence their fear; (v. 10.) Be not afraid. Note, It is the will of Christ that his people should be a cheerful, joyful people, and his resurrection furnishes them with abundant matter for joy.

3. The affectionate respect they paid Him, v. 9. Thus they expressed, (1.) The reverence and honor they had for Him; they threw themselves at his feet, in a posture of adoration, and worshipped Him with humility and godly fear, as the Son of God, and now exalted. (2.) The love and affection they had to Him; they held Him, and would not let Him go, Cant. 3: 4. How beautiful were the feet of the Lord Jesus to them! Isa. 52: 7. (3.) The transport of joy they were in, now that they had this further assurance of his resurrection; they welcomed it with both arms. Thus we must embrace Jesus Christ offered us in the Gospel, with reverence cast ourselves at his feet, by faith take hold of Him, and with love and joy lay Him near our hearts.

4. The encouraging words Christ said to them, v. 10. We do not find that they said any thing to Him, their affectionate embraces and adorations spake plainly enough; and what He said to them was no more than what the angel had said; (v. 5, 7.) for He will confirm the word of his messengers; (Isa. 44: 26,) and his way of comforting his people is, by his Spirit to speak over again to their hearts the same they had heard before from his angels, the ministers. Now observe, here,

(1.) How He rebukes their fear; Be not afraid. They must not fear being imposed on by these repeated notices of his resurrection, nor fear any hurt from the appearance of one from the dead. Note, Christ rose from the dead, to silence his people's fears.

(2.) How He repeats their message; 'Go tell my brethren, they must prepare for a journey into Galilee, and there they shall see Me. If there be any communication between our souls and Christ, it is He that appoints the meeting, and He will observe the appointment. Jerusalem had forfeited the honor of Christ's presence, it was a tumultuous city, therefore He adjourns the meeting to Galilee. Come, my beloved, let us go forth, Cant. 7: 11. But that which is especially observable here, is, that He calls his disciples his brethren. Go, tell my brethren, not only those of them that were akin to Him, but all the rest, for they are all his

NOTES.

CHAP. XXVIII. v. 9, 10. It is obvious to every attentive reader, that there is some difficulty in arranging the various circumstances, recorded by the evangelists, into one compact narration: and it is plain, they did not write in concert; but the Lord was pleased to direct each of the sacred historians to write those incidents which most impressed his own mind. When the different accounts have been separately considered, a compendious view will be given of the most approved method, by which they have been shown to be consistent with each other; and

that will be the proper place also, for a brief statement of the complex demonstration afforded us of this important event, on which the truth of Christianity and all our hopes depend.

(9.) They came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him. Exactly this kind of reverence may be seen daily among the Hindoo or A Hindoo disciple, meeting his religious guide in the public street, prostrates himself before him, and rubs the dust of his feet on his forehead and breast.

WARD.

11 ¶ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,

13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

14 And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

a 4. 27-55. 66.
b 28:34. 27:1, 2, 62-64. Ps. 2:1-7.
Joh. 11:47, 48. 12:10, 11. Acts 4:5-22. 5:33, 34, 40.
c Act. 12:19.

did themselves see the glory of the resurrection, which none else did—and were enemies also, set there to oppose and obstruct his resurrection. Now observe here,

I. How this testimony was given *in* to the chief priests; (v. 11.) *when the women were going to bring that news to the disciples, which would fill their hearts with joy*, the soldiers went to bring the same news to the chief priests, *which would fill their faces with shame.* Some of the watch, probably those of them that commanded in chief, came into the city, and brought to those who employed them, the report of their disappointment: (v. 11.) told them of the earthquake, the descent of the angel, the rolling of the stone away, and the coming of the body of Jesus alive out of the grave. Thus the sign of the prophet Jonas was brought to the chief priests, with the most clear and incontestable evidence that could be; and so the utmost means of conviction were afforded them; we may well imagine what a mortification it was to them, and that, like the enemies of the Jews, they were much cast down in their own eyes, Neh. 6:16. It might justly have been expected that they should now have believed in Christ, and repented their putting Him to death; but they were obstinate in their infidelity.

II. How it was baffled and stifled by them. They called an assembly, and considered what was to be done. For their own parts, they were resolved not to believe that Jesus was risen; but their care was, to keep others from believing, and themselves from being quite ashamed from their disbelief of it. They had put Him to death, and there was no way of standing to what they had done, but by confronting the evidence of his resurrection. Thus they who have sold themselves to work wickedness, find that one sin draws on another, and that they have plunged themselves into a wretched necessity of adding iniquity to iniquity, which is part of the curse of Christ's persecutors, Ps. 69:27.

The result of their debate was, that those soldiers must by all means be bribed off, and hired not to tell tales.

1. They put money into their hands; and what wickedness is it which men will not be brought to by the love of money? These chief priests loved their money as well as most people, and yet, to carry on a malicious design against the Gospel of Christ, they were very prodigal of it. Here was large money given for the advancing of what they knew to be a lie, yet many grudge a little money for the advancement of what they know to be the truth, though they have a promise of being reimbursed in the resurrection of the just. Let us never starve a good cause, when we see a bad one so liberally supported.

2. They put a lie into their mouths; v. 13. A sorry shift indeed. (1.) This was ridiculous, and carried along with it its own confutation. If they slept, how could they know any thing of the matter, or say who came? If any one of them were awake to observe it, no doubt, he would awake them all to oppose it; for that was the only thing they had in charge. It was improbable that a company of poor, weak, dispirited men should expose themselves for so inconsiderable an achievement as the rescue of

brethren, (ch. 12:50.) but He never called them so till after his resurrection; here, and John 20:17. Being, by the resurrection, Himself declared to be the Son of God with power, all the children of God were thereby declared to be his brethren. Being the First-born of the dead, He is become the First-born among many brethren, even of all that are planted together in the likeness of his resurrection. Christ did not now converse so constantly and familiarly with his disciples as He had done before his death; but, lest they should think Him grown strange to them, He gives them this endearing title, *Go to my brethren*, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which, speaking of his entrance on his exalted state, saith, *I will declare thy name unto my brethren.* They had shamefully deserted Him in his sufferings; but, to show that He could forgive and forget, and to teach us to do so, He not only continues his purpose to meet them, but calls them brethren. Being all his brethren, they were brethren one to another, and must love as brethren. His owning them for his brethren put a great honor on them, but withal gave them an example of humility in the midst of that honor.

V. 11-15. For the further proof of the resurrection of Christ, we have here the confession of the guard, whose testimony is confirmed in that they were eye-witnesses, and

the dead body. Why were not the houses where they lodged diligently searched, another means used to discover it? But this was so thin a lie as one might easily see through. Had it been ever so plausible, (2.) It was a wicked thing for these priests and elders to hire these soldiers, against the consciences, to tell a deliberate lie, if it had been in a matter of ever so small importance. Those know not what they do, who draw others to commit one wilful sin; for that may debase conscience, and be an inlet to many. (3.) Considering this as intended to overthrow the great doctrine of Christ's resurrection, it was a sin against the last remedy, and in effect, a blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, imputing that to the rogues of the disciples, which was done by the power of the Holy Ghost.

But, lest the soldiers should object the penalty they incurred by the Roman law for sleeping on guard, which was very severe, (Acts 12:10.) they promised to interpose with the governor; *We will persuade him, and secure you.* They had lately found how easily they could manage him. If really these soldiers had slept, and so suffered the disciples to steal Him away, as they would have the world believe, the priests and elders would certainly have been the forwardest to solicit the governor to punish them for their treachery; so that their care for the soldiers' safety plainly gives the lie to the story. They undertook to secure them from the sword of Pilate's justice, but could not secure them from the sword of God's justice, which hangs over the head of those that love and make a lie. They promise more than they can perform, who undertake to save a man harmless in the commission of a wilful sin.

Well, thus was the plot laid; now, what success had it?

[1.] Those that were willing to deceive, took the money, and did as they were taught. They cared as little for Christ and his religion as the chief priests and elders did; and men of no religion can be well pleased to see Christianity run down, and lend a hand to it, if it need be. They took the money; that they aimed at, and nothing else. Note, Money is a bait for the blackest temptation; mercenary tongues will sell the truth for it.

The great argument to prove Christ to be the Son of God is, his resurrection, and none could have more convincing proofs of the truth of that than these soldiers; they saw the angel descend from heaven, the stone rolled away, the body of Christ come out of the grave, unless their consternation hindered them; and yet they were so far from being convinced by it themselves, that they were hired to lie Him, and hinder others from believing in Him. Note, The most sensible evidence will not convince men without the concurring operation of the Holy Spirit.

[2.] Those that were willing to be deceived, not only credited, but propagated, the story; v. 15. It took well enough, and answered the end. The Jews, who persisted in their infidelity, when pressed with the argument of Christ's resurrection, had this still ready, *His disciples came, and stole Him away.* To this purport was the solemn narrative, which (as Justin Martyr relates in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew) the great sanhedrim sent to all the Jews of the dispersion concerning this affair, exciting them to a vigorous resistance of Christianity—that, when they had crucified, and buried Him, the disciples came by night, and stole

Verses 11-15.

'The more the sun shineth, the more are the wicked blinded.' Heza. 'It may be said, that this account is the representation of friends, interested in asserting the reality of the resurrection; but that there is probably another story told by the opposite party, which may set the matter in a different point of view; and that before we can judge fairly of the question, we must hear what they have to say of it. This is certainly very proper and reasonable. There is, we have observed, another account given by the Jews; and the sacred historians tell us what this opposite story was.' Bp. Porteus. It should also be observed, that this is the only account given of these transactions by the opposite party; at least, no other is extant, nor do we read of any other in ancient writers. It is not conceivable but that the chief priests and rulers must have been convinced that the events were miraculous, and afraid that Jesus was indeed risen again as He had predicted; but they had engaged all their credit, and authority, and

even safety, in this unequal contest; they could not think of submitting or receding; and there was no other way left, but to conceal it, if possible, what had taken place. (Note, 2:3-6.) And this report (v. 15.) was circulated with such diligence and success, that it was commonly current among the Jews, when Matthew wrote his gospel; [Eight, eighteen, or thirty years after, Dr. A. Clarke.] and no one, as far as we can learn, attempted to disprove it, when thus published to the world. Yet was it a falsehood which confused itself, and the single omission to prosecute the disciples was a full demonstration, that they did not believe the report they so industriously circulated. It was also improbable in the extreme, that the intimidated apostles and disciples should attempt such an action, which would have been excessively rash, even in the most experienced soldiers; it was still more improbable that they should succeed; and if they had, reproach, torture, and death were the whole recompense they could possibly have expected.

15 So ^d they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews, ^e until this day.

16 ¶ Then the eleven disciples ^f went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

^d 22-23. 1 Tim. 6:10.

^e 27-28.

^f Mark 16:14. John 6:70. Acts 1:12

^g 2-28. 1 Cor. 15:3.

^h 7, 10. 23-32.

(15.) *Until this day.* They went into Galilee, a long journey to go for one sight of Christ, but it was worth while. They had seen Him several times at Jerusalem, and yet went into Galilee, to see Him there.

1. Because He appointed them to do so. Note, Those who would maintain communion with Christ, must attend Him where He has appointed. Those who have met Him in one ordinance, must attend Him in another.

2. Be sure that was to be a public and general meeting. They had seen Him themselves, and conversed with Him in private, but that should not excuse their attendance in a solemn assembly, where many were to be gathered together to see Him. Note, Our communion with God in secret must not supersede our attendance on public worship, as we have opportunity; for *God loves the gates of Zion*, and so must we. The place was a mountain in Galilee, probably the same on which He was transfigured. There they met for privacy.

III. How they were affected with his appearance, v. 17. Now was He seen of above five hundred brethren at once, 1 Cor. 15: 6. Some think that they saw Him, at first, at some distance, above in the air. *He was seen above, of five hundred brethren*; (so they read it;) which gave occasion to some to doubt, till He came nearer; (v. 18.) and then they were satisfied. We are told,

1. That they worshipped Him; many of them did so, nay, it should seem, they all did that; they gave divine honor to Him, which was signified by some outward expressions of adoration. Note, All that see the Lord Jesus with an eye of faith, are obliged to worship Him.

2. But some doubted, some of those that were then present. Note, Even among those that worship, there are some that doubt. The faith of those that are sincere, may yet be very weak and wavering. They doubted, they hung in suspense, as the scales of the balance, when it is hard to say which preponderates. These doubts were afterward removed, and their faith grew up to a full assurance, and it tended much to the honor of Christ, that the disciples doubted before they believed; so that they cannot be said to be credulous, and willing to be imposed on; for they first questioned, and proved all things, and then held fast that which they found to be true.

III. What Christ said to them; v. 18-20. Though there were those that doubted, yet He did not therefore reject them; for He will not break the bruised reed. He did not stand at a distance, but came near, and gave them such convincing proofs of his resurrection as turned the wavering scale, and made their faith to triumph over their doubts. He came and spake familiarly to them, as one friend speaks to another, that they might be fully satisfied in the communion He was about to give them. He that drew near to God, to speak for us to Him, draws near to us, to speak from Him to us. Christ now delivered to his apostles the great charter of his kingdom in the world, was sending them out as his ambassadors, and here gives them their credentials.

In opening this great charter, we may observe two things:

1. The commission our Lord received Himself from the Father. Being about to authorize his apostles, if any ask by what authority He doeth it, here He tells us, (v. 18.) a very great word, and which none but He could say. Hereby He asserts his universal dominion as Mediator, which is the great foundation of the Christian religion. He has all power. Observe, (1.) *Whence* He hath it. He did not assume, or usurp it, but it was given Him, by Him who is the Fountain of all being, and consequently of all power. God set Him King, (Ps. 2: 6.) inaugurated and enthroned Him, Luke 1: 32. As God, equal with the Father, all power was originally and essentially his; but as Mediator, as God-man, all power was given Him; partly in recompense of his work, and partly in pursuance of his design; He had this power given Him over all flesh, that He might give eternal life to as many as were given Him, John 17: 2. This power He was now more signally invested in, upon his resurrection, Acts 13: 33. He had before power to forgive sins; (ch. 9: 6.) but now all power is given Him. He is now to receive for Himself a kingdom, (Luke 19: 12.) to sit down at the right hand, Ps. 110: 1. Having purchased it, nothing remains but to take possession; it is his own forever. (2.) *Where* He has this power; in heaven and earth, comprehending the universe. Christ is the sole universal Monarch, He is Lord of all, Acts 10: 36. He has all power in heaven. He has power of dominion over the angels, they are all his humble servants, Eph. 1: 20, 21. He has power of intercession with his Father, in virtue of his satisfaction and atonement; He intercedes, not as a

suppliant, but as a demandant; *Father, I will* He has all power on earth too; having prevailed with God, by the sacrifice of atonement, He prevails with men, and deals with them as One having authority, by the ministry of reconciliation. He is indeed, in all causes and over all persons, supreme Moderator and Governor. *By Him kings reign.* All souls are his, and to Him every heart and knee must bow, and every tongue confess Him to be the Lord. This our Lord Jesus tells them, not only to satisfy them of the authority He had to commission them, and to bring them out in the execution of their commission, but to take off the offence of the cross; they had no reason to be ashamed of Christ crucified, when they saw Him thus glorified.

2. The commission He gives to those whom He sent forth; *Go ye therefore.* This commission is given, (1.) To the apostles primarily. Now were they set on thrones; (Luke 22: 30.) *Go ye.* It is not only a word of command, like that, *Son, go work*, but a word of encouragement, *Go, and fear not, have not I sent you?* Go, and make a business of this work; bring the Gospel to their doors. *Go ye.* They had doted on Christ's bodily presence, and built all their joys and hopes on that; now Christ discharges them from further attendance on his person, and sends them abroad about other work. *As an eagle stirs up her nest, flutters over her young*, to excite them to fly, (Deut. 32: 11.) so Christ excites his disciples, to disperse themselves into all the world. (2.) It is given to their successors, the ministers of the Gospel, whose business it is to transmit the Gospel from age to age, to the end of the world, in time, as it was theirs to transmit it from nation to nation to the end of the world in place, and no less necessary. The Old-Testament promise of a Gospel ministry is made to a succession; (Isa. 59: 21.) and this must be so understood, otherwise how could Christ be with them always, to the consummation of the world? Christ at his ascension, gave not only apostles and prophets, but pastors and teachers, Eph. 4: 11. Now observe,

[1.] How far his commission is extended; to all nations. Go, and disciple all nations. Now this plainly signifies it to be the will of Christ, 1st. That the covenant of peculiarity, made with the Jews, should now be cancelled and disannulled. This word brake down the middle wall of partition, which had so long excluded the Gentiles from a visible church state; and where as the apostles, when first sent out, were for hidden to go into the way of the Gentiles, now they were sent to all nations. 2dly. That salvation by Christ should be offered to all, and none excluded that did not, by their unbelief and impenitence, exclude themselves. The salvation they were to preach is a common salvation; whoever will, let him come; for there is no difference of Jew or Greek in Christ Jesus. 3dly. That Christianity should be interwoven with national constitutions, that the kingdoms of the world should become Christ's kingdoms, and their kings the church's nursing fathers.

[2.] The principal intention of this commission; to disciple all nations. Admit them disciples; not to denounce judgments against them, as Jonah against Nineveh, and as the other Old-Testament prophets, but go, and disciple them. The Mediator, is setting up a kingdom in the world; bring the nations to be his subjects. The work the apostles had to do, was, to set up the Christian religion in all places; an honorable work, compared with which the achievements of the mighty heroes of the world were nothing. They conquered the nations for themselves, and made them miserable; the apostles conquered them for Christ, and made them happy.

[3.] Their instructions:

1st. They must admit disciples by baptism

(15.) *Until this day.* This seems to intimate that our evangelist wrote his gospel several years after our Lord's resurrection. It is very observable that Justin Martyr expressly asserts, that the Jews sent chosen men of considerable rank over all the world, not only in the general to represent Christianity as an impious sect, but to assert that

the body of Jesus was stolen out of his tomb by night, and that the persons who thus fraudulently conveyed Him away, took occasion from thence to report that he rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. And this message is spoken of as having been sent before the destruction of Jerusalem.

17 And when they saw him they ^bworshipped him: ^cbut some doubted.

18 ¶ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, ^aAll power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19 Go ^aye therefore, and teach all nations, ^bbaptizing them ^cin the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;

h 9. Ps. 2:12. 45:11. John 5:23.

i 1 Cor. 15:47.

j 11:27. 15:28. Ps. 2:6-9. 89:27.

k 11:12. Is. 9:6, 7. Dan. 7:14. Luke 1:32, 33. 10:22. John 3:35. 5:22-27. 17:13. 17:22. Acts 2:36. 10:35.

l Rom. 14:9. 1 Cor. 15:27. Eph. 1:20-22. Phil. 2:9-11. Col. 1:16-19.

m Heb. 1:2. 2:8. 1 Pet. 3:22. Rev. 1:14. 1:18.

n Ps. 22:27-28. 99:2, 3. Is. 42:4-5.

o 39:6. 52:10. 65:18, 19. Mark 16:15.

p 16. Luke 24:47, 48. Acts 1:8. 18: 46, 47. 28:28. Rom. 9:18. Col. 1:23.

q Acts 2:38, 41. 8:12-16, 35-38. 9: 18. 10:47, 48. 16:33, 38. 19:2-5.

r 1 Cor. 1:13-16. 12:13. Gal. 3:27, 28.

s 2 Cor. 13:17. Gen. 1:26. Num. 6:24-27.

t 1. 48:16. 1 Cor. 12:4-6. 2 Cor. 13:14.

u Eph. 2:18. 1 John 5:7. Rev. 1:4-6.

the summary of the first principles of the Christian religion, and of the new covenant, and according to it the ancient creeds were drawn up. By our being baptized, we solemnly profess, (1.) *Our assent to the Scripture revelation concerning God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.* We confess our belief that there is a God, that there is but one God, that in the Godhead there is a *Father that begets, a Son that is begotten, and a Holy Spirit of both.* We are baptized not into the names, but into the name, of Father, Son, and Spirit, which plainly intimate that *these Three are One, and their name One.* The distinct mentioning of the *Three Persons* in the Trinity, both in the *Christian baptism* here, and in the *Christian blessing*, (2 Cor. 13:14.) as it is a full proof of the doctrine of the Trinity, so it has done much toward the preserving of it pure and entire through all ages of the church; for nothing

Verse 18.

It is not certain whether what is next recorded took place in Galilee, or after the return of the disciples to Jerusalem, and just before our Lord's ascension. 'The word here is *authority, not power*:' it is manifest that they differ from each other; for many are not able to perform those things they have a right to do; and on the contrary, many have power to do those things which they have no right to do.' *Beza (Marg. Ref. k.—See 11:27. John 3:27-36. v. 35, 36. 5:20-29. 13:1-5. v. 3. 17:1-3. v. 2. Eph. 1:15-23. v. 20, 21. Phil. 2:9-11. 1 Pet. 1:21, 22. Rev. 1:12-20. v. 18. 11:15-18).* This authority is given to Christ, as Emmanuel, as the Son of man, and as Mediator; but did He not possess all divine perfections, how could He exercise it? 'He to whom any office is committed, must have sufficient power and wisdom to discharge that office. Now to govern all things in heaven and earth, belongs only to Him who is the Lord and Maker of them. To have power over death, and to be able to raise the dead, is to have that power, which is proper to God alone; and to have power over the souls of men, and the knowledge of all hearts, belongs to God alone.' *Whitby.* Scorn.

Verse 19, 20.

The apostles were so much under the influence of Jewish prejudices, that they did not understand this commission, as authorizing them to preach to the Gentiles, till a considerable time after the descent of the Holy Spirit! (Acts 11:1-3, 13.) Two words in this passage are translated *teach, and teaching*; but are of different meaning. The former means the general instruction necessary to bring men to profess themselves disciples of Christ: the other relates to their subsequent instruction in all the various parts of Christianity. As the words might have stood in the same order, if it had been a command to 'go, and convert all nations to Judaism, circumcising them in the law of God, and teaching them to observe the law of Moses'; no argument can hence be fairly adduced respecting the subjects of baptism. For it would have been understood, that adult males must be circumcised on a profession of the Jewish religion, and their infant-offspring at the time appointed: as in like manner all adults, admitted into the church from among Jews and Gentiles, must be instructed in Christianity before they were baptized; though their infant-offspring must be baptized also; and the case is exactly the same still. The general nature of baptism has already been explained; (Note, 3:6.) So we have here an account of the appropriation of this institution to the Christian dispensation. The apostles and preachers of the Gospel were ordered to baptize those who embraced it, 'into the name' (not God, or Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.)' (Num. 6:21-27.) This is a most irrefragable proof of the doctrine of the Trinity; that is, of the Deity of the Son, and of the distinct personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit; for it would be absurd to suppose, that a mere man, or creature, or a mere *modus*, or quality of God, should be joined with the Father, in the one 'name,' into which all Christians are baptized. To be baptized into the name of any one, implies, in the person so baptized, a professed dependence on Him, and devoted subjection to Him: (1 Cor. 1:10-16, v. 13-15.) to be baptized, therefore, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,

is more great and awful in *Christian assemblies* than these two. (2.) *Our consent to a covenant relation to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.* Baptism is a sacrament, that is, it is an oath; an oath of abjuration, by which we renounce the world and the flesh, as rivals with God for the throne in our hearts; and an oath of allegiance, by which we resign and give up ourselves to God, to be his, our own selves, our whole selves, body, soul, and spirit, to be governed by his will, and made happy in his favor. Therefore baptism is applied to the person because it is the person that is dedicated to God.

[1.] It is into the name of the Father, believing Him to be the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, (for that is principally intended here,) by eternal generation, and our Father, as our Creator, Preserver, and Benefactor, to whom therefore we resign ourselves, as our absolute Owner and Proprietor, to actuate us, and dispose of us; as our supreme Rector and Governor, to rule us, as free agents, by his law; and as our chief good, and highest end. [2.] It is into the name of the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and correlate to the Father. Baptism was in a particular manner administered in the name of the Lord Jesus, Acts 8:16. 19:5. In baptism we assent, as Peter did, *Thou art Christ the Son of the living God*, (ch. 16:16.) and consent, as Thomas did, *My Lord, and my God*, John 20:28. We take Christ to be our Prophet, Priest, and King, and give up ourselves to be taught, and saved, and ruled by Him. [3.] It is into the name of the Holy Ghost. Believing the Godhead of the Holy Spirit, and his agency in carrying on our redemption, we give up ourselves to his conduct and operation, as our Sanctifier, Teacher, Guide and Comforter.

3dly. Those who are thus baptized, and enrolled among the disciples of Christ, must be taught. v. 20. This denotes two things;

1. The duty of disciples, of all baptized Christians; they must observe all things whatsoever Christ has commanded, and, in order to that must submit to the teaching of those whom He

implies a professed dependence on these three divine Persons, jointly and equally, and a devoting of ourselves to them as worshippers and servants. This is proper and obvious, on the supposition of the mysterious unity of three co-equal Persons in the unity of the Godhead, but not so accounted for on any other principles. Christianity is the religion of a sinner, who relies for salvation from wrath, sin, and all evil, on the mercy of the Father, through the person, righteousness, atonement, and mediation of the incarnate Son, and by the sanctification of the Holy Spirit; and who, in consequence, gives up himself to be the worshipper and servant of the triune JEHOVAH, in all his ordinances and commandments; that, according to the ancient and excellent doxology, 'Glory may be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.' Baptism is an outward sign of that inward washing, or sanctification of the Spirit, which seals and evidences the believer's justification. When an adult is baptized, he avows his acceptance of this salvation, and makes his surrender of himself to the service of God and His Son. When we bring our infant-offspring to be baptized, we express our nearest desire, that they may share the same benefits, and be the redeemed and accepted worshippers and servants of God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; we renew our own profession of faith, and devotedness to this one God in three Persons; and we pledge ourselves to God and his church, to use all proper means to 'bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' in hope of their being made partakers of the inward and spiritual grace of baptism. As far as these things are attended to, they have a most salutary effect both on parents and children; and this sacrament, thus administered, helps to keep up the remembrance of the principal doctrines of Christianity, in all places where it is used. (2 Cor. 13:15-16. Mark 10:13-16.) There can be no reasonable doubt, that the apostles and primitive Christians always administered baptism in this very form; and it would be strange to infer their disobedience to a command of Christ, so express, from the brevity, with which matters of this nature are recorded in 'the Acts of the Apostles.' Indeed, it would be a most daring presumption in any man to alter it, as if he knew better than the Lord Himself, in what manner to administer this sacrament. Our Lord is with us in the power of his protecting providence; by the influences of his teaching, sanctifying, and comforting Spirit; and in the communication of all spiritual blessings from the favor of his omnipresent Deity; and we should realize Him with us, in secret and in social worship, and in our public assemblies. (18:20.) Scorn.

'Not only they who have learnt and been instructed, but they also who are to learn and are to be instructed, are included under the name disciple. Therefore are infants to be baptized. For, since the apostles could not have been ignorant that the children and infants of proselytes from the Gentiles were not only called proselytes, and circumcised, which the Mishna teaches, but also baptized, (which Weistain on Matt. 3:6. proves abundantly from the Gemara,) it never could so much as have entered their mind, that children and infants were to be expunged from the catalogue of disciples, or that they were to be denied baptism, unless they had been excepted and excluded by Christ in express words; which we no where read.' *Ross &c.*

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

7:44-27. Dent. 5:32. 19:32. Acta 2:42. 20:20, 21, 27. 1 Cor. 11:23. 11:37. Eph. 4:11-17, 20, &c. Col. 1:25. 1 Thes. 4:1, 2. 2 Thes. 3:6-12. 1 Tim. 6:1-4. Tit. 2:1-10. 1 Pet. 2:10-19. 2 Pet. 1:5-11. 3:2. 1 John 2:3, 4. 3:19-24. Rev. 22:14. 1:123. 18:20. Gen. 39:2, 3, 21. Ex. 8:12. Josh. 1:5. Ps. 46:11. Is. 8:10. 41:10. Mark 16:7. John 14:18-21. Acta 18:19, 20. 2 Tim. 4:17. Rev. 22:21.

7:44-27. Dent. 5:32. 19:32. Acta 2:42. 20:20, 21, 27. 1 Cor. 11:23. 11:37. Eph. 4:11-17, 20, &c. Col. 1:25. 1 Thes. 4:1, 2. 2 Thes. 3:6-12. 1 Tim. 6:1-4. Tit. 2:1-10. 1 Pet. 2:10-19. 2 Pet. 1:5-11. 3:2. 1 John 2:3, 4. 3:19-24. Rev. 22:14. 1:123. 18:20. Gen. 39:2, 3, 21. Ex. 8:12. Josh. 1:5. Ps. 46:11. Is. 8:10. 41:10. Mark 16:7. John 14:18-21. Acta 18:19, 20. 2 Tim. 4:17. Rev. 22:21.

2. The duty of the apostles of Christ, and his ministers; and that is, to teach the commands of Christ, to expound them to his disciples, to press on them the necessity of obedience, and to assist them in applying the general commands of Christ to particular cases. They must teach them, not their own inventions, but the institutions of Christ; to them they must religiously adhere, and in the knowledge of them Christians must be trained up. A standing ministry is hereby settled in the church, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the perfect man, Eph. 4:11-13. The heirs of heaven, till they come to age, must be under tutors and governors.

3. Here is the assurance He gives them of his spiritual presence with them in the execution of this commission; v. 20. This exceeding great and precious promise is ushered in with a *behold*, to strengthen their faith, and engage their observation of it. 'Take notice of this; it is what you may assure yourselves of, and venture on.' Observe here.

(1.) The favor promised them; *I am with you*. Not, *I will be with you, but I am*. As God sent Moses, so Christ sent his apostles by this name, *I am*; for He is God, to whom past, present, and to come, are the same: see Rev. 1:8. He was now about to leave them, as to his bodily presence, and this grieved them; but He assures them of his spiritual presence, which was more expedient for them; 'My Spirit, the Comforter, shall abide with you, John 16:7. *I am with you*, to take your part, to hold with you, as Michael, Dan. 10:21. *I am not absent*, not at a distance, but a very present help.' Ps. 46:1. Christ was now sending them to set up his kingdom in the world, which was a great undertaking. He seasonably promises them his presence, [1.] 'To carry them through the difficulties they were likely to meet with. *When you go through the fire or water*, in the pulpit, in the prison, *lo, I am with you.*' [2.] 'To succeed this great undertaking; *Lo, I am with you*, to make your ministry effective in disciplining the nations, in pulling down the strongholds of Satan, and in setting up stronger for the Lord Jesus.' It was unlikely that they should uninge national constitutions in religion, establish a doctrine so directly contrary to the genius of the age, and persuade people to become the disciples of a crucified Jesus; but *I am with you*, and therefore you shall gain your point.

(2.) The continuance of the favor, *always, even unto the end of the world*. [1.] There is no day, no hour of the day, in which our Lord Jesus is not present with his churches, and with his ministers; if there were that

sends. Our admission into the visible church is in order to something further; when Christ hath disciplined us, He hath not done with us, He enlists soldiers, that He may train them up for his service.

All that are baptized, are thereby obliged, (1.) To make the command of Christ their rule. There is a *law of faith*, and we are said to be under the *law to Christ*; we are by baptism bound, and must obey. (2.) To observe what Christ has commanded. Due obedience to the commands of Christ requires a diligent observation; we are in danger of missing, if we take not good heed; and, in all our obedience, we must have an eye to the command, and do what we do as to the Lord. (3.) To observe all things that He hath commanded, without exception; all the moral duties, and all the instituted ordinances. Our obedience to the laws of Christ is not sincere, if it be not universal; we must stand complete in his whole will. (4.) To confine of Christ, so as not to diminish from them, or to add to them. (5.) To learn their duty according to the law of Christ, from those whom He has appointed to be teachers in his school, for therefore we were entered into his school.

2. The duty of the apostles of Christ, and his ministers; and that is, to teach the commands of Christ, to expound them to his disciples, to press on them the necessity of obedience, and to assist them in applying the general commands of Christ to particular cases. They must teach them, not their own inventions, but the institutions of Christ; to them they must religiously adhere, and in the knowledge of them Christians must be trained up. A standing ministry is hereby settled in the church, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the perfect man, Eph. 4:11-13. The heirs of heaven, till they come to age, must be under tutors and governors.

3. Here is the assurance He gives them of his spiritual presence with them in the execution of this commission; v. 20. This exceeding great and precious promise is ushered in with a *behold*, to strengthen their faith, and engage their observation of it. 'Take notice of this; it is what you may assure yourselves of, and venture on.' Observe here.

(1.) The favor promised them; *I am with you*. Not, *I will be with you, but I am*. As God sent Moses, so Christ sent his apostles by this name, *I am*; for He is God, to whom past, present, and to come, are the same: see Rev. 1:8. He was now about to leave them, as to his bodily presence, and this grieved them; but He assures them of his spiritual presence, which was more expedient for them; 'My Spirit, the Comforter, shall abide with you, John 16:7. *I am with you*, to take your part, to hold with you, as Michael, Dan. 10:21. *I am not absent*, not at a distance, but a very present help.' Ps. 46:1. Christ was now sending them to set up his kingdom in the world, which was a great undertaking. He seasonably promises them his presence, [1.] 'To carry them through the difficulties they were likely to meet with. *When you go through the fire or water*, in the pulpit, in the prison, *lo, I am with you.*' [2.] 'To succeed this great undertaking; *Lo, I am with you*, to make your ministry effective in disciplining the nations, in pulling down the strongholds of Satan, and in setting up stronger for the Lord Jesus.' It was unlikely that they should uninge national constitutions in religion, establish a doctrine so directly contrary to the genius of the age, and persuade people to become the disciples of a crucified Jesus; but *I am with you*, and therefore you shall gain your point.

(2.) The continuance of the favor, *always, even unto the end of the world*. [1.] There is no day, no hour of the day, in which our Lord Jesus is not present with his churches, and with his ministers; if there were that

day, that hour, they were were undone. Since his resurrection, He had appeared to them *now and then*, once a week, it may be, and scarcely that. But He assures them that they shall have his spiritual presence continued to them without intermission. Wherever we are, the Word of Christ is nigh us, even in our mouth, and the Spirit of Christ nigh us, even in our hearts. The God of Israel, the Savior, is sometimes a God that hideth Himself, (Isa. 45:15.) but never a God that absenteth Himself; sometimes in the dark, but never at a distance.

[2.] They shall have his perpetual presence, even to the end of the world. *I am with you to the end of the world*, not with your persons they died quickly, but, 1st. With you and your writings. A divine power goes with the Scriptures of the New Testament, not only preserving them in being, but producing strange effects by them, which will continue to the end of time, 2dly. With you and your successors; with you, and all the ministers of the Gospel, in the several ages of the church. When the end of the world is come, and the kingdom delivered up to God, even the Father, there will then be no further need of ministers and their ministration.

Two solemn farewells Jesus gives to his church, both very encouraging; one here, when He closed his personal converse with them. 'Lo, I am with you always; I leave you, and yet still I am with you;' the other was, when He closed the canon of the Scripture, by the pen of his beloved disciple, and then his parting word was, 'Surely, I come quickly. I leave you for a while, but I will be with you again shortly.' Rev. 22:20. By this it appears that He did not part in anger, but in love, and that it is his will we should keep up both our communion with Him, and our expectation of Him.

One word more remains, *Amen*. This is not a cipher, intended only for a concluding word, like *finis* at the end of a book, but has its significance. 1. It speaks Christ's confirmation of this promise, *Lo, I am with you*. It is his *Amen*. 'Verily I am, and will be, with you; I the Amen, the faithful Witness, do assure you of it.' Or, 2. It speaks the church's concurrence with it, in their desire, and prayer, and expectation. It is the evangelist's *Amen*, So be it, blessed Lord. Our *Amen* to Christ's promises turns them into prayers. Hath Christ promised to be present with his ministers, present in his Word, present in the assemblies of his people, though but two or three are gathered together in his name, and this *always, even to the end of the world*? Let us heartily say *Amen* to it; believe that it shall be so, and pray that it may be so: Lord, remember this word unto thy servants, upon which Thou hast caused us to hope.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-20. We are now called to rejoice with our risen Lord, as we were not long since to sympathize in his sufferings; and attend his funeral: let us then delight to tell to all around us, that 'the Lord is risen indeed,' and is perfected to be 'the Author of eternal salvation to all them that obey Him.'—The believer, however, will not always be able to divest himself of fear, even when he has the most abundant cause for joy; and may think himself highly favored in this present world, if hope and cheerfulness generally prevail.—The malice of proud persecutors cannot be overcome even by demonstration; nay, avarice itself will expend large sums, to silence the evidence of the truth, and to propagate error; policy will adopt the most foolish measures in such a cause; and reasoning infidels will swallow the most absurd falsehoods with a stupid credulity! We must not impute such things to the weakness of men's understandings, but to the malice of their hearts, and to the judicial blindness to which God gives them up. Thus He leaves them to expose their own cause, and to give a constrained testimony to his truth.—But those who are teachable, and impartially seek to know the ways of God, shall be admitted to clearer and fuller discoveries of the truth; and at length their perplexities shall be all removed, by what they see, hear, and experience in their own souls. Being then compassed with such numerous witnesses of our Redeemer's resurrection, let us ever be ready to meet Him in all his appointed ordinances, for the further establishment of our faith and hope; and to show forth his praises, and express our admiring, joyful, grateful love, and hold communion with Him, and with his people; and let us often contemplate Him, as now possessed of 'all power in

heaven and earth,' for the benefit of his church. He has sent his Gospel into this distant nation, to call us to be his disciples; and some of us have been 'baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;' let us then examine whether we really possess 'the inward and spiritual grace of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness,' by which 'the children of wrath' become 'the children of God.' Let us seek to experience more fully the salvation of our true God, and to be more entirely devoted to his service and worship; and let us bring up our families, as those who desire more, far more, that they may be genuine Christians, than that they should be rich, learned, or honorable in the world. Let ministers also observe, to act always under the commission, and according to the instructions, of the great 'Head of the church' and 'Lord of all;' let them still preach the Gospel to all around them, administering sacred ordinances by the rule of the holy Scriptures, and teaching the people, not only a few doctrines, but to observe all things whatever Christ hath commanded them. He is not indeed now personally present with us, and miraculous gifts have ceased; but He is yet spiritually among us, to assist and bless us in our studies and labors, public and private; and He is and will be with all his servants and disciples, 'always, even to the end of the world,' and till He have gathered them all into his heavenly kingdom, to be held and share his glory and felicity. 'Even so, Lord Jesus, be Thou with us, and with all thy people;' and 'cause thy face to shine upon us, that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations.' Amen. SCOTT.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK,

WITH AN EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

ST PETER speaks of Marcus, and calls him 'his son;' perhaps implying that Marcus was converted by his mission, and served with him in the gospel. (Note, 1 Pet. 5:13.) This Marcus, or Mark, was undoubtedly the writer of the gospel, on which we now enter: but whether he was, or was not, a different person from John surnamed Mark, of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles, and in St. Paul's epistles, (Acts 12: 12. 13: 5, 13. 15: 37—39. Col. 4. 10. 2 Tim. 4:11.) must remain doubtful, as the most able and laborious inquirers are divided in opinion on the subject; Erotius on the one side, and Lardner on the other.—It is, however, generally agreed, that this gospel was written under the immediate inspection of the apostle Peter, and received by the church on his authority.—St. John had seen the three gospels, and wrote his own as a supplement to them, as plainly appears in the harmony of the gospels. . . Ecclesiastical history informs us, that Mark's gospel had the approbation of Peter, and that Mark was instructed by him. . . Papias conversed with the disciples of the apostles, about the beginning of the second century. He speaks of the gospels of Matthew and Mark as extant, and written by them. Justin Martyr, A. D. 150, mentions the gospels as universally received, and read in the congregations in his time. He must have conversed with Christians who were old men, and learned that the gospels were extant when they were young.' It is therefore undeniable, that from the earliest ages of the church, this gospel, and that of St. Luke, though not written by apostles, were received as authentic, and as divinely inspired. 'As Mark wrote his gospel for the use of the Christians at Rome, at that time the great metropolis and common centre of all civilized nations, we find it free from all peculiarities, and equally accommodated to all descriptions of persons. Quotations from the ancient prophets, and allusions to Jewish customs, are as much as possible avoided; and such explanations are added as might be necessary for Gentile readers at Rome: thus when "Jordan" is first mentioned in this gospel, the word "river" is prefixed, chap. 1: 5; the oriental word "Corban" is said to mean "a gift," chap. 7: 11; the "preparation" is said to be "the day before the Sabbath," chap. 15: 42; and "defiled hands" are said to mean "unwashed hands," chap. 7: 2; and the superstition of the Jews upon that subject is stated more at large than it would have been by a person writing at Jerusalem. The gospel of Mark is a simple and compendious narrative, and his style clear and correct; he is, in general, much less circumstantial than Matthew; and usually follows his arrangement. Some authors represent his gospel as an abridgment of Matthew's; but they surely mistake. He entirely omits several important things related by Matthew, such as the genealogy and birth of Christ, the massacre at Bethlehem, and the sermon on the mount. He dilates upon some facts which are concisely mentioned by Matthew, such as the case of the paralytic, chap. 2. (compare Matt. 9: 2.) and the miracle among the Gadarenes, chap. 5. (comp. Matt. 8: 28.) He now and then departs from the order of time and arrangement of facts observed by Matthew; and there have been enumerated above thirty circumstances noticed by Mark, which are not found in any other gospel: many of these are of little moment, but two are the miraculous cures recorded in ch. 7. and 8. in the middle. If, however, we except slight additions made by Mark to the narrative common to the first three evangelists, there are not more than twenty-four verses in his whole gospel which contain facts not recorded either by Matthew or Luke.'

We have heard the evidence given by the first witness to the doctrine and miracles of our Lord; here is another witness. Let us inquire,

I. Concerning *Mark*. *Marcus* was a Roman name, but he was by birth a Jew; as Saul, when he went among the nations, took the Roman name of *Paul*, so he of *Mark*. We read of John, whose surname was *Mark*, sister's son to Barnabas, whom Paul was displeased with, (Acts 15: 37, 38.) but afterward had a great kindness for, and not only ordered the churches to receive him, (Col. 4: 10.) but sent for him to be his assistant, with this encomium, *He is profitable to us for the ministry*; (2 Tim. 4: 11.) and he reckons him among his fellow-laborers, Philem. 24. We read of Marcus whom Peter calls his *son*, he having been an instrument of his conversion; (1 Pet. 5: 13.) whether that was the same with the other, and if not, which of them was the penman of this gospel, is altogether uncertain. It is a tradition very current among the ancients, that St. Mark wrote this gospel under the direction of St. Peter; so Hieron. Catal. Script. Eccles. *Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, being sent from Rome by the brethren, wrote a concise gospel*; and Tertullian saith, (Adv. Marcion. lib. 4. cap. 5.) *Mark, the interpreter of Peter, delivered in writing the things which had been preached by Peter*. 'Papias, who was acquainted with John, an early disciple and companion of the apostles, but not the evangelist, says, "This is what was related by the elder (i. e. John) viz. Mark being Peter's interpreter wrote, exactly, whatever he remembered of all things which were done or spoken by the Lord." This testimony has never been contradicted. On the contrary, it is confirmed by all who mention the subject.' CAMPBELL'S Pref. Mark. But as Dr. Whitby very well suggests, Why should we have recourse to the authority of Peter, for the support of this gospel, when we have every reason to think that both he and Luke were of the number of the seventy disciples, who accompanied with the apostles all along, (Acts 1: 21.) who had a commission like that of the apostles, (Luke 10: 19. compared with Mark 16: 18.) and who, it is highly probable, received the Holy Ghost when they did? (Acts 1: 15. 2: 1.) So that it is no diminution at all to the validity or value of this gospel, that Mark was not one of the twelve, as Matthew and John were. St. Jerome saith, that, after the writing of this gospel, he went into Egypt, and was the first that preached the gospel at Alexandria, where he founded a church, to which he was a great example of holy living. *He so adorned by his doctrine and his life the church which he founded, that his example influenced all the followers of Christ*.

II. Concerning *this testimony*. Mark's gospel is short, not giving so full an account of Christ's sermons, but insisting chiefly on his miracles. It is very much a repetition of Matthew; many remarkable circumstances being added to the stories there related, but not many new matters. When many witnesses are called to prove the same fact, upon which a judgment is to be given, it is not thought tedious, but highly necessary, that they should each of them relate it in their own words, again and again, that by the agreement of the testimony the thing may be established. We must not think this book of Scripture needless: it is written to put us in mind of things which we have read in the foregoing gospel, that we may give the more earnest heed to them, lest at any time we let them slip. *Pure minds have need to be stirred up by way of remembrance*. It was fit that such great things as these should be spoken and written once, yea, twice, because man is so unapt to perceive, and so apt to forget them. There is no ground for the tradition, that this gospel was written first in Latin, though it was written at Rome; it was written in Greek, as was St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, the Greek being the more universal language. SCOTT. . . DRYDEN. ST. TOMLINE. HENRY, &c.

CHAP. I.

The gospel is introduced by John the Baptist's ministry, 1-8. The baptism and temptation of Christ, 9-13. John being imprisoned, Jesus preaches in Galilee, and calls Simon and Andrew, James and John, to be his disciples, 14-20. He casts out an uncle in spirit, 21-22. Heals Peter's wife's mother, and many sick persons, 23-34. Retires very early in the morning for prayer; preaches in the synagogues of Galilee; and cleanses a leper, 35-45.

THE ^abeginning of the gospel of ^bJesus Christ, ^cthe Son of God;

2 As it is ^dwritten in the prophets, ^eBehold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

3 The ^fvoice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

4 John ^gdid baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance ^hfor the ⁱremission of sins.

5 And ^jthere went out unto him all the ^kand of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all ^lbaptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins.

6 And John was ^mclothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did ⁿeat locusts and wild honey;

7 And preached, saying, ^oThere cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose.

8 I indeed ^phave baptized you with water; but ^qhe shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

CHAP. I. v. 1.—S. We may observe here,

1. What the New Testament is. It is the *gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God*, v. 1. It is *gospel*; it brings us glad tidings, v. 2. It is the *gospel of Jesus Christ*. It is called his, because He is the *Author* and the *Subject* of it. 3. This Jesus is the *Son of God*. That truth is the foundation on which the gospel is built, and which it is written to demonstrate; for if Jesus be not the *Son of God*, our faith is vain.

II. What the reference of the New Testament is to the Old, and its coherence with it. The gospel of Jesus Christ begins, as it is written in the prophets, (v. 2.) for it saith no other things than those which the prophets and Moses said should come; (Acts 26: 22.) which was proper for the conviction of the Jews, who believed the Old-Testament prophets, and ought to have evidenced that they did so, by welcoming the accomplishment of their prophecies; but it is of use to us for the confirmation of our faith both in the Old Testament and in the New, for the harmony between both shows the same divine origin.

Quotations are here borrowed from the prophecies of Isaiah and Malachi, (and there were above three hundred years between them) both of whom spake concerning the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, in the ministry of John.

1. Malachi, in whom we had the Old-Testament foretold, spake very plainly (ch. 3: 1.) concerning John Baptist, who was to give the New-Testament welcome. Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, v. 2. Christ himself had taken notice of this, and applied it to John, (Matt. 11: 10.) who was God's messenger, sent to prepare Christ's way.

2. Isaiah begins the evangelical part of his prophecy with this, which points to the beginning of the gospel of Christ; (Isa. 40: 3.) The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness; v. 3. Matthew had taken notice of this, and applied it to John, ch. 3: 3. Such is the corruption of the world, that it is something to do to make room for Christ, and to remove that which gives not only obstruction, but opposition. When the paths that were crooked are made straight, (the mistakes of the judgment rectified, and the crooked ways of the affections,) then way is made for Christ's comforts. It is in a wilderness, for such this world is, that Christ's way is prepared, and their's that follow him, like that of Israel to Canaan. The messengers of conviction and terror, that come to prepare Christ's way, are God's messengers, whom He will own, and must be received as such. They that are sent to prepare the way of the Lord, in such a vast howling wilderness as this is, have need to cry aloud, and not spare, and to lift up their voice like a trumpet.

III. What the beginning of the New Testament was. The gospel did not begin so soon as the birth of Christ, for He took time to increase in wisdom and stature; not so late as his entering upon his public ministry, but half a

year before, when John began to preach the same doctrine that Christ afterward preached. His baptism was the dawning of the gospel day; for,

1. In John's way of living there was the beginning of a gospel spirit; for it bespoke self-denial, mortification of the flesh, a holy contempt of the world, which may truly be called the beginning of the gospel of Christ in any soul, v. 6. He was clothed in camels' hair, not with soft raiment; was girt, not with a golden, but with a leathern girdle; and, in contempt of dainties, his meat was locusts and wild honey. Note, The more we live above the world, the better we are prepared for Jesus Christ.

2. In John's preaching and baptizing there was the beginning of the gospel doctrines and ordinances. (1.) He preached the remission of sins, showed people their need of it, that they were undone without it, and that it might be obtained. (2.) He preached repentance, in order to it, and that there must be a renovation of their hearts, and a reformation of their lives, that they must forsake their sins, and upon those terms, their sins should be forgiven. Repentance for the remission of sins, was what the apostles were commissioned to preach to all nations; Luke 24: 47. (3.) He preached Christ, and directed his hearers to expect Him speedily to appear, and to expect great things from Him. Like a true gospel minister, he preaches, [1.] The great pre-eminence of Christ, so great that John, one of the greatest, that was born of woman, thinks himself unworthy even to untie his shoes. He comes after me in time, but is mightier than I, mightier than the mighty ones of the earth, for He is able to baptize with the Holy Ghost; and by Him govern the spirits of men. (4.) The great promise Christ makes in his gospel to those who have repented, and have had their sins forgiven; they shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost, purified by his graces, and refreshed. And, lastly, All those who received his doctrine, and institution, he baptized with water, as the manner of the Jews was to admit proselytes, in token of their cleansing themselves by repentance and reformation, and of God's cleansing them both by remission and sanctification. This was afterward to be advanced into a gospel ordinance, to which John's using it was a preface.

3. In John's preaching and baptism, there was the beginning of a gospel church. He baptized in the wilderness, and declined going into the cities; but there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, inhabitants both of city and country, and were baptized of him. They entered themselves his disciples, and bound themselves to his discipline; in token of which, they confessed their sins; he admitted them his disciples, in token of which, he baptized them. Here were the foundations of the gospel-church, the dew of its youth, from the womb of the morning, Ps. 110: 3. Many of these afterward became followers

^a Luke 12: 2. 24: 11. Acts 1: 1. 2. John 20: 31. Rom. 1: 1.—^b 1 John 1: 1.—^c 5: 11, 12. ^c Ps. 2: 7. Matt. 3: 17. 14: 33. 17: 5. John 1: 14, 34, 49. 5: 16. 6: 69. Rom. 8: 3, 32. ^d Ps. 40: 7. Matt. 25: 35, 36, 37. Luke 1: 73. 18: 31.

^e Mal. 3: 1. Matt. 11: 10. Luke 1: 15.—^f 17: 7. 7: 27, 28. ^g Isa. 40: 3.—^h Matt. 3: 3. Luke 3: 1.—ⁱ John 1: 15, 19.—^j 34. 328.—^k 36. ^l Matt. 2: 1, 2, 4, 11. Luke 3: 3. Acts 10: 37. 13: 24, 25. 19: 3, 4. ^m Or, unto. ⁿ Acts 22: 16.

^o Matt. 3: 5, 6. 4: 25. ^p John 1: 58. 3: 23. ^q Lev. 26: 49. Josh. 7: 19. Ps. 32: 5. Prov. 28: 13. Acts 2: 38. 19: 18. 1 John 1: 9. ^r 2 Kings 1: 8. ^s 34. ^t n Lev. 11: 22.

^u Matt. 3: 11, 14. Luke 3: 16. 7: 6, 7. John 1: 27. 3: 28.—^v 1 John 1: 32. ^w Matt. 3: 11. ^x Prov. 1: 3. Isa. 55: 4, 5. Jer. 31: 25.—^y 1: 5. 2: 4. 17: 10, 15. 11: 15, 16. 18: 1.—^z 1 Cor. 12: 13. Tit. 3: 5, 6.

NOTES.

CHAP. I. v. 1, 2 Mark, writing after Matthew, passed over the birth of Jesus, and began with John's ministry. This was 'the beginning of the gospel,' the introduction of the new dispensation: of glad tidings relating to Jesus Christ, the anointed Savior, as foretold by the prophets. (Marg. Ref.)—The ^astory of John the Baptist is the beginning of the gospel; ^b'because he began by preaching repentance as the preparation to receive it, and faith in the Messiah as the subject of it. (Luke 16: 16.)—This he styles the 'gospel of the Son of God,'—'that we might have worthy thoughts both of the gospel, and of the Author,—so nearly related to the Father.' WHITEY. Behold, &c. (2.) Note, Matt. 11: 17.—11, v. 10. The quotation here is exactly the words which Matthew uses; and except the change of the pronoun may for thy, is literal from the Hebrew. (Notes, Mark. 3: 1.—4: 4.—6. Luke 1: 76.—79, v. 76.) SCOTT.

Verse 3.

Notes, Isa. 40: 3.—5. Matt. 3: 1.—3. Luke 1: 11.—17, v. 16, 17, 67.—80. 1: 16.—'The name is called, in the foregoing clause, JEHOVAN. As his verse refers to Christ, it is a proof of his Deity.' BEZA in SCOTT.

Wilderness.] 'It lay east from Jerusalem along the Jordan; and the Dead sea.' By wilderness, in Scripture, we are not always to understand what is commonly denominated so with us, an uninhabited region. Often, no more was denoted by it, than a country fit for pasture than agriculture, mountainous, woody, thinly inhabited.' See verse 45. CAMPBELL.

Verse 4.

For the remission of sins.] 'They were to repent, and be baptized in reference to the remission of sins. Repentance prepared the soul for it, and baptism was the type or pledge of it.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 5.

Notes, Matt. 3: 4.—17. Luke 3: 7.—9, 15.—18. John 1: 15. 19.—34. 3: 22.—36. Acts 19: 5, 6. Some infer from the addition of the word 'river,' to the name Jordan, that Mark wrote for strangers to Judea. SCOTT.

Verse 6.

'Water baptism is nothing, only as an emblem of that which must be received from the Holy Ghost.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

9 ¶ And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens *opened, and the Spirit¹ like a dove, descending upon him:

11 And there came a voice from heaven, saying, *Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

12 And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness.

13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, *tempted of Satan, and was with the wild beasts: and the angels ministered unto him.

[Practical Observations.]

14 ¶ Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God,

15 And saying, *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: *repent ye, and believe the gospel.

16 Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon,

of Christ, and preachers of his gospel, and this grain of mustard-seed became a tree.

V. 9-13. We have here,

I. Christ's baptism, which was his first public appearance, after He had long lived obscurely in Nazareth: Much hidden worth in this world is either lost in the dust of contempt, and cannot be known, or wrapped up in humility, and will not be known! But sooner or later it shall be known.

1. He owned God, by coming to be baptized of John; thus it became Him to fulfil all righteousness. Thus He took upon Him the likeness of sinful flesh, that, though perfectly pure and unsupposed, He was washed as if He had been polluted; and thus for our sakes He sanctified Himself, that we also might be sanctified, and be baptized with Him, John 17: 19.

2. God owned Him.

(1.) He saw the heavens opened; thus He was owned to be the Lord from heaven, and had a glimpse of the glory and joy that were set before Him, as the recompense of his undertaking. Matthew saith, The heavens were opened to him. Mark saith, He saw them opened. Christ had not only a clear foresight of His sufferings, but of His glory too.

(2.) He saw the Spirit, like a dove, descending upon Him. Note, We may see heaven opened to us, when we perceive the Spirit descending and working upon us. God's good work in us is the surest evidence of his good will towards us. Justin Martyr says that when Christ was baptized, a fire was kindled in Jordan: and it is an ancient tradition, that a great light shone around the place.

(3.) He heard a voice which was intended for his encouragement, and therefore it is directed to Him, Thou art my beloved Son. God lets Him know, [1.] That He loved Him, never the less for that low estate to which He had now humbled himself; "Though thus made of no reputation, yet He is my beloved Son still." [2.] He loved Him much the more for that glorious and kind undertaking in which He had now engaged. God is well pleased in Him, and so well pleased, as to be well pleased with us in Him.

II. His temptation. The good Spirit that descended upon Him led Him into the wilderness, v. 12. Paul mentions it as a proof that he had his doctrine from God, and not from man—that, as soon as he was called, he went not to Jerusalem, but into Arabia, Gal. 1: 17.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-13. Those characters and actions, which are concealed, through humility, are commonly far more excellent, than such as are the subjects of human applause: but when the Lord's time comes, or his work requires it, He makes his servants known, and renders their eminence equal to their excellence.—The hearts of men must be prepared, before they can welcome the kingdom of God; this is commonly effected by the divine blessing on the scriptural preaching of repentance and conversion.—Ministers should perform their duty in this respect, and in administering ordinances; thus numbers may be led to confess their sins, and to repent; but without faith in the Savior, through the Holy Spirit, they cannot be accepted of God. This all faithful preachers plainly declare: and all be-

lievers speak and think humbly of themselves, and honorably of Christ, in exact proportion to the degree of their progress in the divine life. (P. O. Matt. 3: 13-17, 8: 5-13.) and when to this they join a holy indifference to worldly things, they are likely to be extensively useful.—While we rejoice in our Surety's obedience, we should copy his example: and by attending on the ordinances of God, we shall be in the way of receiving more abundant supplies of 'the Spirit of adoption,' witnessing 'that we are the children of God,' accepted through 'his Son.' Then, should we be exposed to persecutors, or to Satan's temptations, in this wilderness; we may confide in divine protection and consolation, and expect that angels will minister to us for our Redeemer's sake.

SCOTT.

Retirement from the world is an opportunity of more free converse with God, and therefore must sometimes be chosen, for a while, even by those that are called to the greatest business. Mark observes that He was with the wild beasts. He was preserved from being torn in pieces by the wild beasts, which encouraged Him the more that his Father would provide for Him when He was hungry. Special protections are earnest of seasonable supplies. It was like wise an intimation of the inhumanity of the men of that generation, no better than wild beasts in the wilderness, nay, abundantly worse. In that wilderness,

1. The evil spirits were busy with Him; He was tempted of Satan; solitude often gives advantages to the tempter, therefore two are better than one. Christ Himself was tempted, not only to teach us, that it is no sin to be tempted, but to direct us whither to go for succor when we are so, even to Him that suffers, being tempted, that He might sympathize with us in our temptations.

2. The good spirits were busy about Him; the angels ministered to Him. Note, The ministration of good angels about us, is matter of great comfort in reference to the malicious designs of evil angels against us; much more doth it befriend us, to have the indwelling of the Spirit in our hearts.

V. 14-22. Here is,

1. A general account of Christ's preaching in Galilee. Observe,

1. When Jesus began to preach in Galilee. After that John was put in prison. When he had finished his testimony, then Jesus began his. Note, The silencing of Christ's ministers shall not be the suppressing of Christ's gospel; if some be laid aside, others shall be raised up, perhaps mightier, to carry on the same work.

2. He preached the gospel of the kingdom of God. Christ came to set up the kingdom of God among men, that they might be subject to it, and obtain salvation in it; and He set it up by his preaching of his gospel, and a power going with it.

Observe, (1.) The great truths Christ preached; The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. This refers to the Old Testament, in which the kingdom of the Messiah was promised, and the time fixed for it. They were not so well versed in those prophecies, as to understand it themselves, and therefore Christ gives them notice of it; 'The time pre-

livers speak and think humbly of themselves, and honorably of Christ, in exact proportion to the degree of their progress in the divine life. (P. O. Matt. 3: 13-17, 8: 5-13.) and when to this they join a holy indifference to worldly things, they are likely to be extensively useful.—While we rejoice in our Surety's obedience, we should copy his example: and by attending on the ordinances of God, we shall be in the way of receiving more abundant supplies of 'the Spirit of adoption,' witnessing 'that we are the children of God,' accepted through 'his Son.' Then, should we be exposed to persecutors, or to Satan's temptations, in this wilderness; we may confide in divine protection and consolation, and expect that angels will minister to us for our Redeemer's sake.

SCOTT.

together with the diabolical influence, must have rendered the scene horrid.' CALMET. Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 14.

(Notes, Matt. 4: 12-17. Luke 8: 14, 15.) Many writers have asserted that Jesus began his ministry, when John had finished his; but Jesus preached and baptized, by his disciples, some time before John was imprisoned. (Notes, John 2: 3: 22-36, 4: 1-1.) SCOTT.

Verse 15.

'The time fixed by the prophets, especially by Daniel's seventy weeks, has been fulfilled; and the predictions which have long excited anxious expectation, are on the eve of being fulfilled.' (Notes, Gen. 49: 10. Dan. 9: 24-27. Hag. 2: 6-9. Mal. 3: 1-4.) SCOTT.

'However much the Jews misunderstood many other prophecies, the time and place of Christ's appearance seem to have been well apprehended by the majority of them. It is a point of some consequence that both the time and place of our Lord's birth coincide with the interpretations given of the prophecies by the Jews themselves, who lived at that age.'

Verse 16-20.

(Matt. 4: 18-22.) Few passages are more exactly parallel, than

CAMPBELL.

and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers.

17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become ^afishers of men.

18 And straightway they ^aforsook their nets, and follo^wed him.

19 And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw ^mJames the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets.

20 And straightway he called them: and ^athey left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

21 ¶ And ^athey went into Capernaum: and straightway on the sabbath-day ^ahe entered into the synagogue, and taught.

22 And ^athey were astonished at his doctrine; for he taught them as one that had authority, and not ^aas the scribes.

23 ¶ And there was in their synagogue ^aa man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,

24 Saying, 'Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art,' the Holy One of God.

25 And Jesus ^arebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.

¶ Ex. 47:10. Matt. 4:19, 20. Luke 5: 10. Acts 2:38-41.
1:10-28-31. Matt. 19:27-30. Luke 9: 14-33. 18:28-30. Phil. 3:8.
3:17. 5:37. 9:2. 10:25. 14:33. Acts 1:18. 19:2.
2:10. Deut. 33:9. 1 Kings 19:20.
Matt. 4:21-22. 8:21, 22. 10:37. Luke 14:26. 2 Cor. 5:16.
2:1. Matt. 4:13. Luke 4:31. 10:15. p. 39:62. Matt. 4:23. Luke 4:16.

these verses, yet, if compared, (especially in the Greek) it will be found that they so vary, in minute particulars, as to render it clear, that Mark did not copy Matthew. 'The hired servants' are not mentioned by Matthew.

Verse 22.

Notes. Matt. 4: 23-25.

Verses 23-23.

(Luke 4: 33-37.) This miracle is not particularly recorded by Matthew. As the possessed person was in the synagogue, it may be supposed that the unclean spirit did not harass him at all times; but took advantage of bodily disorder, or other circumstances. According to the man was seized while in the synagogue, and cried out with great vehemence, 'Let us alone?' &c. Probably, the man was led to feet destruction, instead of expecting deliverance, from Christ. (Notes, 5: 2-13. t. 7. Matt. 8: 23, 29.) No disorder could enable a man to know Jesus to be 'the Holy One of God'; this was the language of the unclean spirit or spirits, speaking by the organs of the man; intending

fixed is now *at hand*; glorious discoveries of divine light and love, are now to be made; a new dispensation, far more spiritual and heavenly, is now to commence. Note, God keeps time; when the time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God is *at hand*; & the vision is for an appointed time, which will be punctually observed, though it tarry past our time.

(2.) The great duties to be inferred thence. Christ gave them to *understand the times*, that they might know *what Israel ought to do*; they fondly expected the Messiah to appear in external pomp, not only to free the Jewish nation from the Roman yoke, but to make it have dominion over all its neighbors, and therefore thought, when that kingdom of God was *at hand*, they must prepare for war, victory, and great things in the world; but Christ tells them, they must *repent, and believe the gospel*. They had broken the moral law, and could not be saved by a covenant of innocence, for both Jew and Gentile are under guilt. They must therefore take the benefit of a covenant of grace, submit to a remedial law, and this is it—*repentance toward God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*. By repentance we must lament and forsake sin, and by faith receive forgiveness. By repentance we must give glory to our Creator; by faith we must give glory to our Redeemer, who came to save us from our sins. Both these must go together: we must not think either that reforming our lives will save us, without trusting in the righteousness of Christ, or that trusting in Christ will save us, without the reformation of our hearts and lives. Christ has joined these two together, and let no man put them asunder. They will assist and befriend each other. Repentance will quicken faith, and faith will make repentance evangelical; and the sincerity of both must be evidenced by a diligent obedience to all God's commandments. Thus the preaching of the gospel began, and thus it continues; still the call is, repent and believe, and live a life of repentance and faith.

II. Christ appearing as a Teacher, here is next his calling of his disciples, v. 16-20. Observe, 1. Christ will have followers. If He set up a school, He will have scholars; if He set up his standard, He will have soldiers; if He preach, He will have hearers. He has taken an effectual course to secure this; for all that the Father has given Him, shall come to Him. 2. The instruments Christ chose to employ in setting up his kingdom, were the weak and foolish things of the world; not called from the schools of the rabbins, but picked up by the sea-side, that the excellency of the power might appear to be wholly of God. 3. Though Christ needs not the help of man, yet He is pleased to use it in setting up his kingdom, that He might deal with us not in a formidable but in a familiar way, and that in his kingdom the nobles and governors may be of ourselves, Jer. 30: 21. 4. Christ puts honor upon those who, though mean in the world, are diligent in their business, and loving to one another; so those were, whom Christ called. He found them employed, and employed together. Industry and unity are good and pleasant, and there the Lord Jesus commands the blessing, even this blessing.

13:10. Acts 13:14, 46. 17:2. 18:4.
q. Jer. 23:29. Matt. 7:28, 29. 13:54.
Luke 4:32. 21:15. John 7:46. Acts 8:10. 9:21, 22. 2 Cor. 4:2. Heb. 4: 12, 13.

ing follow, i.e. 5 The business of ministers is to fish for souls. The children of men, in their natural condition, wander endlessly in the great ocean of this world, and are carried down the stream. Like leviathan in the waters, they play therein; and often, like the fishes of the sea, devour one another. Ministers, in preaching the gospel, cast the net into the waters, Matt. 13: 47. Some are inclosed and brought to shore, but far the greater number escape. Fishermen take great pains, and expose themselves to great perils; so do ministers. If man, a draught brings home nothing, yet they must go on. 6. Those whom Christ calls, must leave all, to follow Him; and He incites them to do so. Not that we must needs go out of the world, but sit loose to the world, and forsake every thing inconsistent, that cannot be kept without prejudice to our souls. Mark takes notice of James and John, that they left not only their father, but the hired servants, whom perhaps they loved as their own brethren, being their fellow-laborers and pleasant comrades. Not only relations, but companions, must be left for Christ. Perhaps it is an intimation of their care for their father, they did not leave him without assistance. Grotius thinks it is mentioned as an evidence that their calling was gainful, yet they left it.

III. Here is a particular account of his preaching in Capernaum, one of the cities of Galilee; for though John Baptist chose to preach in a wilderness, and did good, yet it did not follow, that Jesus must do so too; the inclinations and opportunities of ministers may differ, and yet both be in the way of their duty and useful. Observe, 1. When Christ came into Capernaum, He straightway applied Himself to his work, and took the first opportunity of preaching the gospel. Those will not lose time, who consider what a deal of work they have to do, and what a little time to do it in. 2. Christ religiously observed the sabbath, not by the tradition of the elders, in all the niceties of the sabbath-rest, yet (which was far better) by applying himself to, and abounding in, the sabbath-work, in order to which the sabbath was instituted. 3. The sabbath is to be sanctified in religious assemblies; it is a holy day, and must be honored with a holy convocation; Acts 13: 27, 15: 21. On the sabbath-days; every sabbath-day, as duly as it returned, He went into the synagogue. 4. In religious assemblies on sabbath-days, the Gospel is to be preached. 5. Christ did not preach as the scribes, who expounded the law of Moses by rote, as a school-boy says his lesson, but were neither acquainted with it, (Paul himself, when a Pharisee, was ignorant of the law,) nor affected with it. But Christ taught as one that had authority, as one that knew the mind of God, and was commissioned to declare it. 6. There is much in the doctrine of Christ, that is astonishing; the more we hear it, the more cause we shall see to admire it.

V. 23-28. As soon as Christ began to preach, He began to work miracles for the confirmation of his doctrine, to conquer Satan and cure souls. I. Christ cast the devil out of a man that was possessed, in the synagogue at Capernaum.

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I. Christ cast the devil out of a man that was possessed, in the synagogue at Capernaum.

r. 7:3-13. Matt. 23:16-24.
s. 34. 5:2. 7:25. 9:25. Matt. 12:43.
Luke 4:33-37.
t. 5:7. Ex. 14:12. Matt. 8:29. Luke 8:29, 37. Jam. 2:19.

u. Ps. 16:19. 89:15, 19. Dan. 9:24.
Luke 4:34. Acts 2:27. 3:14. 4:27.
Rev. 3:7.
x. 34. 3:11, 12. 9:25. Ps. 60:16. Luke 4:35, 41. Acts 16:17, 18.

to bring Jesus into suspicion of confederacy with Satan. (Note, Acts 16: 16-18.) Our Lord therefore imposed silence, and constrained him to quit possession; and though he showed his malice, by convulsing the possessed person, and causing extreme anguish, yet he so entirely left him, that the people were astonished at the miracle; and it greatly increased and extended the reputation of Christ. (Marg. Ref. t. x. a. Notes, 34: 9: 16-18.)

(24.) 'Demons knew what madmen, insane persons, epileptics could not know, viz. THAT JESUS WAS THE SON OF GOD, THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF DAVID. See also chap. 5: 7. Matt. 8: 29. Luke 4: 34.'

Art thou come to destroy us? 'The Jews had a tradition, that the Messiah would destroy Galilee, and disperse the Galileans. It is therefore supposed by Lightfoot, that this ought to be considered as spoken by the man who was a Galilean, and not by the demon, as it is commonly understood.'

A. A. P. B. L.

26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him.

28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

[Practical Observations.]

29 ¶ And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever; and anon they tell him of her.

31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

32 ¶ And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

33 And all the city

This passage was not related in Matthew, but is afterward in Luke 4: 33. *There was in the synagogue a man with an unclean spirit,—in an unclean spirit; for the spirit had the man in his possession. So the whole world is said to lie—in the wicked one. He was in the unclean spirit, as a man is said to be in a fever, or in a frenzy. Observe, The devil is here called unclean, because he has lost the purity of his nature, because he acts in direct opposition to the holy Spirit of God, and because with his suggestions he pollutes the spirits of men. This man was in the synagogue; he did not come either to be taught or healed, but, as some think, to confront Christ, and hinder people from believing on Him.*

The unclean spirit expressed rage at Christ; *He cried out, in an agony, afraid of being dislodged; thus the devils believe and tremble, have a horror of Christ, but no hope in Him, nor reverence for Him. He speaks as one that knew his doom. (1.) He calls Him Jesus of Nazareth; and he did it with design to possess the minds of the people with low thoughts of Him, because no good thing was expected out of Nazareth; and with prejudices against Him as a deceiver, because every body knew, the Messiah must be of Bethlehem. (2.) Yet a confession is extorted from him—that He is the Holy One of God. Those who have only a notion of Christ—that he is the Holy One of God, and have no faith in Him, or love to Him, go no farther than the devil. (3.) He in effect acknowledgeth that he could not stand before the power of Christ; 'Let us alone; for Thou canst destroy us.' This is the misery of wicked spirits, they persist in their rebellion, yet know it will end in their destruction. (4.) He desires to have nothing to do with Jesus; for he despairs of being saved by Him, and dreads being destroyed by Him. 'What have we to do with Thee? If Thou wilt let us alone, we will let Thee alone.' See whose language they speak, that say to the Almighty, Depart from us. For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. It is in vain for Satan to beg and pray, Let us alone; his power must be broken, and the poor man relieved; and therefore, (1.) Jesus commands. As He taught, so He healed, with authority. Jesus rebuked him; He imposed silence*

was gathered together at the door.

34 And he healed many that were sick

upon him: *Hold thy peace; that unclean spirit, when he fears, as well as when he barks Christ disdains. Some confess Christ to be the Holy One of God, that under the cloak of that profession they may carry on mischievous designs; their confession is doubly an abomination to Jesus. But this is not all, he must come out of the man; this he dreaded—his being restrained from further mischief. But, (2.) The unclean spirit yields; v. 26. He tore him, put him into a strong convulsion; when he would not touch Christ, in fury at Him he grievously disturbed this poor creature. Thus, when Christ by his grace delivers souls out of the hands of Satan, it is not without a grievous loss and tumult in the soul; for that spiteful enemy will disquiet those whom he cannot destroy. He cried with a loud voice, to frighten the spectators, and make himself seem terrible, as if he would have thought that though conquered, he was but just conquered.*

II. The impressions which this miracle made upon the minds of the people, c. 27, 28.

1. They were all amazed. It was evident, that the man was possessed—witness the tearing of him, and the loud voice with which the spirit cried; it was evident that he was forced out by Christ; it was surprising to them, and put them upon inquiring, 'What is this new doctrine? For it must certainly be of God, which is thus confirmed. He hath certainly an authority to command us, who hath ability to command even the unclean spirits, and they obey Him.' The Jewish exorcists pretended by charm or invocation to drive away evil spirits; but this was quite another thing, with authority He commands them. Surely it is our interest to make Him our Friend, who has the control of infernal spirits.

2. It raised his reputation among all that heard it; *Immediately his fame spread abroad into the whole region of Galilee, a third part of the land of Canaan. The story was presently in every one's mouth, all the country over so that it was universally concluded, that He was a Teacher come from God, and under that character He shone more bright than if He had appeared in all the external pomp, in which the Jews expected their Messiah to appear.*

V. 29—39 When Christ had done that which spread his fame throughout all parts, He

V. 14—23. One human instrument after another finishes his season of usefulness; but the divine Agent 'worketh his virtue,' and will forever; and though delays intervene, yet when the time is fulfilled, He will 'perfect what concerneth' the church and the believer, according to his Word.—Those who are laboring with honesty in some mean employment, are more in the way of being called forth to usefulness, than such as are disputing, or loitering, under pretence of study and preparation. (P. O. Ps. 78: 55—72. Note, Am. 7: 15—17. P. O. Matt. 4: 12—25.)—The occupation of a minister, though despised by worldly men, ought to be deemed a high preferment, not only by those who may be called to it from the fishing-boat, or the flock; but even by such as should leave the highest offices for it: the salvation of one soul is more important than the temporal prosperity of nations. But they 'who desire this good work,' must be content to forsake worldly interests that they may follow Christ; and give themselves wholly to his truth and will, that they may teach them to others. May his powerful Word call forth many disinterested and skilful 'fishers of men;' for though many have been employed, and large numbers of sinners have been brought forth from the course of this world into his church; immensely greater numbers continue in their natural estate, destroying each other, and falling a prey to that great leviathan, who takes pastime in this work of destruction.—Many scribes have possessed

(27.) *What new, &c.* Such astonishing miracles are not wrought in vain, since new discovery of the will of God is intended; but what can be? (Note, Acts 17: 19—21.)

Verses 29—31.

Note, Matt. 8: 14, 15. Anon, quickly, immediately. Ed.

Verses 32, 33.

The Sabbath ended at sunset, and then the people brought the diseased to Jesus. (Note, Matt. 8: 16, 17.)

Scott.

human learning, and made worldly preferment their leading object: our prayer ought to be, that 'scribes, well instructed' unto the kingdom of God, may teach 'with authority,' after the manner of Christ; and to the conviction of such hearers, as have been taught in a formal manner: and this would render our churches more frequented than they now are.—But there are too many, even in assemblies for sacred worship, who are slaves to unclean spirits: such may quietly attend, whilst formal teachers officiate; but if the Lord come with his faithful ministers, and his holy doctrine, and by his convincing Spirit, they begin to cry out, 'What have we to do with Thee, Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us?' Satan well knows Him to be 'the Holy One of God;' but he labors to hide this truth from his servants, that he may extend his empire. The immediate cure of lunatics by a word would in our days astonish. Yet a work really greater is frequently wrought, and men treat it with contempt. Otherwise the conversion of one notorious profligate to a 'sober, godly life,' would cause all to inquire 'What new doctrine is this, by which unclean spirits are constrained to depart, and rebels are made children?' It is in this way, that the fame of Jesus, and the honor of the Gospel, spread in this evil world: and if every one, who professes the doctrines of grace, were but changed, the doctrines would gradually prevail against all opposition.

Scott.

'The sacred writers make an express distinction between demons and the sick: likewise between the exorcism of demons and the healing of the sick. See also Luke 6: 17, 18; 7: 21, 8: 2, 13: 32. Demoniacs, therefore, were not persons afflicted merely with diseases.' JAHN.

Verses 34.

Many, &c.] If on this one evening, after the other miracles of the day, our Lord 'healed many,' and 'cast out many devils;' how

of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils, to speak, because they knew him.

35 ¶ And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place and there prayed.

36 And Simon, and they that were with him, followed after him.

37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, "All men seek for thee."

38 And he said unto them, "Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth."

39 And he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

40 ¶ And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean."

41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, "I will, be thou clean."

42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away;

44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, show thy-

self to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city,

but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

¶ *He cured his mother-in-law. Wherever Christ comes, He comes to do good. Observe, How complete the cure was; when the fever left her, it did not as usually, leave her weak, but the same hand that healed her, strengthened her, so that she was able to minister to them; the cure is in order to fit for action, that we may minister to Christ, and to those that are his for his sake.*

¶ *It was at the even of the sabbath, when the sun did set or was set; perhaps many scrupled bringing their sick to Him, till the sabbath was over, but their weakness therein was no prejudice to them in applying to Christ. Though He proved it lawful to heal on the sabbath-days, yet, if any stumbled at it, they were welcome at another time. Observe,*

I. How numerous the patients were; All the city was gathered at the door, as beggars. One cure in the synagogue occasioned this crowd. Others speeding well with Christ, should quicken us in our inquiries after Him. And in the evening of the sabbath, when the public worship is over, we must continue our attendance upon Christ; He healed, as Paul preached, publicly, and from house to house.

II. How powerful the Physician; He healed all that were brought to Him. Nor was it one particular disease, but He healed those that were sick of divers diseases. And that miracle particularly which He wrought in the synagogue, He repeated in the house at night; for He cast out many devils, and suffered not the devils to speak, for He made them know who He was, and that silenced them.

self to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

45 But he went out, and began to publish it much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city,

but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

¶ *25. 312, Luke 4:41. Acts 16:16, 17. * Or, say that they knew him. 16:48—18. Ps. 53. 108:4. Luke 4:42, 4:43. 6:12. 23:48—49. John 4:24, 6:15. Eph. 6:18. Phil. 2:5. Heb. 5:7. m. 5. Zech. 11:11. John 3:26. 11:48. n. Luke 4:43. o. Ia. 61:1—3. Luke 2:49. 4:18—21. John 9:4, 5. 16:28. p. 21. Luke 4:43, 4:44.*

numerous would the miracles wrought by Him appear if all had been recorded! Suffered, &c.] (Note. 23—23. p. 25.) "It is not the office of the devil to preach the gospel.—Otherwise Christ might seem to have something in common with Satan;—who is never more to be feared by us than when he transforms himself into an angel of light." Beza (Note. 2 Cor. 11: 13—15).—The clause may be rendered, "He suffered not the devils to say that they knew Him." (Marg.) "Because He would not have him, who is the father of lies, disgrace the truth by his testimony." Bp. Hall.

Verses 35—39.

After a day spent in unremitting labor, our Lord rose a great while before day, for prayer. (Note. Luke 4: 38—44. p. 42.) Peter and some others went and informed Him, that the people sought Him: and it is probable, they were delighted at his increasing popularity. Yet He did not go among the same people as at present; but went to other places. Perhaps He knew the multitude were meditating to make Him king.

A great while before day] (35.) Much in the night. Not elsewhere. N. T.—Followed after Him. (36.) Not elsewhere. N. T. The word seems to denote pursuing in a hostile manner; but it cannot here mean this: yet the interruption might be unwelcome to the holy mind of the Savior, and constitute a kind of persecution. Ps. 23: 6. 38: 40. Sept. Towns. (35.) Not elsewhere. N. T. The original distinguishes between villages which had a synagogue, those which had none, and called towns. Lightfoot. Therefore came I forth.] I therefore am I sent. Luke 4: 43. 'For that purpose am I sent

III. His retirement to his private devotion (p. 35.) He prayed alone; to set us an example of secret prayer. Though, as God, He was prayed to, as man He prayed. Though He was glorifying God, and doing good, in his public work, yet He found time to be alone with his Father, and thus it became him to fulfil all righteousness. Observe,

1. The time when Christ prayed. (1.) It was in the morning, after the sabbath. Note, when a sabbath is past, we must not think to intermit our devotion till the next sabbath; we must go to the throne of grace, every day in the week, and the morning after the sabbath particularly, that we may preserve the good impressions of the day. This morning was the morning of the first day of the week, which afterward He sanctified, and made remarkable, by another sort of rising early. (2.) It was a great while before day. When others were asleep, He was praying, as David, early, and directs his prayer in the morning; yea, and at midnight will rise to give thanks. When our spirits are fresh, we should take time for devout exercises. He that is the first and best, ought to have the first and best.

2. The place where He prayed; He departed into a solitary place, either out of town, or some remote garden. Though He was in no danger of distraction, or of temptation to vain-glory, yet He retired, to set us an example to his own rule, When thou prayest, enter into thy closet. Secret prayer must be made secretly. Those that have the most business in public, and of the best kind, must sometimes be alone with God.

IV. His return to his public work. The disciples thought they were up early, but found their Master was up before them; they followed Him to his solitary place, and there found Him at prayer, p. 36, 37. They told Him that He was much wanted, that there were a great many patients waiting for Him; All men seek for Thee. They were proud that their Master was become so popular already, and would have Him appear in public, yet more in that place, because it was their own city; and we are apt to be partial to the places we are interested in. 'No,' said Christ, 'Capernaum must not have the monopoly of the Messiah's preaching and miracles. Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach

q. 730. Luke 4:41. r. Matt. 8:2—4. Luke 5:12—14. s. Lev. 13:14. Num. 12:10—15. Deut. 24:8, 9. 2 Sam. 3:29. 2 Kings 5:5, &c. 73. 10:5. Matt. 11:5. Luke 17:12—19. t. 10:12. 2 Chr. 6:13. Matt. 17:14. Luke 22:41. Acts 7:60. Eph. 3:14. u. 2:22, 23. Gen. 18:14. 2 Kings 5:7. v. 6:34. Matt. 9:36. Luke 7:12, 13. Heb. 2:17. 4:15. y. 4:39. 5:41, 42. Gen. 1:3. Ps. 33:9. z. 31. 5:29. Matt. 15:23. John 4:50—53. a. 312. 5:43. 7:36. Matt. 9:20. Luke 8:36. b. Lev. 14:32. Matt. 23:2, 3. Luke 5:14. 17:1. c. Matt. 9:31. Luke 5:15. d. 2:1, 2, 13.

'into the world by my Father, with the most extensive designs of usefulness; and therefore came I forth from his more intimate presence.' Doddridge. (Marg. Ref. o.)

Verses 40—44.

(Notes. Matt. 8: 1—4. 9: 30, 31. Luke 5: 12—15. 17: 11—19.) It is probable, that our Lord noted something in this man, and some others, which rendered a stern charge needful, to prevent any impropriety which might have given occasion to his enemies. None but our Lord ever charged those who were miraculously cured, not to speak of it. Shene, &c. (44.) A cleansed leper might show himself to any priest who resided in the neighborhood, and thus have his cleansing legally attested; but it was requisite, that the offerings should be presented at the sanctuary; so that, this man must go to Jerusalem; and it is probable, he went to the priests at the temple, without delay. (Notes. Lev. 14: 1—32.)

(44.) For the mode of purification of leproseous persons, read Lev. 14: 1—32, and compare with it Matt. 8: 4. Luke 15: 14. Kn.

Verses 45.

Could no more, &c.] [This phrase signifies, what is unfit, or inconvenient to be done.—(Luke 6: 42. 11: 7.)—That which cannot without violation of equity and justice be performed. (Acts 2: 47. 1 Cor. 10: 21.)—That which is not agreeable to the divine will.—(Matt. 26: 42. John 5: 19, 30.)—That which we cannot do by reason of the trouble of it, or because of some other employment which it interferes with it.—(3: 20. 6: 19, 20. Luke 14: 20.)—That which we do not, on account of some defect or fault in the agent. (6: 5. 1: 1)

CHAP. II.

He heals a paralytic, and shows his authority on earth to forgive sins, —12. He calls Matthew; and answers those who blamed Him for eating with publicans and sinners, 13—17. He vindicates his disciples, when blamed for not fasting frequently, and accused of breaking the sabbath, 18—28.

AND again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them; no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

3 ¶ And they came unto Him, ^{fraging} one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four

4 And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and, when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

a 1:45. Matt. 9:1.
b 7:24. Luke 19:35—38. John 4:47.
c Act. 28.
d 18. 1:33, 37, 45. 4:1, 2. Luke 5:17.
e 12:1.
f 1:14. 6:34. Matt. 5:2. Luke 3:11.
g Act. 9:25. 11:19. 14:25. 16:6.
h Rom. 10:8. 2 Tim. 3:2.
i Matt. 9:2. Luke 5:18.
j Deut. 22:8. Luke 5:19.

here also, for therefore came I forth, to go about doing good.' Observe, Christ had still an eye to the end wherefore He came forth, and closely pursued that; nor will He be drawn from that; for (p. 39.) He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and, to confirm his doctrine, He cast out devils. Note, Christ's doctrine is Satan's destruction.

V. 40—45. We have here the story of Christ's cleansing a leper. It teaches us,

How to apply ourselves to Christ; (1.) With great humility; this leper came beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him; (p. 40.) it teaches us that those who would receive grace and mercy from Christ, must ascribe honor and glory to Christ, and approach Him with humility and reverence. (2.) With a firm belief of his power; Thou canst make me clean. He believes it with application, not only in general, Thou canst do every thing, (as John 11:22.) but, Thou canst make me clean. Note, What we believe of the power of Christ, we must bring home to our particular case; Thou canst do this for me. (3.) With submission to the will of Christ; Lord, if thou wilt. With the modesty that became a poor petitioner, he refers his own particular case to Him.

His address is not in the form of prayer, yet Christ answered it as a request. Note, Affectionate professions of faith in Christ, and resignation to Him, are the most prevailing petitions. Christ was moved with compassion. This is added here, in Mark, to shew that Christ's reasons are fetched from within Himself, and we have nothing in us to recommend us to his favor, but our misery makes us the objects of his mercy. This poor leper was confident of Christ's power; Thou canst make me clean; and Christ will shew how much his power is drawn out into act by the faith of his people; and therefore speaks the word as one having authority, Be thou clean. Immediately his leprosy vanished, and there remained no more sign of it, p. 42.

When we have received mercy from Christ, we must with his favors receive his commands. When Christ had cured him, he strictly charged him; the word here is very significant, prohibiting with threats. I think that this was such a charge as He gave to the impotent man whom

He cured, John 5: 14. Go, sin no more lest a worse thing come to thee; for the leprosy was ordinarily the punishment of some particular sinners, as in Miriam's, Gehazi's, and Uzziah's case; now, when Christ healed him, He threatened him with the fatal consequence if he should return to sin again. He also appointed him (1.) To show himself to the priest, that the priest, by his own judgment of this leper, might be a witness for Christ, that He was the Messiah, Matt. 11: 5. (2.) Till he had done that, not to say any thing of it to any man: this is an instance of the humility of Christ that He did not seek his own honor. And it is an example to us, not to seek our own glory, Prov. 25: 27. He must not proclaim it, because that would much increase the crowd that followed Christ; not as if He were unwilling to do good to all, but He would do it with as little noise as might be, would have no offence given to the government, no disturbance of the public peace, not any thing done that looked like ostentation. The leper ought to have observed his orders; yet, no doubt, it was with a good design that he proclaimed the cure, and it had no other ill effect than that it increased the multitudes which followed Christ, to that degree, that He could no more openly enter into the city; because the crowd was so great, that the streets would not hold them, which obliged Him to go into desert places, to a mountain, (ch. 3: 13.) to the sea-side, ch. 4: 1. This shows how expedient it was for us, that Christ should go away, and send the Comforter, for his bodily presence could be but in one place at a time; and those that came to Him from every quarter, could not get near Him; but by his spiritual presence He is with his people wherever they are, and comes to them to every quarter.

CHAP. II. v. 1—12. Christ, having been for some time preaching in the country, returns to Capernaum, in hopes that by this time the talk and crowd would be somewhat abated.

I. But the people came as soon as it was noised that he was in town; they did not stay till He appeared in the synagogue on the sabbath, but straightway many were gathered together to Him. Where the king is, there is the court; where Shiloh is, there shall the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

CHAP. I. v. 29—45. We ought to supplicate the Savior for help in all spiritual and temporal melodies, for ourselves and others, and minister to Him and his disciples: diligently recommending Him to others, knowing that nothing is too large for his grace, or omnipotence.—But when did any of us spend a single day, as Jesus spent each of his days? Were we like Him, we should 'rise a great while before' light, (if health permitted,) rather than be straitened in time for communion with God, when hindered at other hours by urgent engagements: and having had a good sabbath, we should be more earnest in prayer the next morning, lest the impression should wear off; and that we might obtain a blessing on those who have heard the word of God from us, or with us.—Men may attend on instruction with diligence, and yet not be prepared to follow Christ: but it behoves us to use opportunities that we

may be established in the faith, in case we should be proved by losing them. As Christ preached the gospel in different places, we should endeavor to spread it on every side. Let all who are weary of the leprosy of sin, wait on Christ to be cleansed: for when He speaks the word, and we truly believe in Him, the most inveterate propensities and evil habits will be conquered, and sin shall have no more dominion over us. If this blessing be vouchsafed us, let us prove it in our conduct: by 'walking in all his ordinances and commandments,' as witnesses for Christ. Nor ought we to conceal our obligations to the Savior: for no reasons exist, why we should hesitate to spread abroad his praise; and the more abundantly sinners flock to Him, the greater his honor, and the more complete his triumph.

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That which cannot be done, by reason of some disposition in us, which renders us unwilling to do any thing till it be removed. (Gen. 37: 4.) Jer. 6: 10. Matt. 12: 34. John 8: 43. 12: 39. 14: 17. Rom. 8: 8.) And so concerning a good disposition. (Matt. 7: 18. Act. 4: 29.) 1 John 3: 9. Rev. 2: 2.) Whitby. (Note, 2: 18—22, p. 19.) This quotation is important, in establishing the distinction between moral and natural inability, as showing, that the total want of inclination, or an entire aversion, forms as real an impossibility, as a total want of physical power; but an impossibility, which in no degree interferes with our free agency, or responsibility.—Inasmuch as Jesus, who shunned the applauses of the people, found it not fit for him to 'enter openly into the city.' Ep. Hall.—To blaze abroad.] See on Note, Matt. 28: 15.

Deserts.] The deserts, mentioned in the Bible, are uncultivated tracts of earth of two kinds; some mountainous, but not destitute of water; others are plains covered with sterile sands, in which fountains are very rare, and still fewer are those which afford water fit to drink. They scarcely make their way out of the thirsty earth, and are soon absorbed again. These plains produce, notwithstanding, a scanty herbage, upon which the sheep, goats, and camels feed. The mountainous deserts are not of so dreary and unproductive a character. They obtained names from the places, near which they were situated. The most celebrated is the Great Desert, which, according to Jerome, commences at the city of Tecca, six miles south of Bethlehem, extends through Arabia Deserta as far as the Persian gulf, and north along the

Euphrates beyond the city of Bir. This large tract is called in the Bible the Desert of Judah, because it commences within the limits of that tribe. (Josh. 19: 34. Ps. 63: 1.)

JAHN.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. v. 1, 2. (Note, 1: 45.) As Jesus had been for some time absent from Capernaum, it is probable the inhabitants began to conclude that He would not return: and those who were sick, or had sick friends might fear that they had finally missed the opportunity of cures. The rumor of his return excited great attention, and such numbers assembled, that the house and the space before the door could not contain the whole company.

In the house.] No particular house is specified: probably it was that of Andrew and Peter.—There was no room.] See Note on Matt. 19: 11.

Verses 3—12.

(Notes, Matt. 9: 2—8. Luke 5: 18—26.) We find from Luke, that certain Pharisees and scribes had come from far, even from Jerusalem; doubtless to watch our Lord, and to seek for matter of accusation against Him.—(Luke 5: 17.) The house, it may be supposed, was low, perhaps only one story high, and there was some way up on the outside: (Note, Matt. 24: 15—18, p. 17.) but though there might be no opening in the roof, yet it seems not to have been very much raised above the level of the ground. They therefore uncovered its roof, and broke up what was in the way. Some think he was let down through the battlements, on the outside of the house, into the yard; but the

5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

7 Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins, but God only?

8 And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, 'Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, 'Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,)

11 I say unto thee, 'Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, 'We never saw it on this fashion.

gathering of the people be. In improving opportunities for our souls, we must not lose time. One invited another, (come, let us see Jesus,) so that his house could not contain his visitors. There was no room to receive them, not so much as about the door. A blessed sight, to see people flying like a cloud to Christ, and as doves to their windows!

II. Christ gave them the best his house would afford; He preached the Word unto them, v. 2. Many of them came only for cures, and many for curiosity; but He preached to them. Though the synagogue was open to Him at proper times, He thought it not amiss to preach in a house, on a week day; though some might reckon it both an improper place and time. Blessed are ye that soon beside all waters, Isa. 32: 20.

III. A poor cripple, sick of the palsy, perfectly disabled, was borne of four, upon a bed, as if he had been upon a bier. It was his misery, that he needed to be so carried, and bespeaks the calamitous state of human life; it was their charity, who did so carry him, and bespeaks the compassion that should be in men toward their fellow-creatures in distress, because we know not how soon the distress may be our own. These kind neighbors thought if they could but carry this man once to Christ, they should not need to carry him any more; and therefore made hard to get him to Him; and when they could not otherwise, they uncovered the roof where He was, v. 4. I see no necessity to conclude that Christ was preaching in an upper room, though in such the Jews that had stately houses, had their oratories; for then to what purpose should the crowd stand before the door? Probably the house He was in, had no upper room, but the ground-floor was open to the roof: and these petitioners, when they could not get through the crowd at the door, got, by some means, to the roof of the house, took off some of the tiles, and so let down the bed with cords into the house where

Christ was. This bespoke both their faith and their fervency. It appeared that they were in earnest, and would not go, not let Christ go, without a blessing, Gen. 32: 26.

IV. Christ saw their faith; perhaps not so much his, for his distemper hindered him from the exercise of faith, but theirs that brought him. In curing the centurion's servant, Christ took notice of it as an instance of his faith, that he did not bring him to Christ, but believed He could cure him at a distance; here He commended their faith, because they did bring their friend through much difficulty. Note, True faith and strong faith may work variously, conquering sometimes the objections of reason, sometimes those of sense: but it shall be accepted, Christ said, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee. The compellation is very tender—Son; intimating a fatherly care and concern. Christ owns true believers as his sons, though sick of the palsy. Herein God deals with you as with his sons. The cordial is very rich; Thy sins are forgiven thee. Note, 1. Sin is the procuring cause of all our pains. Christ took his thoughts off from the disease, which was the effect, and led them to sin, the cause, that he might be more concerned to get that pardoned. 2. God doth then graciously take away the sting of sickness, when He forgives sin; recovery from sickness is a mercy indeed, when way is made for it by the pardon of sin. See Isa. 38:17. Ps. 103: 3. The way to remove the effect, is to take away the cause. Pardon of sin strikes at the root of all diseases, and either cures them, or alters their property.

V. The scribes cavil. Their doctrine was true—that it is blasphemy for any creature to undertake the pardon of sin, and that it is God's prerogative, Isa. 43: 25. But their application was false, and the effect of their enmity to Christ. It is true, None can forgive sins, but God only; but it is false, that therefore Christ cannot, who had proved Himself to have divine power. But Christ perceived in

rified God, saying, 'We never saw it on this fashion.

[Practical Observations.]

g Gen. 22:12. John 2:25. Acts 11:23. Thes. 1:3, 4. Jam. 2:18—22. h 9:10. Is. 58:11. Matt. 2:2. Luke 5:20. 7:47—50. Acts 5:31. 2 Cor. 2:10. Col. 3:13. i 5:34. Matt. 9:22. Luke 8:48.

k Job 33:17—26. Ps. 32:1—5. 90:7—9. 103:3. Is. 38:17. John 5:14. 1 Cor. 11:30. Jam. 5:15. l 8:17. Matt. 16:7, 8. Luke 5:21, 22. 2 Cor. 10:5. m 1:94. Matt. 9:3. 26:65. John 10:33, 36. n Ps. 130:4. Is. 43:25. Dan. 9:9. Mic. 7:18. Luke 5:21. 7:49. John 20:23—22. o 1 Chr. 29:17. Matt. 9:4. Luke 5:22. 6:8. 7:39, 40. John 2:24, 25. 6:64. 21:17. Heb. 4:13. Rev. 2:23.

p 7:21. Ps. 139:2. Prov. 15:26 24:9. Is. 55:7. Ez. 38:10. Luke 24:39. Acts 9:5. 9:22. q Matt. 9:5. Luke 5:22—25. r 5. s Dan. 7:13, 14. Matt. 9:6—8. 16:13. John 5:20—27. 1 Tim. 1:13—18. t 1:41. John 5:8—10. 6:63. u 1:27. Matt. 9:9. 12:23. Luke 7:16. 7:17. 8:26. Luke 5:26. 15:13. 17:15. Acts 4:21. y Matt. 9:33. John 7:31. 9:32.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12. Sickness and the fear of death, united to some hope of recovery, and an apprehension that the opportunity may speedily elapse, render men willing to use irksome methods of cure; and the failure of one remedy renders them eager to try another. This is not to be blamed: on the contrary, we should put ourselves to inconveniences in the relief of the afflicted: but it is most to be desired, that their afflictions may bring them to Christ for salvation, as well as for bodily health: in that case their afflictions will be either removed or sanctified. Forgiveness is far more valuable than the removal of sickness; the loss of the soul is infinitely more dreadful, than the death of the body: but how very few, act, as if they believed these truths!—(Notes, Ps. 32: 1, 2, Matt. 10: 23, 29.) We cannot deliver sinners from the maladies of the body, much less from those of the soul: but we may bring them to Christ for salvation; and should lose no opportunity, and sink from no self-denial, in attempting it.—The humble sinner, who despairs of help, except from the Savior, will seek Him, with earnestness: and difficulties will only serve to increase his resolution. He will not attempt to heal himself, or expect to become better, before he comes to his Physician; but when he receives forgiveness, it is accompanied by such power of renewing grace on his soul, that he becomes 'a new creature;

old things pass away, all things become new' (Notes, Rom. 6: 1, 2. 2 Cor. 5: 17. Eph. 2: 4—10, v. 10. Heb. 6: 9, 10.) When enabled to overcome those evils to which he was enslaved, and to delight in those duties to which he had had an aversion, he has 'a witness in himself,' that he is pardoned; for He, who heals the soul, must also have power to cleanse the guilty conscience; and the former is the seal of the latter.—Whatever proud Pharisees and scribes may say against such instances of grace, the change is often so evident, that it cannot be gainsaid: and all impartial judges must own, in the conduct of many who profess the gospel, the excellency of the doctrines, and the efficacy of the grace. But if any think, that their sins are forgiven, who still remain under the power of corrupt passions and habits, they deceive themselves and bring a scandal on the gospel; for Christ is glorified in those alone, who glorify Him by their conduct, from the time when they profess to believe in his name. Should any assume to forgive sins, who have no power to cure paralytics, and to bid them 'take up their bed and walk,' they would be chargeable with blasphemy; but the feeblest believer may attempt such things at Christ's command, as otherwise would be impossible to him; for His word is power. (P. O. Matt. 9: 1—8. John 5: 1—14.)

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language of the evangelists seems incapable of this meaning; and any injury done to the roof, by breaking it up, might be repaired at a small expense. Jesus did not, in the first instance, remove the man's disorder, but pronounced his sins forgiven. (Marg. Ref. k.) This afforded the scribes the occasion for which they were waiting; and though they did not openly declare their sentiments, they inwardly thought Him guilty of blasphemy.

(4.) The explanation here given by Scott is unsatisfactory. Would four men, perhaps strangers, take so great a liberty as to unroof the house of another? Besides, removing the earth, rafters, and other materials of the roof, would have endangered the crowd below. There is an easier solution. Over the court or yard of eastern houses, was usually spread a large awning to screen from the sun. Roof here

means covering or awning. The four men carried the paralytic up the private stairs, on the outside, to the top of the house, which was flat roofed, uncovered the awning by losing one or more of the fastenings which were probably fixed to the parapet, and let him down, (as it should be rendered,) not through, but along the tiling. But it is said, 'and when they had broken it up,' &c. These words may refer, not as Scott and others suppose, to the roof, but to the bed. They brought him upon the bed or bierstead to the roof, then broke it up, or took it apart, and formed a couch of the sacking, which was easily let down into the yard. So in Luke 5: 19, we read, 'he men brought the sick of the palsy to the roof in a bed, and let him down with his couch.' The above accords with the opinions of Jam. Doddridge, Shair, T. Taylor, So Robinson's Calme, art. Houses; but see note on Luke: 19. Ed.

13 ¶ And he went forth again * by the sea-side, * and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

14 And as he passed by, * he saw Levi the son of * Alpheus sitting at the * receipt of custom, and said unto him, * Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

15 And it came to pass, that, * as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

16 And when the scribes and Pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples: * How is it that he eateth and drinketh with * publicans and sinners?

17 When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, * They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: * I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

18 ¶ And * the disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto him, * Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

19 And Jesus said unto them, * Can the children of the bride-

his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves: this proves him to be God, and that He had authority to forgive sins; for He searched the heart, and knew what was in man, Rev. 2: 23. God's royalties are inseparable, and He that could know thoughts, could forgive sins. This magnifies the grace of Christ, in pardoning sin, that He knew men's thoughts, and therefore knows both the sinfulness of sins, and the particulars of them, and yet is ready to pardon. He proves his power to forgive sin, by his power to cure the palsy, v. 9—11. He would not have pretended to do the one if He could not have done the other; that ye may know that the Son of man, the Messiah, has power on earth to forgive sin, Thou, that art sick of the palsy, arise, take up thy bed. This was a suitable argument in itself. He could not have cured the disease, which was the effect, if He could not have taken away the sin, which was the cause. And besides, his curing diseases was a figure of his pardoning sin, for sin is the disease of the soul. He that could by a word accomplish the sign, could doubtless perform the thing signified. It was suited to them. These carnal scribes would be more affected with such an effect of a pardon, as the cure of the disease, and be sooner convinced by it, than by more spiritual consequences; therefore it was proper to appeal, whether it is easier to say, Thy sins are forgiven thee, or to say, Arise and walk? The removing of the punishment as such, was the remitting of the sin; He that could go so far in the cure, no doubt could perfect it. See Isa. 33: 24.

VI. The sick man not only arose, perfectly well, but, to show that he had perfect strength, took up his bed, because it lay in the way, and went forth before them all, and they were all amazed, and glorified God, as indeed they ought; saying, * We never saw it on this fashion; never were such wonders done before in our time. Note, Christ's works were without precedent. When we see what He doeth in healing souls, we must own that we never saw the like.

V. 13—17. I. Christ found no house or street large enough to contain his auditory; but upon the strand there might come as many as would. It should seem by this, that our Lord could and did speak loud; for wisdom crieth without, in the places of concourse. Wherever He goes, though to the sea-side, multitudes resort to Him. Wherever the doctrine of Christ is faithfully preached, though driven to corners or deserts, we must follow it.

II. Levi, the same with Matthew, had a place in the custom-house at Capernaum, from which he was denominated a publican; his place fixed him by the water-side, and thither Christ went to meet him. This Levi is here said to be the son of Alpheus or Cleopas, husband to that Mary who was near kinswoman to the virgin Mary; if so, he was brother to James the less, and Jude, and Simon the Canaanite, so that there were four brother apostles. Matthew was probably a loose, extravagant young man, or else, being a Jew, he would never have been a publican. However, Christ called him to follow Him. Paul, though a Pharisee, one of the chief of sinners, was called to be an apostle. With God, through Christ, there is mercy to pardon the greatest sins, and grace to sanctify the greatest sinners. Matthew, a publican, became an evangelist, the first and the fullest in writing the life of Christ. Great sin and scandal, before conversion, are no bar to great gifts, graces, or advancements, after; nay, God may be the more glorified. Christ prevented him with this call; in bodily cures, ordinarily, He was sought unto, but in spiritual cures, He was found of them that sought Him

not. For *trus* s the great peril of sin, that those who are under it, desire not to be made whole.

III. Christ sat at meat in Levi's house, who invited Him and his disciples to the farewell feast he made to his friends, when he left all to attend Christ: such a feast he made, as Elisha did, (1 Kings 19: 21.) to show with what thankfulness to God he quitted all, in compliance with Christ's call. Fitly did he make the day of his espousals to Christ a festival day. This was also to testify his respect to Christ, and the grateful sense he had of his kindness in snatching him from the receipt of custom, as a brand out of the burning. Many publicans and sinners sat with Christ in Levi's house; (many belonging to that custom-house;) and they followed Him. They followed Levi; so some understood it, supposing that, like Zaccheus, he was chief among the publicans, and rich; and for that reason the inferior sort attended him for what they could get. Rather they followed Jesus, because of the report they had heard of Him. They did not for conscience' sake leave all to follow Him, but for curiosity they came to Levi's feast, to see Him; whatever brought them thither, they were sitting with Jesus and his disciples. The publicans are ranked with the worst of sinners. (1.) Because commonly they were such; so general were the corruptions in the execution of that office, taking bribes or fees to extortion, and accusing falsely. Luke 3: 13—19. A fair-dealing publican was so rare, that one Sabinus was, after his death, honored with this inscription—Here lies an honest publican. (2.) The Jews had an antipathy to their office, as an affront to the liberty of their nation, and a badge of their slavery, and therefore put them in scandal. Such as these our Lord was pleased to converse with, when He appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh.

IV. The scribes and Pharisees would not come to hear Him preach; but they would come to see Him sit with publicans and sinners. They endeavored to put the disciples out of conceit with their Master, as a Man not of that sanctity that became his character; and therefore put the question to them, How is it, that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? Note, It is no new thing for that which is well done and well designed, to be misrepresented, and turned to the reproach of the best of men.

V. Christ stood to what He did, and would not withdraw, though the Pharisees were offended: as Peter afterward did, Gal. 2: 12. Note, Those are too tender of their good name, who, to preserve it with some people, will decline a good work. Christ would not do so. They thought the publicans were to be hated. Christ said, * They are to be pitied, they need a physician; they are sinners, and need a Savior. They thought Christ's character should separate Him from them; * No, saith Christ, * my commission directs Me to them; I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. If the world had been righteous, there had been no occasion for my coming. It is to a sinful world that I am sent, therefore my business lies most with the greatest sinners. Or thus; * I am not come to call the righteous, the proud Pharisees, that think themselves righteous, that ask, Wherein shall we return? (Mal. 3: 7.) but publicans, that own themselves sinners, and are glad to be invited to repent. It is good dealing with those that there is hope of; there is more hope of a fool than of one that is wise in his own conceit, Prov. 26: 12.

V. 18—23. Christ had justified Himself in conversing with publicans and sinners; here

¶ Matt. 13: 1.
 a 3: 7, 8, 20, 21. 4: 1. Prov. 1: 20—22. Luke 19: 49. 21: 38.
 c 3: 18. Matt. 9: 9. * Luke 5: 27.
 d 2: 18. Luke 6: 15. 1: 13.
 Or, place where the customs were received.
 e 17—20. Matt. 4: 19—22.
 f Matt. 9: 10, 11. 21: 31, 32. Luke 5: 29, 30. 15: 1.
 g 7: 1. 6: 55. Luke 15: 2, 3. Eccl. 11: 19, 20. 1 Cor. 2: 15. Heb. 12: 3.
 h Matt. 17: 17.
 i Matt. 9: 12, 13. Luke 5: 31, 32. 15: 7, 28. 16: 15. John 9: 34, 40, 41.
 j Matt. 18: 11. Lu 6: 15, 19. 12: 10. Acts 20: 21. 26: 30. Rom. 5: 8, 9. 29: 21. 1 Tim. 1: 15, 16. Tit. 2: 14. 2: 12.
 k Matt. 9: 14—17. Luke 5: 33—39.
 l Matt. 6: 16, 18. 23: 5. Luke 18: 12. Rom. 10: 3.
 m Gen. 29: 22. Judg. 14: 10, 11. Ps. 25: 14. Cant. 6: 8. Matt. 26: 1—10.

Verses 13—17.

(13.) Sea-side.] Any large collection of water is called a sea in the Bible. Sea-side, in this verse, refers to the shore of lake Gennesaret, called also sea of Tiberias.

Notes, Matt. 9: 9—13. Luke 5: 27—32.] Matthew is here called Levi the son of Alpheus; but it is doubtful whether he was brother to James the son of Alpheus, or son to another of the same name: the former supposition is by far the most probable. (Note, Matt. 9: 10—12.) 16, 17.] Sinners. These 'sinners' were not Gentiles, as some learn; I must interpret the word to mean; but Jews of disgraceful character.

Our Lord's ministry was almost exclusively among 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'

Verses 18—22.

(Notes, Matt. 9: 14—17. Luke 5: 33—39.) 'Superstitious and hypocritical persons place the sum of piety, in things of an indifferent nature.—Not considering what the strength of each person can bear, they rashly enact laws without discretion. They prefer the ceremonial law to the moral; when, on the contrary, they ought to seek from the latter the true use of the ceremonial law.' Beze (Marg and ming Ref.)

chamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the Bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

20 But the days will come, when "the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them," and then shall they fast in those days.

21 No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment; else the new piece that filled it up, taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse

22 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

23 ¶ And it came to pass, that he went through the cornfields on the sabbath-day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

24 And the Pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath-day that which is not lawful?

25 And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and

He justifies his disciples; and in what they do according to his will, He will justify them.

1. He justifies them in their not fasting. Why do the Pharisees and the disciples of John fast? The Pharisees fasted twice in the week, (Luke 18: 12.) and probably the disciples of John did so too; and this very day, perhaps, was their fast-day, which aggravated the offence. Strict professors often make their own practice a standard, and censure all that do not come up to it. They invidiously suggest, that if Christ went among sinners to do good, yet the disciples went to indulge their appetites, for they never knew what it was to deny themselves. Note, Ill-will always suspects the worst.

Christ pleads in excuse of his disciples not fasting.

1. That these were *easy days* with them, and fasting was not *seasonable*. v. 19, 20. There is a time for all things. Those that enter into the married state, must expect trouble in the flesh, yet, during the nuptial solemnity, they are merry, and think it becomes them to be so; it was absurd for Samson's bride to weep before him, during the days that the feast lasted, Judg. 14: 17. Christ and his disciples were but newly married, the Bridegroom was yet with them, the nuptials were yet celebrating; (Matthew's particularly;) when the Bridegroom should be removed from them, then would be a proper time to sit as a widow, in solitude and fasting.

2. These were *early days* with them, and they were not able for severe exercises of religion. The Pharisees had accustomed themselves to such austerities; and John Baptist

was an hungered, he, and they that were with him?

26 How he went into the house of God, in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shew-bread, which is not lawful to eat, but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

27 And he said unto

them, "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath." Therefore 28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

II. He justifies them in plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath, which a disciple of the Pharisees would not dare to have done; for it was contrary to an express tradition of the elders. In this instance, as in that before, they reflect upon the discipline of Christ, as not so strict as theirs: so common it is for those who deny the power of godliness, to be jealous for the form, and censorious of those who affect not their form.

Observe, 1. What poor repeat the disciples had on a sabbath morning; (v. 23,) they plucked the ears of corn. They forgot their necessary food; the Word of God was to them in-

Or, raw, or, unseasoned, Matt. 9: 18, 19. Job 32: 19, Ps. 119: 89, Matt. 9: 17, Luke 5: 37, 38. Matt. 12: 1-5, Luke 6: 1-5. Dent. 23: 24-25, v. 16. Matt. 7: 3-5, 15: 2, 3, 23: 23, 24, Heb. 12: 3. Ex. 29: 10, 31: 15, 35: 23, Num. 15: 32-36, Neh. 13: 15-22, a. 59: 2, 4, 6, 58: 13, Jer. 17: 25-27, y. 12: 10, 36, Matt. 19: 4, 21: 16, 22, 24, 25, Luke 10: 28. z. 1 Sam. 21: 3-6. a. 1 Sam. 22: 20-22, 23: 6, 2 Sam. 8: 17, 15: 24, 29: 33, 20: 25, 1 Kings 1: 7, 2: 22, 15: 27, 44. b. Ex. 29: 32, 33, Lev. 24: 5-9. c. Ex. 33: 12, Dent. 5: 14, Neh. 9: 13, 14, Est. 20: 12, Luke 6: 9, John 7: 23, 1 Cor. 3: 21, 22, 2 Cor. 4: 15. d. 34, Matt. 12: 8, Luke 6: 5, 13: 15, 16, John 9: 11-17, 9: 5-11, 11: 16, Rev. 1: 10.

n Ps. 45: 11, Cant. 3: 11, Is. 54: 6, 25, John 3: 29, 2 Cor. 11: 2. Rev. 19: 7, 21: 9. Matt. 26: 31, John 7: 33, 12: 13, 13: 33, 16: 7, 28: 17, 11: 13, Acts 1: 9, 3: 21, p. Acts 19: 32, 14: 23, 1 Cor. 7: 5, 2 Cor. 6: 5, 11: 27, q. Ps. 103: 13-15, Is. 57: 14, 1 Cor. 10: 13.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13-23. While the servants of Christ call on sinners to forsake all and follow Him, and meet with some success, there are many who accuse them of being enemies to morality; not understanding that 'Christ came, not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.' Christ himself did not escape such slanders; we should therefore be willing to bear them, as well as careful not to deserve them. If we omit such things as are not needful or seasonable, or do that which is not sinful, we may quietly leave Him to plead our cause. But we should attend

to every part of our duty, in its proper season; and ministers should be cautious, in dealing with the weak but conscientious, not to discourage them. They should insist on the practice of holiness, the observance of the Lord's day, and of divine ordinances, in subserviency to their real good and that of others; but not be so exact in doubtful externals, as to interfere with genuine piety and justice; or with any thing, which may glorify God, or do good to men. (P. O. Matt. 9: 9-17.)

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(22.) The bottles here referred to were skins of small animals sewed up—the neck of the skin serving for the neck of the bottle. When new, they were elastic and strong. When old, they were rotten and unyielding, and therefore unsafe depositories for new wine, which must have room for fermentation. See engraving at Matt. 9: 17. Ed. Our Savior's meaning. Why, say the Pharisees, do not thy disciples fast? He answers, because I am with them, and, in these times of joy, fasting would be as much out of place as fasting at a wedding. It would exhibit the folly of a person who should mend an old garment with large patches of new cloth, which, as soon as there came any strain upon them, would tear out the old, and make the rent worse; or of one who should put new wine into old, and decayed, and unelastic bottles, which, in the fermentation of the wine, would certainly burst.

Verses 23-26.

(Notes. Matt. 12: 1-8.) 'Abiathar the high priest.' Ahimelech was high priest when David took the shew-bread; but Abiathar, his son, was chief priest under him, and probably superintended the tabernacle. Ahimelech was soon after slain; and Abiathar became high priest, and continued in that office till after the death of David. He was more eminent than his father, and this shows the evangelist's reason for inserting his name, rather than Ahimelech's. 1 Sam. 21: 1-9, 22: 18-29, 23: 1-6, 2 Sam. 8: 15-14, 1 Kings 2: 26, 27.

(36.) High priest. The word is used either for high priest or chief priest: but generally in the singular, it denotes the high priest; in the plural, the chief priests.

Verses 27, 29.

(27.) 'The Jews, in carrying their observance of the sabbatical law

into frivolous and childish absurdities, acted as if man were made for the Sabbath; whereas the Sabbath is a gift, for the refreshment of our bodies, and the improvement of our souls.'

GURNEY.

'Hereby God plainly shows, that it is neither out of indigence or interest that He requires men to worship and obey Him, but only out of goodness, and to make them happy.' Dr. A. CLARKE. (28.) Therefore. But how does it follow that the Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath? He had just before established his right to a divine prerogative—the forgiveness of sins. He is therefore the Son of man with power. If now the sabbath was an immutable institution, and man had been created merely to put honor upon it, as the conduct of the Jews would lead one to suppose, then would the Author of the sabbath claim no further right to change any thing concerning it. But if it was instituted for man's good, then is the Son of man its Lord, to change the day, or the manner of observing it, or make any alteration in it which man's good may demand.

Ed.

The sabbath was originally instituted for the good of man even before the fall: (Notes. Gen. 2: 2, 3.) and it was enjoined after the fall, as still more needful for men, living in society, having many troubles; the creatures of God, preparing for eternal happiness or misery, and sinners under a dispensation of mercy: but man was not made for the sabbath. When a strict observance of the external rest would be injurious to the individual, or to others, in an enlarged view of the subject, 'the Lord of the sabbath,' has granted him a license to dispense with it: but not on any other account. (Notes. Ex. 16: 22-27, 40: 8-10, 31: 13-17, 35: 2, 3, Is. 58: 13, 14, Ez. 20: 12, Matt. 12: 7-11, Luke 13: 10-17, P. O. 23: 44-56, Notes, John 5: 10-18, 7: 19-24, 20: 19-23, Rev. 1: 9-11.)

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CHAP. III.

Jesus returned a man's withered hand in the synagogue, on the sabbath, 1-5. The Pharisees conspire his death: He retires, is followed by multitudes, and heals many, 6-12. He chooses twelve apostles, 13-19. His friends look upon Him as beside himself, 20, 21. He confutes the blasphemous absurdity of the scribes, who ascribe his casting out devils to the power of Beelzebub, 22-27. Note who in the will of God are regarded as his nearest relations, 31-35.

AND he entered again into the synagogue: and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath-day; that they might accuse him.

3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath-days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace.

5 And when he had looked round about on them, with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out; and his hand was restored whole as the other.

6 ¶ And the Phari-

1. 121. Matt. 12:9-14. Luke 6:9-11.
h. 1 Kings 13:4, 5. John 5:3.
c. P. 27, 32. Is. 29:20, 21. Jer. 30:10.
Dan. 8:4. Luke 6:7, 11, 55, 54, 14.
d. 1. 421. John 6:10. Luke 6:8.
e. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
f. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
g. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
h. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
i. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
j. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
k. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
l. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
m. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
n. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
o. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
p. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
q. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
r. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
s. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
t. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
u. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
v. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
w. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
x. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
y. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.
z. 1. 424. Dan. 6:10. Luke 6:8.

stead of that; and their zeal for it was not at all the same. The Jews made it a piece of religion, to eat dainty food on sabbath days, but the disciples were content with any thing.

2. Even this was grudged them by the Pharisees, upon supposition that it was not lawful to pluck the ears of corn on the Sabbath; that it was as much a servile work as reaping; (v. 24.) Why do they on the Sabbath that which is not lawful? Note, If Christ's disciples do that which is unlawful, Christ will be reflected upon, as here, and dishonor will redound to his name. When the Pharisees thought Christ did amiss, they told the disciples; (v. 16.) now when they thought the disciples did amiss, they spake to Christ, to sow discord between Christ and his disciples.

3. Christ defended them by a good precedent, in David's eating the shew-bread, when there was no other bread to be had; (v. 25, 26.) Have ye never read? Note, Many of our mistakes would be rectified, and censures of others corrected, if we would recollect what we have read in the Scripture. You have read that David, the man after God's own heart, when he was hungry, ate the shew-bread, which by the law none might eat, but priests and their families.

Note, Ritual observances must give way to moral obligations: and that may, in a case of necessity, which otherwise may not, be done. This, it is said, David did in the days of Abiathar the high-priest; or just before the days of Abiathar, who immediately succeeded Ahimelech, his father, in the pontificate, and it is probable, was at that time his father's assistant, in the office; and he it was, that escaped the massacre, and brought the ephod to David.

Again, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. This we had not in Matthew. The Sabbath is a divine institution; but we must receive it as a privilege, not as a task. God never designed it to be an imposition, and therefore we must not make it so. Man was not made for the Sabbath; for he was made a day before the Sabbath. Man was made for God, and for his service, and he must rather die than deny Him; but he was not made for the Sabbath, so as to be tied up by it, for that which is necessary to life. God designed it to be an advantage to us, and so we must make it. He made it for man. He had regard to our bodies, that they might rest, and not be tired out with constant business; (Deut. 5: 14.) that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest. Now He that intended the sabbath-rest for the repose of our bodies, certainly never intended it should restrain us, in a case of necessity, from the necessary supports of the body; it must be construed so as not to contradict itself—for edification, and not for destruction. He had much more regard to our souls. The Sabbath was made a day of rest, in order to communion with God, and thanksgiving; and the rest from worldly business is necessary, that we may apply ourselves to this work, in public and private; but then time is allowed us to fit our bodies for the service of our souls in God's service. See here, (1.) What a good Master we serve, all whose institutions are for our own benefit; it is not

He but we, that are gainers by our service. (2.) What we should aim at in our sabbath-work, the good of our own souls. If the Sabbath was made for man, we should then ask ourselves at night, 'What am I the better for this sabbath?' (3.) We ought not to make those exercises of religion burdens to ourselves or others, which God ordained to be blessings; neither adding unreasonable strictness, nor indulging corruptions adverse to the command, for thereby we make devout exercises a penance, which otherwise would be a pleasure.

Again, The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath; and He will not see the kind intentions of the institution frustrated. Note, The sabbath days are days of the Son of man, and to his honor must be observed; by Him God made the worlds, and by Him the Sabbath was first instituted; by Him God gave the law at mount Sinai, and so the fourth commandment was his law; and that alteration shortly to be made, one day forward, was to be in remembrance of his resurrection, and therefore the Christian Sabbath was to be called the Lord's day, (Rev. 1: 10.) and the Son of man, as Mediator, is always to be looked upon as Lord of the Sabbath. This argument He insists upon in his own justification, when charged with having broken the Sabbath, John 5: 16.

CHAP. III. v. 1-12. Our Lord Jesus is busy in the synagogue and by the sea-side, to teach us that his presence should not be confined either to one or the other, but wherever any are gathered together in his name, He is in the midst of them. In every place where He records his name, He will meet his people, and bless them; it is his will that men pray every where.

1. When He entered again into the synagogue, He improved the opportunity of doing good, and wrought a miracle for the confirmation of this truth—that it is lawful to do good on the sabbath day. We had the narrative Matt. 12: 9.

1. The patient had a withered hand, by which he was disabled to work for his living; those that are so, are the most proper objects of charity; let those be helped, that cannot help themselves.

2. The spectators were very unkind. Instead of interceding for a neighbor, they did what they could to hinder his cure: they intimated that if Christ cured on the Sabbath, they would accuse Him as a sabbath-breaker. It had been very unreasonable, if they should have opposed a physician in helping misery; much more absurd was it to oppose Him that cured without labor, but by a word.

3. Christ dealt fairly with the spectators and with them first, to prevent the offence, and to convince their judgment. He hid the man stand forth, (v. 3.) that they might be moved with compassion, and not account his cure a crime. Then He appeals to conscience; Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? Whether is better, to save life, or to kill? What fairer question could be put? Yet, they held their peace. Note, Those are obstinate indeed in infidelity, who, when they

NOTES.

CHAP. III. v. 1-5. (Notes, 2: 23-23. Matt. 12: 9-13.) When Christ demanded, 'whether it was lawful to do good, or evil, on the sabbath-day; to save life, or to kill.' He referred to the secret intentions of the scribes and Pharisees to compass his death. While they were forming designs of murder in the synagogue, and on the Sabbath, he bled Him for doing good, even in subserviency to the salvation of their souls.

(1.) This they did moreover, in opposition to one of their own approved maxims, that he who neglected to preserve life when it was in his power, was a murderer.

This excited his holy indignation: but their exposure to misery, and the hardness of their hearts, caused Him also to grieve over them, as well as for the mischief which they did to the people.

(4.) Is it lawful, &c. It seems from St. Matthew's narrative, that the enemies of Christ first asked Him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-days? He answered them by the question here stated, Is it lawful to do good, or not to do good when he can, doeth evil; it being evil, to neglect doing good, or showing kindness to misery; and not to preserve life when in danger, is to transgress the precept which saith, 'Thou shalt not kill.' Whitby. (Note, 1 John 3: 16, 17.)

Hold their peace.' Conscience-smitten.'

DODDIDGE.

(5.) Anger. Hence we learn, that anger is not always sinful; 'being found in Him in whom was no sin.' But anger is not properly defined a desire of revenge, or causing grief to him who hath grieved us: this desire of revenge is always evil; and though our Savior was angry with the Pharisees for the hardness of their hearts, yet He had great compassion for them. Whitby. Our Lord's anger was not sinful: it was a holy indignation, a perfectly right state of heart: the want of it would have been sinful. It would show a want of filial respect for a son to hear, without emotion, his father aspersed. Would it not then be a want of reverence for God, to hear his name blasphemed, without disapprobation? Vengeance belongs to the ruler exclusively: he may grieve at the necessity of thus expressing his disapprobation of crimes; but it is his duty. Eli ought to have shown anger, as well as grief, at the conduct of his sons. (Notes, 1 Sam. 2: 23-34. 3: 11-14.) Parents, masters, and magistrates may sin, in not expressing just displeasure; and anger is only sinful, when it springs from selfishness and malevolence; or when causeless, or above the cause; and when expressed by unbalanced words and actions. (Notes, Matt. 5: 21, 22. Eph. 4: 26, 27.)

(6.) Being grieved. By this word it is signified, that Christ was offended at their wickedness; yet so that He also pitied their misery. Beza.

SCOTT.

sees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

7 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea,

8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him, because of the multitude, lest they should throng him.

10 For he had healed many, insomuch that they pressed upon him to touch him, as many as had plagues.

11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.

12 And he straightly charged them, that they should not make him known.

13 ¶ And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him

can say nothing against a truth, will say nothing to it; and, when they cannot resist, will not yield.

When they rebelled against the light, He lamented their stubbornness: (v. 5.) He looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts. The sin He had an eye to, was, the hardness of their hearts, their insensibleness to the evidence of miracles, and their resolution in unbelief. We hear and see what is done amiss; but Christ looks at the root of bitterness in the heart. He looked round upon them; for they were so many, that they surrounded Him; He looked with anger; his anger, it is probable, appeared in his countenance; his anger was, like God's, without the least perturbation to Himself, but not without great provocation from us. Note, Sin is very displeasing to Jesus Christ; and the way to be angry, and not sin, is, to be angry, as Christ was, at nothing but sin. Let hard-hearted sinners think of the anger with which He will look round upon them, when the great day of his wrath comes! He was grieved for the hardness of their hearts; as God was grieved forty years for the hardness of the hearts of their fathers in the wilderness. Note, It is a great grief to Jesus, to see sinners bent upon ruin, and obstinately set against conviction and recovery, for He would not that any should perish. This is a good reason why the hardness of our hearts and of others, should grieve us.

4. Christ dealt very kindly with the patient; He hid him stretch forth his hand, and it was immediately restored. Christ has hereby taught us resolution in duty, how violent soever the opposition. We must deny ourselves sometimes in pleasure and convenience, rather than give offence even to those who causelessly take it, but we must serve God, and do good, though offence be taken at it. None could be more tender of giving offence than Christ; yet rather than send this man away uncured, He would venture offending all the scribes and Pharisees. He hath hereby given us a specimen of his grace on souls: our hands are spiritually withered, our souls weakened by sin. The great healing-day is the Sabbath, and the healing-power is of Christ. The command is like this recorded here; and as rational and just, though our hands are withered, and we cannot of ourselves stretch them forth, we must as well as we can, lift them up in prayer, lay hold on Christ and eternal life, and if we do our endeavor, power goes with the word of Christ. Though our hands be withered, yet, if we will not offer to stretch them out, it is our own fault that we are not healed; but if we do, and are healed, Christ must have all the glory.

5. The enemies of Christ dealt barbarously with Him. Such a work of mercy should have engaged their love, and such a work of wonder their faith. Instead of that, the Pharisees, oracles in the church, and the Herodians, supporters of the state, though of opposite interests, took counsel together against Him, how they might destroy Him. Note, They that suffer for doing good, do but suffer as their Master did.

II. He then withdrew to the sea, to teach us in troublous times to consult our own safety; but He was followed into retirement.

When some drove Him out of their country others followed Him wherever He went; and the enmity of their leaders to Christ did not cool their respect. Great multitudes followed Him from all parts of the nation; as far north, as from Galilee; as far south, as from Judea and Jerusalem; nay, and from Idumea; as far east, as from beyond Jordan; and west, as from about Tyre and Sidon, v. 7, 8. What induced them to follow Him, was the report they heard of the great things He did for all that applied to Him; some wished to see One that had done such great things, and others hoped He would do great things for them. Note, The consideration of the great things Christ has done, should engage us to come to Him, v. 10. They pressed upon Him, to touch Him, as many as had plagues. Diseases are here called plagues, chastisements; so they are designed to be, for our sins, that thereby we may be made sorry, and not return to them. Those that were under these scourgings, came to Jesus; sickness is sent, to quicken us to inquire after Christ, as our Physician. They pressed upon Him, each striving which should get nearest. They fell down before Him, as petitioners for favor; they desired leave but to touch Him, having faith to be healed, not only by his touching them, but by their touching Him; which no doubt they had many instances of, v. 9. He then spake to his disciples, who were fishermen, and had boats at command, that a small ship should constantly wait on Him, to carry Him from place to place on the same coast; that, when He had despatched the necessary business in one place, He might easily remove to another, where his presence was requisite, without pressing through crowds. Wise men, as much as they can, decline a crowd.

He did not withdraw, to be idle, nor send back those who rudely crowded after Him when He withdrew, but took it kindly, and gave them what they came for; for He never said to any that sought Him diligently, Seek ye in vain. (1.) Diseases were effectually cured; He healed many patients, ill of divers diseases. (2.) Devils were effectually conquered; unclean spirits, when they saw Him, trembled at his presence, and fell down before Him, to deprecate his wrath, and were compelled to own the Son of God, v. 11. It is sad that this great truth should be denied by men, who may have the benefit of it, when a confession of it has so often been extorted from devils, who are excluded from having benefit by it. (3.) Christ sought not applause to himself in doing those things, for He strictly charged those for whom He did them, that they should not make Him known; (v. 12.) that they should not be industrious to spread the notice of his cures, but let them leave his own works to praise Him. Let not those that are cured, be forward to divulge it, lest it should feed their pride; but let the standers-by carry intelligence of it. When we do what is praiseworthy, and not covet to be praised of men, the same mind is in us, which was in Christ Jesus.

V. 13–21. I. Christ made choice of twelve apostles to be his attendants, and to preach the Gospel. Observe,

1. The introduction to this call of disciples; He goes up into a mountain to pray. Ministers

8:15. 12:13. Matt. 22:16.
m Matt. 10:23. 12:15. Luke 6:12.
John 10:38–41. 11:53, 54. Acts 14:5, 6. 17:10, 14.
n Matt. 4:25. Luke 6:17.
o 1:39. Josh. 20:7. 21:32. Luke 23:5. Luke 7:41, 52.
p 1a. 36:5. Ec. 35:15. 36:5. Mal. 1:2–4. Edom.
q Num. 22:33–38. Josh. 13:8, &c.
r 7:24, 31. Josh. 19:28–29. Ps. 45:12. 67:4. 1a. 22. Ec. 36–38.
s 5:30, 31. John 6:15.
t Or, rushed.
u 5:27, 28. 6:56. Matt. 14:36. Acts 6:15. 19:11, 12.
v 5:29. Gen. 12:17. Num. 11:33. Luke 7:2. Heb. 12:6.
x 1:23, 24. 5:5, 6. Matt. 9:31. Luke 4:41. Acts 16:17. 19:13–17.
y 1:1. Matt. 4:34. 8:29. Luke 8:28. 12:53, 54. Matt. 16:18. Acts 16:18.
z Matt. 10:1, &c. Luke 6:12–16.

Verses 6–12.

(Notes, Matt. 12:14–21, v. 14.) The Herodians had no regard to religion, except in subservience to politics; yet they concurred with the superstitious Pharisees in plotting the death of Jesus! (Note, Matt. 22:15–22, v. 16.) (Notes, Ps. 94:12–14. 1 Cor. 11:29–34. Heb. 12:4–11.)—When it is said that “unclean spirits fell down before Him,” it forms an undeniable proof of the reality of the possessions, and of the absolute authority of Christ. (Note, Matt. 8:23, 29.)

Charged them.] This He did to avoid offence and unnecessary excitement, till by his character and miracles He should more fully establish his claim to Messiahship, in the minds of the people. En. (v. 13.) Took counsel.] Made a consultation. (Matt. 12:14.) The leaders of the different sects, convening together, as in council, against Jesus, seem intended. Scott.

Verses 13–19.

Notes, Matt. 10:1–4.) This appointment of the twelve apostles seems to have occurred some time before they were sent forth to preach (6:7–12.) The surname of ‘Boanerges,’ or ‘sons of thun-

der,’ given to James and John, doubtless related to the energy with which they addressed men’s consciences, awakened their fears, and showed them their need of salvation. (Notes, Jer. 23:23, 29.) ‘Christ seems to have given it from a foresight of the heat and zeal of their temper, of which they quickly gave an instance, in their desire to call down fire from heaven, to consume the Samaritans. (Luke 9:54.)—Hence we find in the Acts, Peter and John are the chief actors in the defence of the Gospel: and the zeal of James and Peter seems to be the reason, why the one was slain by Herod, and the other imprisoned.’ Whitty. It is evident, that John, as well as James, was naturally of a sanguine disposition: but when sanctified, it constituted that zealous, affectionate temper, which appears in his writings, and which, though it was the result of his loving spirit, (I suppose, because he so much imitates love,) as if he had been incapable of giving reproofs and awful warnings, seem to have mistaken his character: for no part of the Scripture is more suited to give offence to all hypocritical professors than his first epistle; or even to put inconsistent Christians to a stand, and make them question their own sincerity. Scott.

wom whom he would, and they came unto him.

14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach.

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.

16 And Simon he surnamed Peter,

17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder;

18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite,

19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house.

[Practical Observations.]

20 ¶ And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.

21 And when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

22 ¶ And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils.

must be set apart with prayer for the Spirit, though Christ had authority to confer the gifts of the Holy Ghost, yet, to set us an example, He prayed for them.

2. The rule He went by was his own pleasure; He called unto Him whom He would. Not such as we should have thought fittest to be called, looking upon the countenance, and the stature; but such as He thought fit to call, and determined to fit for the service to which He called them; even so, because it seemed good in thine eyes. Christ calls whom He will; his grace is his own.

3. He called them to separate themselves from the crowd, and stand by Him, and they came. Christ calls those who were given Him; (John 17: 6.) and all that the Father gave Him, shall come to Him, John 6: 37. Those whom it was his will to call, he made willing; his people shall be willing in the day of his power. Perhaps they came to Him readily, in expectation of temporal power; but when undeceived, yet they had such a prospect of better things, that they would not say they were deceived in their Master, nor repented their leaving all.

4. He ordained them, (probably by the imposition of hands, a ceremony among the Jews,) that they should be with Him constantly, to be witnesses of his doctrine, manner of life, and patience, that they might fully know it, and be able to give an account of it; and especially that they might attest his miracles; they must be with Him, to receive instructions, that they might be qualified to give instructions to others. It would require time to fit them for that which He designed them for; for they must be sent forth to preach; not to preach till they were sent, and not to be sent till by a long acquaintance with Christ they were fitted. Note, Christ's ministers must be much with Him.

5. He gave them to work miracles; and hereby put great honor upon them. He ordained them to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils. They showed that the power of Christ was original; not as a Servant, but as a Son in his own house, in that He could confer it upon others; they have a rule in law, He that is only deputed himself, cannot depute another; but our Lord had life in Himself, and the Spirit

23 And he called them unto him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan?

b John 15:16. Acts 1:24, 25. Gal. 1:15-20.

c Luke 9:1-6. 10:1-11. 24:47. Acts

d Luke 1:16, 16-18. John 1:42. 1 Cor. 1:12. 3:22. 9:5. Gal. 2:7-9. Cephas. 2 Pet. 1:1.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-19. Acts of charity can never be unseasonable; it is as awful 'to do good' to man, as it is proper to attend on the worship of God, on the Lord's day. But selfish and malicious men, who project wickedness in the midst of ostentatious devotion, are prone to censure good works, which they will not imitate; and are especially glad to find something to condemn in those, who are laboring to promote the salvation of souls, and to show the vanity of their assumed religion.—While we persevere in doing good, we may properly express an indignant abhorrence of wickedness; but it should be connected with compassion for opposers, and earnest desires of their salvation.—The rage and enmity of enemies will increase, in proportion as the power and grace of Christ are glorified; and unbelievers, of opposite sentiments and characters, will combine against evangelical godliness; but if we be at any time compelled to retire from their rage, we ought to seek for other opportunities of usefulness. What multitudes thronged after Jesus, to hear his word, and

(18) Simon the Canaanite. 'Simon called Zelotes' Luke 6: 15. derived from the Hebrew to be zealous. The word signifying 'a native of Canaan,' begins with a different letter. Matt. 15: 22. Acts 7: 11. 13: 19.

Verses 20, 21.

Many objections have been made to this interpretation: yet I can have no doubt, that it is the real meaning of the passage. Some of Christ's relatives or acquaintances might think Him 'beside Himself' for the same reason that Festus and others did Paul; and in their natural affection for Him, might purpose to use compulsion, if persuasion would not prevail: and even his pious relatives might possibly be

without measure; He could give power even to the weak and foolish.

6. He ordained twelve, according to the number of the tribes of Israel. They are here named, not just in the same order as in Matthew, nor by couples, as there; but as there, so here, Peter is first, and Judas last. Here Matthew is before Thomas, probably being called in the order; but in the catalogue of Matthew, he puts himself after Thomas; so far was he from insinuating upon precedence of consecration. Mark only notices in this list of the apostles, that Christ called James and John Boanerges, sons of thunder; perhaps they were remarkable for a commanding voice, they were thundering preachers; or, it denotes the fervency of their spirits, which would make them active for God above their brethren. These two (saith Dr. Hammond) were to be eminent ministers, which is called a voice shaking the earth, Heb. 12: 26. Yet John, one of those sons of thunder, was full of tenderness, and was the beloved disciple.

7. They went into a house. Now that this journey was unimpeded, they stood together, to hearken to their evidence. They went to settle the orders of their infant-college; and now, it is likely, the bag was given to Judas, which made him easy.

II. Continual crowds attended Christ's motions; v. 20. The multitude cometh together again, unseasonably, so that He and his disciples could not get time so much as to eat bread. Yet He did not shut his doors against them, but hid them welcome, and gave each an answer of peace. Note, They whose hearts are enlarged in the work of God, can easily bear with great inconveniences, and will rather lose a meal at any time than an opportunity of doing good. It is happy when zealous hearers and zealous preachers meet. Now the kingdom of God was preached, and men pressed into it, Luke 16: 16. This was a gale of opportunity worth improving.

III. (v. 21.) When his friends in Capernaum heard how He was followed, and what pains He took, they went out, to lay hold on Him, and fetch Him home, for they said, He is beside himself. Some understand it of a care, which had more in it of reproach than of

e 1:19, 20. 5:37. 9:2. 10:35. 14:33. John 6:12, 20-25. Acts 12:1. f 1s. 58:1. Jer. 23:29. Heb. 4:12. Rev. 19:11. g John 1:40. 6:8. 12:21, 22. Acts 1:13. h John 1:48-49. 6:5-7. 14:5, 9. i Matt. 10:3. Luke 6:14. Acts 1:13. k 2:1. Matt. 9:9. Luke 5:27-29. Luc. 6:15. l John 11:16. 20:24-29. 21:2. Acts 1:13. m 8:3. Matt. 10:3. 13:55. Luke 6:15. Acts 15:13. 21:19. 1 Cor. 9:5. 15:7. Gal. 1:19. 2:9. Jam. 1:1. n 2:14. o Matt. 10:3. Luke 6:16. John 14:22. Acts 1:13. Judas the brother of

James. Jude 1 &c. p Matt. 10:4. Luke 6:15. Acts 1:13. Simon the brother of James. q Matt. 26:14-16. 47. 27:3-5. John 6:71, 71:2. 12:4-6. 13:2. 26-30. r 1:16-25. s Or, none. t 9:631. Luke 6:17. John 4:31-34. u Or, kinship. 31. John 7:13-10. v 2 Kings 9:11. Jer. 29:26. John 10:20. Acts 26:24. 2 Cor. 5:13. z 7:1. Matt. 15:1. Luke 5:17. u Ps. 22:6. Matt. 9:34. 10:25. 12:24. Luke 11:15. John 7:20. 8:48, 52. v Ps. 49:4. Matt. 12:24-35. w Matt. 12:25-30. Luke 11:17-23

share the beneficent effects of his miracles! Yet how few were willing to avow their relation to Him, when the time of suffering arrived! He knew their inconstancy; but we should be upon our guard; for popular applause is very dangerous and no more to be trusted than the calm of the ocean.—All our sicknesses and calamities spring from the anger of God against sin; and the removal of them, or the sanctifying blessing on them, was purchased for us by the sufferings of Christ. But the maladies of our hearts are chiefly to be deprecated: He can cure these also by a touch or word; and unclean spirits knowing Him to be 'the Son of God,' are still constrained to obey Him. May increasing numbers press to be healed and delivered from these enemies: may He send forth more of such, as have 'been with Him,' to be instruments in this blessed work: may all his ministers be 'sons of thunder,' to speak his word with energy; and may no Judas be among those who declare his truths!

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anxious for his health, and so concur in the design: for it is thought by many, on very probable grounds, that He had watched all the preceding night, and been laboriously employed all the former part of the day Luke 6: 12-19.

(21) He is beside Himself. See on 2: 12.—He is faint, or may fall by spending his spirits. Gen. 42: 23. 45: 26. Josh. 2: 11. 1s. 7: 2. 33: 3. Sept. Whithy. It does not appear, that any symptoms of fainting were discernible in Jesus; and the present, not what might be feared as to the future, is evidently intended by the original.

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24 And if ^a a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand.

25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.

26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

27 No man ^b can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house.

28 Verily I say unto you, ^c All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, ^d but is in danger of eternal damnation:

30 Because ^e they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

31 ¶ There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him.

32 And the multitude sat about him; and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

33 And he answered them, saying, ^f Who is my mother, ^g or my brethren?

respect; we must take it as we read it, *He is beside himself*; they suspected it themselves, or it was suggested to them, and they gave credit to the suggestion, that He was *distracted*, and therefore his friends ought to bind Him, and bring Him to his right mind. (See *Scott's note*, p. 301.) His kindred, many of them, had mean thoughts of Him, (John 7: 5.) and were willing to hearken to this ill construction which some put upon his great zeal, and to take Him off from his work. The prophets were called *mad fellows*, 2 Kings 9: 11. Others understand it of a *well-meaning* care; 'He fainteth, He has no time to eat bread, He will be stifled with the crowd, and will have his spirits exhausted with speaking, and the virtue that goes out of Him in his miracles; and therefore let us use friendly violence.' In preaching, as well as suffering, He was attacked with, *Master, spare thyself*. Note, They who go on with zeal in the work of God, must expect hindrances, both from the disaffection of enemies, and the mistaken affection of friends; they have need to stand upon their guard against both.

V. 22-30. 1. The scribes, that they might evade and invalidate conviction, *came down from Jerusalem*, v. 22, it would seem, on purpose to hinder the progress of the doctrine of Christ; such pains did they take to do mischief; and, coming from Jerusalem, polite and learned, where they had opportunity of consulting together against the Lord and his Anointed, they were in the greater capacity to do mischief; the reputation of scribes from Jerusalem would influence not only *country-people*, but *country-scribes*; they had never thought of this suggestion concerning Christ's miracles till the scribes came from Jerusalem. They could not deny but that He cast out devils, but they insinuated that He was in league with the *prince of the devils*. There is a trick in the case; Satan is not cast out, he only goes out by consent. There was nothing in the manner of Christ's casting out devils, that gave any cause to suspect this; He did it as one having authority; but so they will have it, who resolve not to believe.

II. The answer Christ gave to this objection was,

34 And he looked round about on them which sat about him, and said, 'Behold my mother and my brethren!

35 For whosoever shall ^h do the will of God, the same is my

brother, and my sister, and mother.

^a Matt. 9: 33, &c. 12: 1-6. 2 Sam. 20: 1, 6. 1 Kings 12: 16, &c. Is. 9: 20, 21. 19: 2, 3. Ez. 37: 22. Zech. 11: 14. John 17: 21. 1 Cor. 10: 10-13. Eph. 4: 3-6.
^b Gen. 13: 7, 8. 37: 4, &c. Ps. 133: 1. Gal. 5: 15. Jam. 3: 16.
^c Matt. 13: 15. Is. 27: 1. 49: 24-26. 53: 12. Matt. 12: 29. Luke 10: 17-20. 11: 21-23. John 12: 31. Rom. 16: 20. Eph. 6: 10-13. Col. 2: 15. Heb. 2: 14. 1 John 3: 8. 14. Rev. 12: 7-9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 20-35. If we were as earnest as our Lord, 'instant in season and out of season,' in every good work, we should count no hour improper, no situation inconvenient; but we also should find, that our carnal or injudicious friends would deem us 'beside ourselves,' and use all their influence to lessen our diligence. Prudence indeed is commendable, but extremely apt to degenerate into lukewarmness and timidity; and zeal like that of Christ will seldom escape the charge of being excessive from the more decent part of mankind, or even from professors of the Gospel, who can scarcely conceive, that invisible things require more earnestness, than our most important temporal concerns. (Note, 2 Kings 9: 11.) Proud and malignant enemies will not stop here: they will impute the most beneficial effects to the basest motives or causes; and maintain that men are doing Satan's work, when sinners are brought to repentance and

newness of life. Let them beware how they ascribe the operations of the Holy Ghost to the power of the devil; or deride and revile them: for in so doing, they may be guilty of such blasphemy, as shall expose them to eternal damnation. Let the servants of Christ go on with their work, depending on his power, avoiding all contentions with each other; then they will have an almighty Helper, ready to overcome their enemy, and deliver sinners from his dominion. Let all those who hear, obey the Savior, rejoice in their relation to Him, 'as his brother, his sister, or his mother;' and conduct themselves towards fellow Christians, however mean, as they would to Christ Himself, if on earth, in the same circumstances; and this, as they hope to meet Him with confidence at the judgment.'

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Verses 22-30.
(25) Notes, Matt. 12: 22-32. Luke 11: 14-26. Forgiven, &c. They are pardonable, and in some instances are forgiven. (See on Matt. 5: 22.)

Verses 31-35.
(Notes, Matt. 12: 46-50. Luke 8: 19-21.)—There is scarcely any difference in the passage, from Matthew: but he who compares the evangelists, must be convinced, that the one did not intend to copy from the other.

(31.) His mother, 'Hence Theophylact taxes her... of vain-glory and of guilt, in endeavoring to draw Him... from teaching the word. Tertullian pronounced her guilty of incredulity: Chrysostom, of vain-glory, infirmity, and madness, for this very thing.' Wholly, 'she was, no doubt, an excellent character, but not perfect: she is entitled to great estimation, but surely not to religious worship. (Notes, 322

Luke 2: 41-52. John 2: 1-5.)—(35.) My mother, &c. Notes, Matt. 7: 21-23. 25: 34-40. Luke 11: 27, 28. John 19: 25-27.—The instruction conveyed in this observation of our Lord, that we also should consider all obedient believers as his brethren and sisters for his sake, is too much overlooked, and too seldom, or too slightly pressed home to the hearts and consciences of Christians, who are stewards of God.

The brethren of our Lord were disaffected towards Him, as appears. John 7: 3-11, and did not believe in Him. These probably are the friends mentioned, v. 21, who thought Him beside Himself, and who now, from no good motive, perhaps, had come to call Him from his work. The pious mother, influenced by the misrepresentations of her other children, or by her own unjustifiable anxieties, had come with them for the same purpose. This may account for the severity with which the Sa^r treats their message.

CHAP. IV.

¹ *He sowed the seed.* 1-9. *Why* Christ taught by parables, 10-13. The interpretation of the parable, 14-20. Knowledge is given in order to be communicated, 21, 22. A call to hear with attention, 23-25. The parable of seed sown, imperceptibly growing up, and ripening by harvest, 26-29; that of the grain of mustard-seed, 30-32. Christ teaches only by parables, which He explains to his disciples, 33, 34. *He still* is a tempest by his word 35-41.

AND^a he began again to teach by the sea-side: and there was gathered unto him a great multitude,^b so that he entered into a ship and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

2 And he taught them many things^c by parables, and said unto them^d in his doctrine,

3 'Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow:

4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way-side,^e and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth, and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth:

6 But when^f the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root it withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded^g no fruit.

8 And other^h fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up, and increased, and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.

9 And he said unto them, 'He that hath ears to hear let him hear.

10 ¶ Andⁱ when he was alone, they that were about him, with the twelve, asked of him the parable,

11 And he said unto them, 'Unto you it is

preaching, not only stood without, having no desire to come in, and hear Him, but sent a message to call Him out to them, (p. 31, 32.) as if He must leave his work, to hearken to their importunities; it is probable they had no business with Him, only to oblige Him to break off, lest He should kill himself. He knew how far his strength would go, and preferred the salvation of souls before his own life; it was therefore idle for them, under pretence of sparing Him, to interrupt Him; and it was worse, if they had business with Him, when they knew He preferred his business as a Savior, to any other business.

Christ, as at other times, put a comparative neglect upon his mother, to prevent the extravagant respect which men in after-times would be apt to pay her. Our respect ought to be governed by Christ; now the virgin Mary, or Christ's mother, is not equalled with ordinary believers, on whom Christ here puts a superlative honor. He looked upon those that sat about Him, and pronounced those of them that not only heard, but did, the will of God, to be as much esteemed as his nearest relations, p. 33-35. This is a good reason why we should honor those that fear the Lord; why we should be not hearers of the Word only, but doers, that we may share with the saints in this honor. It is good to be akin to those who are nearly allied to Christ, and to have fellowship with those that have fellowship with Christ; and woe to those who persecute Christ's kindred, his bone and his flesh, every one resembling the children of a king; (Judges 8: 18, 19.) for He will plead their cause.

CHAP. IV. v. 1-20. The foregoing chapter began with Christ's entering into the synagogue; (p. 1.) this with His teaching again by the sea-side. Thus He changed his method, that all might be reached. To gratify people that had seats, chief seats, in the synagogue, and did not care for hearing a sermon any where else, He went often into the synagogue; yet, to gratify the poor, that could not get room in the synagogue, He did not always preach there, but began again to teach by the sea-side, where they could hear. We are debtors both to the wise and to the unwise, Rom. 1: 14.

Here seems to be a new convenience found out; (ch. 2: 13.) his standing in a ship, while his hearers stood upon the land; and that inland sea of Tiberias having no tide, there was no ebb and flow of the waters to disturb them. Christ's carrying his doctrine into a ship, was a presage of his sending the Gospel to the isles of the Gentiles, and the shipping of that rich cargo, from the Jewish nation, to a people that would bring forth more fruit.

The way of teaching that Christ used with the multitude, (p. 2.) was by similitudes, which would tempt them to hear. People love to be spoken to in their own language, and careless hearers will catch at a comparison from common things, and retain that, when they have lost the truth which it was designed to illustrate; but, unless they would take pains to search into it, it would but amuse them; seeing, they would see, and not perceive, (p. 12.) and so, while it gratified curiosity, it was the punishment of their stupidity; they wilfully shut their eyes against the light, and therefore

Christ put it into the dark lantern of a parable, which had a bright side toward those who were willing to be guided by it; but to those who were only willing to play with it, it gave a flash of light, but sent them away in the dark. It is just with God to say of those that will not see, that they shall not see, and to hide from their eyes, who only look with carelessness upon the things that belong to their peace.

When He was alone by himself, not only the twelve, but others, took opportunity to ask Him the meaning of the parables, p. 10. They found it good to be about Christ; good to be with the twelve, to be conversant with those that they were intimate with Him. He told them what a distinguishing favor it was to them, that they were made acquainted with the mystery of the kingdom of God, v. 11. The secret of the Lord was with them. That instructed them, which others were only amused with, and they were made to increase in knowledge, while others were never the wiser. Note, Those who know the mystery of the kingdom of heaven, must acknowledge that it is given to them; they receive both light and sight from Christ, who, after his resurrection, opened the Scriptures, and the understanding, Luke 24: 27-45.

The parable of the sower, we had, Matt. 13: 3, &c. He begins (p. 3.) with, Hearken. Note, The words of Christ demand attention, and those who speak from Him, should stir it up; even that which as yet we do not thoroughly understand, or not rightly, we must carefully attend to, believing it to be both intelligible and weighty, that we may understand; we shall find more in Christ's sayings than at first there seemed to be.

Here is a question Christ put before He expounded it, which we had not in Matthew; (p. 13.) 'Know ye not this parable?' the meaning of it? How then will ye know all parables? (1.) 'If ye know not this, which is so plain, how will ye understand other parables more dark and obscure? If ye are perplexed with this, which you may see easily, how will ye understand the parables which hereafter will speak of the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, a thing ye have yet no idea of?' Note, This should quicken us both to prayer and pains that we may get knowledge--that there are a great many things which we are concerned to know; and if we understand not the plain truths of the Gospel, how shall we those that are more difficult? If we have run with the footmen, and they have wearied us, how shall we contend with horses? Jer. 12: 5.

(2.) 'If ye know not this, which is intended for your direction in hearing the Word, how shall ye profit by what ye are further to hear? This parable is to teach you to be attentive to the Word, that you may understand it. This is the key to all the rest.' If we understand not the rules we are to observe, in order to profit by the Word, how shall we profit by other rules? Before Christ expounds the parable, [1.] He shows them how sad their case was, who were not let into the meaning of the doctrine of Christ; To you it is given, but not to them. Note, It will help us to put a value upon privileges, to consider the deplorable state of those who want such privileges, especially that they are out of the ordinary way of conversion; lest they should be converted, and their sins

a 2:15. Matt. 13:1,2.

b Luke 6:1-3.

c 11. 3:23. Ps. 49:4. Matt. 13:3,10.

d 13:35.

e 13:36. Matt. 7:28. John 7:16,17.

f 18:19.

g 9:7,14. Dent. 4:1. Ps. 34:11. 45:10.

h 10: Prov. 7:24. 9:32. Is. 46:3,12.

i 55:1,2. Acts 2:14. Heb. 2:1-3.

j 14:28-29. Ec. 11:8. Is. 28:23-28.

k Matt. 13:24-28. Luke 9:5-8.

l John 4:35-38. 1 Cor. 3:6-9.

m 15: Gen. 15:11. Matt. 13:4,13.

n Luke 8:5,12.

o 16:17. Ps. 11:19. 36:26. 110:10.

p 12. Am. 6:1. Matt. 13:5,6,20,21.

q Luke 8:6,13.

r 1 Cant. 1:8. Is. 25:4. Jon. 4:8.

s 1 Jam. 1:11. Rev. 7:16.

t k Ps. 113. 92:12-15. Jer. 17:5-8.

u Eph. 3:17. Col. 2:7. 2 Thes. 2:10.

v 12:12.

w 18:19. Gen. 3:17,18. Jer. 4:3.

x Matt. 13:7,22. Luke 8:7,14. 12:15.

y 21:34. 1 Tim. 6:9,10. 1 John 2:15.

z 16:20. Matt. 13:28. Luke 8:8,15.

1 John 1:12,13. 3:19-21. 7:17. Acts

17:11. Heb. 4:1,2. Jam. 1:19-22.

1 Pet. 2:1-3.

n Gen. 28:12. Phil. 1:11.

o 1 Rev. 2:22,24. 7:14,16. Ms. 11:15.

p 15:13,15. 15:10. Luke 8:18. Rev. 3:16,17.

q 24:1,17. Rev. 13:20. Matt. 10:24.

r Matt. 11:25. 18:1,2,16. 16:17.

s Luke 8:10. 10:21-24. 1 Cor. 4:7.

t 2 Cor. 4:16. Eph. 2:4-10. Tit. 2:14.

u 3:7. Jam. 1:15-16. 1 John 5:30.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. v. 1-20. (Notes. Matt. 13: 1-23. Luke 8: 4-15.) See, saith Theophylact, 'how rare are good men, and how few are saved! for only the fourth part of the seed fell on good ground and was preserved. Observe also the gradation. The seed sown in the highway comes not up at all; the seed sown upon stony ground comes up, but increaseth not; the seed sown among thorns increaseth, but bears

'no fruit; the seed sown on good ground brings forth fruit to perfection.' Whittby.

(10.) They that were about, &c. Such as more constantly attended on Christ, as his disciples, with his apostles.-(11.) To them that are without. 'The Jews gave this title to the heathen: our Savior therefore by applying it to them, seems to hint, that in a short time the kingdom of God would be taken from them; and they themselves

given to know ^{the} mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto ^{them} that are without, ^{all these things} are done in parables:

12 That ^{seeing} they may see, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not understand; lest at any time they should ^{be} converted, and ^{their} sins should be forgiven them.

13 And he saith unto them, ^{Know ye not this parable?} and how then will ye know all parables?

14 The ^{sower} soweth ^{the} word.

15 And ^{these} are they by the way-side, where the word is sown; but, when they have heard, ^{Satan} cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.

16 And these are they likewise ^{which} are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness;

17 And ^{have} no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, ^{when} affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended.

18 And these are they ^{which} are sown among thorns; such as hear the word,

19 And ^{the} cares of this world, and ^{the} deceitfulness of riches, and ^{the} lusts of other things, entering in, choke the word, and it becometh ^{unfruitful}.

20 And these are they ^{which} are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and bring forth it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some ^a hundred.

^{should be forgiven them, v. 12.} Those only who are converted have their sins forgiven them: and it is the misery of *unconverted* souls, that they lie under unpardoned guilt. [2.] He shows them what a shame it was that they needed such particular explanations of the word, and did not apprehend it at first. Those that would improve in knowledge, must be made sensible of their ignorance.

Let us only observe here, *First*, That, in the great field of the church, the Word of God is dispensed to all promiscuously; *The sower sowneth the word*, (v. 14.) at a venture, *beside all waters*, upon all sorts of ground. (Isa. 32: 20.) He scatters, in order to increase it. Christ was a while sowing Himself; now He sends his ministers, and sows by them. Ministers are sowers; they have need of the skill and discretion of the husbandman; (Isa. 28: 24—26.) they must not observe winds and clouds, (Ecc. 11: 4, 6.) and must look to God, who *gives seed to the sower*, 2 Cor. 9: 10.

Of the many that hear the Gospel, comparatively few bring forth the fruits of it; here is but one in four that comes to good. It is sad to think how much of the precious seed is *sown in vain*; but there is a day coming when *lost sermons* must be accounted for. Many, that have heard Christ *preach in their streets*, will hereafter be bidden to depart from Him; those therefore who place all their religion in hearing, as if that alone would save them, do but deceive themselves, and build their hope upon the sand, Jam. 1: 22.

Secondly, Many are much affected with the Word for the present, who yet receive no abiding benefit. The motions of soul they have, are like the crackling of thorns under a pot. We read of hypocrites, that they *delight to know God's ways*; (Isa. 58: 2.) of Herod, that he heard John gladly; (ch. 6: 20.) of others, that they *rejoiced in his light*: (John 5: 35.) of those to whom Ezekiel saw a *lovely song*, (Ezek. 33: 32.) and those here received the word with *gladness*, yet came to nothing.

Thirdly, The reason why the Word doth not leave abiding impressions upon the minds of the people, is, their hearts are not disposed to receive it; the fault is in themselves, not in the Word; some are forgetful hearers, and these get *no good at all* by the Word; it comes and goes: others have their convictions overpowered by their corruptions.

Fourthly, The devil is very busy about loose hearers, as fowls about seed above ground; when the heart, like the *highway*, is unploughed, unhumbed, when it *lies common*, to be trodden on by every passenger, as their's that are great company-keepers, then the devil comes swiftly, and carries away the Word. When, therefore, these fowls come down upon the sacrifices, we should take care, as *Abraham* did, to *drive them away*; (Gen. 15: 11.) that, though we cannot keep them from hovering over our heads, we may not let them nestle in our hearts.

21 ¶ And he said unto them, ^{Is} a candle brought to be put under a ^{bushe}, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?

1 Cor. 5: 12, 13. Col. 4: 5. 1 Thes. 4: 19. 1 Tim. 3: 7. Matt. 13: 13. 1 Deut. 29: 4. Is. 6: 9, 10. 44: 18. Jer. 5: 21. Mic. 1: 13, 14, 15. Luke 8: 10. John 12: 37—41. Acts 28: 25—27. Rom. 11: 8—10. u Jer. 31: 18—20. Ex. 18: 27—32. Acts

Fifthly, Many that are not *openly* *and* *avowed*, so as to throw off their profession, as the stony ground, yet have the efficacy of it secretly *choked*, so that it comes to nothing; they continue in a barren profession, which brings nothing to pass, and go down as certainly, though more plausibly, to hell.

Sixthly, Impressions that are not *deep*, will not be *durable*; like footsteps on the sand of the sea, which are gone the next high tide of persecution; when iniquity doth abound, the love of many to the ways of God waxeth cold; many that keep their profession in fair days, lose it in a storm; as those that go to sea only for pleasure, come back again when the wind rises. It is the ruin of hypocrites, that they *have no root*; they do not act from a fixed principle; they do not mind *heart-work*, and without that, religion is nothing; he is the Christian, that is *one inwardly*.

Seventhly, Many are hindered from profiting by the Word of God, by their abundance of the world. Many a good lesson of self-denial, and heavenly-mindedness, is choked and lost by that prevailing complacency in the world, which they are apt to have on whom it smiles. Many professors, that otherwise might have come to something, prove like Pharaoh's *lean kine* and *thin ears*.

Eighthly, Those that are not incumbered with the cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, yet lose the benefit of their profession by the *lusts of other things*; this is added here in Mark, by the *desires which are about other things*, (so Dr. Hammond,) an inordinate appetite toward those things that are pleasing to sense or fancy. Those that have but little of the world, may yet be ruined by indulgence of the body.

Ninthly, Fruit is the thing that God expects and requires from those that enjoy the Gospel: a temper of mind, and a course of life, agreeable to the Gospel; Christian graces daily exercised, Christian duties daily performed.

Lastly, No good fruit is to be expected but from good seed. If the seed be sown on *good ground*, if the heart be humble, and holy, and heavenly, there will be *good fruit*, and it will *abound* sometimes even to a *hundred fold*, Gen. 26: 12.

V. 21—34. The lessons which our Savior designs to teach us here, are these:

I. Those who are *good*, ought to do *good*; that is, *bring forth fruit*. God expects a grateful return of his gifts, and a useful improvement; for, (v. 21.) *Is a candle brought, to be put under a bushel, or under a bed?* No, but that it may be set on a candlestick. The apostles were ordained to receive the Gospel, not for themselves only, but for the good of others. All Christians, as they have *received the gift*, must *minister the same*. Note, 1. Gifts and graces make a man as the *candle of the Lord*, (Prov. 20: 27.) lighted by the Father of lights: the most eminent are but poor lights, compared

3: 19. 2 Tim. 2: 25, 26. Heb. 6: 4. 7: 17, 18. Matt. 13: 31, 32. 15: 15—17. 16: 9, 10. Luke 24: 32. 1 Cor. 3: 12. Heb. 5: 11—14. Rev. 3: 19. y See on 3: 1—18. 32: 20. Matt. 13: 19, 27. Luke 8: 11. z 2: 4. Col. 1: 5, 6. 1 Pet. 1: 23—25. a See on 4: 1—Gen. 19: 14. Is. 53: 1. Matt. 22: 5. Luke 8: 12. 14: 18, 19. Acts 17: 18—20, 22. 18: 14—17. 25: 19, 20. 26: 32. Heb. 2: 1. 12: 15. b Job 1: 8—12. Zech. 3: 1. Matt. 13: 19. Acts 5: 3. 2 Cor. 2: 11. 4: 3, 4. 2 Thes. 2: 9. 1 Pet. 5: 8. Rev. 12: 9. 20: 2, 3, 7, 10. c 10: 17—22. Ex. 33: 31. Matt. 8: 19, 20. 13: 20, 21. 33: 3. John 5: 33. Acts 9: 13, 15—51. 24: 25, 26. 26: 28. d 5: 6. Job 19: 28. 27: 8—10. John 8: 31. 15: 2—7. 2 Tim. 1: 15. 2: 17, 18.

4: 10. 1 John 2: 19. e Matt. 11: 4. 13: 21. 24: 10. 1 Cor. 10: 13. Gal. 6: 12. 1 Thes. 3: 3—4. 2 Tim. 4: 16. Rev. 2: 10, 13. f See on 7: 1—Jer. 4: 3. Matt. 13: 22. Luke 8: 14. g Luke 10: 41. 12: 17—21, 29, 30. 21: 34. Phil. 4: 6. h Prov. 23: 5. Ec. 4: 8. 5: 10—16. i 1 Pet. 4: 2, 3. 1 John 2: 15, 16. k Matt. 3: 10. John 15: 22. Heb. 6: 7, 8. 2 Pet. 1: 8. Jude 12. l See on 8: 1—Matt. 15: 23. Luke 8: 15. John 15: 4, 5. Rom. 7: 4. Gal. 5: 22. 23. Phil. 1: 11. Col. 1: 10. 1 Thes. 4: 1. m Gen. 28: 12. n 5: 31—33. Matt. 5: 15. Luke 8: 14. 11: 33. 1 Cor. 12: 27. Eph. 5: 3—15. o Matt. 2: 15, 16. * See Matt. 5: 15. marg.

would be, "them that were without." *Whitely*. (Notes, 1 Cor. 5: 13, v. 13. Col. 4: 5, 6. 1 Thes. 4: 9—12. v. 12. 1 Tim. 3: 7.) *How* then, &c. Our Lord here gently reproved the dullness of his disciples, and intimated, that, as He had many things to teach in parables, they ought to apply their minds to them, that they might be able to explain them to others. (19.) *Lusts of other things*. Anxious cares in the poor, and riches in the wealthy, are unfavorable to religious improvement: but the eager pursuit of any earthly object has the same effect.—This addition to the parable, as delivered by Matthew, with very many other variations, (more than could be conceived, without comparing the evangelists in the original,) demonstrate that Mark

was no copier of Matthew, even when he recorded the same actions. No seed, except "the Word of God," produces genuine fruit: regenerating grace attends no instruction which does not make the heart fall in with "good ground." (Notes, 1 Cor. 3: 4—9.)

(19.) *Lusts of other things*. [There is here somewhat of obscurity, which is, perhaps, occasioned by the guarded modesty of the expressions; which I cannot find noticed by any other commentator but Grotius. Certainly, by the "other things," are to be understood gluttony, drunkenness, and "intemperance, and sensuality of every kind."

BLOOMFIELD.

22 For, °there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

23 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

24 And he saith unto them, °Take heed what ye hear: °with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that °hear shall more be given.

25 For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

[Practical Observations.]

26 ¶ And he said, °So is the kingdom of God, °as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and

with the Sun of righteousness. A candle gives light but a little way, and but a little while, and is easily blown out, and continually burning down and wasting. 2. Many, who are *lighted* as candles, put themselves *under a bed, or under a bushel*: they do not manifest grace themselves, nor minister grace to others; they have estates, and do no good with them; have limbs and senses, wit and learning, but nobody is the better for them; they have spiritual gifts, but do not use them; like a taper in an urn, they burn to themselves. 3. Those who are lighted as candles, should improve all opportunities of doing good, for the glory of God, and the service of others.

The reason given for this is, *there is nothing hid which should not be made manifest*, (so it might better be read,) v. 22. There is no treasure of gifts and graces lodged in any but with design to be communicated; nor was the Gospel made a *secret* to the apostles; it should come abroad, to all the world. Though Christ expounded the parables to his disciples privately, it was to make them more useful; they were taught, that they might teach; and it is a general rule, the *ministration of the Spirit is given to every man to profit himself and others*.

II. It concerns those who hear the word of the Gospel, to make good use of it, because their *real or woe* depends upon it. He saith again, *If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear*, v. 23. Let him give the Gospel of Christ a fair hearing; but it is added, (v. 24.) *Take heed what ye hear; Consider what ye hear*. Note, What we hear doth us no good, unless we

consider it; those especially that are to teach others, must themselves be very observant of the things of God; take notice of the message they deliver, that they may be exact. We likewise take heed what we hear, by proving all things, that we may hold fast that which is good. We must be cautious, lest we be imposed upon. To enforce this caution, consider,

1. As we deal with God, God will deal with us. So Dr. Hammond explains these words, *°With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you*. If ye be faithful servants to Him He will be a faithful Master to you: *with the upright He will show Himself upright*.

2. As we improve the talents we are intrusted with, we shall increase them; if we make use of the knowledge we have, it shall grow, as stock in trade. *Unto you that hear, shall more be given; to you that have, it shall be given*, v. 25.

If the disciples deliver that to the church, which they have received of the Lord, they shall be led more into the secret of the Lord. Gifts and graces multiply by exercise: God has promised to bless the hand of the diligent.

3. If we do not use, we lose, what we have; *From him that hath not, that doeth no good with what he hath, and so hath it in vain, shall be taken even that he hath*. Burying a talent is the betraying of a trust, and amounts to a forfeiture; gifts and graces rust for want of wear.

III. The Gospel by degrees, produces wonderful effects, but without noise; (v. 26, &c.) *So is the kingdom of God, the Gospel when received, as seed in good ground*.

o Ps. 40:10, 10. 75:2-4. Matt. 10:26, 27. Luke 8:17. 12:2-3. Acts 4:20. 20:27. 1 Cor. 4:5. 1 John 1:1-3.
p See o. 9. Matt. 11:15. Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 27.
q Prov. 19:27. Luke 8:18. Acts 17:11. Heb. 2:1. 1 John 4:1. 2 Pet. 2:1-3.

r Matt. 7:2. Luke 6:37, 38. 2 Cor. 9:8. 9:9. s 9:7. Is. 55:3. John 5:25. 10:16, 27. t Matt. 13:12. 23:28, 29. Luke 8:18. 18:9-12. 19:24-25. John 15:2. u Matt. 3:2. 4:17. 13:11, 31, 33. Luke 13:18.

x 3:4, 14, &c. Prov. 11:18. F. 11:4, 6. Is. 28:24-28. 32:20. Matt. 13:3, 24. Luke 8:5, 11. John 4:36. 38. 12:24. 1 Cor. 3:5-9. Jam. 3:18. 1 Pet. 1:22-25. y Ec. 3:17. 11:5. John 3:7, 8. 1 Cor. 15:37, 38. 2 Thes. 1:3. 2 Pet. 2:18.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-25. While we lament, that so few are instructed, and that so large a majority of those who are favored, derive no benefit from it; let us look to our own hearts, that they be not as fallow ground, or 'the way-side,' through carelessness and inattention.—Satan is ever active in preventing the success of the Gospel: and if men do not immediately secure what they have heard, by meditation and obedience, he will immediately take it away. No impressions will be *durable*, which are not *deep*: the heart, that is not broken, and changed, will not be made fruitful; and superficial convictions or affections will gradually vanish: this will especially be evident when 'persecution and affliction arise because of the Word.' We cannot be real Christians, if we 'have not that root in ourselves,' which would withstand persecution; but many prove, even in the most quiet times, how they would act in trying circumstances, while 'the cares of the world, and the lusts of other things, choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful.' Let us then earnestly beseech the Lord, that, by his grace, our hearts may become 'good ground'; that the good seed may produce a large increase in our lives, of those good works, 'which are through Jesus Christ to the praise and glory of God.' Thus will it appear, that 'to us it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God,' while numbers

know it not, because of the pride and carnality of their hearts, being given up by God.—Unless we understand this parable of the Sower, which is so plain and universally interesting, how shall we understand divine mysteries? Let us then attend more diligently to instruction, and pray for a teachable disposition, and for illumination: for we are called to 'shine as lights' in the world: and though our light is only as a candle, compared with 'the Sun of righteousness;' yet we may hope to receive from Him, and to communicate some rays of heavenly wisdom; provided we do not put our candle under a bushel, but let it shine before men, in our profession and conversation.—Though no human teaching can make 'the natural man receive the things of the Spirit of God;' yet it is our business to make known the truths of the Gospel, according to the duties of our stations. But, as so many discordant doctrines are propagated on every side, it is incumbent on us to take heed *what*, as well as *how*, we hear. If we believe, and impart to others, the truths of Scripture, blessings will be measured to us in great abundance; but woe to those, who reject or conceal the light, which Christ came to diffuse. All their earthly possessions, admired abilities, and opportunities shall be taken from them; and they will be left to eternal contempt, poverty, and misery.

SCOTT.

Version 21, 22.
(Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 5: 14-16. 6: 22, 23. 10: 24—25.) These verses were intended for the disciples. Christ meant to qualify them to be instructors of others; as candles are lighted, to give light. 'These words being only spoken to Christ's disciples, are as if Christ had said, I give you a light, by which you may discern the import of this and other parables: not that you may keep it to yourselves, but that it may by you be made beneficial to others.... And though I give you the knowledge of "these mysteries"....privately; "there is nothing (thus) hid, which should not be made manifest;" neither was any thing made secret (by me) but that it should (afterwards) come abroad.... Had Christ's apostles so obscurely write the Scriptures which contain the rule of faith, as the Romanists pretend, they must have hid this "candle under a bushel;" and not have manifested it to the world, as Christ here requires them to do.' Whitby. (Note, 2 Cor. 3: 12-6.)

21.) Under a bed.] 'This must not be understood of the bed, but of the sofa or divan, which, as Grotius observes, had such a cavity as to admit of a candelabrum being put under it, and, it seems any thing much larger: indeed, from the citations adduced by Wetstein, it appears to have been used by the ancients as a common hiding-place or 'urking-hole.'

BLOOMFIELD.

'The originals sit or recline on a divan, divan, or sofa, that is, a part of the room raised above the floor,' generally along two sides, 'and spread with a carpet in winter, and in summer with fine mats,' sometimes stuffed like a continuous cushion, 'and having cushions or bolsters, placed along the back to lean against,' or a continuous stuffed back fixed against the wall. These divans frequently serve the purpose

of a bed, with the addition of two thick cotton quilts. The corner is the place of honor.' CALMET.

Version 24.

Take heed, mind what you hear.] 'That is, the more attentive you shall be in hearing, so much the greater progress will you daily make in the knowledge of my doctrine. *Know*. Or it may be thus expressed: "Whatsoever may be the measure of your attention, such shall be the measure of your knowledge." So also *Euthymius—Le Clerc*, however, and some others, apply it to the apostles'

BLOOMFIELD.

Version 25.

So is the kingdom.] 'This parable is mentioned only by Mark, a proof that Mark did not abridge Matthew.' Dr. A. CLARKE.
'This parable was formed to teach the Jews that neither the Messiah, nor his servants, would subdue men by the force of arms, as the Jews supposed; and also to prevent the apostles from being disappointed, when they did not see success immediately following their labors.'

FAWKES.

Version 26-29.

'As the seedman when he hath sown, ° commits the seed to God who brings it to maturity, so I, having cast the seeds of my religion, commit the reason to Him who worketh in men to will and to do: and though my religion is at present low in the world, it will prevail.' In JNOEL.

(27.) Sleep, and rise night and day.] I. e. sleep by night and rise by day, attending to other matters, confident that, by the blessing of God upon the seed sown, there will be a crop'

KUNIEL.

And should sleep, and rise night and day.] 'A proverbial expression

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grow up, & knoweth not how.

28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

30 And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

31 It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

33 And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.

34 But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

35 And the same day, when the even was, he saith un-

1. It will come up; though it seems lost under the clods, it will find its way through them. The seed cast into the ground will spring. Let but the Word of Christ live the place it ought to have in a soul, and it will show itself, as the wisdom from above, in a good conversation. After a field is sown with corn, how soon is the surface of it altered! How gay and pleasant when covered with green!

2. The husbandman cannot describe how it comes up; it is one of the mysteries of nature; it springs and grows up, he knows not how, v. 27. He sees it has grown, but he cannot tell in what manner it grew, or what was the cause and method of its growth. Thus we know not how the Spirit by the Word makes a change in the heart, any more than we can account for the blowing of the wind. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: how God manifested in the flesh came to be believed on in the world, 1 Tim. 3: 16.

3. The husbandman, when he hath sown the seed, doth nothing toward the springing of it; He sleeps, and rises, night and day; goes to sleep at night, gets up in the morning; but follows his pleasures or other business, and yet the earth brings forth fruit of itself, according to the ordinary course of nature, and by the concurring power of the God of nature. Thus the Word of grace, when it is received in faith, is in the heart a Word of grace, and the preachers contribute nothing to it. The Spirit of God is carrying it on when they sleep, and can do no business, (Job 33: 15, 16,) or when they rise to go about other business. The prophets do not live forever; but the Word which they preach, is doing its work, when they are in their graves, Zech. 1: 5, 6. The dew by which the seed is brought up, tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men, Mic. 5: 7.

4. It grows gradually; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear, v. 28. When it is sprung up, it will go forward; nature will have its course, and so will grace. Christ's interest, both in the world and in the heart, is a growing interest; and though the beginning be small, the latter end will greatly increase. Though thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, yet God will give to every seed its own body; though at first it is but a tender blade, which the frost may nip, or the foot crush, yet it will increase to the full corn in the ear. Nature does nothing abruptly. God carries on his work unobscuredly and without noise, but without fail.

5. It comes to perfection at last; (v. 29.) When the fruit is brought forth, that is, when it is ripe, the owner plucks in the sickle. This intimates, That Christ now accepts the services which are done to Him by an honest heart from a good principle; and gathers in a harvest of honor to Himself. See John 4: 35. He will reward them in eternal life. When those that receive the Gospel aright, have finished their course, the harvest comes, when they shall be gathered as wheat into God's barn, (Matt. 13: 30,) as a shock of corn in his season.

23:35, 14:45, Am. 9:11-15, Mic. 4:1-2, Zech. 2:11, 8:20-23, 12:8, 14:5-9, Mal. 3:11, Acts 24:14, 4: 4: 5:14, 19:20, 21:20, Greek Rev. 11:15, 20:1-8.

IV. The work of grace is small in its beginnings, but great at last; (v. 30-32.) Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God, now he be set up? How shall I make you understand the design of it? Christ speaks as one considering and consulting with himself, how to illustrate it with an apt similitude; With what comparison shall we compare it? Shall we fetch it from the motions of the sun, or moon? No, it is like a grain of mustard-seed; He has compared it before to seed sown, here to the seed, intending thereby to show,

1. That the beginnings of the gospel-kingdom would be very small, like the least of all seeds. When a Christian church was sown in the earth, it was contained in one room, and the number of the names was but one hundred and twenty, (Acts 1: 15,) as the children of Israel, when they went down into Egypt, were but seventy souls. The work of grace in the soul is, at first, the day of small things; a cloud no bigger than a man's hand. Never were there such great things undertaken by such a handful, as that of disciplining the nations by the apostles; nor a work that was to end in such great glory raised from such weak and unlikely beginnings. Who hath begotten me these?

2. The perfection of it will be very great. When it grows up, it becomes greater than all herbs. The Gospel shall spread to the remotest nations of the earth, and continue to the last ages of time. The church hath shot out great branches, spreading far, and fruitful. The work of grace in the soul has mighty products, while it is in its growth; but what will it be, when it is perfected in heaven? The difference between a grain of mustard-seed and a great tree, is nothing to that between a young convert and a glorified saint! See John 12: 24.

With many such parables he spake the Word unto them; (v. 33,) probably referring us to the larger account of the parables of this kind, Matt. 13. He spake in parables, as they were able to hear them: He fetched comparisons from things familiar to them, and level to their capacity, and delivered them in plain expressions; though He did not let them into the mystery of the parables, yet his manner of expression was easy, and such as they might hereafter recollect to edification. But, for the present, without a parable spake He not unto them, v. 34. The glory of the Lord was covered with a cloud, and God speaks to us in the language of the sons of men, that by degrees, we may understand his meaning; the disciples themselves understood those sayings of Christ afterward, which at first they did not. These parables He expounded to them, when they were alone. We cannot but wish we had had that exposition, as we had of the parable of the sower; but it was not so useful; because, when the church should be enlarged, that would expound these parables to us.

V. 35-41. This miracle we had before; (Matt. 8: 23, &c.) but it is here more fully related.

It was the same day that he preached out

g Ps. 80:9-11, Ec. 31:3-10, Dan. 3: John 16:12, 1 Cor. 3:1, 2, Heb. 5: 11-14, 14:30-32, 11:34, 10:11, 7:17-28, Matt. 13:36, 46: 15:15, &c. Luke 8:9, &c. 24:27, 44-46, m Matt. 8:23, Luke 8:22.

to him "he passes his days and nights." A very beautiful image of security and freedom from anxiety. So Ps. 3: 5.

(28.) The full corn. The ripe wheat. The grain sown to its proper size. By this is denoted, undoubtedly, that grace or religion in the heart is of gradual growth. The religious principle is at first tender, feeble, perhaps almost imperceptible, like the first shootings of the grain in the earth. Perhaps also, like grain, it often lies long in the earth before there are signs of life. Tender piety in the heart of a child, like the tender grain, needs care, kindness, culture, and shelter from the frosts and storms of a cold, unfeeling world. It needs instruction, prayer, and tenderly counsel from parents, teachers, ministers and experienced Christians, that it may grow and bring forth the full fruits of holiness.

(29.) By these parables it appears, that a preacher is employed by God to sow good seed in the souls of men: that is, a sin to stay in the field and not sow; that it is a sin to pretend to sow, when a man does not furnish with any more seed; that it is a high offence against God to change the Master's seed, to mix it or to sow but seed in the place of it; and that he who sows his Master's seed, with an upright heart, shall come again rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him.

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Faithful preachers sow the good seed of the Word, and use other

means of success; but much of the good done will generally be unknown at the time, and perhaps become visible after their death; and they will at last glorify God for the blessed increase of their patient labors, which perhaps at the time they concluded to be almost entirely unsuccessful. (Note, John 4: 35-38.) (Notes, Matt. 13: 36-43.) 1 Cor. 3: 4-9.)

Verses 30-32.

No words, conveying precisely the same meaning, can well be more different, than those of the two evangelists Matthew and Mark. (Notes, Matt. 13: 31, 32, 44, 45.)

Verses 33, 34.

Our Lord taught the people in that manner, which was most suited to their state of mind. They were too much prejudiced to profit by such plain declarations of doctrinal truth, as his apostles afterwards made: but his parables, without giving needless offence, or affording his enemies any advantage, were calculated to excite inquiries, and to prepare the way for particular instructions. He privately expounded all to his disciples; and so prepared the way for that plainness of speech, which He intended they should use. (Notes, 1st. 49: 1-4, 78: 2, John 16: 12, 13, 1 Cor. 3: 1-3, Heb. 5: 11-14.)

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to them, ^a Let us pass over unto the other side.

36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him ^a even as he was in the ship: and there were also with him other little ships.

37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: ^a and they awoke him, and say unto him, Master, ^a carest thou not that we perish?

39 And he arose, and ^a rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

40 And he said unto them, ^a Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have ^a no faith?

41 And they ^a feared exceedingly, and said one to another, ^b What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

^a 5:41. 6:45. 8:13. Matt. 8:18. 14: 22. John 6:1, 17, 25.

^b 1. 3:9.

^c Matt. 8:24. Luke 8:23.

^d Joh. 14:19. Ps. 107:23-31. Jon.

14. ^e 1 Cor. 27:14-20. 41. 2 Cor. 11:25.

^f John 4:6. Heb. 2:17. 4:15.

^g 1 Kings 18:27-29. Job 8:5-6. Ps.

44:23, 24. Is. 51:9, 10. Matt. 8:25.

^h Luke 8:24.

ⁱ Ps. 104:1, 2. 120:1. 77:10. Is.

40:27-38. 49:14-16. 54:6-8. 63:

12:1-12. 1 Pet. 5:7. Job 38:11. Ps.

29:10. 36:3. 104:7-9. 107:29.

148:8. Prov. 8:29. Jer. 5:22.

^j 9:25. Nah. 1:4. Luke 4:39.

of a ship, *v.* 35. When He had been laboring all day, instead of reposing, He exposes Himself, to teach us not to think of constant rest till we come to heaven. The ship that Christ made his pulpit, is taken under his special protection, and, though in danger, cannot sink. What is used for Christ, He will take care of.

He put to sea at night, because he would lose no time; *Let us pass over to the other side.* Christ went about doing good, and no difficulties in his way hindered Him; thus industriously we should be in serving Him, and our generation.

They did not put to sea, till they had sent away the multitude, that is, had answered all their requests; for He sent none home, complaining that they had attended Him in vain. Or, They sent them away with a solemn blessing; for Christ came into the world to bless mankind.

They took Him even as He was, that is, in the same dress in which He preached, without any cloak to throw over Him, which He ought to have had on the sea at night, after preaching. We must not hence infer that we may be careless of our health, but we may learn not to be too solicitous about the body.

The storm was so great, that the ship was full of water, (*v.* 37.) not by a leak, but partly with the shower, for the word signifies a tempest of wind with rain; however, the ship being little, the waves beat into it so that it was full. Note, It is no new thing for that ship to be greatly endangered, in which Christ and his disciples, his name and Gospel, are embarked.

There were with him other little ships, which, no doubt, shared in the distress. Probably, those little ships carried those who were desirous to go with Christ, for the benefit of his preaching and miracles on the other side. The multitude went away when He put to sea, but some would venture upon the water with Him. Those follow the Lamb aright, that follow Him, wherever He goes. And those that hope for happiness in Christ, must be willing to take their lot with Him, and run the same risks. One may boldly and cheerfully put to sea in Christ's company, though we foresee a storm.

Christ was asleep in this storm; we are told that it was in the hinder part of the ship, at the helm, to intimate that,

Though he may close his eyes, yet not his heart. GEO. HERBERT.

He had a pillow there, such only as a fisherman's ship would furnish. And He slept, to try the faith of his disciples, and to stop up prayer: upon the trial, their faith appeared weak, and their prayers strong. Note, Sometimes when the church is in a storm, Christ seems

^y Ps. 46:1-3. Is. 42:3. Matt. 8:26. 14:31. Luke 8:25. John 6:19, 20. ^z Matt. 6:30. 16:3.

^a 5:33. 1 Sam. 12:13-20. Ps. 89: 17. Jon. 1:9, 15, 16. Mal. 2:5. Heb. 12:28. Rev. 15:4.

^b 7:37. Matt. 8:27. 14:32, 33. Luke 4:36. 8:25.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 26-41. In endeavoring to promote the kingdom of God, we should rest satisfied with having done our part, and wait in patient hope on God, that He may do his: He reserves to Himself the power of giving the increase; and does it in an incomprehensible manner, that He may secure the whole honor to his own great name. We should, therefore, bear up against discouragement, though we do not perceive much success in our labors: we ought to redouble our diligence, and be more fervent in prayer; but, however anxious, we cannot make the seed grow, nor understand why it springs up in one case, and not in another. The effects we may often see, but the method of operation we cannot comprehend. Let us then go on with our work, in assurance, that in due season we shall reap, if we faint not; and let us seek unto the Lord to give the increase; and pray, that all Christians may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, and ripen for the harvest.—We should not despise feeble beginnings, in individuals, or in the diffusing of the light of truth in dark places; as the kingdom of heaven is like the grain of mustard-seed, and as

great consequences often spring from feeble causes. These things will not be obvious to others, but Christ will expound them to his disciples: and if we follow Him closely, He will afford us his special presence; and teach us self-denial by his precepts and example.—Storms may indeed assail us, and our fears may be great; but when He seems to slumber, He restrains the violence of the winds and waves, and the fury of wicked men and spirits: and when He awakes for our help, He will speak every tempest into a calm, and turn our terrors into adoring love. But, while 'He careth for us, that we perish not,' He will rebuke our unbelief: and indeed our excessive fears, in little difficulties, sometimes seem to indicate, that we have almost no faith, notwithstanding we have experienced his power and love. He is 'the mighty God and the Prince of peace,' and 'never faileth those who trust in Him.'—Instead therefore of dreading outward dangers, to the dishonor of the Lord, let us adore Him, whom 'even the winds and seas obey.'

SCOTT.

Verbes 35-41.

(Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 8: 23-27.) All the parables, contained in this chapter, and in the thirteenth of Matthew, seem to have been spoken during the remainder of that day, on which the friends of Jesus were dissatisfied with his unwearied labors: (Notes, 3: 20, 21, 31-33,) not having persisted in them till the evening. He put to sea, even 'as he was' in the ship whence he had preached, and without any peculiar attention to his health, ease, or indulgence, after so great fatigues!

Such an example did he set us of enduring hardship, and avoiding all needless regard to ourselves, whilst employed in doing good to the souls of men! (Note, Phil. 2: 24-30.)

(35.) Other side.] That is, of the sea of Galilee. (36.) Pillow.] See note on *v.* 21. It seems to have been a leather, stuffed cushion. The original Greek not only denoted a cushion (for the head) but a cushion (to sit upon.)

BLOOMFIELD.

CHAP. V.

Some commentators on a legion of devils; and suffer them to enter and destroy a herd of swine, 1-13. The devils entreat him to depart; and it is man, who had been possessed, desires to be with him; but is sent to declare him, Jesus had done for him, 14-20. Jairus entreats Christ to heal his daughter, 21-24. By his way, he heals a woman of an hysterical issue of blood, 25-34. He raises Jairus's daughter to life, 35-43.

AND they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

3 Who had his dwelling among the tombs, and no man could bind him, no, not with chains;

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

8 (For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.)

is a great carn. It is God's prerogative to command the seas, Jer. 31: 35. By this therefore Christ proves Himself to be God. He that made the seas, can make them quiet.

The reproach Christ gave them for their fears, is here carried further than in Matthew. There it is, *Why are ye fearful?* Here, *Why are ye so fearful?* Though there may be cause for fear, yet not for fear to such a degree. There it is, *O ye of little faith.* Here it is, *How is it that ye have no faith?* The disciples believed that Jesus is the Son of God; but at this time their fears prevailed so that they seemed to have no faith. It was out of the way, when they had occasion for it, and so it was as if they had not had it. *How is it, that in this matter ye think I would not come with seasonable relief?* Those may suspect their faith, who can entertain such a thought, as that Christ careth not though his people perish.

Lastly, The impression this miracle made upon the disciples, is here differently expressed. In Matthew it is said, *The men marvelled*; here it is said, *They feared greatly.* They feared a great fear; so the original. Their fear was now rectified by their faith. When they feared the winds and the seas, it was for want of reverence for Christ. Now that they saw a demonstration of his power over them, they feared them less, and him more. They feared lest they had offended Christ by their unbelieving fears; and therefore studied now to give him honor. They had feared the power and wrath of the Creator in the storm, and that fear had torment; now they feared the power and grace of the Redeemer in the calm; they feared the Lord and his goodness; and it had pleasure in it, and by it they gave glory to Christ, as Jonah's mariners, who, when the sea ceased from her raging, feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice unto the Lord, Jon. 1: 16. This sacrifice they offered to Christ; they said, *What manner of man is this?* Surely more than a man, for even the winds and the seas obey him.

CHAP. V. v. 1-20. We have here an instance of Christ's dispossessing the strong man armed, to make it appear that He was stronger than he. This He did when He was come to the other side, whither He went through a storm; his business there was to rescue this soul out of the hands of Satan. Thus He came from heaven to earth, to redeem a remnant of mankind out of the hands of the devil.

9 And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion; for we are many.

10 And he besought him much that he would not send them

Matthew said they were two possessed with devils; here it is said to be a man possessed with an unclean spirit. If there were two, there was one, and Mark doth not say that there was but one; it is probable that one of them was much more remarkable than the other, and said what was said. Observe,

1. The miserable condition this poor creature was in; he was under the power of an unclean spirit, and the effect of it was not, as in many, a silent melancholy, but a frenzy; he was raving mad; worse than any of the possessed that were Christ's patients.

2. He had his dwelling among the tombs. Their tombs were out of the cities, in desolate places; (Job 3: 14.) which gave the devil great advantage: for *woe to him that is alone.* Perhaps the devil drove him to the tombs, to make people fancy that the souls of the dead were turned into demons, and did what mischief was done. The touch of a grave was polluting, Num. 19: 16. The unclean spirit drives people into that company that is defiling, and so keeps possession of them. Christ, by rescuing souls out of Satan's power, saves the living from among the dead.

3. He was ungovernable; No man could bind him. Not only cords, but chains, and fetters of iron were broken, v. 3, 4. Deplorable is the case of such as need to be thus bound, and they are most to be pitied; but his case was worst, in whom the devil was so strong, that he could not be bound. This sets forth the sad condition of souls in which the devil has dominion: Some wilful sinners are like this madman; all are herein like the horse and the mule, that need to be held in with bit and bridle, but some are like the wild ass, that will not be held. The commands and curses of the law are as chains and fetters, to restrain sinners from their wicked courses; but they break those bands in sunder, and it is an evidence of the power of the devil in them.

3. He was a terror and torment to himself and all about him, v. 5. The devil is a perfect tyrant; this wretched creature was night and day in the mountains and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones, either bemoaning his own deplorable case, or in rage against Heaven. Men in frenzies often wound and destroy themselves; what is a man when reason is dethroned, and Satan enthroned? The worshippers of Baal in their fury cut themselves, like this madman. The voice of God is, *Do thyself no harm*; the voice of Satan, *Do*

away out of the country.

a 4:35. Matt 8:28-34. Luke 8:26.
b 14. 65:4. Luke 8:27.
c 8. 1:23, 28. 8:30. 7:25. Luke 9:42.
d 9:18-22. Dan. 4:32, 33. Luke 8:29.
e Jam. 5:7, 8.
f 1 Kings 18:28. Job 2:7, 8. John 8:44.
g Ps. 66:3. marg. 72:9. Luke 4:41. Acts 16:17. Jam. 2:19.

h 1:24. Hos. 14:8. Mat. 9:29. Luke 4:34.
i 3:11. 14:51. Matt. 16:14. John 50:31. Acts 8:37. 16:17.
j 1 Kings 22:16. Matt. 26:63. Acts 16:17.
k Gen. 3:15. Matt. 8:29. Luke 4:28. Rom. 16:20. Heb. 2:14. 2 Pe. 4. 1 John 2:8. Jude 6. Rev. 9:12.
l 1:25. 9:25, 26. Acts 16:18.
m Luke 8:30. 11:21-26.
n Matt. 26:53.
o 13. 8:22.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. v. 1. (Matt. 8: 23.) The region of the Gergesenes was of larger extent than that of the Gadarenes, which was included in it.

[Gadara,] a town situated on the eastern shore of the lake Gennesareth, opposite to Tiberias, and about seven or eight miles distant from it. It is called by Josephus a Grecian city, and few of its inhabitants were Jews.

Verses 2-13.

(Notes, Matt. 8: 23, 29. Luke 8: 26-39.)

2. Mark mentions but one demoniac, (Matthew two) as being the more important, or rather, perhaps, because the mention of one was sufficient for his purpose, to show forth the power of Christ.

CALMET.

SCOTT.

3. [The words.] These were, according to the oriental custom, erected singly on solitary places, or at least apart from the public roads. Such ruins, &c. would be no indifferent shelter for maniacs. Indeed, we find from Diogenes Laërtius, that they formed no contemptible habitations, and were sometimes used as such.

BLOOMFIELD.

Many circumstances here require particular consideration.—It is probable, that our Lord had landed, intentionally, near the place where the demoniac wandered, and was immediately met by him. He was possessed with an unclean or fallen spirit, an enemy to God, in whose judgment all sin is uncleanness, and filthiness of flesh or spirit.

[Note, 2 Cor. 7: 1.] The words, 'unclean spirits,' and 'demons,' are used as synonyms. (12, 13.) Though many evil spirits possessed the man, one is first mentioned, who may be considered as the ruler of [2:28]

the company. The force, which they exerted by the limbs of the man, was so great, that his friends could by no means confine him. He was therefore left to wander, night and day, without clothes, among solitary tombs, and on the mountains; where he cried, hideously, as one in excessive anguish, and cut himself with stones, by running among them lying down naked, or in a frantic manner. (Note, Dan. 4: 23-33.)

(4.) 'His strength was supernatural, because he was possessed with devils. But say some, denying divine testimony, "there is no devil, and there can be none." Why? Because we have never seen one, and we think the doctrine absurd. Men sent from God to bear witness of the truth tell us, there were demoniacs in their times. These persons say, "no, they were only diseases." Whom shall we credit? men sent from God, or men wise in their own conceit?'

A legion is well known to have been a body of Roman soldiers, which at that time consisted of above six thousand men. (Note, Matt. 26: 47-56, v. 53.) The question was doubtless asked, and the answer extorted, in order to display the number of those unclean spirits, which Sadducees, ancient and modern, have denied and which most men unwisely disregard.

(7.) Torment me not.] Here was such a reference to the final sentence Christ is to pass on these rebel spirits, as could not be dictated by lunacy, and it is doubtful, whether the person speaking, or any of the hearers, but Christ Himself and these spirits, understood the sense and propriety of it.

FOR MYSELF

11 Now there was there, high upon the mountains, a great herd of swine feeding.

12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine; and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand,) and were choked in the sea.

[Practical Observations.]

14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told it in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done.

15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind; and they were afraid.

16 And they that saw it, told them how it befel to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine.

¶ Lev. 17:8. Deut. 14:8. Is. 65:4. 66:3. Matt. 8:30. Luke 8:32.

thyself all the harm thou canst; God's word is despised, and Satan's regarded. Perhaps his cutting of himself with stones was only cutting his bare feet.

II. His application to Christ; (v. 6.) When he saw Jesus afar off, coming ashore, he ran, and worshipped Him. He usually ran upon others with rage, but he ran to Christ with reverence. That was done by an invisible hand of Christ, which could not be done with fetters; his fury was all on a sudden curbed. Even the devil was forced to tremble before Christ, and bow to Him: or, rather, the man came, and worshipped Christ, in a sense of his need of help, the power of Satan being suspended.

III. Christ said to the unclean spirit, (v. 8.) Come out of him. He made the man desire to be relieved, when He enabled him to run, and worship Him, and then put forth his power for his relief. If Christ work in us to pray for deliverance from Satan, He will work for us that deliverance. Here is an instance of the power and authority with which Christ commanded the unclean spirits, and they obeyed Him, ch. 1: 27. He said, Come out of the man. The design of Christ is to expel unclean spirits out of the souls of people; 'Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit, that the Holy Spirit may take possession of the heart, and have dominion.'

IV. The dread which the devil had of Christ. The man ran, and worshipped Christ; but it was the devil in the man that cried with a loud voice, What have I to do with Thee? v. 7. ch. 1: 24. 1. He calls God the most high God. By the name *Eliou—the Most High*, God was known among the Phœnicians, and the nations that bordered upon Israel; and by that name the devil calls Him. 2. He owns Jesus to be the Son of God. Note, It is no strange thing to hear the best words drop from the worst mouths. There is such a way of saying this as none can attain to but by the Holy Ghost; (1 Cor. 12: 3.) yet it may be said, after a sort, by the unclean spirit. There is no judging of men by their loose sayings; but by their fruits ye shall know them. Piety from the teeth outward is an easy thing. The most fair-spoken hypocrite cannot say better than to call Jesus the Son of God, and yet that the devil did. He disowns any

† Job 1:10, 11. 25. Luke 22:31, 32.
2 Cor. 2:11. 1 Pet. 6:8.
¶ 1 Kings 22:22. Job 1:12. 26. Matt. 8:32. Rev. 18:5–7. 20:7.

† John 8:44. Rev. 9:11.
u Matt. 8:33. Luke 8:34.
x 4. Is. 49:24, 25. Matt. 9:33. 12:29.

Luk. 8:35, 36. 10:39. Col. 1:13.
y 18. v. 62, 21. 16:4. 1 Chr. 13:12. 2 S. 1:1. 2 Tim. 1:7.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1–13. This chapter calls us to contemplate our Redeemer's power and love; and each of the instances here set before us, may be considered, not only as a miracle, but also as an emblem of his gracious operations on the souls of men. If a legion of apostate spirits were combined against one man, who can conceive the numbers, which there are in this wicked world, of which their great leader is 'the god' and 'prince!' (Notes, John 12: 27–33, v. 31. 14: 29–31, v. 30. 2 Cor. 4: 3, 4. Eph. 2: 1–3. 1 John 4: 4–6. 5: 19. Rev. 12: 7–12, v. 9.) The intention of all their efforts is to destroy mankind, body and soul. May these alarming thoughts warn us to flee to that refuge, which God has prepared for us in the kingdom of his Son! (Note, Col. 1: 9–14, vv. 12–14.) Unconverted sinners are under a more fatal possession, than that which distracted men, and destroyed their health: (though it is the restraining power of God, that preserves us even from these calamities;) but some wicked men seem to be possessed by a legion; their evil actions are so numerous. Frequently, we see or hear of persons carried away by their own passions and Satan's temptations, into pollution and iniquity; so that they dwell among those 'whose feet go down to death, whose steps take hold on hell.' Neither fear, conscience, nor regard to interest or health, can restrain them: neither the affection and authority of friends, human laws, the feelings of present painful effects of vice, nor the dread of 'the wrath to come,' can deter them from their courses. In whatever way they be bound and fettered, their strong and evil habits break loose, and 'no man can tame them.' (Note, Rom. 8: 3, 4.) Thus they reduce

themselves to penury, disease, a prison, or ignominious death; in the mean time, they are the reproach and grief of their friends, the terror and nuisance of the neighborhood, and a pernicious part of community. Yet, if Jesus be pleased to exert his power, He can bring the most abandoned of them, to fall down before Him, and effect a blessed change in character and conduct. But the sinner, when his work is first begun, often fears that the Savior means to destroy him, and is ready to cry out, 'What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God?' This arises not only from unbelief, but also from the artifice of these enemies, who are reluctant to leave those, over whom they have hitherto reigned. They dare not however resist the power of Christ, who can, if He pleases, consign them to the place of torment: and, knowing this, they on some occasions even become his suppliants, and earnestly adjure Him to respite their punishment. But all the hosts of hell, formidable as they are, cannot destroy one sinner, except the Redeemer grants them permission. This is a most encouraging thought to the believer: but what comfort can Satan's willing servants derive from it? (Note, Job 1: 9–12.) Yet, even in respect of them, his power is limited: for the same agency which hurried the swine into the sea, would have been sufficient for the immediate destruction of their availing possessors, had not the power of Christ restrained it. Long-suffering and mercy may therefore be recognised in those corrections, by which men are deprived of property; while their lives are preserved, and warning is given them to seek salvation.

SCOTT.

(11.) Our Savior, as has been remarked on the parallel passage in Matthew, by permitting the legion to enter into and destroy the swine, might have aimed a severe rebuke at those Jews who, contrary to the spirit of their law, kept vast herds of these unclean animals, for gain.

Verse 15.

Wire afraid.] 'They thought that the presence of Jesus would overcome them.' N. T. VOL. I.

casion some greater calamity. The present they accounted a punishment inflicted for their sins, by the Messenger of God. See 1 Kings 17: 18.

'They were affected with awe; they felt that God was there. Because of their own guilty consciences and the power of Christ.'

BAKES
DODDRIDGE. KEENE
Ed

1329

1^o And they began to pray him to depart out of their coasts.

15 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil^a prayed him that he might be with him.

19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not; but saith unto him, ^bGo home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis, how great things Jesus had done for him; and all men did marvel.

[Practical Observations.]

21 ¶ And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him, and he was nigh unto the sea.

22 And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, ^che fell at his feet,

23 And ^bbesought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death; I pray thee, come and

darkness of this world, which supposes a lower rank; the devil and his angels: which makes those enemies the more formidable.

VI. Their request was, 1. That He would not send them away out of the country, (v. 10.) not only that He would not confine them to their infernal prison, and so torment them before the time, but that He would not banish them that country, though they had been such a terror to it.

They seem to have had a particular affection for that country, or a particular spite to it; and to have liberty to walk to and fro through the rest of the earth, will not serve, (Job 1:7.) unless the range of those mountains be allowed them for their pasture, Job 39:3. But why would they abide in that country? Grotius saith, Because in that country there were many apostate Jews, who had thrown themselves out of the covenant of God, and had thereby given Satan power over them. And some suggest, that, having by experience got the knowledge of the dispositions of the people, they could the more effectually do them mischief by their temptations. 2. That He would suffer them to enter into the swine, by destroying which, they hoped to do more mischief than they could by entering the body of any particular person, which they knew Christ would not permit.

VII. Christ gave them leave to enter the swine, (v. 13.) He let them do as they had a mind. Thus He would let the Gadarenes see what spiteful enemies devils are, that they might thereby be induced to make Him their Friend, who alone was able to control them. Immediately the unclean spirits entered into the swine, which by the law were unclean. Those that, like the swine, delight in the mire of sensual lusts, are fit habitations for Satan, and are, like Babylon, the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird, (Rev. 18:2.) as pure souls are habitations of the Holy Spirit. The consequence of the devils entering into the swine was, that they all ran mad into the adjoining sea, where they were drowned, to the number of two thousand. The man possessed, only cut himself, for God had said, he is in your hands, only save his life. But hereby it appeared, that, if he had not been so restrained, he would have drowned himself. How much we are indebted to the providence of God, for preservation from malignant spirits!

VIII. They that fed the swine hastened to the owners, to give account of their charge, v. 14. This drew the people together; and, 1. When they saw the man cured, they conceived a veneration for Christ, v. 15. They had many a time been frightened at the sight of him that was possessed with the devil; and were now as much surprised to see him sitting clothed, and in his right mind; thus he came to himself. Note, Those who are grave and sober, and consider, thereby make it appear, that the devil's power is broken in their souls. The sight of this made them afraid; and forced them to own that Christ is to be feared. But, 2. When they

found that their swine were lost, they conceived a dislike of Christ, and prayed Him to depart out of their coasts, for they think not any good He can do them sufficient to make amends for the swine. Now the devils had what they would have; for by no handle do these evil spirits more effectually manage sinful souls than by the love of the world. They were afraid of some further punishment, if Christ should tarry among them, whereas, if they would but part with their sins, He had life and happiness for them; but, being loth to quit either their sins or their swine, they chose rather to abandon their Savior. Thus they do, who, rather than let go a base lust, will throw away their interest in Christ. They should rather have argued, 'If He had such power as this over devils and all creatures, it is good having Him our Friend; if the devils have leave to tarry in our country, (v. 10.) let us entreat Him to tarry, who alone can control them.' But such misconstructions do carnal hearts make of the judgments of God, instead of being driven to Him, they set Him at a greater distance: though He hath said, *Provoke Me not, and I will do you no hurt*, Jer. 25:6.

IX. The poor man after his deliverance, desired that he might go with Christ, (v. 18.) perhaps for fear of the evil spirit; or, rather, that he might receive instruction from Him. Those that are freed from the evil spirit, cannot but covet fellowship with Christ. Christ would not suffer him to go with Him, lest it should savor of ostentation, and to let him know that He could both protect and instruct him at a distance. Besides, He had other work for him to do; he must go home to his friends, and tell them what great things the Lord had done for him; that Christ might be honored, and his friends edified, and invited to believe in Christ. He must notice rather Christ's pity than his power, for that is it which especially He glories in; he must tell them what compassion the Lord had had on him. The man, in the transport of joy, proclaimed, all the country over, what great things Jesus had done for him, v. 20. This is a debt we owe Christ and our brethren, that He may be glorified and they edified. As the effect of it, all men did marvel, but few went any further. Many wonder at the works of Christ, yet do not wonder after Him.

V. 21—34. The Gadarenes having desired Christ to leave their country, He presently went to the other side; (v. 21.) and there much people gathered to Him. Note, If there be some that reject Christ, there are others that bid Him welcome. A despised gospel will cross the water, and go where it will be entertained. Among the many that applied to Him,

1. Here is one that comes to be a cure for a child; one of the rulers of the synagogue; or, as some think, one of the judges of the consistory-court, which was in every city, consisting of twenty-three. He was not named in Matthew; he is here, *Jairus*, or *Jair*; Judg.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14—20. Losses and alarms frequently terrify and exasperate, instead of promoting repentance; and those who are determined not to part with iniquitous gain, or to mortify their passions, are as averse to the Gospel of Christ, as unclean spirits. But when the most enslaved sinner is delivered from Satan and the bondage of sin, he will gladly sit at the feet, and hear the word of his Deliverer. Being 'come to himself,' and to 'his right mind,' he now learns to love Christ, and longs to be with Him and like Him. (Notes, Phil. 1: 21—26. 1 Jhr. 3: 1—3.) When these desires grow vigorous, and are accompanied with an assured hope of heaven, he is willing to be absent from the body that he may be present with the Lord: wonder, therefore, that he chooses rather to part with the nearest relations and most valued possessions, than to forsake Christ. Words cannot express the blessed change which takes place, when Jesus delivers such wretched slaves of Satan, and numbers them among his saints. They now enjoy a felicity before unknown; they henceforth become the ornament of their

families; they are made partakers of heavenly wisdom, and a glorious liberty; they are rendered useful in those communities to which before they were a terror, or a temptation. They go among their friends and neighbors, 'showing what great things Christ hath done for them,' and, while their conduct evinces the reality and excellency of the change, they often excite great attention, and are made the instruments of inducing even their more orderly neighbors to hearken to the Gospel. (Notes, 2 Cor. 5: 17—21. Gal. 1: 15—24. 1 Thes. 1: 5—8. 1 Tim. 1: 12—16. 2 Pet. 1: 13—15.) The Lord sometimes makes choice of such converts for his ministers: and while they publish through cities and countries, what great things Jesus has done for them; their simple testimony, confirmed by their characters, renders them extensive blessings, sometimes in those places where they were once mischievous. We all seem to be continued in this world of sin and sorrow, after our conversion, chiefly to declare, by word and deed, the Savior's grace among our fellow sinners.

SCOTT.

Verse 19.

Christ sent him away, probably, that He might restore him to his friends, and that God might be glorified in the region where the man was known.

En.

Verse 22.

'Ruler of the synagogue—one who regulated its concerns and granted permission to preach. Of these there were three in every synagogue.'

Calvert

lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed, and she shall live.

24 And ^{she} went with him, and much people followed him, and thronged him.

25 ¶ And ^{there} was a certain woman, which had ^{been} an issue of blood ^{for} twelve years,

26 And had ^{been} suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was ^{not} getting better, but rather grew worse.

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and ^{she} touched his garment:

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole.

29 And ^{he} straightway the ^{source} fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that ^{plague}.

30 And Jesus immediately knowing in himself that ^{the} virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

31 And his disciples said unto him, ^{Thou} seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

33 But ^{the} woman, fearing, and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth.

34 And he said unto her, ^{Daughter}, thy faith hath made thee whole; ^{go} in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

[Practical Observations.]

10:3. He addressed himself to Christ, though a ruler, with great reverence; *When he saw Him, he fell at his feet*, as One really greater than He appeared to be; and besought Him greatly, as one that valued mercy, and knew he could obtain it no where else. His little daughter, about twelve years old, the darling of the family, *lies a dying*; but he believes that if Christ will come, and lay his hands upon her, she will return even from the gates of the grave. He said, at first, when he came, *She lies a dying*; (so Mark;) but afterward, upon fresh information sent him, he saith, *She is even now dead*; (so Matthew;) but he still prosecutes his suit; see Luke 8: 42, 49. Christ readily agreed, and went with him, v. 24.

11. Here is another, that comes to *steal a cure*; and she got relief. This cure was wrought by the way, as He was going to raise the ruler's daughter, followed by a crowd. See how Christ improved his time. Many of his discourses, and some of his miracles, are dated by the way-side; we should be doing good, not only when we sit in the house, but when we walk by the way, Deut. 6: 7.

This woman had a constant issue of blood for twelve years, which had thrown her into great weakness, embittered life, and threatened death. She had had the best advice of physicians, and had made use of the medicines they prescribed; as long as she had any thing to give them, they had kept her in hopes that they could cure her; but now that she had spent all, they gave her up. Skin for skin, and all that a man has, will he give for life and health. It is ill with those patients who suffer by their physicians, instead of being relieved by them. Those that are not bettered by medicines, commonly grow worse. It is usual with people not to apply themselves to Christ, till they have tried all other helpers, and find them physicians of no value. He will be found a sure Refuge, even to those who make Him their last Refuge.

She had strong faith in the power of Christ; she said, though it doth not appear that she was encouraged by any preceding instance to say it, *If I may but touch his clothes, I shall be made whole*, v. 28. She believed that He cured, not as a Prophet, by virtue derived from God, but as the Son of God, by a virtue inherent in Himself. Her case was such as she could not in modesty tell Him publicly, as others did their grievances, and therefore she wished for a private cure, and her faith was suited to her case.

She came in the crowd behind Him, to touch his garment, and immediately felt herself perfectly well: by this it appears that the cure was altogether miraculous; for those that in such cases are cured by natural means, recover their strength slowly, and gradually, and not at once; but as for God, his work is perfect. Note, Those whom Christ heals of the disease of sin, experience in themselves a universal change for the better.

35 ¶ While he yet spake, ^{there} came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, certain which said, Thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou ^{the} Master any further?

1: 6, 5, 13. 16: 8. 2 Kings 5: 11.

Christ inquired after, and encouraged his concealed patient. He knew in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, v. 30. He knew it not by any deficiency, but rather by an agility of spirits, in the exerting of it, and the inward pleasure He had in doing good. And being desirous to see his patient, He asked, not in displeasure, but in tenderness, *Who touched my clothes?* The disciples, not without rudeness, almost ridiculed his question; (v. 31.) *The multitudes throng thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?* Christ looks round, not to blame her that had done this thing, but to commend her faith, and by his own act confirm the cure. He needed not that any should inform Him. Note, As secret acts of sin, so are secret acts of faith, known to the Lord Jesus. If believers derive virtue from Christ ever so closely, He knows it, and is pleased with it. The poor woman hereupon presented herself to Jesus, (v. 33.) *fearing and trembling*, not knowing how He would take it. Note, Christ's patients often tremble when they have reason to triumph. She might have come boldly, knowing what was done in her. It was a surprise, and was not yet a pleasing surprise. However, she fell down before Him. Note, There is nothing better for those that fear than to throw themselves at the feet of Jesus; to humble themselves before Him, and refer themselves to Him. She told Him all the truth. Note, We must not be ashamed to own the secret transactions between Christ and our souls; but, when called to it, mention, to his praise, and the encouragement of others, what He has done for our souls. And the consideration that nothing can be hid from Christ, should engage us to confess all to Him. What an encouraging word He gave her; (v. 34.) *Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole*. Note, Christ honors faith, because faith honors Christ. But what is done by faith on earth, is ratified in heaven; Christ saith, *Be whole of thy disease*. Note, If our faith sets the seal to the power and promise of God, saying, 'So let it be to me; God's grace will set the seal to the prayers of faith, saying, 'So it shall be to thee.' Therefore, *Go in peace*; thy cure is honestly come by; take the comfort of it. Note, They that are healed of spiritual diseases, have reason to go in peace.

V. 35—43. Disease and death came in, on the way by the sin of the first Adam; but by the second Adam, both are conquered. Christ having healed an incurable disease, here goes on to triumph over death, as He had triumphed over a devil.

1. The melancholy news is brought to Jairus, that his daughter is dead, and therefore ^{the} Christ he as other physicians. He comes too late. While there is life, there is hope; but when life is gone, it is past recall; *Why troublest thou the Master any further?* v. 25. Ordinarily, the proper thought in this case, is, 'The matter is determined, the will of God is done, and I sub-

Matt. 9:8. Luke 4:40. 13:13. Acts 28:3. Jam 5:14, 15.
K Luke 7:17. Acts 10:38.
L 31. 3, 9, 10, 10. Luke 8:12, 45. 13:1.
13:3.
m Matt. 9: 9—22. Luke 5:4, 44.
n Lev. 1:20, 5—7.
o Luke 13:11. John 5:5, 8. Acts 4:3.
9:33, 34.
p Job 1:4. Jer. 8:22. 30:3. 51:1.
q Ps. 103:2.
r 6:56. 2 Kings 13:21. Matt. 14:36.
Acts 5:5. 19:12.
s Ex. 15:25. Job 33:24, 25. Ps. 30:3.
103:3. 107:20. 147:3.

t Lev. 9:18.
u 31. 3:10. 1 Kings 8:37. Luke 7:31.
x Luke 6:9. 8:46. 1 Pet. 2:4 marg.
y Luke 8:15. 9:12.
z 4:11. Luke 11:29. 8:47.
a Ps. 136: 103:2—1. 161:2—4.
b Matt. 9:2, 22. Luke 5:8.
c 10:52. Luke 7:50. 3:48. 7:9. 19:42. Acts 1:15.
d 1 Sam. 1:7. 20:12. 2 Kings 5:10. Ec. 9:7.
e Luke 8:9.
f Luke 7:7. John 11:21, 29, 29.
g 10:17. Matt. 26:13. John 11:20.

Verse 26.

'No person will wonder at this account, when he considers the *miraculous* of the Jewish physicians in reference to hemorrhages of this kind.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 29.

Felt in her body.] 'There is much meaning in these words. For in the order of nature, no one recovers suddenly from disease, but for a long time suffers weakness. But this woman felt in her body that she was made whole.'

ROSENM.

Verse 30.

Virtue had gone out.] 'Power had gone out.' BARNES.
'We are not to suppose that Christ was conscious of any change in his body, but that He perceived in spirit, that a miraculous work had been done by Him.'

ROSENM.

2. Is it not more probable that Christ, by his own omniscience, knew of the woman's approach, and healed her according to his *will*, and then made this inquiry for the sake of those who stood by, that God might be glorified? See John 11:41, 42. Similar to this is the following remark of *Blomfield*: 'The truth is, that it is a popular mode of speaking, and therefore, not to be referred to philosophical principles. It simply denotes, that Christ knew that a miracle had been performed by his power and efficacy.'

Ed.

Verse 34.

Go in peace.] 'The wish and formal expression of *evangelical*. In the estimation of the Jews, "peace" comprehended every spiritual and temporal blessing.'

HEWLETT.

36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, ^{only} believe.

37 And he suffered no man to follow him, ^{save} Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is ^{not} dead, but sleepeth.

40 And ^{they} laughed him to scorn. But ^{when} he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

mut; *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. While the child was alive, I fasted and wept; for I said, Who can tell but God will yet be gracious to me, and the child shall live? But now that it is dead, wherefore should I weep? I shall go to it, but it shall not return to me.* With such words we should quiet ourselves at such a time, that our souls may be as a child that is weaned from his mother: but here the case was extraordinary; the death of the child doth not end the narrative.

II. Christ encouraged the afflicted father yet to hope, that his application to Him should not be vain. Christ had staid to work a cure by the way, but he shall be no loser by the gain of others; *Be not afraid, only believe.* We may suppose Jairus at a pause, whether he should ask Christ to go on or no; but have we not as much occasion for the grace of God and his consolations, and of the prayers of our ministers and friends, when death is in the house, as when sickness is? Christ soon determines this; *'Be not afraid that my coming will be to no purpose, only believe that I will make it turn to a good account.'* Note, 1. We must not

41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha, cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise.

42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years; and they were

astonished with a great astonishment.

43 And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

h 34. 9:22. 2 Chr. 30:20. Matt. 9: 29. 17:9. Luke 8:26. John 4: 4—50. 11:40. Rom 4:18—24. i Luke 7:51. Acts 9:40. k 9:22. 14:33. 2 Cor. 13:1.

Jer 9:17—20. Matt. 9:24. 11:37.

Luke 8:55. Acts 9:39.

† Dan. 12:2. John 11:11—13. Acts

20:10. 1 Cor. 11:30. 1 Thes. 4:13,

14. 5:10.

o Gen. 19:16. Neh. 2:19. Job 12:4.

Pe. 2:27. 123:34. Luke 16:11. Acts

17:32.

p 2 Kings 4:33. Matt. 7:5. 9:24, 25.

Luke 8:53, 54.

q 1:31. Acts 9:40, 41.

r 1:41. Gen. 12. Pe. 33:9. Luke 7: 14, 15. 8:54, 55. John 5:28, 29. 11:43

44. Rom. 4:17. Phil. 3:21.

1:27. 4:41. 6:51. 7:37. Acts 3: 10—13.

s 11:43. 13:12. 7:26. Matt. 8:4. 9:35.

12:16. 17:9. John 5:14. 8:56.

John 5:41.

t Luke 24:30, 42, 43. Acts 10:41.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 21—34. Our Lord will not obtrude himself on those, who are not disposed to entertain Him; nor refuse his salvation to any, who are prepared to welcome Him.—The distress for which men can obtain no adequate remedy, frequently brings them to Christ. Severe family trials are sometimes appointed in love, to show those in affluence especially the vanity of their distinctions; and lead them to inquire after a better portion. Those who are in temporal distress, readily find words to express their desires: how is it then that men feel such difficulty in presenting their supplications to God? Because they have not so distinct an understanding of their wants, nor so deep a feeling of their misery.—There are different degrees and exercises of faith; but that which most honors Christ, will be most advantageous to us. The history of his life is an account of his continued earnestness in doing good; so that we know not whether we should most admire his divine power, or his use of it; and, while we derive encouragement from this reflection, let us learn to use our ability in doing what we can, for the benefit of mankind. And if we look around, we shall find many Christians, wasted by disease, and pinched by penury, while stately palaces are often scenes of riot to infidels, profligates, and cruel oppressors. But 'the prosperity of fools destroys them,' and the afflictions of the righteous conduce to their everlasting felicity.—Men often prove vain helpers, even in temporal calamities, and only add to our sufferings by their efforts to relieve us: yet the aversion of sinners to seek help from God, is very conspicuous; for they will try every method, and persevere, after disappointments, before they will apply to Him, who alone can render means successful, and help us when all other helpers fail! Many, through obstinacy, waste their time and strength by applying to 'physicians of no value,' from whom they 'suffer many things,' and get no better, but 'rather grow worse.' Some run into diversions, and gay company, to

quiet conscience, or relieve dejection of spirits; many plunge into business, abstruse speculations, or even into intemperance, for the same purpose; and others 'go about to establish their own righteousness,' or torment themselves by vain superstitions. Happy are they who, by many disappointments, hearken to the Gospel, and expect help from Jesus alone: their remaining infirmity will not prevent the desired blessing. (Note, Matt. 11: 23—30.)—The example before us may likewise instruct us to encourage those, who seem humbly to rely on Christ, though in many respects defective.—In proportion as our faith in Christ brings peace of conscience, and destroys the love and power of sin, it is genuine: and the more singly we depend on Him, the more we shall find that He is become our salvation. Thus He gradually teaches his people, by their own experience: He evinces to them his knowledge of their difficulties; and shows his power and love in helping them. But, while we have the benefit, He will secure to himself the glory; and will at length bring to light, in numberless instances, the 'virtue that hath gone forth from Him,' to heal hidden evils, under which his people had groaned for years before they sought Him. Yet, while multitudes throng around Him, as it were, by crowding the places where the Gospel is preached; only here and there one thus 'touches Him.'—Even disciples of Christ are apt to express themselves dissatisfied with the dispensations of his providence and grace. This is the effect of remaining pride, ignorance and unbelief: for no believer, to this hour, could ever conceive of his compassion so highly as it deserves, though He sometimes conceals it under a frown or a rebuke. Humble souls, therefore, in seeking Him, are apt to tremble and fear lest He should abhor or destroy them; while his heart yearns with pity, and He is about to say to them, 'Be of good comfort, go in peace, thy faith hath saved thee.' For He will honor that faith, which honors Him. SCOTT.

Verse 33.

'Chardin informs us that in the East, the concourse in places where persons lie dead is incredible. Every body runs thither, the poor and the rich; and the first more especially make a strange noise.'

HARMER.

Verse 39.

Why make ye this ado? 'The grief of the orientals formerly, on an occasion of death, was, as it is to this day in the East, very extreme. As soon as a person dies, the females of the family with a loud voice set up a sorrowful cry. They continue it as long as they are without taking breath, and the first shriek of wailing dies away in a w sob. After a short space of time, they repeat the same cry, and so continue for eight days.' Many other indications of grief are often given, such as tearing the hair and clothes, smiting the breast, stamping the foot, tearing their faces with their nails lying down in ashes, or putting dust and ashes upon their heads, &c.

JAHN.

See Archæol. sec. II.

Critics and sceptics inquire why Christ took with Him only Peter, James and John. Manifestly because these three were sufficient to attend his person and be witnesses of the transaction; more would have intruded upon the grief, and have increased the confusion, of the family. Ed.

Verse 41.

Talitha cumi.] 'Talitha is a Syro-Chaldaic word which means maiden—cumi is Hebrew, and means arise.' WAHL, ed. by Rob.

As Mark designed his Gospel for people who might not readily understand this language, he gives the interpretation. See preface to Mark. Ed.

It is worthy of observation, that of the three persons, whom Christ particularly recorded to have raised from the dead, one was the only son of a widow, another, this *only* daughter of Jairus, and the third, the beloved brother of Martha and Mary: so much compassion and condescension did He show to the feelings of natural affection! (Marg. Ref.—Note, Luke 8: 40—56, vv. 12, 54, 55.) SCOTT.

CHAP. VI.

and preaches as is despised in his own country; He sends out the apostles to preach, with power over unclean spirits, 7-13. The opinions of Herod and others concerning Christ, 14-16. Herod imprisons and beheads John the Baptist, at the instigation of Herodias, 17-29. The apostles return to Jesus, 30-33. He teaches, and miraculously feeds the multitudes, 34-44. He walks on the sea to his disciples, 45-52. They land at Gennesareth, and He heals the sick, who callously touched the hem of his garment, 53-56.

AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country, and his disciples followed him.

2 And when the sabbath-day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

4 But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

a Matt. 13:54. Luke 4:16.
b 1:21, 22, 29. Luke 4:15, 31, 32.
c John 7:15. Acts 13:31.
d Matt. 13:57, 58. Luke 4:22. John 6:42.
e 1a. 49:7. 52:2, 3. 1 Pet. 2:4.
f 15:40. 1 Cor. 8:4. Gal. 1:19.
g John 14:22. Jude 1.
h 3:18. Acts 1:13.
i Matt. 11:18. 13:7. Luce 2:34. 4:23-29. 7:23. John 6:59, 61. 1 Cor. 12:3.
j Jer. 11:21. 12:6. Matt. 13:57. Luke 4:24. John 4:44.

V. 35-43. The Lord waits for our extremities, that He may manifest his glory, and encourage our faith and hope. He regards no application to Him as a trouble, and no case can be difficult. He undertakes: we should not therefore yield to fear, but persist in faith, in the most difficult circumstances; and He will then fulfil his word, and all our expectations. (Notes, Rom. 4: 19-25.) No wonder that worldly men wail and lament when bereaved of those whom they love; they have no prospect, or a very gloomy one, beyond the grave: but Christ's is should not sorrow as men without hope, for them who sleep in the Lord: nor should they be inconsolable, for any loss; as the Lord still lives to be their Friend and Comforter. Indeed, death is but a sleep to believers: and we shall soon join our Christian friends in that world, where sin and its effects will be known no more. (Notes, Prov. 14: 32. 1 Thes.

1. The child was extremely beloved; the relations and neighbors wept and wailed greatly. It is very afflictive when that which is come forth like a flower, is soon cut down, and withereth before it is grown up; when that grieves us, of which we said, *This same shall comfort us.*

2. It was evident beyond dispute, that the child was really dead. Their laughing Christ to scorn, for saying, *she is not dead, but sleepeth*, though reprehensible, is proof of this.

3. Christ put those out as unworthy to witness the miracle, who were noisy in their sorrow, and so ignorant in the things of God, as not to understand Him when He spake of death as a sleep, or so scornful as to ridicule Him for it.

4. He took the parents of the child to witness the miracle, because in it He had an eye to their faith, and designed it for their comfort, who were the true, for they were the silent mourners.

5. Christ raised the child to life by a word, which is recorded in Syriac, (the language in which Christ spake,) for the greater certainty of the thing; *Talitha, cumi; Damsel, I say unto thee, Arise.* Dr. Lightfoot saith, it was customary with the Jews, when they gave physic, to say, *Arise from thy disease*; meaning, *We wish thou mayest arise*; but to one that was dead, Christ said, *Arise from the dead*; meaning, *I command that thou arise*; nay, there is more in it—the dead have not power to arise, therefore power goes with this word. *Give what thou commandest, and command what thou wilt.* Christ works while He commands, and by the command, and therefore may command what He pleaseth, even the dead to arise. Such is the gospel-call to those that are dead in sins, and can no more rise from that death by their own power, than this child; yet that word, *Awake and arise from the dead*, is not in vain, when it follows immediately, *Christ shall give thee life.* Eph. 5: 14. By the word of Christ, spiritual life is given. *I said unto thee, Live,* Ezek. 16: 6.

6. The damsel, as soon as life returned, arose and walked, v. 42. Spiritual life will appear by our rising from the bed of sloth, and walking in a religious conversation, in Christ's name and strength. Those that are of the age of twelve years, should walk as those whom Christ has raised to life.

7. All who saw it, and heard of it, were astonished with a great astonishment. They could not but acknowledge that there was something in it extraordinary, yet they knew not what to infer from it. Their wonder should have worked faith, but it rested in astonishment.

8. Christ charged them straitly that no man should know it. It was known to a competent number, but He would not have it as yet proclaimed; his own resurrection was to be the great instance of his power over death, and therefore the divulging of other instances must be reserved till that great proof was given.

9. Christ took care something should be given her to eat. By this it appeared that she was raised not only to life, but to a good state of health. It is observable, that, as Christ when He made man, provided food for Him (Gen. 1: 29.) so now, when He had given a new life, He took care to give livelihood. Where Christ hath given spiritual life, He will provide for the nourishment of it unto life eternal, for He will never forsake the work of his own hands.

CHAP. VI. v. 1-6. Here,

I. Christ visits his own country, the place not of his birth, but of his education; that was Nazareth. He had been in danger of his life among them, (Luke 4: 29.) and yet He came among them again: so strangely doth He wait to be gracious, and seek the salvation of his enemies. Thither He went, though into danger; his disciples followed Him; (v. 1.) for they had left all to follow Him whithersoever He went.

II. He preached in their synagogue, on the Sabbath, v. 2. There was not such flocking to Him here as in other places, so that He had no opportunity of preaching till they came together on the Sabbath; and then He expounded a portion of Scripture with great clearness. In religious assemblies, on sabbath-days, the Word of God is to be preached according to Christ's example. We give glory to God by receiving instruction from Him.

III. They could not but own, 1. That He spake with great wisdom, and that that wisdom was given Him, for they knew He had no learned education. 2. That He did mighty works with his own hand, for the confirming of his doctrine. They acknowledged the two great proofs of the divine original of his Gospel—divine wisdom in the contrivance of it, and divine power exerted to ratify and recommend it; yet, though they could not deny the premises, they would not admit the conclusion.

IV. They studied to disparage Him, and raise prejudices in the minds of people against Him, notwithstanding. All this wisdom, and all these mighty works, shall be of no account, because He had not been at the feet of any of their doctors; (v. 3.) Is not this the carpenter? In Matthew they upbraided Him with being the carpenter's son, his supposed father Joseph being of that trade. But it seems, they could say further, Is not this the carpenter? Our Lord, it is probable, employed himself in that business with his father, before He entered upon his public ministry. 1. He would thus humble himself, and make Himself of no reputation, as one that had taken upon Him the form of a servant. Thus did our Redeemer stoop, when He came to redeem us out of our low estate. 2. He would thus teach us to abhor idleness, and rather to take up with laborious employments, from which no more is to be got than a bare livelihood, than indulge ourselves in sloth. Nothing is more pernicious for young people than a habit of sauntering. The Jews had a good rule for

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4: 13-18.) Our Redeemer, while He rebukes our sorrow, allows the feelings of nature and affection; and, though we cannot now expect to have our deceased relatives restored to us, we may hope to experience consolations proportioned to our trials. When sinners ridicule Christ, they exclude themselves from witnessing or experiencing his grace, for He has power over death and the unseen world; and He will ere long bring forth the nations of the dead to appear before his tribunal, call them to eternal felicity, or hid them depart into everlasting punishment. (Notes, Matt. 25: 31-46. John 5: 23, 29. Rev. 20: 11-15.) May He raise our souls from the death of sin to the life of righteousness; that we may now feed on his spiritual provisions, and live as monuments of his grace; that when He shall appear, we may appear with Him in glory. (Note, Col. 3: 1-4.) Scott.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. v. 1-4. (Notes, Matt. 13: 54-58. Luke 4: 16-32.) In this account of our Lord's last visit to Nazareth, (as it appears to have been) we find that the people asked, 'Is not this the carpenter?' whence it has reasonably been concluded, that He had wrought with Joseph at this laborious business, during the former years of his life.—John Murray says, that, 'being among men he made ploughs and

'yokes, which are the works of carpenters.'—By the Jewish canon, all fathers were bound to teach their children some trade. Jesus was not educated in the schools of human learning; but having, 'for our sakes become poor,' He, 'the second Adam,' submitted to the sentence denounced on the 'first Adam,' and ate his 'bread in the sweat of his brow.' (Notes, Gen. 3: 17-19. Acts 13: 1-6.) Scott.

5 And he could there do no mighty works, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages teaching.

7 And he calleth unto him the twelve and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

8 And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse:

9 But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

10 And he said unto them, 'In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

11 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you; when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, in the day of judgment, than for that city.

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

this—their young men, who were designed for scholars, were yet bred to some trade, as Paul was a tent-maker, that they might have some business to fill up their time with, and, if need were, to get their bread. 3. He would thus put an honor upon mechanics, and encourage those who eat the labor of their hands, though great men look down upon them.

Another thing they upbraided Him with, was, the meanness of his relations; 'He is the son of Mary; his brethren and sisters are here with us; we know his family and kindred;' and therefore, though they were astonished at his doctrine, (v. 2.) yet they were offended at his person (v. 3.) and looked upon Him with contempt; and for that reason would not receive his doctrine, so well recommended. May we think that they had not known his pedigree, but He has dropped among them from the clouds, without father, without mother, and without descent, they would have entertained Him with any more respect? Truly, no; for in Judea, where this was not known, it was made an objection against Him: (John 9: 29.) *As for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.* Obstinate unbelief will never want excuses.

V. Let us see how Christ bore this contempt.

1. He partly excused it, as a common thing, and what might be expected, though not reasonable or just; v. 4. *A prophet is not despised any where but in his own country.* Some exceptions there may be to this rule; doubtless many have got over this prejudice, but ordinarily it holds good; that ministers are seldom so acceptable in their own country as among strangers; familiarity in the younger years breeds a contempt; the advancement of one that was an inferior begets envy, and men will hardly set those among the guides of their souls, whose fathers they were ready to set with the dogs of their flock; in such a case, therefore, it must not be thought hard treatment; it was Christ's, and wisdom is profitable to direct to other soil.

2. He did some good among them, notwithstanding the slights they put upon Him, for He is kind even to the evil and unthankful; *He laid his hands upon a few sick folks, and healed them.* Note, It is generous, and becoming the followers of Christ, to content themselves with the satisfaction of doing good, though they be unjustly denied the praise of it.

3. Yet He could there do no such mighty works, as in other places, because of the unbelief that prevailed among the people, by reason of the prejudices of their leaders, v. 5. It is a strange expression, as if unbelief tied the hands of Omnipotence; He would have done as many miracles there as He had done elsewhere, but He could not, because people would not make application for his favors; He could have wrought them, but they forfeited the honor of having them wrought. Note, Unbelief and contempt of Christ stop the current of his favors.

4. He marvelled because of their unbelief, v. 6. We never find Christ wondering but at the faith of Gentile strangers, as the centurion, (Matt. 8: 10.) and the woman of Samaria, and at the unbelief of Jews, his own countrymen. Note, The unbelief of those that enjoy the means of grace, is most amazing.

5. He went round about the villages, teaching, v. 6. If we cannot do good where we would, we must do it where we can, and be glad of any opportunity of serving Christ and souls. Sometimes the gospel of Christ finds better entertainment in villages, where there is less wealth, and mirth, and subtlety, than in populous cities.

V. 7—13. Here is, I. The commission given to the twelve apostles; it is the same which we had more largely, Matt. 10. Mark doth not name them as Mat-

thew doth, because he had named them before when they were first called into fellowship with Him, ch. 3: 16. Hitherto they had been conversant with Christ, had heard his doctrine and seen his miracles; now He determines to make some use of them; they received, that they might give, had learned, that they might teach; and therefore now He began to send them forth. They must not always be studying to get knowledge; they must preach in the country, to do good with their knowledge. Though they were not as yet so well accomplished as they were to be, yet, according to their present ability, they must be set to work, and make further improvement afterward. Observe here,

1. Christ sent them forth by two and two; this Mark takes notice of. They went two and two to a place, that out of the mouth of two witnesses every word might be established; and to be company for one another when they were among strangers, and strengthen the hands, and encourage the hearts, one of another. Every common soldier has his comrade; and it is an approved maxim, *Two are better than one.* Christ would thus teach his ministers to associate, and both lend and borrow help.

2. He gave them power over unclean spirits. He commissioned them to attack the devil's kingdom, and empowered them to cast him out of the bodies of those that were possessed. Dr. Lightfoot suggests, that they cured diseases, and cast out devils, by the Spirit, but preached that only which they had learned from the mouth of Christ.

3. He commanded them not to take provisions with them, neither victuals nor money, that they might appear, wherever they came, to be poor men, not of this world, and therefore might, with the better grace, call people from it to another world. When afterward He bid them take purse and scrip, (Luke 22: 36.) that did not intimate that his care of them was abated; but that they should meet with worse times, than at their first mission. In Matthew and Luke they are forbidden to take staves with them, that is, fighting staves; but here in Mark they are bid to take nothing save a staff only, such as pilgrims carried. They must not put on shoes, but sandals, which were only the soles of shoes tied under their feet; they must go in the readiest dress they could, and not so much as have two coats; for their stay abroad would be short; they must return before winter, and what they wanted, those they preached to would cheerfully accommodate them with.

4. He directed them, whatever house they came to, (v. 10.) *'There abide till ye depart from that place.'* Since ye know ye come on an errand sufficient to make you welcome, have that charity for your friends that first invited you, as to believe they do not think you burdensome.

5. He pronounces a very heavy doom upon those that reject the gospel they preached; v. 11. *'Whosoever shall not receive you, or will not so much as hear you, depart thence, and shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them.'* Let them know that they have had a fair offer of life; witness that dust; but that, since they have refused it, they cannot expect ever to have another; let them take up with their own dust, for so shall their doom be. That dust, like the dust of Egypt, (Exod. 9: 9.) shall turn into a plague to them; and their condemnation, in the great day, will be more intolerable than that of Sodom; for the angels were sent to Sodom, and were abused there; yet that would not bring on so great a guilt and ruin, as the contempt and abuse of the apostles of Christ, who bring the offers of gospel grace.

II. The apostles were conscious to themselves of great weakness, and expected no secular advantage by it, yet, in obedience to their

1. 9:23. Gen. 19:2. Ge. 59:1, 2. Matt. 13:38. Heb. 14:15.
m. Is. 59:16. Matt. 8:9. Job. 9:30.
n. Matt. 4:23. 9:35. Luke 4:31, 44.
13:12.
o. 13:14. Matt. 10:7, 8. Lu. 9:6, 13.
p. Ex. 4:14, 15. Ec. 4:9, 16. Rev. 11:3.
q. 16:17. Luke 10:17—20.
r. Matt. 10:9, 11. Luke 10:8. 9:35.
s. The word signifies, *A pair of shoes—money, is value, even things less than a farthing.* Matt. 9:9, but here it is taken in general for money. Luke 9:3.
t. Acts 12:8.
u. Matt. 10:11—13. Luke 9:4. Jo. 18. Acts 18:15. 17:25—7.
v. Heb. 9:13. Matt. 10:14. Lu. 9:5. 10:10, 11. Acts 13:50, 51. 1 J. 3:1.
w. Ex. 16:48—51. Matt. 10:15. 11:20—24. Luke 11:29—32. John 5:22—24. Heb. 6:4—5. 10:29—31. 2 Pet. 2:6. Jude 7. Gr. ov.
x. Matt. 12:36. Rom. 2:5, 16. 2 Pet. 2:9. 3:7. 1 John 4:17.
y. 13:15. Ex. 18:20. Matt. 3:2, 8. 4:17. 9:18. 11:20. Luke 11:32. 1 J. 3:5, 15:7, 10. 24:47. Acts 2:32. 3:18. 11:18. 20:21. 25:20. 2 Cor. 7:10. 2 Tim. 2:25, 26.

Verses 5, 6.

Our Lord is generally spoken of as affected with the scenes around Him, according to the nature of them, in the same manner as we should have been; except as sinful emotions are also excited in us, from which He was perfectly free. (Marg. Ref. m.) Scorr.

Could not.] 'Because it was not fit and reasonable that he should.' GENTLEY. 'Consistently with the rules on which he acted in performing his miracles'

LE CURE.

Verse 8.

'Probably, no more is designed by this direction than, that they must not wait to make any provision for the journey, but go off just as they were, trusting all to Divine Providence.' Dr. A. CLARK.

Purse.] 'The end of the girdle in eastern dress is so fastened as to make a purse.'

BL. &c.

13 And they * cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

[Practical Observations.]

14 ¶ And * king Herod heard of him; (for his name was spread abroad;) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.

15 Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is 'a prophet, or as one of the prophets.

16 But when Herod heard thereof, he said, 'It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.

17 For * Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias's sake, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her.

§ See on 7.
b. Jan. 5:14, 15.
c. 22:26, 27. Matt. 14:1, 2. Luke 3:1.
9:7. 13:31. 23:27-12.
d. 1:28, 45. 2 Chr. 26:3, 15. Matt. 9:31. 1 Thes. 1:5.
e. * 28. 9:12, 13. 15:35, 35. Mal. 4:5. *Philip.* Matt. 18:14. 17:10, 11.
f. Luke 1:17. 9:8, 10. John 12:1, 25.
g. Matt. 21:11. Luke 7:16, 33. John 6:14. 7:40. 8:17. Act. 3:22, 23.
h. Gen. 4:10, 11. Ps. 53:5. Matt. 14:13. 27:54. Luke 9:9. Rev. 11:10-13.
i. Matt. 4:12. 11:2. 14:3, &c. Luke 3:19, 20.
j. Luke 3:1.

V. 11-13. They who are placed in inferior situations, should cheerfully go on with their employments; and, if God have work of another kind for them, this will prove no hindrance to their future usefulness. The Lord Jesus, the Fountain of all authority in his church, dispenses to every man as He pleases: and He will surely qualify and assist those whom He commissions to preach his Gospel.—Where the truth has hitherto been but little known, it is very desirable that ministers should go forth at least by two and two; that they may have the comfort and benefit of each other's society, counsel, and prayers. (Note, Ec. 4: 9-12) —While faithful preachers earnestly desire and uprightly design to be a blessing to the people; and, content with food and raiment, however mean and scanty, seek 'not their's but them;' they often prove the occasion of deeper condemnation to those who constrain them to 'shake off the

Verse 13.

Learned men have bestowed pains to show, that it was usual, with the Jews to anoint the sick with oil, in order to their recovery: and some think, that the apostles complied with this custom, without any direction from their Lord. But this is not at all probable: nor can we suppose that the miraculous effect would have followed, had they acted without orders. Doubtless, in this they observed the directions given them by Christ: and the observance was intended to be an outward sign of his inward operation; which was itself an emblem of healing our souls by the union of the Holy Spirit. This practice was continued for some time in the church, as the token of a miraculous cure: but it was obvious, that it must be left off, when miracles ceased. Yet the popish ceremony (or sacrament, as they call it), of 'extreme unction,' seems absurdly to have been derived from it: for that is not used in order to a miraculous cure, but when all hope of recovery is given up. (Note, James 5: 14, 15.)

Anointed with oil.] This is not mentioned by either of the other evangelists; but it is evident from James 5: 14, that in the age of miracles oil was thus employed: yet the reason of this, as of many other things in Scripture, we are not able to assign.

In the countries * the South and East, the oil is very mild, and was used by the ancients (especially by Jews) for the cure of various dis-

Master's order, and in dependence upon his strength, they went out as Abraham, not knowing whither they went. Observe,

1. The doctrine they preached; *They preached that men should repent;* (v. 12.) that they should change their minds, and reform their lives, in consideration of the near approach of the kingdom of the Messiah. Note, The great design and tendency of gospel preaching should be, to bring people to a new heart and a new way. They did not amuse people with curious speculations, but told them that they must repent of their sins and turn to God.

2. The miracles they wrought. The power Christ gave them over unclean spirits was not ineffectual, nor did they receive it in vain; for they cast out many devils; (v. 13.) and they anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them. Some think this oil was used medicinally, according to the custom of the Jews; but I rather think it was used as a sign of miraculous healing, by the appointment of Christ, though not mentioned; and it was afterward used by those elders of the church, to whom, by the Spirit, was given the gift of healing, Jam. 5: 14. It is certain here, and therefore probable there, that anointing the sick with oil, is appropriated to that extraordinary power which is long ceased, &c. herefore that sign must cease with it.

V. 14-29. Here are,

1. The wild notions that the people had concerning Jesus, v. 15. His own countrymen could believe nothing great concerning Him, because they knew his kindred; but others, that were not under the power of that prejudice against Him, were yet willing to believe any thing rather than that He was the Son of God, and the true Messias; they said He is Elias, whom they expected; or, He is one of the Old Testament prophets raised to life; or, as one of the prophets, a prophet newly raised up, equal to those under the Old Testament.

II. The opinion of Herod concerning Him. He heard of his name and fame; and he said, 'It is certainly John whom I beheaded,' v. 16. He is risen from the dead; and though while with us he did no miracle, yet, having removed for a while to another world, he is come with greater power, and now mighty works do show forth themselves in him.'

Note 1. Where there is an idle fancy, there is commonly a working fancy. The people said, It is a prophet risen from the dead; Herod said, It is John Baptist risen from the dead. It

seems by this, that the rising of a prophet from the dead, to do mighty works, was thought neither impossible nor improbable, and it was now readily suspected when it was not true; but afterward, when it was true concerning Christ, and a truth undeniably evidenced, it was obstinately denied. Those who most wilfully disbelieve the truth, are commonly most credulous of errors and fancies.

2. They who fight against the cause of God, will find themselves baffled, even when they think themselves conquerors; they cannot gain their point, for the word of the Lord endures forever. They who rejoiced when the witnesses were slain, fretted as much when, in three or four days, they rose again in their successors, Rev. 11: 10, 11. The impenitent sinner, that escapeth the sword of Jehu, shall Elisha slay.

3. A guilty conscience needs no accuser. Herod charges himself with the murder of John, which perhaps no one else dare charge him with; I beheaded him; and the terror of it made him imagine that Christ was John. He feared John while he lived, and fears him ten times worse when he is dead. One might as well be haunted with ghosts and furies, as with the horrors of an accusing conscience; these, therefore, who would keep an undisturbed peace, must keep an undefiled conscience, Acts 24: 16.

4. There may be strong conviction, where there is not saving conversion. This Herod, who had this notion concerning Christ, afterward sought to kill Him. (Luke 13: 31.) and set Him at nought; (Luke 23: 11.) so that he will not be persuaded, though it be by one risen from the dead; no, not by a John the Baptist risen from the dead.

III. A narrative of Herod's putting John Baptist to death is brought in upon this occasion, as it was in Matthew. Here we may observe,

1. The great veneration which Herod sometimes had for John Baptist, (which is related only by this evangelist, v. 20.) Here we see what a great way a man may go towards grace and glory, and yet come short of both and perish.

(1.) He feared John knowing that he was a just man, and a holy. It is possible that a man may have a great reverence for good men, and especially for good ministers, yea, and for that in them that is good, and yet himself be a bad man. Observe, [1.] John was a just man, and

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dust of their feet for a testimony against them, by refusing to hear and receive their message.—How heinous a sin must unbelief be, in all who have the adequate means of conviction; seeing a righteous God will render the final doom of those who refuse the salvation of the Gospel, even more intolerable than that of Sodom and Gomorrah! Notes, John 3: 19-21. Heb. 2: 1-4. 12: 22-25.—The servants of Christ must go forth in his name, every where 'preaching, that men should repent, and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance;' and enforcing their exhortations both by the terrors of the law, and by the promises of the Gospel. In this way we may hope that our labors will be blessed, to turn many 'from darkness unto light, and the power of Satan unto God,' and that we shall be the instruments of healing their souls. SCOTT.

orders. Celsus. Galen. Many maintain that the oil was here used as a medicine. So Kuinoel, Schutz, Michaelis, Paulus, Pott and Wetstein. I agree with the older commentators and Rosenmuller, that the healing was miraculous, and that the anointing was only a symbolical action, typical of the relief and joy imparted by Divine assistance. The first Christians (says Grotius,) who were accustomed to practise, in visible signs, the allegorical allusions in the Scriptures, used oil in their rites, as at baptism, and on the imposition of hands which succeeded it. Thus St. Paul, 2 Cor. 1: 21, and John 2: 20, 27, speaking of the unction of faith, or of the Spirit. The Christians used oil in the ordination of priests, (says Tertullian,) and in re-admission of heretics. As the art of medicine (observes Willan, ap. Eusebius) was practised among the Jews by the priests and prophets, its remedies became partly sacred; and unction in dangerous cases became a religious ceremony with imposition of hands, and prayers for the sick.' BLOOMFIELD.

Verses 14-29.

Notes, Matt. 14: 3-12. Luke 3: 19, 20. 9: 7-9.—(14.) King Herod. Thus his courtiers and flatterers called him, though only a tetrarch, or governor of Galilee under the Romans: being a fourth part of his father's kingdom. (Notes, Matt. 14: 1, 2. Luke 3: 1.)—It is not easy to meet with a more striking instance, than this, of the force of conscience over a guilty mind, or a stronger proof how perpetually

18 For John had said unto Herod, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife."

19 Therefore Herodias had *a quarrel against him, and would have killed him; but she could not.

20 For Herod "feared" John, knowing that he was a just man, and an holy, and "observed" conversation; and when he heard him, he did many things, "and heard him gladly."

21 And "when a convenient day was come, that Herod on "his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee;"

22 And when "the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced and pleased Herod, and them that sat with him; the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee."

23 And "he sware unto her, "Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my kingdom."

24 And she went forth, and "said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, "The head of John the Baptist."

25 And she came in straightway "with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me now and by, in "a charger, the head of John the Baptist."

26 And the king "was exceeding sorry; yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her."

a holy; to make a complete good man, both justice and holiness are necessary; holiness toward God, and justice toward men. John was mortified to this world, and so was a good friend both to justice and holiness. [2.] Herod knew this, not only by common fame, but by personal acquaintance with him. Those that have but little justice and holiness themselves, may yet discern it with respect in others. And, [3.] He therefore feared (honored) him. Holiness and justice command veneration, and many that are not good themselves, have respect for those that are.

(2.) He observed him; he sheltered him from the malice of his enemies; (so some understand it); or, rather, he had a regard to his exemplary conversation, and took notice of that in him that was praiseworthy, and commended him in the hearing of those about him.

(3.) He heard him preach; which was great condescension, considering John's appearance. To hear Christ himself preach in our streets, will be but a poor plea in the great day, Luke 13:26.

(4.) He did many of those things which John, in his preaching, taught him. He was not only a hearer of the word, but in part a doer. Some sins which John, in his preaching, reproved, he forsook, and some duties he bound himself to; but it will not suffice to do many things, unless we have respect to all the commandments.

(5.) He heard him gladly. He did not hear him with terror, as Felix heard Paul, but with pleasure. There is a flashy joy, which a hypocrite may have in hearing the word; Ezekiel said to his hearers a lovely song; (Ezek. 33:32.) and the stony ground received the Word with joy, Luke 8:13.

2. John's faithfulness to Herod, in telling him of his faults. Herod had married his brother Philip's wife, v. 17. All the country, no doubt, cried shame on him for it; but John reproved him, told him plainly, *It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife*. This iniquity he could not leave when he did many things that John taught him; therefore John tells him of this particularly. Though he were a king, he would not spare him, any more than Elijah did Ahab, when he said, *Hast thou killed, and also taken possession?* Though John had an interest in him, and might fear his plain-dealing would destroy his interest, yet he reproved him; for faithful are the wounds of a friend; (Prov. 27:6.) and though there are some swine that will turn again, and rend those that cast pearls before them, yet, ordinarily, he that rebuketh a man, (if the person reproved has the understanding of a man,) afterward shall find more favor than he that flattereth with his tongue, Prov. 28:23. Though it was dangerous to offend Herod, and much more to offend Herodias, yet John would run the hazard. Note, Those ministers that would be found faithful in the work of God, must not be afraid of the face of man. If we seek to please men, further than is for their spiritual good, we are not the servants of Christ.

k Lev. 19:16, 20:21. 1 Kings 22:14.
Ex. 31:18. Matt. 14:3, 4. Acts 30:26, 27. 21:24—26.
1 Gen. 39:17—20. 1 Kings 21:20.
* Or, an inward grudge. Ec. 7:19.
* Eccl. 10:27.
m 11:18. Ex. 11:3. 1 Kings 21:20. 2 Kings 8:12, 13. 6:21. 13:14. 2 Chr. 34:12—22. 28:5. Dan. 4:18, 27. 5:17. Matt. 14:5, 21:26.
† Or, kept him, or, saved him.

n 1:18. Ps. 106:12, 13. Ex. 33:22.
John 5:35.
o Gen. 27:11. 2 Sam. 13:23—29.
* Eccl. 37: Ps. 37:12, 13. Acts 12:9—11.
p Gen. 40:50. Dan. 1:3—7. 2:18. Prov. 31:5, 24. 31:4. Hos. 7:6.
† 1 Pet. 4:3. Rev. 11:10.
q Eccl. 1:10—12. Is. 5:16, &c. Dan. 6:22. Matt. 14:6.
r 1 Sam. 28:10. 2 Kings 6:31. Matt.

5:34—37. 14:7.
s Eccl. 5:3, 8. 7:2. Prov. 6:2. Matt. 4:8.
t Gen. 27:8—11. 2 Chr. 22:3, 4. Isa. 19:23.
u Job 31:1. Ps. 27:2. Prov. 27:3, 4. Acts 23:12, 13.
x Prov. 1:18. Rom. 8:15.
y Num. 7:19, 18:19.
z Matt. 14:9. 27:3—5, 24, 25.

"it goads the sinner, not only with well-grounded apprehensions of impending vengeance, but with imaginary terrors and visionary dangers... There is reason to believe that Herod... was of the sect called the Sadducees; yet his fears overruled all the prejudices of his sect, and raised up the semblance of the murdered Baptist... Herod had even married a considerable time to the daughter of Aretas, king of Arabia Petraea; but conceiving a violent passion for his brother Philip's wife, Herodias, he first seduced her affections from her husband, then dismissed his own wife, and married Herodias during the lifetime of his brother... Herodias had a passion to gratify, stronger perhaps than any other, when it takes full possession of the human heart, and that was revenge. She had been mortally injured, as she conceived, by the Baptist; and she not only felt the highest indignation at this insult, but was afraid that his repeated remonstrances might at length prevail... Herodias 'had a quarrel against John' according to the original, 'she fastened a "quarrel upon him," and was determined not to let go her hold, till she had destroyed him.' We are informed by Josephus, that Herod's marriage with Herodias drew "in him the resentment of Aretas, the father of his first wife, who

3. The malice which Herodias bore to John for this; v. 19. She had a quarrel with him, and would have killed him; but when she could not obtain that, she had him committed to prison, v. 17. Herod respected him, till he touched him in his Herodias. Many that pretend to honor prophesying, are for smooth things only, and love good preaching, if it keep far enough from their beloved sin; but if that be touched, they cannot bear it. No quarrel if the world hate those who testify that its works are evil. But it is better that sinners persecute ministers for their faithfulness, than curse them eternally for their unfaithfulness.

4. The plot laid to take John's life. I think that Herod was himself in the plot, notwithstanding his pretences to be displeased, and that the thing was concerted between him and Herodias; for it is said to be *when a convenient day was come*, (v. 21.) fit for such a purpose. (1.) There must be a ball at court, upon the king's birthday, and a supper prepared for his lords, high captains, and chief estates of Galilee. (2.) To grow the solemnity, the daughter of Herodias must dance publicly, and Herod must be wonderfully charmed; and if he be, they that sit with him, cannot but, in compliance to him, be so too. (3.) The king hereupon must make her an extravagant promise, to give her whatever she would ask, even to the half of the kingdom; and yet, that, if rightly understood, would not have reached the end designed, for John Baptist's head was worth more than his whole kingdom. This promise is bound with an oath, that no room might be left to fly from it; *He swore to her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask, I will give*. I can scarcely think he would have made such an unlimited promise, but that he knew what she would ask. (4.) She, being instructed by Herodias her mother, asked the head of John Baptist; and she must have it brought her in a charger; (v. 24, 25.) and there must be no delay. (5.) Herod granted it, and the execution was done immediately while the company were together, which we can scarcely think the king would have done, if he had not determined the matter before. But he takes on him, [1.] To be very backward to it, and that he would not for all the world have done it, if he had not been surprised into such a promise; *The king was exceeding sorry* that he seemed to be so, but it was all grimace, he was really pleased that he had found a pretence to get John out of the way. *The man who cannot dissemble, knows not how to reign*. And yet he was not without sorrow for it; natural conscience will not suffer men to sin easily; the very commission of it is vexatious; what then will the reflection upon it be? [2.] He takes on him to be very sensible of the obligation of his oath; whereas if the damsel had asked but a fourth part of his kingdom, doubtless he would have found out a way to evade his oath. The promise was rashly made, and could not bind him to an unrighteous thing.

"declared war against him, and defeated his army with great slaughter. This, says the historian, the Jews considered as the just judgment of God for his murder of John. Not long after this, both he and Herodias were deprived of their kingdom by the Roman emperor, and sent into perpetual banishment; and it is added by an early historian, that Salome met with a violent and untimely death."

Scott.
(20.) Observed him.] "Kept him close," i.e. from the resentment of Herodias. Hammond, Le Clerc, Campbell, Kuinoel, Baxter, Schleusener.

(21.) A convenient day.] Holiday, day of leisure. Hammond.

(23.) Unto the half of my kingdom.] 'M. Anquetil du Perron, giving an account of the dancers at Surat, observes that the rich vie with each other in the presents they make them of money and jewels; and that persons of opulence have even ruined themselves in this way. He mentions "that the dancer Laal-kouer gained such a complete ascendancy over the Mogul emperor, Maaz-eddin, that he became joint governess of the empire with himself!"

B. A. 1800

27 And immediately the king sent * an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison,

28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother.

29 And when his disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

[Practical Observations.]

30 ¶ And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

31 And he said unto them, 'Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

a Matt. 14:10, 11.

b 1 Kings 19:24, 25.

c Matt. 13:12 27:7-50. b. 24:16.

d Luke 9:12 27:7-50. b. 24:16.

e 7:6. Luke 9:12 10:1.

f Acts 1:1. 20:18-21. 1 Tim. 4:12-18. Tit. 2:7. 1 Pet. 5:2, 3.

g 14:5. 8:7, 29. Matt. 14:13. John 6.

V 14—29. When the truths and honor of Christ are spread abroad, by the successful labors of ministers, men will make their observations or conjectures respecting them, according to their different humors or prejudices: and then the secret remorse and horror of conscience, which wicked men experience, will often be brought to light. (Note, Ps. 73:18—22.)—No infidel principles, or hardness of heart, or worldly grandeur, can at all times preserve the enemies of God from terrors and anxieties. They are seldom wholly exempt from convictions of their own guilt, and they are often unable to exclude the dread of divine vengeance. They may imprison or murder their reprovers, but this only increases the clamor of their inward accuser: and any person, who believes the Bible, may predict the consequence of a man's determining to mount, if possible, the summit of prosperity, by whatever means and at any rate; for if he succeed, he will find his desired eminence a turbulent and perilous situation; and unless he have the wisdom and grace to descend into the valley of humiliation, he will soon be cast into the depths of hell. We may see the reason, why men can not receive the message of God's ministers, and why they treat them with enmity; they feel that their example and doctrine is a reproach; their pride is affronted, their consciences are disquieted, and their darling indulgences opposed: thus they have an irreconcilable quarrel against the very persons whom they cannot but stand in awe of, as 'just and holy men,' whom they have often heard with apparent satisfaction, and at whose instance they have 'done many things.' But the frame of men's minds is very different, when they are hearing the word of God, as delivered by a heart-searching, awakening preacher, than it is at those times,

(37.) Sent an executioner.] 'The word translated executioner properly denotes a spy or sentinel, and as these sentinels kept guard at the residences of Roman governors, so they were employed in other offices, and often performed the service of executioners. As, however, we learn from Josephus, that Herod was at this very time engaged in a war with Aretas, king of Arabia, in consequence of Herod having divorced his daughter to marry Herodias, and as this event occurred at an entertainment given at the castle of Machabes, while his army was on its march against his father-in-law, we are furnished with an additional reason why a spectator or sentinel should have been employed as an executioner; and are thus able to discover such a latent and un-

Sinful oaths must be repented of, and not performed; for repentance is the undoing of what have done amiss, as far as is in our power. When Theodosius the emperor was urged by a suitor with a promise, he answered, *I said it, but did not promise it*, if it be unjust. If we may suppose that Herod knew nothing of the design when he made that promise, it is probable that he was hurried into the doing of it by those about him; for he did it for their sakes who sat with him, whose company he was proud of, and therefore would do any thing to gratify them. Thus d. princes make themselves slaves to those whose respect they covet. None of Herod's subjects stood in more awe of him than he did of his lords, high captains, and chief estates. The king sent an executioner, a soldier of his guard. Bloody tyrants have executioners ready to obey their most cruel decrees. Thus Saul has a Doeg at hand, to fall upon the priests of the Lord, when his own footmen declined it.

5. The effect of this is, (1.) That Herod's wicked court is all in triumph, because this prophet tormented them; the head is made a present of to the damsel, and by her to her mother, v. 28. (2.) That John Baptist's friends are all in tears; his disciples little thought of this; they took up the neglected corpse, and laid it in a tomb; where Herod, if he had pleased, might have found it, when he frightened himself with the fancy that John Baptist was risen from the dead.

I. The apostles had dispersed themselves into several quarters of the country for some time, but when they had made good their several appointments, by consent they gathered themselves together, to compare notes, and came to Jesus, their Centre, to give Him an account of what they had done: as the servant that was sent to invite to the feast, and had received answers from the guests, came, and shewed his lord all these things; they told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. Ministers are accountable both for what they do, and for what they teach; and must watch over their own souls, and for the souls of others, as those that must give account, Heb. 13:17. Let them neither do any thing, nor teach any

thing, but what they are willing should be related and repeated to the Lord Jesus. It is a comfort to ministers, when they can appeal to Christ concerning their doctrine and manner of life, both which, perhaps, have been misrepresented by men; and He gives them leave to be free with Him, and to lay open their case before Him, to tell Him all things, what treatment they have met with, what success, and what disappointment.

II. See the tender care of Christ for their repose, after their fatigue, v. 31. He said unto them, perceiving them to be almost spent, Come ye yourselves apart, into a desert place, and rest awhile. It would seem that John's disciples came to Christ with tidings of their master's death, about the same time with his own disciples. Note, Christ takes cognizance of the frights of some, and the toils of others, of his disciples, provides suitable relief for both, rest for the tired, and refuge for the terrified. With kindness and compassion Christ says to them, Come, and rest! Note, The most active servants of Christ cannot be always upon the stretch of business, but have bodies that require relaxation; we shall not be able to serve God without ceasing, day and night, till we come to heaven, where they never rest from praising Him, Rev. 4:8. The Lord considers our frame, and not only allows time for rest, but puts in mind of resting. Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers. Return to thy rest. And those that work diligently and faithfully, may cheerfully retire to rest. The sleep of the laboring man is sweet. But observe, 1. Christ calls them to come themselves apart; for, if they had any body with them, they would have something to say, or something to do, for their good; if they must rest, they must be alone. 2. He invites them not to some pleasant country-seat, to fine buildings and gardens, but into a desert place, where the accommodations were poor, fitted by nature only, and not by art, for quiet and rest. But no wonder that He, who had a ship for his preaching place, had but a desert for his resting place. 3. He calls them only to rest awhile; they must not expect to rest long, only to get breath. There is no remaining rest for

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

when they are celebrating luxurious and joyous feasts, indulging their appetites, surrounded with flatterers, ar. carousing with dissipated companions. (Note, Dan. 5:1—4.) such revels are Satan's opportunities: he waits for them, in order to take his advantage, to push men forward into enormities, from which they were restrained by remaining scruples, in their more sober hours. Hence it has often been known, that the most atrocious murders have been hastily committed, as it were, to grace a riotous banquet, or to gratify some worthless individual, who had contributed to the luxury or conviviality of the occasion! (Note, 2 Sam. 13:22—29.) Thus the great murderer of men carries his point, and employs his servants in the work of destroying lives and souls.—If the history of persecutions and martyrs could be written, under the guidance of inspiration, it would be found, that thousands of the most valuable lives had fallen a sacrifice to the revenge of some ambitious and licentious Herodias; or of some base wretch, whose pride had been affronted, and whose success in wickedness had been impeded by faithful reproofs. Yet even those who are instigated by such prompters often avow, that their conscience and honor are concerned; and devise to connect oaths, and regard to friends, to the public peace, or the good of the church, with the gratification of revenge! They can, however, do the servants of God no real harm: He will vouchsafe them another kind of recompense, than they receive from men, and avenge their cause. But woe will be the doom of those, who have instigated even their own children, and nearest relatives, to the most atrocious crimes, in order to gratify their own malignant passions! (P. O. Matt. 14:1—12.)

SCOTT.

designed evidence, as clearly evinces the truth of the evangelical narrative.

(29.) 'Josephus attributes the execution of the Baptist to the fact that his authority with the people might lead to a rebellion. Exclusive of inspiration, the consistency, the nearness of time to the event related, being contemporary, and, as it were, on the spot, (a brother of Peter, the friend of Mark, having been, amongst others, John's disciple,) the minuteness, the impartiality, and moderation, in showing how Herod was surprised into consent, would, between two Greek or Roman historians, give the preference to the evangelists. Josephus was born some years after John was beheaded, and was neither known to his disciples, nor interested to inquire minutely into the subject.' MARKIN

32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

33 And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran a-foot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

35 ¶ And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed;

36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred penny-worth of bread, and give them to eat?

38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass.

40 And they sat

the people of God till they come to heaven. 4. The reason given for this is, not so much because they had been in constant work, but because they now were in a constant hurry; so that they had not their work in any order; for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. Let but proper time be kept for every thing, and a great deal of work may be done with great ease; but if people be continually coming and going, and no rule or method be observed, a little work will not be done without trouble. 5. They withdrew, accordingly, by ship; not crossing the water, but making a coasting voyage to the desert of Bethesda, v. 32. Going by water was much less toilsome than going by land. They went away privately, that they might be by themselves. The most public persons cannot but wish to be private sometimes.

III. The people, however, followed him. It was rude to do so, when He and his disciples were desirous, for such good reason, to retire; and yet they are not blamed for it, nor bid to go back, but welcomed. Note, A failure in good manners will easily be excused in those who follow Christ, if it be but made up in a fulness of good affections. They followed Him without being called upon. Here is no time set, no meeting appointed, no bell tolled; yet they fly like a cloud, and as doves to their windows. They followed Him out of the cities, quitted their houses and shops, to hear Him preach. They followed Him afoot, though He was gone by sea, and seemed to slight them, yet they ran afoot, and made such haste, that they outwent the disciples, and came together with an appetite to the Word of God. Nay, they followed Him into a desert place, despicable and inconvenient. The presence of Christ will turn a wilderness into a paradise.

IV. Christ, when He saw much people, instead of being moved with displeasure, as many a good man would have been, was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep having no shepherd; they seemed to be well inclined, and willing to be taught, but they had no one to lead and guide them right; none to feed them; and therefore, in compassion to them, He not only healed their sick, as it is in Matthew, but taught them many things, and we may be sure that they were all good.

V. His hearers He generously made his guests, and treated them at a splendid entertainment: so it might truly be called, because miraculous.

1. The disciples moved that they should be sent home. When the day was now far spent, and night drew on, they said, This is a desert place, and much time is now passed; send them away to buy bread, v. 35, 36. This the disciples suggested to Christ; but we do not find that the multitude themselves did. They did not say, Send us away, (though they could not but be hungry,) for they esteemed the words of Christ's mouth more than their necessary food, and forgot themselves when they were hearing Him; but the disciples thought it would be a kindness to dismiss them. Note, Willing minds will do more, and hold out longer, than one would expect.

2. Christ ordered that they should all be fed; (v. 37.) Give ye them to eat. Though their crowding after Him and his disciples hindered them from eating, (v. 31,) yet He would not therefore, to be even with them, send them away fasting, but, to teach us to be kind to those who are rude to us, He ordered provision to be made for them; that bread which Christ and his disciples took with them into the desert, that they might make a quiet meal of it for themselves. He will have them to partake of. Thus was He given to hospitality. They attended on the spiritual food of his word, and

then He took care that they should not want other food. The way of duty, as it is the way of safety, is the way to supply. God fills the pools with rain from heaven, and makes a well, even in the valley of Baca, for those that are going Zion-ward, from strength to strength, Ps. 84: 6, 7. Providence, not temptation, but duty trampled, never yet failed any, but has refreshed many with reasonable and surprising relief. It has often been seen in the mount of the Lord, Jehovah-jireh, that the Lord will provide.

3. The disciples objected against it as impracticable; Shall we go, and buy two hundred penny-worth of bread, and give them to eat? Through the weakness of their faith, instead of waiting for directions from Christ, they perplex the cause with projects of their own. It was a question whether they had two hundred pence with them, and whether the country would, of a sudden, afford so much bread, if they had, and whether that would suffice so great a company; but thus Moses objected, Num. 11: 22. Shall the flocks or herds be slain for them? Christ would let them see their folly in forecasting for themselves, that they might put the greater value upon his provision.

4. They had brought with them five loaves, in their ship; and two fishes, perhaps, they caught as they came along. This was but a little for Christ and his disciples, and yet this they must give away, as the widow her two mites, and as the churches of Macedonia's deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality. We often find Christ at others' tables, dining with one and supping with another: but here we have Him supping a great many at his own charge, which shows that, when others ministered to Him of their substance, it was not because He could not supply Himself otherwise; (if He were hungry, He needed not tell them;) but it was a piece of humiliation, that He was pleased to submit to, nor was it agreeable to the intention of miracles, that He should work them for Himself. Observe,

(1.) The provision was ordinary. Here were no rarities, though Christ, if He would please, could have furnished his table with them; thus He would teach us to be content with food convenient for us, and not be desirous of dainties. If we have for necessity, it is no matter though we have not for delicacy. God, in love, gives meat for our hunger; but, in wrath, gives meat for our lusts, Ps. 78: 18. The promise to them that fear the Lord, is, that verily they shall be fed, not fasted. If Christ and his disciples took up with mean things, surely we may.

(2.) The guests were orderly; they sat down by companies upon the green grass, (v. 39.) in ranks by hundreds and by fifties, (v. 40.) that the provision might the more easily be distributed amongst them; for God is the God of order, and not of confusion. Thus care was taken that every one should have enough, and none be overlooked, nor any have more than was fit.

(3.) A blessing was craved upon the meat; He looked up to heaven, and blessed. Christ did not call one of his disciples to crave a blessing, but did it himself; (v. 41.) and by virtue of this blessing the bread strangely multiplied, and so did the fishes, for they did all eat, and were filled, though they were five thousand, v. 42, 44. This miracle was significant, and shows that Christ came into the world to be the great Feeder as well as Healer; not only to restore, but to preserve and nourish spiritual life; and in Him there is enough for all that come to Him; none are sent empty away from Christ, but those that come to Him full of themselves.

(4.) Care was taken of the fragments that remained, with which they filled twelve baskets. Though Christ had bread enough at command He would hereby teach us, not to waste: remembering how many there are that want, and

Two hundred penny-worth. 1 About 327,00.

A common expression to denote a considerable sum. 1. LITERARY.

2. A whole sack contained in the bag, which was destined for the reception of what was contributed by his friends for the use of himself and the twelve. John 6: 7. Grotius, Doddridge, and Kuinoos.

Verse 40.

By hundreds and by fifties. "Tha is," says Mr. Wesley, "fifty in [38]

a rank, and a hundred in a file." So a hundred, multiplied by fifty, make five thousand. This miracle could not be counted off, and is a full proof of the divinity of Christ. Dr. A. GRAY.

In ranks. The word is taken from beds in a garden, to which companies of people, seated in rows, twice the number in rank as in file, would bear resemblance. Many expositors seem to think, that the whole multitude formed one body, a hundred in rank and fifty in file; but the plural number leads us to conclude, that several distinct companies were formed, but all arranged in the same manner.

down in ranks, ⁶by hundreds, and by fifties.

41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, ⁷he looked up to heaven, and ⁸blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all.

42 And they did all eat, ⁹and were filled.

43 And they took up ¹⁰twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

45 And ¹¹straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before ¹²unto ¹³Bethsaida, while he sent away the people.

46 And when he had sent them away, ¹⁴he departed into a mountain to pray.

47 ¶ And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land.

48 And ¹⁵he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about ¹⁶the fourth watch of the night ¹⁷he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and ¹⁸would have passed by them.

49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they ¹⁹supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out;

50 For they all saw him, and were troubled: and immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: ²⁰'it is I; be not afraid.'

we know not but we may some time or other want such fragments as we throw away.

This passage we had, Matt. 14: 22, &c. only what was there related concerning Peter, is omitted here.

I. Christ constrained his disciples to go before by ship to Bethsaida, intending to follow them, as they supposed, by land. The people were loth to scatter, so that it cost Him some time and pains to send them away. For now that they had been fed, they were in no haste to leave Him. But as long as we are here in this world, we have no continuing city, no, not in communion with Christ. The everlasting feast is reserved for the future state.

II. Christ departed into a mountain, to pray. Observe, 1. He prayed; though He had so much preaching work upon his hands, yet He was much in prayer; He prayed often, and long, which is an encouragement to us to depend upon his intercession at the right hand of the Father. 2. He went alone, to pray; though He needed not to retire for the avoiding either of discretion or of ostentation, yet, to set us an example, and to encourage us in our secret addresses to God, He prayed alone, and for want of a closet, went up into a mountain. A good man is never less alone than when alone with God.

III. The disciples were in distress at sea; The wind was contrary, (p. 45.) so that they toiled in rowing, and could not get forward. This was a specimen of the hardships they were to expect, when hereafter He should send them abroad to preach the gospel; they must expect to toil in rowing, work hard against so strong a stream; they must likewise expect to be tossed with waves; and by exposing them now, He intended to train them up for such difficulties, that they might learn to endure hardness. The church is often like a ship at sea, tossed with tempests, and not comforted; we may have Christ for us, and yet wind and tide against us; but it is a comfort to Christ's disciples in a storm, that their Master is in the heavenly mount, interceding for them.

IV. Christ made them a kind visit upon the water. He could have checked the winds, where He was, or have sent an angel to their relief; but He chose to help them in the most endearing manner possible, and therefore came to them Himself.

51 And he went up unto them into the ship; ²¹and the wind ceased: ²²and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered.

52 For ²³they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for ²⁴their heart was hardened.

53 ¶ And when they had passed over, they came into ²⁵the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore.

54 And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they ²⁶knew him,

55 And ²⁷ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was.

56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, ²⁸they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might ²⁹touch if it were but ³⁰the border of his garment; and as many as touched ³¹him were made whole.

q Luke 9:14, 15.
r 7:24. Matt. 14:19. Luke 9:16. John 11:41. 17:1.

1. He did not come till the fourth watch of the night, three o'clock in the morning; but then He came. Note, If Christ's visits be deferred long, yet at length He will come; and in their extremity, his opportunity will appear so much the more seasonable. Though the salvation tarry, yet we must wait for it; at the end it shall speak, though in the fourth watch of the night, and not lie.

2. He came, walking upon the waters. The sea was now tossed with waves, yet Christ came, walking upon it; for though the floods lift up their voice, the Lord on high is mightier Ps. 93: 3, 4. No difficulties can obstruct Christ's gracious appearance, when the set time is come. He will find, or force, a way through the most tempestuous sea, for their deliverance, Ps. 42: 7, 8.

3. He would have passed by them, that is, He set his face, and steered his course, as if He would have gone farther, and took no notice of them; this He did, to awaken them to call to Him. Note, Providence, when it is acting designedly and directly for the succor of God's people, yet sometimes seems as if it regarded not their case. They thought that He would, but we may be sure that He would not, have passed by them.

4. They were frightened at the sight of Him, supposing Him to have been an apparition; They all saw Him, and were troubled, (p. 50.) thinking it had been some demon, that haunted them, and raised this storm. We often perplex and frighten ourselves with the creatures of our own imagination.

5. He encouraged them, and silenced their fears, by making Himself known to them; saying, Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid. Note, (1.) We know not Christ till He is pleased to reveal Himself: *It is I; your Master, Friend, Redeemer and Savior. It is I,* that came to a troublesome earth, and now to a tempestuous sea. (2.) The knowledge of Christ, as He is in Himself, and near to us, is enough to make the disciples of Christ cheerful even in a storm, and no longer fearful. *If it be so, why am I thus?* If it is Christ that is with thee, be of good cheer, be not afraid. Our fears are soon satisfied, if our mistakes be rectified, especially our mistakes concerning Christ. See Gen. 21: 19. 2 Kings 6: 15—17. Christ's pre-

8:6, 7. 14:22. Deut. 6:10. 1 Sam. 9:13. Matt. 15:36. 26:28. Luke 24:30. John 6:11, 28. Acts 27:35. Rom. 14:6. 1 Cor. 10:31. Col. 3:17. 1 Tim. 4:5.
8:8, 9. 2 Kings 4:42—44. Ps. 145: 15, 16. Matt. 14:20, 21. 16:37, 38. Luke 9:17. John 6:12, 13.
8:15, 20.
x Matt. 14:22. John 6:15—17. Or, over against Bethsaida.
y 9:24. Luke 10:15.
z 1:35. Matt. 14:28. Luke 6:12. 1 Pet. 2:21.
a 14:8, 11. John. 1:13. Matt. 14:24. b Ex. 14:24. 1 Sam. 11:11. Luke 12:36. c Job 9:8. Ps. 83:4. 104:3.
d Gen. 18:2. 32:26. Luke 24:28.
e Job 4:14—16. Matt. 14:27, 28.
f Matt. 14:27. Luke 24:37—41. John 6:19, 20. 20:19, 20.
g 4:39. Ps. 107:28—30. Matt. 8:26. 27. 14:28—32. Luke 8:24, 25. John 6:21.
h 1:27. 2:12. 4:41. 6:42. 7:37. 17:18. 8:17, 19, 21. Matt. 16:9—11. Luke 24:25.
i Matt. 14:34—36. Luke 5:1. John 6:54.
m Ps. 9:10. Phil. 3:10.
n 3:1—3. 3:7—11. Matt. 4:24.
o Acts 5:15.
p 2:10. 5:27, 28. 2 Kings 18:21. Luke 6:19. 22:51. A. A. 16:12.
q Num. 15:38, 39. Deut. 22:12. Matt. 9:20. Luke 8:44. Or, it.

(45.) *Bethsaida.* Bethsaida was near the place where Jesus and the disciples then were, and probably to the east of the sea of Tiberias: but learned men are not agreed in respect to its situation. Scott.

Verses 47—52.

Notes, Matt. 14: 22—32. The same words are sometimes used for the remaining, and in a degree prevailing evil in true disciples, as for the total dominion of evil in unbelievers. (Matt. 16: 23. Rom. 8: 5, 6, 7. 1 Cor. 3: 1.) This is not duly attended to by some controversial writers.—Some chaste have pretended to cure diseases miraculously; and some have even attempted to raise the dead: yet no impostor, I believe, has ever been so bold as to undertake to feed five thousand people at once with ³²five loaves and two fishes; or to walk on the waves of the sea.

Bp. Porteus, in Scott.
(52.) *Their heart was hardened.* Their mind was dull to per-

BLOOMFIELD.

Verses 53—56.

(53.) *Drew to shore.* 'Drew the ship on shore.' BLOOMFIELD.
(55.) *Carry about in beds.* 'Not feather beds; but a sort of mats, mattresses or common carpets, carried upon hurdles.' WILLIAMS.

(56.) *They laid the sick in the streets.* 'Maximus Tyrius tells us, that the medical art, as reported, had its rise from the custom of placing sick persons on the side of frequented ways; that so those who passed, inquiring into the nature of their complaint, might communicate the knowledge of what had been to themselves useful in the like case. BURKE.

Touch. (Marg. Ref.)—Notes, 5: 14—20. Matt. 14: 24—36. Perhaps the report of the woman, who had been cured by touching the fringe of Christ's garment, encouraged these afflicted persons to apply to Him, by his permission, in this manner. SCOTT.

Touch the hem of his garment. 'A mark of the most profound respect.' BLOOMFIELD.

CHAP. VII.

The Pharisees find fault with the disciples for eating with unwashed hands; and Jesus shows, that their traditions 'make void the law of God,' 1-19. He teaches the source and nature of defilement, 14-23; heals the daughter of a Syrophenician woman, 24-30; and a man who was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech, 31-37.

THEN came together unto him the Pharisees and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with * defiled, that is to say, with unwashed hands, they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands † oft, eat not, holding ^a the tradition of the elders.

4 And when they come from the market, ^a except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and

sence with us, in a stormy day, is enough to make us of good cheer, though clouds and darkness be round about us. He said, *It is I.* He doth not tell them who He was; (there was no occasion,) they knew his voice, as the sheep know the voice of their own shepherd, John 10:4. How readily doth the spouse say, once and again, *It is the voice of my Beloved!* Cant. 2:8, 5:2. He said, *I am He;* or, *I am;* it is God's name, when He comes to deliver Israel, Exod. 3:14. So it is Christ's, now that He comes to deliver his disciples. When Christ said to those that came to apprehend Him by force, *I am He,* they were struck down by it, John 18:6. When He saith to those that come to apprehend Him by faith, *I am He,* they are raised up by it, and comforted.

6. *He went up to them into the ship,* embarked with them, and made them easy. Let them but have their Master with them, and all is well. And as soon as He was come into the ship, the wind ceased. In the former storm that they were in, it is said, *He arose, and rebuked the winds, and said to the sea, Peace, be still;* (ch. 4:39.) but here we read of no such formal command given, only the wind ceased. Note, Our Lord Jesus will be sure to do his own work always effectually, though not always alike solemnly, and with observation. Though we hear not the command given, yet, if thus the wind cease, and we have the comfort of a calm, say, it is because Christ is in the ship, and his decree is gone forth *or ever we are aware,* Cant. 6:12. When we come with Christ to heaven, the wind ceaseth; there are no storms in the upper region.

7. They were more astonished at this miracle than became them; *They were sore amazed in themselves;* as if they were a new and unaccountable thing, as if Christ had never done the like before, and they had no reason to expect He should do it now; they ought to admire the power of Christ, and to be confirmed hereby in their belief of his being the Son of God; but why all this confusion about it? It was because they considered not the miracle of the loaves; had they given that its due weight, they would not have been so much surprised at this; for his multiplying the bread was as great an instance of his power as his walking on the

water. They were strangely stupid, and their heart was hardened, or else they would not have thought it a thing incredible that Christ should command a calm. It is for want of a right understanding of Christ's former works, that we are transported at the thought of his present works, as if there never were the like before.

V. When they came to the land of Gennesaret, which lay between Bethsaida and Capernaum, the people bid them welcome; *The men of that place presently knew Jesus,* (v. 54.); and knew what a universal Healer He was; they knew likewise that He used to stay but a little while at a place, and therefore were concerned to improve this opportunity. *They ran through that whole region round about,* with all possible expedition, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick; there was no danger when they hoped to get a cure, v. 55. Let Him go where he would, He was crowded with patients—in towns, cities, in the villages about the cities; they laid the sick in the streets, to be in his way, and begged leave for them to touch if it were but the border of his garment, as the woman with the bloody issue did, by whom, it should seem, this method of application was first brought in; and as many as touched were made whole. We do not find that they were desirous to be taught by Him, only to be healed. If ministers could cure people's bodily diseases, what multitudes would attend them! But it is sad to think how much more concerned the most of men are about their bodies, than about their souls.

CHAP. VII. v. 1-23. One design of Christ was, to set aside the ceremonial law: to take away for which, He begins with the ceremonial law which men had made, and added to the law of God, and discharges his disciples from the obligation of it. These Pharisees and scribes are said to come from Jerusalem to Galilee, fourscore or a hundred miles, to quarrel with our Savior, where they supposed Him to have the greatest reputation. Had they come so far to be taught, their zeal had been commendable; but to come so far to oppose Him, and to check the progress of his Gospel, was wicked. It would seem that the scribes and Pharisees at Jerusalem pretended not only to a pre-eminence,

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V. 30-56. While the enemies of God are triumphing in their success, and his friends are mourning over the loss of those who have entered into their rest; He will send forth other ministers to spread his gospel, and protect them in their labors till they be finished.—Every minister must give an account of himself to Christ at last: and it behoves us now to do it continually, before his 'throne of grace'; both concerning 'all we have done, and all we have taught.' Thus we shall have the comfort of his gracious acceptance of that which has been right, and obtain his blessing upon our labors; and thus we may seek his forgiveness of what has been wrong, pray that the effects of it may be counteracted, and learn to profit even by our own mistakes and offences.—Our Lord, knowing our frailty, will allow and provide seasons of relaxation after fatiguing exertions in his service: that we may be recruited for our work; recollect ourselves respecting the state of our souls; and receive further instructions concerning our future conduct: and if He, by sickness, or any other providential hindrance, lay us aside for a season from our work, we should not think the time wasted, but listen more attentively to his teaching. Those who know the preciousness of Christ and his salvation, will break through all hindrances, to seek Him; nor will He refuse assistance to those, who deviate from ordinary rules, to obtain blessings. He has compassion for them who are 'as sheep not having a shepherd;' and such as wait on Him, obtain all things needful for soul and body: for, as He died on the cross, that He might feed our perishing souls with 'the Bread of life,' He will not fail to give us food for our bodies also. While we therefore cheer-

fully depend on grace, let us copy his example, in being accessible at all times to those who want our help; in compassionating the temporal afflictions of our neighbors, as well as the condition of their souls; and in being always 'ready to distribute, and glad to communicate.' In order to this, we should be frugal in our expenses, that we may have the more to employ in liberality; and we may trust in the Lord to make up, by his blessing, whatever is necessary to our state in life. We should also learn to connect piety and charity together; and to delight alternately in communion with God, and in doing good to men: and should we meet with storms and difficulties in the path of duty, we may by faith behold our Advocate pleading our cause, and ready to come to our help, as it were 'walking upon the waves.' Did we duly regard even our own experience of his power and love, we should not be so much alarmed at renewed difficulties; our expectations would be raised higher; and, though our amazement at his renewed interpositions might be less, our gratitude and praise would be greater, than they now are. But we lose much of our comfort, by forgetfulness and hardness of heart.—Did men value the health of their souls as they do that of their bodies and had they strong faith in the Redeemer's power and grace they would flock to Him, sparing neither trouble nor inconvenience, and beseech Him, that they might, in faith, 'touch the hem of his garment;' for those who thus apply to Him, will be made whole of their most inveterate diseases.—Let us learn to be doing good wherever we go, and seek the salvation of Christ, for others and ourselves.

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. v. 1. 'None do more resist the wisdom of God, than they that would be wisest; and that in zeal for their own traditions, for men do not please themselves more in any thing than in superstition.'...to which hypocrisy is a general companion.' Beza, in SCOTT. These Pharisees probably came from Jerusalem for the purpose of disputing with Christ, that they might entangle Him in his talk.

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Verses 3, 4.

(Note, Matt. 15:1, 2) If we suppose, that they always bathed the

whole body, after they returned from the markets, which is not very probable, we cannot conceive that they plunged their cushions in water also. The Pharisees blamed Christ's disciples for 'eating with unwashed hands;' and not for immersing their bodies in water: so it seems undeniable, that by the words baptize and baptisms, a partial application of water was intended, in this, as well as in several other places (Notes, Luke 11:37, 38. Heb. 9:8-10.) SCOTT.

The Pharisees observed a multitude of traditions; i. e. unwritten ordinances which originated with their ancestors, and some of them, they pretend, with Moses himself. Among these was the duty of always

pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?

6 He answered and said unto them, 'Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoreth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

8 For, laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moses said, Honor thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, A gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be

but to an authority over the country clergy, and therefore kept up their visits, and sent inquisitors among them, as they did to John when he appeared, John 1: 19.

1. The tradition of the elders was to wash their hands before meat; a cleanly custom, and no harm in it; and yet to be over-nice in it discovers too great a care about the body; but they placed religion in it, and would not leave it indifferent, as it was in its own nature; they interposed their authority, and commanded it, upon pain of excommunication, as a tradition of the elders. The papists pretend to a zeal for the authority of the church, and talk much of councils and fathers, when it is nothing but a zeal for their own wealth and dominion, that governs them; and so it was with the Pharisees.

The Pharisees and all the Jews, washed their hands oft; (so we render it;) others think it signifies the pains they took in washing their hands; they washed with great care, they washed their hands to their wrists; (so some;) they lifted up their hands when they were wet, that the water might run to their elbows. 2. They particularly washed before they ate bread; that is, before a solemn meal. Whosoever eats the bread over which they recite the benediction, Blessed be He that produceth bread, must wash his hands before and after; or else he was thought defiled. 3. They took special care, when they came from the markets, to wash their hands; it signifies any place of concourse where it might be supposed there were heathen or Jews under a ceremonial pollution, by coming near to whom they thought themselves polluted. The rule of the rabbins was, that, if they washed their hands well in the morning, it would serve for all day, provided they kept alone; but, if they went into company, they must not eat or pray till they had washed their hands; thus the elders gained a reputation among the people for sanctity, and kept up an authority over conscience. 4. They added to this washing of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, which they suspected had been made use of by heathens, or persons polluted; and the tables on which they ate their meat. There were many cases in which, by the law of Moses, washings were appointed; but they added to them, and enforced their own impositions as much as God's institutions.

II. Christ's disciples knew the law, and the common usage; but they would not be bound by it; they ate bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, &c. 2. Eating with unwashed hands, they called eating with defiled hands; thus men kept up their superstitious vanities by putting things into an ill name. The disciples knew (it is probable) that the Pharisees had their eye upon them, and yet they would not humor them by a compliance with their traditions, but took their liberty and ate bread with unwashed hands; and herein their righteousness, however it might seem to come short, did really exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees, Matt. 5: 20.

III. The Pharisees took offence at this; they censured them as profane, and men of loose conversation, or rather as men that would not submit to the power of the church, and were therefore rebellious, and schismatical. They brought a complaint against them to their Master, expecting that He would order them to conform; for they that are fond of their own inventions,

are commonly ready to appeal to Christ, as He should countenance them. They do not ask, Why do not thy disciples do as we do (Though they meant to make themselves the standard.) But why do not they walk according to the tradition of the elders? &c. To which it was easy to answer, that, by receiving the doctrine of Christ, they had more understanding than all the ancients, Ps. 119: 99, 100.

IV. Christ argues with the Pharisees concerning the authority by which this ceremony was imposed; but this He did not publicly, to the multitude, (as appears by his calling the people to Him, v. 14.) lest He should seem to stir them up to faction and discontent at their governors; but addressed it as a reproof to the persons concerned.

1. He reproves them for their hypocrisy in pretending to honor God, when they had no such design in their religious observances; (v. 6, 7.) They honor me with their lips, pretend it is for the glory of God that they impose those things; but their heart is far from God, and governed by ambition and covetousness. They would be thought to appropriate themselves as a holy people to the Lord, when it is the farthest thing in their thought. They rested in the outside of religious exercises, and their hearts were not right with God, and this was worshipping God in vain; for neither was He pleased with such devotions, nor they profited by them.

2. He reproves them for placing religion in the injunctions of their elders and rulers. They taught for doctrines the traditions of men. When they should have pressed upon people the great principles of religion, they enforced the canons of their church, and judged of people according as they did, or did not, conform to them, without considering whether they lived in obedience to God's laws or no. It was true there were divers washings imposed by the law of Moses, (Heb. 9: 10,) which were intended to signify inward purification of the heart, from worldly lusts, which God requires as absolutely necessary to our communion with Him; but, instead of providing the substance, they added to the ceremony, and were very nice in washing pots and cups; and observe, He adds, Many other such like things ye do, v. 8. Note, Superstition is an endless thing. If one human invention is admitted, though seemingly innocent, as this of washing hands, behold, a troop comes; a door is opened for many other such things.

3. He reproves them for laying aside the commandment of God, not urging it in their preaching and in their discipline, conniving at the violation of it, as no longer of force, v. 8. Note, It is the mischief of impositions, that too often they who are zealous for them, have little zeal for the essential duties of religion, but can contentedly see them laid aside. Nay, they rejected the commandment of God, v. 9. Ye do fairly disannul the commandment of God; and by your traditions make the Word of God of no effect, v. 13. God's statutes shall not only lie forgotten, as obsolete laws, but they shall in effect stand repealed. They were intrusted to expound the law, and to enforce it; and, under pretence of using that power, they violated the law, and dissolved the bonds of it; destroying the text with the comment.

This he gives them a particular and flagrant instance of:—God commanded children to honor their parents, not only by the law of Moses, but, antecedent to that, by the law of nature; and

Gr. Sextarius, about a pint and a half.

Or hells.

2216—18, Acts 21:21, 24. Rom. 4: 12.

12, 13, Thes. 2:15, 16.

14, 29:13, Matt. 15:7—9, Acts 28:25.

15, Matt. 23:13—16, Luke 11:38—44.

16, Ez. 33:31, Hos. 8:2, 3, John 5:42.

8:41, 42, 54, 55, 15:24, 2 Tim. 3:5.

Tit. 1:16, Jam. 2:14—17.

1 Sam. 12:21, Mal. 3:14, Matt. 6: 7, 15:9, 1 Cor. 15:14, 59, Tit. 3:9.

Jam. 1:25, 4:20.

Deut. 12:32, Col. 2:22, 1 Tim. 4: 1—3, Rev. 14:11, 12:22:18.

1 Kin. 16:10—16, Is. 24:5, 29:13.

Jer. 44:16, 17, Dan. 7:25, 11:36.

Matt. 15:3—8, 2 Thes. 2:4.

Or, for-trait, Ez. 119:135, Rom. 3:31, Gal. 2:21.

Ex. 20:12, Deut. 5:16.

Ex. 21:17, Lev. 20:9, Deut. 27:16.

Prov. 20:29, 30:17, Matt. 15:4.

15:5, 23:18, 1 Tim. 5:4—8.

washing before meat, and when returned from public concourse; and of sprinkling all the vessels which were to be used about their food, and even the couches on which they reclined to eat it, lest some ceremonial uncleanness might contaminate the food, and so they would be unclean.

Wish &c. 'The word here translated oft means with strength, &c. with great diligence and care.'

Market.] 'Any public place where there was a crowd.'

'Ordinarily the washing of the hands and face, cups, &c. was sufficient: but on returning from the market they washed the whole body.'

'So strict were the Pharisees in this respect, that the Talmud tells of a rabbi, who, being confined in prison with a small allowance of water, and having spilt a part, chose rather to die first, than to omit washing his hands with the remainder.'

Verse 8.

Cups.] If made of metals; for earthen vessels, if in any way they contracted defilement, must be broken. (Lev. 11: 33.)

Scorr.

Verse 9.

'A strong irony. How noble is your conduct! very careful to observe your traditions, while you annihilate the commandments of God.'

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Verse 10.

Die the death.] Let him die by death. Ex. 21: 17. A Hebrewism

Scorr

Verse 11.

(Marg. Ref.—Note, Matt. 15: 3—6.) Corban is a Hebrew word, very frequently used in the Old Testament, for different kinds of sacred oblations.—The words seem to mean generally, that any man's vow, or devote his substance, or what could be spared, to the Corban, was supposed not only to excuse him from relieving his parents, but to subje-

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profited by me; he shall be free.

12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13 Making^a the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

14 ¶ And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand:

15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him:

19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

whoso reileth, or speaketh evil of, father or mother, let him die the death, v. 4. Hence it is easy to infer, that it is the duty of children, if their parents be poor, to relieve them, according to their ability; and if those children are worthy to die, that curse their parents, much more those that starve them. But if a man will but conform himself, in all points, to the tradition of the elders, they will discharge him from this obligation, v. 11. If his parents be in want, and he has wherewithal to help them, but has no mind to do it, let him swear by the *Corban*, that is, by the *gold of the temple*, and the *gift upon the altar*, that his parents shall not be profited by him, that he will not relieve them; and, if they ask any thing of him, let him tell them this, and it is enough; as if by the obligation of this wicked vow he had discharged himself from the obligation of God's law; thus Dr. Hammond understands it: and it is said to be an ancient canon of the rabbins, that vows take place in things commanded by the law, as well as in things indifferent; so that, if a man makes a vow which cannot be ratified without breaking a commandment, the vow must be ratified, and the commandment violated; so Dr. Whitby. So the Papists discharge children from all obligation to parents by their monastic vows, and their entrance into religion, as they call it. He concludes, *And many such like things do ye*. Where will men stop, when once they have made the word of God give way to their tradition? These eager impostors at first only made light of God's commandments, in comparison with their traditions, but afterward made void God's commandments, if they stood in competition with them. All this, in effect, Isaiah prophesied of them; what he said of the hypocrites of his own day, was applicable to the scribes and Pharisees, v. 6. Note, When we complain of the wickedness of the times, yet we do not inquire wisely of that matter, if we say, that all the former days were better than these, Eccl. 7: 10. Hypocrites and evil doers have had their predecessors.

Christ instructs the people concerning the principles upon which this ceremony was grounded. It was requisite that this part of his discourse should be public, for it related to daily practice, and was designed to rectify a great mistake which the people were led into by their elders; He therefore called the people unto Him, (v. 14.) and bid them hear and understand. Note, It is not enough for the people to hear,

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

q. 9. Is. 8:20. Jer. 8:8,9. Hos. 8:12. Matt. 5:17-20. 15:6. Tit. 1:14. R. 18:14. Gal. 5:21. s. 1 Kings 18:21. 22:28. Ps. 49:12.

him to a dreadful curse, if he did: to avoid which, he would rather break the commandment of God. This makes the contrast very striking.

(12.) *Corban*.] 'That is, be it devoted. By this expression, the son did not give or mean to give any thing to God, but only to preclude himself from ever doing any thing for his parents. If he should repent and go to assist his parents, then his property, by force of the vow, fell into the hands of priests and Pharisees who kept the sacred treasury, and who encouraged, for self purposes, these impious maxims. By the word *corban* addressed to his parents, the son said, "May I incur all the infamy of sacrilege and perjury, if ever ye get a farthing from me." This vow, though made in anger, was forever binding, according to the tradition of the Pharisees.'

Verse 13.

Entereth.] 'Though it is very true, that a man may bring guilt upon himself by eating what is pernicious to his health, or by excess in the quantity of food and liquor: and a Jew might have done it, by presumptuously eating what was forbidden by the Mosaic law, which still continued in force; yet in all these instances, the pollution would arise from the wickedness of the heart, and be just proportionable to it, which is all our Lord asserts.'

Verse 19.

Purging all meats.] 'The meaning is, that the economy or process by which life is supported, *purifies* or renders nutritious all kinds of food. The unwholesome parts are separated, and the wholesome only are taken into the system. This agrees with all that has since been discovered of the process of digestion, and of the support of life. The food taken into the stomach is converted by the gastric juice, as is

but they must understand. When Christ would run down the tradition of the Pharisees about washing before meat, He strikes at the opinion which was the root of it. Note, Corrupt customs are best cured by rectifying corrupt notions.

See now what the pollution is, which we are in danger of being damaged by, v. 15. (1.) Not by meat, though eaten with unwashen hands; that is but from without, and goes through a man. But, (2.) It is by the breaking out of the corruption that is in our hearts; the mind and conscience are defiled, guilt contracted, and we become odious in the sight of God, by that which comes out of us; our wicked thoughts and affections, words and actions, these defile us, and these only. Our care must therefore be, to wash our hearts from wickedness.

Our Lord gives his disciples, in private, an explication of the instructions He gave the people. They asked Him by himself, concerning the parable; (v. 17.) for to them, it seems, it was a parable. In answer to their inquiry, (1.) He reproves their dulness; 'Are ye so without understanding also? As the people that cannot understand, as the Pharisees that will not?' He doth not expect they should understand every thing; 'But are you so weak as not to understand this?' (2.) He explains this truth to them, that they might perceive it, and then they would believe it, for it carried its own evidence along with it. Some truths prove themselves, if they be but rightly explained and apprehended. If we understand the spiritual nature of God and of his law, and what it is that is offensive to Him, we shall soon perceive, [1.] That that which we eat and drink cannot defile us, so as to call for any religious washing; what there may be in it that is defiling, is gone; *God shall destroy both it and them*. But, [2.] It is that which comes out from the corrupt heart, that defiles us. As by the ceremonial law, whatsoever (almost) comes out of a man defiles him, (Lev. 15: 2. Deut. 23: 13.) so what comes out from the mind of a man, is that which defiles him before God, and calls for a religious washing; v. 21. From within, out of the heart of men, which they boast the goodness of, and think is the best part of them, thence comes all the mischief. As a corrupt fountain sends forth corrupt streams, so doth a corrupt heart send forth corrupt reasonings, appetites and passions, and all those wicked words and actions which are produced by them.

9:18. Matt. 15:10. Luke 12:1-4. a Matt. 15:17. 1 Cor. 6:13. Col. 2: 21. 57. 20:45-47. b 18-20. Lev. 11:42-47. Acts 10:14 16:28. 11:8-10. 15:20-21. Rom. 14:17. 1 Cor. 10:25. Gal. 2:15. Tit. 1:15. Heb. 9:10. 13:9. u 20:23. Prov. 4:23. Matt. 12:34, 35. 15:16-20. x 4:19, 23. Matt. 11:15. Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 22. 3:6, 13, 22. y 4:10, 34. Matt. 13:10, 36. 15:15. z 4:13. Is. 28:9, 10. Jer. 5:14. Matt. 15:16, 17. 16:11. Luke 24:25. John 8:10. 1 Cor. 3:2. Heb. 5:11, 12.

generally thought, into a thick pulp, called *chyme*. The nutritious part of this is conveyed into small vessels, and changed into a milky substance, called *chyle*. This is changed into blood, and the blood conveys nutriment and support to all parts of the system. The useless parts of the food are thrown off.

Our Savior, who 'knew what was in man,' by this illustration appeals to the consciences of the Pharisees, and exposes their internal uncleanness and abominable hypocrisy.

Verse 21.

Compare the parallel passage in Matthew. 'For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed all corrupt and evil reasonings, adulteries, fornications, and all sorts of uncleanness; acts of violence and murder, thefts, insatiable desires, and malevolent affections of inhumanity and cruelty to mankind: the injuries arising from false witness and deceit: the abominations of lasciviousness and intemperance; an envious, grudging eye, the outrages of blasphemy and pride; in a word, all kinds of folly, wild imaginations, ungoverned passions, and moral extravagancies,' says Doddridge. Truly, *God made man upright, but he hath sought out many inventions*. What a scourge to our world have been the ill-regulated propensities and self-seeking affections of our nature! Will knowledge and intellectual vigor of themselves restrain this selfishness inherent in man? How oft have they but given sad power to the selfish passions, spreading wide a moral desolation, in the midst of which they triumph, like the Roman conqueror amid the ruin he had caused! What but the love of God shed abroad in the soul, subduing, regulating, and balancing the intellect, the affections and propensities, can effect that moral revolution, in which every false tendency shall be a neighbor, and each shall love his neighbor as himself. 1

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

[Practical Observations.]

24 ¶ And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid.

25 For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the children's crumbs.

29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil

Divers particulars are specified, as in Matthew; we had one there, which is not here, and that is, *false witness bearing*; but seven are mentioned here, to be added to those we had there. *First, Covetousness*; immoderate desires of wealth, and the gratifications of sense, still crying, *Give, give*. Hence we read of a heart exercised with covetous practices, 2 Pet. 2: 14. *Secondly, Wickedness*; malice, hatred, and ill-will, a desire to do mischief, and a delight in mischief done. *Thirdly, Deceit*; which is wickedness covered and disguised, that it may be the more securely and effectually committed. *Fourthly, Lasciviousness*; that filthiness and foolish talking which the apostle condemns; the eye full of adultery, and all wanton dalliances. *Fifthly, The evil eye*; the envious and the covetous eye, grudging others the good we give them, or do for them, (Prov. 23: 6.) or grieving at the good they do or enjoy. *Sixthly, Pride*; exalting ourselves in our own conceit above others, and looking down with scorn and contempt upon others. *Seventhly, Foolishness*; imprudence, inconsideration; or vain-glorious boasting, which St. Paul calls *foolishness*, (2 Cor. 11: 1, 19.) because it is here joined with *pride*; but rather that rashness in speaking and acting, which is the cause of so much evil. *Ill-thinking* is put first, as that which is the spring of all our commissions, and *unthinking* put last, as that which is the spring of all our omissions. Of all these he concludes, (v. 23.) 1. That they come from within, from the corrupt nature, the evil treasure in the heart; justly it is said, that the inward part is very wickedness, when all this comes from within. 2. They defile the man; render him unfit for communion with God, bring a stain upon the conscience; and, if not mortified and rooted out, will shut men out of the new Jerusalem, into which no unclean thing shall enter.

V. 24—30. I. Christ was pleased humbly to conceal Himself. Never man was so cried up as He was in Galilee, and therefore, to teach us, though not to decline any opportunity of doing good, yet not to be fond of popular applause, He arose from thence, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, where He was little known; and there He entered, not into a place

is gone out of thy daughter.

30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

e Deut. 15:9. 28:54. 1 Sam. 18:9.
9. Prov. 23:6. 28:22. Matt. 20:15.
f 2 Chr. 32:25. 36:31. Ps. 104. Ob.
3.4. 3 Cor. 10:5. 1 Pet. 5:5.
g Prov. 12:23. 22:15. 24:9. 27:22.
h Eccl. 7:25. 1 Pet. 3:15.
i 15:18. 50. 1 Cor. 3:17. Tit. 1:15.
Jude 8.
j Matt. 15:21.
k 3:9. Gen. 10:15. 49:13. Josh.
19:28. 23. 1r. 23:14. 42. Ez. 28:2,
21, 22.
l 21. 37. 63:12. Is. 42:2. Matt.
9:29. 1 Tim. 5:25.
m Matt. 15:22.

n 9:17—23.
o 140. 5:22. 25:33. Luke 17:16. Act.
10:25. 28. Rev. 22:9.
p Or, Gentile. Is. 49:12. Gal. 3:28.
Col. 3:11.
q Matt. 15:22.
r Matt. 7:6. 10:5. 6. 15:22—28. Act.
22:21. 22. Rom. 15:8. Eph. 2:12.
s Ps. 145:16. Is. 45:22. 49:6. Matt.
5:45. Luke 7:6—8. 15:30—32. Act.
11:17. 15. Rom. 3:23. 10:12. Eph.
3:8.
t Is. 57:15. 66:2. Matt. 5:3. 8.
6:12. 1 John 3:8.
u John 4:50—52.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—23. Those 'clean hands and that pure heart,' which Christ requires, are different from the external decency, and superstitious forms of sanctity, which have distinguished Pharisees in every age. (Notes, Matt. 5:8. 2 Cor. 7:1. Jam. 4:7—10.) Their outward purifications can neither purge the conscience from guilt, nor the affections from sensuality, or hypocrisy; and if our hearts be purified by faith, we need no human inventions, but 'all things will be made clean unto us.' Yet formalists commonly find fault with true disciples, for not complying with their superstitions; and plead his authority for them, in order to bear down his cause and persecute his people!—Men may be very zealous for plausible and burdensome observances, and exact in attending to them; yet remain strangers to religion, enemies of Christ, and hypocritical worshippers. This must be the case of those zealots, of every denomination, who 'reject the commandments of God,' and the doctrines of the gospel, 'that they may keep their own traditions;' and all engagements must be impious, which allow

children to dishonor their parents; or which authorize men to violate the obligations of justice, and truth. A spiritual understanding of the law of God, and of the evil of sin; an acquaintance with the human heart, and the defilement, which thence flows into the conduct; and a discernment of the scriptural way of cleansing a guilty conscience, will effectually wean a man from human inventions.—The enlightened Christian will seek the Holy Spirit, to enable him to repress the evil affections of his heart; as he is aware that the very 'thought of wickedness is sin'; he will endeavor to purge out the sensual desires of his heart. He will seek deliverance from all enmity and hard thoughts of God; from ingratitude, selfishness, and inordinate love even of lawful things. He will pray to be cleansed from every inclination, inconsistent with piety; and will know, that if purified from inward evil, he is certainly made partaker of that 'holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord'; and his grand object will then be, to increase more and more in grace.

SCOTT.

Verses 24—30.

(Murg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 15: 21—23.) This woman, of Canaan's devoted race, seems to have had no other instruction, than that derived from reading the Old Testament. Yet, having heard concerning Jesus, 3: v. Matt. 4: 24.) and doubtless having compared what she heard with the prophecies of the Messiah, she knew that He was the Messiah, and without hesitation addressed Him in that character!—She was not a true, but a most eminent believer.—What an inducement to display the Bible!

(26.) A Greek! 'This woman is called, Matt. 15: 21. Canaanitish; here a Syrophenician and a Greek. By birth, she was of Syrophenicia;

so the country about Tyre and Sidon was denominated; by descent, of Canaan, as most of the Tyrians and Sidonians originally were; and by religion, a Greek.'

CAMPBELL.

'All heathens or idolaters were called Greeks by the Jews; Parthians, Medes, Arabs, Indians, Ethiopians by the same denominations; the Jews and Greeks divided the world.' ROBERTSON.
(27.) Children's bread.] This our Savior said to test the woman's faith. The Jews were the children of the kingdom;—this woman was of the Gentiles, whom the Jews denominated heathen and dogs. See the parallel passage in Matthew.

ED.

31 ¶ And again, departing ^a from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the casts of ^b Decapolis.

32 And ^c they ^d bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

33 And ^e he ^f took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;

34 And ^g looking up to heaven, ^h he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, ⁱ Be opened.

35 And ^j straight-ways his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And ^k he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it,

37 And ^l were beyond measure astonished, saying, ^m He hath done all things well: ⁿ he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

their souls; and particularly, that He would cast forth the *unclean spirit*, that they may be temples of the Holy Ghost.

2. He said unto her, *'Let the children first be filled'*: let the Jews have all the miracles wrought for them, that they have occasion for, who are in a particular manner God's chosen people; and let not that which was intended for them, be thrown to those who are not of God's family, and have not that knowledge of Him, and interest in Him, and are vile and profane, and, as *dogs*, spiteful towards them. Note, Where Christ knows the faith of supplicants to be strong, He sometimes delights to try it. But his saying, *Let the children first be filled*, intimates that there was mercy in reserve for the Gentiles; for the Jews began already to be surfeited with the gospel of Christ, and some of them had desired Him to *depart out of their coasts*. The children began to play with their meat, and their loathings would be a feast for the Gentiles. The apostles went by this rule, *Let the children first be filled*, and if their full souls loathe this honey-comb, *Lo, we turn to the Gentiles!*

3. She said, *'Yes, Lord, I own it is true that the children's bread ought not to be cast to the dogs'*; but they were never denied the *crumbs*, nay, these belong to them, and they are allowed a place *under the table*, that they may receive them. I ask not for a *loaf*, only for a *crumb*. This she speaks, not as undervaluing the mercy, or making light of it, but magnifying the abundance of miraculous cures with which she heard the Jews were feasted, in comparison with which a single cure was but as a crumb. Gentiles do not come in crowds, as the Jews do; *I come alone*. Perhaps she heard of Christ's feeding five thousand at once, after which, even when they had gathered up the fragments, there could not but be some crumbs left for the dogs.

4. Christ, thereupon, granted her request. For this saying, *Go thy way, thou shalt have what thou camest for, the devil is gone out of thy daughter*, v. 29. This encourages us to *pray* and not *faint*; to continue instant in prayer; the vision, at the end, shall speak, and not lie. Christ's saying that it was done, did it effectually, as at other times, his saying, *Let it be done*; for, (v. 30.) *she came to her house*, depending upon the word of Christ, that her daughter was healed, and so she *found it*. Note, Christ can conquer Satan at a distance; and it was not only when the demons *saw Him*, that they yielded to his power, (as ch. 3: 11.) but when they saw Him not, for the Spirit of the Lord is not *bound*, or *bounded*. She found her daughter not in any agitation, but quietly *laid on the bed*, waiting for her mother's return, to rejoice with her, that she was *well*.

V. 31—37. Our Lord Jesus seldom staid long in a place, for He knew where his work lay, and attended the changes of it. When He had cured the woman of Canaan's daughter, He had done what He had to do in that place, and

therefore presently left those parts, and returned to the sea of Galilee, where his usual residence was; yet He did not come directly thither, but *through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis*, mostly on the other side Jordan; such long journeys did our Lord Jesus take, when He went about doing good.

Here we have a cure that Christ wrought, which is not recorded by any other evangelist.

1. There were those that brought to Him one that was deaf; some think, born deaf, and then dumb of course; others think, that by some disaster he was become deaf; and he had an impediment in his speech. Some think that he was quite dumb; others, that he could not speak but with difficulty, and so scarcely to be understood. He was *tongue-tied*, so that he was unfit for conversation; he had not the satisfaction either of hearing other people talk, or of telling his own mind. Let us take occasion from this to give thanks to God for preserving to us the sense of hearing, especially that we may be capable of hearing the word of God, and the faculty of speech, especially that we may be capable of speaking God's praise; and let us look with compassion upon those that are deaf or dumb, and treat them with tenderness. They that brought this poor man to Christ, besought Him that He would put his hand upon him, as the prophets did upon those whom they blessed in the name of the Lord. It is not said, They besought Him to cure him, but to put his hand upon him, to take cognizance of his case, and put forth his power to do to him as He pleased.

II. His cure was solemn, and some of the circumstances of it were singular.

1. Christ took him aside from the multitude, v. 33. Ordinarily, he wrought his miracles publicly before all the people, to show that they would bear the strictest scrutiny; but this He did privately, to show that He did not seek his own glory, and to teach us to avoid ostentation. Let us learn of Christ to be humble, and to do good where no eye sees, but his that is *all eye*.

2. He used more significant actions, in the doing of this cure, than usual. (1.) He put his fingers into his ears, as if He would fetch out that which stopped them. (2.) He spit upon his own finger, and then touched his tongue, as if He would loosen that with which his tongue was tied; these were no causes that could in the least contribute to his cure, but only signs of that power which Christ had in Himself to cure him, for the encouraging of his faith and their's that brought him. The application was all from Himself, it was his own fingers that He put upon his ears, and his own spit that He put upon his tongue; for He alone heals.

3. He looked up to heaven, to give his Father the praise of what He did; for He sought his praise, and as Mediator, acted in dependence on Him, and with an eye to Him. Thus He signified that it was by a power He had as the Lord from heaven, that He did this; for the hearing ear and the seeing eye the Lord has

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 24—37. While Pharisees are left with decided disapprobation, the Savior manifests his compassion to sinners of the Gentiles; and all, who allow themselves to be unworthy of the crumbs that fall from his table, may confidently call upon Him for the food of his children. Still He goes about to every place, to seek and save the lost: and neither the obscurity of his ministers, nor the opposition of enemies, can prevent the discovery of his glory and grace. In like manner, it is our business to persevere in doing good, privately and in an unobtrusive manner, and 'our labor of love' will not always be hid or misrepresented.—When sinners apply to Christ, in behalf of themselves and others, they may have their faith and humility tried by delays, and be ready to conclude that the blessings are reserved for others; but patient waiting on Christ, by faith

and prayer, will certainly prevail; nor shall any have cause to say, they have sought his face in vain. One after another obtains the blessing, and declares the Savior's love to others; and they too seek Him, in their distress. And though we find a great variety in the cases, the reception, and the manner of relief, of those who came to Him, when here; yet, in one way or other, they all obtained help. Thus it still is, in the concerns of our souls: the Savior still opens the ear, and looses the tongue; and when He speaks with divine authority, He opens the understanding and the heart to receive instruction, and the lips to show forth his praise. (Notes, Is. 35: 5—7. John 9: 4—7.) While we admire the grace and power of his works, let us proclaim that 'He hath done all things well; He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.' SCOTT

Verses 32—35.

Commentators seem much perplexed with this miracle. Why did our Savior withdraw the man from the crowd? and why did He use these singular means of cure when He need only to have said, *'I will, be thou restored'*? To these questions was thought by Clarke, Doddridge and others unanswerable, it may be replied: our Savior withdrew the man from the multitude, for the same reason that He often charged those whom He healed not to make Him known, viz. to avoid ostentation and all unnecessary excitement. He used the signs, not as necessary to the cure, for the virtue was in Himself—not to impose upon the multi-

tude, as sceptics insinuate, for the multitude were not present, but simply for the benefit of him who was healed. This man was, probably, deaf and dumb. And our Savior by these signs would give the man a true notion of his disorder, and of the power which must restore him. By putting his fingers into his ears, He signified that *here* was the source of deafness; by touching his tongue with spit, He signified, that *here* was the source of dumbness; by looking to heaven and sighing, He signified that *Almighty Power* only could open the ear and loosen the string of his tongue; and by all this, this restored man was impressively taught to glorify God. Eds.

CHAP. VIII

Jesus miraculously feeds the multitude, *1-9*; rebukes the Pharisees a sign, *10-13*; warns the disciples against their Asten, and that of Herod; and repairs them for dullness of understanding, *14-21*; gives sight to a blind man at Bethsaida, *22-26*; approves Peter's confession, predicts his own sufferings, and rebukes Peter for objecting to them, *27-33*; and teaches self-denial and a willingness to suffer for his sake, *34-39*.

In those days, ^athe multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples unto him, and saith unto them,

2 I have ^bcompassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, ^cand have nothing to eat:

3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, ^dthey will faint by the way; for divers of them came from far.

4 And his disciples answered him, ^eFrom whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness?

5 And he asked them, ^fHow many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

6 And he commanded the people ^gto sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, ^hand gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people.

7 And they had a few small ⁱfishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also before them.

8 So they did eat,

^a Matt. 15:32.
^b 14:1. 6:19. 6:34. 9:22. Ps. 103:13. Mic. 7:19. Matt. 9:36. 14:14. 20:34. Luke 7:13. 15:20. Heb. 2:17. 4:15.
^c 24:42. 49-51. 6:32-33. John 4:5-8. 13:34.
^d Luke 8:4-6. 1 Sam. 14:28-31. 30:10. 12. 15. 40:31.
^e 6:36. Num. 11:21-23. 2 Kings 4:42-44. 7:2. Ps. 78:19-20. Matt. 15:33. John 6:7-9.
^f 6:38. Matt. 14:15-17. 15:34. Luke 9:13.
^g 6:31, 40. Matt. 14:18, 19. 15:35-36. Luke 9:14, 15. 12:37. John 2:5. 6:10.
^h 6:41-44. 1 Sam. 9:13. Matt. 15:26. 28:26. Luke 24:30. John 6:11. 13. Rom. 14:5. 1 Cor. 10:30, 31. 23:317. 1 Tim. 4:4-5.
ⁱ Luke 24:41, 42. John 21:5, 9.

made. He also hereby directed his patient, who could see, though he could not hear, to look up to heaven for relief. Moses with his stammering tongue is directed to look that way; (Exod. 4:11.) *Who hath made man's mouth? Or who maketh the dumb or deaf, or the seeing or blind? Have not I the Lord?*

4. He sighed; not as if He found any difficulty in working this miracle, or obtaining power to do it from his Father; but thus He expressed his pity of the miseries of human life, and his sympathy with the afflicted, as One that was Himself touched with the feeling of their infirmities. And as to this man, He sighed, not because He was loth to do him this kindness; but because of the many temptations which he would be exposed to, and the sins he would be in danger of, after the restoring of his speech. He had better be tongue-tied still, unless he have grace to keep his tongue as with a bridle, Ps. 39:1.

5. He said, *Be opened*. This was nothing that looked like spell or charm, such as they used who had familiar spirits, who peeped and muttered, Isa. 8:19. Christ speaks as One having authority, and power went with the word. *Be opened*, served both parts of the cure; Let the ears be opened, let the lips be opened, and the effect was, *Straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue loosed*; and happy he who, as soon as he had his hearing and speech, had the blessed Jesus so near him, to converse with.

Now this cure was, (1.) A proof of Christ's being the Messiah; for it was foretold that by his power the ears of the deaf should be unstopped, and the tongue of the dumb be made to sing, Isa. 35:5, 6. (2.) It was a specimen of the operations of his Gospel upon the minds of men. The great command of the Gospel, and grace of Christ to poor sinners is, *Be opened*. Grotius applies it thus, that the internal impediments of the mind are removed by the Spirit of Christ, as those bodily impediments were by the word of his power. He opens the heart, as he did Lydia's, and thereby opens the ear to receive the word of God, and opens the mouth in prayer and praise.

6. He ordered it to be kept private, but it was made public. (1.) It was his humility, that He charged them they should tell no man, v. 36. Most men will proclaim their own goodness, or, at least, desire that others should proclaim it; but Christ, though in no danger of being puffed up, knowing that we are, would set us an example of self-denial, especially in praise and applause. We should take pleasure in doing good, but not in its being known. (2.) It was their zeal, that, though He charged them to say nothing of it, yet they published it, before Christ would have published. But they meant honestly, and therefore it is to be reckoned rather an act of indiscretion than an act of disobedience, v. 37. But they that told it, and they that heard it, were beyond measure astonished: they were exceedingly affected with it, and this was the common verdict, *He has done all things well*; (v. 37.) whereas there were those that hated and persecuted Him as an evil-doer, they are ready to witness for Him, not only that He has done no evil, but that He has done a great deal of good, and has done it well, modestly and humbly, and without money, and without price, which added to the lustre of his works. *He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak*; and that is well for them; it is well for their relations, to whom they had been a burden; and therefore they are inexcusable who speak ill of Him.

CHAP. VIII. v. 1-9. Observe,
1. Our Lord Jesus was greatly followed;
The multitude was very great; (v. 1.) notwithstanding

standing the arts of scribes and Pharisees to blast his interest, the common people, who had more honesty, and therefore more true wisdom, kept up their high thoughts of Him. We may suppose that this multitude were generally of the meaner sort of people; with such, Christ was familiar; for He humbled himself, as made himself of no reputation, and thus encouraged the meanest to come to Him.

2. Those that followed Him underwent great difficulty. *They were with Him three days and had nothing to eat*. Never let the Pharisee say, that Christ's disciples fast not. There were those, probably, that brought some food with them; but by this time it was spent, and they were a great way from home; yet they continued with Christ, and did not speak of leaving Him till He spake of dismissing them. Note, True zeal makes nothing of hardships in the way of duty. They that have a full feast for their souls, may be content with slender provisions for their bodies. It was an old saying among the Puritans, *Brown bread and the gospel are good fare*.

3. As Christ has a compassion for all that are in want, He has a special concern for those that are reduced by their zeal and diligence in attending on Him. Christ said, *I have compassion on the multitude*. Whom the proud Pharisees looked upon with disdain, the humble Jesus looked upon with tenderness; and thus must we honor all men. But that which He chiefly considers, is, *They have been with me three days, and have nothing to eat*. Whatever losses we sustain, or hardships we go through, for Christ's sake, and in love to Him, He will take care that they shall be made up to us. *They that seek the Lord shall not long want any good thing*. Ps. 34:10. Observe with what sympathy Christ saith, (v. 3.) *If I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way, for hunger*. Christ knows and considers our frame; and He is for the body; if with it we glorify Him, verily we shall be fed. He considered that many of them came from far, and had a great way home. When we see multitudes attending upon the word preached, it is comfortable to think that Christ knows whence they all come, though we do not. *I know thy works, and where thou dwellest*, Rev. 2:13. Christ would by no means have them go home fasting, for it is not his manner to send those empty away, that in a right manner attend on him.

4. The doubts of Christians sometimes magnify the power of Christ. The disciples could not imagine whence so many men should be satisfied with bread in the wilderness, v. 4. That therefore must needs be wonderful, which the disciples looked upon as impossible.

5. Christ's time to act for the relief of his people, is, when things are brought to the last extremity; when they were ready to faint, Christ provided for them. That He might not invite them to follow him for the loaves, He did not supply them but when they were utterly reduced, and then He sent them away.

6. The bounty of Christ is inexhaustible, and to evidence that, Christ repeated this miracle to show that He is still the same for the succor and supply of his people. His favors are renewed, as our wants and necessities are. In the former miracle, Christ used all the bread which was five loaves, and fed all the guests which were five thousand, and so He did now; though He might have said, *If five loaves would feed five thousand, four may feed four thousand*; he took all the seven loaves, and fed with them the four thousand; for He would teach us to take things as they are, and accommodate ourselves to them; to use what we have, and make the best of that which is. Here as in the dispensing of the manna, He that ga-

NOTES.
CHAP. VIII. v. 1-4. (3.) *FAINT*, i. e. 'Had there not been such danger, Christ had not wrought this miracle, that the people might not follow Him for loaves; and having done this, He straightway leaves them, v. 9, that He might avoid their attempts to make Him a king.' *Theophylact*, quoted by *Whitby*.

(4.) *Bread*: 'This among the Hebrews, frequently signifies all

'kinds of food; but here - must be understood literally: - as if the disciples had said, Not even bread alone, or any kind of food, can in this place be procured to satisfy so large a multitude.' *Beza*. Our Lord blessing the fishes, before He ordered them to be set before the company, is here mentioned separately: which shows the importance attached by the evangelist to this blessing.

SCOTT

and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

10 ¶ And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

11 And the Pharisees came forth and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him.

12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

14 ¶ Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the heaven of the Pharisees, and of the heaven of Herod.

16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread.

17 And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, Why reason ye because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened?

18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up?

thered much had nothing over, and he that gathered little had no lack.

7. In our Father's house, in our Master's house, there is bread enough, and to spare; there is a fulness in Christ, which He communicates to all that passes through his hands; so that from it we receive, and grace for grace, John 1:16. Those need not fear wanting, that have Christ to live upon.

8. It is good for those that follow Christ, to keep together; these followers of Christ continued in a body, four thousand of them together, and Christ fed them all. Christ's sheep must abide by the flock, and go forth by their footsteps, and verily they shall be fed.

V. 10-21. Christ now visits the parts of Dalmanutha, that no corner of the land of Israel might say that they had not had his presence with them. He came thither by ship; (v. 13.) but meeting with occasions of dispute there, and not with opportunities of doing good, He entered into the ship again, (v. 13.) and came back.

I. He refused to gratify the Pharisees, who challenged a sign from heaven. They came forth not to propose questions, that they might learn, but to cross-question, and ensnare Him.

1. They demanded of Him a sign from heaven, as if the signs He gave them on earth, which were more familiar to them, and more capable of being examined, were not sufficient. There was a sign from heaven at his baptism, (Matt. 3:16, 17.) it was public enough; and, if they had attended John's baptism as they ought to have done, they might themselves have seen it. Afterward, when he was nailed to the cross, they prescribed a new sign; Let Him come down from the cross, and we will believe Him; thus obstinate infidelity will still have something to say, though ever so unreasonable. They demanded this sign, tempting Him; not that they might be satisfied, but in hopes that He would not, that they might imagine themselves to have a pretence for their infidelity.

2. He denied them their demand; He sighed deeply in his spirit, (v. 12.) being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, and the little influence that his preaching and miracles had had upon them. Note, The infidelity of those that long enjoy the means of conviction, is a grief to Jesus; it troubles Him, that sinners should stand in their own light, and put a bar in their own door. (1.) He expostulates with them upon this demand; Why doth this generation seek after a sign; this generation, that is so unworthy to have the Gospel brought to it, and to have any sign accompanying it; that so greedily swallows the tradition of the elders, without the confirmation of any sign at all; this generation, into which, by the calculating of the times prefixed in the Old Testament, they might easily perceive that the coming of the Messiah must fall; that has had such merciful signs given them in the cure of their sick? What an absurdity is it for them to desire a sign! (2.) He refuses to answer their demand; Verily I say unto you, There shall no such sign be given to this generation. When God spake to particular persons, out of his

common dispensation, they were encouraged to ask a sign, as Gideon and Ahaz; but when He speaks in general to all, as in the law and gospel, sending each with their own evidence, it is presumption to prescribe other signs. Shall any teach God knowledge? He denied them, and then left them to their strong delusions.

II. He warned his disciples against the heaven of the Pharisees and of Herod.

1. The caution was, Take heed, beware, lest ye embrace the tradition of the elders, which they are so wedded to, lest ye be proud, hypocritical, and ceremonious, like them. Mat thew adds, and of the Sadducees; Mark adds, and of Herod; whence some gather, that Herod and his courtiers were generally Sadducees, that is, deists. The Pharisees demanded a sign from heaven; and Herod was long desirous to see some miracle wrought by Christ, (Luke 23:8.) such as he should prescribe, so that the heaven of both was the same; they were unsatisfied with the signs they had, and would have others of their own devising; 'Take heed of this heaven,' (saith Christ,) 'be convinced by the miracles ye have seen, and covet not to see more.'

2. They misunderstood this caution. At their putting to sea, they had forgotten to take bread, and had not in their ship more than one loaf, v. 14. When therefore Christ bid them beware of the heaven of the Pharisees, they understood it as an intimation not to apply to any of the Pharisees for relief, when they came to the other side, for they had lately been offended at them for eating with unwashed hands. They reasoned among themselves, what should be the meaning of this caution, and concluded, 'It is because we have no bread; He saith this, to reproach us for being so careless as to go to sea, and among strangers, with but one loaf; He doth, in effect, tell us, we must be brought to short allowance, and eat our bread by weight.' They reasoned it, they disputed about it; one said, 'It was owing to you;' and the other said, 'It was owing to you,' that we are so ill provided for this voyage.' Thus distrust of God makes Christ's disciples quarrel among themselves.

3. This argued a disbelief of Christ's power to supply them, notwithstanding their abundant experience. The reproof is given with warmth, for He knew they needed to be thus soundly chidden; 'Perceive ye not yet, neither understand, that which you have had so many demonstrations of? Have ye your hearts yet hardened, so that nothing will make any impression upon them, or bring them to compliance with your Master's designs? Having eyes, see ye not that which is plain before your eyes? Having ears, hear ye not that which you have been so often told? How strangely stupid and senseless! Do ye not remember that but the other day, I brake five loaves among five thousand, and soon after, seven loaves among four thousand? Do ye not remember how many baskets full ye took up of fragments?' They did remember, and they took up twelve baskets full one time, and seven another; 'Why then,' saith He, 'do ye not understand?' As if He

k 19.20. Pa. 107.8.9. 145:16. Matt. 16:10. Luke 1:53. John 6:11-13, 27. 29-35. 47-58. Rev. 7:16, 17.
1 Matt. 15:39.
m 2:16. 7:12. Matt. 12:38. 16:1-4. 18:9. 21:23. 22:15. 18, 23, 34, 35. Luke 11:53, 54. John 7:48.
n Luke 11:16. 12:34-37. John 4:48. 6:30. 1 Cor. 12:23.
o 12:15. Ex. 17:2. Deut. 6:16. Mal. 3:15. Luke 10:25. Acts 5:9. 1 Cor. 10:9.
p 5:5. 7:31. 9:19. Is. 58:3. Luke 19:41. John 11:33-35.

q 6:6. Luke 16:23-31. 22:67-70. John 12:37-43.
r Matt. 12:39-40. 16:4. Luke 11:23. 20.
s Pa. 61:12. Jer. 23:33. Hos. 4:17. 9:12. Zach. 11:8, 9. Matt. 7:6. 15:14. Luke 8:37. John 8:21. 12:36.
t Acts 13:45-46. 18:6.
u Num. 27:19-23. 1 Chr. 29:9, 10, 20. 1 Tim. 5:21. 6:13. 2 Tim. 2:14.
x Matt. 16:5, 11, 12. Luke 12:1, 2, 15. Ex. 12:18-20. Lev. 2:11. 1 Cor. 5:6-8.

y 12:13. Matt. 22:15-18. z Matt. 16:7, 8. Luke 9:18. 20:5. b 28. John 22:45. 16:30. 21:17. Heb. 4:12, 13. Rev. 2:23. c 6:52. 16:14. Is. 63:17. Matt. 15:17. 16:9, 9. Luke 24:25. Heb. 8:11, 12. d 4:12. Deut. 29:4. Pa. 65:23. 115:5. Is. 6:9, 10. 42:18-29. 44:18. Jer. 5:21. Matt. 18:14, 15. John 13:40. Acts 23:35, 37. Rom. 1:8. e 6:38-44. Matt. 14:17-21. Luke 9:12-17. John 6:5-13.

Verse 9. About four thousand.] 'Four thousand men, besides women and children,' Matt. 15:38.

Verse 10. 'Dalmanutha, a city west of the sea of Tiberias, in the district of Magdala.'

Verse 11. 'Sign from heaven.' This was demanded under pretence that a sign from heaven, or in the heavens, was less exposed to the deceptions of imposture, or because false Messiahs were always promising signs

of liberty, or miraculous appearances in the heavens, to insure deliverance from the Roman yoke.' Doddridge.

Verse 14-16. (15.) Heaven of the Pharisees and Herod.] 'Matthew omits Herod, and mentions Sadducees. Ey Herod here is meant the Herodians - i. e. Herod, and his followers in sentiment. Our Savior warns his disciples against the hypocrisy and false doctrines of each of these sects.'

ROSEN-MULLER. CALMET. 'We must especially beware of them, who corrupt the word of God of what degree soever they be, either in the church or the court.' Beza. SCOTT.

They say unto him, Twelve.

1) And when 'the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

21 And he said unto them, 'How is it that ye do not understand?

[Practical Observations.]

22 ¶ And he cometh to 'Bethsaida; and 'they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him ^k to touch him.

23 And he took the blind man 'by the hand, and led him ^m out of the town; and when he had ⁿ spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

24 And he looked up and said, 'I see men, as trees, walking.

25 After that, he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, ^p and saw every man clearly.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, 'Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

27 ¶ And Jesus went out, and his disciples,

f 1-3, Matt. 15:34-38.
g 12, 6:52, 9:19, Ps. 94:8, Matt. 16:11, 12, John 14:9, 1 Cor. 6:5, 15: 24.
h 6:41, Matt. 11:21, Luke 9:10, 10: 13, John 14:4, 12:21.
i 9:23, 6:55, 56.
j 5:27-29, Matt. 8:3, 15, 9:29.
k 16:31-18, Jer. 31:32, Acts 9:8, Heb. 8:9.
l 7:33, Is. 42:2.
m John 9:5, 7, Rev. 3:18.
n Judg. 9:39, Is. 29:18, 32:3, 1 Cor. 13:9, 11, 12.
p Prov. 4:18, Matt. 13:12, Psal. 1:5, 2 Pet. 3:18.
q 5:43, 7:36, Matt. 8:4, 9:30, 12: 16.

that multiplied five loaves, and seven, could not multiply one.' They seemed to suspect that one was not matter enough to work upon; and if that was their thought, it was very senseless, as if it were not all alike to the Lord, to save by many or few, and as easy to make one loaf to feed five thousand as five. It was therefore proper to remind them, not only of the sufficiency, but of the overplus, of the former meals; and justly were they chidden for not understanding what Christ therein designed, and what they from thence might have learned. Note, (1.) The experiences we have had of God's goodness to us in the way of duty, greatly aggravate our distrust of Him, which is therefore provoking to Jesus. (2.) Our not understanding the true intent and meaning of God's favors to us, is equivalent to our not remembering them. (3.) We are therefore overwhelmed with care and distrust, because we do not understand and remember what we have known and seen of the power and goodness of our Lord. It would be a great support to us, to consider the days of old, and we are wanting both to God and ourselves if we do not. (4.) When we thus forget the works of God, we should chide ourselves for it, as Christ doth his disciples here; 'Am I thus without understanding? How is it that my heart is thus hardened?'

V. 22-26. This cure is related only by this evangelist, and there is something singular in the circumstances.

I. Here is a blind man brought to Christ by his friends, with a desire that He would touch him, v. 22. Here appears the faith of those that brought him—they doubted not but that one touch of Christ would recover his sight; but the man himself showed not that earnestness for, or expectation of, a cure that other blind men did. If those that are spiritually blind, do not pray for themselves, yet let their friends and relations pray for them, that Christ would be pleased to touch them.

II. Christ did not bid his friends lead him, but (which bespeaks his condescension) Himself took him by the hand, and led him, to teach us to be as Job was, eyes to the blind, Job 29: 15. Never had blind man such a Leader. He led him out of the town. Had he herein only designed privacy. He might have led him into a house; but He intended hereby to upbraid Bethsaida with the mighty works that had in rain been done in her, (Matt. 11: 21.) and was telling her in effect, she was unworthy to have any more done within her walls. Perhaps Christ took the blind man out of the town, that he might have a larger prospect in the open fields, to try his sight with, than he could have in the close streets.

III. Here is the cure of the blind man, by Him who came into the world to preach the recovering of sight to the blind, (Luke 4: 18.) and to give what he preached. In this cure we may observe, 1. That Christ used a sign; He spat on his eyes, (into them, so some,) and put his hand upon him. He could have cured him, as He did others, with a word, but thus He was

pleased to assist his faith which was very weak, and to help him against unbelief. And this spittle signified the eye-salve, wherewith Christ anoints the eyes of those that are spiritually blind, Rev. 3: 18. 2. The cure was wrought gradually, which was not usual in Christ's miracles. He asked him if he saw ought, v. 23. Let him tell what condition his sight was in, for the satisfaction of those about him. And he looked up; so far he recovered his sight, that he could open his eyes, and he said, I see men as trees walking; he could not distinguish men from trees, otherwise than that he could discern them to move. He had some glimmerings of sight, and betwixt him and the sky could perceive a man erect like a tree, but could not discern the form thereof, Job 4: 16. But, 3. It was soon completed; Christ never leaves his work till He can say, It is finished. He put his hands again upon his eyes, to disperse the remaining darkness, and then bade him look up again, and he saw every man clearly, v. 25. Christ took this way, (1.) Because He would not tie himself to a method, but would show with what liberty He acted in all He did. He did not cure by rote, but varied as He thought fit. Providence gains the same end in different ways, that men may attend its motions with implicit faith. (2.) Because it should be to the patient according to his faith; and perhaps this man's faith was at first very weak, but afterward gathered strength; and his cure was accordingly. Not that Christ always went by this rule, but thus He would sometimes put a rebuke upon those who came to Him, deriding. (3.) Thus Christ would show how, and in what method, those are healed by his grace, who by nature are spiritually blind; at first, their knowledge is confused, they see men as trees walking; but, like the light of the morning, it shines more and more to the perfect day, and then they see all things clearly, Prov. 4: 18. Let us inquire, then, if we see ought of those things which faith is the substance and evidence of; and if through grace we see any thing of them, we may hope that we shall see yet more and more, for Jesus Christ will perfect forever those that are sanctified.

IV. The directions Christ gave the man He had cured, not to tell it to any in the town of Bethsaida, nor so much as to go into the town, where, probably, there were some expecting him to come back, who had seen Christ lead him out of the town, but, having been eye-witnesses of so many miracles, had not so much as the curiosity to follow him: let not those be gratified with the sight of him when he was cured, who would not show so much respect to Christ, as to go out of the town to see this cure wrought. Christ doth not forbid him to tell it to others, but he must not tell it to any in the town. Slighting Christ's favors is forfeiting them; and Christ will make those know the worth of their privileges, by the want of them, that would not know them otherwise. Bethsaida, in the day of her visitation, would not know the things that belonged to her peace, and now

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-21. Our Lord sometimes requires his followers to endure hardship in attending Him; but He relieves them before they faint; and we should copy his example, in noticing the wants of those around us, that we may remove them. But his love as much excels ours, as his all-sufficiency exceeds our aid and grace. He will feed his disciples with suitable provision, but they have no reason to expect luxuries; these are generally lavished on the servants of another master.—Yet many professed Christians excuse themselves, on account of poverty, from relieving the distressed, who would think it a hardship to dine with Jesus and his company, on those provisions which He miraculously supplied! The Christian, however, while his soul is feasted with 'hidden manna,' will eat his mean morsel with better relish than unthankful worldly men their royal dainties. (Matt. Rev. 2: 17.) What cause have we to

sigh because of those around us, who destroy themselves and others, by their obstinate unbelief, and enmity to the gospel! We have great cause to be humbled and thankful on our own account; for the Lord has continual reason to reprove us also, for our remaining distrust. How is it, that we no more see the glory of his truths, the privileges of his kingdom, the security of his word, the spirituality of his precepts? How is it, that we so often mistake his meaning, disregard his warnings, and distrust his providence? These things arise from the remains of that same leaven, which wholly prevails in the hearts of unbelievers. Then watch against it: and beseech the Lord to remove 'all hardness of heart,' and blindness of understanding, that we may perceive, and remember his precepts, and be thankful for all his kindness.

SCOTT.

Verse 24.

He looked up.] (Matt. 11: 5, Luke 7: 22.) The verb is translated in several places, 'he received sight;' yet it is evident, that it is here rendered properly. (Comp. Luke 18: 43, with Luke 21: 1, Gr.)

SCOTT.

This miracle was performed gradually. The blind man saw, at first, indistinctly, that he could distinguish men from trees only by their

change of place. His seeing men as trees proves that he was not blind from his birth.

KUNIG.

'But perhaps it is not well indeed to be too anxious about justifying the exact propriety of the expressions, which seem to partake of the incoherency so natural to a man struck with surprise at recovered sight, and laboring under the dawning and deceiving effects thence resulting.

BLOOMFIELD.

int. the towns of Cesarea Philippi: "and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?"

28 And they answered, "John the Baptist; but some say, "Elias; and others, One of the prophets.

29 And he saith unto them, "But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, 'Thou art the Christ.'

30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

31 ¶ And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed; and after three days rise again.

32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him.

33 But when he had turned about, and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, say-

they are hid from her eyes. They will not see, and therefore shall not see.

V. 27-33. We have read a great deal of the doctrine Christ preached, and the miracles He wrought, which were many, and strange. It is now time for us to pause a little, and to consider what these things mean; the wondrous works which Christ then forbade the publishing of, being recorded in these sacred writings, are thereby published to all the world; now what shall we think of them? Is the record of these things designed only for amusement? *These things are written, that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God;* (John 20: 31.) and this discourse which Christ had with his disciples, will assist us in making the necessary reflections upon the miracles of Christ, and a right use of them. Three things we are here taught to infer from the miracles Christ wrought.

I. *They prove that He is the true Messiah, the Son of God, and Savior of the world:* this his disciples, who were the eye-witnesses of those works, here profess their belief of; which cannot but be a satisfaction to us in making the same inference.

1. Christ inquired of them, *Who do men say that I am?* v. 27. Note, Though it is a small thing for us to be judged of man, yet it may sometimes do us good to know what people say of us, not that we may seek our own glory, but that we may hear of our faults. Christ asked them, not that He might be informed, but that they might observe it themselves, and inform one another.

2. The account they gave Him, was such as plainly intimated the high opinion the people had of Him. Though they came short of the truth, yet they were convinced by his miracles that He was an extraordinary Person, sent from the invisible world with a divine commission. It is probable that they would have acknowledged Him to be the Messiah, if they had not been possessed with a notion that the Messiah must be a temporal Prince, appearing in pomp; yet (whatever the Pharisees said, who were touched by the strictness and spirituality of his doctrine) none of the people said that He was a deceiver, but some said that *He was John Baptist, others Elias, others one of the prophets.* v. 28. All agreed that He was risen from the dead.

3. They intimated their own abundant satisfaction in Him, having left all to follow Him, which now, after trial, they see no reason to repent; *But who say ye that I am?* To this they answer, *Thou art the Christ*, promised, and long expected, v. 29. To be a Christian indeed, is, sincerely to believe that Jesus is the Christ, and to act accordingly. This they must shortly publish and maintain; for the present they must keep it secret, (v. 30.) till the proof was completed, and they were completely qualified to maintain it by the Holy Ghost; and then let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both Lord and Christ, Acts 2: 36.

II. These miracles of Christ take off the stiffness of the cross, and assure us that the Christ

was, in it, not conquered, but a Conqueror. Now that the disciples are convinced that Jesus is the Christ, they may bear to hear of his sufferings.

1. Christ taught his disciples that He must suffer many things. Though they had got over the error of the Messiah's being a temporal Prince, so far as to believe their Master to be the Messiah, notwithstanding his present meanness, still they retained it, so far as to expect that He would shortly appear in outward grandeur, and restore the kingdom of Israel. To rectify that mistake, Christ here tells them that He must be rejected of the elders, and the chief priests, and the scribes, who, they expected, should be brought to own Him; that, instead of being crowned, He must be crucified, and after three days rise again to a heavenly life, and be no more in this world. This He spake openly; did not wrap it up in ambiguous expressions. The disciples might easily understand it, had they not been very much under the power of prejudice: or, it intimates that He spoke it cheerfully, and without any terror, and would have them hear it so: He spake that saying boldly, as one that not only knew He must suffer and die, but was resolved He would, and made it his own act and deed.

2. Peter opposed it; he took Him, and began to rebuke Him. Here Peter showed more love than discretion, a zeal for Christ not according to knowledge. He took hold of Him, as it were to stop and hinder Him, (so some understand it); he fell on his neck, as impatient to hear that his Master should suffer such things; or, he took Him aside privately, and began to rebuke Him. This was not the language of authority, but of the greatest affection; of that jealousy for the welfare of those we love, which is strong as death. Our Lord allowed his disciples to be free with Him, but Peter here took too great a liberty.

3. Christ checked him for his opposition; (v. 33.) He turned about, as one offended, and looked on his disciples, to see if the rest of them were of the same mind with Peter, that, if they were, they might take the reproof to themselves, which He was now about to give to Peter; and He said, *Get thee behind me, Satan.* Peter little thought of such a sharp rebuke, but perhaps expected as much commendation now for his love, as he had lately had for his faith. Note, Christ sees that amiss in what we say or do, which we ourselves are not aware of, and knows what manner of spirit we are of, when we ourselves do not. Peter spake as one that did not rightly understand, nor had duly considered, the purposes of God. When he saw every day such proofs of the power of Christ, he might conclude that He could not be compelled to suffer; the most potent enemies could not overpower Him whom diseases, deaths, winds, waves, and devils themselves were forced to obey; and when he saw so much of the wisdom of Christ, he might conclude that He would not choose to suffer but for some great and glorious purpose; and therefore he ought to have acquiesced. He looked upon his death only as a martyrdom, like that

- ¶ Matt. 16:13.
- ¶ Luke 9:18.
- ¶ 14-16, Matt. 14:2. 16:14. Luke 9:7-9.
- ¶ 9:11-13. Mal. 4:5. Elijah. John 12:1.
- ¶ 4:11. Matt. 16:15. Luke 9:20. 1 Pet. 2:7.
- ¶ Matt. 18:16. John 1:1, 49. 4:42. 6:89. 11:37. Acts 8:37. 9:20. 1 John 4:15. 8:1.
- ¶ 26. 7:36. 9:9. Luke 9:21, 22.
- ¶ 9:31-32. 10:33-34. Matt. 16:21. 17:22-23. 20:17-19. Luke 9:22. 18:31-34. 24:7, 28-44.
- ¶ 12:10. 1 Sam. 8:7. 10:19. Ps. 118:22-25. 53:3. Matt. 21:42. Luke 17:25. John 12:48. Acts 3:13-15. 7:35. 51, 52.
- ¶ Hos. 6:2. Jon. 1:7. Matt. 12:40. John 2:19. 1 Cor 15:4.
- ¶ 4:38. Matt. 16:22. Luke 10:40. John 13:8-8.
- ¶ 9:35-34. Luke 22:61.
- ¶ Lev. 19:17. 2 Sam. 19:22. Ps. 141:5. Prov. 9:8, 9. Matt. 16:23. Luke 9:55. 1 Tim. 5:20. Tit. 1:13. Rev. 8:19.

Verses 27-30.

(27.) *Cesarea Philippi.* 1. 'Situated at the foot of mount Paneus or Hermon, near the springs of the Jordan. It was built by Philip the tetrarch.'

CALMET.

(Notes Matt. 16: 13-20.) 'As the ancients, with general consent, record that this epistle was dictated by the apostle Peter to Mark; who can believe that either Peter, or Mark, would have omitted that expression, "Thou art Peter, &c." if they had thought that the foundation of the Christian Church was placed in these words? ... Many praise "Christ, who yet rob Him of his true honor." *Beza. Charged, &c.* (30.) The premature and unreserved avowal of this truth, must, without perpetual miracles, have excited the ill-judging multitude to such measures, as would have given the scribes and priests an occasion against Jesus, and even have rendered the Romans jealous of his popularity. It was therefore highly proper, that He should, in the most pre-emptory manner, forbid the disciples to declare openly that He was the Messiah. Let the people gradually collect it, by comparing his miracles and doctrine with the Scriptures, as they became better acquainted with the true nature of the Messiah's kingdom and salvation.

SCOTT.

(30.) *Of him.* 1. 'That is, as being Christ. For He wished the apostles to give him no higher appellation, than a teacher of the truth, and a prophet of righteousness. His Messiahship he declared to few, not wishing that to be published till after his resurrection.' *Rosenmüller.* 'We discern here bids us notice, that Mark, the amanuensis of Peter' (see [348])

preface.) 'omits what was here uttered in praise of Peter, and which is narrated in Matthew. This *Grotius* attributes to the interference of Peter, who seems modestly to have suppressed the recital of the epistle did promise made to him by Christ, though he most distinctly relates the circumstances of his fall, in his instructions to Mark on these subjects.'

BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 31.

(Marg. Ref.—Note, Matt. 16: 21-23, v. 21.)—After three days. 1. It is ten times expressly said, that our Lord rose, or was to rise, "again the third day." (Matt. 16: 21. 17: 23. 20: 19. Mark 9: 31. 10: 34. Luke 9: 22. 18: 33. 24: 7, 46. Acts 10: 40.) and so the expression, which is most used, both in our Lord's predictions before his death, and in his and his apostles' language after his resurrection, being this, ... these other forms of speech, which are but once or twice found in Scripture, must be interpreted to accord with it. ... 2. According to the language both of the Hebrew and the Greek, that is said to be done after so many days, months, or years, which is done in the last of them. ... (Deut. 14: 23. 15: 1. 26: 12. 31: 10. 2 Chr. 10: 5. 12.) ... "After three days they found him in the temple." (Luke 2: 46.) that is, on the third day. ... 3. The Jews understood "after three days" to signify no more than on the third day. ... For, having told Pilate, that Christ had said, "after three days I will rise again," they desired, "only that a watch might be kept ... 'till the third day." (Matt. 27: 63. 64.)

SCOTT.

mg, ^bGet thee behind me, Sata: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

34 And when he had called the people unto him, with his disciples also, he said unto them, ¹Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and ^atake up his cross, and ^afollow me.

35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life ^afor my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it.

36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?

37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.

b Gen. 34—6. Job 2:10. Matt. 4:10. Luke 4:8.

of the prophets, which he thought might be prevented, if either He would take care not to provoke the chief priests, or to keep out of the way; but he knew not that the thing was necessary for the glory of God, the destruction of Satan, and the salvation of man; that the Captain of our salvation must be made perfect through sufferings, and so bring many sons to glory. Note, The wisdom of man is folly, when it pretends to give measures to the divine counsels. The cross of Christ, the greatest instance of God's power and wisdom, was to some a stumbling-block, and to others foolishness. Peter spake as one that did not rightly understand the nature of Christ's kingdom; he took it to be temporal and human, whereas it is spiritual and divine. Thou savorest not the things that are of God, but those that are of men;—thou mindest not; so the word is rendered, Rom. 8: 5. Peter seemed to mind the things that relate to the lower world, and the life that now is, than those which relate to the upper world, and the life to come. Minding the things of men more than the things of God, our own credit and safety, more than the things of God, and his kingdom, is the root of much sin, and very common among Christ's disciples, and it will appear in times of temptation, when those, in whom the things of men have the ascendant, are in danger of falling off. It is important to consider what generation we appear wise in, Luke 16: 8. It seems policy to shun trouble, but if with that we shun duty, it is fleshly wisdom, (2 Cor. 1: 12,) and will be folly in the end.

III. These miracles of Christ should engage us all to follow Him, whatever it costs us, not only as they were confirmations of his mission, but explanations of his design; and the tendency of that grace which He came to bring; plainly intimating, that, by his Spirit, He would do for our diseased, possessed souls, which

† Matt. 3:1, 32. Rom. 8:5—8. Phil. 3:19. (Gr.) Jam. 3:16—18. 1 Pet. 4: 1, 2. 1 John 2:15, 16.
b Gen. 34. Luke 9:25. 2 Cor. 1:12.
1943—49. Matt. 5:29, 30. 7:13, 14. 16:24. Luke 13:24. 14:27, 33. Rom. 9:1—3. 1 Cor. 8:13. 9:19. Phil. 3:7, 8. Tit. 2:12.
m 10:21. Matt. 10:33. 27:32. John 19:17. Acts 14:22. Rom. 6:8. 8:17. 1 Cor. 4:9—13. Gal. 2:20. 5: 24. 6:14. Phil. 3:10. Col. 2:14. 3:5. 2 Tim. 3:11. 1 Pet. 4:13. Rev. 2:10.
a Num. 14:24. 1 Kings 14:8. Luke 14:25. 18:22. John 10:27. 13:36.

37. 21:19, 20. Heb. 13:13. 2 Pet. 1:14. 1 John 3:16.
o Eph. 4:1—16. Jer. 26:20—24. Matt. 10:39. 16:25. Luke 9:24. 17:33. John 12:25, 26. Acts 20:24. 21:13. 2 Tim. 2:11—13. 4:6—8. Heb. 11:35. Rev. 2:10, 11. 7:14—17. 12:11.
p Matt. 5:10—12. 10:29. 19:29. Luke 6:22, 23. John 15:20, 21. Acts 9:16. 1 Cor. 9:23. 2 Cor. 12:10. 2 Tim. 1:16. 1 Pet. 4:12—16.
q Job 24. Ps. 49:17, 19. 73:18—20. Matt. 4:8—10. 16:26. Luke 9:25. 12:19, 20. 16:19—23. Phil. 3:7—9.

He did for the bodies of those who applied to Him. Frequent notice had been taken of the great flocking to Him for help: this is written that we may believe that He is the great physician of souls, and may become his patients; and here He tells us upon what terms we may be admitted; He called all the people to Him, to hear this, who modestly stood at some distance when He was in private conversation with his disciples. This is that which all are concerned to know, and consider, if they expect Christ should heal their souls.

1. They must not be indulgent of the ease of the body; for, (p. 34.) 'Whosoever will come after me for spiritual, as these people for bodily, cures, let him deny himself, live a life of self denial, and contempt of the world; let him not pretend to be his own physician, but renounce his own righteousness and strength, take up his cross, conforming himself to the pattern of a crucified Jesus, and to the will of God in all the afflictions he lies under; and thus let him continue to follow me.' Those that will be Christ's patients must attend on Him, receive instruction and reproof from Him, as those that did followed Him, and must resolve they will never forsake Him.

2. They must not be solicitous for the life of the body, when they cannot keep it without quitting Christ, p. 35. Are we invited by the word of Christ to follow Him? Let us sit down, and count the cost, whether we can prefer our advantages by Christ before life itself, whether we can bear to think of losing our life for Christ's sake, and the Gospel's. When the devil is drawing away disciples after him, he conceals the worst, tells them only of the pleasure, but nothing of the peril, of his service; *Ye shall not surely die*; but what there is of trouble and danger in the service of Christ, He tells us of before; that we shall suffer, perhaps die, in the

Rev. 18:7, 8.
r Job 22:2. Mal. 3:14. Rom. 6:21. Heb. 11:24—28. Jam. 1:9—11.
s Ps. 49:7, 8. 1 Pet. 1:13, 19.
t Matt. 10:32, 33. Luke 9:26. 12:8, 9. Acts 5:41. Rom. 1:16. Gal. 6:14. 2 Tim. 1:3, 12, 16. 2:12, 13. Heb. 11: 28. 12:2, 3. 13:15. 1 John 3:23.
u Matt. 12:39. 16:4. Jam. 4:4. x 14:62. Dan. 7:13. Matt. 16:27, 28. y 24:34. 25:31. 28:54. John 14:1. 3: 24. 15:24.
y Deut. 33:2. Dan. 7:10. Zech. 14:5. Matt. 13:41. John 1:51. 1 Thes. 1: 7, 8. Jude 14, 15.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 22—33. The Lord in general illuminates our minds gradually; and He works by means, which are often no more than signs of his efficacious operation. Thus He sometimes takes a sinner aside from the multitude, gradually removes the darkness from his understanding, and leads him to some indistinct views of spiritual things. This is his own work: He will perfect it, and we should wait his time. Let all who desire this blessing, seek Christ, 'the Light of the world,' in the use of means, and they shall not be disappointed. But while 'the blind see out of obscurity,' the proud, who reject his teaching, are given up to delusion; and even the means of instruction are in judgment withdrawn from them.—The Lord will interrogate his followers on their proficiency; and his real disciples are distinguished, by their honorable thoughts of Him, and large expectations from Him. He will approve of what we are enabled to do; but we continually need to be taught further, to ^aour minds stirred up, concerning his sufferings for us, and the ^adenial which He requires. Our minds are by nature adverse to these humiliating instructions: and even where some true knowledge and grace exist, there often are, much error,

and remains of 'the carnal mind.'—As our Lord so sharply re-proved Peter for objecting to his sufferings, which the glory of God and the salvation of his people required; we should be reminded, that those who would set us against self-denial, for the honor of our Lord, and the good of others, 'savor the things that are of men, and not those that are of God.' All people should therefore be called to observe, that they, who would go after Christ to heaven, must deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him: and that they only are in the way of eternal happiness, who are willing to venture even their lives, rather than deny Christ, or be ashamed of Him. Did we duly consider the worth of our souls, for which no ransom could be found but the blood of Emmanuel, we should count the whole world contemptible, if the gain of it endangered our salvation; and the loss of life our gain, if laid down for the sake of Christ and the Gospel. Continually think of that season, when He will 'come in the glory of the Father, with his holy angels,' and estimate every earthly object, as we shall, on that important day! (P. O. Matt. 16: 13—25.) SCOTT.

Verases 32—37.

(35.) *The Gospel's sake.* This is not found in Matthew. He who loses his life for the sake of the true Gospel of Christ, loses it for Christ's sake; but if he dies by adhering to 'another gospel,' the case is far different. It is then of no ordinary importance to determine what is the Gospel of Christ, and what is 'another gospel.' (Note, Gal. 1: 6—10.) If, as some learned men think, the word translated 'soul' (36, 37), should be translated *life*, it must certainly be the office of the expositor, to show, that the *life*, or *salvation*, of the soul is meant; else how can he, who 'loses his life for Christ's sake,' 'save his life'? (Note, John 12: 23—26.)

(37.) *What wilt a man give.* "What will a man not give?" better expresses the original in English. CAMPBELL.

Verse 38.

That the fear of imprisonment or death should terrify others, as it did Peter, to deny Christ, could not be incredible: but that any should 'be ashamed of Him, whom all angels worship, and in whom the inhabitants of heaven glory, must appear inconceivable; except to those who have a deep knowledge of human nature, and the deceitfulness of the

heart. Yet perhaps there is no sin, to which every convert to true Christianity is more powerfully tempted; and no temptation which induces such large numbers to act, habitually, against the conviction of conscience in order to escape the reproach of men, and often of their inferiors. This warning is therefore to all, in every rank and station, nay, even in the church. For a bold avowal of our dependence on Christ, our expectations from Him, and devotedness to Him, in the spirit of Scripture, will not fail to expose us to scorn, and to the imputation of folly or enthusiasm: and the fear lest the Savior and Judge should at last be ashamed of us, is the proper preservative from yielding to this temptation, to those who desire 'to have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at his coming.' (Marg. Ref.—1 John 2: 28.) SCOTT.

Shall be ashamed of me. 'Our Lord hints here at one of the principal reasons of the incredulity of the Jews—they saw nothing in the person of Jesus Christ which corresponded to their pompous notions of the Messiah. If Jesus Christ had come into the world as a mighty and opulent man, clothed with earthly glories and honors, he would have had a multitude of partisans, and most of them hypocrites.' DE A. CLARKE.

CHAP. IX.

transfiguration. A Christ, 1-10. He shows ^{at} John the Baptist is "Elias who was to come," 11-13. He casts out a dumb and deaf spirit, having rebuked the company and the disciples, for their unbelief, 14-29. He foretells his own death and resurrection, 30-32; reproves the ambition of the disciples, 33-37; forbids them to hinder one who can cast out devils in his name, though he followed not with them, 38-41; shows the guilt of obeying weak believers, 42; and warns his learners to part with all occasions of sin, however small, showing the eternal doom of the wicked, especially of apostates, in most awful language, 43-50.

AND he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, "that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not ^{be} taste of death, till they have seen ^{the} kingdom of God come with power.

2 ¶ And ^{after} six days, Jesus taketh with him ^{his} Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into ^{an} high mountain apart by themselves: and he was ^{transfigured} before them.

3 And ^{his} raiment became shining, ^{exceeding} white as snow; so as ^{no} fuller on earth can white them.

4 And there ^{appeared} unto them ^{Elias} with ^{Moses}; and they were talking with Jesus.

5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, ^{it is} good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

6 For ^{he} wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

7 And there was ^a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, ^{This is} my beloved Son; ^{hear} him.

8 And ^{suddenly}, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves.

cause; He represents the discouragements not less but greater, than commonly they prove, that it may appear He deals fairly, and is not afraid that we should know the worst; because the advantages of his service balance the discouragements, if we will set the one over against the other. In short,

(1.) We must not dread the loss of our lives, provide it be in the cause of Christ; v. 35. Whosoever will save his life, by declining Christ, or by disowning and denying Him after he has in profession come to Christ, he shall lose the comfort of his natural life, the root and fountain of his spiritual life, and all his hopes of eternal life. But whosoever shall lose his life, he truly willing to venture it, lay it down, when he cannot keep it without denying Christ, he shall be an unspeakable gainer; for the loss of his life shall be made up to him in a better life. It is looked upon to be some kind of recompense to those who lose their lives in the service of their prince and country, to have their memories honored, and their families provided for; but what is that to the recompense which Christ makes in eternal life to all that die for Him?

(2.) We must dread the loss of our souls, yea, though we should gain the whole world by it; v. 36, 37. For what shall it profit a man if he should gain all wealth, honor, and pleasure, by denying Christ, and lose his own soul? True it is, said Bishop Hooper, the night before he suffered martyrdom, *'life is sweet, and death is bitter, but eternal death is more bitter, and eternal life is more sweet.'* As the happiness of heaven, with Christ, is enough to countervail the loss of life itself for Christ, so the gain of all the world, in sin, is not sufficient to countervail the ruin of the soul by sin.

What men do, to save their lives and gain the world, He tells us, (v. 38.) and of what fatal consequences it will be to them; Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed. Something like this we had, Matt. 10: 33. But it is here expressed more fully. Note, [1.] The disadvantage that the cause of Christ labors under in this world, is, that it is to be owned and professed in an adulterous and sinful generation; such the generation of mankind is, gone from God, lying in wickedness; some ages, some places, are more especially adulterous and sinful, as that was in which Christ lived; in such a generation the cause of Christ is opposed, and those that own it are exposed to reproach, and every where ridiculed and spoken against.

[2.] There are many, who, though they cannot but own that the cause of Christ is a righteous cause, are ashamed of it, because of the reproach that attends professing it; they are ashamed of their relation to Christ, and ashamed of the credit they cannot but give to his words; they cannot bear to be frowned upon and despised, and therefore throw off their profession, and go down the stream of a prevailing apostasy. [3.] There is a day coming, when the cause of Christ will appear as illustrious as now it appears contemptible; when the Son of man comes in the

glory of his Father with his holy angels, as the brightness of his Father's glory, and the Lord of angels. [4.] Those that are ashamed of Christ in this world where He is despised, He will be ashamed of in that world where He is eternally adored. They shall not share with Him in his glory then, that were not willing to share with Him in his disgrace now.

CHAP. IX. v. 1-13. Here,

1. Christ foretold that the kingdom of God would come, and so as to be seen. The kingdom of the Messiah shall be set up by the destruction of the Jewish polity, which stood in the way of it; this was the restoring of the kingdom of God among men, which had been lost by the woful degeneracy both of Jews and Gentiles.

2. It would come with power, so as to bear down opposition. It came with power, when vengeance was taken on the Jews for crucifying Christ, and when it conquered the idolatry of the Gentile world. 3. It would come while some now present were alive; there are some standing here, that shall not taste of death, till they see it; this generation shall not pass, till all those things be fulfilled. Those that were standing, with Christ should see it, when others could not discern it to be the kingdom of God, for it came not with observation.

II. Six days after Christ had begun to give notice to his disciples of his death, to prevent their offence at that, He gives them this glimpse of his glory, to show that his sufferings were voluntary, and what a virtue the dignity and glory of his person would impart to them.

1. It was on the top of a high mountain, like the converse Moses had with God, which was on the top of Sinai, and his prospect of Canaan from the top of Pisgah. Tradition saith, it was on the top of Tabor that Christ was transfigured; and if so, the scripture was fulfilled, Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in thy name, Ps. 89: 12, 13. Dr. Lightfoot, observing that the last place where we find Christ was in the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, far from Tabor, rather thinks it was a high mountain which Josephus speaks of, near Caesarea.

2. The witnesses of it were Peter, James and John; these were the three that were to bear record on earth, answering to Moses, Elias, and the voice from heaven, the three that were to bear record from above. Christ did not take all the disciples with Him, because the thing was to be kept private. As there are distinguishing favors which are given to disciples, and not to the world, so there are to some disciples, and not to others. All the saints are near to Christ, but some lie in his bosom. James was the first of all the twelve that died for Christ, and John survived them all, to be the last eye-witness of this glory; he bore record, (John i: 14.) We saw his glory; and so did Peter, 2 Pet. 1: 16-18.

3. He was transfigured before them; appeared in another manner than He used to do. This was a change of the accidents, the substance remaining the same, and was a miracle. But transubstantiation, the change of the substance, and the accidents remaining the same, is not a miracle.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. v. 1. (Notes, Matt. 16: 24-23, p. 23.) 'This chiefly refers to the providential appearance of Christ for the destruction of Jerusalem. ... Our Lord's manner of speaking intimates, that most of the company should be dead before the event referred to: yet his ascension happened in a few months after.' Doddridge. Some interpret the passage of the successful preaching of the Gospel after Christ's ascension, and the establishment of his kingdom: but the reason assigned in this quotation seems conclusive, for interpreting it of his glorious appearance, in his providence, to remove the great hindrance to the full settlement of the Christian church, by destroying Jerusalem, and terminating the Jewish Dispensation. Scott.

This verse is connected with the last verse of the former chapter. An allusion is there made to the fact of the Son of man's coming in his glory; here the time is designated. (See Knapp's Nov. Test. Gr. Ed.)

Verse 5.

It is good, &c.] Had it been possible for Peter to have gone up now directly, with Christ, and Moses, and Elias, all his usefulness would have been prevented. (Notes, John 12: 23-26, 15: 12-16.) He lived many years amidst conflict and suffering, and died on a cross: yet tens and hundreds of thousands were saved by his means, to the glory of God by him! And was not this well worth his while? (Notes, Phil. 1: 19-26, 2 Pet. 1: 12-15.)

Scott.

9 And as they came down from the mountain, ^a he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, ^{*} till the Son of man were risen from the dead.

10 And ^v they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another ^v what the rising from the dead should mean.

11 ¶ And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come?

12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and ^b restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that ^c he must suffer many things, and be ^d set at nought.

13 But I say unto you, That ^e Elias is indeed come, ^f and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed; as it is written of him.

[Practical Observations.]

5 43, 8:29,30. Matt. 12:19, 17:9.
5 30,31. 8:31. 10:32-34. Matt. 12:40. 16:21. 27:53. Luke 24:46.
7 Gen. 22:11. Luke 2:50,51. 24:7,8. John 18:17-19.
9 22. Matt. 16:22. Luke 18:33,31. 24:26-27. John 2:19-22. 12:16,33,34. 16:29,30.
11 4. Mal. 3:4. 4:5. Matt. 11:14. 17:10,11.
12 1,2. Luke 16:40-55. Mal. 4:5. Matt. 3:1,6c. 23:29-38. Luke 11:17,78. 32-34. John 1:8-9. 8:29, 6c.
13 Ex. 23:1,6c. 34:1,6c. Is. 63:1,6c. Dan. 9:24-26. Zech. 13:7.

cle, but a fraud and imposture, such a work as Christ never wrought. What a great change human bodies are capable of, when God is pleased to put an honor upon them, as He will upon the bodies of the saints, at the resurrection. He was transfigured *before them*; the change, it is probable, was *gradual*, from glory to glory, so that the disciples, who had their eye upon Him all the while, had the clearest evidence that this glorious appearance was no other than Jesus, and there was no illusion. John seems to refer to this, (1 John 1:1) when he speaks of the *word of life*, as that which they had *seen with their eyes, and looked upon*. His *raiment became shining*: so that, though, probably, it was *sad-colored*, if not black, yet it was now *exceeding white as snow*, beyond what the fuller could whiten it.

4. His companions in this glory were Moses and Elias; (v. 4.) They appeared *talking with Him, not to teach Him, but to testify to Him, and to be taught by Him*; by which it appears that there is intercourse between glorified saints, ways of talking one with another, which we understand not. Moses and Elias lived at a great distance of time one from another, but in heaven, where the *first shall be last, and the last first*, all are one in Christ.

5. The great delight that the disciples took, is expressed by Peter; *He said, Master, it is good for us to be here*, v. 5. Though Christ was transfigured, and was in discourse with Moses and Elias, yet He gave Peter leave to speak to Him, and to be as free with Him as he used to be. Note, Our Lord in his exaltation and glory, doth condescend to his people. Many when they are great, rebuke their friends to keep their distance; but even to the glorified Jesus true believers have access with boldness, and freedom of speech. Even in this heavenly discourse there was room for Peter to put in a word; and that it is *Lord, it is good to be here, it is good for us to be here; here let us make tabernacles; let this be our rest forever*. ^v Note, Gracious souls reckon it *good to be in communion with Christ, good to be in the mount with Him*, though a cold and solitary place; it is good to be retired from the world, and alone with Christ: and if it is good to be with Christ transfigured only upon a mountain with Moses and Elias, how good will it be to be with Christ glorified in heaven with all the saints? But Peter forgot

d Ps. 22:6,7. 69:12. Is. 49:7. 50:6.
24:14. 53:1-3. Zech. 11:13. Luke

what need there was of the presence of Christ, and the preaching of his apostles among the people. At this very time, the other disciples wanted them greatly, v. 14. Note, When it is well with us, we are apt, in the fulness of our enjoyments, to forget the necessities of our brethren; it was a weakness in Peter to prefer private communion with God before public usefulness. Paul is willing to *abide in the flesh*, rather than depart to glory, (though that be far better,) when he sees it needful for the church, Phil. 1:24, 25. Peter talked of making three tabernacles, for Moses, Elias, and Christ, which was not well contrived; for such a perfect harmony there is between the law, the prophets, and the Gospel, that one tabernacle will hold them all in unity. But he may be excused, for they were all *sore afraid*.

6. The voice that came from heaven was an attestation of Christ's mediatorship, v. 7. A cloud overshadowed them and sheltered them. Peter had talked of making tabernacles; but while he yet spake of his tabernacles, God created his tabernacle *not made with hands*. Now out of this cloud (which was but a shade to the excellent glory Peter speaks of, whence this voice came) it was said, *This is my beloved Son, hear Him*. God owns Him, as his beloved Son, and is ready to accept of us in Him; we must then own and accept Him as our beloved Savior, and give up ourselves to be ruled by Him.

7. The vision, being designed only to introduce this voice, when that was delivered, disappeared; (v. 8.) *Suddenly when they had looked round about*, as men amazed to see where they were, all was gone, *they saw no man any more*. Elias and Moses were vanished out of sight, and Jesus only remained with them, and He not transfigured, but as He used to be. Note, Christ doth not leave the soul, when extraordinary joys and comforts leave it. Though more sensible communications may be withdrawn, Christ's disciples shall have his ordinary presence with them always, even to the end of the world, and that is it we must depend upon. Let us thank God for *daily bread*, and not expect a continual feast on this side heaven.

As they came down from the mount, (1.) Christ charged them to keep this matter private, till He was *risen from the dead*, which would complete the proof of his divine mission,

f 14:1-28. Matt. 14:3-11. Luke 3:19,20. Acts 7:32.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-13. Those who live to behold 'the kingdom of God' set up in all parts of the world, will enjoy a satisfaction with which others have not been favored; but though we shall 'taste of death' before those days arrive; (*Note, Heb. 2:5-9, v. 9.*) we shall possess a still more exalted felicity, if admitted where Jesus displays far brighter glories, than even on the mount of transfiguration. The pleasures of that divine vision must be unspeakably great; for the glimpses, which we now behold, as 'through a glass darkly,' sometimes so ravish our minds, that we are ready to cry out, 'It is good for us to be here.' (*P. O. 1 Cor. 13:8-13.*) But we should not expect such peculiar consolations to be abiding, in this state of conflict. We must now learn to believe, and obey an unseen Savior; to 'walk by faith,' and wait in hope. We should seek conformity to Him, and expect ere long to be with Him, and like Him in body and soul, where prophets and apostles, and angels, vie with each other, who shall most honor, and

praise his glorious majesty. In this hope, we may cheerfully pass through life and death; though we be often under a cloud, and ready to question, what the meaning of his words and appointments can be: and if we consider the way, in which Jesus and his servants have passed through this world to heaven, we shall be the less discouraged, should we be called to suffer many things, or be 'set at nought,' if so be, we may by any means attain unto eternal life. (*Note, Phil. 3:8-11.*)—The enemies of Christ always watch their opportunities of perplexing his disciples: their cavils create disquietude, in such as neglect to maintain communion with their Lord: and perverse opponents often attack the unestablished, from a consciousness that they can make no impression on those, who are more fully confirmed. But the Lord will interpose to plead for his friends, and to silence his adversaries: yet many seem zealously to welcome Him and his ministers, who do not cordially obey his Gospel. SCOTT.

Verse 10.

Marg. Ref.—Questioning, &c.] The apostles argued with each other, concerning their Lord's meaning, when He said, 'Till the Son of man be risen from the dead.' (9) Not that they did not believe a future resurrection, or had any peculiar difficulty concerning the common meaning of the words: for they had witnessed some instances of the dead being restored to life: but they were so prepossessed with prejudices against the Messiah's being cut off by death, and so assured that Jesus was the Messiah, that they supposed some figurative sense must be put on his words; for as they erroneously supposed He could not literally die, so He could not literally rise again. (*Note, Luke 9:45.*) Nothing has more tended to induce false interpretations of Scripture, than a vain imagination that the literal meaning could not be true, because contrary to some notion, which, though no better than the prejudiced conclusion of men, has been regarded as *certain truth*: and therefore *allegorizing* (called *spiritual interpretation*) must be adopted. The grand explanation of an expostor consists, in knowing what ought to be explained literally, and what must be interpreted figuratively. The poets explaining, 'This is my body,' literally, and others *allegorizing* the parable, or story, of the good Samaritan, will show the at-

tentive and judicious reader the importance of this remark. (*Notes, Matt. 26: 26-28. Luke 10: 30-37.*)

Verse 12.

Restore, &c.] That is, bring back numbers from ungodliness to the true worship of God; as Elijah had done the Israelites from Baal to JAHOVAH. The thirteenth verse would be more readily understood if translated as follows:—'Elias is indeed come, as it is written of him; and they have done to him whatsoever they listed.' For this is the evident meaning of the words. It was not foretold, that the Messiah's forerunner would suffer martyrdom; and the scribes and priests did not put him to death: but it is plain, that they were well pleased, when he was thus taken off, and the conduct of the nation to so eminent a servant of God, showed what might be expected from them against the Savior whom he preceded. SCOTT.

Elias... cometh first.] 'The various opinions of commentators on this passage are diligently detailed by Wolf and Koehler. "So then Elias cometh and restoreth all things; but how then has it been prophesied that Christ must suffer, and be put to death?" So *Euthymius, Gratian, Rosenmuller, and Kuntze*. It is as much as to say, "Well, taking for granted what... say." BLOOMFIELD [351]

14 ¶ And when he came to his disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to him saluted him.

16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit:

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him; and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away; and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out, and they could not.

19 He answered him, and saith, O faithless generation! how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me.

20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him, and he fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming.

21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child.

22 And oft-times it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said

and then this must be produced with the rest of the evidence, v. 9. And besides, He being now in a state of humiliation, would have nothing publicly taken notice of, that might seem disagreeable to such a state; for to that He would in every thing accommodate Himself. This enjoining of silence to the disciples would likewise be of use to them, to prevent their boasting of the intimacy they were about to be admitted to, that they might not be puffed up with the abundance of the revelations. It is a mortification to a man, to be tied up from telling of his advancements, and may help to hide pride from him.

(2.) The disciples were at a loss what the rising from the dead should mean, they could not form any notion of the Messiah's dying, (Luke 18: 34.) and therefore were willing to think that the rising was figurative; from his present low estate to dignity and dominion. But if so, why say the scribes, that before the appearing of the Messiah in his glory, Elias must first come? Elias was gone, and Moses too. Now that which raised this difficulty was, the scribes taught them to expect the person of Elias, whereas the prophecy intended one in the spirit and power of Elias. Note, The misunderstanding of Scripture is a great prejudice to the entertainment of truth.

(3.) Christ gave them a key to the prophecy concerning Elias; v. 12, 13. 'It is indeed prophesied that Elias will come, and will restore all things, set them to rights; and (though you will not understand it) it is also prophesied of the Son of man, that he must be a reproach of men, and despised of the people; though the scribes do not tell you so, the Scriptures do, and you have as much reason to expect that as the other; but as to Elias, He is come; it is one to whom they have done whatsoever they listed;' which was applicable to John Baptist. Many think, that beside the coming of John Baptist in the spirit of Elias, himself, in his own person is to be expected, with Enoch, before the second appearance of Christ, where the prophecy of Malachi will have a more full accomplishment than it had in John Baptist. But it is a groundless fancy: the true Elias, as well as the true Messiah promised, is come, and we are to look for no other. These words, as it is written of him, refer not to their doing to him whatever they listed, (that comes in a parenthesis,) but only to his coming. He is come, and hath been, and done, according as was written of him.

V. 14—29. Observe here,

1. Christ returns to his disciples, lays aside his robes of glory, and comes to look after his family. Christ's glory above, does not make Him forget the concerns of his church below, which He visits in great humility, v. 14. And He came very seasonably, when the disciples were embarrassed: the scribes, who were enemies both to Him and them, had gained an advantage against them. A child possessed with a devil was brought to them, and they could not cast out the devil, whereupon the scribes insulted over them, and reflected upon their Master, and triumphed. He found the scribes questioning with them, in the hearing of the multitude.

2. With tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.

g Matt. 17:14, &c. Luke 9:37.
h 28. 11:28. 12:14. Luke 11:53, 54.
i Heb. 12:3.
j 2. 8. 34:30.
k 4:11. Luke 5:30—32.
l Or, among yourselves.
m 1:28. 7:28. 10:13. Matt. 17:15.
n John 4:47.
o 28. Matt. 12:22. Luke 11:14.
p Or, dasheth. 26. Matt. 15:22.

Verses 16—24.

This accords very much with the case of persons afflicted with the epilepsy; and hence some have ventured to assert, that it was no real possession: but does it not better become our ignorance, concerning the real causes of these maladies, to allow that at least the symptoms are aggravated by diabolical agency, than to suppose that Christ, by word and deed, gave the most explicit sanction to a vulgar error, and taught men to ascribe effects to the power of apostate spirits, in which they had no agency? This irreverence to the Word of God, and to the Redeemer's character, is often the effect of pride and determined infidelity, in which Satan has far more influence, than such persons are willing in any thing to allow him. The question, 'How long is it ago, since this

Thus Moses, when he came down from the mount, found the camp of Israel in great disorder: Christ's return was very welcome, no doubt, to the disciples, and unwelcome to the scribes. The people, who perhaps were ready to say, As for this Jesus, we do not know what is become of Him, when they beheld Him coming to them again, were greatly amazed; and running to Him (or bidding Him welcome,) saluted Him. It is easy to give a reason why they should be glad to see Him; but why were they greatly amazed what they beheld Him? Probably, there might remain something unusual in his countenance; as Moses' face shone when he came down from the mount, which made the people afraid to come nigh him, Exod. 34:30. So perhaps there appeared something wonderful in his looks, which amazed them.

II. He asked the scribes, who, He knew, were always vexatious to his disciples, 'What is the quarrel now?' The scribes made no answer; they were confounded at his presence; the disciples made none, for they were comforted, and left all to Him. The father of the child opened the cause, v. 17, 18. His child is possessed with a dumb spirit: he has the falling-sickness, and in his fits is speechless; wheresoever the fit takes him, the spirit throws him into violent convulsions; and, which is grievous and frightful, he foams at the mouth, and gnashes with his teeth, as one in great misery; and though the fits go off, they leave him so weak, that he pines away to a skeleton. This was a constant affliction to a tender father. The disciples cannot give him any relief; 'I desired they would cast him out, as they had done many, and they would willingly have done it, but they could not; and therefore, Master, I have brought him to Thee.'

III. The rebuke He gave to them all; (v. 19.) O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Dr. Hammond understands this as spoken to the disciples, reproving them for not exerting the power He had given them, and because they did not fast and pray, as He had directed them to do. But Dr. Whitty takes it as a rebuke to the scribes, who gloried in this disappointment that the disciples met with. Them He calls a faithless generation, and speaks as one weary of being with them, and of bearing with them. We never hear Him complaining, 'How long shall I be in this low condition, and suffer that?' But, 'How long shall I be among these faithless people, and suffer them?'

IV. When the child saw Christ, he fell into a fit; The spirit straightway tore him, as if the devil would set Christ at defiance, and keep possession in spite of Him. The child fell on the ground, and wallowed, foaming. The devil raged, because he knew that his time was short, Rev. 12: 12. Christ asked, How long since this came to him? The disease was of long standing; it came to him of a child, (v. 21.) which made the case more sad, and the cure more difficult. We are all by nature, children of disobedience, and in such the evil spirit works, and has done so from our childhood; for foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, and nothing but the grace of Christ can cast it out.

Luke 9:38.
n 26. Luke 13.
o John 16:8, 9. Matt. 8:12.
p Acts 7:34.
q 28:39. 11:23. 2 Kings 4:29—31.
r Matt. 17:16—21. Luke 9:40.
s 16:14. Num. 14:11, 22, 27. 32:13, 14.
t Deut. 32:20. Ps. 78:4—5, 22. 108:21, 25. Matt. 17:11. Luke 9:41.
u 24:25. John 12:27. 20:27. Heb. 8:10—12.
v 19:28. 1:26. 5:3—5. John 1:10, &c.
w 2:6—8. Luke 8:38. 9:29. 9:42.
x John 8:44. 1 Pet. 5:8.
y 9:25. John 5:7. 16:1. Luke 8:48.
z 13:16. John 5:5, 8, 11, 20, 21. Acts

came upon him' was probably intended to show the inveteracy of the case, to put the man's faith to a sharp trial, and to illustrate his own power. (24.) Lord, I believe, &c. He could scarcely believe that Jesus could cast out this evil spirit; yet he concluded, that He could enable him to believe, and inwardly assist him against unbelief! In effect he said, 'Lord, I do believe, and expect help from Thee alone; but I am not able to exclude all doubting about it: but do thou not help me against my unbelief, and then deliver my child from his calamity.' Where do we ever read of such an address to any prophet or apostle, in the whole Scripture? And who does not perceive, that such a request must have been highly reprehensible, if made to any mere man or creature?

Scott.

25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, ^ahe rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, ^b*Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him.*

26 And ^cthe spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

27 But Jesus took ^dthe hand, and ^ehim up, and he arose.

28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, ^fWhy could not we cast him out?

29 And he said unto them, ^gThis kind can come forth by nothing but ^hby prayer and ⁱfasting.

[Practical Observations.]

30 ¶ And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; ^jand he would not that any man should know it.

a 1:35-27. 5:7,8. Zech. 3:2. Matt. 17:18. Luke 4:35,41. 9:42. Jude 1.
b Is. 35:5,6. Matt. 9:32-33. 12:22. Luke 11:14.
c Luke 8:29. Acts 16:13.
d 18:20. 1:29. Ex. 5:23. Rev. 12:12. 1:31,41. 5:41. 8:23. Is. 41:13. Acts 3:7. 9:41.
e 4:10,34. Matt. 13:10,36. 15:15.
f Matt. 17:19,20.

V. The father of the child pleads with Christ for a cure; (v. 22.) *Qf-times it has cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him.* Note, The devil aims at the ruin of those in whom he rules, and sees whom he may devour. But if *Thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.* The leper was confident of Christ's power, but put an if upon it, because his disciples, who cast out devils in his name, had been non-plussed in this case. Christ suffers in his honor by the difficulties and follies of his disciples.

VI. Christ gave this answer; (v. 23.) *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.* Here, 1. He checks the weakness of his faith. The sufferer put it upon Christ's power, *If Thou canst do any thing*, and reflected on the want of power in the disciples; but Christ puts him upon questioning his own faith, and imputes the disappointment to the want of that: *If thou canst believe.* 2. He encourages his desire; *All things will appear possible to him that believeth the almighty power of God; or, 'That shall be done for them that believe, which seemed utterly impossible.'* Note, In dealing with Christ, very much is put upon our believing, and very much promised to it. *Canst thou believe?* Art thou willing to venture thy all in the hands of Christ? To venture all thy spiritual concerns with Him, and all thy temporal concerns for Him? If so, it is not impossible but that, though a great sinner, thou mayest be reconciled; though mean and unworthy, thou mayest get to heaven. *If thou canst believe*, it is possible that thy hard heart may be softened, thy diseases cured; and that, weak as thou art, thou mayest hold out to the end.

VII. The man hereupon cried out; *'Lord, I believe; I am fully persuaded both of thy power and of thy pity; my cure shall not be prevented by the want of faith: Lord, I believe.'* He adds a prayer, for grace to enable him more firmly to rely upon the ability and willingness of Christ; *Help Thou my unbelief.* Note, 1. Ere those who through grace can say, *Lord, I believe*, have reason to complain that they cannot so readily apply the word of Christ as they should, nor so cheerfully depend upon it. 2. Those that complain of unbelief, must look up to Christ, and his grace shall be sufficient for them. *'Help mine unbelief; help me to a*

h Matt. 12:45. Luke 11:26.
i 1 Kings 17:20-22. 2 Kings 4:33,34.
Matt. 17:21. Acts 9:40,41. 2 Cor.

12:8. Eph. 6:18. Jam. 5:15.
k Dan. 9:3. Acts 14:23. 2 Cor. 6:5.
11:27.

pardon for it, help me with power against it help out what is wanting in my faith with thy grace, the strength of which is perfected in our weakness.'

VIII. Christ saw the people running together, expecting to see this trial of skill, and therefore kept them in suspense no longer, but rebuked the foul spirit. He said, *'Thou spirit that maketh the child dumb and deaf, but shalt be made to hear thy doom, and not be able to say any thing against it. Come out of him immediately, and enter no more into him.* Let him not only be brought out of this fit, but let his fits never return.' Note, Whom Christ cures, He cures effectually. Satan may go out himself, and yet recover possession: but if Christ cast him out, He will keep him out. The unclean spirit grew yet more outrageous, cried, and rent him sore, that he was as one dead; so loath was he to quit his hold, so exasperated at the superior power of Christ, so malicious to the child, and so desirous to kill him. *Many said, he is dead.* Thus the breaking of Satan's power in the soul, may perhaps be frightful for the present, but opens the door to lasting comfort. The child was perfectly restored; (v. 27.) *Jesus took him by the hand, and strongly bore him up; he arose, recovered, and all was well.*

IX. The reason He gave to the disciples why they could not cast out this devil. They inquired of Him privately, *why they could not*, that wherein they were defective might be made up another time, and they might not be again thus publicly shamed; and He told them, (v. 29.) *This kind can come forth by nothing but prayer and fasting.* Whatever other difference there really might be, none appears between this and other kinds, but that the unclean spirit had had possession of this poor patient from a child, and that strengthened his interest and confirmed his hold. When vicious habits are rooted by long usage, and begin to pierce prescription, like chronic diseases, they are hardly cured. *Can the Ethiopian change his skin?* The disciples must not think to do their work always with a like ease; some services call them to take more than ordinary pains: but Christ can do that with a word's speaking, which they must prevail to do by prayer and fasting.

V. 30-40. I. Christ foretells his own ap-

1 Matt. 17:22,23.
m 9. 6:31,32.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 14-29. In what varied ways does Satan with his angels attempt to render mankind miserable! Yet his chief success among those who are favored with the Gospel, arises from their unbelief: for if they had a clear apprehension of the power and grace of the Savior, who came to destroy the works of the devil, they would seek and obtain deliverance.—When our relatives are made wretched, or mischievous, through the influence of Satan, we should bring them to Christ, beseeching Him to 'have compassion and help us:' and we may do this for them, when they are incapable of receiving our instructions, or determined to disregard our counsels.—Ministers and Christians may be applied to on such occasions, and their counsels and prayers may be useful; but our dependence must rest on Christ alone; and should they conclude the case to be hopeless, we should still persist in expecting help from his almighty arm. But after all the displays which He has made, and his patient teaching of us, by his word and our own experience, we are prone to form low expectations from Him. Yet the things, which to all others are impossible, are easy with Him.—Even in the case of those, who, from their earliest years have been peculiarly enslaved by Satan, and have contracted various pernicious habits and fatal connections; by means of which, they have, as it were, often been cast into the fire, and into the water, and have repeatedly been brought to the verge of destruction; we have abundant encouragement to expect

help from the Savior. He has hitherto bounded the rage of the enemy, and borne with the sinner; and He can easily break the power of the former, and glorify Himself in the salvation of the latter. Our chief danger, in every thing really good for us, arises from unbelief: 'if we can believe, all things are possible to him that believeth;' and as we shall certainly find a difficulty in exercising such unshaken faith in the power and grace of Christ, on many occasions: we should apply to Him, 'as the Author and Finisher of our faith;' to strengthen us against unbelief; that we may not, through our own fault, come short of the blessings which we seek, in behalf of ourselves or others. Satan will be reluctant to be driven out of those who have long been his slaves; and when he cannot destroy the sinner, he will cause him as much trouble as possible: so that when a man is about to experience a most blessed deliverance, he is often more distressed than at any other time; and the beginnings of liberty and life resemble the agonies of death.—Ministers would witness, and be the instruments of more remarkable conversions, if they were stronger in faith, more fervent in prayer, and more entirely mortified to earthly pleasures and pursuits: and should we inquire of Jesus, why we have no more success 'in turning sinners from the power of Satan unto God,' He would probably answer, 'Because of your unbelief; for this effect cannot be produced 'except by fasting and prayer.'

Scott

Verse 29.

'We are not to understand that a certain time was to be spent in prayer and fasting before the expulsion of every demon; but that the power of expelling was not otherwise to be attained.' CAMPBELL. Christ every where associates the power of working miracles with faith, as the last quoted author hints. This kind.] 'This order of beings, not this kind of demon.'

CAMPBELL. BLOOMFIELD.

The failure of the disciples in Matthew's account of this transaction.

N. T. VOL. 1.

is attributed to unbelief; and Christ adds, 'if ye have faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say to this mountain, Remove,' &c. and it shall remove, and nothing shall be impossible unto you.' By faith here we understand confidence in God: both as to his power and his readiness. But this, the disciples of Christ could attain only by devout religious exercises and self-denial:—other words, by prayer and fasting. Having been, it would seem, somewhat remiss in these duties, their faith wavered, and their power failed: for which they were reproved by Christ.

31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, "The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day."

32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

33 ¶ And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house, he asked them, "What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way?"

34 But they held their peace; for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest.

35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all."

36 And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them,

37 Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

38 ¶ And John answered him, saying, "Master, we saw one casting out devils in

proaching sufferings. He passed through Galilee with more expedition than usual, and would not that any man should know it: (v. 30.) because He had done many works among them in vain, they shall not be invited to see them, and have the benefit of them as they have been. The time of his sufferings drew nigh, and therefore He was willing to be private awhile, and to converse only with his disciples, to prepare them for the approaching trial, v. 31. He said to them, *The Son of man is delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God into the hands of men, (v. 31.) and they shall kill Him.* Had He been delivered into the hands of devils, and they had worried Him, it had not been so strange; but that men, who have reason, and should have love, should be thus spiteful to the Son of man, who came to redeem and save them, is unaccountable. But still it is observable that when Christ spake of his death, He always spake of his resurrection, which took away the reproach of it from Himself, and should have taken away the grief of it from his disciples. But they understood not that saying, v. 32. The words were plain enough, but they could not be reconciled to the thing, and therefore would suppose them to have some mystical meaning which they did not understand, and they were afraid to ask Him; not because He was difficult of access, or stern, but either because they were loath to know the truth, or because they expected to be chidden for their backwardness to receive it. Many remain ignorant because they are ashamed to inquire.

II. When He came to Capernaum, He asked his disciples what it was that they disputed among themselves by the way, v. 33. He knew very well what the dispute was, but He would know it from them, and would have them to confess their folly in it. Note, 1. We must all expect to be called to an account by our Lord concerning what passes while we are in the way in this state of probation. 2. We must in particular be called to an account about our discourses among ourselves; for by our words we must be justified or condemned. 3. As our other discourses among ourselves by the way, so especially our disputes, will be all called over again, and we shall be called to an account about them. 4. Of all disputes, Christ will be sure to reckon with his disciples for their disputes about precedence; that was the subject of the debate here, *who should be the greatest*, v. 34. Nothing could be more contrary to the two great laws of Christ's kingdom, which are *humility and love*, than *desiring preferment in the world, and disputing about it*. This ill temper He took all occasions to check, both because it arose from a mistaken notion of his kingdom, and because it tended to the debasing and the corrupting of his Gospel, and He foresaw, would be the bane of the church.

Now, (1.) They were willing to cover this fault, (v. 34.) they held their peace. As they would not ask, (v. 32.) because they were ashamed, so here they would not answer, because of their pride. (2.) He was willing to bring them to a better temper; and therefore had a solemn and full discourse with them about this matter. He called the twelve to Him, and told them, [1.] That ambition, and affectation of dignity, instead of gaining them preferment in his kingdom, would but postpone it; *If any man aim to be first, he shall be last*; he that exalteth himself shall be abased, and men's pride shall bring them low. [2.] There is no preferment to be had under Him, but an opportunity for the more labor and condescension; *If any man desire to be first, he must be much the more servicable. He that desires the office of a bishop,*

desires a good work, for he must, as St. Paul did, labor the more abundantly, and make himself the servant of all. [3.] Those who are most humble and self-denying, do most resemble Christ, and shall be most owned by Him. This He taught them by a sign; *He took a child in his arms*, that had nothing of pride and ambition in it, and said, *Whosoever shall receive one like this child, receives Me.* Those of a humble, meek disposition I will own, and encourage every body else to do so too, and will take what is done to them as done to myself, and so will my Father, for he who thus receives Me, receives Me, and it shall be placed to his account, and repaid with interest.

III. He rebukes them; for, while they are striving which of them should be greatest, they will not allow those who follow not with them to be any thing. Observe,

1. John told Him of the restraint they laid upon one from making use of the name of Christ, because he was not of their society. Though they were ashamed to own their contentions for preferment, they seem to boast of this exercise of authority, and expected their Master would not only justify them in it, but commend them for it; and hoped He would not blame them for desiring to be great, when they would thus use their power for the maintaining of their honor. Master, saith John, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, but he followed not us, v. 33. (1.) It was strange that one who was not a professed disciple and follower of Christ should yet have power to cast out devils in his name, for that seemed to be peculiar to those whom He called, ch. 6, 7. Some think that he was a disciple of John, who made use of the name of the Messiah, not knowing that Jesus was He. It should rather seem that he made use of the name of Jesus, believing Him to be the Christ, as the other apostles did. And why might not he receive that power from Christ, whose Spirit, like the wind, blows where it listeth, without such an outward call as the apostles had? And perhaps there were many more such. Christ's grace is not tied to the visible church. (2.) It was strange that one who cast out devils in the name of Christ, did not join himself to the apostles, but should continue to act in separation from them. I know of nothing that could hinder him from following them, unless because he was loath to leave all to follow them; and if so, that was an ill principle. The thing did not look well, and therefore the disciples forbade him to make use of Christ's name as they did, unless he would follow Him as they did. This was like the motion Joshua made concerning Eldad and Medad, that prophesied in the camp, and went not with the rest to the door of the tabernacle; *My lord Moses, forbid them*; (Num. 11: 33.) for it is a schism. Thus apt are we to imagine that those do not follow Christ at all, who do not follow Him with us, and that those do nothing well, who do not just as we do. But the Lord knows them that are his; and this instance gives us a useful caution, to take heed lest we be carried, by an excess of zeal for the unity of the church, and for that which we are sure is right, to oppose that which yet may tend to the enlargement of the church, and the advancement of its true interests, another way.

2. Jesus said, *Forbid him not*, nor any that do likewise. This was like the check Moses gave to Joshua; *Enviest thou for my sake?* Note, That which is good, and doeth good, must not be prohibited, though there be some defect or irregularity in the manner of doing it. Casting out devils, and so destroying Satan's

Verses 33—37.

'If there was to be any primacy among the apostles, why was Christ on this occasion silent respecting it? Or, if He had, in the hearing of the others, conferred it on Peter, what occasion would there have been for the apostles to dispute about it?' Beza. (35.) Servant, etc. 'The precedence among my disciples, all that they are capable of, that of being governors of the church, brings no advantage to him that has it, but to be more the servant of other men; more work and business being the only advantage of that precedence, which shall befall you and your successors.' Hammond. If this were known by all to be the case, or generally believed to be so, the number of candi-

dates for the distinction of being 'successors to the apostles,' would be exceedingly diminished.

Verse 38.

The disciples had just been disputing who should be greatest. Among the most ambitious, as elsewhere appears, were James and John. This answer of John seems to intimate, that the origin of the dispute was in a difference of opinion about the man whom they found casting out devils. He appeals to Christ: 'We, i. e. a part of the disciples, forbid him. Was it not right to exercise this authority?' In the following verses, Christ reproves his forwardness, and corrects his mistake.

thy name, and he followeth not us; and we forbade him, because he followeth not us.

39 But Jesus said, 'Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me.'

40 For *He* that is not against us, is on our part.

41 For *who*soever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

42 And *who*soever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched;

44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45 And if *thy* foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be

kingdom, in *Christ's* name, so owning Him to be sent of God, and giving honor to Him as the Fountain of grace, are good things which ought not to be forbidden to us, merely because they follow not with us. If Christ be preached, Paul therein doth, and will rejoice, though he be eclipsed by it, Phil. 1:18. Two reasons Christ gives why such should not be forbidden. (1.) Because we cannot suppose that any man, who makes use of Christ's name in working miracles, should blaspheme his name, as the scribes and Pharisees did. There were those indeed that did in *Christ's* name cast out devils, and yet in other respects were workers of iniquity; but they did not speak evil of Christ. (2.) Because those that differed in communion, while they agreed to fight against Satan under the banner of Christ, ought to look upon one another as on the same side. *He* that is not against us, is on our part. As to the great controversy between Christ and Beelzebub, He had said, *He* that is not with *Me* is against *Me*, Matt. 12:30. He that will not own Christ, owns Satan. But among those that own Christ, though not in the same circumstances, that follow Him, though not with us, we must reckon, that, though these differ from us, they are not against us, and therefore are on our part, and we must not hinder their usefulness.

V. 41—50. I. Christ promiseteth a reward to all that are kind to his disciples; (c. 41.) 'Whoever shall give you a cup of water, when you need it, because ye belong to Christ, shall not lose his reward.' Note. 1. It is the honor of Christians, that they belong to Christ, and are owned by Him; nay, they are members of his body. 2. They who belong to Christ may sometimes be glad of a cup of cold water. 3. The relieving of Christ's poor, is a good deed; He accepts it, and will reward it. 4. What kindness is done to Christ's poor, must be done for his sake, and because they belong to Him; for that is it that puts a value upon it in the sight of God. 5. This is a reason why we must not discourage those who are serving Christ, though they are not in every thing of our mind and way. It comes in here as a reason why those must not be hindered, that cast out devils in Christ's name, though they did not follow Him; for 'it is not only the eminent

performances which are done by you that are accepted by Me, but the least degree of sincere faith and Christian performance, proportionable but to the expressing the least kindness; as giving a cup of water to a disciple of mine, for being such, shall be rewarded.' Hammond. I. Christ reckons kindnesses to us services to Him, we ought to reckon services to Him kindnesses to us, and to encourage them, though done by those that follow not with us.

II. He threatens those that offend his little ones, that wilfully are the occasion of sin or trouble to them, v. 42. Whosoever shall grieve any true Christians, though the weakest, oppose their entrance into the ways of God, or obstruct their progress in those ways, restrain them from doing good, or draw them to commit sin, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea; his punishment will be very great, and the death and ruin of his soul more terrible than such a death and ruin of his body would be. See Matt. 18:6.

III. He warns all his followers to take heed of ruining their own souls. This charity must begin at home; if we must take heed of doing any thing to hinder others from good, much more careful must we be to avoid every thing that will take us off from duty, or lead us to sin; and that which doth so, we must part with, though it be ever so dear to us. Observe,

1. The case supposed, that our own hand, or eye, or foot, offends us; that the corruption we indulge is as dear to us as an eye or hand; or that that which is to us as an eye or a hand, is become a temptation to sin, or occasion of it. Suppose the beloved is become a sin, or the sin a beloved. Suppose we cannot keep that which is dear to us, but it will be a snare; suppose we must part with it, or part with Christ and a good conscience.

2. The duty prescribed in that case; Pluck out the eye, cut off the hand and foot, mortify the darling lust, crucify it. Let the idols that have been delectable, be cast away as detestable; keep at a distance from that which is a temptation, though ever so pleasing. It is necessary that the part which is gangrened should be taken off for the preservation of the whole. We must put ourselves to pain, that we may

a 16:13, 14. Matt. 13:28, 29. Phil. 1:18.
b Matt. 22:22. Acts 19:13—16, 1 Cor. 9:27. 18:12.
c 1 Cor. 12:3.
d Matt. 12:30. Luke 11:23.
e See on Matt. 10:42. 26:40.
f John 19:25—27. Rom. 8:9. 14:15.
1 Cor. 3:23. 15:22. 2 Cor. 10:7.
Gal. 3:29. 5:24.

g Matt. 18:10. Luke 17:1, 2. Rom. 14:13, 15, 21. 16:17. 1 Cor. 8:10—13. 10:32, 33. 2 Cor. 6:3. Phil. 1:10. 1 Tim. 5:14, 15. 1 Pet. 2:23.
h Matt. 25:45. Acts 4:34. 26:11—14. 2 Thes. 1:6—8. Rev. 6:9, 10. 16:6, 7.
i Deut. 13:5—8. Matt. 6:29, 30. 18:8, 9. Rom. 8:13. 1 Cor. 9:27.

Gal. 5:24. Col. 3:5. Tit. 2:12. Heb. 12:1. 1 Pet. 2:1.
* Or, cause thee to offend; and so, 45, 47.
† Matt. 15:30, 31. Luke 14:13, 21.
‡ 146, 48. Is. 66:24.
§ Is. 33:14. Matt. 3:12. 25:41, 46.
¶ 2 Thes. 1:3. Rev. 14:11. 20:10.
15, 21:5. n 43:4.

Verse 39.

Forbid him not.] A spirit of bigotry has little countenance from these passages. Some are so outrageously wedded to their own creed, that they would rather let sinners perish, than suffer those who differ from them to become the instruments of their salvation. *This is vanity, and an evil device.*

Lightly.] Easily. The word must here be understood morally: i. e. scarcely will any be found, &c. ROSENMULLER. BLOOMFIELD.

'This man, we suppose, was one of John's disciples, or one of the seventy.'

Verse 41.

Instead of prohibiting those who aided in promoting the common cause, our Lord declared, that He would recompense every one, who gave one of the least among his disciples so much as 'a cup of water, because he belonged to Him'; on the contrary, whosoever injured the least of his disciples, would commit so grievous a crime, and be in danger of a great a punishment, that the most terrible death would be a much lighter evil, than that to which he would expose himself.

(41.) Ye belong to Christ.] 'These words explain what the phrase "In the name of a disciple," in St. Matthew signifies.' Beza.

Little ones.] 'The comparative used for the superlative, whosoever shall offend the least, i. e. in point of dignity, humblest, meanest.'

WALTE, ed. by Rob.

Verse 43—50.

These verses belong to the sermon on the mount. But Christ, traveling from place to place, doubtless, repeated often the same sentiments, sometimes in the same words. Especially would He do this to his disciples, that He might make them familiar with the principles which must regulate their conduct. In the sermon on the mount, these precepts were general; here they are applied to a particular case, ambition.

(43.) I saw Philip himself, with whom our contest was for rule and dominion, after having lost an eye, having had his hip broken, and being lamed in his hand and his leg, disposed, readily and easily to part with any part of his body, which fortune might choose; so that, with this remainder, he might live in glory and honor.' Demos-

thenes. 'They do it for a corruptible crown; but we for an incorruptible.' (Note, 1 Cor. 9:24—27.) It is repeatedly said, 'Their worm never dieth,' as well as that 'the fire is never quenched.' (Note, Is. 66:24.) Doubtless, remorse of conscience and keen self-reflection constitute this never-dying worm: so that the expression is alike contrary to the ideas of annihilation, and of final restitution to happiness; for, on either of these suppositions, 'their worm' would die, and their torturing consciences would cease. And as the fire is doubtless, at least, an emblem of the wrath of God, its unquenchableness must denote, that his justice will never be satisfied, nor his anger turned away from those, who are cast into this fire of hell. (Mark 9:43. 16:19. Note, Is. 33:14. Matt. 3:11, 12. 45:41—46. 2 Thes. 2:5—10, tr. 8, 9. 1 Pet. 2:1. 5:8, v. 8.) The sacrifices under the law were commanded to be salted with salt. (Note, Lev. 2:13.) This was primarily an emblem of grace, which renders the sanctified soul meet for the enjoyment of its incorruptible inheritance: but it also represented that 'every sacrifice' to the divine justice 'would be salted with fire,' the very nature of the punishment, or the righteous vengeance of God, will render the heirs of hell incorruptible: so that their misery will be as endless, as the happiness of the righteous. 'Every wicked man shall be seasoned with fire itself, so as to become insconquerable, and shall endure forever to be tormented; and therefore may be said to be "salted with fire," in allusion to that property of salt, which is to preserve from corruption.' Whitby.

(50.) In concluding this subject, our Lord reminded the disciples, that as salt, though valuable in itself to season other bodies, was yet worthless and irrecoverable when it had lost its saltiness; so they would become more vile than others, if they were not truly sanctified: for they would be employed in converting and preserving others, and would have none to season them, should they turn aside. It would therefore be incumbent on them, to watch over their own hearts, to mortify their lusts, and, laying aside ambition, the parent of contention, to live at peace with each other. If teachers themselves to whom is committed the divine word, with which men must be seasoned as with salt, do themselves become insipid, (not savoring of that holy word, in doctrine, spirit, and practice,) what remaineth, but either, that the hearers perish, or that God should send other teachers? Beza.

(44—48.) 'The words are taken from Is. 66:24, where the subject

cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched;

46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire;

48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltiness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

Luke 18:24-26.
Gen. 3:8. Job 31:1. Ps. 119:37.
Matt. 5:28, 29. 10:37-39. Luke 14:36. Gal. 4:15. Phil. 3:7, 8.
43. marg.
Lev. 2:12. Ex. 49:24.
1 Cor. 6:8. Matt. 5:13. Luke 14:34, 35.
Eph. 4:22. Col. 4:6.
Ps. 133:1. Job 10:34, 35. 15:17, 18.
Rom. 12:18. 14:17-19. 2 Cor. 13:11. Gal. 5:14, 15, 22. Eph. 4:22-6.
31, 32. Phil. 1:27. 2 Tim. 3:2. Col. 3:12, 13. 2 Tim. 3:22. Heb. 12:14.
Jam. 1:20. 3:14-18. 1 Pet. 3:8, 9.

not bring ourselves to ruin; self must be denied, that it may not be destroyed.

3. The necessity of doing this. The flesh must be mortified, that we may enter into life, (v. 43, 45.) into the kingdom of God, v. 47. Though, by abandoning sin, we may, for the present, feel *halt and maimed*, (it may create us some uneasiness,) yet it is for life; and all that men have they will give for their lives: it is for a kingdom, the kingdom of God, which we cannot otherwise obtain; these *halts and maims* will be the marks of the Lord Jesus, and scars of honor.

4. The danger of not doing this. The matter is brought to this, that either sin, or we, must die. If we will lay this *Delilah* in our bosom, it will betray us: if we be ruled by sin, we shall inevitably be ruined by it; if we must keep our *two hands, and two eyes, and two feet*, we must with them be *cast into hell*. Our Savior often pressed our duty upon us, from the consideration of the torments of hell, which we run into if we continue in sin. With what an emphasis of terror are those words repeated three times here, *Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!* The words are quoted from Isa. 66:24. (1.) The reflections and reproaches of the sinner's own conscience are the *worm that dieth not*; which will cleave to the damned soul as worms to the dead body, and prey upon it, and never leave it till it is quite devoured. *Son, remember*, will be this worm; and how terribly will it bite with that word, (Prov. 6:12, 23.) *How have I hated instruction!* The soul that is food to this worm dies not; and the worm is bred in it, and one with it, and neither doth that die. Damned sinners will be to eternity accusing and upbraiding themselves with their own follies, which, how much soever they are now in love with them, will at the last *bite like a serpent, and sting like an adder*. (2.) The wrath of God fastening upon a guilty conscience, is the *fire that is not quenched*; it is the wrath of the living and eternal God, into whose hands it is a fearful thing to fall. There are no operations of the Spirit upon the souls of damned sinners, and therefore there is nothing to alter the nature of the fuel, which must re-

main forever combustible; nor is there any application of the merit of Christ to them, and therefore there is nothing to appease the violence of the fire. Dr. Whitby shows that the eternity of the torments of hell was not only the constant faith of the Christian church, but had been so of the Jewish church. Josephus says, The Pharisees held that the souls of the wicked were to be *punished with perpetual punishment*; and that there was appointed for them a *perpetual prison*. And Philo saith, The punishment of the wicked is, to live forever dying, and to be forever in pains and griefs that never cease.

The two last verses are somewhat difficult, and interpreters agree not in the sense of them; for every one in general, or rather every one of them that are cast into hell, shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Therefore have salt in yourselves. [1.] It was appointed by the law of Moses, that every sacrifice should be salted with salt, not to preserve it, (for it was to be immediately consumed,) but because it was the food of God's table, and no flesh is eaten without salt; it was therefore particularly required in the meat-offerings, Lev. 2:13. [2.] The nature of man being corrupt, and as such being called *flesh*, (Gen. 6:3. Ps. 78:39.) some way or other must be salted, in order to its being a sacrifice to God. [3.] Our chief concern is, to present ourselves *living sacrifices* to the grace of God, (Rom. 12:1.) and, in order to our acceptableness, we must be salted with salt, our corrupt affections must be subdued, and we have in our souls a savor of grace. Thus the offering up, or sacrificing of the Gentiles, is said to be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, Rom. 15:16. [4.] Those that have the salt of grace must make it appear that they have it a living principle of grace in their hearts, which works out all corrupt dispositions, and every thing in the soul that tends to putrefaction, and would offend God, or our own consciences. Our speech must be always with grace, seasoned with this salt, that no corrupt communication may proceed out of our mouth. [5.] As this gracious salt will keep our own consciences void of offence, so it will keep our conversation with others, that we may not offend

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 30-50. While the Savior teaches most plainly those things which relate to his love, his sufferings and death, his present glory and future coming to judgment; men in general are so blinded by prejudice, that they do not understand his sayings, and by various hindrances are frequently deterred from praying for divine illumination. Even disciples are often more ready to dispute with each other, 'which shall be the greatest,' than with humble simplicity to sit at his feet, and learn the doctrine of the cross, 'by which the world must be crucified to them, and they unto the world;' and we all need repeated rebukes, before we are made willing to seek wisdom by becoming 'little children,' and to aspire after greatness by stooping to 'be the least of all.' Yet disciples of this character are most dear to their Lord, and will be most honored by Him, as his messengers to mankind: and 'whosoever receiveth one of them in Christ's name, receiveth both 'Him and the Father who sent Him.' Pride and bigotry are great hindrances to usefulness: men often think the interests of a party, or the credit of their order, of more importance than the cause of godliness: they are ready, by presumptuous authority, to forbid others 'to cast out devils in the name of Christ,' 'because they follow not with them;' and even to grieve when good is done, if it be not managed according to their notions, and by those who are commissioned and sent forth in their way. Whereas all who love and honor Christ are of one side: 'he that is not against us is on our part;' and if sinners be brought to repent, believe in the Savior, and lead sober, righteous and godly lives, we must perceive that the Lord works by the preacher; and who are we, that we should attempt to silence him? While, therefore, we are encouraged to do good to others 'for his name's sake,' and especially to those who belong to Him, assured that such services shall not lose their

reward; let us also favor all who appear to be on his side in this evil world, and be glad to concur with them: and let us dread, worse than death, any thing which can tend to grieve them, or hinder their usefulness.—Instead of acrimony against those, who 'follow not with us,' let us bend all our severity against our own evil propensities; not sparing one of them, though it has been as a hand, a foot, or an eye, unto us; or however painful we may find the mortification of it. Thus we shall be assured of 'entering into life,' and be preserved from the most distant fear of being 'cast into hell, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.'—It would be infinitely better to undergo all possible pain here, and be forever happy hereafter, than to enjoy all worldly pleasure for a season, and then to be forever miserable! (P. O. Matt. 16:21-28.) If then the difficulty and pain of mortifying every sinful inclination appears very great; if the worldly advantages to be renounced appear very valuable; consider the awful alternative. For eternity is before us: incorruptible in holiness and happiness, or in sin and misery, we must be: either sacrifices to God's justice, to be 'salted with fire,' or willing sacrifices to his honor, by the sanctification of the Spirit through the redemption of Christ. We have the name of Christians: some of us preach, and many others profess the Gospel; we are thus 'the salt of the earth.' If we answer to our character, we shall be useful here and happy forever: but if we remain destitute of the grace of God, our name, or sacred function, will only serve to aggravate our guilt, and increase our condemnation. Then lay aside every carnal and ambitious project and pursuit: 'look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God;' and follow holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' (Notes, Heb. 12:14-17.) SCOTT.

• the punishment to be inflicted on the incorrigible in this life, in order to describe (as is usual with the Jewish writers) the judgment of another world. Sirach 7:17. Judith 16:17. Wetstein. The place of the damned is compared to a field where carcasses are thrown out, and are gnawed by worms, or burnt with fire. Such was their Gehenna, or the valley of Hinnom near Jerusalem; a place by the former sacrifices was a variety of punishments, proportioned to the different degrees of crime, in the present; but that the very depraved were tortured forever in the burning lake of Tartarus. That the same, especially the

"Hence, (says Bp. South,) the worms which preyed on the carcasses, and the fire which consumed the victims. From these sensible images," continues he, "our Savior describes hell, as by the sensible images of reclining on Abraham's bosom, &c. He described heaven." Plato, in his Phædo, tells us, it was the opinion of Socrates, that as there was an eternity of happiness for the good and virtuous in a future state, so there was a variety of punishments, proportioned to the different degrees of crime, in the present; but that the very depraved were tortured forever in the burning lake of Tartarus. That the same, especially the

CHAP. X.

Jesus teaches in Judea, 1; answers the Pharisees concerning divorce, 2-12; receives and blesses young children, 13-16; instructs and proves the rich young man; shows the danger of affluence; and makes gracious promises to those who forsake worldly objects for his sake, 17-31. He again predicts his own death and resurrection; reproves the ambition of James and John, and the other apostles, 32-45; and gives signs to blind Bartimeus, 46-52.

AND he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea, by the farther side of Jordan; and the people resort unto him again: and, as he was wont, he taught them again.

2 ¶ And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, 'Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?' tempting him.

3 And he answered and said unto them, 'What did Moses command you?'

4 And they said, 'Moses suffered to write a bill of divorce, and to put her away.'

5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept:'

6 But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female.

7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife,

any of Christ's little ones, but be at peace one with another. [6.] We must not only have this salt of grace, but always retain the relish of it; for if this salt lose its saltiness, if a Christian revolt from his Christianity, and be no longer under the influence of it, what can recover him, or wherein will ye season him? [7.] Those that present not themselves living sacrifices to God's grace, shall be made forever dying sacrifices to his justice, and, since they would not give honor to Him, He will get honor upon them; they would not be salted with the salt of divine grace, could not bear the corrosives that were necessary to eat out the proud flesh; it was to them like cutting off a hand, or plucking out an eye; and therefore in hell they shall be salted with fire; coals of fire shall be scattered upon them, (Ezek 10: 2.) as salt upon the meat, and brimstone, (Job 18: 15.) as fire and brimstone were rained on Sodom; the pleasures they had lived in shall eat their flesh, as it were fire, Jam. 5: 3. The pain of mortifying the flesh now, is no more to be compared with the punishment for not mortifying it, than salting with burning. And since He had said, that the fire of hell shall not be quenched, but it might be objected, that the fuel will not last always, He here intimates, that, by the power of God it shall be made to last always; for those that are cast into hell, will find the fire to have not only the corroding quality of salt, but its preserving quality; whence it is used to signify that which is lasting; a covenant of salt is a perpetual covenant, and Lot's wife being turned into a pillar of salt, made her a monument of divine vengeance. Now since this will certainly be the doom of those that do not crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, let us, knowing the terror of the Lord, be persuaded to do it.

CHAP. X. v. 1-12. Our Lord did not continue long in a place, for the whole land of Canaan was his parish, and therefore He would visit every part of it, and give instruction in the remotest corners. Here we have Him in the coasts of Judea, by the further side of Jordan eastward, as we found Him, not long since, in the utmost borders westward, near Tyre and Sidon. Thus was his circuit like that of the sun, from whose light and heat nothing is hid. Here He is.

1. Resorted to by the people, v. 1. Wherever He was, they flocked in crowds; they came to Him as they had done, when He had formerly been in these parts, and, as He was wont, He taught them again. Note, Preaching was

e Mat. 2:16. Matt. 5:31, 32. 19:3.
1 Cor. 7:10, 11.
f 1 Cor. 7:10, 11.
g 1 Cor. 10:2.
h 1 Cor. 10:2.
i 1 Cor. 10:2.
j 1 Cor. 10:2.
k 1 Cor. 10:2.
l 1 Cor. 10:2.
m 1 Cor. 10:2.
n 1 Cor. 10:2.
o 1 Cor. 10:2.
p 1 Cor. 10:2.
q 1 Cor. 10:2.
r 1 Cor. 10:2.
s 1 Cor. 10:2.
t 1 Cor. 10:2.
u 1 Cor. 10:2.
v 1 Cor. 10:2.
w 1 Cor. 10:2.
x 1 Cor. 10:2.
y 1 Cor. 10:2.
z 1 Cor. 10:2.

h Deut. 24:1-4. Is. 50:1, Jer. 3:1.
i Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
j Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
k Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
l Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
m Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
n Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
o Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
p Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
q Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
r Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
s Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
t Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
u Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
v Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
w Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
x Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
y Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.
z Gen. 1:27. v. 28-29. 5:2. Mal. 2:1.

Pharisees, had the belief in eternal punishment is clear, both from the O. T., and also from Josephus and Philo. From all which we see that the eternity of punishments denounced against impenitent sinners by Christ, could not appear as a novelty to the ancient world.

BLOOMFIELD.

Ed.

Comp. Jude 6, 7, 13-15 verses.

(49, 50.) 'Salt among the orientals is a symbol of inviolable friendship; a covenant of salt means a perpetual covenant. It is used tropically for wisdom—salt that has lost its savor, for folly.'

These words, salted with fire, are supposed by Williams, Kuinzel, and others, not to refer to the punishment of the wicked, but to the general subject of Christ's discourse, self-denial. 'And' should be translated as, according to WAHL'S Lex. The meaning then is, as every sacrifice must receive in the fire the purifying virtue of salt, so you must be purified in the fires of self-denial and affliction. Trials are good. But if not allowed to produce their legitimate influence, they will tend to spiritual folly and contention, more than to spiritual wisdom and peace. Therefore, have salt, i. e. spiritual wisdom, in yourselves, and peace, of which also salt is a symbol, with one another.

Ed.

NOTES

CHAP. X. v. 2-12. (Notes, Matt. 19: 3-12.) 'This seeming difference, (between this account and that in Matthew's gospel,) may be removed by saying, They first asked Him "Why did Moses command you?" And then our Savior asked them, What were the words of Moses in his case? And when they had repeated them, He tells them the reason why Moses gave them this permission.' Whitby. It is here added, 'If a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another,' &c. This case, which often occurred among the Romans, and sometimes even among the Jews, (having been introduced by Salome, sister to Herod the Great, who sent a bill of divorce to her husband, Costobarus; and her example was followed by Herodias and others,) serves to confirm the conclusion, that our Lord intended to put men and women exactly on the same footing in this matter; so that the

Christ's constant practice; it was what He used to, and wherever He came, He did as He was wont. In Matthew it is said, He healed them; here it is said, He taught them: his cures were to confirm his doctrine, and to commend it, and his doctrine was to explain his cures and illustrate them. His teaching was healing to souls. He taught them again. Note, Even those whom Christ hath taught, have need to be taught again. Such is the fullness of the Christian doctrine, that there is still more to be learned; and such our forgetfulness that we need to be minded of what we do know.

II. He is disputed with by the Pharisees, who envied the progress of his spiritual arms, and did all they could to oppose it; to perplex Him, and to prejudice the people against Him.

Here is, 1. A question they started concerning divorce; (v. 2.) Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? This was a good question, if it had been put with a humble desire to know the mind of God; but they proposed it, seeking an occasion against Him, and an opportunity to expose Him, which side soever He should take of the question. Ministers must stand upon their guard, lest, under pretence of being advised with, they be ensnared.

2. Christ's reply; (v. 3.) What did Moses command you? This He asked them, to testify his respect to the law of Moses, and to show that He came not to destroy it; and to engage them to an impartial respect for Moses' writings, and to compare one part with another.

3. They own that Moses only suffered, or permitted, a man to write his wife a bill of divorce, and to put her away, Deut. 24: 1. 'If you will do it, you must do it in writing, delivered into her own hand, and so put her away, and never return to her again.'

4. Christ abides by the doctrine He had formerly laid down in this case, (Matt. 5: 32.) That whosoever putteth away his wife, except for fornication, causeth her to commit adultery. And to clear this, He here shows,

(1.) That the reason why Moses, in his law, permitted divorce, was such, as that they ought not to make use of that permission; for it was only for the hardness of their hearts, (v. 5.) lest, if they were not permitted to divorce their wives they should murder them; so that none must put away their wives but such as are willing to own that their hearts were so hard as to need this permission.

(2.) The account which Moses, in this history, gives of the institution of marriage, affords such a reason against divorce, as amounts to a pro-

same conduct is in the man adultery against his wife, which in the woman is adultery against her husband. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 5: 31, 32. Luke 16: 16-18. 1 Cor. 7: 1-9.)

(5.) Hardness of heart.] The original word means an obstinate, untractable disposition.

(6-9.) 'Among the ancients, when persons were newly married, they put a yoke upon their necks, or chains upon their arms, to show that they were to be one, closely united, and pulling equally together in all the concerns of life. A fine allegorical representation of the marriage union is found on an antique gem in the collection of the duke of Marlborough: it describes the marriage of Cupid and Psyche. 1. Both are represented as winged, to show the alacrity with which the husband and wife should help, comfort, and support each other: preventing, as much as possible, the expressing of a wish or want on either side, by fulfilling it before it can be expressed. 2. Both are veiled, to show that modesty is an inseparable attendant on pure matrimonial connections. 3. Hymen, or marriage, goes before them with a lighted torch, leading them by a chain, of which each has hold, to show that they are united together, and are bound to each other, and that they are led to this by the pure flame of love, which at the same instant both enlightens and warms them. 4. This chain is not iron or brass, (to intimate that the marriage union is a state of thralldom or slavery,) but it is a chain of pearls, to show that the union is precious, beautiful, and delightful. 5. They hold a dove, the emblem of conjugal fidelity, which they appear to embrace affectionately, to show that they are faithful to each other not merely through duty, but by affection, and that this fidelity contributes to the happiness of their lives. 6. A winged Cupid, or love, is represented as having gone before them, preparing the nuptial feast, to intimate that active affection or warm and cordial love are to them a continual source of comfort and enjoyment. 7. Another Cupid, or genius of love, comes behind, and places on their heads a basket of ripe fruits, to intimate, that such a union will generally be blessed with children, who will be as pleasing to all their senses, as ripe and delicious fruit are to the smell and taste. 8. The genius of love that follows them, has in

8 And they twain shall be ^a one flesh: so then t.ey are no more twain, but one flesh.

9 What ^a therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder

10 And ^a in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.

11 And he saith unto them, ^a Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

13 ¶ And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them; and his ^a disciples rebuked those that brought them.

14 But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, ^a Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; ^a for of such is the kingdom of God.

15 Verily I say unto you, ^a Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

^a 1 Cor. 8:16. Eph. 5:20.

^a Matt. 7:1-3. 1 Cor. 7:10-13.

^a 2° on 4:10. 9:28-33.

^a Matt. 5:31-32. 19:9. Luke 16:13.

^a 1 Cor. 7:10, 11. Heb. 13:4.

^a Matt. 19:13-15. Luke 18:15, 16.

^a 48. 9:28. Ex. 10:9-11. Deut. 31:12, 13. Job 2:16.

^a 5:9. 8:33. Luke 9:54-56. Eph. 4:26.

^a Gen. 17:7, 10-14. Num. 14:31.

^a Deut. 4:37. 29:31, 32. 1 Sam. 1:11.

^a 22:27, 28. Ps. 78:4. 115:14, 15. Is. 65:22. Jer. 22:39, 40. Luke 18:15.

^a 16. Acts 2:39. 3:25. Rom. 11:16.

^a 28. 1 Cor. 7:14. 2° Tim. 1:5. 3:15.

^a Ps. 131:1, 2. Matt. 15:4. 19:14.

^a 1 Cor. 14:20. 1 Tim. 2:2.

^a Matt. 18:3. Luke 19:17. John 3:3-6.

^a 1 Cor. 14:20. 1 Tim. 2:2.

^a Matt. 18:3. Luke 19:17. John 3:3-6.

^a 1 Cor. 14:20. 1 Tim. 2:2.

^a Matt. 18:3. Luke 19:17. John 3:3-6.

^a 1 Cor. 14:20. 1 Tim. 2:2.

^a Matt. 18:3. Luke 19:17. John 3:3-6.

^a 1 Cor. 14:20. 1 Tim. 2:2.

^a Matt. 18:3. Luke 19:17. John 3:3-6.

^a 1 Cor. 14:20. 1 Tim. 2:2.

^a Matt. 18:3. Luke 19:17. John 3:3-6.

^a 1 Cor. 14:20. 1 Tim. 2:2.

^a Matt. 18:3. Luke 19:17. John 3:3-6.

hibition of it. So that if the question be, *What did Moses command?* (v. 3.) it must be answered, 'Though by a temporary proviso he allowed divorce to the Jews, yet, by an eternal reason he forbade it to all the children of Adam and Eve, and that is it which we must abide by.'

Moses tells us, [1.] That God made man *male and female*, one male, and one female; so that Adam could not put away his wife and take another, for there was no other to take, which was an intimation to all his sons, that they must not. [2.] When this male and this female were, by the ordinance of God, joined together in holy marriage, the law was, That a man must leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; (v. 7.) which intimates not only the nearness of the relation, but the perpetuity of it; he shall so cleave to his wife as not to be separated from her. [3.] The result of the relation is, That, though they are *two*, yet they are *one*, they are *one flesh*, v. 8. The union between them is the most intimate that can be, a sacred thing that must not be violated. [4.] God Himself has joined them together; He has not only, as Creator, fitted them to be comforts and helps meet for each other, but He has, in wisdom and goodness, appointed them, who are thus joined together, to live together in love till death. Marriage is not an invention of men, but a divine institution; therefore it is to be religiously observed, and the more, because it is a figure of the mystical union between Christ and his church.

Now, from all this, He infers that men ought not to put their wives asunder, whom God has put so near to them. The bond which God Himself has tied, is not to be lightly untied. They who are for divorcing their wives for every offence, would do well to consider what would become of them, if God should in like manner deal with them. See Isa. 50:1. Jer. 3:1.

5. Christ's discourse with his disciples, in private, about this matter, v. 10, 11. It was an advantage to them, that they had opportunity of personal converse with Christ, not only about gospel-mysteries, but about moral duties, for their further satisfaction. No more is here related of this private conference, than the law Christ laid down in this case—That it is adultery for a man to put away his wife, and marry another; it is adultery *against the wife* he puts away, it is a wrong to her, and a breach of his contract with her, v. 11. He adds, *If a woman shall put away her husband*, that is, elope from him, leave him by consent, and be married to another, she commits adultery, (v. 12.) and it will be no excuse at all for her to say, that it was with the consent of her husband. Wisdom, holiness, and love, reigning in the heart, will make those commands easy, which to the carnal mind may be a heavy yoke.

V. 13-16. It is looked upon as the indication of a kind and tender disposition, to take notice of little children, and this was remarkable in our Lord; which is an encouragement not only to little children to apply themselves to

Christ when they are very young, but to grow up people, who are conscious to themselves of weakness, and of being, through manifold infirmities, helpless like little children. Here we have,

I. Little children brought to Christ, v. 13. Their parents, or their conductors, brought them to Him, that He should touch them, in token of his commanding a blessing on them. It doth not appear that they needed any bodily cure, nor were they capable of being taught; but it seems, 1. That they had the care of them were mostly concerned about their souls, which ought to be the principal care of all parents; for that is the principal part, and it is well with them if it be well with their souls. 2. They believed that Christ's blessing would do their souls good; and therefore to Him they bring them, that He might touch them, knowing that He could reach their hearts, when nothing their parents could say to them, or do for them, would. We may present our children to Christ, now that He is in heaven, for even thence He can reach them with his blessing, and therein we may use faith upon the fullness and extent of his grace, the kind intimations He hath always given of favor to the seed of the faithful, the tenor of the covenant with Abraham, and the promise to us and to our children, especially that great promise of pouring his Spirit upon our seed, and his blessing upon our offspring, Isa. 44:3.

II. The disciples rebuked them that brought them; as if they had been sure that they knew their Master's mind in this matter, whereas He had lately cautioned them not to despise the little ones.

III. Christ took it very ill that his disciples should keep them off; *When He saw it, He was much displeased*, v. 14. 'What do you mean? Will you hinder me from doing good to the rising generation, to the lambs of the flock?' Christ is very angry with his own disciples, if they discountenance any in coming to Him themselves, or in bringing their children to Him. He ordered that they should be brought to Him, and nothing said or done to hinder them; suffer little children, as soon as they are capable, to come to me, to offer up their supplications to me, and to receive instructions from me. Little children are welcome betimes to the throne of grace with their hosannas. He owned them as members of his church, as they had been of the Jewish church. He came to set up the kingdom of God among men, and took this occasion to declare that that kingdom admitted little children to be the subjects of it, and gave them a title to the privileges of subjects. Nay, the kingdom of God is to be kept up by such; they must be taken in when they are little children, that they may be secured to bear the name of Christ. There must be something of the temper and disposition of little children found in all that Christ will own and bless. We must receive the kingdom of God as little children; (v. 15.) that is, We must stand affected to Christ and his grace, as little children do to their parents and teachers. We

wings shrivelled up, or the feathers all curled, so as to render them utterly unfit for flight, to intimate, that love is to abide with them, and that there is to be no separation in affection. See the plate in BRYANT'S Analysis of Ancient Mythology.

(12.) Josephus affords a double example of this practice. His first wife left him, and he married another. Her he divorced, after having three children by her, and then married a third.

Though this discourse be originally about divorce; yet it seems plainly to evince, that polygamy must be unlawful under the Christian economy. For, from Christ's saying, "He that putteth away his wife, and marries another, committeth adultery against her;" it clearly follows, that he, who having not put her away, marries another, must be guilty of the same crime; seeing he must have at least the same power to marry another, when the first is put away, as when she is not.

Notes, Matt. 19: 13-15. Luke 15: 15-17. Christ's regard to children, not only must have been exceedingly pleasing to the parents, but the memory of this condescension might make lasting impressions on the children themselves; and the sight must be encouraging to other young persons, who might happen to be present. Nicephorus tells, that the celebrated Ignatius, afterwards bishop of Antioch, was one of these infants. Our Lord might reasonably be the more displeased with the disciples, for endeavoring to prevent their being brought; as He has so lately set a child among them, and insisted on the necessity

'of their being made conformable to it.' Doddridge. The language, in this gospel, is more emphatic than that in Matthew; and it must be obvious, that the exhortations and instructions, which might have been addressed both to the parents and the children, and by the parents to their children, as a subsequent improvement of the transaction, must have been in many respects similar to those, which may be grounded on infant baptism, when duly improved. The passage therefore, though not a direct proof, has surely a favorable aspect towards bringing out infant offering to Christ, seeking his blessing on them, and devoting them to his service, in this sacrament; provided it be done intelligently and uprightly.

(15.) 'We must receive the kingdom as little children; we must stand affected to Christ as little children to their parents. Little children are not guileful and deceitful, but plain and simple; they are strangers to artful disguises; they are not obstinate; they rely on the instructions of their parents. Their anger does not last long. So Christians in malice are children.' 1 Cor. 14:20. Here is therefore a fit and lively emblem of the followers of the Lamb.' J. EDWARDS.

'He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.' What Christian parent does not beseech Him thus to embrace his children in the arms of his mercy, to lay his hands on them and bless them? And is not this the language of parents in presenting their children for baptism, if rightly understood and attended to?

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16 And ^ahe took them up in his arms, put ^bhis hands upon them, and blessed them.

[Practical Observations.]

17 ¶ And ^awhen he was gone forth into the way, there came one ^brunning, and ^ckneeled to him, and ^dasked him, ^eGood Master, ^fwhat shall I do that I may inherit ^geternal life?

18 And Jesus said unto him, ^aWhy callest thou me good? ^bthere is none good but one, ^cthat is, God.

a Gen. 1:1-16, Deut. 28:3, Is. 40:1, Luke 2:28-34, 24:50, 51, John 2:15-17.
b Matt. 19:16, Luke 18:17 &c.
c 9:25, Matt. 28:8, John 20:2-4.
d 1:40, Dan. 6:10, Matt. 17:14.
e 12:14, John 3:2.
f John 6:28, Acts 2:37, 9:6, 16:30, Rom. 10:1-4.
g John 5:39, 6:27-40, Rom. 2:7, 6:23, 1 John 2:25.
h Matt. 19:17, Luke 18:19, John 5:1, 4:34, Rom. 8:12.
i 1 Sam. 2:2, Ps. 36:7, 8, 119:63, Jeru. 1:17, 1 John 4:16.

must be *inquisitive*, as children must learn as children, and in learning must *believe*. The mind of a child is white paper, you may write upon it what you will; such must our minds be to the pen of the Spirit. Children are under government; so must we be. *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?* We must receive the kingdom of God as the child Samuel did, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth*. Little children depend upon their parents' wisdom, are carried in their arms, go where they send them, and take what they provide; and thus must we receive the *kingdom of God*, with an humble resignation of ourselves to Christ, and an easy dependence upon Him both for strength and righteousness, for tuition, provision, and a portion. He received the children, and gave them what was desired; (v. 16.) *He took them up in his arms*, in token of his affectionate concern; *put his hands upon them*, as was desired, and *blessed them*. He outdid the desires of the parents; they begged He would touch them, but He did more. *He took them in his arms*. Now the scripture was fulfilled, (Isa. 40: 11.) *He shall gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in his bosom*. The time was, when Christ Himself was taken up in old Simeon's arms, Luke 2: 28. And now He took up these children, not complaining of the burthen, (as Moses did, when he was bid to carry Israel, that peevish child, in his bosom, as a nursing father bears the child, Num. 11: 12.) but pleased with it. If we in a right manner bring our children to Christ, He will take them up, not only in the arms of his providence, but in the arms of his

grace; (as Ezek. 16: 8.) underneath them *are the everlasting arms*. He put his hands upon them, denoting the bestowing of his Spirit, (for that is the hand of the Lord,) and his setting them apart for Himself. (3.) *He blessed them with spiritual blessings*. Our children are happy, if they have but the *Mediator's blessing* for their portion. It is true we do not read that He baptized these children; baptism was not fully settled as the door of admission into the church, till after Christ's resurrection; but He asserted their visible church-membership, and by another sign bestowed those blessings upon them, which are now appointed to be conveyed and conferred by baptism, the seal of the promise, which is to us and to our children.

V. 17-31. Here is,

I. A *hopeful meeting* between Christ and a young man; such he is said to be, (Matt. 19: 20-22.) and a ruler; (Luke 18: 18.) a person of quality. Some circumstances here are, which we had not in Matthew, which make his address to Christ very promising.

1. He came *running* to Christ, an indication of his humility; he laid aside the gravity and grandeur of a ruler, when he came to Christ: thus he manifested his earnestness; he ran, as one in haste, longing to be in conversation with Christ. He had now an opportunity of consulting this great Prophet, in the things that belonged to his peace, and he would not lose the opportunity.

2. He came to Him when He was *in the way*, in the midst of company: he did not insist upon a private conference with Him by night,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-16. Our Lord has given his ministers an example of being 'instant in season and out of season,' in 'preaching the Word,' whenever or wherever the people are disposed to hear it; notwithstanding the malice of those who 'watch for their halting.'—We should expect to be frequently proved with 'ensnaring questions' from Pharisees and infidels; and we should study to be expert in answering them pertinently, and in 'the meekness of wisdom.' (Notes, *Proph.* 26: 4, 5. 1 *Pet.* 3: 13-16.) In general, our appeal must be to the plain testimony of God's Word: yet in applying texts of Scripture to particular cases, ^a accurate attention to the meaning and design of the sacred writer is absolutely necessary: and many distinctions must be noted, between temporary appointments or allowances, 'because of the hardness of men's hearts,' or with reference to peculiar circumstances; and those truths and precepts, which are of universal obligation. Almost all errors in doctrine and practice have been grounded on wrong conclusions from texts, either misinterpreted, or misapplied. But the 'unprejudiced, who love the truths and ways of God, and depend on the teaching of the Holy Spirit, will be conducted through such difficulties, as are insurmountable to those, who 'lean to their own understandings.'—True religion will teach us our duty in every relation of life, and render us comfortable in ourselves, and blessings to each other: so that even those restrictions, which to carnal men appear intolerable, become pleasant to the consistent Christian; and he considers the liberty for which others contend, as the source of confusion and misery.—Those 'whom God hath joined together,' and taught to be helpers and blessings to each other, as having one inseparable interest here, and as being 'heirs together of the grace

of life' (Notes, *Eph.* 5: 22-33. 1 *Pet.* 3: 1-7.) if they have children, will bring them, by their united prayers, to Jesus, for his salvation; He will be 'much displeased with all,' who would discourage them in so doing; for all men ought to be 'exhorted to seek his blessing on those with whom they are connected.' (P. O. *Matt.* 19: 1-15.) Even 'little children should be suffered' and directed to go to the Savior, as soon as they are capable of understanding his words: they should be assured that He will regard their lisping petitions; and all his ministers should copy his condescending regard to the lambs of the flock, the young, the newly awakened, the weak believers, the poor, or the discouraged; that they may be his instruments to them in establishment and comfort. (Notes, *Is.* 40: 9-11.) While we consider the case of children, and remember that 'of such is the kingdom of God;' let us attend to our Lord's declaration, that 'whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.' No man of distinguished learning, or abilities, can be a subject of the kingdom of grace here, or of the kingdom of glory hereafter, who will not receive instruction in the simple teachable spirit, with which a child learns the elements of knowledge, from its teacher. (Note, *Matt.* 11: 27.) 'If any man therefore be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise' unto salvation; and, as scarcely any thing militates so much against this submission of the understanding to the Word of God, as the pride of human wisdom; so not many of the wise and learned, any more than of the rich and noble, have hitherto been found among the followers of Christ. (Notes, 1 *Cor.* 1: 26-31. 3: 18-23.)

SCOTT.

(16.) 'If Christ embraced them, why should not his church? Why not dedicate them to God by baptism? By sprinkling, washing, or immersion? for we need not dispute about the mode: I confess, it appears to me grossly heathenish, to see parents, who profess to believe that Christ loves children, and among them those whose creed does not prevent them from using infant baptism, depriving their children of an ordinance by which no soul can prove that they cannot be profited; and through an unaccountable bigotry or carelessness, withhold from them the privilege of even a nominal dedication to God.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

We must not deceive ourselves as to the force of this example. We must remember that there were certain conditions connected with the blessing here bestowed. In this case, the children were neither present accidentally, nor introduced in compliance with a formal practice; they were brought to Jesus by persons interested in them; in reliance on his power, in faith of the virtue which might proceed from Him, and be a blessing to these children. When a like faith is shown in a like manner, the conduct of our Lord gives reason to suppose that He will not withhold that blessing. Bp. SUMNER.

Verses 17-31.

(Notes, *Matt.* 19: 16-30. *Luke* 18: 18-30.) (17.) *Good Master.* It is said that the Rabbinists affected this title, which shows the peculiar property of our Lord's answer.

SCOTT.
Some understand by this passage, a denial of supreme divinity by Jesus Christ in Himself. But, if He here denies that He is God, He denies that He is good. Now as we know Christ to be good, the passage proves any thing to this point. It proves that He is God. Ed.

In the account of this instructive history, which we find in these of the evangelists, one circumstance is noted by St. Mark alone. Jesus beholding him, loved him. It seems probable therefore, that where he says of the commandments, *Master, all these have I observed from my youth*, he did not mean to make a self-righteous boast, but to say that he knew the will of God as contained in the law, and that he had directed his life generally according to that law. Otherwise we should hardly be told that Jesus loved him, except as He loves all mankind:—He would hardly have felt a special interest in him. Bp. SUMNER.

One design of this instructive wisdom with which the Scriptures are written, is found in this: that they show us real characters, characters of men of like passions and circumstances with ourselves. We see how these have acted, and the consequences, and we are enabled to judge with more accuracy and effect than would otherwise be possible, whose example is to be imitated and whose avoided. In this history, for instance, we see a man who refused the advice of the Redeemer, and we see others who did not refuse. Which made the choice of wisdom? Had this young man sold all that he had, and divided it among the poor, and become a disciple of Jesus, his relations and friends would surely have wondered at his folly. We, however, looking back, are enabled to form a more just opinion. He chose to retain his earthly treasure, and to refuse the offer of treasure in heaven. This happened eighteen hundred years ago. What is now become of his great possessions? Can they confer happiness on his soul, or prevent his misery? Could he have kept them eighteen hundred years, it might appear something: it is a long period of time, except when con-

19 Thou knowest the commandments, 'Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, 'Defraud not, Honor thy father and mother.

20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, 'all these have I observed from my youth.

21 Then Jesus, beholding him, 'loved him, and said unto him, 'One thing thou lackest: go thy way, 'sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have 'treasure in heaven: and come, 'take up the cross, and follow me.

22 And he was 'sad at that saying, and went away grieved: 'for he had great possessions.

23 And Jesus 'looked round about, and said unto his disciples, 'How hardly shall they that have riches, 'enter into the kingdom of God!

24 And the disciples were 'astounded at his words. But Jesus

as Nio Jemus did, though like him he was a ruler, but when he shall find Him without, will embrace that opportunity of advising with Him, and not be ashamed, Cant. 8: 1.

3. He kneeled to Him, in token of the great veneration he had for Him, as a Teacher come from God, and his earnest desire to be taught by Him. He bowed the knee to Jesus, as one that would not only do obedience to Him, but would yield obedience to Him always; he bowed the knee, as one that meant to bow the soul to Him.

4. His address to Him was serious and weighty: *Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?* Eternal life was an article of his creed, though then denied by the Sadducees; he thinks it a thing possible, that he may inherit eternal life; he asks, What he shall do now, that he may be happy forever! Most men inquire for good to be had in this world, (Ps. 4: 6.) any good; he asks for good to be done in this world, in order to the enjoyment of the greatest good in the other world; not, Who will make us to see good? But, 'Who will make us to do good?' He inquires for happiness in the way of duty. 'This was a very serious question in itself, about eternal things, and his own concern in those things. Note, Then there begins to be some hope of people, when they begin to inquire solicitously, what they shall do to get to heaven. It was proposed to a Person every way fit to answer it, being Himself the Way, the Truth, and the Life, the true way to life, to eternal life; who came from heaven, on purpose, first, to lay open for us, and then to lay open to us, the way to heaven. Note, Those who would know what they shall do to be saved, must apply themselves to Christ; it is peculiar to the Christian religion, both to show eternal life, and to show the way. It was proposed with a good design—to be instructed. We find this same question put by a lawyer, not kneeling, but standing up, (Luke 10: 25.) with a bad design, to quarrel with Him; he tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do? It is not so much the good words, as the good intention of them, that Christ looks at.

5. Christ encouraged this address, (1.) By assisting his faith, v. 17. He called Him good Master: Christ would have him mean thereby, that he looked upon Him to be God, since there is none good but one, that is God, who is one, and his name one; Zech. 14: 9. Our English word, God, doubtless hath affinity with good: as the Hebrews name God by his power, Elohim, the strong God; so we by his goodness, the good God. (2.) By directing his practice; (v. 19.) *Keep the commandments.* He mentions the six commandments of the second table, which prescribe our duty to our neighbor; He inverts the order, putting the seventh commandment before the sixth, to intimate that adultery is a sin no less heinous than murder. The fifth commandment is here put last, as that which should especially be remembered and observed, to keep us to all the rest. Instead of the tenth commandment, *Thou shalt not covet*, our Savior here puts, *Defraud not*. 'Thou shalt rest contented with thy own, and not seek to increase it by the diminution of other men's.' It is a rule of justice not to advance ourselves by doing injury to any other.

6. The young man bid fair for heaven, having

been free from any open violations of the divine commands. Thus far he was able to say in some measure, (v. 20.) *Master, all these have I observed from my youth.* He thought he had, and his neighbors thought so. Note, Ignorance of the extent and spiritual nature of the divine law, makes people think themselves better than they are. Paul was alive without the law. But when he saw that to be spiritual, he saw himself to be carnal, Rom. 7: 9, 14. However, he that could say he was free from scandalous sin, went further than many in the way to eternal life. But though we know nothing by ourselves yet are we not thereby justified.

7. Christ had a kindness for him: *Jesus beholding him, loved him*, v. 21. He was pleased to find that he had lived inoffensively, and pleased to see that he was inquisitive how to live better. Christ particularly loves to see young people, and rich people, asking the way to heaven, with their faces thitherward.

II. Here is a sorrowful parting between Christ and this young man.

1. Christ gave him a command of trial, whether he did in sincerity aim at eternal life: he seems to have his heart much upon it, and, if so, he is what he should be; but has he indeed his heart upon it? Bring him to the touchstone. (1.) Can he find in his heart to part with his riches for the service of Christ? He hath a good estate, and now, shortly, at the founding of the Christian church, necessity will require that those who have lands, sell them, and lay the money at the apostles' feet; Acts 4: 34. After a while, tribulation and persecution will arise, because of the word; and he must be forced to sell his estate, or have it taken from him. Let him know the worst now; if he will not come up to these terms, let him quit his pretensions. 'Sell whatsoever thou hast above what is necessary for thy support,' probably he had no family to provide for; let him therefore be a father to the poor, and make them his heirs. Every man, according to his ability, must relieve the poor, and be content, when there is occasion, to straiten himself to do it. Worldly wealth is given us, not only as maintenance to bear our charges through this world, according to our place in it, but as a talent to be used and employed for the glory of our great Master in the world, who hath so ordered it, that the poor we should have always with us as his receivers. (2.) Can he find in his heart to go through the costliest services he may be called to as a disciple of Christ, and depend upon Him for a recompense in heaven? He asks Christ what he shall do, more than he has done, to obtain eternal life; and Christ puts it to him, whether he has indeed that firm belief of, and that high value for, eternal life, that he seems to have. Doth he really believe there is a treasure in heaven sufficient to make up all he can leave, or lose, or lay out for Christ? Is he willing to deal with Christ upon trust? Can he give Him credit for all he is worth; and be willing to bear a present cross, in expectation of a future crown?

2. (v. 22.) He was sad at that saying; was sorry that he could not be a follower of Christ, upon easier terms than leaving all; that he could not lay hold on eternal life, and keep hold of temporal possessions. But, since he could

pared with eternity. But we know that he could not have enjoyed them more than twenty or thirty years, the average of human life. Whereas, had he obeyed the invitation of our LORD, whenever he departed, he would have been "with CHRIST;" he would already have been in the enjoyment of happiness unspeakable, and would possess the sure prospect of still greater happiness. Can we doubt what his choice would be now? Suffer then his experience to determine you.

Ep. SUMNER.

(19.) 'The Jews were not accustomed, in ordinary discourse, or in the commonly published books, to recite the precepts of the decalogue in the very words in which they were expressed, but in other words, or in another order. Nay, from Josephus, it appears they scarcely thought it lawful to do so, at least to the Gentiles.' WESTERN.

Defraud not | This is supposed by some expositors to be here substituted instead of the tenth commandment; yet that is far more extensive in its requirement. (Notes, Ex. 20: 17. Rom. 7: 7. In R.) 'Surely all endeavors to defraud show a very covetous mind: In claiming us against the dictates of our consciences, and to the damage of our precious souls to defraud and er of his right. ... The word ...

'signifies also to detain, and keep back a thing when it is due. ...

'And surely they who desire thus to detain that which belongs to others, and they know they much want, must covet to have at that time what is another's. ... He pays less than he ought, who pays not in due time.' WHITBY. (Notes, Ex. 20: 17. 1 Tim. 6: 6-10, et. 3-10.)

(21.) Loved him | There was an amableness in this young ruler, compared with the base conduct of the scribes, Pharisees, and many others, which excited our Lord's compassion; and, as He was like us in all things, sin excepted, we may suppose that He felt that tender regard for him, which pious ministers do for some in their congregations, who appear amiable, but whom they do not consider at present as truly religious. (21.) Take up thy cross. | (Notes, Matt. 16: 24-23, v. 24. Luke 9: 18-27, v. 23.) 'The cross' is some trial or suffering which might be avoided by turning out of the way of duty, but cannot otherwise: as the cross lay in our Lord's path, and He took it up, can it be, and was called to it, not turning aside because of it. (Marg. Ref. v. 24.) Trust in riches | (Marg. Ref. v. 24-Notes, Job 31: 24-38. Ps. 62: 8-10. 1 Tim. 6: 17-19.) The danger consists not in possessing, but confiding in riches; and the difficulty consists in possessing

answered again, and saith unto them, 'Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!

25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, 'What then can be saved?

27 And Jesus, looking upon them, saith, 'With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

28 Then Peter began to say unto him, 'Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee.

29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, 'There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,

30 But he shall receive an hundred-fold now in this time, houses and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecu-

not come up to the terms of discipleship, he was so fair as not to pretend to it; *He went away grieved*. Here appeared the truth of that, (Matt 6: 24.) *Ye cannot serve God and mammon*; while he held to mammon, he did in effect despise Christ, as all those do who prefer the world before Him. He bids for what he has a mind for in the market, yet goes away grieved, and leaves it, because he cannot have it at his own price. That which ruined this young man was, *he had great possessions*; thus the prosperity of fools destroys them, and those who spend their days in wealth, are tempted to say to God, *Depart from us*; or to their hearts, *Depart from God*.

III. Here is Christ's discourse with his disciples. We are tempted to wish that Christ had mollified that saying which frightened this young man from following Him, and, by any explanation, taken off the harshness of it: but He knew all men's hearts; He would not court him to be his follower, because he was rich, and a ruler; if he will go, let him go. Christ will keep no man against his will; and therefore we do not find that Christ called him back, but took this occasion to instruct his disciples in two things.

1. The difficulty of the salvation of those who have an abundance; because there are few, who have much to leave, that can be persuaded to leave it for Christ, or to lay it out in doing good.

(1.) Christ asserts this here; *He looked about upon his disciples*, because He would have them all take notice of what He said, that by it they might have their judgments rightly informed, and their mistakes rectified, concerning worldly wealth; *How hardly shall they who have riches enter into the kingdom of God!* v. 23. They have many temptations to grapple with, and many difficulties to get over, which lie not in the way of the poor. He calls the disciples children, because as such they should be portioned by Him with better things than this young man left Christ to cleave to; and whereas He had said, *How hardly will those that have riches get to heaven!* here He tells them, that the danger arose not so much from their having riches, as from the trusting to them, expecting protection, and a portion from them; saying to their gold, what they should say only to God, *Thou art my hope*. Job 31: 24. They that have such a value as this for the wealth of the world, will never be brought to put a right value upon Christ and his grace. They that have ever so much riches, but do not trust in them, that see the vanity of them, and their insufficiency to make a soul happy, have got over the difficulty, and can easily part with them for Christ; but they that have ever so little, if they set their hearts upon that little, it will keep them from Christ. He enforces this assertion with, (v. 25.) *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man that trusts in riches, or inclines to do so, to enter into the kingdom of God.* The disproportion here seems so great, (though the more so, the more it answers the intention,) that some have labored to bring the camel and the eye of the needle a little nearer together. [1.] Some imagine there might be some wicket gate, or door, to Jerusalem, commonly known by the name of the needle's eye, for its straitness, through which a camel could not be got, unless he were unloaded and made to kneel. Gen. 24: 11. So a rich man cannot get to heaven, unless he be willing to part with the burthen of his wealth, and stoop to the duties of a humble religion, and so enter in at the strait

gate. Others suggest that the word we translate a camel, sometimes signifies a cable rope which, though not to be got through a needle's eye, yet is of greater affinity to it. A rich man, compared with the poor, is as a cable to a single thread, stronger, but not so pliable, and it will not go through the needle's eye, unless untwisted. So the rich man must be loosed from his riches, and then there is some hope of him, that thread by thread he may be got through the eye of the needle, otherwise he is good for nothing but to cast anchor in the earth.

(2.) This truth surprised the disciples; *They were astonished out of measure, and said among themselves, Who then can be saved?* They knew what were generally the sentiments of the Jewish teachers—that the Spirit of God chooses to reside upon rich men; nay, they knew what abundance of promises there were in the Old Testament, of temporal good things; they knew likewise that all either are rich or poor would be so, and that they who are rich have so much the larger opportunities of doing good, and therefore were amazed to hear that it should be so hard for rich people to go to heaven.

(3.) Christ reconciled them to it, by referring it to the almighty power of God, to help even rich people over the difficulties that lie in the way of their salvation; (v. 23.) *He looked upon them*, to engage their attention, and said, 'With men it is impossible; rich people cannot by their own skill or resolution get over these difficulties, but the grace of God can do it, for with Him all things are possible. If the righteous scarcely are saved, much more may we say so of the rich; and therefore, when any get to heaven, they must give all the glory to God, who worketh in them both to will and to do.

2. The greatness of the salvation of those that have but a little of this world, and leave it, Christ speaks of, upon occasion of Peter's mentioning that he and the rest of the disciples had left all to follow Him, v. 28. 'You have done well,' saith Christ, 'and it will prove well for yourselves; you shall be abundantly recompensed, and not only you shall be recompensed, who have left but a little, but those that have ever so much, though it were so much as this young man had, yet they shall have much more than an equivalent. (1.) The loss is supposed to be very great; he specifies, [1.] *Worldly wealth; houses* are here put first, and lands last. If a man quit his house, which should be for his habitation, and his land, which should be for his maintenance, and so make himself a beggar and outcast, this has been the choice of suffering saints; 'Farewell houses and lands, though ever so desirable, though the inheritance of fathers, for the house from heaven, and the inheritance of saints in light, where are many mansions.' [2.] *Dear relations, father and mother, wife and children, brethren and sisters*; in these, as much as in any temporal blessing, the comfort of life is bound up; (without these, the world would be a wilderness;) yet, when we must either forsake these, or Christ, we must remember, that we stand in nearer relation to Christ than to any creature; and therefore, to keep in with Him, we must be content to break with all the world, and say to father and mother, as Levi did, *I have not known you*. The greatest trial of a good man's constancy is, when his love to Christ comes to stand in competition with a love that is lawful, nay, that is his duty. It is easy to such an one to forsake a lust for Christ, for he hath that within him that rises against it; but to forsake a father, a brother, a wife, for Christ, those whom he knows he must love, is hard.

a John 13: 31-32. Gal. 4: 19. 1 John 2: 1, 4, 5, 21.
b Job 31: 24, 25. Ps. 17: 14. 49: 7, 9, 12. 7: 62. Prov. 13: 13. 18: 11. 23: 5. Jer. 9: 23. Ec. 28: 4-5. Hab. 2: 9. Zeph. 1: 18. Luke 21: 21-21. 16: 14. 1 Tim. 6: 17. Jam. 5: 1-3.
c Jer. 18: 23. Matt. 7: 3-5. 19: 24, 25. 23: 21. Luke 18: 25.
d 6: 51. 7: 37. 2 Cor. 11: 23.
e Luke 13: 23. 18: 25. Acts 16: 31.
f Gen. 18: 13. Num. 11: 21-23. 2 Kings 7: 2. Zech. 8: 8. Matt. 19: 26. Luke 24: 27.
g Job 4: 2. Jer. 17: 27. Luke 1: 37. Phil. 3: 21. Heb. 7: 25. 11: 19.
h 1: 18-20. Matt. 19: 27-30. Luke 18: 13. 18: 30. Phil. 3: 7-9.
i Gen. 12: 1-3. 45: 21. Deut. 3: 9-11. Luke 22: 28-30. Heb. 11: 24-26.
k 8: 23. Matt. 5: 10, 11. 10: 18. 1 Cor. 9: 8, 9. Rev. 2: 13.
l 2 Chr. 29: 9. Ps. 84: 11. Prov. 9: 10. 16: 16. Mal. 3: 10. Matt. 12: 44-46. 2 Cor. 6: 10. 9: 8-11. Phil. 3: 2. 2 Thes. 2: 16. 1 Tim. 6: 8. 1 John 3: 31. Rev. 2: 9, 11.
m 5: 11. 5: 11. John 16: 23. Acts 5: 11. 16: 25. Rom. 6: 3. Jam. 1: 2-4. 12. 5: 11. 1 Pet. 4: 12-16.

and not confid in them. (30.) *With persecutions.* Or, notwithstanding persecutions; nay, in the midst of persecutions; for where tribulation abounded, consolation likewise abounded. The comfort of communion with God, as aided greatly by the communion of the saints, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, seems especially intended. (Marg. Ref. i-n.—Notes. Rom. 5: 3-5. 1 Cor. 3: 18-23. 2 Cor. 1: 7-9. 2 Cor. 6-6.) The promise indeed cannot be understood literally, but as relating to blessings immensely more than equivalent; among which kind and valuable Christian friends may be numbered.

30. 'Those who have left all for Christ do find spiritual relations to them as fathers, mothers, &c. Often the promise of a hundred

fold is literally fulfilled: for wherever a Christian travels among Christians, the shelter of their houses, and the product of their lands, are at his service as far as they are requisite. With persecutions.] While they meet with nothing but kindness, from true Christians, they will be afflicted by the enemies of God.

Dr. A. CLARKE. 'There may indeed,' observes Bloomfield, modestly, 'appear some difficulty in this passage; but, were it greater, I would not consent to abandon and cut it out, as some have proposed. In such a case, we should rather commend it to the labors of our successors. How many passages are there, of which, two centuries ago, no tolerable account had been given, which now, by the successful labors of many generations of philologists and theologians, have been completely illustrated

tions; and if the world to come a eternal life.

31 But many that are first shall be last, and the last first.

[Practical Observations]

32 ¶ And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,

33 Saying, Behold we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:

34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him; and the third day he shall rise again.

John 10:23. Rom. 6:23. 1 John 2:25.
Matt. 8:11, 12. 19:30. 20:16. 21:21. Luke 7:29, 30, 40-47. 13:30. 18:11-14. Acts 13:46-48. Rom. 9:30-33.
Matt. 20:17. Luke 18:31.
John 3:28. Luke 9:51. John 11:8, 16.
4:34. Matt. 11:25. 13:11. Luke 10:23, 24.
6:31. 9:31. Matt. 16:21. 17:22, 23. 20:17-19. Luke 9:22. 18:31-33. 24:5, 7.
14:61. Matt. 26:69. Acts 13:27, 28. 17:1.
15:1. Matt. 27:2. Luke 23:1, 2, 21. John 18:28. 19:11. Acts 13:14.
14:85. 15:17-20, 23-31. Ps. 22:6. 13:1. Luke 22:37-41. Luke 22:63-65. 23:11, 35-39. John 19:2, 3.
11:65. Job 30:10. Is. 50:6. Matt. 26:67.
Ps. 18:10. Hos. 6:2. Jon. 1:17. 2:1. Matt. 12:39, 40. 1 Cor. 15:4.

V. 17-31. Whatever increases pride, and attachment to the world, must enhance the difficulty of embracing the Gospel. If it were not the determination of God, that 'no flesh shall glory in his presence,' the case of rulers, scribes, and Pharisees would be more hopeful. Many of them will call Jesus 'Good Master'; seem to have serious thoughts about 'eternal life'; and approve, and even profess to obey, several of the commandments; but they do not understand the holiness of the divine character, the spirituality and extent of the law, the evil and desert of sin, their own guilt and depravity, the nature of salvation, or their need of the Redeemer's righteousness, and the regenerating Spirit. A sharp trial often proves even their moral goodness defective, and to be carnal selfishness in a more decent garb: so that self-denying duties no more suit their love of this present world, than the doctrines of grace their self-complacency. They appear to be sorry, that they cannot reconcile the service of God and mammon, obey Christ and keep the world: but they cannot think of leaving an earthly treasure, which they have in possession, for the hope of a heavenly treasure, by 'taking up the cross and following Christ.' All these evils are enhanced by wealth: few can possess riches, without loving them and trusting in them: and it is extremely difficult to break the strong bands, which hold a carnal mind to large possessions. So that Jesus speaks to us, 'as to children,' when he reminds us, 'How hardly shall

And yet he must do so, rather than deny Christ. Thus great is the loss supposed to be; but it is for Christ's sake, that He may be honored, and the Gospel's, that that may be promoted. It is not the suffering; but the cause, that makes the martyr. And therefore, (2.) The advantage will be great. [1.] They shall receive a hundred-fold in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters; not in specie, but that which is equivalent. He shall have abundance of comfort while he lives, sufficient to make up all his losses; his relation to Christ, his communion with his saints, and his title to eternal life, shall be to him brethren and sisters, and houses, and all. God's providence gave Job double to what he had had, but suffering Christians shall have a hundred-fold in the comforts of the Spirit, sweetening their creature comforts. But it is added here in Mark, with persecutions. Even when they are gainers by Christ, let them still expect to be sufferers for Him; and not to be out of the each of persecution, till they come to heaven. Nay, The persecutions seem to come in here among the *receptions*, in this present time; for unto you it is given, not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for his name; yet this is not all, [2.] They shall have eternal life in the world to come. If they receive a hundred-fold in this world, one would think they should not be encouraged to expect more. Yet, as if that were a small matter, they shall have life eternal; which is more than ten thousand-fold, ten thousand times told, for all their losses. But because they talked so much, and really more than became them, of leaving all for Christ, He tells them, though they were first called that there should be disciples called after them, that should be preferred before them; as St. Paul, who was one born out of due time, and yet labored more abundantly than all the rest of the apostles, 1 Cor. 15:10. Then the first were last, and the last first.

V. 32-45. Here is,

I. Christ's prediction of his own sufferings; this string he harped much upon, though in the ears of his disciples it sounded harsh and unpleasant.

1. How bold He was; when they were going up to Jerusalem, *Jesus went before them*, as the Captain of our salvation, now to be made perfect through sufferings, v. 32. Thus He showed Himself forward to go on with his undertaking, even when He came to the hardest part of it. Now that the time was at hand, He said, *Lo, I come*; so far was He from drawing back, that now, more than ever, He pressed forward. *Jesus went before them, and they were amazed.* They began now to consider what imminent danger they ran themselves into, when they went to Jerusalem; how very malicious the sanhedrim was against their Master and them;

and they were ready to tremble at the thought of it. Therefore, *Christ went before them*. 'Come,' saith He, 'surely you will venture where your Master ventures.' Note, When we see ourselves entering upon sufferings, it is encouraging to see our Master go before us. Or, *He went before them, and therefore they were amazed*, they admired to see with what cheerfulness and alacrity He went on, though He knew He was going on to suffer. Note, Christ's courage and constancy in going on with our salvation, are the wonder of all his disciples.

2. His disciples, as they followed, were afraid; for themselves, as being apprehensive of their own danger; and justly might they be ashamed of their being thus afraid. Their Master's courage should have put spirit into them.

3. To silence their fears, He did not go about to make the matter better than it was, or say that He might escape the storm; but told them again, as often before, the things that should happen to Him. He knew the worst, and therefore went on boldly, and He let them know the worst. Come, be not afraid; for, (1.) There is no remedy, the matter is determined. (2.) It is only the Son of man that shall suffer; their time of suffering was not at hand, He will now provide for their security. (3.) He shall rise again; the issue of his sufferings will be glorious to himself, and advantageous to all that are his, v. 33, 34. The method and particulars of Christ's sufferings are more largely foretold here, than in any other of the predictions—that He shall first be delivered up by Judas to the chief priests and the scribes; that they shall condemn Him to death, but not having power to put Him to death, shall deliver Him to the Gentiles, the Roman powers, and they shall mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit upon Him, and kill Him. Christ had a perfect foresight, not only of his own death, but of all the circumstances of it; yet He thus went forth to meet it.

II. The ambitious request of two of his disciples. This story is much the same here as in Matt. 20:20. Only there they are said to have made their request by their mother, here, themselves; she presented their petition, they assented to it.

Note, 1. As, on the one hand, there are some that do not use, so, on the other hand, there are some that abuse, the encouragements Christ has given us in prayer. He hath said, *Ask, and it shall be given you*; and it is a commendable faith to ask for great things: but it was a culpable presumption in these disciples to make such a boundless demand upon their Master. *We would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire.* We had much better leave it to Him to do for us what He sees fit,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven? And instead of expressing our astonishment, or indulging our speculations, let us learn contentment in a low estate: or if a higher be allotted us, let us watch against confidence in riches, and the love of them, or anything that can be purchased with them. (Note, Prov. 30:7-9.) Let us pray to be enabled to part with every earthly object for Christ's sake; and to use all, which we are allowed to keep, in his service, as faithful stewards. (Notes, and P. O. Luke 16:1-12.) and let us be encouraged to pray for the rich especially, and to employ means for their good, remembering, 'that with God all things are possible.'—But, whatever our circumstances be, we shall be called on to prove our sincerity by renouncing some temporal advantages for Christ's sake. The trial may be sharp, but the recollection of having made the sacrifice will afterwards turn unto us for a testimony: and to encourage us in so doing, we are assured of immense compensation even in this present world, as well as of 'eternal life in that to come.' If we have true faith, we shall be satisfied with this security, and expect the promised blessing; and thus well regulated, holy self-love will be reconciled to self-denial, renunciation of worldly objects, and persecutions for Christ's sake. But such trials lay open men's hearts, and thus the 'first become last, and the last first.' (P. O. Matt. 19:16-30. Luke 18:18-43.) Scott.

Verse 32.

'They were amazed.. afraid.' These words seem to refer to a sort of undefinable awe which the apostles began, they scarcely knew [362]

why, to feel for Jesus, the dignity of whose character they now had estimated more and more highly.

Bloomfield.

35 ¶ And ^a James and John, the sons of Zebedee, ^b come unto him, saying, Master, ^c we would that thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.

36 And he said unto them, ^d What would ye that I should do for you?

37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may ^e sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, ^f in thy glory.

38 But Jesus said unto them, ^g Ye know not what ye ask: can ye ^h drink of the cup that I drink of? and be ⁱ baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?

39 And they say unto him, ^k We can. And Jesus said unto them, ^l Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

40 But ^m to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared.

41 And when the ten heard it, ⁿ they began to be much displeased with James and John.

42 But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, ^o Ye know that they which ^p are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them;

and He will do more than we desire, Eph. 3: 20.

2. We must be cautious how we make general promises. Christ would not engage to do for them whatever they desired, but would know from them what it was they did desire; *What would ye that I should do for you?* He would have them go on with their suit, that they might be made ashamed of it.

3. Many have been led into a snare by false notions of Christ's kingdom, as if it were like the kingdoms of this world. James and John conclude, if Christ *rise again*, he must be a king, and if a king, his apostles must be peers, and one of these would willingly be—the first peer of the realm, and the other next him, like Joseph or Daniel.

4. Worldly honor is a glittering thing, with which the eyes of Christ's own disciples have many a time been dazzled. Whereas to be good

and their great ones exercise authority upon them.

43 But ^q so shall it not be among you: but ^r whosoever will be great among you shall be your minister:

44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

45 For even the Son of man ^s came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, ^t and to give his life a ransom for many.

[Practical Observations.]

46 ¶ And ^u they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples, and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway side ^v begging.

47 And when he heard that it was ^w Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, ^x thou Son of David, have mercy on me.

48 And ^y many charged him that he should hold his peace: ^z but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.*

49 And Jesus ^{aa} stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, ^{ab} Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee.

50 And he, ^{ac} casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, ^{ad} What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

52 And Jesus said unto him, ^{ae} Go thy way; ^{af} thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately ^{ag} he received his sight, ^{ah} and followed Jesus in the way.

a 1:19, 20. 5:37. 9:2. 14:33.
b Matt. 20:20, &c.
c 2 Sam. 14:4—11. 1 Kings 2:16, 20.

should be more our care, than to have the pre-eminence.

5. Our weakness and short-sightedness appear as much in our prayers, as in any thing. We cannot order our speech, when we speak to God, by reason of darkness, both concerning Him and concerning ourselves. It is folly to prescribe to God, and wisdom to subscribe.

6. It is the will of Christ that we should prepare for sufferings, and leave it to Him to recompense us for them. He needs not be put in mind, as Ahasuerus did, of the services of his people, nor can he forget their *work of faith and labor of love*. Our care must be, that we may have wisdom and grace to know how to suffer with Him, and then we may trust Him to provide in the best manner how we shall reign with Him, and what the degrees of our glory shall be.

III. The uneasiness of the rest of the disci-

d 51. 1 Kings 9:5, &c. John 15:7.
e 16:19. 1 Kings 22:19. Ps. 45:9
110:1.
f 1:38. Matt. 25:31. Luke 24:28. 1 Pet. 1:11.
g 1 Kings 2:22. Jer. 45:5. Matt. 20: 21, 22. Rom. 8:26. Jam. 4:3.
h 14:33. Ps. 75:8. 1o 31:2. Jer. 25: 15. Matt. 26:39. Luke 22:42. John 18:11.
i Luke 12:57.
k 14:31. John 13:37.
l John 15:20. Acts 12:2. Col. 1:24. Rev. 1:9.
m Matt. 20:23. 25:34. John 17:24.
n 9:33—35. Prov. 13:10. Matt. 30: 24. Luke 22:24. Rom. 12:10. Phil. 2:3. Jam. 4:5, 6.
o Matt. 20:25. Luke 22:25. 1 Pet 5:3.
p Or, *think good*.
q John 18:36. Rom. 12:2.
r 9:35. Matt. 20:28. 23:8—12. Luke 9:48. 14:11. 15:14. John 13: 13—18. 1 Cor. 9:12—23. Gal. 5:13. 1 Pet. 5:1, 6.
s Matt. 20:28. Luke 22:26, 27. John 13:14. Phil. 2:5—8. Heb. 5:8.
t Is 53:10—12. Dan. 9:24, 26. 2 Cor. 5:21. Gal. 3:13. 1 Tim. 2:4—6. Tit. 2:14. 1 Pet. 1:19.
u Matt. 20:28, &c. Luke 18:35, &c. Luke 16:20, 22. John 9:8. Acts 9:8. 2:3.
v Matt. 2:23. 21:11. 26:71. Luke 4: 16. 18:36, 37. John 1:46. 7:41, 54. 19:19. Acts 6:14.
w 9:6, 7. 11:1. Jer. 23:6, 6. Matt. 11: 19. 22:7. 13:23. 15:22. 20:30. 21: 9. 32:42—45. Acts 13:22, 23. Rom. 15:4. Heb. 22:16.
x 5:35. Matt. 15:13. 20:51. Luke 18:39.
y 7:6—29. Gen. 32:24—29. Jer. 29: 13. Matt. 15:23—28. Luke 11:5—10. 18:1, &c. 21:1. 6:13. Heb. 5:7.
z Ps. 88:15. 145:8. Matt. 20:32—34. Luke 10:40. Heb. 2:17. 4:15.
aa John 11:53.
ab Phil. 3:7—9. Heb. 12:1.
ac 26. 2 Cor. 1:7. Matt. 6:8. 7:7, 8. Luke 18:41—43. Phil. 4:6.
ad 5:24. Matt. 22:23, 25—10. 15:28. Luke 7:50. 8:48.
ae Or, *saved* thee.
af 8:25. Ps. 33:9. 146:8. Is. 39:18, 19. 35:5. 42:16. 49:14. 51:10. 52: 21, 14. John 9:5—7, 32, 39. Acts 26:18.
ah 1:31. Luke 8:2, 3.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 32—45. Even disciples are often more disposed to be amazed at our Lord's contempt of the world, and patient endurance of poverty, hardship, and death for them; than to consider Him, as having 'left' them an example that they should follow his steps: and though they do follow Him, even when danger approaches; yet they do it fearfully, and with hesitation. When we consider, that Jesus endured every indignity from priests and scribes, who delivered Him up to the insults of Gentiles, as a condemned malefactor; we cannot expect exemption from reproach, however blameless our conduct may be: but the view of his glorious resurrection and exaltation may encourage our hope of a happy event to all our conflicts. It is greatly to be lamented, that 'honor, glory, and immortality' in a future world, and obscurity and persecution here, are ill suited to the desires of most of those who are called Christians: nay, sanctification must be considerably advanced in us, before we shall be reconciled to them. If Jesus were

Verses 42, 43.

'Ambition, leading to spiritual lordship, is one great cause of murmurings and animosities in religious societies, and has proved the ruin of the most flourishing churches. The words translated *exercise lordship and authority*, mean *tyrannize and exercise arbitrary power over*. This was certainly true of the governments in our Lord's time, both in the east and west. Every kind of lordship and spiritual domination over the church of Christ, like that exercised by the church at Rome, is destructive and anti-Christian.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 46—52.

(Matt. 20: 29—34. Note. Luke 18: 35—43.) St. Matthew mentions

ready to gratify all our desires, it would soon appear, that we were aspiring to eminence among our brethren; and that we were unwilling to taste of his cup, or have any measure of his baptism, if we could avoid it. We should often ask for 'we know not what,' and be effectually ruined by our prayers. But He loves us more wisely than we love ourselves; and He will give us what is good for us, not what we foolishly hanker after.—We are indeed often keen-sighted in discerning, and severe in reproving, the ambition of our brethren; but prone to fall into the same faults in our competitions with them: yet our Master gently rebukes and corrects us, and gradually represses our foolish desires of pre-eminence. He teaches us to leave lordly authority, and the praise of men, to Gentiles and nominal disciples; and to follow Him, in aspiring after true greatness, by self-abasement, and a readiness to labor in any way, however obscure and disregarded, to the glory of God and the good of men. (P. O. Matt. 20: 17—34.) SCOTT.

two blind men, who received sight on this occasion; probably the other was excited to apply to Jesus by Bartimeus's example, and was much less known. Both Matthew and Mark record the miracle, as wrought when Jesus 'went out of Jericho'; but Luke says, it took place, 'when he was come nigh to Jericho,' and he afterwards records an event which took place in that city. (Note, Luke 19: 1—10.) He seems, however, only to mean that the miracle was performed when he was near Jericho; for it is not improbable that Jesus staid some days in that neighborhood; and this occurred, as He went 'out of the city during long time, though perhaps He returned thither again.' SCOTT.

CHAP. XI.

verse enters Jerusalem, riding on an ass, amidst the acclamations of the multitude, 1-11. He curses a barren fig-tree, 12-14; and drives the traders from the temple, 15-19. From the fig-tree being dried up, He shows his disciples the power of faith, and directs them how to pray, 20-26. He silences the priests and scribes who questioned his authority, 27-33.

AND when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage, and Bethany, he sendeth forth two of his disciples,

2 And saith unto them, 'Go your way into the village over against you; and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring him.

a Matt. 21:1. Luke 19:29.
b 13:3. 2 Sam. 15:30. Zech. 14:1.
c Matt. 24:53. 26:50. John 9:1. Acts 1:12.
d See o. 6:7. 14:13.
e Matt. 21:2. Luke 19:30, 31.

to them; not as horses under the driver, that works and beats them, and gets his pennyworths out of them. He that affects to be chief, thrusts himself into dignity and dominion, he shall be servant of all, he shall be mean and contemptible in the eyes of the wise and good; he that exalteth himself shall be abased.' Or rather, 'He that would be truly great and chief, must do good to all, stoop to the meanest, and labor in the hardest services. Those not only shall be most honored hereafter, but are most honorable now, who are most useful.' To convince them of this, He sets before them his own example; (v. 45.) 'The Son of man submits first to the greatest hardships, and then enters into his glory, and can you expect to come to it any other way; or to have more ease and honor than He?' (1.) He takes upon him the form of a servant, comes not to be ministered to, but to minister. (2.) He becomes obedient to death, to its dominion, for He gives his life a ransom for many; did He die for the benefit of people, and shall not we study to live for their benefit?

V. 46-52. This passage of story agrees with that, Matt. 20: 29, &c. Only that there were told of two blind men; here, and Luke 18: 35, only of one; but if there were two, there was one. This one is named here, being a blind beggar that was much talked of; he was called Bartimeus, that is, the son of Timeus; which, some think, signifies the son of a blind man; he was the blind son of a blind father, which made the case the worse, and the cure the more wonderful, and the more proper to typify the spiritual cures wrought by Christ, on those that not only are born blind, but are born of those that are blind.

I. This blind man sat begging. Note, Those who by the providence of God are unable to live by their own labor, and have not any other way of subsisting, are proper objects of charity; particular care ought to be taken of them.

II. He cried out to Jesus for mercy; Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David. Misery is the object of mercy, his own miserable case he commends to the Son of David, of whom it was foretold, that, when He should come, the eyes of the blind should be opened, Isa. 35: 5. In coming to Christ for help, we should have an eye to Him as the promised Messiah, the Trustee of mercy.

ples. They began to be much displeased, to have indignation about James and John, v. 41. They were angry at them for affecting precedence, not because it did so ill become the disciples of Christ, but because each of them hoped to have it himself. When the Cyrenic trampled on Alexander's carpet, saying—*Now I tread on Alexander's pride*, he was seasonably checked with—*But with greater pride of thine own*. So these discovered their own ambition, in their displeasure at the ambition of James and John; and Christ took this occasion to warn them against it, and all their successors in the ministry of the Gospel, v. 42, 43. He called them to Him in a familiar way, to give them an example of condescension, when He was reproving their ambition, and to teach them never to keep their disciples at a distance. He shows them,

1. That dominion was generally abused in the world; (v. 42.) They that seem to rule over the Gentiles, with the name and title of rulers, exercise lordship over them; all they study and aim at, is not so much to protect them, and provide for their welfare, as to exercise authority upon them; they will be obeyed, and have their will in every thing. Their care is, what they shall get by their subjects, to support their own grandeur, not what they shall do for them.

2. That therefore it ought not to be admitted into the church; 'I shall not be so among you; those that shall be put under your charge, must be as sheep under the charge of the shepherd, who is to tend and feed them, and be a servant to them; not as horses under the driver, that works and beats them, and gets his pennyworths out of them. He that affects to be chief, thrusts himself into dignity and dominion, he shall be servant of all, he shall be mean and contemptible in the eyes of the wise and good; he that exalteth himself shall be abased.' Or rather, 'He that would be truly great and chief, must do good to all, stoop to the meanest, and labor in the hardest services. Those not only shall be most honored hereafter, but are most honorable now, who are most useful.' To convince them of this, He sets before them his own example; (v. 45.) 'The Son of man submits first to the greatest hardships, and then enters into his glory, and can you expect to come to it any other way; or to have more ease and honor than He?' (1.) He takes upon him the form of a servant, comes not to be ministered to, but to minister. (2.) He becomes obedient to death, to its dominion, for He gives his life a ransom for many; did He die for the benefit of people, and shall not we study to live for their benefit?

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 46-52. Whilst enlightened believers are admonished daily to behold the glory of their Lord, 'till they are changed into his image; let sinners be exhorted to imitate blind Bartimeus.—As long as men are favored with the use of their eyes, how diligent should they be, in searching the Scriptures, and storing their memories with them; that if visited with blindness, they may have something treasured up, on which to meditate, and with which to compare what they hear. And when the Lord deprives any of the use of one sense, how diligent should they be in improving those which they still enjoy! In these respects, this interesting narrative sets before us an instructive and encouraging example.—If the eyes of men's understandings are not opened to behold Christ and the beauty of holiness, they are shut up under a far more dreadful darkness, and from far more delightful prospects and pleasures, in the spiritual world, than any blind man in respect of the natural. But wherever the Gospel is, or the written Word, Jesus is passing by; and this is the sinner's opportunity. Though he cannot at present understand the doctrine of Christ, or see his glory, yet let him as a perishing sinner cry after Him, 'Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.' And if any

III. Christ encouraged him to hope that he should find mercy; for He stood still, and commanded him to be called. We must never reckon it a hindrance to us, to stand still, when it is to do a good work. Those about him, who discouraged him at first, perhaps now signified to him the gracious call of Christ; 'Be of good comfort, rise, He calls thee; and if He call thee, He will cure thee.' Note, The gracious invitations of Christ are encouragements to hope, that if we come to Him, we shall have what we come for. Let the guilty, the empty, the tempted, the hungry, the naked, he of goor comfort, for He calls them to be pardoned, supplied, succored, to be filled, and to be coter to have all done for them which their case calls for.

IV. The poor man, hereupon, made his way to Christ; He cast away his loose vesture garment, every thing that might be in danger of throwing him down, or hinder him in coming to Christ. Those who would come to Jesus, must cast away the garment of their own sufficiency, strip themselves of all conceit, free themselves from every weight, and the sin that, like long garments, doth most easily beset them, Heb. 12: 1.

V. The particular favor he begged, was, that his eyes might be opened; so that he might be able to work for his living, and be no longer a burthen to others. It is very desirable to be in a capacity of earning our bread; and, where God has given men their limbs and senses, it is a shame to make themselves by their foolishness and slothfulness, in effect, blind and lame.

VI. His eyes were opened; (v. 52.) and two things Mark here adds, which intimate, 1. How Christ made a double favor to him, by putting the honor of it upon his faith; 'Thy faith has made thee whole; faith in Christ as the Son of David, and in his pity and power; not thy importunity, but thy faith, setting Christ on work, or rather Christ setting thy faith on work.' Those supplies are most comfortable, that are fetched in by faith. 2. He made it a double favor to himself, when he had received his sight, he followed Jesus by the way. By this he made it appear that he was thoroughly cured, needed none to lead him; and by this he evidenced the sense he had of Christ's kindness, that, when he had his sight, he made this use of it. It is not enough to come to Christ for spiritual healing, but, when we are healed, we must continue to follow Him; that we may do honor to Him, and receive instruction from Him. Those that have spiritual eye-sight, see that beauty in Christ, that will effectually draw them to run after Him.

CHAP. XI. v. 1-11. We have here the public entry of Christ into Jerusalem, four or five days before his death. He came thus remarkably, 1. To show that He was not afraid of his enemies in Jerusalem. He did not steal into the city, as one that durst not show his

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. v. 2. Ye shall find, &c.] 'The exact knowledge, which our Lord showed, of so many minute and most fortuitous particulars, must have impressed the minds of these messengers, greatly. It is observable, that many such things occurred a little before his death, which, considered in this view, have a peculiar beauty.' [14-1364.]

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[COTT.]

3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye, ^athat the Lord hath need of him; ^band straightway he will send him thither.

4 And they went their way, ^cand found the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met; and they loose him.

5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye loosing the colt?

6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go.

7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, ^dand cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him.

8 And many spread their garments in the way; and others ^ecut down branches off the trees, and strewed them in the way.

9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord:

10 Blessed be ^fthe kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna ^gin the highest.

11 And ^hJesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the even-tide was come, ⁱhe went out unto Bethany, with the twelve.

12 ¶ And ^jon the morrow, when they

face; they needed not send spies to search for Him, He comes with observation. This would be an encouragement to his disciples that were timorous at the thought of their enemies' rage; let them see how bravely their Master sets all at defiance. 2. To show that He was not cast down at the thoughts of his approaching sufferings. He came, not only publicly, but cheerfully, and with acclamations of joy. Though He was now but taking the field, and *girding on the harness*, yet, being fully assured of a complete victory, He thus triumphs as though He had it put off.

I. The outside of this triumph was very mean; He rode upon an *ass's colt*, which made no figure; and being but a colt, *whereon never man sat*, we may suppose, was rough and ungovernable, and would disturb and disgrace the solemnity. This colt was borrowed. Christ went upon the water in a borrowed boat, ate the passover in a borrowed chamber, was buried in a borrowed sepulchre, and here rode on a borrowed ass. Let not Christians scorn to be beholden one to another, and when need is, to borrow. He had no rich trappings; they threw their clothes upon the colt, and so He sat upon him, *v. 7*. The persons that attended were mean people; and all the show they could make, was, by *spreading their garments in the way*, and *strewing branches of trees in the way*, (*v. 8*.) as at the feast of tabernacles. All these were marks of his humiliation; even when He would be taken notice of, He would be taken notice of for his meanness; and they are instructions to us, not to mind *high things*, but to *condescend to them of low estate*. How ill doth it become Christians to *take state*, when Christ was so far from affecting it!

II. The inside of this triumph was very great; not only as it was the fulfilling of the scripture, (which is not taken notice of here, as in Matthew,) but as there were several rays of Christ's glory shining forth in the midst of all this meanness. 1. Christ showed his knowledge of things distant, and his power over the wills of men, when He sent his disciples for the colt, *v. 1-4*. By this it appears that He can do every thing, and no thought can be withholden from Him. 2. He showed his dominion over the creatures in riding on a colt that was never broken. The subjection of the inferior part of the creation to man is spoken of, (Ps. 8: 5, 6.) with application to Christ; (Ps. 8: 5, 6. compared with Heb. 2: 8.) for to Him it is owing, that we have any remaining benefit by the grant God made to man, of a sovereignty in this lower world, Gen. 1: 28. And perhaps Christ, in riding the ass's colt, would give a shadow of his power over the spirit of man, who is born as the *wild ass's colt*, Job 11: 12. 3. The colt was brought from a place where two ways met, (*v. 4*.) as if Christ would show that He came to direct those into the right way, who had two ways before them, and were in danger of taking the wrong. 4. Christ received the joyful hosannas of the people; that is, both the *joy* come they gave Him, and their good wishes to the prosperity of his kingdom, *v. 9*. God put it into the hearts of these people to cry Hosanna, who were not by art and management brought to it, as those were, who afterward cried, *Crucify, crucify*. Christ reckons Himself honored by the faith and praises of the multitude, and it is God that brings people to do Him this honor, beyond their own inclinations.

Luke 19:37,38. John 12:13. 19:15.
m. l. s. 94:7. ^aer. 33:15-17, 29. Ez.
34:23, 24. 37:24, 25. Hos. 3:5. Am.

9:11, 12. Luke 13:1-33.
n. Pa. 148:1. Luke 2:14. 19:27-40.
o. Mal. 3:1. Matt. 21:10-12. 14-16.

Luke 19:41-45.
p. Matt. 21:17. Luke 21:37,38. John
8:1,2. q. Matt. 21:1.

'15, 16, Matt. 28: 31-35; Luke 22: 10-13.' Doddridge.—
^aWhereon, &c. 1. Mark alone notices this circumstance (3.) Why
do, &c. The owners actually made this demand. (5.) (Luke 19: 33.)
Thus every occasion of objection was precluded.—The Lord. I can-
not recollect one instance, in which this word, with the article, and
without either noun or pronoun, is used in speaking of any other per-
son, than Jesus; except when used of the glorious God absolutely.—
(7.) The colt. 'It seems to have been a miracle, that such a colt
'should patiently suffer Christ to ride upon him.' Whitby in Scott.

(2.) No animal was allowed to be employed in sacred uses, even
among the heathen, that had been previously used for any domestic or
agricultural purpose.

^fThe Jews themselves applied Zech 9: 9 to the Messiah.

Dr A. CLARKE.

WHITBY.

(1.) They welcomed his person; (v. 9.) Blessed is He that cometh, He, so often promised and expected; He comes in the name of the Lord, as God's Ambassador to the world; Blessed be He; let Him have our applauses and best affections; He is a blessed Savior, and brings blessings to us, and blessed be He that sent Him. Let Him be blessed in the name of the Lord, and let all nations and ages call Him Blessed, think and speak honorably of Him.

(2.) They wished well to his interest, v. 10. They believed that, mean a figure as He made. He had a kingdom, which would shortly be set up in the world, that it was the kingdom of their father David, (the father of his country,) the kingdom promised to him and his seed forever; a kingdom that came in the name of the Lord, by a divine authority. Blessed be this kingdom; let it take place, come in power, and let all opposing rule be put down; let it go on conquering, and to conquer. Hosanna to this kingdom; prosperity, happiness attend it. The proper signification of hosanna is that which we find, Rev. 7: 10. Salvation to our God, that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb; success to religion, both natural and revealed. Hosanna in the highest. Praises be to our God, who is in the highest heavens over all, God, blessed forever; or, Let Him be praised by his angels, that are in the highest heavens, let our hosannas be an echo to his.

Christ, thus attended, thus applauded, came into the city, and went directly to the temple. Here was no banquet of wine prepared for his entertainment, nor the least refreshment; but He immediately applied himself to his work, for that was his meat and drink. He went to the temple, that the scripture might be fulfilled; 'The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, without sending any immediate notice before Him; He shall surprise you with a day of visitation, for He shall be like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap,' Mal. 3: 1-3. He came to the temple, and took a view of the present state of it, v. 11. He looked round about upon all things, but as yet said nothing. He saw many disorders there, but kept silence, Ps. 50: 21. Though He intended to suppress them, He would not on a sudden, lest He should seem to have done it rashly; He let things be as they were for this night, intending the next morning to apply Himself to the necessary reformation. We may be confident that God sees all the wickedness that is in the world, though He do not presently reckon for it, nor cast it out. Christ, having made his remarks upon what He saw in the temple, retired in the evening to a friend's house at Bethany, because there He would be more out of the noise of the town, and out of the way of being suspected, as designing to head a faction.

V. 12-26. Here is, I. Christ's cursing of the fruitless fig tree. He had a convenient resting place at Bethany, and therefore thither He went at resting time; but his work lay at Jerusalem, and thither therefore He returned in the morning; and so intent was He upon his work, that He went out from Bethany fasting. Before He was gone far, He was hungry, (v. 12.) for He was subject to all the sinless infirmities of our nature. Finding himself in want of food, He went to a fig tree, at some distance, which being well adorned with green leaves, He hoped to find enriched with fruit. But He found nothing but leaves;

Luke 19:41-45.
p. Matt. 21:17. Luke 21:37,38. John
8:1,2. q. Matt. 21:1.

Verse 7.—10.

'By this rural triumph our Savior shows, 1st. That He is the King whom God had promised, and, 2d. That his kingdom is not of this world. In such circumstances, it would have seemed ridiculous in a government to have been afraid of Him. Nor, indeed, do we find Pontius Pilate, who was at this time the Roman governor at Jerusalem, in the least disturbed, though the scribes and Pharisees were much vexed. They had however, more money than to bring this little triumph against Him; though their great charge was that He made Himself King. In order to which, this was the greatest show He ever made.'

Verse 11.—17.

(11.) Looked round' As master of such a house, and was silent' to give time for reformation; but coming afterwards, He deals more harshly with them, as incorrigible.

were come from Bethany, he was hungry:

13 And seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, "No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it."

15 ¶ And they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrow the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves;

16 And would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple.

† Matt. 4:2. Luke 4:2. John 4:6, 7. 31-33. 19:28. Heb. 9:17.
† Matt. 21:18. Luke 13:6-9.
† Ruth 2:3. 1 Sam. 6:9. Luke 10:31. 12:6, 7.
† 20:21. Is. 5:5-6. Matt. 3:10. 7:19. 12:33-35. 21:19-20. 24:44. John 15: 6. Heb. 6:4-5. 10:26-31. 2 Pet. 2:20-22. Rev. 22:11.
† Matt. 31:12-16. Luke 19:45, 46.
† John 2:13-17.
† Deut. 14:23, 26.

He hoped to find some fruit, for the time of gathering in figs, though it was near, was not yet; so that it could not be pretended that it had had fruit, but that it was gathered and gone; for the season had not yet arrived. Or, He found none, for indeed it was not a season of figs, it was no good fig year. But this was worse than any other fig tree, for there was not so much as one fig to be found upon it, though it was so full of leaves. However, Christ was willing to make an example of it, not to the trees, but to the men, of that generation, and therefore cursed it with that curse which is the reverse of the first blessing, *Be fruitful*; He said unto it, *Never let any man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever*, p. 14. *Sweetness and good fruit* are, in Jotham's parable, the honor of the fig tree, (Judg. 9: 11.) and its serviceableness therein to man, preferable to being promoted over the trees; now to be deprived of that, was a grievous curse. This was intended to be a type and figure of the doom passed upon the Jewish church, to which He came, seeking fruit, but found none; (Luke 13: 6, 7.) and though it was not, according to the doom in the parable, immediately cut down, yet blindness and hardness befell them, (Rom. 11: 8, 25.) so that they were henceforth good for nothing. The disciples heard what sentence Christ passed on this tree, and took notice of it. Woes from Christ's mouth are to be observed and kept in mind, as well as blessings.

II. His clearing of the temple of the market people, and of those that made it a thoroughfare. We do not find that Christ met with food elsewhere, when He missed it of the fig tree; but the zeal of God's house so ate Him up, that He came, hungry as He was, to Jerusalem, and to the temple, and began to reform those abuses which the day before He had marked out; to show, that, when the Redeemer came to Zion, his errand was, to turn away ungodliness from Jacob, (Rom. 11: 26.) and that He came not, as He was falsely accused, to destroy the temple, but to purify it, and reduce his church to its primitive rectitude.

1. He cast out the buyers and sellers, overthrow the tables of the money-changers, (threw

the money to the ground;) and threw down the seats of them that sold doves. This He did at one having authority, as a Son in his own house. The filth of the daughter of Zion is purged away, not by might, nor by power, but by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning. And He did it without opposition; for what He did was manifested to be right, even in the consciences of those that had got money by it. Note, It may be some encouragement to zealous reformers, that frequently the purging out of corruptions, and the correcting of abuses, prove an easier piece of work than was apprehended. Prudent attempts sometimes prove successful beyond expectation, and there are not those lions found in the way, that were feared.

2. He would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel, any sort of goods or wares, through the temple, or any of the courts of it, because it was the nearer way, and would save them the labor of going about, v. 16. The Jews owned that it was one of the instances of honor due the temple, not to make the court of the Gentiles, a common passage, or to come into it with any burden.

3. He gave a good reason for this; it was written, *My house shall be called of all nations. The house of prayer*, v. 17. So it is written, Isa. 56: 7. It shall pass among all people under that character. *It shall be the house of prayer to all nations*; it was so in the first institution of it; when Solomon dedicated it, it was with an eye to the sons of the strangers, 1 Kings 8: 41. And it was prophesied that it should be yet more so. Christ will have the temple, as a type of the gospel church, to be, (1.) *A house of prayer*. After He had turned out the oxen and doves, which were for sacrifice, He revived the appointment of it as a house of prayer, to teach us, that, when all sacrifices and offerings should be abolished, the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise should continue forever. (2.) That it should be so to all nations; and not to the Jews only; for whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved, though not of the seed of Jacob. It was therefore insufferable for them to make it a den of thieves, which would prejudice those nations

Marg. Ref.—Note, Matt. 21: 17—20. (13.) *The time, &c.* It is evident, that the fruit, on common fig-trees, must have been unfit for food at this early season of the year: for though the fig-tree puts forth its blossom before the leaves; yet the fruit must have been very small at the passover, which is said by the Jewish writers to be five months before the time of ripe figs. (Note, Matt. 24: 32—35, v. 32.) It has been said, that our Lord found only leaves, and no fruit of any kind, and therefore this must have been a barren tree: for if no fruit were at this time set, there could be none that year. But this could be no reason, why He should, when hungry, seek fruit of it to eat; as there could have been none fit for use, however fruitful it might promise to be. The following quotation seems to contain the true solution of the difficulty. "Let it be noted, that St. Mark doth not by these words, "for the time of figs was not yet," assign a reason why our Lord found no figs upon the tree; but why he went to this one tree, which had leaves on it, and so was of that kind of figs, which had always leaves; and why He expected to find fruit on that tree, which upon the ordinary fig-trees abounding there, he could not expect, the time of ordinary figs not being yet. For this kind of fig-tree, being ever green with leaves, hath old and new fruit on it together; the fruit of the year past and present, say the Jewish doctors. Accordingly, Julian the apostate, speaking of the fruit of Damascus, saith, some of them were but of a short duration;—only the fig-tree carries its fruit above a year, and it hangs on with the fruit of the following year." *Whitby*. (Note, Is. 28: 1-4, v. 4.)—The fig-trees, in England, seem in general to be of this kind, though the first kills their leaves; but the case in Judea was different: so that the time of ripe figs, on the ordinary fig-trees, was not come; but fruit might have been expected on this tree because its leaves showed it to be of the other species. SCOTT.

According to Calmet and John, there were in Judea several kinds of the fig-tree, which bore fruit in different seasons according to their kind. This accounts for the fact, that our Savior looked for fruit, so early as five days before the passover, which was never later than April.

En.

Time of figs. Rather fig-time or fig-harvest—i. e. the time of gathering, after which they were not to be expected.

WESTEEN. CAMPBELL.

"The most delicate kind of figs was ripe in Judea at the beginning of summer. The fig-tree opening its leaves, which do not appear till after the fruit, is spoken of, (Matt. 24: 32) as a sign of summer. Since then a kind of fig was thus early—and fruit always preceded the leaves, and since, harvest time not being yet come, the figs could not have been gathered, our Savior might naturally expect to find them on such a tree. The phrase, for the time of figs was not yet—belongs to the first part of the verse, and is given as the reason of the doubt, in finding any thing thereon, expressed by the words, if haply. There is another transposition of the same kind, (Mark 16: 3, 4) both occasioned, probably, by an accidental interlineation in the original, and a mis-

take of some early transcriber, who did not bring in the interlined clause exactly in its place."

The words "having leaves" seem to denote something peculiar; as if the other trees thereabout had been without leaves, or, at least, had not such leaves as promised figs. These leaves were not the leaves of the present spring, for these were hardly so much as in being yet. Probably, this tree was of the kind which had figs and leaves together, hanging on it for two or three years, before the fruit grew ripe, and kept its leaves both summer and winter. Mark gives the reason why on that mountain which abounded in fig-trees, He saw but one that had such leaves; "because it was not the usual time of figs," otherwise it might have gathered figs from the trees about Him. The tree (supposed) bore figs such a summer, which hung upon the boughs all the following winter; it bore others also the next summer; and those too hung on the boughs all this winter; the third summer it bore a third degree; and this summer brought those of the first bearing to ripeness; so that it was at no time without the fruit of several years. This disappointment of his reasonable expectations our Lord justly punished, as it were, as an emblem of the punishment to be inflicted on the Jews, for their spiritual barrenness and hypocrisy.

LIGHTFOOT.

Notes, Matt. 21: 12—16.—(16.) *Would not suffer, &c.* This circumstance is not mentioned by Matthew; and it rather favors the supposition, that Christ purged the temple two days successively, and more completely the second day than before.

SCOTT.

(15.) *Money-changers.* The half-shekel tax was a tax to be paid every year, by every adult Jew, at the temple. The tax must be paid in Jewish coin. The money-changers were persons who took their seats in the temple, on the fifteenth of the month Adar and after, for the purpose of exchanging Roman and Greek coins, for Jewish half-shekels. The object of the money-changers was personal emolument, contrary to the spirit of the law, Deut. 23: 20, 21. It was for this reason that Jesus drove them from the temple.

JAHN.

"The temple of Jerusalem was the great depository of the worship of God; of the true God. "In Jewry was God known: in Salm was his tabernacle." And here the pretence of the worship of God was kept up. Here was a show of leaves, but no fruit. [And nothing could be more injurious to the divine honor.] Suppose a Gentile, who had learnt from the Jewish Scriptures the being and unity of God who "had joined himself to the Lord to serve Him." Suppose him to have visited Jerusalem, for the purpose of fulfilling the duties of his faith: like the chamberlain of the Ethiopian Candace, (Acts 8: 27.) what a disappointment to his feelings, what a contrast to his expectations would be the sight of this temple, in which the sacrifices which were to be offered on the altar had been made a pretext for buying and selling; for placing there the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves. How disgusting and how injurious to his rising faith it would prove, to find that the business of profit and loss was pursued, and the tumult of worldly transactions continued, even

17 And he taught, saying unto them, 'Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations, The house of prayer? but ye have made it a den of thieves.'

18 And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine.

19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

[Practical Observations.]

20 ¶ And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots.

21 And Peter, calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away!

22 And Jesus answering, saith unto them, 'Have ye faith in God.'

23 For verily I say unto you, That whatsoever shall say unto

against it, whom they should have invited to it. When Christ drove out the buyers and sellers at the beginning of his ministry, He only charged them with making the temple a house of merchandise; (John 2:16.) but now He chargeth them with making it a den of thieves, because since then they had twice gone about to stone Him in the temple, (John 8:59. 10:31.) or because the traders there were notorious for cheating, and imposing upon the ignorance and necessity of the country people, which is no better than thievery. Those that suffer worldly thoughts to lodge within them at their devotions, turn the house of prayer into a house of merchandise; but they that make long prayers, for a pretence to devour widows' houses, turn it into a den of thieves.

4. The scribes and the chief priests hated Him, and hated to be reformed by Him; yet they feared Him, lest He should next overthrow their seats, and expel them, being conscious of profaning and abusing their power. They found that He had a great interest, that all the people were astonished at his doctrine, and that every thing He said was an oracle and a law; and what durst He not attempt, or effect, being thus supported? They therefore sought, not how they might make their peace with Him, but how they might destroy Him. A desperate attempt, which, one would think, they themselves could not but fear was fighting against God. But they are not what they do, to support their own power.

III. His discourse with his disciples, upon occasion of the fig tree's withering away, which

this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have

whatsoever he saith.

24 Therefore I say

z 1 Kings 8:41-43. Is. 56:7. 60:7.

1 Kings 18:46. Hos. 12:7. John 2:16.

b 3:6. 12:12. 14:1-2. Is. 49:7. Matt.

21:15, 38, 39, 45, 46. 25:3, 4. Luke 19:

47. John 11:33-37.

c 22. 6:20. 1 Kings 18:17, 18. 21:20.

52, 58. Matt. 21:46. Acts 24:25.

Rev. 11:5-10.

d 1:22. Matt. 7:23. Luke 4:22. John

7:46.

e 11. Luke 21:37. John 12:36.

f See on 14.—Job 18:16, 17. 20:5-7.

Is. 54. 40:24. Matt. 13:5. 15:

13. 21:19, 20. John 15:5. Heb. 6:8.

John 12.

g Prov. 3:33. Eccl. 5:2, 4. Matt. 25:

1. 1 Cor. 16:22.

h 9:23. 2 Chr. 20:20. Ps. 62:8. Is.

59. John 14:1. Tit. 1:1.

i Cor. the faith of God. 1:12, 2:12.

j Matt. 17:20. 21:21, 22. Luke 17:6

1 Cor. 13:2.

k Matt. 4:13. Rom. 4:18-25. H:4

11:1-19. Jam. 1:5, 8.

l Ps. 37:4. John 14:13. 15:7.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-19. We should learn from our Master to meet sufferings, in a good cause, with alacrity; and to be bold in our profession of the truth, in proportion as its enemies grow virulent. The undeniable proofs of his knowledge of all events, and his influence over all hearts, should inspire us with confidence, and excite us to prompt obedience: for we shall find all his words faithful, and he will carry us through all difficulties in his service.—It is a peculiar honor to be instrumental, in any way, to the display of his glory. His kingdom is not of this world; and therefore its appearance is often mean; and its subjects must not affect worldly grandeur, or be ashamed of appearing poor and despicable: but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, are privileges of more value than all earthly honors and riches. These blessings we should seek with a decided preference, and then aim to communicate them to others: and we ought to welcome all those, who come in the name of the Lord, to promote his kingdom, rejoicing greatly in their success.—While we expect the church to be purged from all abuses, that it may no more be reproached as a den of rob-

bers, (P. O. Rev. 18: 9-19.) but be indeed a house of prayer and spiritual worship, to all nations; rulers and teachers should do what they can to promote the scriptural administration of God's ordinances, the sanctification of his holy day, and faithful preaching; and to maintain a decided distinction between things sacred and secular! All who love and preach the truth, should keep from every appearance of turning their ministry into a lucrative trade!—Alas! the chief priests, and elders should so frequently be the most inveterate opposers of reformation; from a mistaken regard to their own reputation, which in fact they thus destroy! Men of this character set themselves against the truth for fear of its getting ground, when they find the people attentive. Thus they enter on a contest, from which they cannot recede with credit, and which they cannot persist without fatal consequences. Or though they should for a time succeed, they must in the end be crushed by the exalted Redeemer. (P. O. Matt. 21: 12-16, 33-46.)

Scott.

there, where most particularly the thoughts ought to be carried beyond this world, and lifted above it! We cannot then wonder that the zeal of our Lord was excited; that He saw it a fit opportunity to express vehement indignation against all who showed such a proof of the prevalence of this present world in their hearts beyond the love of God. And all we, see, were so struck with the justice of his feelings, as to offer no opposition to Him.

EP. SUMNER.

(17.) 'The court of the Gentiles, as it is expressed in this passage, was particularly destined for the devout of all nations, who acknowledged the true God, though they had not subjected themselves to the Mosaic law. Justly therefore was the temple styled a house of prayer for all nations.'

VERSES 20-26.

The apostles were exhorted to have 'faith in God,' or, 'the faith of God' (margin), that is, a firm confidence in his power and truth, as enabling them to effect those things which they undertook in his name. This was peculiarly applicable to that faith required in working miracles. 'These were generally introduced by some solemn declaration of what was intended, which was in effect a prediction of immediate success. So Peter says, (Acts, 3: 6.) "In the name of Jesus Christ, rise up, and walk;" and (9: 34.) "Eneas, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." And in pronouncing this, the person speaking pawned all his credit as a messenger from God, and consequently all the honor and usefulness of his future life, on the immediate miraculous energy to attend his words, and to be visibly exerted on his uttering them. Hence it is, that such a firm courageous faith is so often urged on those,

'to whom such miraculous powers were given.' Doddridge. This ought not, however, to be considered, as the exclusive meaning of the exhortation, which should also be kept in mind in all our expectations and prayers, grounded on the promises of God, which will certainly be fulfilled to every believer, in the proper meaning of their word in the due season; and this we ought to expect, notwithstanding all difficulties and apparent improbabilities. (Notes, Jam. 1: 5-8. 1 John 5: 14, 15.) Therefore, whatever we desire, according to the will of God, made known by his precepts and promises, we should when we pray for it confidently hope to receive, and go on with our duty as though we had received it.

Scott.

VERSES 22-24.

It is obvious that this promise, in its full and literal sense, was confined to the apostles; confined to the time, which required evident and striking miracles as a testimony to the divinity of Him from whom the power proceeded. John, however, writing fifty years afterwards, when the power of working miracles was gradually declining, likewise speaks of the prayer of faith. The limit to which he confines the power, makes the promise applicable to every age. 'This is the confidence which we have in Him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, He heareth us: [and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him.] 1 John 5: 14. Such a measure of wisdom was given to the apostles, that they could not ask except according to the will of God. Succeeding Christians must limit their petitions to "what may be expedient for them."'

EP. SUMNER.

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unto you, 'What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any; that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses.

26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

27 ¶ And they come again to Jerusalem: and, as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,

28 And say unto him, 'By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

29 And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

30 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.

31 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven, he will say, 'Why then did ye not believe him?

32 But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, 'We cannot tell. And Jesus answering, saith unto them, 'Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

¶ Matt. 7:7-11, 18:19, 21:22, Luke 11:13-19, 18:1-8, John 16:23-27, Jam. 5:15-18, 1 John 3:22, 5:14, 15.

¶ Zech. 3:1, Luke 18:11, Rev. 11:4.

fessing people in the world, should be thus abandoned; they could not imagine how that fig tree should so soon wither away; but this comes of rejecting Christ, and being rejected by Him.

2. But even this withered tree was fruitful:

(1.) For Christ teacheth them hence to pray in faith; (v. 22.) Have faith in God. They admired the power of Christ's word; saith Christ, 'a lively faith would put as great a power into your prayers, v. 23, 24. Whosoever shall say to this mountain, of Olives, Be removed, and be cast into the sea; if he has but any word of God, general or particular, to build his faith upon, and if he shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith, according to the warrant he has from what God hath said, shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith.' Through the power of God in Christ, the greatest difficulty shall be got over, and the thing shall be effected.

And therefore, (v. 24.) 'What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye shall receive them; nay, believe that ye do receive them, and He that has power to give them saith, Ye shall have them.' Now this is to be applied, [1.] To that faith of miracles which the apostles and first preachers of the Gospel were endued with, which did wonders in things natural, healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out devils; these were, in effect, the removing of mountains. The apostle speaks of a faith which would do that, and yet might be found where holy love was not, 1 Cor. 13: 2. [2.] It may be applied to that miracle of faith, which all true Christians are endued with, which doeth wonders in things spiritual. It justifies us, (Rom. 5: 1.) and so removes mountains of guilt, and casts them into the depths of the sea, never to rise up in judgment against us, Mic. 7: 19. It purifies the heart, (Acts 15: 9.) and so removes mountains of corruption, and makes them plain before the grace of God, Zech. 4: 7. It is by faith that the world is conquered, Satan's fiery darts quenched, a soul is crucified with Christ, and yet lives; by faith we set the Lord always before us, and see Him that is invisible; and this is to remove mountains, for at the presence of the God of Jacob, the mountains were not only moved, but removed, Ps. 114: 6, 7.

(2.) To this is added here that necessary qualification of the prevailing prayer, that we freely forgive those who have been any way injurious to us, and be in charity with all men; (v. 25, 26.) When ye stand praying, forgive. Note, Standing is no improper posture for prayer; it was generally used among the Jews; hence they called their prayers their standings; when they would say how the world was kept up by prayer, they expressed it thus, The world is upheld by standings. But the primitive Christians generally used the more reverent gesture of kneeling, especially on fast days, though not on Lord's days. When we are at prayer, we must remember to pray for others, particularly for our enemies, and those that have wronged us; now we cannot pray sincerely that God would do them good, if we bear malice to them, and wish them ill. If we have injured others, before we pray, we must go and be reconciled to them, Matt. 5: 23. But if they have injured us, we go a nearer way to work, and

3-8.
o Or, living.
e 13-11, 9:13, Matt. 3: Luke 3: 1-20, John 1:6-8, 15-36, 3:25-36, t Matt. 11:7-14, 21:25-27, 31, 32, John 1:15, 59, 34, 36, 329-36, u 6:90, 12:12, Matt. 14:5, 21:46, Luke 20:19, 22:2, Acts 5:26, x Matt. 3:5, 21:31, 32, Luke 7:28-32, 20:6-8, John 10:41, y 1:6, 5:9, 10, 29:9-11, 42:19, 20, 54, 10, Jer. 8:7-9, Hos. 4:6, Mat. 2: 7, 8, Matt. 15:14, 23:16-28, John 8:10, Rom. 1:18-22, 28, 2 Cor. 2: 15, 4:3, 4, 2 The. 2:10-12, z Job 5:13, Prov. 26:4, 5, Matt. 6: 4, 21:27, Luke 20:7, 8, 22:66-68, chm 9:27.

n Matt. 6:12, 14, 15, 18:23-35, Luke 6:37, Eph. 4:32, Col. 3:13, Jam. 2:13.
o Mat. 3:1, Matt. 21:23-27, Luke 20:1-8, John 10:23, 18:20.
p 14:1, Pa. 2:1-5, Acts 4:5-8, 27:28, q Ex. 2:14, Num. 16:13, Acts 7: 27, 28, 38, 39, 51.
r Is. 52:13, Matt. 21:24, Luke 20: 13-8.

(24.) 'It is not possible to pray, with a full persuasion that we shall receive, without being first satisfied that what we ask is according to the will of God. This we cannot know, without a divine revelation, as to things not necessary to salvation. Our faith therefore can rise no higher than a full persuasion, that if what things we ask be for God's glory we shall receive them.'

Verbes 25, 26.

Forgive. 'Our reason and our conscience must subscribe to the just declaration of the prophet, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." There may be much remaining corruption in the heart which makes acceptable prayer; but there must be no iniquity reigning and prevailing. The Christian is one who lives by

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must immediately from our hearts forgive them. [1.] Because this is a good step towards obtaining the pardon of our own sins: Forgive, that your Father may forgive you; that is, 'that you may be qualified to receive forgiveness, that He may forgive you without injury to his honor, as it would be, if He should suffer those to have such benefit by his mercy, who are so far from being conformable to the pattern of it.' [2.] Because the want of this is a certain bar to the pardon of our sins; 'If ye do not forgive those who have injured you, if ye hate their persons, bear them a grudge, meditate revenge, and speak ill of them, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' This ought to be remembered in prayer, because one great errand we have to the throne of grace, is, for the pardon of our sins: and it ought to be our daily care, because prayer is a part of our daily work. Our Savior often insists on this, for it was his great design to engage his disciples to love one another.

V. 27-33. We have here Christ examined by the great sanhedrim concerning his authority; for they claimed a power to call prophets to an account concerning their mission. They came to Him when He was walking in the temple, not for his diversion, but teaching the people, first one company and then another. The Peripatetic philosophers were so called from the custom they had of walking when they taught. The piazzas, in the courts of the temple, were fitted for this purpose. The great men were vexed to see Him followed with attention, and therefore came to Him with some solemnity, and arraigned Him at the bar, with this question, By what authority dost Thou these things? v. 28.

I. They designed hereby to embarrass Him. If they could make it out before the people, that He had not a legal mission, though ever so well qualified, and preaching ever so profitably, they would tell the people that they ought not to hear Him. This they made the last refuge of an obstinate unbelief; because they were resolved not to receive his doctrine, they were resolved to find some flaw in his commission, and will conclude it invalid, if it be not ratified in their court. Thus the Papists resolve their controversy with us very much into the mission of our ministers, and if they overthrow that, they think they have gained their point, though we have the Scripture on our side. But this is indeed a question, which all that act either as magistrates or ministers, ought to be furnished with a good answer to, and often put to themselves, By what authority do I these things? For how can men preach except they be sent? Or how can they act with confidence, or hope of success, except they be authorized? Jer. 33: 32.

II. He effectually embarrassed them, with this question, 'What are your thoughts concerning the baptism of John? Was it from heaven, or of men? By what authority did John preach, baptize, and gather disciples? Answer me, v. 30. Deal fairly and ingenuously, and give a categorical answer, one way or the other.' By the resolving of their question into this, our Savior intimates how near akin his doctrine and baptism were to John's; they had the same original, and the same design and tendency—to introduce the gospel-kingdom. Christ might with better grace put this question

mercy; and who cannot be spiritually alive at all, if he is not habitually sensible of this. Therefore he must habitually show mercy and feel compassion.'
Br. SUMMAY.

Verse 33.

This is the dilemma of the Jews. They dared not deny that John was a prophet. But as John was Christ's forerunner, and spake clearly of Him, they could not acknowledge John as a prophet sent from God, without acknowledging Christ to be the Messiah, according to John's testimony: 'for, to use the words of Doddridge, 'the other question naturally requires to be determined first, and when you think proper to decide that, you may easily perceive that the same answer will serve for both.'

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CHAP. XII.

The parable of the vineyard let out to wicked husbandmen, 1-12. Jesus answers the Pharisees and Herodians about paying tribute to Cæsar, 13-17; the Sadducees, concerning the resurrection, 18-27; and a Scribe, concerning the first commandment in the law, 28-34. He denounces the Scribes, whose Son the Messiah was to be, 35-37; warns the people against the ostentation and hypocrisy of the Scribes, 38-40; and commends a poor widow, who had cast two mites into the treasury, 41-44.

AND ^a he began to speak unto them by parables. ^bA certain man ^cplanted a vineyard, ^dand set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the wine-^evat, and built a tower, ^fand let it out to husbandmen, ^gand went into a far country.

² And ^hat the season he sent to the husbandmen ⁱa servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

³ And ^jthey caught him, and beat him, ^kand sent him away empty.

⁴ And again he sent unto them another servant: and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled.

⁵ And again he sent another; ^land him

^a 2. 11-13. 38. 34. Ex. 20. 49. Matt. 13. 10-11. 34. 35. 21. 33-35. 22. 1-14. Luke 8. 10.

^b Matt. 21. 33-40. Luke 20. 9-15.

^c Ps. 80. 8-16. Is. 5. 1-4. Jer. 2. 21.

^d Luke 13. 8-9. Is. 5. 1-4. Jer. 2. 21.

^e Cant. 8. 11. 12. Is. 7. 23.

^f 2. 34. Matt. 25. 14. Luke 15. 12-19.

^g Ps. 13. Matt. 21. 34. Luke 20. 10.

^h Jer. 6. 8-10. 2 Kings 17. 13. 2 Kings 18. 15. Ezra 9. 11. Jer. 25. 4. 5. 15. 44. Zechar. 1. 3-4. 7. 7. 10. 11.

ⁱ 1 Kings 18. 13. 19. 10. 14. 22. 27.

^j 2. 16. 10. 24. 19-21. 36. 18. Neh. 9. 28. Jer. 2. 30. 20. 26. 20-24.

^k 29. 38. 37. 15. 16. 38. 4-6. Matt. 23. 34. 37. Luke 11. 47-51. 13. 33. 34. 35. 52. 53. 1 Thess. 2. 16. 11. 37. 37. 2. 1. 4. 5. 16. Dan. 9. 10. 11. Zechar. 7. 9-13. Luke 20. 10-12.

^l 9. 13. Matt. 5. 12. 21. 35. 38. 22. 6. Luke 8. 22. 23. 28.

to them, because they had sent a committee of their own house to examine John, John 1: 19. 'Now,' saith Christ, 'what was the result of your inquiries concerning him?'

They knew what they thought of this question; they could not but think that John Baptist was a man sent of God. But the difficulty was, what they should say to it now. Men that oblige not themselves to speak as they think, (which is a certain rule,) cannot avoid perplexing themselves.

1. If they own the baptism of John to be from heaven, as really it was, they shame themselves; for Christ will presently turn it upon them, Why did ye not then believe him, and receive his baptism? They could not bear that Christ should say this, but they could bear it that their own consciences should say so, because they had an art of stifling them, and because what conscience said, though it might grate them a little, would not shame them; and then they would do well enough, who looked no further than Saul's care, when he was convicted, Honour me now before this people, 1 Sam. 15: 30.

2. If they say, 'It is of men, he was not sent of God,' they expose themselves; the people will be ready to do them mischief, or at least clamor upon them; for all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed, and therefore could not hear him reflected on. Note, There is a carnal fear, to which not only wicked subjects but wicked rulers are liable, which God makes use of to keep the world in some order, and to suppress violence, that it shall not always grow up into a rod of wickedness. Now by this dilemma, (1.) They were confounded, and forced to a dishonorable retreat; to pretend ignorance—We cannot tell, (and that was mortification enough to proud men,) but really to discover the greatest malice and wilfulness. What Christ did by his wisdom, we must labor to do by our well-doing—put to silence the ignorance of foolish men, 1 Pet. 2: 15. (2.) Christ came off with honor, and justified Himself in refusing to give them an answer to their imperious demand; Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. They did not deserve to be told; for it was plain that they contended not for truth, but victory; nor did He need to tell them; for the works which He did, told them plainly that He had authority from God to do what He did; since no man could do those miracles which He did, unless God were with him. Let them wait but three or four days, and his resurrection shall tell them; for by that He will be declared to be the Son of God with power, as by their rejecting of Him, they will be declared to be the enemies of God.

CHAP. XII. v. 1-12. Christ had formerly in parables showed how He designed to set up the gospel church; now He begins in parables to show how He would lay aside the Jewish church, and build upon its ruins. We may observe here,

1. They that enjoy the privileges of the visible church, have a vineyard let out to them, which is capable of great improvement, and from the occupiers of which rent is justly expected. When God showed his word unto Ja-

cob, his statutes and judgments unto Israel, (Ps. 147: 19.) when He set up his temple among them, and his ordinances, then He let out to them the vineyard he had planted; which He hedged, and in which He built a tower, v. 1. Members of the church are God's tenants, and they have both a good landlord and a good bargain, and may live well upon it, if it be not their own fault.

II. Those to whom God lets out his vineyard, He reminds of his just expectations, v. 2. He was not hasty in his demands, for He did not send till the season.

III. It is sad to think what base usage God's faithful ministers have met with, in all ages, from those that have enjoyed the privileges of the church, and have not brought forth fruit answerable. The Old-Testament prophets were persecuted even by those that went under the name of the Old-Testament church. They ¹ wounded them, and sent them empty away; (v. 3.) ² they wounded them, and sent them away shamefully untreated; (v. 4.) nay, at length, they came to such a pitch of wickedness, that ³ they killed them, v. 5.

IV. It was no wonder, if ⁴ those who abused the prophets, abused Christ Himself. God did at length send them his Son, his well-beloved, it was therefore so much the greater kindness to send Him; as in Jacob to send Joseph to his brethren, Gen. 37: 14. And it might be expected, that Him whom their Master loved, they also should respect and love; (v. 6.) 'They will reverence my Son, and in reverence to Him, will pay their dues. But, instead of reverencing Him, because He was the son and heir, they therefore hated Him, v. 7. Because Christ, in calling to repentance, made his demands with more authority than the prophets, they were the more enraged, and determined to put Him to death, that they might engross all church power to themselves, and that all the respect of the people might be paid to them; 'The inheritance shall be ours, we will be lords and bear the sway.' There is an inheritance, which, if they had duly revered the Son, might have been theirs, a heavenly inheritance; but they slighted that, and would have their inheritance in the pomp and power of his world. So they took Him and killed Him; they had not done it yet, but would do it in a little time; they cast Him out of the vineyard, refused to admit his Gospel, but threw it out with disdain and detestation.

V. For such shameful doings, nothing can be expected but a fearful doom; (v. 9.) What shall therefore the Lord of the vineyard do?

1. He will come and destroy the husbandmen, whom He would have saved. When they only denied the fruit, He did not restrain upon them for the rent, nor dispossess them for non-payment; but when they killed his servants, and his Son, He determined to destroy them; and this was fulfilled when Jerusalem was laid waste, and the Jewish nation extirpated.

2. He will give the vineyard to others. God will be no loser by any. This was fulfilled in the taking in of the Gentiles, and the abundance of fruit which the Gospel brought forth in all the world, Col. 1: 6. Note, If some, from whom we expected well, prove bad, it doth not follow but that others will be better. Christ encour

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 20-33. Many professed Christians and ministers are barren fig-trees, covered with leaves, disappointing those who seek fruit from them; and exposing themselves to the doom of being withered, and remaining to all eternity unfruitful under the curse of the Lord! We should fear this sentence far more than death, and rest in no religion which does not render us 'fruitful in good works.' This will be the sure effect of 'faith in God,' if it is vigorous and lively. Thus our attempts to do good may be rendered more successful than we could have imagined, by a divine blessing on our labors of love: and though we may not possess superior abilities, or influence, we may prevent impiety by the efficacy of fervent, constant prayers,

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. v. 1-12. Notes. Is. 5: 1-7. Matt. 21: 33-44. Luke 20: 9-19. Wine, &c. 'The word used by St. Matthew, signifies, 'the wine-press' that by Mark, the cavity under it, in which the vessel was fixed which received the liquor pressed from the grapes.' Doddridge.

(1.) 'The Jews planted their vineyards, most commonly, on the N. T. VOL. I.

south side of a hill or mountain, the stones being gathered out and the space hedged round with thorns or walled. Isa. 5: 1-6. Ps. 80. and Matt. 21: 33.

Build a tower. 'Mr. Buckingham, in his late travels, was particularly struck with the appearance of several small and detached towers in the midst of the vineyards, from which, watchmen looked to guard the produce, even in the present day.'

they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some.

6 Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, 'They will reverence my son.'

7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours.'

8 And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard.

9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? 'He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others.'

10 And 'have ye not read this scripture, 'The Stone which the builders rejected is become the Head of the corner?'

11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people; for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them; and they left him, and went their way.

[Practical Observations.]

13 ¶ And they sent unto him certain of the Pharisees, and of the Herodians, to catch him in his words.

¶ P. 2.7. Matt. 1.23. 11.27. 26.53.

raged Himself with this in his undertaking; *Though Israel be not gathered to Him, but against Him, yet shall I be glorified.* (Isa. 49: 5, 6.) as a *Light to lighten the Gentiles.*

3. Their opposition to Christ's exaltation shall be no obstruction to it; (v. 10, 11.) *The stone which the builders rejected is, notwithstanding, highly advanced as the Head-stone, and as the Corner-stone. God will exalt Christ as his King upon his holy hill of Zion, in spite of their project, who would break his bands asunder.* And all the world shall own this to be the *Lord's doing*, in justice to the Jews, and in compassion to the Gentiles. The exaltation of Christ was the *Lord's doing*, and it is *his doing* to exalt Him in our hearts, and to set up his throne there; and if it be done, it cannot but be marvellous in our eyes.

The chief priests and scribes, whose conviction was designed by it, knew *He spake this parable against them*, v. 12. They could not but see their own faces in the glass of it; and, one would think, it showed them their sin so very heinous, and their ruin so certain and great, that it should have frightened them into a compliance with Christ, should have prevailed to bring them to repentance; at least, to make them desist from their malicious purpose against Him; but, instead of that, (1.) *They sought to lay hold on Him, and so fulfil what He had just said*, v. 8. (2.) Nothing restrained them from it but the awe they stood in of the people; they did not *revere* Christ, nor *fear* God, but were afraid, if they should publicly lay hold on Christ, the people would rise, and rescue Him. (3.) *They left Him, and went their way*; if they could not do hurt to Him, they resolved that He should not do good to them, and therefore they got out of the hearing of his powerful preaching, *lest they should be converted and healed.* Note, If men's prejudices be not conquered by the truth, they are but confirmed; and if the corruptions of the heart be not subdued by faithful reproofs, they are but exasperated. If the Gospel be not a *savor of life* unto life, it will be a *savor of death* unto death.

V. 13-17. When the enemies of Christ, who thirsted for his blood, could not find occasion against Him, from what He said against them, they tried to ensnare Him, by putting questions to Him.

John 1:14, 18, 34, 49. 2:16-18. 1 John 4:9. 5:11, 12.
n 1:11. 9:7. Gen. 22:2, 12. 37:3, 11-13.
44:50. 16. 42:1. Matt. 3:17. 17:15.
Luke 2:22. 9:35. John 3:35.
o Ps. 2:12. John 5:23. Heb. 1:6. Rev. 5:9-13.
p 12. Gen. 3:15. 37:20. Ps. 22:3.
22:12-15. Is. 49:7. 53:7-8. Matt. 2:3-13. 16. John 1:47-50. Acts 2:3.
5:28. 7:52. 13:27, 28.
q Matt. 21:33, 39. Luke 20:15. Heb. 13:11-13.
r Matt. 21:40, 41.

s Lev. 26:15-19. 23:24, 27, 28. Deut. 4:26, 27. 28:15, &c. 61. Josh. 23:15. Is. 5:5-7. Dan. 9:26, 27. Zech. 13:7-9. Matt. 3:9-12. 12:45. 22:27. 23:34-36. Luke 13:27, 29-34. 30:15, 16.
t Is. 29:17. 32:15-16. 65:15. Mal. 1:11. Matt. 8:11-13. 21:43. Acts 13:46-48. 28:23-28. Rom. 9:30-33. 10:20, 21. 11:1, &c.
u 26. 2:25. 13:34. Matt. 14:3. 19:4. 21:16. 22:31. Luke 6:3.
z Ps. 118:22, 23. Is. 28:16. Matt. 42. Luke 20:17, 18. Acts 4:11, 12.

Rom. 9:33. Eph. 2:20-22. 1 Pet. 2:7, 8.
y Num. 23:23. Hab. 1:5. Acts 21:12, 32-36. 3:19-16. 13:40, 41. Eph. 3:4-11. Col. 1:27. 1 Tim. 3:16.
z 11:18, 32. Matt. 21:26, 35, 46. Luke 20:6, 19. John 7:25, 30, 44.
a 2 Sam. 12:7, &c. 1 Kings 20:38-41. 21:17-27.
b Ps. 118:12. 56:5, 6. 140:5. Is. 29:21. Jer. 18:18. Matt. 22:15, 16. Luke 11:5. 20:20.
c 3:8. 8:15. Matt. 16:8.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-12. We are accountable to God for peculiar advantages afforded us, that we may be fruitful in good works. Our Lord, the Proprietor of the vineyard, waits for the fruits till 'the due season'; but He will by no means excuse any who do not render them; and as we in this land are more favored than the Jews of old, our doom will be more dreadful if we are unfruitful. The Scriptures and faithful preachers are demands on us, to render the due revenue of glory to God, by holiness of life; and the coming of the beloved Son, and all his miracles and doctrines, were intended to supply us with motives, and assistance for fruitfulness. But proud men, though the professed worshippers of God, will be exceedingly offended at these truths; and many rulers and teachers, to whom the vineyard has been intrusted, have often been ready to insult, and murder the servants of God, who came to demand the fruits in their Master's name; nay, they have not shown reverence even to his Son, but have acted with decided enmity against Him, for the sake of their own secular interest! Thus have 'the builders rejected the Corner-stone' to their own ruin; and

in securing present advantages, have come short of 'the inheritance of the saints in light,' and sunk to misery and despair. Let sinners beware of this spirit: and remember, that if they are offended by the faithful reproofs of ministers, they would have been far more irritated by those of Christ, had they lived when He was on earth; and would have concurred with his crucifiers. If provoked to revile or ridicule their teachers, they would easily be tempted to ill treat them, were the power in their hands; for when this disposition prevails, the more plain and convincing the truth, the greater rage it excites! Let us then regard and profit by the instructions of the servants, as a proof that we really 'revere the beloved Son' of God; and let us seek grace from Him, that we 'may be filled with all the fruits of righteousness which are brought forth by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God,' that our privileges may be continued to us, and our souls perfected, when wicked professors of Christianity shall be destroyed forever. (P. O. Matt. 21: 33-46. 23:34-39. Luke 20:1-18.)

SCOTT.

Verses 13-17.

[Exposition of the parable.] 'The man planting a vineyard is God, who brought a vine out of Egypt, and cast out the heathen, and planted it in the land of Canaan. Ps. 80: 89. It was a noble vine, a right seed. Jer. 2: 21. See also Isaiah 5. The vineyard was the church of the Jews—the servants so abused were the prophets. 2 Chron. 36: 16. The son was Christ. The latter part of the parable foretells their treatment of Him and his rejection of them, the passing of the Gospel to the Gentiles, and our Savior's final exaltation.'

POOLS.

(Notes, Matt. 22: 15-22. Luke 20: 19-26.) 'Judas of Galilee' (Acts 5: 37.) 'saith Josephus, solicited the people to rebellion, telling them that God was to be their only Prince, and no mortal to be acknowledged such; that a tax paid by them, was a manifest profanation of servitude; and that it was their duty to vindicate their liberty. By which means he raised a great sedition among the Jews, and was 'cause of innumerable mischiefs to the nation. Of this sect it was;

14 And when they were come, they say unto him, 'Master, we know that thou art true, and 'carest for no man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: 'Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?

15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, 'knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, 'Why tempt ye me? bring me * a penny, that I may see it.

16 And he saith unto them, Whose is this 'image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cæsar's.

17 And Jesus answering said unto them, 'Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, 'and to God the things that are God's. 'And they marvelled at him.

18 ¶ Then 'come unto him the Sadducees, which 'say there is no resurrection: and they asked him, saying,

19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, 'If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

20 Now * there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.

21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

22 And the fourth, and the fifth, and the sixth, and the seventh, all of them took wives, and died, leaving no seed.

23 And the seventh, and the eighth, and the ninth, and the tenth, and the eleventh, and the twelfth, all of them took wives, and died, leaving no seed.

24 And the Sadducees came, and they said unto him, 'Master, we know that thou art true, and 'carest for no man; for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: 'Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not?

25 And he, 'knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, 'Why tempt ye me? bring me * a penny, that I may see it.

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31 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

32 And the fourth, and the fifth, and the sixth, and the seventh, all of them took wives, and died, leaving no seed.

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39 Now * there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed.

40 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

41 And the fourth, and the fifth, and the sixth, and the seventh, all of them took wives, and died, leaving no seed.

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49 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise.

50 And the fourth, and the fifth, and the sixth, and the seventh, all of them took wives, and died, leaving no seed.

able they suspected Christ to be a favorer, and the rather for his being counted a Galilean. Hammond. — [1] He said No, the Herodians might represent Him as an enemy to Cæsar: if Yea, the Pharisees might represent Him to the people, as no friend to the nation. Whitby. (15.) *Shall we give, &c.* They urged our Lord to answer explicitly. — [2] Perhaps the very circumstance of taking upon Him to determine such a question, might, by these invidious inquirers, be construed as a pretence to sovereignty. Doddridge. Scott.

(17.) 'It is certain, that not daring to refuse this coin, when offered them in payment, was in effect a confession that they were conquered by the Romans, and consequently, that the emperor had a right to their tribute.'

Render to Cæsar, &c.] Marg. Ref. m-o. 'The meekness of wisdom' was never more beautifully manifested, than in our Lord's answer: to no insidious question: and nothing can be more worthy of imitation than this: that He always took occasion, even from the most captious and frivolous questions, which would have excited contempt

or indignation, in others, calmly to call the attention of the hearers to some very important instruction. Scott

Veres 18—27. (Notes, Matt. 22: 23—33; Luke 20: 27—38.) The circumstances of the case are more particularly related here, than in Matthew: but the concluding words, 'Ye therefore do greatly err,' as a strong protest against the Sadducees, is the most remarkable addition. Where the narrative in Mark seems most entirely a repetition of that in Matthew; comparing them will fully show, that Mark did not copy Matthew. — Indeed the difference of style in the evangelists, is much more conspicuous in the original than in any translation.

(18.) 'The Sadducees took their name from Saduc, who taught that God was not to be served from mercenary principles, from hope of reward or fear of punishment. His followers interpreted this as a denial of the future state. The story which they mention seems to have been a kind of common-place objection, as we meet with it in the old Jewish writers.'

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The clear perception and unreserved confession by the scribe, of a "truth so often concealed, appeared to indicate that "honest and good heart" which "having heard the word, keeps it," and might therefore be permitted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: might be led onward to a fuller and more complete acquaintance with God through the Son. For it is this knowledge, the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus, which brings forth the fruit of life eternal, *all the heart, all the mind, all the strength, to unite in love with Him.* Love exercised towards ourselves, is of all things the most likely to produce a return of love. We have indeed the strongest reason to love God. He gave this great and wonderful evidence of His love for us, that he "sent

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, "Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God is one Lord :

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment.

31 And the second is like, *namely* this, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth : "for there is one God ; and there is none other but He :

33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbor as himself, "is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.

34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. "And no man after that durst ask him any question.

[Practical Observations.]

35 ¶ And Jesus answered and said, "while he taught in the temple, "How say the

1. That the great commandment which includes all is, the "of loving God with all our hearts ; (1.) Who a this is the commanding principle in the soul, there is a disposition to every other duty. Love is the leading affection of the soul ; the love of God is the leading grace in the renewed soul. (2.) Where this is not, nothing good is done, or done aright, or done long. Loving God with all our heart, will effectually take us off from all rivals with Him in our souls, and will engage us to every thing by which He may be honored, and pleased ; and no commandment will be grievous where this principle has the ascendancy. In Mark, our Savior prefixes to this command the great doctrinal truth upon which it is built ; (v. 29.) *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord ;* if we firmly believe this, it will follow, that we shall love Him with all our heart. He is Jehovah, who has all perfection ; He is our God, to whom we stand related and obliged, and therefore we ought to love Him, and set our affections on Him ; He is one Lord, and therefore must be loved with our whole heart ; He has the sole right to us, and therefore ought to have sole possession. If He be one, our hearts must be one with Him, and since there is no God besides, no rival must be admitted with Him upon the throne.

2. The second great commandment is to love our neighbor, as truly and sincerely as ourselves, and in the same instances ; and we must show it by doing as we would be done by. As we must therefore love God better than ourselves, because He is infinitely better than we, and must love Him with all our heart, because He is one Lord, and there is no other like Him ; so we must love our neighbor as ourselves, because He is of the same nature with ourselves ; of one society, that of the world of mankind ; and if a fellow Christian, and of the same sacred society, the obligation is the stronger. *Has not one God created us ?* Mal. 2: 10. Has not one Christ redeemed us ? Well might Christ say, *There is no other commandment greater than these ;* for in these, all the law is fulfilled, and if we make conscience of obedience to these, all other obedience will follow of course.

III. The scribe, 1. Commends Christ's decision of this question ; *Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth.* Christ's assertions needed not the scribe's attestations ; but this scribe, being a man in authority, thought it would put some reputation upon what Christ said, to commend it ; and it shall be brought in evidence against

those who persecuted Christ, that even a scribe of their own confessed that He said the truth. We must subscribe to Christ's sayings, and set to our seal that they are true. 2. He comments upon it. Christ had quoted that great doctrine, *That the Lord our God is one Lord ;* and this he not only assented to, but added, *'There is none other but He ;* and therefore we must have no other God.' This excludes all rivals. Christ had laid down that great law, of loving God with all our heart ; and this also He explains—that it is loving Him with the understanding. Our love to God, as it must be an entire, so it must be an intelligent love ; we must love Him out of the whole understanding ; our rational powers and faculties must lead out the affections of our souls toward God. Christ had said, *'To love God and our neighbor is the greatest commandment of all ;'* 'Yea,' saith the scribe, *'it is better than all whole-burnt-offerings and sacrifices,* more acceptable to God, and will turn to a better account to ourselves.' There were those who held, that the law of sacrifices was the greatest commandment of all ; but this scribe readily agreed with our Savior in this—that the law of love to God and our neighbor is greater than that of sacrifice, even than those whole-burnt-offerings, which were intended purely for the honor of God.

IV. Christ approved of what he said, and encouraged him to proceed. 1. He owned that he understood well, as far as he went. *Jesus saw that he answered discreetly,* and was the more pleased with it, because He had of late met with so many that answered indiscreetly. He answered as a rational, intelligent man, whose reason was not blinded, whose judgment was not biassed, and whose forethought was not fettered, by the prejudices of other scribes. He answered as one that allowed himself liberty and leisure, and as one that had considered. 2. He owned that he stood fair for a further advance ; *'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God,* the kingdom of grace and glory ; thou art in a likely way to be a Christian. For the doctrine of Christ insists most upon these things, and is designed to bring thee to this.' Note, There is hope of those who make a good use of the light they have, that by the grace of God they will be led to clearer discoveries. What became of this scribe we are not told, but would willingly hope that, having been told by Him so much to his satisfaction, what was the great commandment of the law, he proceeded to inquire of Him, or his apostles, what was the

g 32, 33. Deut. 6: 4, 5. 10: 12. 30: 6. Prov. 22: 26. Matt. 10: 37. Luke 10: 27. 1 Tim. 1: 5. h Lev. 19: 13. Matt. 7: 12. 19: 13. 22: 39. Luke 10: 27, 36, 37. Rom. 13: 8, 9. 1 Cor. 13: 4-8. Gal. 5: 14. Jam. 2: 8-13. 1 John 3: 17-19. 4: 7, 9, 21.

i Deut. 4: 39. 5: 7. 6: 4. Is. 44: 8. 45: 6, 14, 18, 21, 22. 46: 9. Jer. 10: 12. 1 Sam. 15: 22. Ps. 50: 8-15, 23. Prov. 21: 3. Is. 1: 11-17. 58: 5-7. Jer. 7: 21-23. Hsa. 6: 6. Am. 5: 21-24. Mic. 6: 8-8. Matt. 9: 13. 12: 7. 1 Cor. 13: 1-3. 1 Matt. 12: 29. Rom. 3: 20. 7: 9. Gal.

2: 19, 20. m Job 32: 15, 16. Matt. 22: 46. Luke 20: 40. Rom. 3: 19. Col. 4: 16. Tit. 1: 16-11. n 11: 27. Luke 19: 47. 20: 1. 21: 29. John 18: 20. o Matt. 22: 42. Luke 20: 41-44. John 7: 62.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 23-34. By pertinent replies to one description of opposers, we may sometimes obtain a more candid hearing from others, who have hitherto been equally estranged from the truth : for we shall find some more teachable than the rest of those to whom they belong. A careful attention to the Scriptures will convince us of the importance of a deep acquaintance with the spirituality, extent, and excellency of the moral law. While, therefore, many are disputing about nice distinctions, or external observances, we should hearken to the sacred Word, which requires us to 'love the Lord our God with all our heart, our soul, and mind, and strength,' and 'to love our neighbor as ourselves.' Did we thus love the Lord, did we thus supremely delight in his excellencies ; did we wholly desire his favor as our felicity ; were we thus filled with gratitude for his goodness to us ; and were we actuated by zeal for his glory, as in reason we ought to be, what spiritual worshippers and devoted servants of God should we be ! in what should we differ from the inhabitants of heaven ? (Note, Ex. 20: 2.) Did we 'love our neighbors as ourselves,' seek their good, and value their happiness equally with our own ; what perfect justice, truth, purity, goodness, compassion, and peace would every where prevail ! (Notes, and P. O. Luke

10: 25-37.) This indeed would be far 'more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.' But because our character and conduct have been, and are, (as far as left to ourselves,) the reverse of this temper and behavior ; therefore we are condemned sinners, need repentance, mercy, and the Savior's righteousness and sacrifice ; we cannot be justified by works of the law, but must be 'saved by grace, through faith,' and 'by the sanctification of his Spirit unto obedience.' Yet, if really interested in this redemption, we shall love these great commandments, as our rule of duty ; and daily mourn because our obedience to them is so defective. A just apprehension of the law, is generally the first step towards a spiritual understanding of the Gospel, and a proper improvement of its truths and though many, who contend for free salvation, might have been ready to reprobate the conviction and confession of this scribe, as self-righteous, we may easily perceive, that our Lord, with perfect wisdom and propriety, allowed him to have 'answered discreetly,' and as a man of reflection. We learn from our Lord's example to commend what is right, and encourage what is hopeful, in those who differ from us, and are ever judged against us.

Sc. vt.

his Son to be the propitiation for our sins," and for this inestimable mercy He now demands our love in return."

Ver. 35-37.

(35.) Christ, &c.] Or, 'The Christ,' the Messiah. The question was not asked by our Lord concerning Himself, whom most of his hearers were far from allowing to be 'the Christ ;' but concerning the Mes-

siah, whom they expected. (36.) *By the Holy Ghost,* 'By a divine Spirit of prophecy ; for elsewhere we read, that "God spake by the mouth of David." (Acts 1: 16. 4: 25.) This deserves to be noted by 'them who deny that the Psalms of David were writ by the Spirit of prophecy.' Whitby. It shows also that the Messiah had authority over David when he wrote the 111th Psalm.

Scort.

scribes that Christ is the Son of David?

36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, "The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool."

37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his Son? And the common people heard him gladly.

38 ¶ And he said unto them in his doctrine, "Beware of the scribes," which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the market-places,

39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts;

40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers; these shall receive greater damnation.

41 ¶ And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.

42 And there came a certain poor widow; and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

43 And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:

44 For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.

great commandment of the Gospel. Yet, if he went no further, we are not to think it strange; for there are many who are not far from the kingdom of God, and yet never come thither. One would think this should have invited many to consult Him; but it had a contrary effect; No man, after that, durst ask Him any question; every thing He said was spoken with such authority and majesty, that every one stood in awe of Him; those that desired to learn were ashamed, and those that designed to avail, were afraid to ask.

V. 35—40. Here,

1. Christ shows the people how defective the scribes were in their preaching, and how unable to solve the difficulties in the Old Testament, which they undertook to expound. Of this He gives an instance, which is not so fully related here as in Matthew. Christ was teaching in the temple: many things He said which were not written; but notice is taken of this, because it will stir us up to inquire concerning Christ, and to inquire of Him.

1. They told the people that the Messiah was to be the Son of David, (v. 35.) and they were right; He was not only to descend from him, but to fill his throne; (Luke 1: 32.) The Lord God shall give Him the throne of his father David. The Scripture said it often, but the people took it from the scribes; whereas the truths of God should rather be quoted from our Bibles than from our ministers; The waters are sweetest when drawn immediately from their source.

2. Yet they could not tell them how it was proper for David, in the spirit of prophecy, to call Him Lord, Ps. 110: 1. They had taught the people that concerning the Messiah, which would be for the honor of their nation—that He should be a branch of their royal family; but they had not taken care to teach them that which was for the honor of the Messiah Himself—that He should be the Son of God, and, as such, and not otherwise, David's Lord. Thus they held the truth in unrighteousness, and were partial in the Gospel, as well as in the law of the Old Testament. They were able to say it, and prove it—that Christ was to be David's Son; but if any should object, How then doth David himself call Him Lord? they could not avoid the objection. Note, Those are unworthy to sit in Moses' seat, who are not in some measure able to defend the truth when they have preached it, and to convince gainsayers.

Now, to have their ignorance thus exposed, no doubt incensed the scribes against Christ; but the common people heard Him gladly, v. 37. What He preached was affecting; and though it reflected upon the scribes, it was instructive to them; they had never heard such preaching. Probably there was something commanding and charming in his voice and way of delivery, which recommended Him to the common people; for we do not find that any were wrought upon to believe in Him, and to follow Him, but He was to them as a lovely song of one that could play well on an instru-

2 Pet. 1: 21.

q Ps. 110: 1. Acts 2: 34—36. 1 Cor. 15: 25.

55. Heb. 1: 13. 10: 12, 13.

r Matt. 1: 23. Rom. 1: 3, 4. 9: 5. 1

Tim 3: 16. Rev. 22: 16.

u Matt. 11: 25. 21: 36. Luke 19: 48.

21: 38. John 7: 46—49. Jam. 2: 5.

t 4: 2.

u Matt. 10: 17. 23: 1—7. Luke 20: 45—47.

x Mat. 6: 5. Luke 11: 33. 14: 7—11.

z John 9. 7. Jam. 2: 3.

3 Ez. 22: 25. Mic. 2: 2. 3: 1—4. Mat. 23: 14.

23: 14. Luke 20: 24: 7.

a Mat. 6: 7. 11: 22—24. 23: 33. Luke 12: 47, 48.

b Mat. 27: 6. Luke 21: 1. John 8: 20.

* A piece of brass money. Matt. 10: 9.

c Ez. 35: 21—23. Matt. 10: 12. Acts 1: 9.

d 2 Cor. 8: 12. 9: 6—8.

d 14: 8. 1 Chr. 29: 12—17. 2 Chr. 24: 10—14. 31: 5—10. 35: 7, 8. Ezra 4: 65, 66.

76: 70—72. 2 Cor. 8: 5, 6.

Phil. 4: 10—17.

e Luke 8: 43. 15: 13. 20. 21: 2—4.

(37.) The common people. 'The great multitude.' SCOTT. Verses 38—40.

Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 23: 5—7, 14. Luke 20: 45—47. Jam. 1: 2.

(38.) Long clothing. 'This garment mentioned here descended to the ankles, worn in the East, by persons of distinction; e. g. Kings & Chron. 15: 27. Jon. 3: 6.) Priests, (3 Ed. i. 1. 5: 81.) and honorable persons. See Xenophon. Luke 15: 22. These were affected by the lawyers of the Pharisaical set. Kain.' BLOOMFIELD.

(39.) Devour widows' houses. 'The female sex, as being more prone to superstition, so lies more open to such frauds.' GROTIUS. Verses 41—44.

The exact amount is not easily determined; it could not be less than a farthing, nor so much as a penny—How applicable this to the case of weekly small subscriptions from the poor, to Bible societies, and Missionary societies, must be obvious to every reflecting reader! Marg. Ref.

(40.) Treasury. 'This received the voluntary contributions of the worshippers who came up to the feasts; and the money thrown into the treasury.' SCOTT.

it was employed to buy wood for the altar, salt and other necessities not provided for in any other way.

"This example brings before our minds with great force a solemn reflection. It admonishes us of the way in which the King of all the earth is constantly beholding the works of men, and recording them in reward or condemnation. 'The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good.' Prov. 15: 3. Beholding the evil sometimes that He may overrule their bad designs to his own wise purposes; and sometimes that He may restrain them within the bounds which they should not pass, lest, like the waters of the deluge, they should return to cover the earth: and in the end, that He may 'give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings.'" Jer. 17: 10. Why He beholds the good, it is needless to declare. For the same purpose that our LORD noticed this poor to lose, that He may approve and favor now, and give abundant recompense hereafter. Let us strive to bear in mind that He is always beholding us; that He "compasseth our path, and our lying down, and is acquainted with all our ways."

Ed. S. G. N. E.

CHAP. XIII.

That predicts the destruction of the temple, and of Jerusalem, 1, 2; and what will signs and calamities should go before that catastrophe, 3-23, and what should happen at the time of his coming, 24-27. The parable of a fig-tree, showing the Lord and His certain approach of these events, 28-31. No man knows the day or hour therefore all ought to watch and pray, and be ready, 32-37.

AND as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!

2 And Jesus answering, said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple, Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, asked him privately,

4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

a Mt. 24. 1, Luke 21. 5, b Ez. 7:20-22, 8:6, 10:4, 19. 11:22, 23. Mal. 3:1, 2. c 1 Cor. 9:7-12, 2 Cor. 7:20, 21. Jer. 29:18. Mic. 3:12. Matt. 24:2. Luke 19:41-44. 21:6. Acts 6:14. Rev. 11:2. d Mt. 24:3. e 1:18-19. 5:37. 9:2. 10:35. 14:33. John 1:40, 41. f 4:34. Matt. 13:10, 36. g Dan. 12:9. Luke 21:7. John 21:21, 22. Acts 1:5, 7.

V. 35-44. With a proper view of the holy law, a serious recollection of its awful sanction, and a believing prospect of the day of judgment, we shall be prepared to attend to what the Scriptures declare, concerning the person and offices of Christ; and be led unreservedly to confess Him to be 'our Lord and our God'; as 'the End of the law for righteousness to every one who believeth' (Note, Rom. 10: 1-4.) to obey Him as our exalted Redeemer; and to rejoice that He is seated at the right hand of the Father, to perfect his people's salvation, and to 'put all enemies under his feet.'—If 'the common people hear these things gladly,' while the distinguished in rank and authority oppose them, we may congratulate the former, however despised, and pity the latter, in the midst of their splendor; for what will rich, or long clothing, salutations in public assemblies, or 'chief rooms in synagogues,' however now valued, avail men, when the Judge shall prove their devotion to have been the mask of impiety, and sentence them to receive the greater condemnation? Let us not forget that Jesus still watches the treasury, to observe how much, and from what motives, men contribute to it. He approves of liberality in the rich; who ought to appropriate a far greater proportion of their wealth to works of piety and charity, than they generally, or indeed almost ever do; but it should be in simplicity,

works of piety very far go together; where God is honored by our ship, it is proper He should be honored by the relief of his poor; and we often find prayers and alms in conjunction, as Acts 20: 1, 2. It is good to erect public receptacles of charity for directing private hands in giving to the poor; nay, it is good for those who are of ability to have funds of their own, to lay by, as God has prospered them, (1 Cor. 16: 2) that they may have something ready to give when an object of charity offers itself, which is before dedicated to such uses.

II. Jesus Christ had an eye upon it; He sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into it; not grudging either that He had none to cast in, or had not the disposal of that which was cast in, but observing what was cast in. Note, Our Lord Jesus takes notice of what we contribute to pious and charitable uses; whether we give liberally or sparingly; whether cheerfully or with reluctance; nay, He looks at the heart; observes what principles we act upon, and what our views are, in giving, and whether we do it as unto the Lord, or only to be seen of men.

III. He saw many that were rich, cast in much; and it was a good sight to see rich people charitable, to see many so, and to see them cast in much. Note, Those that are rich, ought to give richly; if God give abundantly to us, He expects we should give abundantly to the poor; and it is not enough for those that are rich, to say, that they give as much as others who perhaps have much less of the world, but they must give in proportion to their estates; and if objects of charity do not present themselves, they ought to inquire them out, and to devise liberal things.

IV. There was a poor widow that cast in two mites, which make a farthing; (v. 42.) and Jesus commended her: called his disciples, and bid them take notice of it; (v. 43.) told them that she could ill spare what she gave, she had scarcely enough for herself; it was all she had to live upon that day, and perhaps a great part of what she had earned the day before; and as He knew she did it from a truly charitable disposition, He reckoned it more than all that the rich people threw in; for they did cast in of their abundance, but she of her want, v. 44. Many would have been ready to censure this poor widow, and to think she did ill; why should she give to others, when she had little enough for herself? Charity begins at home; or, if she would give it, why did she not bestow it upon

some poor body that she knew? What occasion was there for bringing it to the treasury? be disposed of by the chief priests, who, we have reason to fear, were partial in the disposal of it? It is so rare a thing to find any that would not blame this widow, that we cannot expect to find any that will imitate her; and yet our Savior commends her, and therefore we are sure that she did well and wisely. If Christ saith, *Well done*, no matter who saith otherwise; and we must hence learn, 1. That giving alms, is an excellent thing, and highly pleasing to Jesus; and if we be humble and sincere in it, He will accept it, though in some circumstances there may not be all the discretion in the world. 2. Those that have but a little ought to give alms out of their little. Those that live by their labor, must give to those that need, Eph. 4: 28. 3. It is very good for us to deny ourselves, that we may give more to the poor; to deny ourselves even conveniences, for the sake of charity. We should in many cases pinch ourselves, that we may supply the necessities of others; this is loving our neighbors as ourselves. 4. Public charities should be encouraged, for they bring upon a nation public blessings; and though there may be some mismanagement of them, yet that is not a good reason why we should not give to them. 5. Though we can give but a little in charity, yet if it be according to our ability, and be given with an upright heart, it shall be accepted of Christ, who requires according to what a man has, and not according to what he has not. Two mites shall be brought to account, if given in a right manner, as if it had been two pounds. 6. It is much to the praise of charity, when we give not only to our power, but beyond our power, as the Macedonian churches, whose deep poverty abounded to the riches of their liberality; 2. Cor. 8: 2, 3. When we provide for others out of our own necessary provision; as the widow of Sarepta for Elijah, and Christ for his five thousand guests, and trust God to provide for us some other way, this is *thankworthy*.

CHAP. XIII. v. 1-4. I. Many of Christ's disciples idolize things that look great, and have been long looked upon as sacred. They had heard Christ complain of those who had made the temple a den of thieves; and yet, when He quitted it, for the wickedness that remained in it, they count Him to be as much in love as they were, with the stately structure and adorning of it. One of them said to Him.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

and not from pride and ostentation. And though their contributions should be encouraged; they ought not to be flattered into an opinion, that they are meritorious, or that they can atone for licentiousness, and prove a substitute for holiness. Nor should the poor on any account be discouraged in their humble endeavors to show 'the sincerity of their love,' as their small oblations, spared from their scanty supply, and from such expenses as are generally deemed needful, are more honorable to God, more evident effects of the power of divine grace, and expressions of patient self-denial and reliance on Providence; as well as, by comparison, a far greater bounty, than the applauded generosity of their superiors. Let then the poor contribute their mite to the relief of the distressed, or to promote the cause of God: and though men may deride or censure them, and those who excite and encourage them to such contributions, the Lord will graciously recompense them. They will not be impoverished by what they lend to Him; and their believing, though feeble efforts to honor Him, and do good to their brethren, will be mentioned with commendation in that day, when the splendid actions of unbelievers will be exposed to deserved contempt, as the result of pride, ostentation, enmity to God, and dislike to his humbling salvation. (P. O. Mat. 22: 34-46. 25: 34-36.)

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. v. 1. 'This temple, called the temple of Herod, in distinction from that of Solomon, and from the second temple, which was Zerubbabel's, was one hundred cubits long, seventy bread and one hundred high. The porch was raised to the height of one hundred cubits, and was extended fifteen cubits, each side of the rest of the building. It was built of white marble exquisitely wrought, and with stones of large dimensions, some of them twenty-five cubits long, eight high and twelve thick. These are the stones to which the disciple refers, "see what manner of stones," &c.

"The appearance of the temple," says Josephus, "was such as to strike the mind and astonish the sight. For it was on every side covered with

solid plates of gold, which reflected, when the sun rose upon it, such a strong and dazzling effulgence, that the eye could not sustain its radiance. At a distance, it appeared a huge mountain covered with snow. For where the plates of gold were not, it was extremely white and glistening."

CALMET.

Verse 2.

"The splendid building has forever passed away! According to our Lord's prediction, "that there should not be left one stone upon another," it was completely demolished by the Roman soldiers under Titus, A. D. 70"

CALMET.

5 And Jesus answering them, began to say, ⁶ Take heed lest any man deceive you:

⁶ For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; ⁷ and shall deceive you.

7 And when ye shall hear of wars, and rumors of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things ⁸ must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.

8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: ⁹ these are the beginnings of sorrows.

9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, ¹⁰ for a testimony against them.

10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

11 But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye preme-

'Look, Master, what manner of stones, and what buildings are here, v. 1. We never saw the like in Galilee; do not leave this fine place.'

II. Christ does not value external pomp, where there is not real purity; 'Seest thou these great buildings,' (saith Christ,) 'and admirest thou them? I tell thee, The time is at hand when there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down,' v. 2. The sumptuousness of the fabric shall be no security, nor move any compassion in Jesus towards it. He looks with pity upon the ruin of souls, and weeps over them, for on them He has put great value; but we do not find Him look with any pity upon the ruin of a magnificent house, when He is driven out of it by sin. With what little concern doth He say, *Not one stone shall be left on another!* Much of the strength of the temple lay in the largeness of the stones, and if these be thrown down, no footstep, or remembrance of it will remain. While any part remained standing, there might be some hope of the repair of it; but what hope is there, when not one stone is left upon another?

III. How natural it is to us to desire to know things to come, and the times of them; we are apt to be more inquisitive about that than about our duty. His disciples knew not how to digest this doctrine of the ruin of the temple, which they thought must be their Master's royal palace, and in which they expected their preferment, and posts of honor; and therefore they were in pain till they learned more of Him concerning this matter. As He was returning to Bethany, therefore, He sat upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple, where He had a full view of it; and there four of them agreed to ask Him privately, what He meant by the destroying of the temple, which they understood no more than they did the predictions of his own death, so inconsistent with their scheme. Probably, though these four proposed the question, yet Christ's discourse, in answer to it, was in the hearing of the rest of the disciples, yet privately, that is, apart from the multitude. Their inquiry is, *When shall these things be?* They will not seem to question, whether they shall be or no, (for their Master has said that they shall), but are willing to hope it is a great way off. Yet they ask not precisely the day and year, (therein they were modest,) but say, 'Tell us what shall be the sign, when all these things shall be fulfilled?' What presages shall there be of their approach?

V. 6-13. Our Lord replies to their question, not so much to satisfy their curiosity, as to direct their consciences; leaves them still in the dark concerning the times and seasons, which the Father has kept in his own power; but gives them cautions with reference to the events that would now shortly come to pass.

I. They must take heed that they be not deceived by impostors that would now shortly arise; (v. 5, 6.) 'Take heed lest any man deceive you, lest, having found the true Messiah, you lose Him again in the crowd of pretenders, or embrace others in rivalry with Him. Many shall come in my name, (not in the name of Jesus), but saying, I am Christ, and so claiming the dignities to which I only am entitled.' After the Jews had rejected the true Christ, they were imposed upon, by many false Christs, but never before; those false Christs deceived many. Therefore take heed lest they deceive you. Note, When many are deceived, we should look to ourselves.

II. They must take heed that they be not disturbed, at the noise of wars, which they

should be alarmed with, v. 7, 8. Sin introduced wars; they come from men's avarice. But at some times the nations are more distracted and wasted with wars than at other times; so I shall be now; Christ was born into the world when there was a general peace, but soon after He went out of the world there were general wars; *Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.* And what will become of them then who are to preach the gospel to every nation? *Amidst the clash of arms, the voice of law is not heard.* 'But be not troubled at it.' 1. 'Let it be no surprise to you; such things must needs be, for God has appointed them, in order to accomplish his purposes, and by their wars, God will punish the wickedness of the Jews.' 2. 'Let it be no terror to you; as if your interest were in danger of being overthrown, or your work obstructed; you have no concern in them, and therefore need not be apprehensive of damage.' Note, Those that despise the smiles of the world, may despise its frowns. If we seek not to rise with them that rise in the world, why should we dread falling with them that fall? 3. 'Let it not be looked upon as an omen of the approaching period of the world, for the end is not yet, v. 7. Think not that these wars will bring the world to a period; there are intermediate counsels to be fulfilled, which are to prepare you for the end, but not to hasten it out of due time.' 4. 'Let it not be looked upon, as if God had no more arrows in his quiver, ordained against the persecutors; be not troubled at the wars you shall hear of; they are but the beginnings of sorrows, and therefore, instead of being disturbed at them, you ought to prepare for worse; for there shall also be earthquakes in divers places, which shall bury multitudes in the ruins of their own houses; there shall be famines, by which many of the poor shall perish for want of bread, and troubles and commotions; so that there shall be no peace to him that goes out, or comes in. The world shall be full of troubles, but be not ye troubled; without are fightings, within are fears, but fear not ye their fear.' Note, The disciples of Christ, if it be not their own fault, may enjoy a holy serenity of mind, when all about them is in the greatest disorder.

III. They must take heed that they be not drawn away from their duty by the sufferings they should meet with for Christ's sake. Again, He saith, 'Take heed to yourselves, v. 9. Though you may escape the sword of war, because you interest not yourselves in the public quarrels, yet you will be exposed to the sword of justice more than others, and the part is the content with one another will unite against you. Take heed, therefore, lest you deceive yourselves with the hopes of such a temporal kingdom as you have been dreaming of, when it is through many tribulations that you must enter into the kingdom of God. Take heed lest you needlessly expose yourselves to trouble, and pull it upon your own head. Take heed what you say and do, for you will have many eyes upon you.'

The trouble which they must expect is, (1.) They shall be hated of all men. The thoughts of being hated are grievous to a tender spirit, and the fruits of that hatred must needs be a constant vexation; those that are malicious will be mischievous. It was not for any thing amiss in them, or by them, that they were hated, but for Christ's name's sake, because they were called by his name, preached his name, and wrought miracles in his name. The world hated them, because He loved them.

(2.) Their own relations shall betray them, as

- Jer. 29:8. Matt. 24:4,5. Luke 21:8. 1 Cor. 15:33. Eph. 5:6. Col. 3:2. 2 Thes. 2:3. 1 John 4:1.
• 22. Jer. 14:14. 23:21-23. John 5:43.
• 23. Matt. 24:11,23,24. Acts 5:36-39.
• Jer. 46:1-9. 11:27. Is. 6:12. Jer. 4:19-21. 51:46. Matt. 24:6,7. Luke 21:19-11.
• 2 Sam. 14:14. Matt. 18:7. Acts 17:3.
• 2 Chr. 15:6. Is. 19:2. Jer. 25:32. Hag. 2:22. Zech. 14:13. Rev. 6:4.
• Acts 11:28. p Matt. 24:8.
• Gr. the pains of a woman in travail. Ps. 48:6. Is. 37:3. Jer. 4:31. 6:24. 18:21. 22:23. 49:24.
• 50:43. Mic. 4:9-10. 1 Thes. 5:3.
• 5. Matt. 10:17,18. 23:34-37. 24:9,10. Luke 21:16-18. John 15:20. 16:2. Acts 4:1-21. 5:17-40. 6:11-11. 7:54-60. 8:1-3. 9:1,2,13. 14:16. 12:1-3. 16:26-21. 21:11. 21:40. 22:19,20. 23:12. 24:1. 28:29-29. 1 Cor. 4:9-13. 2 Cor. 11:23-27. Phil. 1:29. 2 Thes. 1:5. Rev. 1:9. 2:10,13. 6:9-11.
• 1:11. 6:11. Matt. 10:18. Luke 9:32. 12:10. 24:14. 28:18,19. Rom. 1:8. 10:18. 15:19. Col. 1:16, 23.
• 9. Matt. 10:17,21. Acts 3:13.
• Ex 4:10-12. Jer. 1:8-9. Dan. 3:18-18. Matt. 10:19,20. Luke 12:11,12. 21:14,15. Acts 2:4. 4:8, 10. 5:1, 6:10,15. 7:55.

Verse 6.

'Josephus' history of the Jewish war is the best commentary on this chapter. It is a wonderful instance of the care of Providence for the Christian church, it at an eye-witness, of so great credit, should be preserved, to give a collection of important facts illustrative of this noble prophecy in almost every particular.

'According to Josephus, few if any of these signs failed of coming to pass before the dreadful destruction of Jerusalem.'

'There were wars of the Jews among themselves, and of the Romans with the Syrians, Samaritans, and other neighboring nations. There were earthquakes in Apamea, Laodicea and Campania. The famine, in the days of Claudius, is mentioned in Acts 11: 28, as well as recorded

in history. (Sueton. Claud. cap. 18; and Euseb. Hist. Eccl. lib. II. cap. 8.) and many perished by it in Judea.'

'According to the same historian, there were also fearful signs and apparitions, in the air and heavens.'

POOLS. Verse 6. The tumults which were excited by the persecuting Jews against the apostles, and by the seditious, against the Romans, which brought dire calamities on immense numbers, and at length ruin on the nation seem especially intended.

SCOTT. Verses 9-13. (9.) Shall deliver, &c.' 'All this was exactly accomplished: for Peter and John were called before the sanhedrim; (Acts 4: 6-7)

dilate; but whatsoever ^u shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, ^v but the Holy Ghost.

12 Now ^a the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death.

13 And ^a ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: ^b but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

14 ¶ But when ye shall see ^c the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing ^d where it ought not, ^e (let him that readeth understand,) ^f then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains:

15 And ^g let him that is on the house-top not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take any thing out of his house:

16 And let him that is in the field, not turn back again for to take up his garment.

17 But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

19 For ⁱ in those days shall be affliction, such

whom they were most nearly allied, and on whom they depended for protection; 'They shall betray you, shall inform against you, and be your persecutors.' If a father has a child that is a Christian, he will become void of natural affection, it will be swallowed up in bigotry, and he shall betray his own child to the persecutors, as if he were a worshipper of other gods, Deut. 13: 6.

(3.) Church-rulers shall inflict their censures; 'You shall be delivered up to the great sanhedrim at Jerusalem, and to the inferior courts in other cities, and shall be beaten in the synagogues, with forty stripes at a time, as offenders against the law which was read in the synagogue.' It is no new thing for the church's artillery, through the treachery of its officers, to be turned against its best friends.

(4.) Governors and kings shall use their power against them. Because the Jews have not power to put them to death, they shall incense the Roman powers against them, as they did Herod against James and Peter; and they shall cause you to be put to death, as enemies to the empire.

2. What they shall have to comfort themselves with, in the midst of these great troubles.

(1.) That the work they were called to should be carried on notwithstanding. 'The Gospel shall, for all this, be published among all nations, and, before the destruction of Jerusalem, the sound of it shall go forth into all the earth; not only through the nation of the Jews, but to all the nations of the earth.' It is comfort to those who suffer for the Gospel, that, though they may be crushed, the Gospel cannot; it shall carry the day.

(2.) Their sufferings, instead of obstructing their work, should forward it. 'Your being brought before governors and kings shall be for a testimony to them; shall give you an opportunity of preaching the Gospel to those before whom you are brought as criminals, to whom otherwise you could not have access.' Thus St. Paul's being brought before Felix and Festus, and Agrippa, and Nero, was a testimony to them concerning Christ and his gospel. Or, It shall be for a testimony against them, against both the judges and the persecutors, who pursue those with the utmost rage that are innocent, excellent persons. The Gospel is a testimony to us concerning Christ and heaven; if we receive it, it will be a testimony for us, it will justify and save us; if not, it will be a testimony against us in the great day.

(3.) When brought before kings and governors for Christ's sake, they should have special assistance from heaven, 'Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak; be not solicitous how to address great men, so as to obtain their favor; your cause is just and glorious, and needs not premeditated harangues; but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, put into your minds, that speak ye, and fear not the success of it, for it is not ye that speak, by the strength of your own wisdom, but the Holy Ghost.' Note, Those whom Christ calls to be advocates for Him, shall be furnished with full instructions; and when we are engaged in the service of Christ, we may depend upon the aids of the Spirit of Christ.

(4.) Heaven at last would make amends for all; 'You will meet with great hardship in your way, but have a good heart, your warfare will be accomplished, your testimony finished, and he that shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved.' v. 13. Perseverance gains the crown. The promise is more than a deliverance from evil, it is everlasting blessedness, which shall be an abundant recompense for all their services and sufferings

V. 14—23. The Jews, in rebelling against the Romans, and in persecuting the Christians, were hastening their own ruin upon space, setting both God and man against them; see 1 Thes. 2: 16. That ruin came upon them within less than forty years after this.

It is here foretold concerning it, 1. That the Roman armies should invest Jerusalem, the holy city. These were the abominations of desolation, which the Jews did abominate, and by which they should be made desolate. The country of the enemy is called the land which thou abhorrest, Isa. 7: 16. It was an abomination, because it brought with it nothing but desolation. They had rejected Christ as an abomination, who would have been their Salvation; and now God brought upon them an abomination that would be their desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, (ch. 9: 27.) as that by which this sacrifice and offering should be made to cease. This army stood where it ought not, in and about the holy city, which the heathen ought not to have approached, nor would have been suffered to do, if Jerusalem had not first profaned the crown of their holiness. This the church complains of, Lam. 1: 10. The heathen entered into her sanctuary, whom thou didst command that they should not enter into the congregation; but sin made the breach, and the abomination of desolation broke in, and stood where it ought not. Now, let him that readeth this, understand it, and endeavor to take it right. Prophecies should not be too plain, and yet intelligible to those that search them; and they are best understood by comparing them first with one another, and at last with the event.

2. That when the Roman army should come there would be no safety but by quitting the country, with all possible expedition; it will be in vain to fight, the enemies will be too hard for them; in vain to abscond, the enemies will find them out; and in vain to capitulate, the enemies will give them no quarter; a man cannot have so much as his life given him for a prey, but by fleeing to the mountains out of Judea; and let him take the first alarm. If he be on the house-top, and spies them coming, let him not go down, to take any thing out of the house, losing time, more precious than his best goods, which will but encumber his flight. If he be in the field, and there discover the approach of the enemy, let him get away as he is, and not turn back again, to take up his garment, v. 16. If he can save his life, let him, though he can save nothing else, be thankful to God, that, though cut short, he is not cut off.

3. It would go very hard at that time with mothers; (v. 17.) 'Woe to them that are with child, that dare not go into strange places, nor make haste, as others can. And woe to them that give suck, that know not how either to leave their infants behind them, or to carry them with them.' The time may often be, when the greatest comforts may prove the greatest burthens. It would likewise be very uncomfortable, if they should be forced to flee in the winter, (v. 18.) when the weather was bad, the roads scarcely passable, especially in those mountains to which they must flee. If trouble must come, we may desire and pray that, if it be God's will, the circumstances of it may be so ordered as to mitigate the trouble; and when things are bad, we ought to consider they might have been worse. It is bad to be forced to flee, but worse if in the winter.

4. Throughout all the country of the Jews, there should be such desolation as could not be paralleled in any history; (v. 19.) In these days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of time; that is, of the creation which

x Is. 50:4. John 3:27. Eph. 6:19, 20. Jam. 1:5.
y 2 Sam. 23:2. 1 Cor. 2:13. Eph. 3:5. 1 Pet. 1:12.
z Ex. 36:21. Mic. 7:4—6. Matt. 10: 21. 24:10. Luke 12:52, 53. 21:16.
a Matt. 5:11, 12. 24:9. Luke 6:22. 21:17. John 15:18, 19. 17:14. 1 John 7: 13.
b Matt. 10:22. 24:18. Rom. 2:7. Gal. 6:9. Heb. 3:14. 10:39. Jam. 1:12. Rev. 2:10. 12:18. 13:15. 17:12.
c Dan. 8:13. 9:27. 12:11. Matt. 24: 15, &c. Luke 21:20—22.
d Lam. 1:10. Ec. 4:45.
e Matt. 25:1. Acts 8:30, 31. 1 Cor. 14:7, 8, 20. Rev. 15: 13, 18.
f Luke 21:21—24.
g Gen. 19:15—17, 22, 26. Job 24. Prov. 6:3, 5. 22:3. Matt. 24:16—18. Luke 17:31—33. Acts 17:18, 19, 38. Phil. 3:7, 8. Heb. 11:7.
h Deut. 28:56, 57. Lam. 2:19, 20. 4:3. 4:10. Ec. 9:14. 13:15. Matt. 24: 19—21. Luke 21:23. 23:29.
i Deut. 28:59. 29:22—28. Is. 65:12—15. Lam. 1:12. 2:13. 4:5. Dan. 9:12. 12:4. Joel 2:2. Matt. 24:21. Luke 21:22—24.

'James and Peter before Herod; (Acts 12: 2, 3.) and Paul before Nero, as well as before the Roman governors, Gallio, Felix, and Festus. (Acts 18: 12. 24: 25: 28.) Doddridge. (Marg. Ref.) SCOTT.
(13.) Hated of all men.' That the apostles and primitive Christians were more hated and persecuted than any other religious sect of men, is notorious.

Verse 14.
Jerusalem and all the adjacent country was holy ground, on which a thing which pertained to idolatry was allowed to encroach. SCOTT.

Abomination of desolation.] 'When ye shall see Jerusalem encompassed by Roman armies, and the standards of their desolating legions, bearing the detestable images of idols, are planted on holy ground, then let them in Judea flee to the mountains.' DODDRIDGE.
'The Christians fled to Pella, a city among the mountains, in the half-tribe of Manasseh, beyond Jordan.' EUSEBIUS. HENRY abr.

Verse 15.
'Eastern houses had flat roofs, which were frequent places of resort, so that the alarm of an invading army would be first reported among the people when they are assembled.' HENRY abr.

as was not ^{from} the beginning of the creation which God created, unto this time, neither shall be.

20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but ^{for} the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days.

21 And then, ^{if} any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, ^o, he is there; believe him not:

22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall shew signs and wonders, to seduce, ^{if it were possible}, even the elect.

23 But ^{take ye heed}: behold, I have foretold you all things.

[Practical Observations.]

24 ¶ But ⁱⁿ those

God created, for time and the creation are of equal date, *unto this day, neither shall be to the end of time*; such a complication of miseries, and of such continuance. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans was terrible, but this exceeded it. It threatened a universal slaughter of the Jews; so barbarously did they devour one another, and the Romans devour them all, that, if their wars had continued a little longer, no flesh, not one Jew could have been left alive; but in the midst of wrath, God remembered mercy; and, (1) *Shortened the days*; He let fall this controversy before He had made a full end. As a church and nation, the ruin was complete, but particular persons had their lives given them by the storm's subsiding when it did. (2) *For the elect's sake*, those days were shortened; many fared the better for the sake of the few that believed in Christ. There was a promise, that a remnant should be saved, (Isa. 10: 22.) and that God would not, for his servants' sakes, destroy them all; (Isa. 65: 8.) these promises must be fulfilled. God's own elect cry day and night to him, and their prayers must be answered, Luke 18: 7.

II. Directions are given to the disciples for the safety of their lives; 'When you see the country invaded, flatter not yourselves that the enemy will retire, or that you may be able to resist them; but, without further delay, flee to the mountains, v. 14. Meddle not with strife that belongs not to you; let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth; go out of the ship when you see it sinking, that you die not the death of the uncircumcised in heart.'

They must provide for the safety of their souls; 'Seducers will be busy at that time; they love to fish in troubled waters, you must then double your guard; if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or Lo, he is there, you know He is in heaven, and will come again, at the end of time, to judge the world; therefore believe them not; having received Christ, be not drawn into the snares of antichrist; for false Christs and false prophets shall arise,' v. 22. When the gospel-kingdom was setting up, Satan mustered all his force, and made use of

all his wiles; and God permitted it, for the trial of the sincerity of some, the discovery of the hypocrisy of others, and the confusion of those who rejected Christ. *False Christs shall rise*, and false prophets shall preach them up; or such as set up for prophets, and undertake to foretell things, and they shall show signs and lying wonders; so early did the mystery of iniquity begin to work, 2 Thess. 2: 7. They shall seduce, if it were possible, the very elect; so plausible shall their pretences be, and so industrious to impose upon people, that they shall draw away many that were zealous professors of religion, many that were likely to have persevered; for nothing will be effectual to secure men but that foundation of God which stands immovable. The Lord knows them that are his, who shall be preserved when the faith of some is overthrown, 2 Tim. 2: 19. They shall seduce, if it were possible, the very elect; but it is not possible to seduce them; the election shall obtain, whoever are blinded, Rom. 11: 7. But, in consideration hereof, let the disciples be cautious whom they give credit to; (v. 23.) *Take ye heed*. Christ knew that they were of the elect, who could not be seduced, yet He said to them, *Take heed*. An assurance of persevering, and cautions against apostasy, consist with each other. Though Christ said to them, *Take heed*, it doth not therefore follow, that their perseverance was doubtful, for they were kept by the power of God; and though their perseverance was secured, yet it doth not therefore follow, that this caution was needless, because they must be kept in the use of proper means. God will keep them, but they must keep themselves. 'I have foretold you all things; that, being forewarned, you may be fore-armed; I have foretold all things which you needed to have foretold, and therefore take heed of hearkening to such as pretend to be prophets, and to foretell more than I have foretold.' The sufficiency of the Scripture is a good argument against listening to such as pretend to inspiration.

V. 24-27. These verses seem to point at Christ's coming, to judge the world; the disciples, in their question, had confounded the de-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-23. When we behold magnificent cities and stately palaces or temples, we should recollect how soon they will come to nothing, through the sin of man; that we may be reminded, how necessary it is to have a permanent mansion in heaven, and to be prepared for it by sanctification sought in the persevering use of all 'the means of grace.'—If we duly consider how soon all temporal things will pass like a vision, our desires after wealth and prosperity will abate: and we shall be less disquieted, on our own account, when we hear of wars, earthquakes, famines, and other dreadful judgments; however we may be concerned for the sufferers. Such reflections will reconcile us to contempt and persecution: but they will render us also more careful, that 'no man deceive us,' or draw us into error, to prevent our being partakers of Christ, and the blessings of the Gospel. Indeed we cannot profess and adorn his holy doctrine without experiencing the world's hatred and scorn: but, if we be wearied by trivial difficulties, what should we be, if delivered up to councils and rulers, and treated with rage and cruelty; or if betrayed by near relations to death for adherence to the truth? (Note, Jer. 12: 5, 6.)—When the hatred of men, and the fear of hardship cause us to shrink or complain, we should remember, that 'he that continueth unto the end, the same shall be saved;' but 'if any man draw back, the Lord will have no pleasure in him.' We should take comfort under trials for the sake of Jesus, by hoping that our testimony to his truth, and meekness under the cross, may be of

use, even to persecutors or revilers; and assuredly our 'night afflictions, and but for a moment, will work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Should any of us be called to appear before princes in so good a cause, we ought not to be anxious about 'what we should speak,' or to 'premeditate,' in a disquieting manner; for, in such extraordinary cases, we may expect that the Spirit of God will teach us to plead the cause of truth with propriety and energy.—The enmity and pride of man's heart, when inflamed by bigotry and furious zeal, produce fatal effects: this should put us upon our guard, and instruct us to pray for the Spirit of wisdom and love to dwell in our hearts, and to mortify our depraved propensities, even in our religious pursuits and controversies.—Indeed, when we consider, that brethren, and even parents and children, are capable of betraying, and murdering each other; and that atrocious abominations are often established even in the very sanctuary. (Notes and P. O. Ez. 8:) we shall see cause to flee without delay to Christ, from our own sins, and those of others, and to renounce every earthly object, to secure the salvation of our souls. We should also deem every thing an evil, and pray against it as such, which tends to retard our course to heaven: for every unbeliever will soon be overtaken with such misery, as has never been witnessed on earth, 'from the beginning of the creation.' (P. O. Matt. 24: 1-28. Luke 21: 1-19.)

SCOTT.

Verse 20.

Days shortened for the elect's sake. 'Mr. Reading understands this of the preservation of the Christians at Pella, whose safety, he supposes, depended upon the shortening of the siege.'

DODDRIDGE.

(20.) *The elect's sake, whom he hath chosen.* The Christians, who fled out of Judea when these calamities began, cannot here be meant; as the continuance of these desolating judgments on the Jews, had no tendency to extirpate the Christians. That chosen seed, therefore, which was to arise out of the remnant of the Jews, in after ages, is evidently intended. (Notes, Is. 6: 13. 65: 8-10. Matt. 24: 21, 22.)

SCOTT.

(22.) 'There were many false prophets and false Christs from the time of our Lord's crucifixion, to the destruction of the city, as we learn from Josephus; and even after. The last and most mischievous called himself Barchochab or son of the Star, in allusion to Balaam's prophe-

cy. His rebellion was suppressed, by Adrian, with great slaughter, and occasioned the final expulsion of the Jews from Judea, A. D. 135.'

HENRY ALZ.

(22.) *False prophets.* (24.) *Tribulation.* Compare also, v. 8. *Troubles*, where Luke adds *fearful sights*, &c. 'Josephus,' after describing some of these sights, (see note Luke 21: 7-11) says, 'For years before the war, one Jesus began at the feast of the tabernacles to cry, "A voice against Jerusalem and the temple, a voice against all the people, Woe, woe unto them!" and he continued crying thus about seven years.' These troubles and sights Tacitus thus epitomizes: 'Armies seemed to meet in the clouds. Weapons were there seen glittering: the temple seemed to be in flame, with fire issuing from the clouds, and a divine voice was heard, that the Deity was 'quitting the place; and a great motion, as of his departing. *Whitby* Josephus was a Jew, who never embraced Christianity, and Tacitus a learned Gentile, who hated and vilified it.

SCOTT

days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light;

25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken.

26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds, with great power and glory.

27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven.

28 Now learn a parable of the fig tree: When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near:

29 So ye, in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors.

30 Verily I say unto you, All this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

31 Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.

32 But of that day, and that hour, knoweth no man, not the angels which are in heaven, nei-

struction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, (Matt. 24: 3.) as if the temple must needs stand as long as the world stands; this mistake Christ rectifies, and shows that the end of the world in those days, and the day of judgment, shall be after that tribulation, and not co-incidental with it. Let those who live to see the Jewish nation destroyed, take heed of thinking that, because the Son of man doth not visibly come in the clouds then, He will never so come; He will come after that. Here He foretells,

1. The final dissolution of the present frame of the world; even of that part of it which seems least liable to change, the upper, the purer and more refined part; *The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall no more give her light*; for they shall be quite outshone by the glory of the Son of man, Isa. 24: 23. *The stars of heaven*, that from the beginning had kept their place and motion, shall fall as leaves; and the powers that are in heaven, the fixed stars, shall be shaken.

2. The visible appearance of the Lord Jesus, to whom the judgment of that day shall be committed; (v. 26.) *Then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds*. Probably He will come over that very place where He sat when He said this; for the clouds are in the lower region of the air. He shall come with great power and glory, such as will be suited to the errand on which He comes. Every eye shall see Him.

3. The gathering together of all the elect to Him; (v. 27.) He shall send his angels, and gather together his elect to meet Him in the air, 1 Thess. 4: 17. They shall be fetched from one end of the world to the other, so that none shall be missing, from the part of the earth most remote from the place where Christ's tribunal shall be set, and shall be brought to the uttermost part of heaven; so sure, swift, easy, shall their conveyance be, that none of them shall miscarry, though brought from the uttermost part of the earth one way, to the uttermost part of the heaven another way. A faithful Israelite shall be carried safely, though from the utmost border of the land of bondage, to the utmost border of the land of promise.

Y. 28—37. The application:
I. 'As to the destruction of Jerusalem, expect it to come very shortly; as when the branch of the fig tree becomes soft, and the leaves sprout

forth, ye expect that summer will come shortly, v. 28. When second causes begin to work, ye expect their effects in their proper time. So when ye see the Jewish nation embroiled in wars distracted by false Christs and prophets, and drawing upon them the displeasure of the Romans, especially when ye see them persecuting you for your Master's sake, and so filling up the measure of their iniquity, then say that their ruin is nigh, even at the door, and provide for yourselves accordingly.' The disciples themselves were indeed all of them, except John, taken away from the evil to come, but the next generation, whom they were to train up, would live to see it; and by these instructions which Christ left behind Him would be kept from sharing in it; *This generation*, now rising up, shall not all die before all these things come to pass, relating to Jerusalem, and they shall begin shortly. As this destruction is near, so it is sure. The decree is gone forth, it is a consumption determined, Dan. 9: 27. Christ doth not speak these things merely to frighten them; they are the declarations of God's fixed purpose; *Heaven and earth shall pass away*, at the end of time; but my words shall not pass away, (v. 31.) not one of these predictions shall fail of a punctual accomplishment.

II. 'As to the end of the world, do not inquire when it will come, for it is not a question to be asked, for of what day, and that hour, knoweth no man; it is at a great distance, the time is fixed in the counsel of God, but is not revealed either to men on earth, or angels in heaven; the angels shall have timely notice to prepare, and it shall be published to the children of men, with sound of trumpet; but, at present, men and angels are kept in the dark concerning the precise time of it, that they may both attend to their proper services.' But it follows, *neither the Son*; but is there any thing which the Son is ignorant of? We read indeed of a book which was sealed, till the Lamb opened the seals; but did not He know what was in it, before the seals were opened? Was not He privy to the writing of it? There were those, in the primitive times, who taught from this text, that there were some things that Christ, as man, was ignorant of; and from thence were called *Agnostæ*; they said, 'It was no more absurd to say so, than to say that his human soul suffered grief and fear;' and many of the

r 8:88. 14:62. Dan. 7:13, 14. Matt. 15:17. 24:30. 25:31. Acts 1:11. 2 Thess. 1:7—10. Rev. 17.
s Matt. 13:41, 49. 24:31. Luke 16:22. Rev. 7:1—3. 15:7.
t Gen. 49:10. Matt. 25:31, 32. John 10:16. 11:52. 1 Thess. 4:14—17. 2 Thess. 2:1. Rev. 7:5—9.
u 20:22. 1 Is. 65:9. Matt. 24:23, 24, 31.

Luke 18:7. Rom. 8:33. Col. 3:12. 1 Pet. 3:10. 1 Pet. 1:12.
x Deut. 30:4. Matt. 12:42.
y Matt. 24:32. Luke 21:29—31.
z Ez. 7:10—12. 12:28—29. Heb. 10:35—37. 1 Pet. 1:12, 13.
a Matt. 16:28. 23:36. 24:34. Luke 21:32.
b Ps. 102:25—27. Is. 51:6. Matt. 5:1

18. 24:35. Heb. 11:10—12. 2 Pet. 3:10—12. Rev. 20:11.
c Num. 23:19. Josh. 23:14, 15. Ps. 19. 7. Is. 40:8. Zech. 1:6. Luke 21:32. 2 Tim. 2:13. Tit. 1:6.
d 88:27. Matt. 24:35—42. 25:13, 19. Acts 1:7. 1 Thess. 5:2. 2 Pet. 3:10. Rev. 3:3.
e Rev. 1:1.

(24.) 'The words, *those days*, refer the events here described in their primary import to the destruction of Jerusalem. *Sun shall be darkened*.] It was customary with the prophets, and is still with eastern writers, to describe the utter ruin of kingdoms, not only by *universal darkness*, but also, by such strong figures as those here used. Compare Isa. 13: 10. 34: 4, 10. 60: 20. Jer. 15: 9. Joel 2: 30, 31. 35: 15. Ezek. 32: 7, 8. and Amos 8: 9. Sudden and irresistible destruction is expressed often by God's coming in the clouds. Ps. 18: 9. Isa. 19: 1. and elsewhere; though I think the celestial appearances, described by Josephus, lead us into the exactest interpretation of this text.

(27.) *Send his angels*.] 'When Jerusalem shall be reduced to ashes, then shall the Son of man send his ministers, of several nations, from the four corners of heaven, so that God shall not want a church, though the ancient Jewish church be cast off. *Lightfoot*.'

Verse 32.

The Son, &c.] The precise season, either of the day of judgment, or of the destruction of Jerusalem, was no part of the revelation which the incarnate Son of God had received to communicate to his church: it was not revealed to his human nature, by the union of the Holy Spirit. But we cannot understand many things, which relate to the mysterious union of his divine and human nature, and should not further presume to pry into them.—'The Son' is here considered as the 'Prophet sent into the world, to reveal the Father's will; and therefore as 'delivering to the world, not what the Logos knew or taught, but what the Spirit of God revealed to Him. (John 3: 34, 35. 5: 20. 12: 49. 14: 10.) *Whitby*.—'This He speaks in his human nature, and in his prophetic capacity. This point was not made known to Him by the Spirit, nor was He commissioned to reveal it.' *Ep. Porteus*. (Note. Rev. 1: 1—4, v. 1, 2.)

SCOTT.
'The union of Divine nature with human, in the person of Messiah, does not involve the communication of omniscience to Christ's human

mind, any more than omnipresence to his human body. It seems a reasonable opinion, that the communication of supernatural knowledge to the human mind of Jesus Christ was made, as occasions were seen by Divine wisdom, to require. In various passages, we find things affirmed of the Messiah, which can belong only to his superior nature; it is not then extraordinary, if we find that asserted of Him here, which can attach only to his dependent and limited capacity.' J. P. SMITH.

All the difficulty, in the above passage, seems to arise from a backwardness to admit that Jesus Christ was really a man in all respects except sin, like his brethren, and that in this man dwelt all the Fullness of the GODHEAD. 'If He was a man, then was He frail, dependent, ignorant. He must acquire knowledge, somewhat like other men—grow in wisdom, as well as in stature. It only appears then that there were some things which the INDWELLING GOD did not communicate to the man Christ Jesus. Nor is this more unreasonable than the fact, that the lower nature of man, which he holds in common with the brute, does not take cognizance of all the thoughts and emotions of his higher nature, the indwelling soul.

Ed.

'To preclude the curiosity of men and engage their vigilance, Christ is pleased to tell them that neither man nor angels, nor the Son of man, hath God ordered to know the seasons.'

HAMMOND.

'The turn of the sentence would imply, that that day and hour were actually unknown to the Son. But "He and his Father are one." He was with God in the beginning, and was God.' We cannot, therefore, suppose that He was not partaker of the Father's counsels, either as to the destruction of Jerusalem, or the end of the world. And it is hard to understand, how the Son, coming in the flesh, should divest Himself of knowledge which He possessed as God, in the same way as, confessedly, He divested Himself of immortality. It would be strange, however, if there were not difficulties in a case so mysterious as the union of the divine and human nature in a person of CHRIST.

Ep. 2: MARK

ther the Son. But the Father.

33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.

35 Watch ye therefore; for ye know not when the Master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning;

36 Lest coming suddenly, he find you sleeping.

37 And what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch.

f 23-35. 37. 14:37-38. Matt. 24: 42-44. 25:13. 26:40, 41. Luke 21: 34-36. Rom. 13:14. 1 Cor. 16:13. Eph. 6:18. 1 Thes. 5:5-8. Heo. 12:15. 1 Pet. 4:7. 5:8. Rev. 3:2, 16:5.

g Matt. 25:14, &c. Luke 19:12-17. Rom. 12:4-8. 13:8. 1 Cor. 3:5-10. 12:31-34. 15:58. 16:19. 2 Cor. 4:1. 12:31. 13:12. 13:2-9. Matt. 24:45-47. Luke 12:35-40. Acts 20: 29-31.

h Matt. 15:19. John 10:3. Rev. 3:7. 13:3.

i 14:37, 40. Prov. 6:9-11. 24:33, 34. Cant. 3:1. 5:2. L. 56:10. Matt. 24:48-51. 25:5. Luke 21:34. 22:45. Rom. 13:11-14. Eph. 5:14. 1 Thes. 5:6, 7.

n Luke 12:41-46.

qualify you for it, for ye know not when the time is; and you are concerned to be ready for that every day, which may come any day.' This He illustrates, in the close, by a parable.

1. Our Master is gone away, and left us something in trust, which we must give account of, v. 34. He is as a man taking a far journey; for He is to be gone a great while, has left his house on earth, and his servants in their

orthodox fathers approved of this. Some say that Christ spake this in a way of prudential economy, to divert the disciples from further inquiry: but to this one of the ancients answers, *It is not fit to speak too nicely in this matter.* 'It is certain (saith Tillotson) that Christ, as God, could not be ignorant of any thing; but the divine wisdom did communicate itself to his human soul according to the divine pleasure, so that his human nature might sometimes not know some things; therefore Christ is said to grow in wisdom, (Luke 2: 52.) which He could not be said to do, if the human nature of Christ did necessarily know all things by virtue of its union with the divinity.' Dr. Lightfoot explains it thus: Christ calls himself the Son, as Messiah. Now the Messiah, as such, was the Father's servant, (Isa. 42: 1.) sent and deputed by Him, and, as such, He refers himself often to his Father's will and command, and owns *He did nothing of Himself*; (John 5: 19.) in like manner He might be said to know nothing of Himself. The revelation of Jesus Christ was what God gave unto Him, Rev. 1: 1. He thinks, therefore, that we are to distinguish between those perfections which resulted from the union between the divine and human nature, and those which flowed from the anointing of the Spirit; from the former flowed the infinite dignity of his person, and his freedom from sin; but from the latter flowed his power of working miracles, and his foreknowledge of things to come. What therefore (saith he) was to be revealed by Him to his church, He was pleased to take; not from the union of the human nature with the divine, but from the revelation of the Spirit, by which He yet knew not this, but the Father only knows it; that is, God only, the Deity; for (as Tillotson explains it) it is not used here personally, in distinction from the Son and the Holy Ghost, but as the Father is, *The Fountain of Deity.*

III. 'As to both, your duty is to watch and pray. Therefore the time is kept secret, that you might stand always upon your guard; (v. 33.) Take ye heed of every thing that would indispose you for your Master's coming, and perplex you; watch for his coming, that it may not at any time surprise you, and pray for grace to

offices, given authority to some, who are to be overseers, and work to others, who are laborers. They that have authority had work assigned them, for those that have the greatest power have the most business; and to them I whom He gave work. He gave some sort of authority, to do that work. And when He took his last leave, He appointed the porter to be ready to open to Him at his return; and in the mean time to take care to whom he opened his gates not to thieves and robbers, but only to his Master's friends. Thus our Lord when He ascended on high, left something for all his servants to do, expecting they should all do Him service in his absence, and be ready to receive Him at his return. All are appointed to work, and some authorized to rule.

2. We ought to be always upon our watch, in expectation of his return, v. 35: 37. (1.) Our Lord will come, and will come as the Master of the house, to take account of his servants, of their work, and of the improvement they have made. (2.) We know not just at what precise time the Master of the house will come: at even, or nine at night; or it may be at midnight, or at cock-crowing, (at three in the morning,) or, perhaps, not till six. And He has very wisely kept us at uncertainty, that we might be always ready. This is applicable to his coming to us, in particular, at our death, as well as to the general judgment. Our present life is a dark night, compared with the other life; we know not in which watch of the night our Master will come, whether in youth, middle age, or old age; but, as soon as we are born, we begin to die, and therefore, as soon as we are capable of expecting any thing, we must expect death. (3.) Our great care must be, that, whenever our Lord comes, we be not secure in ourselves, off our guard, indulging in ease and sloth, mindless of our work and duty, and thoughtless of our Lord's coming; ready to say, He will not come, and unwary to meet Him. (4.) His coming will be sudden; it will be a great surprise and terror to those that are careless and asleep; it will come upon them as a thief in the night. (5.) It is therefore the duty of all Christ's disciples, to watch; and 'What I say unto you four, (v. 3.) I say unto all the twelve, or rather to you twelve, I say unto all my followers; what I say to you of this generation, I say to all that shall believe in me, through your word, in every age. Watch, expect my second coming, prepare for it, that you may be found in peace, without spot, and blameless.'

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 24-37. In all things we ought to remember the Savior's words: for as sure as the predictions, which related to Jerusalem and the temple, were exactly accomplished, so will all things come to pass, which are written concerning the eternal happiness of the righteous, and the misery of the wicked. Ere long, 'heaven and earth shall pass away,' and all the things which we hold will be dissolved; 'but the words of Christ shall not pass away.' A firm belief of his truth will be our only preservative against seducers, and our sure support under those trials, which occasion the ruin of all, 'but the elect whom God hath chosen.' At length, we shall see 'the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory,' and then his people will be gathered from among the wicked into his kingdom. Instead, therefore, of curiously inquiring into 'the secret things which belong to the Lord,' let us carefully improve the revelation of his will, by 'giving diligence to make our calling and election sure.' (Notes, 2 Pet. 1: 5-11.) We know that the hour of our death cannot be very distant: our Lord, though not present to our sight, beholds our whole conduct, and will shortly come to call us to

an account. To some he intrusts authority to preach, to preside in his church, and to be his porters for the admission of proper persons into sacred services and ordinances, and to exclude such as are unfit; and to every one of us He gives his proper work, by attending to which, we may approve ourselves true believers, honor our Lord, and serve our generation. (Note, Phil. 1: 9-11.) Happy therefore is that servant, who continues sober and vigilant in his place, without interfering with that of other men! He will be prepared for the coming of his Lord; he will be found awake, and employed in his station, and his recompense will be secure. But it will be an awful surprise to a professed Christian or minister, should he be found sleeping, self-indulgent and unprepared; yet this may probably be our case, if at any time we relax our vigilance, or neglect our work. (Note, Heb. 4: 1, 2.) He therefore speaks to us all, charging us to 'take heed to ourselves,' our duty, or our ministry, and to watch and pray always, 'lest coming suddenly He find us sleeping.' (P. O. Matt. 24: 29-51. Luke 21: 20-38.)

SCOTT.

Verse 35.

Those who are concerned in admitting members into the Christian church, and especially in the ordination of ministers, and in all appointments respecting them, seem especially intended.—At even, &c.] Nine in the evening, midnight, three in the morning, and sunrise.

SCOTT.

At even, at midnight, &c.] It has been disputed, with reference to several passages of Scripture, whether the evangelists followed the Jewish or Roman computation of time. The Romans had two different computations of their days, and two different denominations for them. The one they called the civil, the other the natural day. The first was the same as ours; the second, which was the vulgar computation, began at six in the morning, and ended at six in the evening. The Jews computed their hours from six in the morning to six in the evening. The night was divided into four watches, as indi-

cated in the text. The first was at even, and continued from six till nine. The second commenced at nine, and ended at twelve, or midnight. The third, or the time of cock-crowing, lasted from twelve to three; the morning watch closed at six. The Jews counted their natural days very differently from us: we reckon from twelve o'clock at night to twelve the next night; they reckoned from one sunset to the next, and all the time between they called a day. Gen. 1: 5. Lev. 23: 32. They also reckoned any part of a day of twenty-four hours, for a whole day. Thus, Aben-ezra, on Lev. 12: 3. speaking of the law for circumcising an infant on the eighth day, says, that if an infant be born but an hour before the first day ended, it was counted for one whole day. Their first hour corresponded with our seven o'clock; their second with our eight, &c. Matt. 20: 1, 12. Acts 11: 15.

U. 5059

CHAP. XIV.

The chief priests and scribes conspire to put Jesus to death, 1, 2. A woman pours precious ointment on his head with the circumstances attending her conduct, 3-9. Judas bargains with the chief priests to betray him, 10-11. The disciples by the direction of Jesus prepare the passover, 12-16. He eats it with them, and points out the traitor, 17-21. He institutes the Lord's supper, 22-25. He foretells that all the disciples would forsake Him, and that Peter would deny Him, 26-31. His agony and prayer in the garden, and his warnings to the disciples, 32-42. He is betrayed, apprehended, and forsaken, 43-52. He is arraigned before Caiaphas, condemned, and treated with cruel indignity, 53-65. Peter thrice denies Him, but repents, 66-72.

AFTER two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death.

2 But they said, 'Not on the feast-day,' lest there be an uproar of the people.

3 ¶ And being in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman, having an alabaster-box of ointment of spike-nard, very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.

4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, 'Why was this waste of the ointment made?'

5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor.' And they murmured against her.

CHAP. XIV. v. 1-11. We have here instances.

1. Of the kindness of Christ's friends, and their provision of respect and honor for Him. Some, even in and about Jerusalem, loved Him, and never thought they could do enough for Him, among whom, though Israel be not gathered, He is, and will be, glorious.

1) One friend was so kind as to invite Him to sup with him; and He was so kind as to accept the invitation, v. 3. Though He had a prospect of death approaching, He did not abandon himself to a melancholy retirement, but conversed with his friends as usual.

2. Another friend was so kind as to anoint his head with very precious ointment, as He sat at meat. This extraordinary respect was paid by a woman that thought nothing too good to do Him honor. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, *When the king sits at his table, my spike-nard sendeth forth the smell thereof*, Cant. 1: 12. Let us anoint Christ as our Beloved, with affection; and as our Sovereign, with allegiance. Did He pour out his soul unto death for us, and shall we think any box of ointment too precious to pour upon Him? It is observable that she took care to pour it all upon Christ's head: *she brake the box*; (so we read it; but because it was an alabaster box, not easily broken, nor necessary that it should be broken, to get out the ointment, some read it, *she shook the box, or knocked it to the ground*, to loosen what was on the sides of it. Christ must be honored with all we have, and we must not keep back any part of the price. Do we give Him the precious ointment of our best affections? Let Him have them all; love Him with all the heart.

Now, (1.) There were those that put a worse construction upon this than it deserved. They called it a waste of the ointment, (v. 4.) because they could not put themselves to such expense to honor Christ; they thought that she was prodigal. Note, As the vile person ought not to be called liberal, nor the churl bountiful; (Isa. 32: 5.) so the liberal and bountiful ought not to be called wasteful. They pretended it might have been sold, and given to the poor, v. 5. A common piety to the temple will not excuse from a particular charity to a poor parent, (ch. 7: 11.) nor a common charity to the poor from a particular act of piety to Jesus. What thy hand finds to do, that is good, do it with thy might.

(2.) Our Lord put a better construction upon it than, for aught that appears, was designed. Probably, she intended no more than to show

a Matt. 26: 2. Luke 22: 1, 2. John 11: 52-57.
b Ex. 12: 26-30. Lev. 23: 5-7. Num. 28: 16-25. Deut. 16: 1-8.
c Ps. 2: 1-5. John 11: 47. Acts 4: 23-28.
d Ps. 52: 3. 62: 9. 64: 2-8. Matt. 26: 4.

e Prov. 19: 21. 21: 50. Lam. 3: 57.
f Matt. 26: 5.
g 11: 13, 32. Luke 20: 9. John 7: 40. 12: 19.
h Matt. 26: 6, 7. John 11: 2. 12: 1-3.
i Cant. 4: 13, 14. 5: 5. Luke 7: 37, 38.
* Or, pure nard, or, liquid nard.

the great honor she had for Him, and to complete his entertainment. But Christ makes it an act of great faith, as well as great love; (v. 8.) 'She is come aforehand, to anoint my body to the burying, as if she foresaw that my resurrection would prevent it afterward.' This funeral rite was a presage of his death. Christ was filled with the thoughts of his death; every thing was construed with a reference to it; He spake of it upon all occasions. These who are condemned to die, have their coffins and other provision made for their funerals, while yet alive; so Christ accepted this. Christ's death and burial were the lowest steps of his humiliation, and there, though He cheerfully submitted to them, He would have marks of honor attend them, to take off the offence of the cross and intimate how precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saint. Christ never rode in triumph into Jerusalem, but when He came to suffer; nor had his head anointed, but for his burial.

(3.) He transmitted this piety to all ages; *Wherever this Gospel shall be preached, it shall be spoken of, for a memorial of her*, v. 9. Note, The honor which attends well-doing, balances reproach and contempt. The memory of the just is blessed, and they that had trial of cruel mockings, yet obtained a good report, Heb. 11: 36, 39. This woman got by her box that good name which is better than precious ointment. Those that honor Christ He will honor.

II. Christ's enemies, the chief priests, consulted how they might put Him to death, v. 1, 2. The passover was at hand, and at that feast He must be crucified, that his death and sufferings might be the more public, that all Israel, who came from all parts to the feast, might witness it, and that the Anti-type might answer to the type. Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us, and brought us out of the house of bondage, at the same time that the paschal lamb was sacrificed, and Israel's deliverance out of Egypt was commemorated.

Christ's enemies did not think it enough to banish or imprison Him, for they aimed not only to stop his progress, but to be revenged on Him. Not on the feast day, when the people are together; not, lest they should disturb their devotions, but, lest there be an uproar; (v. 2.) and they should rise, and rescue Him. They who desired the praise of men, dreaded nothing more than their displeasure.

1. Judas, one of Christ's family, trained up for the service of his kingdom, went to the chief priests, to tender his service in this affair.

He proposed to betray Christ to them, and

i Ec. 4: 4. Matt. 26: 9. John 12: 4, 5.
k Ps. 54: 8. Mal. 1: 12, 13.
l Matt. 18: 28. marg. John 6: 7.
m John 12: 6. 13: 29. Ec. 4: 28.
n Ex. 16: 7, 8. Deut. 1: 167. 16: 6, 25.
o Matt. 20: 11. Luke 15: 2. John 6: 48.
1 Cor. 10: 10. Phil. 2: 14. Jude 16.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. v. 3-9. (Notes. Matt. 26: 6-13. Luke 7: 37-39. John 12: 1-3.) 'It appears to me more probable, that Matthew and Mark should have introduced this story a little out of its place: that Lazarus, if he made this feast, (which is not expressly said by John,) should have been the use of Simon's house, as more convenient; and that Mary should have poured this ointment on Christ's head and body, as well as on his feet: than that, within the compass of four days, Christ should have been twice-anointed with so costly a perfume; and that the same fault should be found with the action, and the same value set on the ointment, and the same words used in defence of the woman, and all this in the presence of many of the same persons: all which improbable particulars must be admitted, if the stories be considered as different.' Doddridge. Neither Matthew nor Mark says, that this occurred no more than two days before the passover: they only relate it subsequent to some transactions which took place at that time. It happened when Jesus was in Bethany: this may be explained to mean any evening from his arrival, till the passover; and it was no doubt on the first evening, before He entered Jerusalem riding on the ass's colt.

Alabaster-box.] 'Alabaster is a stone remarkable for its whiteness and smoothness, of which the ancients made vases, flasks, &c. easily wrought, and pellucid, that it is scarcely possible to distinguish these vases from those made of glass.'

Brake.] 'Broke the sealed covering.' Burder. 'Or broke off the narrow neck which was sealed up, to preserve the nard, and denote its gaudiness, as we learn from Pliny.'

(4.) Had indignation.] 'It is indecent, (say the Jerusalem Talmudists,) for a scholar of the wise man to smell of spices.' From this opinion, every where received among them, you may more aptly understand, why the other disciples, as well as Judas, 'who kept the bag,' were indignant. He out of covetousness—they not liking such effeminate niceties as were used in bride chambers, should be used towards their Master. But Christ, taking off the envy of what was done, applies this anointing to his burial, both in his intention, and in the intention of the woman.'

(5.) Sold.] Mary had not bought it on this occasion: but she might have sold it, as perhaps she had done many of those ornaments and luxuries, which she had used before she chose the good part.' (Note, Luke 10: 38-42.) (5.) Three hundred, &c.] About 9 l. 15s. sterling. A denarius was then a day's wages of a laborer even in harvest; (Matt. 20: 2.) and therefore equal in value, though not in weight, to three shillings in England; as it would purchase as many necessities of life. This would therefore appear a large sum. The language, concerning the poor, (7.) 'Whosoever ye will ye may do them good,' and so show your love and gratitude to Me, should be especially noticed. Mary 'did what she could' (8.) v. express her reverence and love to Jesus: to whom she considered herself as under the greatest obligations. (Notes, 1 Chr. 29: 1-20. 2 Cor. 9: 12-15.) But this is totally different from the pretensions of many, 'that they do what they can,' that is, 'to establish their own righteousness,' while they refuse to 'submit to the righteousness of God.' (Note. Rom. 10: 1-4.)

Scott. (3.) Spike-nard.] 'Pure, or liquid nard.' John 12: 3. Not else where. N. T. Cant. 4: 14. Various opinions are held of the meaning of this word: probably, it was derived from a Syriac word, denoting the manner in which the ointment was prepared from the spikes, or small blades of the plant which yielded it. *She brake, &c.* 5: 4. Matt. 2: 20. John 19: 36. Item, 16: 20. Rev. 2: 27. Some would render the word shook; supposing it improbable, that the alabaster box should be broken: but perhaps the ointment was closed up in the vessel, in such a manner, that it was needful to break the top or cover, in order to get it at.

Scott. Spike-nard.] 'A costly perfume, supposed to have been brought from India. A pound of it was worth forty dollars.' CALMET by Rob.

2 And Jesus said, 'Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.'

7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying.

9 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of, for a memorial of her.

10 ¶ And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them.

11 And when they heard it, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

12 ¶ And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said to him, 'Where wilt thou that we go and prepare, that thou mayest eat the passover?'

13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, 'Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him.'

14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good-man of the house, 'The Master

saith, notice when and where they might seize Him, without making an uproar among the people, of which they were afraid. Did he know their counsels? It is probable that he did not, for the debate was held in close cabal. Did they know that he had a mind to serve them? No; they could not imagine that an intimate should be so base; but Satan, who entered into Judas, knew what occasion they had for him, and could guide him to guide them, who were contriving to take Jesus. Note, The spirit that works in the children of disobedience, knows how to bring them to assist one another in a wicked project, and then to harden them with the fancy that Providence favors them.

(2.) That which he proposed to himself was money; he had what he aimed at, when they promised him money. Covetousness was Judas's master-lust, his own iniquity, and that betrayed him to betray his Master; the devil suited his temptation, and conquered him. It is not said, They promised him *pre*ferment, (he was not ambitious of that,) but, They promised him money. See what need we have to double our guard against the sin that *most easily besets us*. Perhaps it was covetousness that brought him to follow Christ, having a promise that he should be purse-keeper; and now, that there was money to be got on the other side, he was as ready to betray Him as to follow Him. Note, Where men's profession of religion is the serving of a secular interest, the same principle, when the wind turns, will be the bitter root of a vile and scandalous apostasy.

(3.) Having secured the money, he sought how he might seasonably deliver Him up. We should be careful not to ensnare ourselves in sinful engagements. If at any time we be so ensnared, we are to deliver ourselves by a speedy retreat, Prov. 6: 1-5. It is a rule in law, as well as in religion, that an obligation to do an evil thing is null and void; it binds to repentance, not to performance. The way of sin is down hill. What wicked contrivances may have to compass their designs conveniently! But such conveniences will prove mischiefs in the end.

V. 12-31. I. Christ ate the passover with his disciples, the night before He died; the joys and comforts of the ordinance prepared Him for his approaching sorrows, which did not indispose Him for that solemnity. Note, No apprehension of trouble should put us out of frame for holy ordinances.

1. Christ ate the passover at the time, with the other Jews; it was on the first day of that

saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

n Joh 42:7-8. Is. 54:17. 2 Cor. 10:18. o Matt. 26:10. John 10:32, 33. Acts 9:36. 2 Cor. 9:8. Eph. 2:10. Col. 1:10. 2 The. 2:17. 1 Tim. 5:10. 6:18. 2 Tim. 2:21. 3:17. Tit. 2:7. 24. Gal. 6:14. Heb. 10:24. 13:21. 1 Pet. 2:19.
p Deut. 15:11. Matt. 25:35-45. 26:

11. John 12:7-8. 2 Cor. 9:13, 14. Philom. 7. Jam. 2:14-16. 1 John 3:16-18. q John 13:32. 16:5, 28. 17:11. Acts 3:21. r 1 Chr. 29:2-3. 29:17. 2 Chr. 31:20, 21. 34:19-33. Ps. 110:3. 2 Cor. 8:1-3, 12. s 15:42-47. 16:1. Luke 23:53-56. 24:1-3. John 12:7. 13:32-42. t 16:15. Matt. 26:12, 13. u Num. 31:54. Ps. 112:6-9. Zech. 6:14. x Matt. 26:14-16. Luke 22:3-6. y John 13:30. z Ps. 41:9. 55:12-14. Matt. 10:4.

John 6:70, 71. z Hos. 7:3. Luke 22:5. a 2 Kings 5:26. Prov. 28:21, 22. Matt. 26:15. 1 Tim. 6:10. 2 Pet. 2:14, 15. Jude 11. b Luke 22:3, 6. c Ex. 12:6, 18. 13:3. Lev. 23:5, 6. Num. 28:16-18. Deut. 16:1-4. Matt. 26:17. Luke 22:7. d Matt. 26:15. Luke 22:3, 6. Gal. 4:4. e Matt. 8:9. 26:15, 19. Luke 12:30. 22:10-13. John 2:5. 13:7. H. 14:5. f 17:11. 11:3. John 11:28.

(7.) The poor ye have always with you. 'The Jews thought there were to be no poor in the days of the Messiah.' LIGHTFOOT.

(8.) She hath done what she could. 'What she had, she has done.' Other ways of showing her veneration and affection were in her possession or power. She is come beforehand. (1 Cor. 11: 21. Gal. 6: 1.) She has laid hold of the opportunity by anticipation.

And she my body to the burying. Allusion is here made probably to the Jews's custom of embalming the dead, or at least depending upon them: aromatic substances, such as myrrh and aloes. Ed. Verses 10, 11.

It is not certain on which day Judas first went to the chief priests; but it is most probable, that it was two days before the passover, when they were consulting how to apprehend Jesus, that they might put him to death. The devil had before this 'put it into his heart'; but it may be supposed, that he hesitated for a time, before he carried his design into execution.

Verses 12-16. (Note, Matt. 26. 17-19.) Nothing could be less the object of natural sagacity and foresight, than the events here mentioned. Had the two disciples come to the place specified, sooner or later than they did, the 'man bearing the pitcher of water' would either not have arrived, or would have been gone. But our Lord knew that the owner of a

feast called, The feast of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, v. 12.

2. He gave another proof of his infallible knowledge, as when He sent for the ass on which He rode in triumph; (ch. 11: 6.) 'Go into the city, (for the passover must be eaten in Jerusalem,) and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water, to his master's house; follow him, inquire for his master, and desire him to show you a room.' No doubt, the inhabitants of Jerusalem had rooms fitted up for this occasion, for those that came out of the country to keep the passover, one of those Christ made use of; not a friend's house, nor any house He had formerly frequented, for then He would have said, 'Go where we used to be, and prepare.' Probably, He went where He was not known, that He might be undisturbed. Perhaps He notified it by a sign, to conceal it from Judas, that he might not know it. He came to the place; and by such a sign, to intimate that He will dwell in the clean heart, that is, washed as with pure water. Where He designs to come, purifying water must go before Him; see Isa. 1: 16-18.

3. He ate the passover in an upper room, furnished; it would seem to have been very handsome. Christ was far from affecting any thing stately; on the contrary, He chose that which was homely, sat down on the grass: but when He was to keep a sacred feast, he would do it in a good room. God looks not at outward pomp, but at the expressions of inward reverence for a divine institution, which, it is to be feared, those want, who, to save charges, deny themselves decencies in the worship of God.

4. He ate it with the twelve, his family, to teach those who have the charge of families, not only of children, but of servants, or of scholars, to worship God with them. If Christ came with the twelve, Judas was with them, though contriving to betray his Master; it is plain by what follows, (v. 20.) that he was there: he did not absent himself, lest he should have been suspected; had his seat been empty at this feast, they would have said, as Saul of David, Surely he is not clean, 1 Sam. 20: 26. Hypocrites, though they know it is at their peril, crowd to special ordinances, to keep up their reputation, and palliate their secret wickedness. Christ did not exclude him from the feast; his wickedness was not, as yet, public and scandalous. Christ, giving the keys of the kingdom of heaven to men who judge according to outward appearance, would hereby direct and encourage them, in their admissions to his table, to be satisfied with a justifiable profession, he-

certain commodious house in Jerusalem favored Him; He foresaw that at a precise time of the day, he would send his servant for a pitcher of water; that the disciples would meet him just when they entered the city; that by following him they would find out the person whom He intended; and that by mentioning Him, as 'the Master,' or 'the Teacher,' the owner of the house would readily consent to accommodate them in an upper chamber. When the disciples found all these circumstances so exactly accord to the prediction, they could not but be deeply impressed with a conviction of our Lord's knowledge of every event, and his influence over every heart. (Notes, 11: 1-11. 1 Sam. 10: 2-7.) (15.) Furnished, &c.] That is, with table, couches, and all other things suited to the occasion. [See note, p. 363.] Scott.

(14.) The guest-chamber. Luke 2: 7. 22: 11. Probably every household in Jerusalem, who had it in his power, reserved a room in his house for this purpose, for such of his friends as came up thither to eat the passover. He was their host, and this 'guest-chamber' was as it were their 'inn.' An upper room. Luke 22: 12. Not elsewhere in N. T.

Lodgings, says Lightfoot, were free of charge at Jerusalem during the passover. But, says Rosenmuller, it is certain that, at the time of this feast, many Jerusalemites let out to strangers rooms ready prepared. Ed.

to And ^hhe will shew you a large ^hupper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us.

16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, ¹and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the pass-over

[Practical Observations.]

17 ¶ And ^{*}in the evening he cometh with the twelve.

18 And ¹as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, ^mVerily I say unto you, ^oOne of you which eateth with me shall betray me.

19 And they began to be sorrowful, ^oand to say unto him one by one, *Is it I?* and another said, *Is it I?*

20 And he answered and said unto them, ^pIt is one of the twelve that ^ddipped with me in the dish.

21 The Son of man indeed ^ggoeth, as it is written of him: ^{*}but woe to that man by whom the Son of man

cause they cannot discern the root of bitterness: till it springs up.

II. Christ discoursed with his disciples, as they were eating the passover, probably, according to the custom of the feast, of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and the preservation of the first-born; and were as they used to be together on this occasion, till Christ told them that which would mix trembling with their joys.

1. They were *pleasing themselves with the society of their Master*; but He tells them that they must now lose Him; *The Son of man is betrayed*; and if He be betrayed, the next that you will hear of Him, is, that He is *crucified and slain*; God hath determined it concerning Him, and He agrees, *The Son of man goes, as it is written of Him*, v. 21. It was written in the counsels of God, and in the prophecies; not one jot or tittle of either can *fall to the ground*.

2. They were *pleasing themselves with the society one of another*, but Christ told them, *One of you that eateth with me shall betray me*, v. 18. Christ said this, to startle the conscience of Judas, to awaken Him to repent and draw back (for it was not too late) from the brink of the pit. But he, who was *most concerned* in the warning, was *least concerned* at it. All the rest were affected. (1.) They began to be *sorrowful*. As the remembrance of our former falls into sin, so the fear of the like again, often imbibes our spiritual feasts, and our joy. Here were the *bitter herbs*, with which this *passover* was taken. (2.) They began to be *suspicious* of themselves; they said *one by one, Is it I?* And another said, *Is it I?* They are to be commended for their charity, that they were more jealous of themselves than of *one another*. It is the law of charity, to *hope the best*; (1 Cor. 13: 5, 7.) we assuredly *know*, and therefore may justly *suspect*, more evil in ourselves than in our brethren. They are also to be commended for their acquiescence in what Christ said; they trusted more to his words than to their own hearts; and therefore do not say, 'I am sure it is not I'; but, 'Lord, is it I? see if there be such a way of wickedness in us, and discover it to us that we may turn from that way.'

In answer to their inquiry, Christ made them easy; 'It is not you, nor you; it is this that now dips with me in the dish: the adversary is this wicked Judas.' One would think this would have made Judas very uneasy. If he go on in his undertaking, it is upon the sword's point, for *woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed*; he is forever undone; his sin will soon find him out; and it were better for him that he had never had a being, than such a miserable one as he must have. It is very probable that Judas encouraged himself with this thought, that his Master had often said He must be betrayed; 'And if it must be done, surely God will not find fault with him that

doth it, for who has resisted his will?' As the objector argues, Rom. 9: 19. But Christ tells him that this will be no sneller or excuse; *The Son of man indeed goes, as it is written of Him, as a lamb to the slaughter; but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed*. God's decrees to permit sins, and glorify Himself by them, neither necessitate the sins, nor determine them, nor will they excuse, or mitigate the punishment. Christ was delivered indeed by the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God*; but, notwithstanding, it is with *wicked hands* that He is crucified and slain, Acts 2: 23.

III. The Lord's supper,

1. Was instituted in the close of a supper, when they were sufficiently fed with the paschal lamb, to show that in the Lord's supper there is no bodily repast intended. It is food for the soul only, and therefore as much as will serve for a sign, is enough. It was at the close of the passover supper, which was then superseded and set aside. The doctrine and duty of the sacrament is illustrated to us by the law of the passover; (Exod. 12.) for the Old-Testament institutions, though they do not bind us, yet instruct us, by the help of a gospel-key. These two ordinances it may be good to compare, and observe how much plainer the institution of the Lord's supper is, than that of the passover. Christ's yoke is easy in comparison with that of the ceremonial law, and his ordinances are more spiritual.

2. It was instituted by the example of Christ, not with the ceremony of a law, as baptism was after Christ's resurrection, (Matt. 28: 19.) but by the practice of our Master himself, because intended for those who are already taken into covenant with Him: but it has the obligation of a law, and was intended to remain in force till his second coming.

3. It was instituted with blessing and giving of thanks; the gifts of common providence are to be so received, (1 Tim. 4: 4, 5.) much more the gifts of special grace. At his other meals, He was wont to bless, and give thanks; (ch. 6: 41. 8: 7.) so remarkably, that He was known by it, Luke 24: 30, 31. And He did the same at this meal.

4. It was to be a memorial of his death; and therefore He brake the bread, to show how it pleased the Lord to bruise Him; and He called the wine, which is the blood of the grape, the blood of the New Testament. The death Christ died was a bloody death, and frequent mention is made of the blood, the precious blood, as the price of our redemption; for the blood is the life, and made atonement for the soul, Lev. 17: 11, 14. The pouring out of the blood was the most sensible indication of the pouring out of his soul, Isa. 53: 12. Blood has a voice; (Gen. 4: 10.) and therefore the blood is so often mentioned, because it was to speak, Heb. 12: 24. It is called the blood of the New Testament; for

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-16. While numbers combine against Christ both power and subtlety, to run down his truth, and his people; there are a few, generally in inferior stations, who spare no pains to express their love to Him, and to promote his glory. But it is not uncommon for their expressions of zeal and affection to be misunderstood and censured, even by their brethren, as well as by hypocrites and open enemies. We should not therefore be discouraged, if those whom we love should think our labor misapplied; when we are desirous of honoring Christ and promoting his Gospel, and are employed for Him; and on the other hand, we should fear to molest those who express their love in a different manner from us.—Happy is he, of whom in these things the Lord says, 'He did what he could.'—We indeed have not Christ personally present with us, and may have little opportunity of promoting his cause, or ability to do it; but we have 'the poor always with us, and whosoever we will, we may do them good'; and if in this, or in any other way, we show the sincerity of our love and gratitude to Christ,

He will accept our services, and make them known for a memorial of us, when mercenary hypocrites, as well as avowed enemies, shall sink into shame and everlasting contempt. (Notes, Matt. 25: 34-40. P. O. 31-40. 26: 1-13. John 13: 1-9. Notes, 2 Cor. 8: 1-9.) Our Lord knows every circumstance respecting us before it comes to pass; and if we compare our experience with his words, we shall be convinced that He is ordering every thing relative to us, in wisdom and goodness, 'according to the counsel of his own will'; and that the most painful dispensations will in the event conduce to our good.—Whatever we possess is then best employed, and most profitable to us, when most entirely devoted to Him: if we admit Him, He will dwell in our hearts, and we may feast with Him; and when we consecrate our houses to Him, by family worship, and by hospitably entertaining his disciples, He will there also manifest his presence with us and bless us. (P. O. Matt. 26: 14-25.)

SCOTT

(15.) An upper room.] 'Such as those which the Jews used for the same purposes as those to which our dining-rooms, parlors, and closets are applied. Furnished, i. e. with beds, couches or sofas, carpets, pillows, stools, &c.; such as among the oriental nations supply the place of chairs, tables, and indeed almost all the other furniture of a room.'

BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 20.

To them.] 'That is, to one of them, viz. John. Jesus, when He had dipped his sop, gave it to Judas: which was the sign given to John, by which he was to know the betrayer. The discourse between our Savior and John, previous to giving the sop, is omitted: the answer is retained: This is frequently done, and often causes some obscurity.'

MARKLAND.

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is betrayed! 'good were it for that man if he had never been born.

22 ¶ And "as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: 'this is my body.

23 And he took the cup, and "when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, "and they all drank of it.

24 And he said unto them, "This is my blood of the new testament, "which is shed for many.

25 Verily I say unto you, "I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it "new in the kingdom of God.

26 ¶ And when they had "sung an "hymn, "they went out into the mount of Olives.

27 And Jesus saith unto them, "All ye shall be offended because of me this night: 'for it is written, I will smite the "shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.

28 But "after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

29 But Peter said unto him, "Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.

30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That "this day, even in this night, "before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice.

31 But "he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. "Likewise also said they all.

32 ¶ And "they came to a place which

the covenant of grace became a *testament*, and of force *he*, the death of Christ, the Testator, Heb. 9: 16. It is said to be *shed for many*, to justify *many*, (Isa. 43: 12,) to bring *many* sons to glory, Heb. 2: 10. It was sufficient for *many*; it has been of use to *many*; a great multitude which no man could number, had *washed their robes*, and *made them white in the blood of the Lamb*; (Rev. 7: 9, 14,) and still it is a *fountain opened*. How comfortable is this to repenting sinners, that the blood of Christ is *shed for many*! And if for *many*, why not for me? If for the chief of sinners, then why not for me?

5. It was to be a *ratification* of the covenant made with us in *Him*, and a sign of the conveyance of those benefits to us, which were purchased by his death: and therefore He brake the bread to them, (v. 22,) and said, *Take, eat of it*: he gave the cup to them, and ordered them to drink of it, v. 23. Apply the doctrine of Christ crucified to yourselves, and let it be *meat and drink* to your souls, the support and comfort of your spiritual life.

6. It was instituted with an eye to the happiness of heaven, to be a foretaste of that, and thereby to deaden our taste for all the pleasures and delights of sense; v. 25. *I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine*, as it is a bodily refreshment. I have done with it. Let me drink no more of the fruit of the vine, it is dead to those that have been made to drink of the river of God's pleasures; but, Lord, hasten the day, when I shall drink it in the kingdom of God, where it shall be forever new, and in perfection.

7. It was closed with a *hymn*, v. 26. Though Christ was in the midst of his enemies, yet He did not, for fear of them, omit this sweet duty of singing psalms. Paul and Silas sang, when the prisoners heard them. This was an *evangelical song*, and gospel times are often spoken of in the Old Testament, as times of rejoicing, and praise is expressed by *singing*. This was Christ's *swan-like song*, which He sang just before he entered upon his agony; probably, that which was usually sung, Ps. 114 to 119.

IV. When they had sung the *hymn*, presently they went out. Our Lord Jesus had his heart so much upon his suffering, that He would not come into the *tabernacle of his house*, nor go up into his bed, nor give sleep to his eyes, when that work was to be done, Ps. 132: 3, 4. The Israelites were forbidden to go out of their houses that night that they eat the passover, for fear of the sword of the destroying angel, Exod. 12: 22, 23. But because the *great Shepherd* was to be smitten, He went out to expose Himself to the sword; they evaded the destroyer, but Christ conquered him, and brought destruction to a perpetual end.

1. Christ here foretells that in his sufferings He should be deserted by all his disciples; 'You will all be offended because of me, this night. What I tell you now, is no other than what the Scripture has told you before; I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' Christ knew this before, and yet welcomed them at his table; he foresees the falls of his disciples, and yet doth not refuse them. Nor should we be discouraged from coming to the Lord's supper, by the fear of relapsing into sin; but, the greater our danger, the more need we have to fortify ourselves by the conscientious use of ordinances. Christ tells them, that they would be offended in Him, would question whether He were the Messiah or no,

when they saw Him overpowered by his enemies. Hitherto, they had continued with Him in his temptations; though they had sometimes offended Him, yet they had not been offended in Him; but now the storm would be so great, that they would slip their anchors, and be in danger of shipwreck. Some trials are more particular; (as Rev. 2: 10. *The devil shall cast some of you into prison*;) but others are more general, an hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, Rev. 3: 10. The smiting of the shepherd is often the scattering of the sheep: magistrates, ministers, masters of families, if shepherds to those under their charge, when any thing comes amiss to them, the whole flock suffers and is endangered by it.

Christ encourages them with a promise, that they shall return both to their duty and to their comfort; (v. 28.) 'After I am risen, I will gather you in from all the places whither you are scattered, Ezek. 34: 12. I will go before you into Galilee, we shall see each other there.'

2. He foretells that He should be denied particularly by Peter. When they went out to go to the mount of Olives, we may suppose that Judas stole away from them, whereupon the rest began to think highly of themselves, that they stuck to their Master, when Judas quitted him. But Christ tells them, that though they should be kept by his grace from Judas's apostasy, yet they would have no reason to boast of their constancy. Note, Though God keeps us from being as bad as the worst, yet we may well be ashamed to think that we are not better than we are.

(1.) Peter is confident that he should not do so ill as the rest of the disciples; (v. 23.) *Though all should be offended, yet will not I*. He supposes himself stronger than others, so much as to receive the shock of a temptation, and bear up against it, all alone; *I stand*, though no body stood by him. It is bread to us, to think well of ourselves, and trust to our own hearts.

(2.) Christ tells him that he will do worse than any of them. They will all desert Him, but he will deny Him; not once, but thrice; 'This day, even this night, before the cock crow thrice, thou wilt deny that ever thou hadst any acquaintance with me, as one ashamed to own me.'

(3.) He stands to his promise; 'If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee: I will adhere to thee, though it cost me my life;' and, no doubt, he thought as he said. Judas said nothing like this, when Christ told him he would betray Him. He sinned by contrivance; Peter by surprise; he devised the wickedness; (Mic. 2: 1.) Peter was overtaken in this fault, Gal. 6: 1. It was ill done to contradict his Master. If he had said, 'Lord, give me grace to keep me from denying thee, lead me not into this temptation, deliver me from this evil,' it might have been prevented: but they were all thus confident; they who said, *Lord, is it I?* now said, *It shall never be I*. Being acquitted from their fear of betraying Christ, they were now secure. But he that thinks he stands, must learn to take heed lest he fall; and he that girdeth on the harness, must not boast as though he had put it off.

V. 32-42. Christ, entering upon his sufferings, begins with the sorest of all the sufferings of his soul. This agony in soul was the *wormwood and the gall*; and thereby it appeared that no sorrow was forced upon Him; it was freely admitted.

c Matt. 26:24-25.
u Matt. 26:28-29. Luke 22:19, 20.
1 Cor. 10:16, 17. 11:23-29.
e 4:1. Luke 24:30. John 6:3.
f 24. Gen. 41:28-27. Zech. 5:7, 8.
g Luke 22:1. 1 Cor. 10:1. Gal. 4:28.
h 22. Luke 22:1. Rom. 14:6. 1 Cor. 11:26.
i 1:16. Matt. 26:27.
j 24:8. Zech. 14:1. 1 Cor. 11:26.
k Heb. 9:13-23. 13:20, 21.
l 10:45. Rev. 5:8-10. 7:9-17.

d Ps. 104:15. Matt. 26:29. Luke 22:16-18, 29, 30.
e Joel 3:18. Am. 9:13. Zech. 9:17.
f Ps. 47:7. Acts 16:25. 1 Cor. 14:15.
g Eph. 5:18-20. Col. 3:16. Jam. 5:15.
h Rev. 5:8. Or, *psalm*.
i Matt. 26:30. Luke 22:29. John 18:1-4.

h Matt. 26:31. Luke 22:31, 32. John 16:32. 2 Tim. 4:16.
i Zech. 13:7.
k 16:7. Matt. 16:21. 26:32. 28:7, 10.
l 16. John 21:1. 1 Cor. 15:4-6.
m 1 Matt. 26:32-33. Luke 22:33, 34.
n John 13:36-38. 21:15.
o Mark. 15:8, 13, 19, 23.

p 66-72. Matt. 26:69-75. Luke 22:54-62. John 18:17, 25-27. 1 Cor. 10:12.
q 2 Kings 8:13. Job. 40:4, 5. 1. a. 30:6.
r Prov. 16:18. 28:26. 29:23. Jer. 10:26. 17:9.
s Ex. 19:8. Deut. 5:27-29.
t Matt. 26:36. Luke 22:55. John 18:18.

Verses 26-31.

26.) 'Probably the usual hymn, called the "Hallel," which was sung at the passover. Psalm 113 to 118.'

(27.) *And ye* Christ foretelleth, how He shall be forsaken of his; yet that He will never forsake them.' *Beza*. (Note, John 16: 31-33.)

(30.) *Thrice*, 'After thou hast heard it once, thou shalt not be admonished. But before it crows a second time thou shalt repeat the

'fault, nay, thou shalt do it thrice, and every time with new aggravations.' (Note, Matt. 26: 69-75.)

(31.) *I will speak the more vehemently*, I know no English words, which can fully express the emphasis of the original.—The circumstances of Peter's self-confidence, and dreadful fall, are related with peculiar energy by St. Mark, who is supposed to have written his gospel under Peter's immediate inspection; and his reputation is more signally touched on. (Note, 66-72.)

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was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

33 And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy;

34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him.

36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt.

37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour?

38 Watch ye, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation: the spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.

39 And again he

I. He retired for prayer; He had lately prayed with them; (John 17.) now He goes to his Father upon an errand peculiar to Himself. Note, Our praying with our families will not excuse our neglect of secret worship. Jacob first sent over all that he had, and was left alone, and then there wrestled a man with him, (Gen. 32: 23, 24.) though he had been at prayer before, (p. 9.) it is likely, with his family.

II. Even into that retirement He took with Him Peter and James and John, (p. 33.) to witness this part of his humiliation; and though great spirits care not how few know their agonies, He was not ashamed that they should see. These three had boasted of their ability and willingness to suffer with Him; (ch. 10: 39.) and therefore Christ takes them to see the bloody baptism and the bitter cup, to convince them that they knew not what they said. They who are most confident, should be first tried, that they may be made sensible of their weakness.

III. He began to be sore amazed—a word very significant; it bespeaks something like that horror of great darkness which fell upon Abraham, (Gen. 15: 12.) or something worse. The terrors of God set themselves in array against Him, and He allowed himself the intense contemplation of them. Never was sorrow like unto his; never such experience as He had had from eternity of divine favors, and therefore never any could have such a sense as He had of divine deserts. Yet there was not the least irregularity in this commotion; his affections rose not tumultuously, but as they were called up, for He had no corrupt nature. If water have a sediment when shaken, it grows muddy; so with our affections; but pure water in a clean glass, though stirred, continues clear; and so it was with Christ. Dr. Lightfoot thinks it probable that the devil did now appear to our Savior in a visible shape, to terrify and drive Him from his hope in God, to make Him curse God, and die, and to deter Him from prosecuting his undertaking; whatever hindered Him from that, He looked upon as coming from Satan, Matt. 16: 23. When the devil had tempted Him in the wilderness, it is said, He departed from Him for a season, (Luke 4: 3.) intending another struggle with Him; finding that he could not flatter Him into sin, he would try to affright Him into it, and make void his design.

IV. He said, My soul is exceeding sorrowful. He was made sin for us, and therefore was thus sorrowful: He fully knew the malignity of the sins He was to suffer for; and having the highest degrees of love to God, who was offended, and of love to man, who was endangered by them, now that those were before Him, no marvel that his soul was exceeding sorrowful. He was made to serve with our sins, and wearied with our iniquities. He was made a Curse for us; the curses of the law were transferred to Him as our Surety. When his soul was thus exceeding sorrowful, He did, as it were, yield to them, and lie down under the load, until by his death He had satisfied for sin, and forever abolished the curse. He now tasted death, which is not an expression, as if He did but taste it; He drank up even the dregs of the cup; but it did not go down quickly and at once: He tasted all the bitterness of it. This was that fear which the apostle speaks of,

(Heb. 5: 7.) a natural fear of pain and death which it is natural to human nature to startle at.

Christ's sufferings and sorrows for us should (1.) *imbitter our sins*. Can we ever entertain a thought of sin, when we see what impression sin (though but imputed) made up: the Lord Jesus? Shall that sit light upon our souls, which sat so heavy upon his? Was Christ, in such an agony for our sins, and shall we never be in an agony about them? How should we look upon Him whom we have pierced, and mourn, and be in bitterness! It becomes us to be exceeding sorrowful for sin, because Christ was so, and never to make a mock at it. If Christ thus suffered for sin, let us arm ourselves with the same mind.

(2.) To *sweeten our sorrows* if our souls be exceeding sorrowful, through affliction, let us remember that our Master was so before us, and the disciple is not greater than his Lord. Why should we affect to drive away sorrow, when Christ for our sakes submitted to it, and thereby not only took out the sting, but put virtue into it, and made it profitable, (for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better,) nay, and sweet, and comfortable. Paul was sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. If we be exceeding sorrowful, it is but unto death; that will be the period of all our sorrows, if Christ be ours; when I e eyes are closed, all tears are wiped away from them.

V. He ordered his disciples to keep with Him, not because He needed help, but because He would have them look upon Him, and receive instruction; He said to them, Tarry ye here, and watch. He had said to the other disciples nothing but, Sit ye here; (p. 32.) but these three He bids to tarry and watch, as expecting more from them than from the rest.

VI. He fell on the ground, and prayed. It was but a little before this, that in prayer He lifted up his eyes; (John 17: 1.) but here, being in an agony, He fell upon his face, accommodating himself to his present humiliation, and teaching us thus to abase ourselves before God; it becomes us to be low, when we come into the presence of the Most High. As Man, He deprecates his sufferings, that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him; p. 35. 'Let man's salvation be, if possible, accomplished without it.' The Syriac word Abba is here retained, which signifies, Father, to intimate what an emphasis our Lord Jesus, in his sorrows, laid upon it. With an eye to this, Paul retains this word, putting it into the mouths of all that have the Spirit of adoption; they are taught to cry, Abba, Father, Rom. 8: 15. Gal. 4: 6. Father, all things are possible to Thee. Note, Even that which we cannot expect, we ought yet to believe that God is able to do; and when we submit to his will, and refer ourselves to his wisdom, it must be with a believing acknowledgment that all things are possible to Him. As Mediator, Christ acquiesced in the will of God. 'Nevertheless, not what I will, but what Thou wilt. I know the matter is settled, and cannot be altered; I must suffer and die, I hid it welcome.'

VII. His disciples dropped asleep while He was at prayer, p. 37, 38. He comes to look after them, since they did not look after Him;

Verses 32—36.

Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 26: 36—39. Luke 22: 39—46.—(36.) And He said, &c. 'O Father, I know that all things are possible to thee Almighty power. When I consult with human infirmity, I could in vain wish the removal of this bitter passion: but these weak volitions are not now for me; I willingly submit my human will to thy divine will and pleasure.' Bp. Hall.—(Note, John 12: 23—33.) 'Christ suffering for us, in that flesh which He took upon Him for our sakes, the horrible terrors of the curse of Gal, receiveth the cup at his Father's hand, which He, being just, doth straightway drink off for the unjust.' Beza.

'We are taught by this affecting passage, that a season of special emergency from danger foreseen, or approaching trial, is a fit season for special prayer. Few occasions in our Savior's life are more suited for our comfort or imitation. Here we contemplate Him in his human nature, exercising no divine power:—for "how then should the Scripture be fulfilled?" We see Him, as man, contending against the foreknowledge of bitter suffering, against all that our nature most shrinks from: and we see Him, not supported, as many of his disciples have since been in similar trials, by a strength beyond their own, but left, as

it appears, to experience all the bitterness of unmitigated anguish. No doubt, for a purpose: that we, for whose instruction it is recorded, may be convinced of the reality of that misery which awaits unrepented unpardoned sin. The prayer which He utters is of all things most calculated to convince us of that reality.' Bp. Swinock.

(38.) Abba. A Syriac word signifying Father, but in a way of peculiar affection and confidence. (Notes, Rom. 8: 14—17, v. 15. Gal. 4: 5—7, v. 6.)

(37.) Says to Peter.—'Whom He especially addresses, since he had a short time before, with every asseveration, strongly declared, that he would willingly encounter all calamities, nay, even death itself, with Jesus.'

Observe, too, He calls him not Peter, i. e. rock, (constant,) but Simon. L. BRUGENS

Verses 37, 38.

(Marg. Ref.—Note, Matt. 26: 40, 41.) 'Thou that didst ever now express so much kindness and constancy to me (31) art thou able to do so much less? In this state of agony, which I expressed to you, that I was in, (34.) couldst thou be so little concerned, as to fall asleep when I stayed so little while from you?' Hammond. Sec.

went away, and prayed, and spake the same words.

40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again; (for their eyes were heavy;) 'neither wist they what to answer him.'

41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, 'Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough,' 'the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hand of sinners.'

42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

[Practical Observations.]

43 ¶ And immediately, while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders.

44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, 'Whosoever I shall

and finds them asleep, so little affected were they with his sorrows and prayers. This was a presage of their deserting Him; and an aggravation of it was, He had so lately commended them for continuing with Him in his temptations, though they had not been without their faults. Was He so willing to make the best of them, and they so indifferent in approving themselves to Him? They had lately promised not to be offended in Him; and yet mind Him so little? He particularly upbraided Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? Thou that didst so positively promise thou wouldst not deny me, dost thou slight me thus? From thee I expected better things. Couldst thou not watch one hour? He did not require him to watch all night with Him, only for one hour. It aggravates our faintness in Christ's service, that He doth not over-task nor weary us with it, Isa. 43: 23. He puts upon us no other burden than to hold fast till He comes; (Rev. 2: 24, 25.) and behold, He comes quickly, Rev. 3: 11.

Whom Christ loves He rebukes when they do amiss, so those whom He rebukes He counsels and comforts. It was wise and faithful advice. Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation, v. 38. It was bad to sleep when Christ was in his agony, but they were entering into further temptation, and if they did not stir up themselves, and fetch in grace and strength from God by prayer, they would do worse; and so they did, when they all forsook Him, and fled. It was a kind and tender excuse that Christ made for them, 'The spirit truly is willing; I know it is ready; you would willingly keep awake, but you cannot.' This may be taken as a reason for that exhortation, 'Watch and pray; because, though the spirit is willing, (you have sincerely resolved never to be offended in me,) yet the flesh is weak, and if you do not watch and pray, and use the means of perseverance, you may be overcome, notwithstanding.' The consideration of the weakness and infirmity of our flesh should engage and quicken us to prayer and watchfulness, when we are entering into temptation.

VIII. He repeated his address to his Father; (v. 39.) He went again, and prayed, saying the same word, or matter, or business; He spake to the same purport the third time. This teaches us, that men ought always to pray, and not faint, Luke 18: 1. Though answers to prayer do not come quickly, we must renew our

requests, and continue instant in prayer; for the vision is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and not lie, Hab. 2: 3. Paul, when buffeted by a messenger of Satan, besought the Lord thrice, as Christ did, before He obtained an answer, 2 Cor. 12: 8. A little before this, when Christ, in trouble of soul, prayed, Father, glorify thy name, He had an immediate answer, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again; but now He comes a second and third time, for God's answer to prayer, comes sooner or later, according to his will, that we may be kept depending.

IX. He repeated his visits to his disciples; a specimen of his continued care for his church, even when it is half asleep, and not concerned for itself, while He ever lives making intercession with his Father in heaven. See how, as became a Mediator, He passes and repasses between both. He came the second time to his disciples, and found them asleep again, v. 40. See how the infirmities of Christ's disciples return, notwithstanding their resolutions, and overpower them, notwithstanding their resistance. What clogs these bodies are to our souls! We should long for that state in which they shall be no more an encumbrance. This second time He spake to them as before, but they resist not what to answer Him; they were ashamed and had no excuse. Or, they were so overpowered, that, like men between sleeping and waking, they knew not where they were or what they said. But the third time, they were bid to sleep if they would; (v. 41.) Sleep on now, and take your rest. I have now no more occasion for your watching. It is enough; 'You have had warning enough to keep awake, and would not take it, and now you shall see what little reason you have to be secure.' I discharge you from any further attendance; so some understood it; 'Now the hour is come, in which I knew you would all forsake me; take your course;' as He said to Judas, What thou doest, do quickly. The Son of man is now betrayed into the hands of sinners, the chief priests and elders; those worst of sinners, because they made a profession of sanctity. 'Come, rise up. Let us go and meet the enemy, for lo, he that betrayeth me, is at hand, and I must not now think of escape.' When we see trouble at the door, we should get ready for it.

V. 43-52 The enemies of our Lord had long aimed to take Him; but He had escaped

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17-42. While we consider the Lord Jesus, ('the paschal Lamb, sacrificed for us;' who has given his body to be broken, and his blood to be shed, that we might live by faith in his name,) attending on divine institutions which bring sin to remembrance; that He might 'fulfil all righteousness;' let us learn, in copying his example, to beware of hypocrisy, and to fear being counted intruders, or detected as traitors. We must 'take heed and beware of covetousness,' and be diligent in self-examination; not trusting our own hearts, but still inquiring, when we read of hypocrites and apostates, 'Lord, is it I?'—more ready to suspect ourselves than our brethren. Let us thus 'examine ourselves,' and then, as frequently as opportunity is afforded us, 'eat of that bread, and drink of that cup,' the appointed symbols of the body and blood of Christ, given to purchase the blessings of the new covenant for our souls. Thus we shall be led to recollect our guilt and danger, our hope and obligations, and our profession of faith, and love our Redeemer and his flock: thus we shall receive renewed pledges of his love, have our affections enlivened, our strength increased for his service: thus we shall anticipate the hour, when we shall drink of the fruit of our living Vine with Him, forever new in the kingdom of our Father: and thus we shall also be prepared for bearing our cross, for drinking of the cup of tribulation, and for tasting death in our passage to glory. (P. O. Matt. 26: 26-35.) The good Shepherd indeed passed through his sufferings, without one false step; but even the principal of it is followers have often been offended and scattered, by the comparatively small measure of afflictions allotted to them; and this has been exactly proportioned to the degree, in which

they have confided in resolutions made in their own strength. Did we properly contemplate the scene in Gethsemane; did we duly consider the amazement and anguish of the great Redeemer, when 'his soul was sorrowful even unto death,' through the load of our guilt which He willingly sustained; did we advert to 'his strong crying and tears,' (Note, Heb. 5: 7-10, v. 7.) and to the victorious resignation of his heart, when He said, 'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt:' these reflections would fill our minds with such convictions concerning the evil of sin, the awful justice of God, the love of the Savior, the vanity of the world, the impotency of men's malice, and the advantageous and helpless condition of our souls, as would render us humble, and steadfast, in the hour of trial, and excite us to watch and pray, lest we be borne down by temptation, or fall under the wrath of God. But, alas! while unbelievers entirely disregard this interesting and affecting subject, even believers are apt to contemplate it in a drowsy manner; and, instead of being 'ready to die with Christ,' they are often unprepared to 'watch with Him one hour!' Thus, after repeated warnings, through their own negligence they 'enter into temptation;' and then, through the weakness of the flesh, they fall into sin, notwithstanding the readiness of the spirit, in their better moments. (Notes, Rom. 7: 15-21. P. O. 15-25.) Let us not attempt to excuse such disobedience and ingratitude; should Jesus call us to account for it, we should not know what to answer Him: and though He will not cast off the true believer for these offences, He will yet sharply rebuke and chasten him and bring him to condemn himself on account of them. (P. O. Matt. 26: 36-46. Luke 22: 35-46.)

SCOTT.

Note, Matt. 26: 42-46.—(41.) It is enough! Matt. 6: 2. 15: 8. Luke 6: 24. F. A. T. Both my charge to you, to watch, and your sleeping are at an end. 'It is sufficient,' you can no longer be of any service in watching for me.

Verdes 43-50.

Notes, Matt. 26: 47-56; Luke 22: 47-53. John 18: 1-14.—

(44.) Take and lead Him away safely. 'It is probable that Judas thought they could not do this; but that, as Jesus had at other times conveyed Himself away, when they attempted to cast Him down a precipice, (Luke 4: 29, 30,) or to stone Him, (John 8: 59. 10: 39.) so He would have done now.' Whittier.

Lead Him away safely. 'That is, take Him off with the utmost care and diligence, for He has sometimes made strange

SCOTT.

kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead him away safely.

45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, 'Master, Master; and kissed him.

46 And they laid their hands on him, and took him.

47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear.

48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Are ye come out as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take me?'

49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures must be fulfilled.

50 And they all forsook him, and fled.

51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about his naked body; and the young men laid hold on him.

52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

^a 1 Sam. 23:22, 23. Acts 16:23.

^b 12:14, 15. 13: 1, 3. Matt. 23: 8-10. Luke 6:46. John 13:13, 14, 20, 28.

^c Judges 16:21. Lam. 4:20. John 18: 12. Acts 2:23.

^d Matt. 26:51-54. Luke 22:49-51. Job 18:10, 11.

^e 1 Sam. 24:14, 15. 26:13. Matt. 26: 55. Luke 22:52, 53.

^f 11:15-18, 27. 12:35. Matt. 21:23, 24. Luke 18:47, 48. 20:1, 2. 21:37.

^g 83. John 7:28-30, 37. 8:2, 12, 10; 13, 18, 20.

^h Ps. 22:1-31. 69: 15, 53. Dan. 9: 24-26. Matt. 26:54, 55. Luke 24: 25-27, 44, 45.

ⁱ 27. Job 19:13, 14. Ps. 88:11. 88:7, 9, 18. John 16:32. 18:8, 9. 2 Tim. 4:16.

^j 13:11-16. Gen. 39:12. Job 24.

and only cut off the ear. It is easier to fight for Christ than to die for Him; but Christ's good soldiers overcome, not by taking away other people's lives, but by laying down their own, Rev. 12: 11.

VI. Christ argues with them that had seized Him, and shows them the absurdity of their proceedings. 1. That they came against Him, as against a thief, whereas He was innocent of any crime; He taught daily in the tem-

ple, and if He had any wicked design, there it would have been discovered; nay, these officers of the chief priests, being retainers to the temple, may be supposed to have heard his sermon there; and had He not taught them excellent doctrine, his enemies themselves being judges.

2. Were not all the words of his mouth in righteousness? Was there any thing forward or perverse in them? Prov. 8: 8. By his fruits He was known to be a good Tree; why then did they come out against Him as a thief? 2. They came to take Him privately, whereas He was neither ashamed nor afraid to appear publicly in the temple. He was none of those evil-doers that hate the light, neither come to the light, John 3: 20. Their masters might meet Him any day in the temple, where He was ready to answer all charges; and there they might do as they pleased with Him, for the priests had the custody of the temple, and the command of the guards about it; but to come upon Him thus at midnight, and in the place of his retirement, was base and cowardly. This was to do as David's enemy, that sat in the lurking places of the villages, to murder the innocent, Ps. 10: 8. But this was not all. 3. They came with swords and staves, is if He had been in arms against the good sent, and must have the military raised to reduce Him. There was no occasion for those weapons; but they did this to secure themselves from the rage of some; they came armed, because they feared the people; but thus were they in great fear, where no fear was, Ps. 53: 6. By coming also with swords and staves to take Him, they represented Him to the people (who are apt to take impressions this way) as a dangerous man, and so endeavored to incense them against Him, and make them cry out, Crucify him, crucify him, having no other way to gain their point.

III. Judas betrayed him with a kiss; Christ allowed his disciples to kiss his cheek at their return, when they had been any time absent. He called him Master, Master, as if he would be more respectful than ever. It is enough to put one forever out of conceit with being called of men Rabbi, Rabbi, (Matt. 23: 7.) since it was with this compliment that Christ was betrayed. He bid them take Him, and lead him away safely. Some think that he spake this ironically, knowing that they could not secure Him unless He pleased, that this Samson could break their bands asunder as threads of tow, and make his escape, and then he should get the money, and Christ the honor, and no harm done; and I should think so too, but that Satan was entered into him, so that the worst and most malicious intention of this action is not too black to be supposed. Nay, he had often heard his Master say, that being betrayed, He should be crucified, and had no reason to think otherwise.

IV. They made Him their prisoner, laid on Him rude and violent hands, and took Him into custody; triumphing that they had done that which had been often before attempted in vain. V. Peter, in defence of his Master, wounded one of the assailants, being for the present mindful of his promise, to venture his life with his Master. He was one of them that stood by, of them that were with Him, (so the word signifies, in the Greek;) he drew a sword, it is likely, to cut off the head, but missed his blow, and only cut off the ear. It is easier to fight for Christ than to die for Him; but Christ's good soldiers overcome, not by taking away other people's lives, but by laying down their own, Rev. 12: 11.

VI. Christ argues with them that had seized Him, and shows them the absurdity of their proceedings. 1. That they came against Him, as against a thief, whereas He was innocent of any crime; He taught daily in the tem-

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VII. He reconciled himself to this ignominious treatment, by referring to the predictions of the Messiah. I am hardly used, but I submit, for the Scriptures must be fulfilled, v. 49. What a regard Christ has had to the Scriptures! He would bear any thing rather than that the least jot or tittle of the Word of God should fall to the ground; and as He had an eye to them in his sufferings, so He has in his glory; for what is Christ doing in the government of the world, but fulfilling the Scriptures? The Old Testament we must search for Christ, the true Treasure hid in that field: as the history of the New Testament expounds the prophecies of the Old, so the prophecies of the Old Testament illustrate the history of the New.

VIII. All Christ's disciples, hereupon, forsook Him, and fled. They were very confident that they should adhere to Him; but even good men know not what they will do, till they are tried. If it was such a comfort to Him, as He had lately intimated, that they had hitherto continued with Him, in his trials, (Luke 22: 23.) what a grief it was to Him, that they deserted Him now in the greatest, when they might have done Him some service—when He was abused, to protect Him, and when accused, to witness for Him. Let not those that suffer for Christ, think it strange, if they be thus deserted, and if all the herd such as the wounded deer; they are not better than their Master, nor can expect to

escape. Yet many commentators think that Judas expected that He would do so on this occasion, and in despair went and hanged himself.

BLOOMFIELD.

(48-50.) And Jesus. &c.] 'As men had knowingly and willingly deserted their Creator, become traitors against Him, and robbed Him of his glory: so Christ willingly making satisfaction for the unjust, being deserted by his disciples, and betrayed by one whom He had admitted to the most familiar acquaintance with Him, is apprehended like a robber; that the punishment might answer to the sin; and we, the real traitors, deserters, and sacrilegious robbers, might be rescued from the snare of the devil.' Beza.

(51.) A token.] From the Greek of 'watchword.' SCOTT.

Veres 51, 52.

It is probable, though not certain, that this young man was one of our Lord's followers. (Marg. Ref. c.) SCOTT.

(51.) Though this incident recorded by Mark may not seem of great moment, it is, in my opinion, one of those circumstances we call picturesque, which though in a manner unconnected with the story, enlivens the narrative and adds to its credibility. It must have been late in the night, with some young man, whose house lay near the garden, roused from sleep by the noise, sprang up, and stimulated by

curiosity, threw around him the cloth in which he had been sleeping, and ran after the crowd. This is such an incident as is very likely to have happened, but more unlikely to have been invented.

CAMPBELL.

'D. Kimchi defines the original word rendered "linen cloth" as a "night garment" of linen, which is put next the skin. These sorts of garments are much in use amongst the eastern nations, especially in the summer and at night time. Very similar to them are the ample and flowing cloaks worn at the present day by the Moors and Arabs, called by them Hykes. Shaw, Pocock, &c.'

BLOOMFIELD.

The mention of these trivial occurrences (observes Le Clerc) confirms the truth of the history. The evangelists write without any selection of those events which might prejudice readers in favor of Jesus Christ, or without almost any praise bestowed on Him. They represent things as they are, in the colors of truth, and as they appeared to them at the time, or came to their knowledge.

BLOOMFIELD.

Young men.] 'Roman soldiers.' Though the transaction was conducted with such extreme violence, the apostles had been permitted to escape, through the secret influence of Jesus over the minds of those who apprehended Him! (Note, John 18: 4-9.) SCOTT.

53 ¶ And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests, and the elders, and the scribes.

54 And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

55 And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus, to put him to death; and found none.

56 For many bare false witness against him; but their witness agreed not together.

57 And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying,

58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands.

59 But neither so did their witness agree together.

60 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what is it which these witness against thee?

61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?

62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses?

64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death.

¶ *John 8:13, 14, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.*

be better used either by enemies or friends. When Paul was in peril, none stood by him, but all men forsook him, 2 Tim. 4: 16.

IX. The noise disturbed the neighborhood, and some were brought into danger by the riot, v. 51, 52. This passage of story we have not in any other evangelist. 1. Such a multitude, armed, and coming with so much fury, in the dead of the night, and in a quiet village, could not but produce a great stir; this alarmed a young man, who perhaps thought there was some tumult in the city, some uproar among the people, and was in such haste to inform himself, that he threw a sheet about him, and ran among the thickest of them with this question, *What is here?* Having, no doubt, heard much of Jesus, he continued to follow Him, desirous to hear what He would say, and see what He would do. Some think, that his having no other garment than this linen cloth, intimates that he was one of those Jews who made a greater profession of piety than their neighbors, in token of which, among other instances of austerity they used no clothes but one linen garment, which was thin and cold. But this probably was not his constant wear. 2. Christ's own disciples had run away from Him; but this young man, having no concern for Him, thought he might securely attend Him, especially being so far from being armed, that he was not so much as clothed; but the young men, the Roman soldiers, laid hold of him. Perhaps they were vexed that they had suffered the disciples to run away, and, they being out of their reach, they resolved to seize the first they could lay their hands on; though this young man was perhaps one of the strictest sect of the Jews, the Roman soldiers made no conscience of abusing him, upon this occasion. Finding himself in danger, he left the linen cloth by which they had caught hold of him, and fled away naked. This passage is recorded, to show what a barbarous crew this was, that was sent to seize Christ, and what a narrow escape the disciples had of falling into their hands, out of which nothing could have kept them, but their Master's care; *If ye seek me, let these go their way*, John 18: 8. It also intimates that there is no hold of those who are led by curiosity only, and not by faith and conscience, to follow Christ.

V. 53—65. We have here Christ's arraignment, trial, and condemnation, before the great sanhedrim, of which the high priest was president, or judge; the same Caiaphas that had lately adjudged it expedient he should be put to death, guilty or not guilty, (John 11: 50.) and who therefore might justly be excepted against as partial.

I. Christ is hurried away to his palace (it is called), such state did he live in. And there, though in the dead of the night, all the chief priests and elders and scribes, were assembled, ready to receive the prey.

II. Peter followed at a distance, such a degree of cowardice was his late courage dwindled into, v. 54. But when he came to the high priest's palace, he went, and sat with the servants, that he might not be suspected to belong to Christ. The high priest's fire-side was no proper place, nor his servants proper company, for Peter, but it was his entrance into a temptation.

III. Great diligence was used to procure false witnesses against Christ. They had seized Him as a malefactor, and now they had Him, they had no indictment against Him, no crime to lay to his charge, but they sought for

witnesses with insinuating questions, offered bribes to some, if they would accuse Him, and endeavored to frighten others, if they would not, v. 55, 56. The chief priests and elders were by the law intrusted with the prosecuting and punishing of false witnesses; (Deut. 19: 16.) yet those were now ringleaders in a crime that tends to the overthrow of justice. It is time to cry, *Help, Lord*, when the physicians of a land are its troublers, and those that should be the preservers of peace and equity, are the corrupters of both.

IV. He was at length charged with words spoken some years ago, which, as they were represented, seemed to threaten the temple, which they had made an idol of; (v. 57: 58.) but the witnesses to this matter did not agree, (v. 59.) for one swore that He said, *I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days*; (so it is in Matthew;) the other swore that He said, *I will destroy this temple, that is made with hands, and within three days I will build, not it, but another made without hands*; now these two differ much from each other; their testimony was not equal to the charge of a capital crime; they did not accuse Him of that upon which a sentence of death might be founded; by the utmost stretch of their law.

V. He was urged to be his own accuser; (v. 60.) *The high priest stood up in a heat, and said, Answerest thou nothing?* This he said under pretence of justice and fair dealing, but really with a design to ensnare Him, that they might accuse Him, Luke 11: 53, 54, 20: 20. We may well imagine with what an air of haughtiness this proud high priest brought Jesus to this question; *'Come you, the prisoner at the bar, you hear what is sworn against you: what have you now to say for yourself?'* Pleased to think that He seemed silent, who had so often silenced those that picked quarrels with Him. Still Christ answered nothing, that He might set us an example of patience under calumnies and false accusations; when we are reviled, let us not revile again, 1 Pet. 2: 22. And, of prudence, when a man shall be made an offender for a word, (Isa. 59: 21.) and our defence made our offence; it is an evil time indeed when the prudent shall keep silence, (lest they make bad worse,) and commit their cause to Him that judgeth righteously. But,

VI. When He was asked whether He was the Christ, He confessed, and denied not, that He was, v. 61, 62. He asked, *Art thou the Son of the Blessed?* that is, the Son of God? for, the Jews, when they named God, generally added, *blessed for ever*; and thence the *Blessed* is the title of God, a peculiar title, and applied to Christ, Rom. 9: 5. For the proof of his being the Son of God, He binds them over to his second coming; *'Ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power; that Son of man that now appears so mean, whom you see and trample upon, (Isa. 53: 2, 3,) you shall shortly see and tremble before.'* One would think that such a word as this, which our Lord seems to have spoken with a grandeur and majesty not agreeable to his present appearance, (for through the thickest cloud of his humiliation rays of glory still darted forth,) should have startled the court, and at least, in the opinion of some of them, should have amounted to an arrest of judgment, and that they should have stayed process till they had considered further of it; when Paul at the bar reasoned of the judgment to come, the judge trembled, and adjourned the trial, Acts 24: 25. But

Verse 53

Perhaps one testified, that He said and He was able to destroy the temple, and the other, that He would actually destroy it. (Note, John 8: 13—22.)

Agreed not together.] 'Or, as some commentators was insufficient.'

Verses 60—65.

RECOMFIELD.

I am.] "I am what thou hast said." These two phrases are of

65 And some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands.

66 ¶ And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest:

67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth.

68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest, And he went out into the porch, and the cock crew.

69 And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them.

70 And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto.

71 But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this man of whom ye speak.

these chief priests were so miserably blinded with malice and rage, that, like the horse rushing into the battle, they mocked at fear, and were not affrighted, neither believed they that it was the sound of the trumpet, Job 39: 22, 23. And see Job 15: 25, 26.

VII. The high priest, upon this confession of him, convicted Him as a Blasphemer; (v. 63.) He rent his clothes. Some think that the word signifies his pontifical vestments, which, for the greater state, he had put on, though in the night, upon this occasion. As before, in his enmity to Christ, he said he knew not what, (John 11: 51, 62,) so now he did he knew not what. If Saul's rending of Samuel's mantle was made to signify the rending of the kingdom from him, (1 Sam. 15: 27, 28,) much more did Caiaphas's rending of his own clothes signify the rending of the priesthood from him, as the rending of the vail, at Christ's death, signified the throwing of all open. Christ's clothes, even when He was crucified, were kept entire, and not rent; for, when the Levitical priesthood was rent in pieces and done away, this Man, because he continues ever, has an unchangeable priesthood.

VIII. They agreed that He was a blasphemer, and, as such, guilty of a capital crime, v. 64. The question seemed to be put fairly, What think ye? But it was really prejudged, for the high priest had said, Ye have heard the blasphemy; he gave judgment first, who, as president of the court, ought to have voted last. So they all condemned Him to be guilty of death; what friends He had in the great sanhedrim did not appear, it is probable that they had not notice.

IX. They set themselves to abuse Him, and, as the Philistines with Samson, to make sport with him, v. 65. It would seem that some of the priests that had condemned Him, so far forgot the dignity, as well as duty, of their place,

72 And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought

thereon, he wept.

15:19, Num. 12:14, Job 30:10, Is. 50:6, 52:14, 53:3, Mic. 5:1, Matt. 26:67, 68, Luke 22:63, 64, John 18:22, 19:3, Acts 23:2, Heb. 12:24, 25, Matt. 26:59, 60, Luke 22:64, 65, John 18:15-18, c 10:47, Matt. 21:23, 31:11, John 1:45-49, 19:18, c 13:38, d 29-31, John 13:36-38, 2 Tim. 2:12, 13, e Matt. 26:71, 72, f 30.

g 38, Luke 22:58, John 18:25, Gal. 6:1, h Matt. 26:73, 74, Luke 22:59, 60, John 18:26, 27, i 1 Cor. 12:6, Acts 5:7, k 2 Kings 8:12-15, 10:22, Jer. 17:9, 1 Cor. 10:12, l 30, 68, Matt. 26:74, 75, m 1 Sam. 18:10, 19:59, 60, Jer. 31:18-20, Ez. 16:63, 36:31, Luke 15:17-19, 22:60, 61, n Ez. 7:18, Matt. 26:75, Luke 22:62, 2 Cor. 7:10, o Or, he kept abundantly, or, he began to weep.

'equal import in the Hebrew idiom.' Whitby.—(65.) To buffet Him. I see on Matt. 26: 67. The palms of their hands. I John 18: 22, 19: 3. Comp. 15: 19. Matt. 27: 30.—Christ, suffering all kinds of reproach for our sakes, getteth everlasting glory to them that believe in Him.' Beza. (Notes, Ps. 69: 8—12, Is. 50: 5—9, 53: 2, 3, Mic. 5: 1.)

Verses 66—72.

Notes, Matt. 26: 69—75. John 21: 15—17.—(67.) Thou, &c.] 'Thou also wast with the Nazarine Jesus.' (Matt. 2: 23)—(68.) He denied. 'A mournful example of human weakness; and an example of God's compassion, who giveth to his elect the spirit of repentance and faith.' Beza.—(72.) Peter called, &c.] 'Peter remembering what the Savior had foretold concerning his denial; and considering how exactly, but shamefully, after all his confident engagements to the contrary, he had fulfilled the same, was filled with compunction, and wept bitterly.' Whitby.—'Peter was suffered to fall fouler than any of the rest of the apostles, (except Judas the traitor,) that we might be cautioned against that extravagant regard which would afterwards be demanded to him and his pretended successors.' Clarke.—'Peter by the look of Christ, and by the crowing of the cock, was awaked as from a deep sleep.' Beza.

Scott.

(70.) 'The Galileans spoke a corrupt dialect of Syria, confusing and changing many of the letters and words. This may have arisen from their being much in communication with other nations. Probably it led to Peter's detection. Lightfoot gives several instances of the confusion produced by their pronunciation. When a certain Galilean asked, Whose is Immah? (this lamb), he pronounced it so, that the hearers did not know whether he meant an ass, wine, wool or lamb. A Galilean woman meaning to say, Come and I will feed you with milk, confounded the letters of the words, so that they signified, My neighbor a lion shall eat you.'

HENRY abr.

'In the early times of Christianity, the professors of it were, in derision, called Galileans.' ROSENKRANZ.

(65.) Understand I, &c.] More strong than in Matt. 26: 70.—(69.) A maid. Matt. 26: 71. Another maid was certainly meant; yet the article scarcely admits of being translated 'a maid.' Indefinitely. May it not refer to the maid who was stationed at the door? (John 18: 17.)

Scott.

(72.) Cock crew.] 'To reconcile this with the Jewish tradition, that all the cocks were removed out of Jerusalem, at the passover, some read, instead of cock crew, the watchmen proclaimed the hour of the

night. But this seems so unnatural an interpretation, that, rather than admit it, one would question the truth of the Jewish tradition; or conclude, that, if the custom did prevail, some cock was accidentally left behind, or had returned unobserved to this place. The hurry of such a night might have occasioned much greater neglects than this supposes.'

DODDRIDGE.

When he thought thereon.] Some refer the original expression to the vehemence, with which Peter rushed forth from the palace, when he heard the cock crew the second time.

Scott.

And when he thought thereon.] There is a dispute about the meaning of the original word thus translated, upon which Markland, as the following useful remark: 'It is a desirable thing to know the precise meaning of every passage and word in the Scriptures. But where that cannot be as in this place and many others, we must be contented with this reflection, that the knowledge of such places is never absolutely necessary to us upon any account, except that of curiosity; for which I do not know of any provision that is made in the Christian religion.'

Ed.

'Watchfulness would have led Peter to foresee and provide against the very situation in which he was now placed. Jesus had forewarned them all, that He "must suffer many things and be set at naught." Peter should have meditated on this; have prepared his mind for acting on such an emergency; should have meditated on the proofs of power, and of truth, and of divinity which he had seen; enough surely to convince him, that nothing could be done against Jesus which was not permitted from above. And, like his divine Master, he should have strengthened himself by PRAYER against this predicted season; have sought a supply of grace suited to its difficulty; that knowing these things, he should act as if he knew them. Thus when he was questioned, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth, the reply might have been suggested to him,—all this which seems to you proof that Jesus of Nazareth is a deceiver, is proof that He is indeed a prophet, yea, "that prophet which should come into the world." For He foretold us this, (chap. 10: 33, 34.) In this manner both Peter himself and the rest of the apostles did act afterwards, when they were threatened and strengthened by the HOLY SPIRIT. Threatened and assailed by these same rulers, they made a solemn appeal to God. (Acts 4: 29.) We are told that the transgressions of the people of God are recorded "for our example." And the practical lesson to be derived from Peter's unfaithfulness, is, that we strengthen ourselves by all the means which Scripture supplies, against the hour of temptation.'

BR. SUMNER

CHAP. IV.

Jesus is bound, and delivered, unto Pilate, and when accused before him, and interrogated by him, He remains silent, &c.—5. Pilate, induced by the priests and people, releases Barabbas, and delivers Jesus to be crucified, 6—15. The soldiers crown Him with thorns, and cruelly mock Him; and then lead Him away to the place of crucifixion, 16—24. He is crucified between two thieves, and reviled by the people and the priests, 25—32. The sun is darkened; and Jesus, calling on God, expires, 33—37. The veil of the temple is rent; and the centurion confesses Him to be the Son of God, 38, 39. Certain women are spectators of his crucifixion, 40, 41. One of the women, who is named Pilate for thy body, which, having obtained, is honorably interred, 42—47.

AND a straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried him away, and delivered him to Pilate.

2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews? And he answering, said unto him, Thou sayest it.

3 And the chief priests accused him of many things; but he answered nothing.

4 And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against thee.

a Ps. 2:2. Matt. 27:12. Luke 22:66. Acts 4:5, 6, 25—28.
b 10:33, 34. Matt. 26:19, 19. Luke 18:28, 29. John 18:28. Acts 1:3.
c Matt. 2:2. 27:11. Luke 23:3. John 18:33—37. 19:19—22. 1 Tim. 6:13.
d Matt. 27:12. Luke 23:2—5. John 18:29—31. 19:7, 12.
e 5. 14:50, 61. Is. 53:7.
f Matt. 26:62. 27:13. John 19:10.

dren of base men, Job 30:8. Yet, all things considered, the temptation could not be called formidable; it was only a maid that casually cast her eye upon him, and, for aught that appears, without design of giving him any trouble, said, *Thou art one of them*, to which he needed not to have made any reply, or might have said, 'And if I be, I hope that is no treason.'

4. The sin was very great; he denied Christ before men, at a time when he ought to have confessed Him, and to have appeared in court a witness for Him. Christ had often given notice to his disciples of his sufferings; yet, when they came, they were to Peter as great a surprise and terror, as if he had never heard of them before. He had often told them that they must suffer for Him, must take up their cross, and follow Him; and yet Peter is so terribly afraid of suffering, upon the very first alarm of it, that he will lie, and swear, to avoid it. When Christ was admired and flocked after, he could readily own Him; but now, that He is deserted and despised, he is ashamed of Him, and will own no relation to Him.

5. His repentance was very speedy. He repeated his denial thrice, and the third was worst of all, for then he cursed and swore, to confirm his denial; and that third blow, which, one would think, should have stunned him, and knocked him down, startled him, and roused him up. Then the cock crew the second time, which put him in mind of his Master's warning: by recollecting that, he was made sensible of his sin; and when he thought thereon, he wept. Some observe that this evangelist, who wrote, as some have thought, by St. Peter's direction, speaks as fully of Peter's sin as any of them, but more briefly of his sorrow, which Peter, in modesty, would not have to be magnified, and because he thought he could never sorrow enough for so great a sin. His repentance here is thus expressed: He added to weep; the more he thought of it, the more he wept; *threw himself down*, and wept; he covered his face, and wept; so some; cast his garment about his head, that he might not be seen to weep; he cast his eyes upon his Master, who turned, and looked upon him. Or, as we understand it, fixing his mind upon it, he wept. It is not a transient thought of that which is humbling, that will suffice; we must dwell upon it. This word may mean his throwing confusion into his own face; he did as the publican that smote his breast, in sorrow for sin; and this amounts to his weeping bitterly.

CHAP. XV. v. 1—14. I. The great sanhedrim for the effectual prosecution of Jesus, met early in the morning, to find out ways and means to get Him put to death; they lost no time, lest there should be an uproar among the people. The unwearied industry of wicked people in doing evil, should shame our backwardness in that which is good. They that war against Christ and his soul, are up early; *How long then wilt thou sleep, O sluggard?*

II. They delivered Him a Prisoner to Pilate. Sacrifices must be bound with cords, Ps. 118:27. Christ was bound, to make hands easy to us, and enable us, as Paul and Silas, to sing in bonds. It is good for us often to remember the bonds of the Lord Jesus, who was bound for us. They led Him through Jerusalem, to expose Him to contempt, who, in the temple, but 9 day or two before, was venerated; and we may well imagine how He looked after such a night's usage; buffeted, spit upon, and abused. Their delivering Him to the Roman power, was a type of the ruin of their church, which hereby they brought upon themselves; it signified that the promise, covenant, and the oracles of God, and the visible church-state, which were the glory of Israel, and had been so long in their possession, should now be delivered up to the Gentiles. By delivering up the King, they do, in effect, deliver up the kingdom of God, which is therefore, as it were, by their own consent, taken from them, and given to another nation. If they had delivered up Christ, to gratify the desires of the Romans, or to satisfy any jealousies concerning Him, it had been another matter; but they voluntarily betrayed Israel's Crown, to them that were Israel's yoke.

III. Pilate interrogates; (v. 2.) 'Art thou the king of the Jews? Dost thou pretend to be that Messiah whom the Jews expect as a temporal prince?'—'Yea,' saith Christ, 'it is as thou sayest. I am that Messiah, but not as they expect.' He rules and protects his Israel, who are Jews by the circumcision of the Spirit, and will restrain and punish carnal Jews, who continue in unbelief.

IV. The chief priests forgot the dignity of their place, turned informers, and in person accused Christ of many things, (v. 3.) and witnessed against Him, v. 4. Many of the Old-Testament prophets charge the priests of their times with great wickedness, in which *well did they prophesy* of their priests; see Ezek. 22:26. Hos. 5:1, 6:9. Mic. 3:11. Zeph. 3:4. Mal. 1:6, 2:8. The destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldeans is said to be for the iniquity

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 43—72. Faulty disciples and hypocrites essentially differ. These often prove traitors, and join the enemies of Christ. Having long carried on a trade of iniquity, under the mask of piety, and amid the means of grace, they grow callous in sin, and treat religious concerns with unfeeling familiarity; they conceal their crimes by attending on ordinances, and, while they call Christ Lord, and express great affection for Him, betray Him into the hands of his enemies. They hasten their own destruction; 'it would have been better for had they never been born.'—While the enemies of Christ, actuated by the most outrageous malice, seem to have their way, they are under secret restraints, and can only fulfil the Scriptures: not can they move any faster or further, or touch one person more than the Lord permits them. (Note, Ps. 76:10.) The most enormous wickedness has commonly been committed under the forms of law and justice, and varnished over by a semblance of piety; and while rulers have been ringleaders in perjury, oppression and murder, they have often perplexed themselves in devising how to regulate their conduct by statute, and with the appearance of impartiality! When we contemplate the whole body of the rulers and teachers of God's professed people, combined against his Son, determined, at any rate, to condemn Him to death; when we view Him given up by them as a malefactor, to such insults and cruelties, as the vilest murderer would have been exempted from; we have the clearest demonstration of man's extreme enmity to God, and of God's

unspeakable love to man. In the conduct of our Lord, we see the brightest pattern of meekness, fortitude, and compassion to sinners, that creation ever witnessed: we perceive likewise the desert of sin, the worth of our souls, the foundation of our hope, and the nature of our Christian calling; which is to do good with unwearied perseverance, and to endure evil after the example of our gracious Savior. (Note and P. O. 1 Pet. 2:18—25.) Thus may we look forward with comfort to the time when we 'shall see the Son of man, sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven;' and hope to be numbered with his glorified saints; when all his enemies will be driven away into everlasting destruction.—But when we hear Peter, after his promises, repeatedly denying his Lord, with oaths and curses, we may well tremble to reflect on the weakness and depravity even of believers; we may take occasion to admire the mercy and patience of God; he excited to thankfulness, that we have not yet been left utterly to forsake Him; and confess with shame our manifold instances of partial unfaithfulness. 'Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall;' and let him that has fallen think of these things, and return to the Lord with weeping and supplication, with deep repentance and faith; still hoping to receive forgiveness, to be restored to 'the joy of God's salvation,' and established by his free Spirit. (Notes, and P. O. Ps. 61:5—13. Matt. 26:47—75.)

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. v. 1—5. The events of this chapter are explained more fully in Matt. 27.

(1.) The meetings of the Jewish sanhedrim could not be held till morning, as the courts of the temple were shut at night. Nor was it lawful, to put any man to death on the passover. So the council of Jews, fearing the people too much to retain our Lord in prison, and not

daring to proceed with the execution, delivered Him to Pilate, on charge of sedition, that He might be put to death immediately, and according to the Roman custom. Townsend.

(2.) The observation of Theophylact is this: The Jews delivered up our Lord to the Romans; and they, for that sin, were themselves given up into the hands of the Romans. Whately.—Christ being publicly bound before an earthly judge, not for his own sins, as it appears on

5 But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

6 ¶ Now ^{at that} feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired.

7 And there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

8 And the multitude, crying aloud, began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them.

9 But Pilate answered them, saying, 'Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?'

10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him ^{for} envy.

11 But ^{the} chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, 'What will ye then that I shall do unto him ^{whom} ye call the King of the Jews?'

13 And they cried out again, Crucify him.

14 Then Pilate said unto them, 'Why, what evil hath he done?' And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him.

15 And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified.

g Ps. 71:7. Is. 53:8. Zach. 9:8. Matt. 27:14. 1 Cor. 4:9.
c Matt. 26:2, 5. 27:15. Luke 23:16, 17. John 18:39, 40. Acts 24:27, 29.
i Matt. 27:18. Luke 23:18, 19, 25.
h Matt. 27:17-21. John 18:39. 19:4, 5, 14-16. Acts 13:15-18.
l Gen. 44-6. 37:11. 1 Sam. 18:8, 9. Prov. 27:4. Ec. 4:4. Matt. 27:18. Jam. 3:14-16. 4:5. 1 John 3:12.
m Matt. 27:20. Matt. 27:70. John 18:40.
n Matt. 27:22-23. Luke 23:20-21. John 19:14-16.
o 12:11-15. Ps. 35:7. Is. 9:5-7. Jer. 33:5. Zach. 9:9. Matt. 2:2-4. 12:15. Luke 23:2.

of the priests that shed the blood of the just, Lam. 4:13. Note, Wicked priests are generally the worst of men. The better any thing is, the worse it is when corrupted. Lay-persecutors have been generally found more compassionate than ecclesiastics. These priests were very eager and noisy; but Christ answered nothing, v. 3. When Pilate urged Him to clear Himself, and was desirous He should, (v. 4.) He stood mute, (v. 5.) which Pilate thought strange. He gave Pilate a direct answer, (v. 2,) but could not answer the persecutors and witnesses, because the things they alleged were notoriously false, and He knew Pilate himself was convinced they were so. Note, As Christ spake to admiration, so He kept silence to admiration.

V. It was the custom of the feast to grace it with the release of a prisoner. The people expected and demanded that Pilate should do as he had ever done to them, (v. 8.) it was an ill usage; but they would have it kept up. Pilate perceived that the chief priests delivered Jesus for envy, because his reputation among the people eclipsed their's, v. 10. The eagerness of the persecutors and the slenderness of the proofs, showed that it was not his guilt, but his goodness, not any thing mischievous or scandalous, but something meritorious and glorious, that they were provoked at. Therefore, hearing how much He was the favorite of the crowd, he appealed from the priests to the people, thinking that they would be proud of rescuing Him out of the priests' hands. He proposed an expedient for their doing it without uproar; let them demand Him to be released, and Pilate will readily do it, and reply to the priests, that the people insisted upon his release. There was indeed another prisoner, one Barabbas, that would have some votes; but he questioned not but Jesus would succeed.

VI. The unanimous clamors of the people were to have Christ put to death; and by crucifixion. It surprised Pilate, when he found the people so much under the influence of the priests, that they all desired that Barabbas might be released, v. 11. Pilate opposed it; 'What will ye that I shall do to Him whom ye call the King of the Jews? Would not ye have Him released too?' v. 12. No, they say, Crucify Him. The priests put that in their mouths; when Pilate objected, Why, what evil has He done? (a very material question in such a case,) they do not pretend to answer it, but cried out the more exceedingly, as they were more and more instigated by the priests, Crucify Him, crucify Him. Now the priests, who were very busy among the mob, to keep up the cry, promised themselves that it would influence Pilate two ways to condemn Him. 1. J. might incline him to believe Christ guilty, when there was so general an outcry against Him. 'Surely,' might Pilate think, 'He must needs be a bad man, whom all the world is weary of.' He would now conclude that he had been misinformed, when he was told what an interest He had in the people. But the priests had so hurried on the prosecution that we may suppose that Christ's friends, who would have opposed this cry, were absent, and knew nothing of the matter. Note, It is but the common artifice of Satan, to give all ill name to Christ and his religion, and so to put them down. When once this sect, as they called it, comes to be every where spoken against, though without cause, then that is looked upon as cause enough to condemn it. But let us judge of persons and things by their merits, and the standard of God's Word, and

p Is. 53:9. Matt. 27:14, 19, 24, 54. Luke 23:14, 15, 21, 22, 41, 47. John 18:38, 19:6. Heb. 7:26. 1 Pet. 1:18.
q Ps. 69:4. Is. 53:3. Matt. 27:2-25.

not prejudice by common fame.—Though Pilate was not so weak as to be governed by their opinion, to believe Him guilty, yet he was so wicked as to be swayed by their outrage, though he believed Him innocent, induced incertainties by reasons of state, and the wisdom of this world. Our Lord Jesus dying as a Sacrifice for the sins of many, fell a sacrifice to the rage of many.

V. 15-21. I. Pilate, to gratify the Jews' malice, delivered Christ to be crucified, v. 15. Willing to content the people, and keep them quiet, he released Barabbas, the scandal and plague of their nation, and delivered Jesus to be crucified, their Glory and Blessing. Though he had scourged Him before, hoping that would content them, and not designing to crucify Him, yet he went on to that; for no wonder that he who could persuade himself to chastise one that was innocent, (Luke 23:16.) could by degrees persuade himself to crucify Him.

Christ was crucified, for that was, 1. A bloody death, a death without blood no remission, Heb. 9:22. 'Thy blood is the life; (Gen. 9:4.) it is the vehicle of the animal spirits, which connect the soul and body, so that the exhausting of the blood is the exhausting of the life. Christ was to lay down his life for us, and therefore shed his blood. Blood made atonement for the soul, (Lev. 17:11.) and therefore in every sacrifice of propitiation special order was given for pouring out and sprinkling the blood before the Lord. Now, that Christ might answer all these types, He shed his blood. 2. It was a painful death; the pains were exquisite, for death made its assaults upon the vitals by the exterior parts, which are quickest of sense. Christ died, so as that He might feel himself die, because He was to be both the Priest and the Sacrifice; so that He might be active in dying, because He was to make his soul an offering for sin. Cicero calls crucifixion, a most tremendous punishment; Christ would meet death in its greatest terror, and so conquer it. 3. It was a shameful death, the death of slaves, and the vilest malefactors; so it was accounted among the Romans. The cross and the shame are put together. God having been injured in his honor by the sin of man, it is in his honor that Christ makes Him satisfaction, not only by denying Himself the honors due his divine nature, but by submitting to the greatest ignominy. Yet this was not the worst. 4. It was a cursed death; thus it was branded by the Jewish law; (Deut. 21:23.) He that is hanged is accursed of God, under a particular mark of God's displeasure. It was the death that Saul's sons were put to when the guilt of their father's bloody house was to be expiated, 2 Sam. 21:6. Haman and his sons were hanged, Esth. 7:10. 9:13. We do not read of any of the prophets of the Old Testament that were hanged; but now that Christ has submitted to be hanged upon a tree, the reproach of that kind of death is rolled away, so that it ought not to hinder the comfort of those who die innocently or penitently, nor diminish, but rather add to, the glory of those who die for Christ.

II. Pilate, to gratify his Roman soldiers, delivered Him to them, to be abused and spitefully treated, while they were preparing for the execution. They called together the whole regiment that was then in waiting, and went into an inner hall, where they ignominiously abused Jesus, as a King, just as, in the high priest's hall, his servants had abused Him as a Prophet and Savior. 1. Do kings wear robes of purple or scarlet? They clothed Him with

Luke 23:28, 29. John 19:12-15. Acts 7:54-57. 19:34. 22:22, 23.
r Prov. 29:25. Is. 57:41. Matt. 27:26.
Luke 23:24, 25. John 19:16. Acts 24:1.

27. 25:9. Gal. 3:10.
s 10:34. Ps. 123:3. Is. 50:6. Matt. 20:19. 27:26. Luke 15:33. John 19:1.

'of the mouth of the judge himself, but for the crimes of us all' was condemned to the cross; that we, guilty creatures, being freed from the penalty of sin, might be publicly justified before the tribunal of God, and the assembly of his angels.' Beza.

(5.) Yet answered nothing.] He answered nothing further than what was implied in the words, 'Thou sayest it.' (3.) (Note, 1 Tim. 6:13-16, v. 13.)

Verboes 6-10.

Besides the notoriously bad character of Barabbas, as a robber, he had been guilty of the very crime of which the scribes and priests

falsely accused Jesus; having joined in or headed an insurrection against the Romans, which had committed murder in the attempt. Yet this man was preferred before the holy and beneficent Savior! The demand, that a criminal of this kind should be released, might have given great offence to Pilate, had he not perceived the malice by which the priests and rulers were actuated.

(7.) Had made insurrection with him. Who had committed murder, &c.] The insurgents had committed murder, in which Barabbas was either the principal or an accomplice. Scott.

16 And 'the soldiers led him away into the hall called "Pretorium"; and they call together the whole band.

17 And *they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his head;

18 And began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!"

19 And *they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, *and bowing their knees, worshipped him.

20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, *and led him out to crucify him.

21 And *they compel one Simon *a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander *and Rufus, 'to bear his cross.

22 And they bring him unto the place "Golgotha," which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

23 And 'they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: *but he received it not.

24 And when they had *crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take.

25 And it was "the third hour; and they crucified him.

purple. This abuse done to Christ in his apparel should be an intimation to Christians, not to make the putting on of apparel their adorning, 1 Pet. 3: 4. Shall a purple or scarlet robe be matter of pride to a Christian, which was matter of shame to Christ? 2. Do kings wear crowns? They platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head. A crown of straw, or rushes, would have been banter enough; but this was pain also. He wore the crown of thorns which we have deserved, that we might wear the crown of glory which He merited. Let us be taught by these thorns, as Gideon taught the men of Succoth, to hate sin, and to love Jesus Christ, who is here a *Lily among thorns*. If we be at any time afflicted with a *thorn in the flesh*, let it be our comfort, that our great High Priest is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. 3. Are kings attended with the acclamations of their subjects, *O king, live forever*? That also is mimicked: 'Hail king of the Jews; Prince, and people, good enough for one another.' 4. Kings' sceptres are marks of dominion, as the crown is of dignity; to resemble that, they put a reed in his right hand. Those who despise the authority of Jesus, who regard not either the precept of his Word, or the threatenings of his wrath, do, in effect, put a reed in his hand; nay, and, as these here, smite Him on the head with it, such indignity they do Him. 5. Subjects, when they swear allegiance, were wont to kiss their sovereign; and this they offered to do, but, instead of that, spit upon Him. 6. Kings used to be addressed upon the knee; and this also they brought into the jest, they bowed the knee, and worshipped Him; this they did in scorn, to make themselves and one another laugh. We were by sin become liable to everlasting shame and contempt, to deliver us from which, our Lord submitted to this shame and contempt for us. He was thus mocked, not in his own clothes, but in another's, to signify that He suffered not for his own sin; the crime was ours, the shame his. Those who pretend subjection to Christ, but at the same time give themselves up to the service of the world and the flesh, do, in effect, bow the knee to Him in mockery, and abuse Him with, *Hail, King of the Jews*, when they say, *We have no king but Caesar*. Those that bow the knee to Christ, but do not bow the soul, that draw nigh to Him with their mouths, and honor Him with their lips, but their hearts are far from Him, put the same affront upon Him that these did.

III. The soldiers, at the hour appointed, led Him away from Pilate's judgment-hall to the place of execution, (v. 20.) as a sheep to the slaughter; He was led forth with the workers of iniquity, though He did no sin. But lest his death under the load of his cross, which He was to carry, should prevent further cruelties, they compelled one Simon of Cyrene to carry his cross. He passed by, coming out of the

country or out of the fields, not thinking of any such matter. Note, We must not think it strange, if crosses come upon us suddenly. The cross was a troublesome, unwieldy load; but he that carried it a few minutes, had the honor to have his name upon record in the book of God, though otherwise an obscure person; so that, wherever this gospel is preached, there shall this be told for a memorial of Him: in like manner, though no cross, for the present, be joyous, but grievous, yet afterward it yields a crown of glory to them that are exercised thereby.

V. 22-31. I. The place where He was crucified was called *Golgotha*—the place of a skull, some think, because of the heads of malefactors that were there cut off; it was the common place of execution, for He was in all respects numbered with the transgressors. I know not how to credit it, but divers ancients mention as a current tradition, that in this place our first father Adam was buried, and think it highly congruous that there Christ should be crucified; for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. Something more credible is the tradition, that this mount Calvary was *that mountain in the land of Moriah*, (and in the land of Moriah it certainly was, for so the country about Jerusalem was called,) on which Isaac was to be offered; and the ram was offered instead of him; and then Abraham had an eye to this day of Christ, when he called the place *Jehovah-jireh*—The Lord will provide, expecting that so it would be seen in the mount of the Lord.

II. The time when He was crucified was the third hour, v. 25. He was brought before Pilate about the sixth hour, (John 19: 14.) according to the Roman way of reckoning, that is, at six o'clock in the morning; and then, at the third hour, according to the Jews' way of reckoning, that is, about nine in the morning, or soon after, they nailed Him to the cross. Dr. Lightfoot thinks the third hour is here mentioned, to intimate an aggravation of the wickedness of the priests, that they were here prosecuting Christ to death, when they ought to have been attending the service of the temple, and offering the peace-offerings; it being the first day of the feast of unleavened bread, when there was to be a holy convocation. At that very time, when they should have been presiding in the public devotions, they were venting their malice against Jesus; yet these were the men that seemed so zealous for the temple, and condemned Christ for speaking against it. Note, There are many who pretend to be for the church, who care not how seldom they go to church.

III. They added several things to the ignominy of the cross:

1. It being the custom to give wine to persons that were to be put to death, they mingled

† Matt. 27: 32.
‡ John 18: 28-33, 19: 9. (Gr.)
§ Matt. 27: 30-31. Luke 23: 11. John 19: 25.
¶ Gen. 37: 10. Matt. 27: 42, 43. Luke 23: 36, 37. John 19: 14, 15.
‡ Gen. 14: 65. John 3: 9-12. Ps. 29: 6, 7. 35: 15-17. 69: 12, 19, 20. Is. 49:

7. 50: 6, 52: 14. 53: 3-5. Mic. 5: 1. Matt. 20: 18, 19. Luke 18: 32, 33. Heb. 12: 3, 13: 12.
§ Gen. 41: 49. 49: 28. 1 Kings 19: 16. Esth. 3: 2-5. Is. 45: 28. Rom. 11: 4, 14: 10, 11. Phil. 2: 10.
b Matt. 27: 31. John 19: 16.
c Matt. 27: 32. Luke 23: 35.

d Acts 2: 10. 6: 9. 11: 20. 13: 1.
e Rom. 16: 13.
f Luke 14: 27. John 15: 18-20.
g Matt. 27: 35. Luke 23: 37. Calvary. John 19: 17.
h Matt. 27: 34. Luke 23: 36. John 19: 28-30.
i Luke 23: 36, 37. Luke 22: 18.

k Deut. 21: 23. Ps. 22: 16, 17. Is. 53: 4-8. Acts 5: 30. 2 Cor. 5: 21. Gal. 3: 13. 1 Pet. 2: 24.
l Ps. 124. Matt. 27: 35, 36. Luke 23: 34. John 19: 23, 24.
m 33. Matt. 27: 44. Luke 23: 44. John 19: 14. Acts 2: 15.

Verdes 16-23.

Pretorium. 'A name given in the gospels to the house in which the Roman governor of Jerusalem dwelt, and sat in his judicial capacity.'

(19.) 'Worshipped.' Note, Esth. 3: 2.—Adoration, in the strictest meaning of the word, was paid to many of the Roman emperors; and no doubt the soldiers mocked our Lord's claim to regal authority by the semblance of it.—(20.) And when, &c.] Before the soldiers had taken off the purple robe, and put on Jesus his own clothing, Pilate brought Him forth to the people and priests, saying, 'Behold the man.' (Note, John 19: 1-7.)

(21.) 'The condemned criminal, among the Romans, was compelled to bear his cross, or the transverse beam, and on his way was urged forward and treated with every species of wanton cruelty. Our Lord was so exhausted, that they compelled Simon to assist Him. Luke, writing to the Gentiles of Asia, who probably knew the man, calls him Simon. Mark writing to the Romans, calls him Simon the father of Rufus, who appears to have been a member of that church. See Rom. 16: 13.'

(22.) *Golgotha.* 'A small hill on a greater hill, or mount, northwest of Jerusalem; so called from its form or because criminals were executed there.'

(23.) *Wine.* &c.] This 'wine mingled with myrrh' is said to have been prepared by certain honorable women at Jerusalem, who used to

send it to such criminals as were led forth to execution.—'Christ, being about to drink off the most bitter cup of his Father's wrath against our sins, refused this solace; being so mindful of his Father's command, as to be unmindful of Himself, and only solicitous at once to expiate our sins, even to his latest breath.' Beza. (Note, Matt. 26: 29.)

(23.) 'It was customary to give the sufferer a stupefying potion; this was offered our Lord, but being ready to suffer to the utmost, He refused any thing which would have caused an unnatural suspension or oblivion.'

(25.) 'The third, &c.] Or about nine o'clock in the morning.—The rulers must have been very active to have gone through so much business, and surmounted so many difficulties, by that hour. Indeed in John's gospel, we read of 'the sixth hour;' but this is generally allowed, either to be an error of the transcribers, or to admit of another interpretation; and Christ is commonly supposed to have been nailed to the cross about nine o'clock in the forenoon. (Note, John 19: 13-18, v. 14.)—'The darkness began at the sixth hour, which yet began not, till after our Lord had hung on the cross some considerable time: till after the soldiers had divided the garments, the Jews had mocked Him, and bid Him come down from the cross; and the discourse had passed between the two thieves among themselves, and between the speaking thief and our Lord.' Whitby (Notes, Matt. 27: 45. Luke 23: 30-43.)

SCOTT.

26 And "the super-
scription of his accus-
ation was written
over, "THE KING OF
THE JEWS.

[Practical Observations.]

27 And ^p with him
they crucify two
thieves, the one on his
right hand, and the
other on his left.

28 And "the scrip-
ture was fulfilled,
which saith, And he
was numbered with
the transgressors.

29 ¶ And "they that
passed by railled on
him, wagging their
heads, and saying, "Ah,
thou that destroyest
the temple and buildest
it in three days,

30 Save thyself, and
come down from the
cross.

31 Likewise "also

Deut. 23:5. Ps. 76:10. Prov. 21:1.
Is. 10:7. 46:10.
Ps. 26. Zech. 9:9. Matt. 2:2. 27:
14. Luke 23:37. John 19:18—2.
Matt. 27:38. Luke 23:33, 39. John
19:18.
Is. 53:12. Luke 22:37. Heb. 12:2.
Ps. 97:1, 12—14. 35:15—21. 69:7.
18:26. 109:25. Lam. 1:12. 2:15.
Matt. 27:39, 40.
14:58. Gen. 37:19, 20. Matt. 26:51.
John 2:18—22.
Ps. 2:1—4. 27:16, 17. Matt. 27:41—
43. Luke 23:35—37.

his with *bitter myrrh*, He *tasted* it, but would
not drink it,—admitting the bitterness, but not
the benefit.

2. The garments of those that were cruci-
fied, being the executioner's fee, the soldiers
cast lots (p. 24.) for them: so making them-
selves merry with his misery, and sitting at
their sport while He was in pain.

3. They set a superscription over his head,
by which they intended to reproach Him, but
really did Him both justice and honor, *The
King of the Jews*, v. 26. Here was no crime
alleged, but his sovereignty owned. Perhaps
Pilate meant to cast disgrace upon Christ as a
baffled King, or upon the Jews, who by their
importunity had forced him, against his con-
science, to condemn Christ, as a people that de-
served no better a King than He seemed to be:
however, God intended it to be the proclaiming
even of Christ upon the cross, the *King of Is-
rael*; though Pilate knew not what he wrote,
any more than Caiaphas what he said, John 11:
51. Christ crucified is King of his spiritual
Israel; and even when He hung on the cross,
He was like a king, *conquering* his and his
people's enemies, and *triumphing* over them,
Col. 2:15. Now He was writing his laws in
his own blood, and preparing his favors for his
subjects. Whenever we look unto Christ cruci-
fied, we must remember the inscription over
his head, that He is a King, and give up our-
selves to be his subjects, as Israelites indeed.

4. They crucified two thieves with Him, *one
on his right hand, the other on his left*, and Him
in the midst as the worst of the three; (p. 27.)
so great a degree of dishonor did they hereby
intend Him. And no doubt, it gave Him *distur-
bance* too. Some that have been imprisoned
in the common jails, for the testimony of Je-
sus, have complained of the company of swear-
ing prisoners, more than of any other grievance
of their prison. In the midst of such our Lord
was crucified; while He lived He associated

with sinners to do them good; and when He
died, He was for the same purpose joined with
them, for He *came into the world*, and went on
of it, to *save sinners*, even the chief. But this
evangelist takes particular notice of the fulfil-
ling of the Scriptures in it, v. 28. In that fa-
mous prediction of Christ's sufferings, (Isa. 53.
12.) it was foretold that He should be numbered
with the *transgressors*, because He was made
sin for us.

5. The spectators, the generality of them, in
stead of condoling with Him, added insult.
Never was there such barbarous inhumanity to-
ward the vilest malefactor: but thus the devil
showed the utmost rage against Him, and thus
He submitted to the greatest dishonors.

(1.) Even they that *passed by*, that were no
way concerned, *railed on Him*, v. 29. If their
hearts were so hardened, that their compassions
were not moved with such a spectacle, yet they
should have thought it enough to have their cu-
riosity gratified; but, as if they were devils in
human shape, they taunted Him, with the ut-
most detestation and indignation, and shot thick
at Him their arrows, even *bitter words*. The
chief priests no doubt, put these sarcasms into
their mouths. *Thou that destroyest the temple,
and buildest it in three days, save thyself, and
come down from the cross.* They triumph as
if now, that they had got Him to the cross,
there were no danger of his *destroying the tem-
ple*; whereas the temple of which He spake He
was now *destroying*, and did within three days
build it up; and the temple of which they spake,
He did by men, that were his sword, destroy no
many years after. When secure sinners think
the danger is over, it is then most ready to seize
them: the day of the Lord comes as a thief
upon those that deny his coming, and say,
Where is the promise of it? much more upon
those that deny his coming, and say, *Let Him
make speed, and hasten his work*.

(2.) Even the chief priests, who should have

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—26. The sufferings of our Redeemer are an inex-
haustible source of instruction to the believer: a subject, of
which, in his best hours, he cannot be weary. The considera-
tion, that no one was ever so hated, or so treated by men of
every rank, or religion, (his own disciples alone excepted,) as
the only perfectly excellent person, who has appeared on earth,
leads the mind into such views of human depravity and enmity
to God, as, being applied to himself, by recollecting that such
are we all by nature, tends exceedingly to humiliation before
God; while a view of his love, in delivering up his Son to this
death, making his soul a sacrifice for the sins of daring rebels and
enemies, must cause the heart to overflow with admiration and
grateful joy. To believe that such an atonement was necessary,
in order that God might honorably pardon sinners, cannot
fail to give the mind the deepest impression of his justice and
holiness, the excellency of the law and the evil of sin; and it
must at the same time destroy all expectations of being saved
in any other way; for, 'if righteousness come by the law, then
Christ died in vain.' The contemplation of men, however
otherwise distinguished, all condemned, and exposed to ever-
lasting misery, except as Jesus thus opened the gate of life
and salvation to believers, must fill our minds with compassion
for all around us, and lead us to look upon the most prosperous
sinners, with a mixture of solemn awe and commiseration: at
the same time it directly tends to crucify us to the world; to
reconcile us to its scorn and hatred; to mortify us to its inter-
ests and pleasures; to heal the diseases of our souls, which
break forth in envy and eager competition; and to render us
contented in obscurity. (Note, Gal. 6: 11—14.) But with

what earnestness will the man, who firmly believes these
truths, seek an interest in this great salvation! With what
gratitude will he receive the assurance, or even the dawning
hope, of forgiveness and eternal life, as purchased for him by
the sufferings of the Son of God! And with what 'godly sor-
row, will he mourn over those sins, which he now looks on as
having 'crucified the Lord of glory!' Hence that attention to
this 'one thing needful,' which subordinates all other interests
and employments: hence that devoted obedience to Christ,
which neither danger nor suffering can move: hence that ab-
horrence of sin, which renders it the great burden and distress
of a believer's life, and which induces him to use every means
to weaken and destroy all evil out of his heart: hence that af-
fection to all who love and resemble Christ; that desire to re-
commend Him, and that delight of speaking or reading of Him;
and hence that love to enemies, patience under afflictions, and
that meekness under injuries, which distinguish the character
of consistent Christians from that of all other men. The same
views of Christ crucified, gradually reconcile the believer to
the thoughts of death, in order that he may behold, and praise
as he ought, that Savior, who was pierced to save him from the
wrath to come.—Frequently meditate on the scenes which have
so blessed an efficacy in producing these affections, and in
forming the character into a conformity to Jesus, and a meet-
ness for heaven: especially adopt this method, when tempted to
impatience under trials, or peevishness under contempt; or
when anxious or discontented about worldly things, or disposed
to hanker after sinful indulgences.

SCOTT.

(26.) The superscription of his accusation.' By the Romans,
the title of the crimes for which criminals were condemned, were
either carried before them, or affixed to the instrument of their pun-
ishment.' *Whitby*.

Thus Attalus the martyr was led round the amphitheatre with a
tablet before him, inscribed, "This is Attalus the Christian." The same
custom prevailed in crucifixions. Dio mentions a servant or slave who
was carried to the cross, with a writing declaring the cause of his
death.'

There were three inscriptions, or rather one, with slight variations,
in three languages, Hebrew, Greek, Latin. Matthew is supposed to
have given the Hebrew, John the Greek, and Mark the Latin. Ed.
'It was written in Latin for the majesty of the Roman em-
pire, in Greek for the information of the Hellenists who used that,
as indeed most of the Roman provinces did. Hebrew was the vulgar
language of the place.'

(28.) Transgressors.' The word more properly signifies malefac-
tors, than transgressors.'

The innocent here bore the chastisement of the guilty, and procured

their peace with God. We know why this was required. We know
how, from the time when Adam sinned, and brought his own corruption
and condemnation upon the whole race of his posterity, man became a
debtor to God's justice. He is "the King of all the earth." Shall
man rebel against his rightful Sovereign, and no punishment ensue?
Can God behold with the same eyes, righteousness and unrighteous-
ness? No. We are assured that He "cannot look upon evil." What
then remains? On one side, God offended—his will despised—his au-
thority defied. On the other side, sinful, helpless, wretched man.
What, I say, remains, but "tribulation and anguish?" What, but
"the terrors of the Lord?" "the blackness of darkness forever?"
"outer darkness where is weeping and gnashing of teeth?" Such
must have been the end, if the Son had not consented to and in the
stead of our guilty race, and said, "Lo, I am come to do my will, O
God. I am content to do it." And then could God say, "Deliver them
from going down into the pit, for I have found a ransom." He was a
sufficient Ransom, who being without sin, could atone for man's guilt.
He was our Ransom, who taking our nature upon Him, could die for
our death, suffer our penalty.'

Ep. SCHMIDT.

the chief priests, mocking, said among themselves with the scribes, 'He saved others, himself he cannot save.'

32 Let *Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him.

33 ¶ And *when the sixth hour was come, there was *darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

34 And *at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?' which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, *why hast thou forsaken me?

35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard it, said, 'Behold, *he calleth Elias.'

36 And one ran, and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, 'Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down.'

37 And *Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.

38 And *the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom.

39 And when *the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, *he said, 'Truly this man was the Son of God.'

John 11:47-52. 12:23, 24. 1 Pet. 3: 17, 18.
14:51, 52. Is. 44:5. Zeph. 3:15.
Zech. 9:9. John 1:49. 12:13. 19:

compassion on those that are out of the way, and be tender of those that are suffering and dying. (Heb. 5: 1, 2.) poured vinegar instead of oil into his wounds; they talked to the grief of Him whom God had smitten; (Ps. 69: 26.) they mocked Him and said, He healed and helped others, but now it appears that he was not by his own power, for himself He cannot save. They challenge Him to come down from the cross. Let them but see that, and they would believe; whereas they would not believe, when He gave them a more convincing sign when He came up from the grave. These chief priests, one would think, might now have found other work to do: if they would not go to their duty in the temple, they might have been employed in an office not foreign to their profession; though they would not offer any comfort to Jesus, they might have given help to the thieves in their dying moments; (the monks and priests in popish countries are very officious about criminals broken upon the wheel; a death much like that of the cross;) but they did not think that their business.

(3.) Even they that were crucified with Him, reviled Him, (v. 32.) so wretchedly was the heart of one of them hardened even in the depth of misery, and at the door of eternity.

V. 33-41. Here we have an account of Christ's dying. His enemies abused Him, God honored Him, at his death.

I. There was a thick darkness over the whole land, (some think over the whole earth,) for three hours, from noon. Now the scripture was fulfilled, (Amos 8: 9.) *I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and will darken the earth in the clear day;* and (Jer. 15: 9.) *Her sun is gone down while it is yet day.* The Jews had often demanded of Christ a sign from heaven; now they had such a one as signified the blinding of their eyes. It was a sign of darkness that was coming upon the Jewish church and nation. They were doing their utmost to extinguish the Sun of righteousness, which was now setting, and the rising again of which they would never own; and what then might be expected among them but a worse than Egyptian darkness? This intimated to them, that the things which belonged to their peace were now hid from their eyes, and that the day of the Lord was at hand, which should be to them a day of darkness and gloominess, Joel 2: 1, 2. It was the power of darkness that they were now under, the works of darkness that they were now doing; and such as this should their doom justly be, who loved darkness rather than light.

II. Towards the close of this darkness, our Lord Jesus, in the agony of his soul, cried out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* v. 34. The darkness signified the cloud which the human soul of Christ was under, when He

was making it an offering for sin. A martyr queen Mary's time, being fastened to the stake, to be burnt, put up this short prayer, *Son of God, shine upon me;* and immediately the sun shone out of a dark cloud, so full in his face, that He was forced to look another way, which was very comfortable to Him. But our Lord, on the contrary, was denied the light of the sun, when He was in his sufferings, to signify the withdrawing of the light of God's countenance. And this He complained of more than anything; He did not complain of his disciples' forsaking Him, but of his Father's, 1. Because this wounded his spirit; and that is a thing hard to bear; (Prov. 15: 14.) this brought the waters into his soul. Ps. 69: 1-3. 2. Because in this especially He was made sin for us; our iniquities had deserved indignation and wrath upon the soul, (Rom. 2: 7.) and therefore Christ, being made a Sacrifice, underwent as much of it as He was capable of; and it could not but bear hard indeed upon Him who had lain in the bosom of the Father from eternity, and was always his delight. These symptoms of divine wrath, which Christ was under in his sufferings, were like that fire from heaven which had been sent sometimes in extraordinary cases, to consume the sacrifices; (as Lev. 9: 24. 2 Chron. 7: 1. 1 Kings 18: 38.) and it was always a token of God's acceptance. The fire that should have fallen upon the sinner, if God had not been pacified, fell upon the Sacrifice, as a token that He was so; therefore it now fell upon Christ, and extorted from Him this long and bitter cry. When Paul was to be offered, as a sacrifice for the service of saints, he could joy and rejoice; (Phil. 2: 17.) but it is another thing to be offered as a sacrifice for the sin of sinners. Now, at the sixth hour, and so to the ninth, the sun was darkened by an extraordinary eclipse; and if it be true, as some astronomers compute, that in the evening of this day on which Christ died, there was an eclipse of the moon, that was natural and expected, in which seven digits of the moon were darkened, and continued from five o'clock till seven, it is remarkable, and yet further significant of the darkness of the time that then was. When the sun shall be darkened, the moon also shall not give her light. [But see note.]

III. Christ's prayer was lanted by them that stood by, (v. 35, 36.) because He cried *Eli, Eli,* or, (as Mark has it, according to the Syriac dialect,) *Eloi, Eloi,* they said, *He calls for Elias,* though they knew very well that it signified, *My God, my God.* Thus did they represent Him as praying to saints, either because He had abandoned God, or God had abandoned Him; and hereby they would make Him more odious to the people. One of them filled a sponge with vinegar, and reached it up to Him upon a reed; 'Let Him cool his mouth with that, it

(*Marg. Ref.—Note, Matt. 27: 45.*) 'The anger of God, as avenging our sins on our Surety, was attested by this horror of darkness. ... It is inquired by many, whether this is to be understood of the land of Judea, or of the whole earth. Tertullian seems to embrace the latter opinion, calling the failure of the sun the misfortune of the world, which they had recorded in the Roman archives. But I rather agree with those who understand it of Jerusalem, and all the neighboring country: for it would be more proper for the prodigy to be noted in the archives, if peculiar to Judea. ... While the sun enlightened the rest of the earth, and even at the noon-day, this one corner of the world, in which the horrible crime was perpetrating, was covered with the thickest darkness! ... This miracle may seem to have been opposed to one directly contrary; when darkness covered the Egyptians, while the sun shone on the Israelites in Goshen. At that time God intimated that destruction impended over the Egyptians, and that liberty was obtained for his people: but now on the contrary, He showed that, while miserable blindness was coming on the Jews, (with which they are punished even to the present time,) the heavenly light of the Gospel would arise on all other nations.' Beza.

SCOTT.

'The passover, at which time Christ was crucified, was at the full moon, when it is impossible for a natural eclipse of the sun to take place.'

HENRY abr.

Verses 34-39.

'Arist striving with Satan, sin, and death, all armed with the dread-
[10:]

Lam. 5:20.
e 9:11-13. Matt. 17:11-13. 27: 47-49.
f 23. Ps. 69:21. Luke 23:36. John 19:28-30.
g Matt. 27:50. Luke 23:46. John 19:30.

b Ex. 32:31-34. 40:30, 31. Lev. 16:2. &c. 2 Chr. 3:8-14. Matt. 27:51-53. Luke 23:45. Heb. 12:43-44. 19. 23-12. 10:15-13. 31.
c Matt. 8:5-10. Acts 10:1, 2. 3:1-3, 48.
k Matt. 27:45, 54. Luke 23:47, 48.

'ful curse of God; his body hanging on the cross, oppressed with exquisite tortures, his soul sinking in the depths of hell, cries out with a loud voice: and though He had received a wound from death, as being for a time deprived of life: yet by smiling both things above and things beneath, by rending the veil of the temple, and extorting a testimony in his favor from his executioners, declares to his enemies, who still remained obstinate and mocked Him, that He was speedily about to show Himself a Conqueror, and the Lord of all.' Beza.—It has been supposed, that the vigor with which Jesus cried out just before He expired, being contrary to what is generally observed in such cases, (*Note, Matt. 27: 50.*) helped to convince the centurion, that He was 'the Son of God'; but the confidence, with which He owned and dressed God as his Father, and committed his soul into his hands, seems to have had still greater influence in producing this conviction.

(35.) 'Vinegar and water was the common drink of Roman soldiers; this perhaps was set there for their use, or for the crucified, whose torture creates excessive thirst.'

DODDRIDGE.

(39.) 'This man was the Son of God.' Because the article wanting before each of the nouns, some would render the clause, 'A son of a god.' (See on Matt. 27: 40, 54.) For saying, 'I am the Son of God,' Jesus had been crucified; but the centurion says, 'Truly He was the Son of God.' In that sense, more clearly, in which Jesus had said that He was: and for saying it, He had been crucified!—His views doubtless were very indistinct on the subject; and so with those of the Jews, and even of the apostles. (*Note, Matt. 14: 33.*) SCOTT.

40 There were also women looking on afar off; among whom was ^m Mary Magdalene, and ⁿ Mary the mother of James the less, and of ^o ^p ^q ^r ^s ^t ^u ^v ^w ^x ^y ^z ^{aa} ^{ab} ^{ac} ^{ad} ^{ae} ^{af} ^{ag} ^{ah} ^{ai} ^{aj} ^{ak} ^{al} ^{am} ^{an} ^{ao} ^{ap} ^{aq} ^{ar} ^{as} ^{at} ^{au} ^{av} ^{aw} ^{ax} ^{ay} ^{az} ^{ba} ^{bb} ^{bc} ^{bd} ^{be} ^{bf} ^{bg} ^{bh} ^{bi} ^{bj} ^{bk} ^{bl} ^{bm} ^{bn} ^{bo} ^{bp} ^{bq} ^{br} ^{bs} ^{bt} ^{bu} ^{bv} ^{bw} ^{bx} ^{by} ^{bz} ^{ca} ^{cb} ^{cc} ^{cd} ^{ce} ^{cf} ^{cg} ^{ch} ^{ci} ^{cj} ^{ck} ^{cl} ^{cm} ^{cn} ^{co} ^{cp} ^{cq} ^{cr} ^{cs} ^{ct} ^{cu} ^{cv} ^{cw} ^{cx} ^{cy} ^{cz} ^{da} ^{db} ^{dc} ^{dd} ^{de} ^{df} ^{dg} ^{dh} ^{di} ^{dj} ^{dk} ^{dl} ^{dm} ^{dn} ^{do} ^{dp} ^{dq} ^{dr} ^{ds} ^{dt} ^{du} ^{dv} ^{dw} ^{dx} ^{dy} ^{dz} ^{ea} ^{eb} ^{ec} ^{ed} ^{ee} ^{ef} ^{eg} ^{eh} ^{ei} ^{ej} ^{ek} ^{el} ^{em} ^{en} ^{eo} ^{ep} ^{eq} ^{er} ^{es} ^{et} ^{eu} ^{ev} ^{ew} ^{ex} ^{ey} ^{ez} ^{fa} ^{fb} ^{fc} ^{fd} ^{fe} ^{ff} ^{fg} ^{fh} ^{fi} ^{fj} ^{fk} ^{fl} ^{fm} ^{fn} ^{fo} ^{fp} ^{fq} ^{fr} ^{fs} ^{ft} ^{fu} ^{fv} ^{fw} ^{fx} ^{fy} ^{fz} ^{ga} ^{gb} ^{gc} ^{gd} ^{ge} ^{gf} ^{gg} ^{gh} ^{gi} ^{gj} ^{gk} ^{gl} ^{gm} ^{gn} ^{go} ^{gp} ^{gq} ^{gr} ^{gs} ^{gt} ^{gu} ^{gv} ^{gw} ^{gx} ^{gy} ^{gz} ^{ha} ^{hb} ^{hc} ^{hd} ^{he} ^{hf} ^{hg} ^{hh} ^{hi} ^{hj} ^{hk} ^{hl} ^{hm} ^{hn} ^{ho} ^{hp} ^{hq} ^{hr} ^{hs} ^{ht} ^{hu} ^{hv} ^{hw} ^{hx} ^{hy} ^{hz} ^{ia} ^{ib} ^{ic} ^{id} ^{ie} ^{if} ^{ig} ^{ih} ⁱⁱ ^{ij} ^{ik} ^{il} ^{im} ⁱⁿ ^{io} ^{ip} ^{iq} ^{ir} ^{is} ^{it} ^{iu} ^{iv} ^{iw} ^{ix} ^{iy} ^{iz} ^{ja} ^{jb} ^{jc} ^{jd} ^{je} ^{jf} ^{jj} ^{jk} ^{jl} ^{jm} ^{jn} ^{jo} ^{jp} ^{jq} ^{jr} ^{js} ^{jt} ^{ju} ^{jv} ^{jw} ^{jx} ^{ky} ^{kz} ^{la} ^{lb} ^{lc} ^{ld} ^{le} ^{lf} ^{lg} ^{lh} ^{li} ^{lj} ^{lk} ^{ll} ^{lm} ^{ln} ^{lo} ^{lp} ^{lq} ^{lr} ^{ls} ^{lt} ^{lu} ^{lv} ^{lw} ^{lx} ^{ly} ^{lz} ^{ma} ^{mb} ^{mc} ^{md} ^{me} ^{mf} ^{mg} ^{mh} ^{mi} ^{mj} ^{mk} ^{ml} ^{mm} ^{mn} ^{mo} ^{mp} ^{mq} ^{mr} ^{ms} ^{mt} ^{mu} ^{mv} ^{mw} ^{mx} ^{my} ^{mz} ^{na} ^{nb} ^{nc} nd ^{ne} ^{nf} ^{ng} ^{nh} ⁿⁱ ^{nj} ^{nk} ^{nl} ^{nm} ⁿⁿ ^{no} ^{np} ^{nq} ^{nr} ^{ns} ^{nt} ^{nu} ^{nv} ^{nw} ^{nx} ^{ny} ^{nz} ^{oa} ^{ob} ^{oc} ^{od} ^{oe} ^{of} ^{og} ^{oh} ^{oi} ^{oj} ^{ok} ^{ol} ^{om} ^{on} ^{oo} ^{op} ^{oq} ^{or} ^{os} ^{ot} ^{ou} ^{ov} ^{ow} ^{ox} ^{oy} ^{oz} ^{pa} ^{pb} ^{pc} ^{pd} ^{pe} ^{pf} ^{pg} ^{ph} ^{pi} ^{pj} ^{pk} ^{pl} ^{pm} ^{pn} ^{po} ^{pp} ^{pq} ^{pr} ^{ps} ^{pt} ^{pu} ^{pv} ^{pw} ^{px} ^{py} ^{pz} ^{qa} ^{qb} ^{qc} ^{qd} ^{qe} ^{qf} ^{qg} ^{qh} ^{qi} ^{qj} ^{qk} ^{ql} ^{qm} ^{qn} ^{qo} ^{qp} ^{qq} ^{qr} ^{qs} ^{qt} ^{qu} ^{qv} ^{qw} ^{qx} ^{qy} ^{qz} ^{ra} ^{rb} ^{rc} rd ^{re} ^{rf} ^{rg} ^{rh} ^{ri} ^{rj} ^{rk} ^{rl} ^{rm} ^{rn} ^{ro} ^{rp} ^{rq} ^{rr} ^{rs} ^{rt} ^{ru} ^{rv} ^{rw} ^{rx} ^{ry} ^{rz} ^{sa} ^{sb} ^{sc} ^{sd} ^{se} ^{sf} ^{sg} ^{sh} ^{si} ^{sj} ^{sk} ^{sl} sm ^{sn} ^{so} ^{sp} ^{sq} ^{sr} ^{ss} st ^{su} ^{sv} ^{sw} ^{sx} ^{sy} ^{sz} ^{ta} ^{tb} ^{tc} ^{td} ^{te} ^{tf} ^{tg} th ^{ti} ^{tj} ^{tk} ^{tl} tm ^{tn} ^{to} ^{tp} ^{tq} ^{tr} ^{ts} ^{tt} ^{tu} ^{tv} ^{tw} ^{tx} ^{ty} ^{tz} ^{ua} ^{ub} ^{uc} ^{ud} ^{ue} ^{uf} ^{ug} ^{uh} ^{ui} ^{uj} ^{uk} ^{ul} ^{um} ^{un} ^{uo} ^{up} ^{uq} ^{ur} ^{us} ^{ut} ^{uu} ^{uv} ^{uw} ^{ux} ^{uy} ^{uz} ^{va} ^{vb} ^{vc} ^{vd} ^{ve} ^{vf} ^{vg} ^{vh} ^{vi} ^{vj} ^{vk} ^{vl} ^{vm} ^{vn} ^{vo} ^{vp} ^{vq} ^{vr} ^{vs} ^{vt} ^{vu} ^{vv} ^{vw} ^{vx} ^{vy} ^{vz} ^{wa} ^{wb} ^{wc} ^{wd} ^{we} ^{wf} ^{wg} ^{wh} ^{wi} ^{wj} ^{wk} ^{wl} ^{wm} ^{wn} ^{wo} ^{wp} ^{wq} ^{wr} ^{ws} ^{wt} ^{wu} ^{wv} ^{ww} ^{wx} ^{wy} ^{wz} ^{xa} ^{xb} ^{xc} ^{xd} ^{xe} ^{xf} ^{fg} ^{xh} ^{xi} ^{xj} ^{xk} ^{xl} ^{xm} ^{xn} ^{xo} ^{xp} ^{xq} ^{xr} ^{xs} ^{xt} ^{xu} ^{xv} ^{xw} ^{xy} ^{xz} ^{ya} ^{yb} ^{yc} ^{yd} ^{ye} ^{yf} ^{yg} ^{yh} ^{yi} ^{yj} ^{yk} ^{yl} ^{ym} ^{yn} ^{yo} ^{yp} ^{yq} ^{yr} ^{ys} ^{yt} ^{yu} ^{yv} ^{yw} ^{yx} ^{yy} ^{yz} ^{za} ^{zb} ^{zc} ^{zd} ^{ze} ^{zf} ^{zg} ^{zh} ^{zi} ^{zj} ^{zk} ^{zl} ^{zm} ^{zn} ^{zo} ^{zp} ^{zq} ^{zr} ^{zs} ^{zt} ^{zu} ^{zv} ^{zw} ^{zx} ^{zy} ^{zz}

41 (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

42 ¶ And now when the even was come, (because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath.)

43 Joseph of Arimathea, an honorable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

45 And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

47 And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of ^o ^p ^q ^r ^s ^t ^u ^v ^w ^x ^y ^z ^{aa} ^{ab} ^{ac} ^{ad} ^{ae} ^{af} ^{ag} ^{ah} ^{ai} ^{aj} ^{ak} ^{al} ^{am} ^{an} ^{ao} ^{ap} ^{aq} ^{ar} ^{as} ^{at} ^{au} ^{av} ^{aw} ^{ax} ^{ay} ^{az} ^{ba} ^{bb} ^{bc} ^{bd} ^{be} ^{bf} ^{bg} ^{bh} ^{bi} ^{bj} ^{bk} ^{bl} ^{bm} ^{bn} ^{bo} ^{bp} ^{bq} ^{br} ^{bs} ^{bt} ^{bu} ^{bv} ^{bw} ^{bx} ^{by} ^{bz} ^{ca} ^{cb} ^{cc} ^{cd} ^{ce} ^{cf} ^{cg} ^{ch} ^{ci} ^{cj} ^{ck} ^{cl} ^{cm} ^{cn} ^{co} ^{cp} ^{cq} ^{cr} ^{cs} ^{ct} ^{cu} ^{cv} ^{cw} ^{cx} ^{cy} ^{cz} ^{da} ^{db} ^{dc} ^{dd} ^{de} ^{df} ^{dg} ^{dh} ^{di} ^{dj} ^{dk} ^{dl} ^{dm} ^{dn} ^{do} ^{dp} ^{dq} ^{dr} ^{ds} ^{dt} ^{du} ^{dv} ^{dw} ^{dx} ^{dy} ^{dz} ^{ea} ^{eb} ^{ec} ^{ed} ^{ee} ^{ef} ^{eg} ^{eh} ^{ei} ^{ej} ^{ek} ^{el} ^{em} ^{en} ^{eo} ^{ep} ^{eq} ^{er} ^{es} ^{et} ^{eu} ^{ev} ^{ew} ^{ex} ^{ey} ^{ez} ^{fa} ^{fb} ^{fc} ^{fd} ^{fe} ^{ff} ^{fg} ^{fh} ^{fi} ^{fj} ^{fk} ^{fl} ^{fm} ^{fn} ^{fo} ^{fp} ^{fq} ^{fr} ^{fs} ^{ft} ^{fu} ^{fv} ^{fw} ^{fx} ^{fy} ^{fz} ^{ga} ^{gb} ^{gc} ^{gd} ^{ge} ^{gf} ^{gg} ^{gh} ^{gi} ^{gj} ^{gk} ^{gl} ^{gm} ^{gn} ^{go} ^{gp} ^{gq} ^{gr} ^{gs} ^{gt} ^{gu} ^{gv} ^{gw} ^{gx} ^{gy} ^{gz} ^{ha} ^{hb} ^{hc} ^{hd} ^{he} ^{hf} ^{hg} ^{hh} ^{hi} ^{hj} ^{hk} ^{hl} ^{hm} ^{hn} ^{ho} ^{hp} ^{hq} ^{hr} ^{hs} ^{ht} ^{hu} ^{hv} ^{hw} ^{hx} ^{hy} ^{hz} ^{ia} ^{ib} ^{ic} ^{id} ^{ie} ^{if} ^{ig} ^{ih} ⁱⁱ ^{ij} ^{ik} ^{il} ^{im} ⁱⁿ ^{io} ^{ip} ^{iq} ^{ir} ^{is} ^{it} ^{iu} ^{iv} ^{iw} ^{ix} ^{iy} ^{iz} ^{ja} ^{jb} ^{jc} ^{jd} ^{je} ^{jf} ^{jj} ^{jk} ^{jl} ^{jm} ^{jn} ^{jo} ^{jp} ^{jq} ^{jr} ^{js} ^{jt} ^{ju} ^{jv} ^{jw} ^{jx} ^{ky} ^{kz} ^{la} ^{lb} ^{lc} ^{ld} ^{le} ^{lf} ^{lg} ^{lh} ^{li} ^{lj} ^{lk} ^{ll} ^{lm} ^{ln} ^{lo} ^{lp} ^{lq} ^{lr} ^{ls} ^{lt} ^{lu} ^{lv} ^{lw} ^{lx} ^{ly} ^{lz} ^{ma} ^{mb} ^{mc} ^{md} ^{me} ^{mf} ^{mg} ^{mh} ^{mi} ^{mj} ^{mk} ^{ml} ^{mm} ^{mn} ^{mo} ^{mp} ^{mq} ^{mr} ^{ms} ^{mt} ^{mu} ^{mv} ^{mw} ^{mx} ^{my} ^{mz} ^{na} ^{nb} ^{nc} nd ^{ne} ^{nf} ^{ng} ^{nh} ⁿⁱ ^{nj} ^{nk} ^{nl} ^{nm} ⁿⁿ ^{no} ^{np} ^{nq} ^{nr} ^{ns} ^{nt} ^{nu} ^{nv} ^{nw} ^{nx} ^{ny} ^{nz} ^{oa} ^{ob} ^{oc} ^{od} ^{oe} ^{of} ^{og} ^{oh} ^{oi} ^{oj} ^{ok} ^{ol} ^{om} ^{on} ^{oo} ^{op} ^{oq} ^{or} ^{os} ^{ot} ^{ou} ^{ov} ^{ow} ^{ox} ^{oy} ^{oz} ^{pa} ^{pb} ^{pc} ^{pd} ^{pe} ^{pf} ^{pg} ^{ph} ^{pi} ^{pj} ^{pk} ^{pl} ^{pm} ^{pn} ^{po} ^{pp} ^{pq} ^{pr} ^{ps} ^{pt} ^{pu} ^{pv} ^{pw} ^{px} ^{py} ^{pz} ^{qa} ^{qb} ^{qc} ^{qd} ^{qe} ^{qf} ^{qg} ^{qh} ^{qi} ^{qj} ^{qk} ^{ql} ^{qm} ^{qn} ^{qo} ^{qp} ^{qq} ^{qr} ^{qs} ^{qt} ^{qu} ^{qv} ^{qw} ^{qx} ^{qy} ^{qz} ^{ra} ^{rb} ^{rc} rd ^{re} ^{rf} ^{rg} ^{rh} ^{ri} ^{rj} ^{rk} ^{rl} ^{rm} ^{rn} ^{ro} ^{rp} ^{rq} ^{rr} ^{rs} ^{rt} ^{ru} ^{rv} ^{rw} ^{rx} ^{ry} ^{rz} ^{sa} ^{sb} ^{sc} ^{sd} ^{se} ^{sf} ^{sg} ^{sh} ^{si} ^{sj} ^{sk} ^{sl} sm ^{sn} ^{so} ^{sp} ^{sq} ^{sr} ^{ss} st ^{su} ^{sv} ^{sw} ^{sx} ^{sy} ^{sz} ^{ta} ^{tb} ^{tc} ^{td} ^{te} ^{tf} ^{tg} th ^{ti} ^{tj} ^{tk} ^{tl} tm ^{tn} ^{to} ^{tp} ^{tq} ^{tr} ^{ts} ^{tt} ^{tu} ^{tv} ^{tw} ^{tx} ^{ty} ^{tz} ^{ua} ^{ub} ^{uc} ^{ud} ^{ue} ^{uf} ^{ug} ^{uh} ^{ui} ^{uj} ^{uk} ^{ul} ^{um} ^{un} ^{uo} ^{up} ^{uq} ^{ur} ^{us} ^{ut} ^{uu} ^{uv} ^{uw} ^{ux} ^{uy} ^{uz} ^{va} ^{vb} ^{vc} ^{vd} ^{ve} ^{vf} ^{vg} ^{vh} ^{vi} ^{vj} ^{vk} ^{vl} ^{vm} ^{vn} ^{vo} ^{vp} ^{vq} ^{vr} ^{vs} ^{vt} ^{vu} ^{vv} ^{vw} ^{vx} ^{wy} ^{wz} ^{xa} ^{xb} ^{xc} ^{xd} ^{xe} ^{xf} ^{fg} ^{xh} ^{xi} ^{xj} ^{xk} ^{xl} ^{xm} ^{xn} ^{xo} ^{xp} ^{xq} ^{xr} ^{xs} ^{xt} ^{xu} ^{xv} ^{xw} ^{xy} ^{xz} ^{ya} ^{yb} ^{yc} ^{yd} ^{ye} ^{yf} ^{yg} ^{yh} ^{yi} ^{yj} ^{yk} ^{yl} ^{ym} ^{yn} ^{yo} ^{yp} ^{yq} ^{yr} ^{ys} ^{yt} ^{yu} ^{yv} ^{yw} ^{yx} ^{yy} ^{yz} ^{za} ^{zb} ^{zc} ^{zd} ^{ze} ^{zf} ^{zg} ^{zh} ^{zi} ^{zj} ^{zk} ^{zl} ^{zm} ^{zn} ^{zo} ^{zp} ^{zq} ^{zr} ^{zs} ^{zt} ^{zu} ^{zv} ^{zw} ^{zx} ^{zy} ^{zz}

48 And Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of ^o ^p ^q ^r ^s ^t ^u ^v ^w ^x ^y ^z ^{aa} ^{ab} ^{ac} ^{ad} ^{ae} ^{af} ^{ag} ^{ah} ^{ai} ^{aj} ^{ak} ^{al} ^{am} ^{an} ^{ao} ^{ap} ^{aq} ^{ar} ^{as} ^{at} ^{au} ^{av} ^{aw} ^{ax} ^{ay} ^{az} ^{ba} ^{bb} ^{bc} ^{bd} ^{be} ^{bf} ^{bg} ^{bh} ^{bi} ^{bj} ^{bk} ^{bl} ^{bm} ^{bn} ^{bo} ^{bp} ^{bq} ^{br} ^{bs} ^{bt} ^{bu} ^{bv} ^{bw} ^{bx} ^{by} ^{bz} ^{ca} ^{cb} ^{cc} ^{cd} ^{ce} ^{cf} ^{cg} ^{ch} ^{ci} ^{cj} ^{ck} ^{cl} ^{cm} ^{cn} ^{co} ^{cp} ^{cq} ^{cr} ^{cs} ^{ct} ^{cu} ^{cv} ^{cw} ^{cx} ^{cy} ^{cz} ^{da} ^{db} ^{dc} ^{dd} ^{de} ^{df} ^{dg} ^{dh} ^{di} ^{dj} ^{dk} ^{dl} ^{dm} ^{dn} ^{do} ^{dp} ^{dq} ^{dr} ^{ds} ^{dt} ^{du} ^{dv} ^{dw} ^{dx} ^{dy} ^{dz} ^{ea} ^{eb} ^{ec} ^{ed} ^{ee} ^{ef} ^{eg} ^{eh} ^{ei} ^{ej} ^{ek} ^{el} ^{em} ^{en} ^{eo} ^{ep} ^{eq} ^{er} ^{es} ^{et} ^{eu} ^{ev} ^{ew} ^{ex} ^{ey} ^{ez} ^{fa} ^{fb} ^{fc} ^{fd} ^{fe} ^{ff} ^{fg} ^{fh} ^{fi} ^{fj} ^{fk} ^{fl} ^{fm} ^{fn} ^{fo} ^{fp} ^{fq} ^{fr} ^{fs} ^{ft} ^{fu} ^{fv} ^{fw} ^{fx} ^{fy} ^{fz} ^{ga} ^{gb} ^{gc} ^{gd} ^{ge} ^{gf} ^{gg} ^{gh} ^{gi} ^{gj} ^{gk} ^{gl} ^{gm} ^{gn} ^{go} ^{gp} ^{gq} ^{gr} ^{gs} ^{gt} ^{gu} ^{gv} ^{gw} ^{gx} ^{gy} ^{gz} ^{ha} ^{hb} ^{hc} ^{hd} ^{he} ^{hf} ^{hg} ^{hh} ^{hi} ^{hj} ^{hk} ^{hl} ^{hm} ^{hn} ^{ho} ^{hp} ^{hq} ^{hr} ^{hs} ^{ht} ^{hu} ^{hv} ^{hw} ^{hx} ^{hy} ^{hz} ^{ia} ^{ib} ^{ic} ^{id} ^{ie} ^{if} ^{ig} ^{ih} ⁱⁱ ^{ij} ^{ik} ^{il} ^{im} ⁱⁿ ^{io} ^{ip} ^{iq} ^{ir} ^{is} ^{it} ^{iu} ^{iv} ^{iw} ^{ix} ^{iy} ^{iz} ^{ja} ^{jb} ^{jc} ^{jd} ^{je} ^{jf} ^{jj} ^{jk} ^{jl} ^{jm} ^{jn} ^{jo} ^{jp} ^{jq} ^{jr} ^{js} ^{jt} ^{ju} ^{jv} ^{jw} ^{jx} ^{ky} ^{kz} ^{la} ^{lb} ^{lc} ^{ld} ^{le} ^{lf} ^{lg} ^{lh} ^{li} ^{lj} ^{lk} ^{ll} ^{lm} ^{ln} ^{lo} ^{lp} ^{lq} ^{lr} ^{ls} ^{lt} ^{lu} ^{lv} ^{lw} ^{lx} ^{ly} ^{lz} ^{ma} ^{mb} ^{mc} ^{md} ^{me} ^{mf} ^{mg} ^{mh} ^{mi} ^{mj} ^{mk} ^{ml} ^{mm} ^{mn} ^{mo} ^{mp} ^{mq} ^{mr} ^{ms} ^{mt} ^{mu} ^{mv} ^{mw} ^{mx} ^{my} ^{mz} ^{na} ^{nb} ^{nc} nd ^{ne} ^{nf} ^{ng} ^{nh} ⁿⁱ ^{nj} ^{nk} ^{nl} ^{nm} ⁿⁿ ^{no} ^{np} ^{nq} ^{nr} ^{ns} ^{nt} ^{nu} ^{nv} ^{nw} ^{nx} ^{ny} ^{nz} ^{oa} ^{ob} ^{oc} ^{od} ^{oe} ^{of} ^{og} ^{oh} ^{oi} ^{oj} ^{ok} ^{ol} ^{om} ^{on} ^{oo} ^{op} ^{oq} ^{or} ^{os} ^{ot} ^{ou} ^{ov} ^{ow} ^{ox} ^{oy} ^{oz} ^{pa} ^{pb} ^{pc} ^{pd} ^{pe} ^{pf}

CH. P. X. I.

An angel appears to the women that Jesus is risen, 1-8. He appears to Mary Magdalene, 9-11; to two disciples going into the country, 12, 13; and to the eleven, whom He appoints for their unbelief, and commissions to preach the gospel to all the world, 14-18. He ascends into heaven, 19. The gospel is every where preached, and confirmed by miracles, 20.

AND when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him.

2 And very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

3 And they said among themselves, 'Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?'

4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

1542. Matt. 28:1. Luke 23:54, 55. 24:1. John 19:39, 40. 20:1.
1540-47. Luke 24:10. John 19:25, 41:3-8. 2 Chr. 16:14. John 19:40.
4 Matt. 28:1. Luke 24:1. John 20:1.
1546-47. Matt. 27:60-66.
Mat. 28:2-4. Luke 24:2. John 20:1.

how to regard it; and the hearts of the priests were so influenced that they did not oppose it. We care not for his being adorned, provided He be not revived.

Joseph bought fine linen to wrap the body. In paying respects to Christ, it becomes us to be generous, and to serve Him with the best that can be got, not with that which can be got best.

He took down the body, mangled and macerated, and wrapped it in the linen. Our Lord hath commanded Himself to be delivered to us sacramentally in the ordinance of the supper, which we should receive in such a manner as may best express our love to Him, who loved us and died for us.

He laid it in a sepulchre of his own, in a private place. We sometimes find it spoken of, in the story of the kings of Judah, as a slur upon the memory of wicked kings, that they were not buried in the sepulchres of the kings; our Lord, though He did no evil, but much good, and to Him was given the throne of his father David, yet was buried in the graves of the common people, for it was not in this world, but in the other, that his rest was glorious. This sepulchre belonged to Joseph; Abraham, when he had no other possession in the land of Canaan, yet had a burying-place, but Christ had

wanted for the kingdom of God, whose faith will condemn the unbelief of the rest. This man God raised up for this necessary service, when none of Christ's disciples could, or durst undertake it, having neither purse, nor interest, nor courage. Joseph went in boldly to Pilate; though he knew how much it would affront the chief priests, who had loaded Him with so much reproach, to see any honor done Him, yet he put on courage; perhaps at first he was a little afraid, but he determined to shew this respect to Jesus, lest the worst come to the worst.

It was a surprise to Pilate to hear that he was dead. Perhaps he expected that He would save himself, and come down from the cross. But He was already dead, though He seemed to have more than ordinary vigor. Every circumstance of Christ's dying was marvellous; from first to last his name was called *Wonderful*. Pilate doubted (so some understand it) whether He were yet dead or no, fearing lest he should be imposed upon, and the body taken down alive, and recovered, whereas the sentence was, as with us, to hang till the body be dead. He therefore called the centurion, his own officer, and asked him whether He had been any while dead, (v. 44.) whether it was so long since they perceived any sign of life in Him, that they might conclude He was past recall. The centurion could assure him of this, for he had particularly observed how He gave up the ghost, v. 39. There was a special providence in it, that Pilate should be so strict in this, that there might be no pretence to say that He was buried alive, and so to take away the truth of his resurrection; and so fully was this determined, that that objection was never started. Thus the truth of Christ gains confirmation, sometimes, even from his enemies.

Pilate gave Joseph leave to take down the body, and do what he pleased with it. It was a wonder the chief priests were not too quick for him, and had not first begged the body of Pilate, to drag it about the streets; but that remainder of their wrath did God restrain, and gave that invaluable prize to Joseph, who knew

not so much as that. This sepulchre was hewn out of a rock, for Christ died to make the grave a refuge and shelter to the saints, and being hewn out of a rock, it is a strong refuge. Oh that thou wouldest hide me in the grave! Christ Himself is a hiding place to his people, that is, as the shadow of a great rock.

He rolled a stone to the door of the sepulchre, for so the manner of the Jews was to bury. When Daniel was put into the lions' den, a stone was laid to the mouth of it to keep him in, as here to the door of Christ's sepulchre, but neither of them could keep off the angels' visits to the prisoners.

Some of the women attended, and beheld where He was laid, that they might come after the sabbath to anoint the body, because they had not time to do it now. When Moses, the mediator and lawgiver of the Jewish church, was buried, care was taken that no man should know of his sepulchre, (Deut. 34: 6.) because the respects of the people towards his person were to die with him; but when our great Mediator and Lawgiver was buried, special notice was taken of his sepulchre, because He was to rise again; and the care taken of his body speaks the care which He himself will take concerning his body, the church; even when it seems to be dead, and as a valley full of dry bones, it shall be preserved in order to a resurrection; as shall also the dead bodies of the saints, with whose dust there was a covenant in force which shall not be forgotten. Our meditations on Christ's burial should lead us to think of our own, and should help to make the grave familiar to us, and so to make that bed easy, which we must shortly make in the darkness. Frequent thoughts of it would not only take off the dread and terror of it, but quicken us, since the graves are always ready for us, to get ready for the graves, Job 17: 1.

CHAP. XVI. v. 1-8. Never was there such a sabbath since the Sabbath was first instituted as this; during all this sabbath our Lord Jesus lay in the grave. It was to Him a sabbath of rest, but a silent sabbath; it was to his disciples a melancholy sabbath, spent in tears and fears. Never were the sabbath-services in the temple such an abomination to God, though they had been often so, as they were now, when the chief priests, who presided in them, had their hands full of the blood of Christ. Now this sabbath is over, and the first day of the week is the first day of a new world.

The women that had attended Christ, now came to his sepulchre; not superstitious, but pious. They set out very early in the morning; but either they had a long walk, or they met with some hindrance, so that it was sun-rising by the time they got to the sepulchre. They had bought sweet spices, and came not only to bedew the dead body with their tears, but to perfume

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 27-47. Careful meditation on the silence and meekness of Jesus, amidst his sufferings, and the varied contempt and cruelty of his enemies, must cause us to exclaim, 'Did Jesus thus suffer, and shall I, a wretched sinner repine? shall I indulge resentment, or utter reproaches and menaces, because of injuries?' With this object before us, we cannot think it too much to pour out tears for those sins, for which the Son of God shed his blood; or to pour out our prayers for those blessings, for which He poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with malefactors; or to bear hardships for Him who bore the wrath of God for us. All we can suffer must be light, compared with his unknown agonies; yet how often are we weary and faint in our minds; instead of being thankful, that we are not in the pit of destruction, as we justly might have been! Did we more constantly contemplate these scenes, we should not only derive peace and comfort from the Savior's atoning blood; but we should also transcribe his character into our lives, and learn more and more to dread and hate all those evil dispositions, which marked the conduct of his persecutors:

and we should always find motives to live to the glory of Him who died for us and rose again.' We also ought to remember, that the hiding of God's face from us is in itself more dreadful than all that man can do unto us; that we may learn to cry to Him for help and comfort, when contemned by men. He will not forsake those who trust Him: death, now deprived of his sting, will soon terminate the believer's sorrows, as it did the Savior's; then the way into the holiest will be open to his soul, as it was before to his prayers, and He will be out of the reach of all enemies. His dying words and behavior may leave a salutary impression on the minds of those who observe them; his memory may perhaps be honored by those, who despised him when living; the grave will be a quiet and sacred repository to his body, till the joyful resurrection; and thus he will be made more than 'conqueror, through Him who loved him,' and 'washed him from his sins in his own blood.'—Lord, visit our souls with this salvation, and make us thankful for these inestimable gifts! (P. O. Matt. 27: 45-56.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. v. 1-4. Anoint Him.] 'Rather, to embalm Him. This is a proof that the disciples had not properly understood what Christ had so frequently spoken, viz. that He would rise again the [396]

third day. And this inattention or unbelief of theirs, is a proof of the truth of the resurrection.'

(2) Very early.] 'They began their journey to the sepulchre, while it was only twilight, and they came to the sepulchre, as the sun began to rise.' Whitby. (Notes, John 20: 1-10, 13.) SCOTT.

5 And ^{entering} into the sepulchre, they saw ^a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; ^{and} they were affrighted.

6 And he saith unto them, ^{Be} not affrighted: ^I ye seek ^{the} Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: ^{he} is risen, he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

7 But go your way, ^{tell} his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee: ^{there} shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

8 And ^{they} went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre, ^{for} they trembled and were amazed: ^{neither} said they any thing to any man: for they were afraid.

9 Now when Jesus was risen early, ^{the} first day of the week, ^{he} appeared first to Mary Magdalene, ^{out}

g Luke 24:9, John 20:8.
 Dan. 10:5,6. Matt. 28:3 Luke 24:4,5. John 20:11,12.
 i 6:49,60. Dan. 8:17. 10:7-9,12. Luke 1:12,23,30.
 k Matt. 14:26,27. 28:4,5. Rev. 1:17,18.
 l Ps. 105:3,4. Prov. 8:17.
 m John 19:20,20. Act. 2:22,23. 4:10. 10:38-40.
 n 9:9,10. 10:24. Matt. 12:40 28:6,7. Luke 24:4-8,20-27,46. John 21:1-19.
 o 2 Cor. 15:7-7.
 p 14:50,56-72. Matt. 28:7, 2 Cor. 2:17.
 q 28:7. Matt. 28:32. 28:10,16,17.
 r John 21:1. Act. 13:31. 1 Cor. 15:5,5.
 s Matt. 28:8. Luke 24:9-11,22-24.
 t 5:8. Luke 24:37.
 u 2 Kings 4:29. Luke 10:4.
 v John 20:19. Act. 20:7. 1 Cor. 16:2. Rev. 1:10.
 w 15:40,47. Luke 24:10. John 20:14-17.
 x Luke 9:2.

ners, so they do also in the consolation of saints. Be not affrighted, for 'Ye are faithful lovers of Jesus Christ, and therefore, instead of being confounded, ought to be comforted. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified.' Note, The inquiries of believing souls after Christ have a particular regard to Him as crucified, (1 Cor. 2: 2) that they may know Him, and the fellowship of his sufferings. His being lifted up from the earth, is that which draws all men unto Him. Christ's cross is the ensign to which the Gentiles seek. Observe, He speaks of Jesus as one that *was crucified*; 'that scene is over, ye must not dwell so much upon the sad circumstances of his crucifixion, as not to believe the joyful news of his resurrection. He was

it with their spices. Nicodemus had bought dry spices, myrrh, and aloes, to dry the wounds. John 19: 39. But these women did not think that enough; they bought spices, perhaps of another kind, some perfumed to anoint Him. Note, The respect which others have showed to Christ's name, should not hinder us from showing our respect to it.

They said among themselves, as they drew near the sepulchre, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? For it was very great, more than they with their united strength could move. They should have thought of this before they came out, and then discretion would have bidden them not go, unless they had those to go with them, who could do it. And there was another difficulty, much greater than this, to be got over, which they knew nothing of, to wit, a guard of soldiers set to keep the sepulchre; who, had they come before they were frightened away, would have frightened them away. But their love to Christ carried them to the sepulchre: and by the time they came thither, both these difficulties were removed. the stone and the guard. They saw that the stone was rolled away, which amazed them. Note, They who are carried by a holy zeal to seek Christ, will find difficulties strangely vanish, and themselves helped over them beyond their expectation. Assurance was given them by an angel, that Jesus was risen, had taken leave of his sepulchre, and had left him there to tell those who came thither to inquire after Him.

They entered into the sepulchre, a little way, and saw that the body of Jesus was not where they left it. He who by his death undertook to pay our debt, in his resurrection took out our acquittance; for it was his discharge out of prison, by which it appeared that his satisfaction was accepted, and the matter in dispute determined, by an incontestible evidence that He was the Son of God.

They saw a young man sitting on the right side of the sepulchre. The angel appeared in the likeness of a young man; for angels, though created in the beginning, grow not old, but are always in the same perfection of beauty and strength; and so shall glorified saints be, when they are as the angels. This angel was sitting on the right hand as they went into the sepulchre, clothed with a long white garment, down to the feet, such as great men were arrayed with. The sight of him might justly have encouraged them, but they were affrighted. Thus many times that which should be matter of comfort to us, through our own misapprehensions proves a terror to us.

He silenced their fears by assuring them that there was cause for triumph, none for trembling; (v. 6.) He saith to them, Be not affrighted. Note, As angels rejoice in the conversion of sinners,

crucified in weakness, yet raised in power, and therefore yet that seek Him, he not afraid of missing Him.' He was crucified, but He is glorified; and the shame of his sufferings is so far from lessening the glory of his exaltation, that that glory perfectly wipes away the reproach of his sufferings. And therefore after his entrance upon his glory, He never drew any veil over his sufferings. The angel here, that proclaims his resurrection, calls Him Jesus that was crucified. He himself owns, (Rev. 1: 18.) I am He that liveth, and was dead; and He appears in the midst of the praises of the heavenly hosts, as a Lamb that had been slain, Rev. 5: 6. 'It will therefore be good news to you, to hear that, instead of anointing Him dead, you may rejoice in Him living. He is risen, He is not here, not dead, but alive again; we cannot as yet show you Him, hereafter you will see Him; but you may here see the place where they laid Him, and you see He has hence, not stolen either by his enemies or by his friends, but risen.'

He orders them to give speedy notice of this to his disciples. Thus they were made the apostles of the apostles, which was a recompense of their affection and fidelity, attending Him on the cross, to the grave, and in the grave. They first came, and were first served; no other of the disciples durst come near his sepulchre, or inquire after Him; so little danger was there of their coming by night to steal Him away, that none came near Him but a few women, who were not able so much as to roll away the stone.

They must tell the disciples, that He is risen. It is a dismal time with them, their Master is dead, and their hopes and joys buried in his grave; they look upon their cause as sunk, and themselves ready to fall an easy prey into the hands of their enemies, so that there remains no more spirit in them. 'Go quickly to them, saith the angel, tell them that their Master is risen; this will put some life and spirits into them, and keep them from sinking into despair. Note, [1.] Christ is not ashamed to own his poor disciples, now that He is in his exalted state; his preference doth not make Him shy of them, for He took early care to have it notified to them. [2.] Christ is not extreme to mark what they do amiss, whose hearts are upright with Him. The disciples had very unkindly deserted Him, and yet He testified this concern for them. [3.] Seasonable comforts shall be sent to those that are lamenting after the Lord Jesus, and He will find a time to manifest Himself to them.

(2.) They must be sure to tell Peter. This is particularly taken notice of by this evangelist, who is supposed to have written by Peter's direction. If it were told the disciples, it would be told Peter, for, as a token of his repentance, he still associated with his disciples; yet he is particularly named; Tell Peter, for, [1.] It will be news more welcome to him than to any of them; for he is in sorrow for sin, and no tidings can be more welcome to penitents than the resurrection of Christ, because He arose for their justification. [2.] He will be afraid, lest the joy of this good news do not belong to him. Had the angel said only, Go tell his dis-

Verses 5-8.

(Notes, Luke 24: 1-12.) St. Luke mentions two angels, whom the women saw on this occasion, but Matthew and Mark take notice only of the one who spake to them, and whom they probably saw first.—The angel appeared like a man, in the vigor of youth, and clothed in a long white garment, the emblem of purity and innocence: but his appearance to the soldiers seems to have been far more majestic and awful; yet the women were affrighted, being aware that he was more than man.

(3.) This appears to have been a different angel, from that mentioned by Matthew. The latter sat in the porch of the tomb, and had assumed a terrible appearance to overawe the guard, (Matt. 28: 1.) but this appeared as a young man within the sepulchre, in the inner apartment. The two angels spoken of by John (chap. 20: 11.) appeared some time after these; but whether they were the same or different cannot be ascertained; neither can it be affirmed, that the angels which manifested themselves to the second party of women, recorded by Luke, were the same or different.

In the subsequent conduct of the women, their amazement and terror are noticed, and not their joy. The former first seized them; but the latter afterwards prevailed. The clause however may be rendered, 'for terror and ecstasy possessed them;' and the ecstasy may signify, the

mingled affections of astonishment and joy, in the greatest excess. (Marg. Ref.—Note, Matt. 28: 1-8.)

(7.) Tell his disciples and Peter.] 'And was not Peter a disciple? Perhaps he scarcely dared consider himself as such, after his sad apostasy. He had denied all knowledge of his Lord: and would his Lord acknowledge him? Yes! He is "touched with our infirmities." He has pardoned the weakness of his repentant servant: He has still a commission to intrust him with, and will enable him to show, by a life of faithfulness, that the grace bestowed on him had not been bestowed in vain.'

Verses 9-11.

(Marg. Ref.—Note, John 20: 11-17.) It is here said, that Jesus had cast out of Mary Magdalene 'seven devils.' (Luke 8: 2.) This no doubt, refers to a real possession, from which she had mercifully been delivered, in the same manner as the man who had the legion; but whether this had been a visitation appointed her, for the sins of her former life, or not, is quite uncertain. (Note, 5: 2-13.) Indeed all that is generally taken for granted, of her previous bad character and profligate conduct, rests merely on the credit of tradition, which reports that she was 'the woman who was a sinner,' of whom St. Luke speaks (Notes, Luke 7: 36-50.) for there is no scriptural proof of it, though very much has frequently been built on it. Her surname of *Mary*

of whom he had cast seven devils.

10 And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept.

11 And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

[Practical Observations.]

12 ¶ After that, he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

13 And they went and told it unto the residue: neither believed they them.

14 ¶ Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

y 14:72. Matt. 9:15. 25:75. Luke 24:17. John 16:21-22.
z 13:14. 9:19. Ex. 6:3. Job 9:16. Luke 24:11, 22-35.
a Luke 24:13-32.
b Luke 24:33-35.
c Luke 16:31. John 20:9, 25.
d Luke 2:38-43. John 20:19, 20.
e Or, together.
f 7:18. 8:17, 15. Matt. 11:20. 15:16. 17: 16:8-11. 17:20. Luke 24:25, 28, 39. John 20:27. Rev. 3:19.
g Rom. 14:11. Ps. 95:9-11. Heb. 3:7, 15-18.

V. 9-13. We have here, a short account of two of Christ's appearances, and the little credit which the report of them gained with the disciples.

I He appeared to Mary Magdalene first, in the garden, of which we have a particular narrative, John 20: 14. It was she out of whom He had cast seven devils; much was forgiven her, and done for her, and she loved much; and this honor Christ did her, that she was the first that saw Him after his resurrection. The closer we cleave to Christ, the sooner we may expect to see Him, and the more to see of Him. She brings notice of what she had seen, not only to the eleven, but to the rest that followed Him, as they mourned and wept, v. 16. Now was the time of which Christ had told them,

ciples, poor Peter would have been ready to sigh, and say, 'But I doubt I cannot look upon myself as one of them, for I disowned Him, and deserve to be disowned by Him;' to obviate that, 'Go to Peter by name, and tell him, he shall be as welcome as any of the rest to see Him in Galilee.' Note, A sight of Christ will be very welcome to a true penitent, and a true penitent shall be very welcome to a sight of Christ, for there is joy in heaven concerning him.

(3.) They must appoint them all, and Peter by name, to meet in Galilee, as He said unto you, Matt. 26: 32. In their journey down to Galilee they would have time to recollect themselves, and call to mind what He has often said to them there, that He should suffer and die and the third day be raised again; whereas, while they were at Jerusalem among strangers and enemies, they could not recover themselves from the fright they had been in, nor compose themselves to better tidings. Note, [1.] All the meetings between Christ and his disciples are of his own appointing. [2.] Christ never forgets his appointment, but will be sure to meet his people with the promised blessing in every place where He records his name. [3.] In all meetings between Christ and his disciples, He is the most forward. He goes before you.

The women went out quickly, and ran from the sepulchre, with all haste to the disciples, trembling, and amazed. We are enemies to our own comfort, in not considering and mixing faith with what Christ hath said to us; Christ had often told them, that the third day He would rise again; had they given that its due credit, they would have come to the sepulchre, expecting to have found Him risen, and would have received the news of it with a joyful assurance, and not with terror and amazement. But, being ordered to tell the disciples, because they were to tell it to all the world, they would not tell it to any one else, they showed not any thing of it to any man that they met by the way, for they were afraid it was too good to be true. Note, Our fears often hinder us from that service to Christ, and the souls of men, which, if faith and the joy of faith were strong, we might do.

that they should mourn and lament, John 16: 20. It was an evidence of their love to Christ, and the deep sense they had of their loss. But when their weeping had endured a night or two, comfort returned, as Christ had promised them; I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice. Better news cannot be brought to disciples in tears, than to tell them of Christ's resurrection. We should study to be comforters to disciples that are mourners, by communicating to them our experiences, and what we have seen of Christ.

They could not credit the report she brought them. They heard that He was alive, and had been seen of her. The story was plausible, yet they believed not. They would not say that she made the story, or designed to deceive them; but they fear that she is imposed upon, and that it was but a fancy that she saw Him. Had they believed the frequent predictions of it from his own mouth, they would not have been now so incredulous.

II. He appeared to two of his disciples, as they went into the country, v. 12. This refers, no doubt, to that which is largely related, (Luke 24: 13.) of the two disciples going to Emmaus. He is here said to have appeared to them in another form, in another dress than what He usually wore, in the form of a traveller, as, in the garden, in such a dress, that Mary Magdalene took Him for the gardener; but that He had really his own countenance, appears by this, that their eyes were holden, that they should not know Him; and when that restraint on their eyes was taken off, immediately they knew Him, Luke 24: 16, 31.

These two witnesses gave in their testimony to Christ's resurrection; They went and told it to the residue, v. 13. Being satisfied themselves, they were desirous to give their brethren the satisfaction they had, that they might be comforted as they were.

This did not gain credit with all; Neither believed they them. They suspected that their eyes also deceived them. There was a wise providence in it, that the proofs of Christ's resurrection were given in gradually, and admitted cautiously, that the assurance with which the apostles preached this doctrine afterward, might be the more satisfying. We have the more reason to believe those who did themselves believe slowly: had they swallowed it presently, they might have been thought credulous, and their testimony the less to be regarded; but their disbelieving at first, shows that they did not believe it afterward but upon a full conviction.

V. 14-18. Here is, I. The conviction which Christ gave his apostles of his resurrection; (v. 14.) He ap-

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V. 1-11. When we deny ourselves, and incur trouble and expense, from love to Christ and zeal for his glory, we shall be accepted, even though unsuccessful.—Those whose hearts are right before God, may yet be greatly mistaken in their judgment, and they will be often disquieted, when they have abundant reason to rejoice. Indeed, those who believe, and seek Jesus who was crucified, and is risen, should not in any possible circumstances give way to disconsolate sorrow or gloomy fears. Evil men and apostate angels cannot hurt them: holy angels are their faithful friends, and delight to minister to their comfort, because they are the objects of the Lord's peculiar love and favor. Even after they have been overcome by temptation, and have acted inconsistently, yea, basely; yet when

they are deeply penitent, the gracious Savior will mingle encouragement with their humiliation, lest they should be swallowed up of over-much sorrow; and a trembling Peter shall be especially mentioned, that he may not be tempted to despond. How slowly we admit the consolations, which the Word of God holds forth to us! how difficult to believe that the Lord will especially favor those, over whom Satan has heretofore domineered! Yet He sometimes employs such trophies of his victory over the powers of darkness, to bear tidings of his abundant grace to those who mourn and weep, that the very example of the messenger may evince the truth of the message, and prove that Jesus lives, and is able to save to the uttermost all them that come to God through Him. Scott.

lene, seems to relate to the place of her nativity, or abode: for the words translated Mary Magdalene, or 'Mary the Magdalene,' may very properly be rendered 'Mary of Magdala,' as 'Jesus the Nazarene' is commonly rendered 'Jesus of Nazareth.' Scott.

Verses 12, 13.

(Notes, Luke 24: 13-35.) Our Lord was pleased to change his habit on appearance on this occasion, that the disciples might not for a time know who He was.—[13.] Neither believed, &c.] That is, several of the disciples did not fully credit them; though others had been before convinced of Christ's resurrection. But in so extraordinary an event, and among a number of persons, we need not wonder, that some were more deeply impressed by what they heard than others. Hence one of the ancients says well, "their doubting is the confirmation of our faith: and the more difficulty they showed in believing Christ's resurrection, the greater reason have we to believe it." For the testimony of them, who believed not themselves, till after unquestionable conviction; is the more credible on that account. Whithy. Scott.

Verses 14-16.

(Notes, Matt. 28: 18. Luke 24: 36-49. John 20: 19-29. 21: 1-23.) If we understand this of our Lord's appearing to the apostles, on the evening of the day on which He arose, Thomas was not present; but they might be called the eleven, that being the whole remaining number, though one of them was absent; or some other appearance of our Lord to them might be intended.—Baptism is the outward sign of regeneration, and it is also that profession of faith in Christ which is required of all who embrace Christianity. (Notes, Matt. 28: 19, 20. Acts 2: 37-40. Rom. 10: 5-11. 1 Pet. 3: 21, 22.) But if men truly believe in Christ, profess openly faith in him, and partake of his sanctifying Spirit, they will doubtless be saved, even should they have no opportunity of being baptized with water, or should they fall into any mistake, about the external mode of administering that ordinance: and if men both believe and are baptized, it does not follow from the order of the words in the text, that the baptism is invalid, because it was previous to believing; for no sect of Christians re-baptize those who

15 And he said unto them, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.'

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe: 'In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.'

19 ¶ So then, after the Lord had spoken

¶ Matt. 10:5, 6. 28:19. Luke 14:21—23. 24:47, 48. John 20:21. 1 John 4:14.

¶ 13:10. P. 22:27. 67:1, 2. 96:3. 98:3. Is. 42:10—12. 45:22. 49:8. 52:10. 60:1—3. Luke 2:10, 11, 31, 32. 1 Cor. 12:8. Rom. 10:18. 16:4. Eph. 2:17. Col. 1:8, 23. Rev. 14:6.

¶ 1:18. Luke 8:12. John 1:12, 13. 3:15, 18, 19, 36. 5:24. 6:23, 30, 40, 7:27. 8:12, 15, 26. 12:46. 20:23. Acts 10:43. 13:39. 18:81. Rom. 3:26. 4:24. Heb. 10:38, 39. 1 Pet. 1:1. 1 John 5:10, 13.

¶ Acts 1:22, 19. Acts 2:38, 41. 8:35—39. 22:16. Rom. 10:9—14. 1 Pet. 3:21.

¶ 1 John 3:18, 19, 26. 8:24. 12:47, 48. Acts 13:45. 2 Theas. 1:8. Rev. 20:15. 21:8.

¶ John 14:12. Luke 10:17. Acts 5:16. 8:7. 16:18. 19:12—16.

¶ Acts 24—11, 33. 10:46. 19:6. 1 Cor. 12:10, 28, 30. 14:5—26.

¶ P. Gre 3:15. P. 9:13. Luke 10:19. Acts 28:3—6. Rom. 16:20.

¶ 2 Kings 4:39—41. Acts 3:8—9, 12, 16. 4:10, 22, 30. 5:15, 16. 9:17, 18, 24, 40—42. 19:12. 23:9.

¶ 1 Cor. 12:9. Jam. 5:14, 15. ¶ Matt. 28:18—20. Luke 24:44—50. John 21:5, 22. Acts 1:2, 3.

whether they could not go themselves, and live to send glad tidings up and down the world with all possible fidelity and care, not as an amusement, but as a message from God, and the means of making men happy. 'Tell as many as you can, and bid them tell others; it is of universal concern, and ought to have a universal welcome, because it gives a universal welcome.'

2. The summary of the Gospel they are to preach, is, 'Set before the world life and death, good and evil. Tell the children of men that they are in a state of misery and danger, condemned by their Prince, conquered and enslaved by their enemies.' This is supposed in their being saved, which they would not need to be if they were not lost. 'Tell them, (1.) That if they believe the Gospel, and give themselves to Christ; if they renounce the devil, the world, and the flesh, and be devoted to Christ as their Prophet, Priest and King, and to God in Christ as their God in covenant, and evidence by their adherence to this covenant their sincerity, they shall be saved from the guilt and power of sin; it shall not rule nor ruin them. He that is a true Christian, shall be saved through Christ.' Baptism was appointed to be the inaugurating rite, by which those that embrace Christ, owned Him; but it is here put rather for the thing signified than for the sign, for Simon Magus believed, and was baptized, yet was not saved, Acts 8:13. Believing with the heart, and confessing with the mouth the Lord Jesus, (Rom. 10:9.) seems to be much the same with this here. Or thus, We must assent to the gospel-truths, and consent to gospel-terms. (2.) If they receive not the record God gives concerning His Son, they cannot expect any other way of salvation, but

have been baptized in their own way, because it afterwards appears that they were not true believers at the time, though it be hoped that they have since become so.

(16.) The words *damned* and *damnation*, are sometimes used in our translation, where the original words mean simply *judge* or *judgment*; which weakens its effect when it should be used. (Note, 1 Cor. 11:29—34, v. 29.) In this place, however, eternal judgment is manifestly intended; and 'condemnation' will then be damnation, eternal damnation. (Notes, Matt. 25:41—46. 2 Theas. 1:5—10, v. 8, 9. Rev. 20:11—15.)

¶ Verses 17, 18.

'The art of poisoning was almost cultivated as a science, and it might be expected that their enemies would endeavor in this way to destroy them.'

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appeared to them as they sat at meat, which gave Him an opportunity to eat and drink with them, for their full satisfaction; see Acts 10:41. And still, when He appeared to them, He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, for even at the general meeting in Galilee some doubted, as we find, Matt. 28:17. Note, The evidences of the truth of the Gospel are so full, that those who receive it not, may justly be upbraided with unbelief; and it is owing, not to any weakness or deficiency in the proofs, but to senselessness and stupidity. Though they had not till now seen Him themselves, they are justly blamed, because they believed not them who had seen Him after He was risen; and perhaps it was owing in part to the pride of their hearts, that they did not; for they thought, 'If indeed He were risen, to whom should He delight to do the honor of showing Himself, but to us?' And if He pass them by, and show Himself to others first, they cannot believe it is He. Thus many disbelieve the doctrine of Christ, because they think it below them to give credit to such as He has chosen to be the witnesses and publishers of it. It will not suffice for an excuse of our infidelity in the great day, to say, 'We did not see Him after He was risen;' for we ought to have believed the testimony of those who did see Him.

II. He gave them a commission to set up his kingdom by the preaching of his Gospel, the tidings of reconciliation to God through a Mediator. Observe,

1. To whom they were to preach the Gospel. Hitherto they had been sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and were forbidden to go into the way of the Gentiles, or into any city of the Samaritans; but now their commission is enlarged, and they are authorized to go into all parts of the habitable world, and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews; to every human creature that is capable of receiving it. 'Inform them concerning Christ, the history of his life, death, and resurrection; instruct them in the meaning and intention of these, and of the advantages which the children of men may have, hereby; and invite them, without exception, to come and share in them. This is Gospel, let this be preached in all places, to all persons.' These eleven men could not themselves preach it to all the world, much less to every creature; but they and the seventy, with those who should afterwards be added to them, must disperse, and wherever they went, carry the Gospel. They must send others to places

most perish, they shall be damned, by the sentence of a despised Gospel, accord to that of a broken law.' And even this is Gospel, good news, that nothing else but unbelief shall damn men, which is a sin against the remedy. Dr. Whitby here observes, that they who hence infer, 'that the infant seed of believers are not capable of baptism, because they cannot believe, must hence also infer that they cannot be saved; faith being here more expressly required to salvation than to baptism. And that in the latter clause, baptism is omitted, because it is not simply the want of baptism, but the contemptuous neglect of it, which makes men guilty of damnation, otherwise infants might be damned for the mistakes or profaneness of their parents.'

3. They would be endowed with power for the confirmation of the doctrine they were to preach; (v. 17.) These signs shall follow them that believe. Not that all who believe shall be able to produce these signs, but as many as were employed in propagating the faith; for signs are intended for them that believe not; see 1 Cor. 14:22. It added much to the glory and evidence of the Gospel, that the preachers not only wrought miracles themselves, but conferred upon others a power to work miracles, which power followed some of them that believed, wherever they went to preach. They shall do wonders in Christ's name, in virtue of power derived from Him, by prayer. Some particular signs are mentioned; (1.) They shall cast out devils; this power was more common among Christians than any other, and lasted longer, as appears by the testimonies of early writers. (2.) They shall speak with new tongues, which they had never learned; and this was both a miracle, for confirming the truth of the Gospel, and a mean of spreading it among those that had not heard it. It saved the preachers vast labor in learning languages; and no doubt, they who by miracle were made masters of languages, were complete masters of all their native elegances, which were proper both to instruct and affect, and would very much recommend them and their preaching. (3.) They shall take up serpents. This was fulfilled in Paul, who was not hurt by the viper that fastened on his hand, which was acknowledged a great miracle by the barbarous people, Acts 28:5, 6. They shall be kept unhurt by that generation of vipers among whom they live, and by the malice of the old serpent. (4.) If they be compelled by persecutors to drink deadly poison, it shall not hurt them: of which very thing some instances are found in ecclesiastical history. (5.) They shall not only be preserved from hurt themselves, but they shall be enabled to do good to others; They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover, as multitudes had done by their Master's healing touch. Many of the elders of the church had this power, as appears by Jam. 5:14. where, as an instituted sign of this miraculous healing, they are said to anoint the sick with oil, in the name of the Lord. With what assurance of success might they go about the executing of their commission, when they had such credentials!

V. 19, 20. Christ is now welcomed into the upper world. After the Lord had spoken what He had to say to his disciples, He went up into heaven, in a cloud; which we have a particular account of, (Acts 1:9.) and He had not only an admission, but an abundant entrance, into his kingdom: He was received up, in state, with loud acclamations of the heavenly hosts, and He sat on the right hand of God. Sitting is a

'Considering to what degrees of cursed refinement this art was brought, as well as how frequently execution was done, at that age, by giving poison to the condemned, such a promise will appear more important than the reader might at first apprehend.' Doddridge.

By these particulars, doubtless, the Savior conveys a general promise; pledging to his disciples, amidst the trials and dangers of their mission, the protection of that Almighty One, by whom 'the hairs of their heads were all numbered,' and without whom 'not a sparrow falleth to the ground.'

Ed. It is not said, that all who ever should believe, would be enabled to work miracles; or that none, except those who had saving faith, would perform them. (Notes, Matt. 7:21—23. 1 Cor. 13:1—3.) but that 'these signs would follow them that believed,' that is, would be manifestly displayed among them.

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unto them, 'he was received up into heaven,' and sat on the right hand of God.

20 And 'they went forth, and preached every where,' the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

Luke 9:51. 24:50, 51. John 13:1. 16: 28. 17:4, 5, 13. Acts 1:10, 11. 2:38. 3:21. Eph. 1:20. 22: 45-46. 1. Heb. 1:3. 4:14. 8:20. 12:26, 31. 9:24. 10:12, 13, 19-22. 12:2. 1 Pet. 3:22. Rev. 3:21. u. 1. Ps. 110:1. 1 Cor. 2:5, 56. 1 Cor. 15: 21. 2. 4. Acts 2:-28. 1 Cor. 15: 21. 4:30. 5:12. 8:4-6. 14:4-8-10. Rom. 15:19. 1 Cor. 2:4, 5. 3:8-9. 2 Cor. 6:1. Heb. 2:4.

V. 12--20. In whatever way the Lord is pleased to confirm his truth, our faith is apt to be weak; therefore, while He comforts his people, by 'manifesting Himself to them as He doth not to the world,' He often sees it needful to correct them for 'their hardness of heart,' in distrusting his faithful promises, as well as in not obeying his precepts. Yet He will 'heal their backslidings,' and 'love them freely,' and again employ them in his service.—The commission given by Christ to his ministers extends to 'every creature' throughout the world: so that wherever a human being is found, we are expressly commanded to propose to him the Gospel of Christ, whatever reception he may give it. Our instructions, likewise, as preachers of the Gospel, contain not only truths, promises, and precepts, but also most awful warnings: so that we as much preach the Gospel, when we declare, in the name of God, that 'he who believeth not shall be damned,' as that 'whosoever believeth' in Jesus, 'shall be saved.' However men may now despise, or dispute against, such solemn denunciations, or revile those who insist on them, they will doubtless be fulfilled in their most tremendous meaning, upon all who reject the Gospel.

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We indeed do not now profess to work miracles in confirmation of our instructions: but the Scriptures are proved to be of divine origin, and this will render all inexcusable who despise or neglect them. The effects also produced wherever the Gospel is faithfully preached and truly believed, in changing the tempers and characters of men, form a constant proof that the Gospel is 'the power of God unto salvation.' (Notes, Rom. 1: 13-16, v. 16. P. O. 16-21. 1 Cor. 1: 20-25.) and indeed, they, who truly believe in Christ, will be defended against the assaults of the serpent and his seed, and more than conquer them, and be preserved from the effects of those poisonous heresies, which he is continually propagating in the world. (P. O. Matt. 18: 11-20. Luke 24: 36-53.) Glorified Redeemer! send forth faithful ministers, every where, to preach the Gospel; work with them, and confirm thy word 'by signs following;' even by 'opening men's eyes, and by turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among all that are sanctified by faith in Thee.' Amen. SCOTT.

Verses 19, 20.

The addition of the word 'Amen,' may denote the evangelist's earnest desire, that the same powerful and gracious presence of Christ, and the same success, might still attend the preaching of the Gospel in every place. (Note, Matt. 28: 1, 20.) SCOTT.

'CONCLUSION. The Gospel of Mark, if not an abridgment of Mat-

thew, contains a neat, perspicuous abridgment of the history of our Lord. As such, it is very satisfactory and well adapted to young persons, to bring them acquainted with the principal facts of the Gospel. It should not be used as a substitute for Matthew, but as corroborating evidence, and as containing many valuable hints for completing the history of our Lord.' DR. A. CLARKE.

NOTE.—It was long believed that the gospels were successively written as they are now placed, from the testimonies of Irenaeus, Origen, Jerome, Augustine, Chrysostom, &c. who so cite them. Hence Grotius, Mil. Weiststein, Thoinsson, &c. entertained no doubt of the priority of Mark's gospel to Luke's. But later critics question the validity of this assumption, Oecum. Busching, &c. And Griesbach, by an elaborate process, has furnished internal evidence of the priority of Luke's gospel; showing that Mark copied both Matthew and Luke; the whole of his gospel being contained in their gospels, with the exception of about four and twenty verses, presenting facts not recorded by either of his predecessors, but illustrative of the general subject.

'Table of parallel passages in the three gospels, from Bp. Marsh.

| Matth. | Mark. | Luke. | Matth. | Mark. | Luke. |
|-----------|---------|-----------|------------|-------------|------------|
| 3:1-4:22 | 1:1-26 | | 3-12 | 17-29 | |
| | 21-29 | 4:31-44 | | 30, 31 | 10 |
| | 40-45 | 5:12-6:11 | 13-21 | 32-44 | 11-17 |
| 12:15, 16 | 3-7-12 | | 22-15:12 | 45-52:21 | |
| | 13-19 | 6:12-16 | | 8:22-26 | |
| 22:23 | 20-21 | | 16:13-19:9 | 27-30:50 | 18-51 |
| 22-34 | 22-30 | | 19:1-12 | 10:1-12 | |
| 46-50 | 31-35 | | 12-23:1 | 10:13-12:38 | 19:5-20:45 |
| 13:1-23 | 4:12-20 | | | 12:38-44 | 20:45-21:4 |
| | 21-25 | 8:16-18 | 24:1-35 | 13:1-32 | 21:5, &c. |
| 24-30 | 26-30 | | | 33-38 | |
| 31-32 | 30-32 | | 26:1-28:8 | 14:1-16:8 | |
| 21-35 | 33:34 | | | 16:9 | |
| | 35-41 | 22-25 | | 10-13 | 24:10-35 |
| | 51-43 | 26-28 | | | 36-43 |
| 52-53 | 6:1-6 | | 28:18-20 | 15-18 | |
| | 7-13 | 9:1-6 | | 19 | 50, 51 |
| 14:1, 2 | 14-18 | 7-9 | | 20 | |

1. In general it appears, that Mark rather adopted the language of Matthew, but the order of Luke in their joint sections, but neither implicitly.

2. He is usually more circumstantial and correct than they, in the relation of facts. Compare, for instance, their accounts of the death of John the Baptist with his, Mark 6:17-29; his masterly description of the storm, 4:36-41; his account of the fig-tree cursed, and temple purged, 11:12-26, in which he has judiciously separated these two transactions, as happening on two successive days, which Matthew had concisely blended together, on the day of our Lord's triumphal entrance. In the joint parable of the vineyard, he has critically corrected a verbal inaccuracy of Matthew, 21:23. "he dug a wine press," a vine vat, says Mark, 12:1. And the sentence against the rebellious tenants, which Matthew has put in the mouths of the chief priests and elders, (21:41.) is restored by Mark to Christ, (12:9.) while Luke gives their answer, perceiving the drift of the parable against themselves, 20:15.

In their joint accounts of Bartimeus, restored to sight, he follows Luke in preference to Matthew, who notices two blind men; while

he follows the order of Matthew in preference to Luke, in representing the miracle as having been performed after our Lord left Jericho, in his way to Jerusalem, (Matt. 20:29, 30.) which Luke had represented as before his entrance into Jericho, (Luke 18:35. 19:1.) and yet Luke himself allows that Christ, at the time, was attended by a "multitude" (collected, as we may suppose, at Jericho,) Luke 18:36-39. Whereas Matthew and Mark both agree, that He came to Jericho, attended only by the twelve. Here, therefore, Mark has receded from Matthew, in one point, and corrected Luke in another, and noticed the leading blind man's name, omitted by both.

3. Indeed, to the accurate fidelity of this well-informed evangelist, we owe several important facts and illustrations omitted by his predecessors. Thus, he alone mentions wild beasts in the wilderness, 1:13. That additional circumstance in our Lord's first preaching, "the time is fulfilled," foretold by the prophets, 1:15. David's eating the shewbread in the days of Abiathar, 2:16. The emphatic surname, Boanerges, 3:17. Our Lord's anger and grief at the obduracy of the Jews, 3:5. The expression "He is beside Himself," (3:21.) the beautiful parable of the spontaneous growth of the seed, (4:26, 29.) the number of the swine, two thousand, (5:13.) Christ's expression, *Talitha cumi*, "Dame, arise," (5:41.) and Ephphatha, "Be opened," 7:34. The "green grass" characterizing the spring, (6:39.) noticed also by John. The distribution of the two fishes, (6:41.) likewise noticed by John. The first cock-crowing, during Peter's denial, 14:68. The addition of Salome to Matthew's party of women visiting the sepulchre, 16:2. The vision of the second angel there, 16:5. The women's silence respecting his message to Peter, 16:7, 8. Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene first, (16:9.) and under another form to the disciples on the way to Emmaus, 16:12. The disbelief of the rest, and our Lord's censure, 16:13, 14. His commission to the apostles, 16:15-18. Their discharge of it, 16:20. All this is judiciously added to the conciser accounts of his predecessors, Matthew and Luke. Whereas had Luke followed Him, it is not credible that he would have omitted them all, since we see that John noticed those of Mark that coincided with his scheme, or came within the range of his gospel.

From the time the notion prevailed that Mark's gospel was merely an abridgment of Matthew's, as in the days of Augustine, (A. D. 385,) who calls Mark the "follower in the footsteps" and "abridger" of Matthew; it was natural to place his gospel next to Matthew's, with which it was supposed to have the closest connection. But the foregoing analysis abundantly proves, that Mark was not a servile copier, nor selected most judiciously, and sometimes enlarged, according to his plan, which was to give a succinct history of our Lord's ministry, commencing from John's preaching, (Mark 1: 1, 2.) to the ascension, (16:19.) and concluding with the preaching of the apostles every where (r. 20.) thus comprising, in a short compass, the substance of Matthew's, and of Luke's Gospel and Acts of the Apostles.

DR. HALLES

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE,

WITH AN EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

WE now enter on the labors of another evangelist, born, so Jerome, at Antioch, whose name, Luke, some take to be a contraction of *Lucius*. Some think him the only sacred writer not of the seed of Israel. He was a Jewish proselyte, and, as some conjecture, converted to Christianity by the ministry of Paul at Antioch, and, after his coming into Macedonia, (Acts 16: 10.) his constant companion. He had been a physician: hence Paul calls him *Luke the beloved physician*. (Col. 4: 14.) Whitby thinks it probable that he was one of the seventy disciples, and if so, he was an Israelite. Origen and Epiphanius say the same, and I see nothing to object to it, but some uncertain traditions of the ancients. He is supposed to have written this gospel while associated with Paul, and by his direction; and some think him the brother whom Paul speaks of, (2 Cor. 8: 18.) as if the meaning of it were, that he was celebrated in all the churches for writing this gospel, and that Paul means this when he speaks of his gospel. Rom. 2: 16. But there is no ground for that. Dr. Cave commends his style, and says he expresses himself in a vein of purer Greek than is to be found in the other writers of the holy story. He is more copious than the other evangelists, especially in what relates to the priestly office of Christ. When and where he wrote, is uncertain. Some think it was in Achaia, during his travels with Paul, seventeen (others say twenty-two) years after Christ's ascension; others, that it was at Rome, a little before he wrote the *Acts of the Apostles*, (Acts 28: 30. 2 Tim. 4: 11.) which would make it about twenty-seven years after the ascension, and about the fourth year of Nero. Jerome says he died when he was eighty-four years of age, and was never married. Some write that he suffered martyrdom; but if he did, where and when is uncertain. Nor, indeed, is there much more credit to be given to the Christian traditions concerning the writers of the New Testament, than to the Jewish concerning those of the Old. HENRY.

It is not certainly known of what country Luke originally was, or when he was converted to Christianity. He never once mentions himself, except as he uses the first person plural when writing several parts of Paul's history, and nothing is recorded of him, till we find him among the companions of that apostle; for Lucius of Cyrene seems to have been another person. (Acts 13: 1.) The more general tradition, however, is, that he was a Syrian; and having, as some report, practised physic at Rome, as a servant of some of the great men, it is thought, that, being rewarded with his liberty, he received a name from his patron, as was often the case, and then, returning to Antioch in Syria, became acquainted with Paul, embraced Christianity, was appointed to the ministry, and from that time attended the apostle in his travels. Indeed, it is certain he accompanied him in all his labors and sufferings during many years, probably till his martyrdom. (Acts 28: 7—10. Col. 4: 14. 2 Tim. 4: 11. *Philom.* 24.—*Notes*, Acts 16: 6—12, v. 10. 20: 1—6, 27: 1, 2.) Yet Paul never calls him 'his son,' as he does Timothy and Titus: it is therefore probable that he was converted before meeting the apostle at Antioch. Whether he was a Jew by birth, a proselyte, or a gentile, is also uncertain; though Paul's language seems to favor the latter opinion; for having spoken of several persons, as 'of the circumcision,' who had been his fellow-workers, and a comfort to him, he directly speaks in high terms of Epaphras and Luke; and as he could not mean to say that they had not been his fellow-workers, and a comfort to him, it seems to follow, that they were not of the circumcision. (Note, Col. 4: 9—14.) SCOTT. 'The most probable conjecture is that of Bolten, adopted by Kuinoel, that he was descended from gentile parents, and in his youth had embraced Judaism, from which he was converted to Christianity.' *Horne*, vol. 4. p. 260. ED. It is indeed a general opinion, that none of the sacred books of the New Testament were written by gentile converts, however eminent many of them were as preachers of the Gospel. But the Scripture lays down no rule of that kind. It is probable: the book of Job was written by Elihu, who was not of the nation of Israel; (*Preface to Job*); and certainly Nebuchadnezzar wrote the fourth chapter of Daniel.—Luke, besides his gospel, wrote also 'the Acts of the Apostles,' which conclude with a brief account of Paul's imprisonment at Rome. We may infer, therefore, with great probability, that he wrote his gospel before that event, and we may be sure that he had the apostle's sanction to what he did. His gospel, moreover, was certainly extant at an early period, and from the first received by the church as of divine authority: (*Introduction to the New Testament*.) and the early and unanimous reception of this, as well as of the Acts of the Apostles, as divinely inspired, and a part of the canon of Scripture, are alone sufficient to satisfy any reasonable person: and it is remarkable that, in recording our Lord's words when he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, Luke adds some particulars not expressly mentioned in the other gospels, which, taken with the extraordinary accomplishment of them during above seventeen hundred years, form an internal demonstration, that he wrote 'as he was moved by the Holy Ghost.' (Note, 21: 20—24.)—This gospel contains parables, discourses, miracles, and events, which had been omitted by the preceding evangelists; and several recorded by them are here passed over. The history begins with the circumstances preceding and attending the birth of John the Baptist, and that of Jesus Himself, and closes with a fuller account of what passed between our Lord's resurrection and ascension than Matthew or Mark had given.—Luke is supposed to have been a man of learning, previous to his being induced with spiritual gifts. His style is more pure and classical than that of the other evangelists; though not free from the Hebrew and Syriac idiom, which some make an objection to his being a gentile convert: yet it only proves that he had studied the Septuagint, and was conversant with Hellenists. The simplicity of his manner, however, is such, and such are his artlessness and power of fixing attention and exciting the affections, that many have thought him, as a writer, capable of standing the competition with the most celebrated historians of Greece itself. (Note, 7: 11—17.) SCOTT.

Scott remarks above, that Lucius of Cyrene appears to have been another person, and not the evangelist Luke; but Robinson, in Calmet, observes, that many have supposed him to be the same. Of this opinion, it may be mentioned too, was Taylor, the English editor of Calmet. He says, also, that every probability is against Luke's having been one of the seventy disciples. He, moreover, describes him as one who is proved by his writings, to have been of an uncommonly accurate and precise turn of mind, in confirmation and illustration of which, he cites and comments upon many passages of Luke's Gospel and of the Acts of the Apostles.

Respecting arrangement, 'it is allowed,' says Dr. A. Clarke, 'that there is considerable diversity in the order of time between Matthew and Luke; which is accounted for on the ground that Matthew relates his history according to a *chronological order*, while Luke relates his according to a *classification of events*.' Rosenmueller also is of the same opinion. Others, however, (as Taylor, above,) adopt Luke as the standard. Newcome, in the preface to his Harmony, says, that 'chronological order is not precisely observed by any of the evangelists: that John and Mark observe it most; and Matthew neglects it most.'

CHAP. I.

'We preface, and dedication to Theophilus, 1-4. An account of Zacharias and Elizabeth, 5-7. The angel Gabriel appears to Zacharias in the temple, and promises him a son in his old age, who will be of singular eminence and useful, 8-17. He is chastised for unbelief, by being struck dumb, 18-23. Elizabeth conceives, and hides herself, 24, 25. The angel appears to the virgin Mary; and assures her that she should become the mother of the Messiah, the King of Israel, by the power of the Holy Spirit, 26-33. Her humble faith and acquiescence, 34-35. She visits Elizabeth, and is visited by her; she prophesies, and praises God, 36-39. The birth, circumcision, and naming of John the Baptist, 37-40. Zacharias restored to the use of speech, prophetically praises God, 64-65. The manner in which John spent his youth, 80.

FORASMUCH as many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us,

2 Even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses, and ministers of the word;

3 It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write un-

a. John 20:31. Ac 1:1-3. 1 Tim. 3:16. 2 Pet. 1:13.
b. 8:48. John 15:27. Ac 1:8, 6:21, 8:40. 10:39-41. Heb. 2:3. 1 John 1-3.
c. Ac 25:16. Rom. 15:16. Eph. 3:7. Col. 1:23-25.
d. Ac 15:19, 25, 28. 1 Cor. 7:40. 16:12.

CHAP. I. v. 1-4. The narrative this evangelist gives (or rather God by him) of the life of Christ, begins earlier than either Matthew or Mark. We have reason to thank God for them all, as we have, for all the gifts and graces of Christ's ministers, which, in one make up what is wanting in another, and, together, make a harmony.

Complimentary prefaces and dedications are justly condemned by the wise and good; but not such as are useful and instructive; as this, in which Luke dedicates his gospel to his friend Theophilus, not as to his patron, to protect it, but as to his pupil, to learn it, and hold it fast. It is not certain who this Theophilus was; the name signifies a friend of God; some think it means any and every lover of God; Hammond quotes some of the ancients understanding it so; and then it teaches us, that those who are truly lovers of God, will heartily welcome the Gospel of Christ, the design and tendency of which are, to bring us to God. But it is rather to be understood of some particular person, probably a magistrate; because Luke gives him here the same title of respect which Paul gave Festus the governor, Acts 26: 25. Note, Religion does not destroy civility and good manners, but teaches us, according to the usages of our country, to give honor to whom honor is due.

1. Observe, why Luke wrote this gospel. It is certain he was moved by the Holy Ghost, not only to it, but in it; and in both as a reasonable creature, and not a machine; and he was made to consider,

1. That the things he wrote, were things most surely believed among all Christians; things which they ought therefore to be instructed in, and which ought to be transmitted to posterity, and, in order to that, committed to writing, which is the surest way of conveyance to the ages to come: not things of doubtful disputations, about which Christians may safely differ and hesitate; but things which are, and ought to be, most surely believed,—things which were performed, (so some,) which Christ and his apostles did, and did with such circumstances as gave a full assurance that they were really done, so that they have gained an established, lasting credit. Note, though it is not the founda-

tion of our faith, yet it is a support to it, that the articles of our creed are things that have been long most surely believed. The doctrine of Christ is what thousands of the wisest and best of men have centured their souls upon, with the greatest assurance and satisfaction.

2. That a declaration of those things should be made in order; that the history of the life of Christ should be methodized. When things are put in order, we know the better where to find them for our own use, and how to keep them for the benefit of others.

3. That many not inspired had undertaken to publish narratives of the life of Christ; which, though well designed, and useful, were not so well prepared as might be, nor intended for perpetuity. Note, Others' labors in the Gospel, if faithful and honest, we ought to commend and encourage, and not to despise, though imperfect; yet they must not be reckoned to supersede ours, but rather to quicken them.

4. That the truth of the things he had to write, was confirmed by the concurring testimony of those who were competent and unexceptionable witnesses of them, v. 2. Note, (1.) The apostles were ministers of the word of Christ, who is the Word, (so some understand it,) or of the doctrine of Christ, 1 John 1: 1. They had not a Gospel to make as masters, but a Gospel to preach as ministers. (2.) They were eye-witnesses, and ear-witnesses. They themselves heard the doctrine, and saw the miracles of Christ; and therefore could not but speak, with the greatest assurance, the things they had seen and heard, Acts 4: 20. (3.) They were so from the beginning of Christ's ministry, (v. 2.) when He wrought his first miracle, John 2: 11. They accompanied with Him all the time that He went in and out among them, (Acts 1: 21.) so that they not only heard and saw all that which was sufficient to confirm their faith, but, if there had been any thing to shock it, had opportunity to discover it. (4.) The written Gospel, which we now have, exactly agrees with that which was first preached. (5.) He himself had a perfect understanding of what he wrote, from the first, v. 3. Some think He would here imply that those who had written before him, had not a perfect understanding of

NOTES.

CHAP. I. v. 1-4. Matthew and Mark could not be called 'many' and the former of them at least wrote from his personal knowledge, as well as under the guidance of the Holy Spirit; while the persons here mentioned had written from report. We must therefore understand the evangelist of some compilations, which have been lost very long since; for publishing and circulating authentic narratives would soon discredit spurious ones.

Most surely believed.] Most fully proved, or most certainly performed; for either the evidence by which they were attested, or the conviction which arose from the evidence of their having been accomplished, may be intended. Eye witnesses.] The apostles seem especially intended. Most expositors suppose the second verse to point out the manner, in which the evangelist had derived his information: yet it is directly connected with the first verse, and precedes the writer's first mention of himself. Luke evidently acquired his acquaintance with the Gospel, by information and testimony, and not as an eye-witness. This history he addressed to Theophilus, for his more full instruction in Christianity. Theophilus signifies, A lover of God: he appears to have been a person of rank and authority; for the title, 'Most excellent,' is the same in the original, which is elsewhere addressed to the Roman governors. (Marg. Ref. f.—Note, Acts 26: 24-29, v. 25.) The title was given to Theophilus with greater propriety. The word rendered 'instructed,' relates to the initiatory instruction in the first principles of Christianity, in which the converts were afterwards to be more fully taught and established. 'Luke thought not what was delivered by word of mouth only, even by the eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, sufficient to give Theophilus a knowledge of the certainty of these things, without writing the gospel. He held it not unlawful, or unfit, for a layman, or any Christian, to read the Scriptures; nor such a one insufficient, by thus reading, to understand the things in which he had been instructed.' Whitby. 'The very circumstance of the number of such narratives, at so early a period, is itself an evidence, that there was something in the first publication of the Christian doctrine, which excited the curiosity, and awakened the attention, of persons of all ranks and denominations; inasmuch, that every narrative, which proceeded to furnish me with additional information concerning so extraordinary a personage as Jesus, seems to have been read with avidity.' Campbell.

From the very first.] Sometimes rendered 'from above.' (John 3: 31. Jam. 1: 17. 3: 15, 17.) It is however often used in another sense. (John 3: 3, 7; Acts 28: 5. Gal. 4: 9.) No doubt, Luke wrote under the superintending inspiration of the Holy Spirit; yet this word cannot properly be adduced as a proof of it, nor does it at all imply, that he had his information 'from above,' without the intervention of any ordinary methods of information.

Scott.

(1.) 'Whereas many have undertaken to compose the history of those facts, which have been confirmed among us Christians with the fullest and most satisfactory evidence.'

Storr and Platt understand Luke here, to refer, undoubtedly, to interpolated copies of Matthew's gospel, which had become numerous before Luke wrote his gospel. See Bib. Theol. vol. 1, p. 142. — Ed.

In these histories a simple narrative of the facts is given; but no attempt is made, by argument, asseveration, or animated expression, to bias the understanding, or work upon the passions. The naked truth is left to its own native evidence. The writers betray no suspicion of its insufficiency. This method of theirs has more genuine dignity than the other, and if I mistake not, has been productive of more durable consequences than ever yet resulted from the arts of rhetoricians, and the enticing words of man's wisdom.

(2.) Word, 1. 'Some have conjectured that logos, the word, here signifies Christ, as in the beginning of St. John's gospel: perhaps it may; but I did not think it so evident, as to venture fixing it to that sense.'

DODDRIEGE.

Ministers of the word.] 'Those who took part in the affair, and bore a part in the things done; i. e. the relations, friends, and apostles of Christ, and the seventy disciples. So Beza, Hammond, Erasmus, Grotius, Rosenm., and Kuinoel.'

BLOOMFIELD.

It is impossible, on reflection, to hesitate a moment in affirming, that the historian here meant to acquaint us, that he had received his information from those who had attended Jesus, and been witnesses of every thing during his public ministration upon the earth, and who, after his ascension, had been intrusted by Him with the charge of propagating his doctrine throughout the world.

CAMPBELL.

(3.) To write unto thee in order.] 'It is chiefly on the authority of this clause that M. Le Clerc, and many other modern harmonizers have thought, (as Beza also did,) that all the other gospels are to be reduced to the order of Luke, wherever they differ from it: a conclusion which I apprehend to be an occasion of many errors, and particularly injurious to the character of Matthew; and the foundation of which is very precarious: since it is evident, this evangelist might, with great propriety, be said to have given an orderly account of the history of Christ, as the leading facts are in their due series, though some particulars are transposed.'

DODDRIEGE.

We cannot conclude from the words in order, that the order of time is better observed by this, than by any other evangelist.

CAMPBELL.

Theophilus.] 'The most probable opinion is that of Dr. Lardner, now generally adopted, viz that as Luke composed his gospel in Greece, Theophilus was a man of rank of the same country.'

JOHNS.

to thee 'in order, 'most excellent Theophilus, 4 That thou 'mightest know the certainty of those things, wherein thou hast been instructed.

5 **T**HERE *was in the days of ^a Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zacharias, of the course of Abia: and his wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elisabeth.

6 And they were both ^krighteous before God, ^lwalking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord ^mblameless.

e 1. Ps. 40:5. 50:21. Ec. 12:2. Acta 11:4.
f Acta 11. 22:26. 24:3. 26:25. Gr.
g John 30:31. 2 Pet. 1:15, 16.
h Before the account called Anno Domini, the sixth year.
i Matt. 24.
j Ch. 24:10, 19. Neh. 12:4, 17.
k 16:15.
l Gen. 6:9. 7:1. Job 1:8. 2 Sam. 13:25. Phil. 3:6-9. Tit. 3:8-7.
m 1 Kings 9:4. 2 Kings 20:3. Ps. 119:6. Acta 24:16. 2 Cor. 1:12. Tit. 2:1. John 3:3, 29. 3:7.
n Epl. 2:15. Col. 1:22. 1 Thes. 3:13. 2 Pet. 3:14.

the certainty of those things; to know not only what we believe, but why we believe it, that we may be able to give a reason of the hope that is in us.

v. 5—25. Matthew and Mark began the gospel with the baptism of John, and his ministry, which commenced about six months before our Savior's; Luke therefore, designing to give a more particular account than had been given of our Savior's conception and birth, determines to do so of John Baptist, who in both was his harbinger and forerunner. The evangelist determines thus, not only because it is commonly reckoned a satisfaction and entertainment to know something of the original extraction and early days of those who afterward prove great men, but because in the beginning of these were many things miraculous, and presages of what they afterward proved. In these verses, our inspired historian begins as early as the conception of John Baptist. Now observe here,

1. The account given of his parents; v. 5. They lived in the days of Herod the king, a foreigner, and a deputy for the Romans, who had lately made Judea a province of the empire. This is taken notice of, to show that the secpire was quite departed from Judah, and therefore that now was the time for Shiloh to come, according to Jacob's prophecy, Gen. 49: 10. The family of David now sunk, was to rise, and flourish again, in the Messiah. Note, None ought to despair of the reviving and flourishing of religion, even then when civil liberties are lost, Israel is enslaved, yet then comes the Glory of Israel.

Now the father of John Baptist was Zacharias, a priest, a son of Aaron. No families in the world were ever so honored of God as those of Aaron and David; with one was made the covenant of priesthood, with the other that of royalty; both had forfeited their honor, yet the Gospel again puts honor up on both in their latter days, on that of Aaron in John Baptist, on that of David in Christ, and then both were extinguished and lost. Christ's was of David's house, his forerunner of Aaron's, for his priestly agency and influence opened the way to his kingly authority and dignity. This Zacharias was of the course of Abia; when in David's time the family of Aaron was multiplied, he di-

(4.) *Instructed.* The word expresses, with great accuracy, the instructions given to those who were training up for admission to the Christian church: whose name of *catechumens* was, as it is well known, derived from hence, and applied without any particular regard to the age of the persons concerned. DODDRIDGE.

It appears that Theophilus had already received the first elements of the Christian doctrine, but had not as yet been completely grounded in them. Every man should labor to acquire the most correct knowledge and indubitable certainty of those doctrines, on which he stakes his eternal salvation. DR. A. CLARKE.

Verſes 5—7.

Zacharias was not, as some have imagined, high priest. Zacharias was chosen by lot to burn incense: the high priest did it by the right of succession, and in the holy of holies, into which Zacharias entered not. Zacharias was priest of the course of Abia; whereas the high priest was of no course at all. These several courses began on the sabbath-day, and continued to serve till the next sabbath-day. — *Walt.* — *Notes.* 2 Kings 11: 5—9. 1 Chr. 23: 2—6. 24: 10. Ezra 2: 36—39. BATHSHUA was thought a very heavy affliction by the Jews; yet Zacharias gave no countenance to the practice of polygamy or divorce, by taking another wife. (Notes, Gen. 16: 1—6.) The lat-

tered them into twenty-four courses, for the more regular performance of their office, that it might never be either neglected for want of hands, or engrossed by a few. The eighth of those was that of Abia, (1 Chron. 24: 10.) who was descended from Eleazar, Aaron's eldest son: but Dr. Lightfoot suggests, that many of the families of the priests were lost in the captivity, so that after their return they took in those of other families, retaining the names of the heads of the respective courses. The wife of this Zacharias was of the daughters of Aaron too, and her name was Elisabeth, the very same name with Elisheba the wife of Aaron, Exod. 6: 23. The priests (Josephus saith) were very careful to marry within their own family, that they might maintain the dignity of the priesthood, and keep it without mixture.

Now that which is observed concerning Zacharias and Elisabeth is,

1. That they were a very religious couple, v. 5. They were so in his sight, whose judgment, we are sure, is according to truth; they were sincerely and really so. They are righteous indeed, that are so before God, as Noah, Gen. 7: 1. They approved themselves to Him, and He was graciously pleased to accept them. It is a happy thing when those that are joined to each other in marriage, are both joined to the Lord: and it is especially requisite that the priests, the Lord's ministers, should with their yoke-fellows be righteous before God, that they may be examples to the flock, and rejoice their hearts. (1.) Their being righteous before God was evidenced by the course and tenor of their conversation; they showed it, not by their talk, but by their works; by the way they walked in, and the rule they walked by. (2.) They were of a piece with themselves; for their devotions and their conversations agreed. They walked not only in the ordinances of the Lord, which related to divine worship, but in the commandments of the Lord, which have reference to all the instances of a good conversation, and must be regarded. (3.) They were universal in their obedience; not that they never in any thing came short of their duty, but it was their constant care and endeavor to come up to it. (4.) Herein, though they were not sinless, yet they were blameless; nobody could charge them with any open, scandalous sin; they lived honestly and inoffensively, as ministers and their families are in a special manner concerned to do, that the ministry be not blamed in their blame.

2. That they had been long childless, v. 7. Children are a heritage of the Lord. They are valuable, desirable blessings; yet many there are in a married state, who are righteous before God, and, if they had children, would bring them up in his fear, who yet are not thus blessed, while the men of this world are full of children, (Ps. 17: 14.) and send forth their little ones like a flock, John 21: 11. Elisabeth was barren, and they began to despair of ever having children, for they were both now well stricken in years. Many eminent persons were born of mothers that had been long childless, as Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samson, Samuel, and so here John Baptist—to make their birth the more remarkable, and the blessing of it the more valuable to their parents; and to show that when God keeps his people long waiting for mercy,

of these, especially, was common at that time; yet the pious Jews generally disapproved it. (Notes, Matt. 23: 31, 32. 19: 3—12.)

(5.) *Herod.* The Great. See notes Matt. 2: 1. SCOTT. *Course of Abia.* Each "course" had its father, or president, who were on that account styled high priests; and this is the reason why in the Gospel the "high priests" are so often mentioned. BEANUSOBIUS & L'Enfant, Rosenm. HEWLETT.

The priests employed in sacred services at Jerusalem were present in the temple, not only by day, but also as watchers by night. They prepared not only the victims, but also the lamps and the wood, and did whatever handy work was to be done. ROSENEM.

(6.) *Ordinances.* Rom. 1: 32. 2: 26. 5: 16, 18. 8: 4. Heb. 9: 1, 10. Rev. 15: 4. 19: 8. The word is used in different senses; but the institutions of the ritual law of Moses seem here exclusively meant. SCOTT.

(7.) *Commandments and ordinances.* Moral commandments and ceremonial institutions. DODDRIDGE.

"Perhaps commandments may here mean the decalogue; and ordinances, the ceremonial and judicial laws which were delivered after the decalogue; as all the precepts delivered from Ex. 2 to 24. are termed judgments or ordinances." DR. A. CLARKE.

7 And they had no child, because that Elisabeth was barren; and they both were now well stricken in years.

[Practical Observations.]

8 And it came to pass, that while he executed the priest's office before God in the order of his course,

9 According to the custom of the priest's office, his lot was to burn incense when he went into the temple of the Lord.

10 And the whole multitude of the people were praying without, at the time of incense.

n Gen. 15:2, 3. 16:1, 2. 25:21. 30:1, 2. Judg. 13:2, 3. 1 Sam. 1:2, 5-8.

o Gen. 17:17. 18:11. 1 Kings 1:1. 2 Kings 4:14-16. Rom. 4:15-20. Heb. 11:11, 12.

p Ex. 28:1, 41. 29:1, 4, 30. Num. 18:7. 1 Chr. 24:1. 2 Chr. 11:14.

q 5. 1 Chr. 24:12. 2 Chr. 8:14. 3:1. 2 Chr. 24:12. 2 Chr. 8:14. 3:1.

r Ex. 30:7, 8. 37:25-29. Num. 16:40. 1 Sam. 2:28. 1 Chr. 6:49. 25:13. 2 Chr. 24:15-17. 25:11. Heb. 9:5, 7.

s Lev. 16:17. Heb. 4:14-16. 9:24. Rev. 8:4.

there was a multitude of people attending, (v. 10.) which ordinarily was not on a week day; and thus God usually puts honor upon his own day. And then, if, as Dr. Lightfoot reckons, this course of Abia fell on the seventeenth day of the third month, the month Sivan, answering to part of May and part of June, it is worth observing, that the portions of the law and the prophets, which were read this day in the synagogues, were very agreeable to that which was doing in the temple; namely, the law of the Nazarites, (Num. 6;) and the conception of Samson, Judg. 13.

While Zacharias was burning incense in the temple, the whole multitude of the people were praying without, v. 10. Dr. Lightfoot says, the priests of that course that then served, were constantly in the temple, at the hour of prayer, and if it were the sabbath-day, those of that course also that had been in waiting the week before, and the Levites that served under the priests, and the men of the station, as the rabbins call them, who were the representatives of the people, in putting their hands upon the head of the sacrifices, and many besides, who, moved by devotion, left their employments, for that time, to be present at the service of God; and those would make up a great multitude, especially on sabbaths and feast-days: now these all addressed themselves to their devotions, (in mental prayer, for their voice was not

he sometimes is pleased to recompense them for their patience, by doubling the worth of it when it comes.

II. The appearing of an angel to his father Zacharias, as he was ministering in the temple, v. 8, 11. Zacharias the prophet was the last of the Old Testament that was conversant with angels; and Zacharias the priest the first in the New Testament. Observe,

1. How Zacharias was employed in the service of God, v. 8. It was his week of waiting, and he was on duty. Though his family was not built up, yet he made conscience of doing the work of his own place and day. Though we have not desired mercies, yet we must keep close to enjoined services; and in our diligent and constant attendance on them, we may hope that mercy and comfort will come at last. Zacharias' lot was to burn incense morning and evening that week, as other services fell to other priests also by lot. The services were directed by lot, that some might not decline them, and others engross them; and that, the disposal of the lot being from the Lord, they might have the satisfaction of a divine call to the work. This was not the high priest's burning incense on the day of atonement, as some have fondly imagined, who have thought by that to find out the time of our Savior's birth, but the burning of the daily incense at the altar of incense, (v. 11.) which was in the temple, (v. 9.) not in the most holy place, into which the high priest entered. The Jews say that one and the same priest burned not incense twice in all his days, (there were such a multitude of them,) at least never more than one week. It is very probable that this was upon the sabbath-day, because

that this was upon the sabbath-day, because there was a multitude of people attending, (v. 10.) which ordinarily was not on a week day; and thus God usually puts honor upon his own day. And then, if, as Dr. Lightfoot reckons, this course of Abia fell on the seventeenth day of the third month, the month Sivan, answering to part of May and part of June, it is worth observing, that the portions of the law and the prophets, which were read this day in the synagogues, were very agreeable to that which was doing in the temple; namely, the law of the Nazarites, (Num. 6;) and the conception of Samson, Judg. 13.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-7. Those things, which we are required 'most surely to believe,' are most abundantly proved to be of divine original; and if our faith were as strong, as the truths and promises are certain, we should continually rejoice in them... We should therefore endeavor to obtain a more exact knowledge of them; and also labor to bring our friends and neighbors to an established faith in them... (Note, Tit. 2: 9, 10.) This is peculiarly needful and becoming in those who sustain the office of minis-

ters. Some alloy to our comfort must be expected in every situation; and this consideration should reconcile us to our own trials; as we probably should be no gainers, could we exchange condition with those whom we are most apt to envy. But those who 'grow in grace' as they advance in years, and who steadily attend to their proper employment, may hope for increasing peace and comfort in the eve of life. (Notes, Ps. 71: 17-24. 92: 13-15.) SCOTT.

(7.) 'Polygamy, as well as divorces, were, for the hardness of their hearts, tolerated among the Jews; but they seem both to have been, in this age at least, disapproved by persons of the best character. Compare Mat. 2: 14-16. and 1 Tim. 3: 2.' DODDRIDGE.

Verses 8-10.

Zacharias burning incense on the golden altar within the sanctuary, at the same time that a great number of people were collected without, in the courts of the temple, silently offering up their prayers and supplications, was an apt type of Christ's intercession in heaven, through which the prayers of believers, in every part of the outer court of the church on earth, ascend with acceptance before God. (Marg. Ref. r. s. - Notes, Ex. 30: 1-10. Rev. 8: 1-6.) SCOTT.

(8.) 'The course of Abia (v. 5) to which the service returned after an interval of one hundred and sixty-eight days, was the eighth in order, and on duty the fourth month of the Jewish year, answering to our July. Elisabeth conceived about the month of August, after Zacharias' return. John therefore would seem to have been born about the month of May, and Jesus (v. 36.) about September or October. Yet these things are uncertain.' ROSENEM.

(9.) His lot was to burn incense. 'Since the sacerdotal offices were various, it was agreed among the priests, that all should be assigned, or distributed, by lot. By the first lot, was designated he who should cleanse the outside of the altar. Secondly, thirteen were taken who should sacrifice the lamb, sprinkle the blood, trim the lamps, and burn and scatter the incense. Thirdly, he who should ascend the high altar, and lay upon it the member, of the victim. The most honorable

heard,) when, by the tinkling of a bell, they had notice that the priest was gone in to burn incense.

Observe here, how the true Israel of God were always a praying people; and prayer is the great and principal service by which we honor God, obtain his blessing, and keep up our communion with Him. Even then, when ritual and ceremonial appointments were in full force, as this of burning incense, yet moral and spiritual duties were required to go along with them, and were principally looked at. David knew that when he was at a distance from the altar, his prayer might be heard without incense, Ps. 141: 2. But when he was compassing the altar, the incense could not be accepted without prayer, any more than the shell without the kernel. It is not enough to be where God is worshipped, if our hearts do not join in the worship, and go along with the minister, in all the parts of it. If he burn the incense ever so well, in the most pertinent, judicious, lively prayer, if we be not at the same time praying in concurrence with him, what will it avail us? All our prayers are acceptable and successful, only in virtue of the incense of Christ's intercession in the temple of God above. To this usage in the temple-service there seems to be an allusion, (Rev. 8: 1, 3, 4.) where we find there was silence in heaven, as there was in the temple, for half an hour, while the people were silently lifting up their hearts to God in prayer; and that there was an angel, the angel of the covenant, who offered up much incense with the prayers of all saints before the throne. We cannot expect an interest in Christ's intercession, if we do not pray, and pray with our spirits, and continue instant in prayer. Nor can we expect our best prayers to be accepted, and bring in an answer of peace, but through the mediation of Christ, who ever lives, making intercession.

2. How, when thus employed, he was honored with a special messenger sent to him from heaven, v. 11. Some observe, that we never read of an angel appearing in the temple, with a message from God, but here only, because there God had other ways of making known his mind, as the Urim and Thummim, and by a still small voice from between the cherubims; but the ark and the oracle were wanting in the second temple, and therefore when an express was to be sent, an angel was employed, and so the gospel, as the law, was given at first very much by the ministry of angels; the appearance of which we often read of in the Gospels and in the Acts; though the design both of the law and of the gospel, when brought to perfection,

of all the functions was that of burning incense; an office which could only be discharged once.' WETSTEIN.

The temple. This word generally means the sanctuary; but includes the courts and outer buildings.

The temple. The sanctuary. The temple comprehended the whole edifice, with all its inclosures, piazzas, and other buildings; the sanctuary, only what was termed, by way of eminence, the house, consisting of the vestibule, the holy place or sanctuary, and the most holy. The altar of incense, on which the perfumes were burnt, was in the sanctuary: the people who were praying, without, were in the temple, but not in the sanctuary. CAMPBELL.

(10.) Praying without, at the time of incense. 'This was the foundation of that elegant figure, by which prayer is so often compared to incense; (see Ps. 141: 2. Mal. 1: 11. Rev. 8: 3, 4.) and perhaps, one reason of obtaining incense might be, to intimate the acceptableness of those pious prayers, which were to accompany it. And indeed burning fragrant perfumes was, and in the eastern nations still is, so important a part of the entertainment of illustrious families, that one might well expect it in the house of God. It is so plain that this was only an office of daily ministration, and that Zacharias was one of the ordinary priests, that one cannot but be surprised, that any one should ever conclude from this circumstance of the story, that Zacharias was Sagan, or assistant to the high priest, and was now performing his grand office on the day of atonement, and so on this foundation, should calculate the birth of John the Baptist, and of Christ, and all the other feasts which depend upon them: yet this is done in the calendars, both of the Roman and Greek church.' DODDRIDGE.

11 And there 'appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense.

12 And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and fear fell upon him.

13 But the angel said unto him, 'Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.'

14 And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth.

15 For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.

19:28, 2:10, Judg. 13:9, Acts 10:34, Heb. 1:14.
 Ex. 30:1-6, 37:25-29, 40:26, 27.
 Lev. 16:13, Rev. 8:3, 5:13.
 28, 2:9, 10, Judg. 8:22, 13:22, Job 4:14, 15, Dan. 10:7, Mark 16:5.
 Acts 16:4, Rev. 1:17.
 19:36-40, Jo. 6:62, Dan. 10:12.
 Matt. 28:5, Mark 16:6.
 Gen. 25:21, 1 Sam. 1:20-23, Ps. 119:21, Acts 10:31.
 19:40, 17:10, 18:14, Judg. 13:3-5, 1 Sam. 9:21, 2 Kings 4:16, 17, Ps. 118:9, 127:3-5.
 6:43, 12:7, Gen. 17:19, 1a. 9:3.
 Hos. 14:6, 10, Matt. 1:21.
 59, Gen. 21:6, 7, Prov. 15:20, 23:15, 16:4, 25.
 d. 7:32, Gen. 12:2, 48:19, Josh. 3:7, 4:1, 1 Chr. 17:8, 29:12, Matt. 11:9-19, John 5:85.
 e. 7:33, Num. 6:2-4, Judg. 13:4-6, 11:18.
 f. Zech. 9:15, Acts 2:14, 18, Eph. 5:18.
 g. Ps. 22:9, Jer. 1:5, Gal. 1:15.

salvation of the whole world; neral, 'The prayers thou now makest, and all thy prayers, are accepted of God, and come up for a memorial before Him; (as the angel said to Cornelius, when he visited him at prayer; (Acts 10: 30, 31.) and this shall be the sign that thou art accepted of God, Elisabeth shall bear thee a son.' Note, It is very comfortable to praying people, to know that their prayers are heard; and those mercies are doubly sweet, that are given in answer to prayer.

2. He shall have a son in his old age, by Elisabeth his wife, who had been long barren, that by his birth, which was next to miraculous, people might be

was to settle another way of correspondence, more spiritual, between God and man. This angel stood on the right side of the altar of incense, the north side of it, saith Dr. Lightfoot, on Zacharias' right hand; compare Zech. 3: 1. Some think he appeared coming out of the most holy place, which led him to stand at the right side of the altar.

3. The impression this made on Zacharias, v. 12. Though righteous before God, and blameless in his conversation, yet he could not be without some apprehensions at the sight of one whose visage and surrounding lustre bespoke him more than human. Ever since the fall, man has been unable to bear the glory of such revelations, and his conscience afraid of evil tidings; even Daniel himself could not bear it, Dan. 10: 8. Hence God chooses to speak to us by men like ourselves, whose terror shall not make us afraid.

III. The angel's message, v. 13. He began his message, as angels generally did, with, *Fear not*. Perhaps it had never been Zacharias' lot to burn incense before; and, being a very serious conscientious man, we may suppose him full of care to do it well, and perhaps when he saw the angel, he was afraid lest he came to rebuke him for some mistake or miscarriage; 'No,' saith the angel, 'fear not; I have no ill tidings. Fear not, but compose thyself, that thou mayst with a sedate and even spirit receive the message I have to deliver to thee.'

Let us see what that is.

1. His prayers are answered. *Fear not, Zacharias, for thy prayer is heard*. If he means his particular prayer for a son, it must be the prayer he had formerly made, when he was likely to have children; but we may suppose, as he and his wife had now done expecting that mercy, so they had done praying for it; like Moses, it sufficeth them, and they speak no more to God of that matter, Deut. 3: 26. God looks a great way back to the prayers he had made long since for and with his wife, as Isaac for and with his, Gen. 25: 21. Note, Prayers of faith are filed in heaven, and though not presently answered, are not forgotten. Prayers made when we were young and coming into the world, may be answered when we are old and going out of the world. But, if he means the prayer he was now offering with his incense, we may suppose it as according to the duty of his place, for the Israel of God, and the performance of the promises made to them concerning the Messiah, and the coming of his kingdom. Some of the Jewish writers themselves say that the priest, when he burnt incense, prayed for the and now that prayer shall be heard. Or, in general, 'The prayers thou now makest, and all thy prayers, are accepted of God, and come up for a memorial before Him; (as the angel said to Cornelius, when he visited him at prayer; (Acts 10: 30, 31.) and this shall be the sign that thou art accepted of God, Elisabeth shall bear thee a son.' Note, It is very comfortable to praying people, to know that their prayers are heard; and those mercies are doubly sweet, that are given in answer to prayer.

Verses 11-17.

(Marg. Ref. e.-Notes, Num. 6: 1-21. Judg. 13: 2-5, v. 4, 5.) Though 'conceived in sin,' like other men, yet a saving change would be wrought in his soul by the regenerating Spirit of God, even at or before his birth: which would appear in his eminent wisdom and piety from his earliest youth. (Marg. Ref. f. g.) In due time he would be brought forth as a zealous preacher and a successful reformer. (Note, Mat. 4: 6-6.) John went before Christ, as his forerunner, to prepare the people for him; yet the LORD THEIR GOD is the antecedent to the pronoun 'Him.' 'Shall he turn to the Lord their God; and he shall go before him, &c.' so that the angel's address was evidently calculated to induce the belief, that Christ was the Lord God of Israel; and must have been improper, and suited to mislead us, on any other supposition. (Marg. Ref. h.-o., Notes, 76-79. 3: 4-6. Is. 40: 3-5, Mat. 3: 1-4. John 1: 30-34. 3: 27-26, v. 28, 29.) Dr. Campbell renders the clause, 'he shall go before them,' without the least intimation in the notes of any different reading, or even conjectural alteration. 'John, in Hebrew, *Johanan*, which occurs nearly thirty times in the Old Testament, is derived from *JEHOVAH* and *chen*, and properly signifies the grace and favor of the LORD.' Doddridge. SCOTT.

(1.) There appeared an angel of the Lord. 'There had been neither prophecy nor angelic ministry vouchsafed to this people for about four hundred years.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Altar of incense. The altar was double; one outward, for ordinary purposes; the other, which was used for the burning of incense, inward.

(13) Thy prayer is heard. 'It is reasonable to conclude, that these

words chiefly relate to his prayers for the deliverance of Israel by the Messiah, whose appearance was then expected by pious persons, conversant in the sacred writings; (Luke 2: 25, 38, 19: 11. 23: 51.) and the more earnestly desired just at this time, as they suffered so many grievous things, by the oppression of the Romans, and the tyranny of Herod, which, toward the close of his reign, grew more and more insupportable.' DODDRIDGE.

Thou shalt call, &c. See Henry's note on verse 62. ED.

(14) Thou shalt have joy. 'He will be joy and gladness to thee. A child of prayer and faith is likely to be a source of comfort to his parents. Were proper attention paid to this point, there would be fewer disobedient children in the world; and the number of broken-hearted parents would be lessened. But what can be expected from the majority of matrimonial connections begun without the fear of God, and carried on without his love?' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(15) Strong drink. 'The original word *sikera* comes from a Hebrew word meaning to inebriate. Any inebriating liquor, says Jerome, is called *sikera*, whether made of corn, apples, honey, dates, or any other fruits. One of the four prohibited liquors among the East Indian *Moslimans*, is called *sikir*; made by steeping fresh dates in water till they take effect in sweetening it: this liquor is abominable and unlawful. *Helaya*. Probably this is the very liquor referred to in the text. From this word comes our English term *cider* or *sider*.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

'All liquors, however weak, which had undergone fermentation, were understood to be prohibited both to the Nazarites and to the priests, during the week wherein they officiated in the temple.' CAMPBELL.

This son shall be the distinguished favorite of Heaven, and a distinguished blessing to the earth. The honor of having a son is nothing to the honor of having such a son.

He shall be great in the sight of the Lord; those are great indeed, that are so in God's sight, not those that are so in the eye of a vain and carnal world. God will set him before his face continually, employ him in his work, and send him on his errands; and that shall make him truly great and honorable. He shall be a prophet, yea, more than a prophet, and on that account as great as any that ever were born of women, Matt. 11: 11. He shall live retired from the world, and when he makes a public appearance, it will be very mean; but he shall be much, he shall be great, in the sight of the Lord.

He shall be a Nazarite, set apart to God from every thing that is polluting; in token of which he shall drink neither wine nor strong drink, or rather, neither old wine nor new; for most think that the word here translated strong drink, signifies some sort of wine; perhaps what we call made wines, or any thing that is intoxicating. He shall be, as Samson, (Judg. 13: 7.) and Samuel, (1 Sam. 1: 11.) a Nazarite for life. It is spoken of as a great instance of God's favor to his people, that he raised up of their sons for prophets, and their young men for Nazarites, (Amos 2: 11.) as if those that were designed for

16 And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.

17 And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

18 And Zacharias said unto the angel, Whereby shall I know this? for I am an old man, and my wife well stricken in years.

19 And the angel answering said unto him, I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God; and am sent to speak unto thee, and to shew thee these glad tidings.

h 76, Is. 40:5-6. 49:6. Dan. 12:3. Mal. 3:1. Matt. 3:1-8. 21:32.
i 16. John 1:13, 23-37. 8:28.
j 16. Mal. 4:5. Matt. 11:14. 17:11, 12. Mark 9:11-13. John 1:21-24. Rev. 20:4.
k 1 Kings 17:1. 18:18. 21:20. 2 Kings 14:9, 16. Elijah. Matt. 3:4. 7:12. 14:4.
l 37-14. Mal. 4:5.
m 14. 23:24. Matt. 21:29-32. 1 Cor. 6:9-11.
n Or, by.

o 1 Sam. 7:5. 1 Chr. 29:18. 2 Chr. 29:36. Ps. 10:17. 79:8. Am. 4:12. Ac. 16:39. Rom. 9:23. Col. 1:12. 2 Tim. 2:21. 2 Pet. 3:11-14. 1 John 2:28.
p 34. Gen. 15:8. 17:17. 18:12. Judg. 6:38-40. Is. 38:22.
q 7. Num. 11:21-23. 2 Kings 7:2. Rom. 4:13-16. 9:21-23. Matt. 18:10. Heb. 1:14.
r 2:10.

a little before Him, to give notice of his approach, and to prepare people to receive Him.

He shall go in the spirit and power of Elias. That is, First, He shall be such a man as Elias was, and do such works as Elias did; like him, wear a hairy garment and a leathern girdle, and live retired from the world; like him, preach repentance and reformation to a corrupt and degenerate age; like him, be bold and zealous in reproving sin, and witnessing against it even in the greatest; and be hated and persecuted for it by a Herod and his Herodias, as Elijah was by an Ahab and his Jezebel. He shall be carried on in his work, as Elijah was, by a divine spirit and power, which shall crown his ministry with wonderful success. As Elias went before the writing prophets of the Old Testament, and did, as it were, usher in that signal period of the Old Testament dispensation by a little writing of his own, (2 Chron. 21:12.) so John Baptist went before Christ and his apostles, and introduced the gospel-dispensation by preaching the substance of the gospel-doctrine and duty, Repent, with an eye to the kingdom of heaven. Secondly, He shall be that very person prophesied of by Malachi under the name of Elijah, (Mal. 4:5.) who should be sent before the coming of the day of the Lord. Behold! I send you a prophet, even Elias; not Elias the Tishbite, (as the LXX have corruptly read it, to favor the Jews' traditions,) but a prophet in the spirit and power of Elias, as the angel here expounds it.

He shall turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, shall incline their hearts to receive the Messiah, by awakening them to a

prophets, were trained up under the discipline of the Nazarites; Samuel and John Baptist were, which intimates that those that would be eminent servants of God, and employed in eminent services, must live a life of self-denial and mortification, be dead to the pleasure of sense, and keep their minds from every thing darkening and disturbing to them.

He shall be abundantly qualified for the eminent services to which he shall be called; He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb. Observe, [1.] Those that would be filled with the Holy Ghost, must be sober and temperate, and very moderate in the use of wine and strong drink; for that is it that fits him for this. Be not drunk with wine, but be filled with the Spirit, with which that is not consistent, Eph. 5:18. [2.] It is possible that infants may be wrought upon by the Holy Ghost, even from their mother's womb; for John Baptist even then was filled with the Holy Ghost, and it appeared very early that he was sanctified. God has promised to pour out his Spirit on the seed of believers, (Isa. 44:3.) and their first springing up in a dedication of themselves betimes to God is the fruit of it, v. 4, 5. Who then can forbid water, that they should not be baptized, who, for aught we know, (and we can say no more of the adult, witness Simon Magus,) have received the Holy Ghost as well as we, and have the seeds of grace sown in their hearts? Acts 10:47.

He shall be instrumental for the conversion of many souls to God, and the preparing of them to receive and entertain the Gospel of Christ, v. 16, 17.

He shall be sent to the children of Israel, the Jews, to whom the Messiah also was first sent, and not to the Gentiles; to the whole nation, not to the family of the priests only, with which, though he was himself of that family, we do not find he had any particular intimacy or influence.

He shall go before the Lord their God; that is, before the Messiah, whom they must expect not as a temporal prince, but as their Lord and their God, to rule and defend, and serve them in a spiritual way, by his influence on their hearts. Thomas knew this, when he said to Christ, my Lord and my God, better than Nathanael did, when he said, Rabbi, thou art the King of Israel. John shall go before Him, a little before his approach, and to prepare people to receive

of sin and a desire of righteousness. Whatever has a tendency to turn us from iniquity, will turn us to Christ as our Lord and our God: for those who, through grace, are wrought upon to shake off the yoke of sin, will soon be persuaded to take on themselves the yoke of the Lord Jesus.

Hereby he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, that is, of the Jews to the Gentiles; which was begun to be done by John Baptist, who came for a witness, that all through him might believe, baptizing Roman soldiers as well as Jewish Pharisees; and assuring those who gloried in Abraham, that God would out of stones raise up children unto Abraham, (Matt. 3:9.) which would tend to cure their enmity to the Gentiles. Dr. Lightfoot observes, it is the constant usage of the prophets to speak of the church of the Gentiles as children to the Jewish church, Isa. 54:5, 6, 13, 60:4, 9. 62:5. 66:12. When the Jews, that embraced the faith of Christ, were brought to join in communion with the Gentiles, that did so too, then the heart of the fathers was turned to the children. And he shall turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that is, he shall introduce the Gospel, by which the Gentiles, who are now disobedient, shall be turned, not so much to their fathers the Jews, but to the faith of Christ, here called the wisdom of the just, in communion with the believing Jews; or thus, He shall turn the hearts of the fathers with the children, that is, the hearts of old and young; shall be instrumental to bring some of every age to be religious, to work a great reformation in the Jewish nation, to bring them off from a ritual, traditional religion, which they had rested in, and to bring them up to substantial, serious godliness: the effect of which will be, that enmities will die, and discord cease; and they that are at variance, being united in his baptism, will be better reconciled one to another. This agrees with the account Josephus gives of him, Antiq. lib. 18, cap. 7. 'Thus he turned the hearts of fathers and children to God and one another, by turning the disobedient to the wisdom of the just. True religion is the wisdom of just men, in distinction from the wisdom of this world. It is both our wisdom and our duty to be religious. Those who have been unbelieving and disobedient, may be turned to the wisdom of the just; divine grace can conquer the greatest ignorance and prejudice. The great design of the Gospel is, to bring people home to God, and to bring them nearer to one another; and on this errand John Baptist is sent. In the mention twice made of his turning people, there seems to be an allusion to the name of Tishbite, given to Elijah, which, some think, has an appellative signification, and therefore render it Elijah the converter; one that was much employed, and very successful, in conversion-work.'

Hereby he shall make ready a people prepared for the Lord; shall dispose their minds to receive Him and prepare them for the comforts of his coming. Note, All that are to be devoted to the Lord and made happy in Him, must first be prepared and made ready for Him. We must be prepared by grace in this world for glory in the other; by the terrors of the law, for the comforts of the Gospel; by the spirit of bondage, for the Spirit of adoption. Nothing has a more direct tendency to prepare people for Christ, than the doctrine of repentance received and submitted to. When sin is thereby

(17.) Turn the hearts of the fathers, &c.] 'By a very expressive figure of speech, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and the rest of the patriarchs, are represented here as having their hearts alienated from the Jews, their children, because of their unbelief and disobedience; but that the Baptist should so far succeed in converting them to the Lord their God, that these holy men should again look upon them with delight, and acknowledge them for their children. Some think by the word children the Gentiles are meant, and by the fathers the Jews.'

Doddridge says, here is a plain allusion to Mal. 4:6, and admits, as probable, the interpretation of L' Enfant and others, who render it, 'to reconcile fathers and children, supposing it may relate to domestic dissensions inseparable from the variety of religious sects then amongst the Jews.'

Ed. Disobedient.] 'Or unbelieving, the persons who would no longer credit the predictions of the prophets, relative to the manifestation of the

Messiah. Unbelief and disobedience are so intimately connected, that the same word in the sacred writings often serves for both.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 18-20.

(Notes, 34-38. Gen. 17:17, 18. 18:9-12. Marg. Ref. p. q. x. Note, Rom. 4:18-22. Note, 21-25. Marg. Ref. r-x.) Scott.

(18.) 'God has a right to be believed on his word alone; and it is impious, when we are convinced that it is his word, to demand a sign of pleasure for its fulfilment.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

(19.) Gabriel.] 'The might of the strong God; a name peculiarly appropriate now, as pointing out that all-prevailing power by which the strong God could accomplish every purpose, and subdue all things to Himself.'

Stand in the presence of God.] 'To dwell, or to stand in the presence of a sovereign, is an oriental idiom, importing an most eminent and dignified station it court.'

H. H. H.

20 And, behold, 'thou shalt be dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that these things shall be performed,' because thou believest not my words, which shall be fulfilled in their season.

21 And the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple.

22 And when he came out, he could not speak unto them: and they perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple; for he beckoned unto them, and remained speechless.

23 And it came to pass, that as soon as the days of his ministration were accomplished, he departed to his own house.

24 And after those days his wife Elisabeth conceived, and hid herself five months, saying

25 *Gen. 22:68. Ex. 4:11. Ex. 3:26. 24:27. 43. Gen. 16:10-15. Num. 20:12. 2 Kings 12:19, 20. Is. 7:9. Mark 9:19. 16:14. Rev. 3:19. Rom. 9:18. 2 Tim. 2:13. Tit. 1:2. 15:16. 6:23-27. John 13:24. Acts 12:17. 19:33. 21:30. 2 Kings 11:5-7. 1 Chr. 9:25.*

in the Persian court are described by this, that they saw the king's face, Esth. 1: 14. 'Though I am now talking with thee here, yet I stand in the presence of God. I know his eye is upon me, and I dare not say any more than I have warrant to say. But I declare I am sent to speak to thee, and to show thee these glad tidings, which thou oughtest to have received cheerfully.'

(2.) The angel stops his mouth indeed, by exerting his power; 'That thou mayst object no more, behold, thou shalt be dumb,' v. 20. If thou wilt have a sign for the support of thy faith, it shall be such a one as shall be also the punishment of thine unbelief; thou shalt not be able to speak till the day that these things shall be performed,' v. 20. The same word signifies both dumb and deaf; and it is plain that he lost his hearing as well as his speech, for his friends made signs to him, (v. 62,) as well as he to them, v. 22. Now, in striking him dumb, [L.] God dealt justly with him, because he had objected against God's word. Hence we may take occasion to admire the patience of God, and his forbearance towards us, that we, who have so often spoken to his dishonor, have not been struck dumb, as Zacharias was, and as we had been, if God had dealt with us according to our sins: [2.] God dealt with him very kindly, tenderly and graciously. For, *First*, Thus he prevented his speaking any more such distrustful, unbelieving words. If he have thought evil, and will not himself lay his hands upon his mouth, God will. It is better not to speak at all, than to speak wickedly. *Secondly*, Thus he confirmed his faith; and by his being disabled to speak, he is enabled to think the better. If by the rebukes we are under for our sin, we be brought to give more credit to the word of God, we have no reason to complain of them. *Thirdly*, Thus he was kept from divulging the vision, and boasting of it, which otherwise he would have been apt to do, whereas it was designed for the present to be lodged as a secret with him. *Fourthly*, This was a great mercy that God's words should be fulfilled in their season, notwithstanding his sinful distrust. The unbelief of man shall not make the promises of God of no effect; 'thou shalt not be forever dumb, but only till the day that these things shall be performed';

(30.) *Thou shalt be dumb.* Many, by giving way to the language of unbelief, have lost the language of praise and thanksgiving for months, if not years. Dr. A. CLARK.

Verdes 21-25.

The interview between the angel and Zacharias would not take up much time; but the mind of Zacharias must have been occupied and agitated by a variety of reflections and emotions; so that he continued in the temple, some time after the angel had left him, perhaps employed in devotion. (Notes, Num. 6: 23-26.) (Notes, Judg. 11: 34-40. Is. 41: 1.)

(33.) *Ministrations.* The original Greek, here translated minis-

then thy lips shall be opened, that thy mouth may show forth God's praise.' Thus, though God chastens the iniquity of his people with the rod, yet his loving kindness he will not take away.

V. The return of Zacharias to the people and at length to his family, and the conception of this child of promise.

1. The people staid, expecting Zacharias to come out of the temple, because he was to pronounce the blessing upon them in the name of the Lord; and though he staid beyond the usual time, yet they did not, as is too common in Christian congregations, hurry away without the blessing, but waited for him, marvelling that he tarried so long, and afraid lest something was amiss, v. 21.

2. When he came out, he was speechless, v. 22. He was now to have dismissed the congregation with a blessing, but is dumb, and not able to do it; that the people may be minded to expect the Messiah, who can command the blessing, who blesseth indeed, and in whom all the nations of the earth are blessed. Aaron's priesthood is now shortly to be silenced and set aside, to make way for the bringing in of a better hope.

3. He made a shift to give them to understand that he had seen a vision, for he beckoned to them, and remained speechless, v. 22. This represents to us the weakness and deficiency of the Levitical priesthood, in comparison with Christ's priesthood, and the dispensation of the Gospel. The Old Testament speaks by signs, and gives but imperfect intimations; it beckons to us, but remains speechless; it is the Gospel that speaks to us articulately, and gives us clear view of what in the Old Testament was seen through a glass darkly.

4. He staid out the days of his ministration; for he could burn incense, though dumb and deaf. When we cannot perform the service of God so well as we would, yet, if we perform it as well as we can, God will accept of us in it.

5. He then returned to his family, and his wife, by virtue of the promise, conceived, (v. 23, 24.) and, being sensible of it, she hid herself five months, and did not go abroad as usual. (1.) Lest she should do herself any prejudice, or any hurt to the conception. (2.) Lest she should contract any ceremonial pollution which might intrench upon the Nazarieth of her child, remembering the command given to Samson's mother in a like case, Judg. 13: 14. And though five months are mentioned, because of what follows in the sixth month, yet we may suppose she in like manner took care of herself during the whole time of her pregnancy. (3.) Some think she hid herself in excess of modesty, ashamed it should be said that one of her age should be with child. Or, it was in token of her humility, that she might not seem to boast of the honor God had put upon her. (4.) She hid herself for devotion, that she might spend her time in prayer and praise. The saints are God's hidden ones; she gives this reason for her retirement, 'For thus hath the Lord dealt with me; not only thus graciously in giving me a child, but thus honorably in giving me such a child as is to be a Nazarete;' (for so her husband might by writing signify to her;) 'he hath taken away my reproach among men.' Fruitfulness among the Jews, because of the promises of the increase of their nation, and the rising of the Messiah among them, was thought to be so great a blessing, that it was a great reproach to be barren; and those who were so though ever so blameless, were concluded to be guilty of some great sin unknown, for which

tration, is literally liturgy, which signifies properly any public service, whether civil or military. But, in the Scriptures, it is applied to the public offices of religion. First, that of the priests and Levites, under the Mosaic law: Secondly, that of Christian priests, under the Gospel dispensation, including every branch of the sacerdotal office. In the ecclesiastical writers, it is chiefly applied to the public offices of prayer, performed morning and evening. Hammond. (24.) *hid herself five months.* That she might have the full proof of the accomplishment of God's promise, before she appeared in public, or spoke of her mercies. Dr. A. CLARK.

25 Thus hath the Lord dealt with me, in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men.

[Practical Observations.]

26 ¶ And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

27 To a virgin espoused to a man, whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

o 13. Gen. 21:1, 2. 25:21. 30:22. I Sam. 1:19, 20. 2:21, 22. Heb. 1:1. Gen. 30:23. I Sam. 1:6. 1s. 43: 5:1-4. 1:24. 1:25. 1:26. Matt. 2:23. John 1:45, 46. 7: 41, 42. 2:26. Gen. 3:15. Is. 7:14. Jer. 31: 22. Matt. 1:21, 23.

the title and character of the house of David, and knew her genealogy, which, as long as the promise of the Messiah was to be fulfilled, was worth keeping; though now, to trace one's genealogy, is of little importance.

3. She was a virgin, but espoused to Joseph, a man, who, though like her of low estate, was also of the same royal stock, of the house of David, Matt. 1:20. Christ's mother was a virgin, because He was not to be born by ordinary generation, but miraculously; which was necessary, that, though He must partake of the nature of man, He might not of the corruption

they were so punished. Now Elisabeth triumphs, that she is vindicated; *Thus hath the Lord dealt with me*, beyond any thought or expectation of mine, *in the days wherein he looked on me*. Note, In God's gracious dealings with us, we ought to observe his gracious regards to us.

V. 26-33. We have here all it was fit we should know concerning the incarnation and conception of our blessed Savior, six months after the conception of John. The same angel Gabriel, that was employed in communicating with Zacharias, being employed here also; as the same work of redemption is here carried on which was then begun. As bad angels are not of the redeemed, so good angels are not redeemers; yet they are employed by the Redeemer as his messengers, and they go cheerfully, because they are his Father's servants, and his children's friends.

I. We have here an account of the mother of our Lord, of whom He was to be born, whom, though we are not to pray to, yet we ought to praise God for.

1. Her name was *Mary*, the same name with *Miriam*, sister of Moses and Aaron. It signifies *exalted*, and a great elevation it was to her indeed, to be thus favored above all the daughters of the house of David.

2. She was of royal descent from David, and though poor and low in the world, went under

of that nature; but He was born of a virgin espoused, to put honor upon the married state, that that might not be brought into contempt, (which was an ordinance in innocency,) by the Redeemer's being born of a virgin.

4. She lived in Nazareth, a city of Galilee, a remote corner of the country, in no reputation for religion or learning, but bordering on the heathen, and therefore called *Galilee of the Gentiles*: Christ's having his relations there, intimates favor for the Gentile world. And Dr. Lightfoot observes, that *Jonah* was by birth a Galilean, and *Elijah* and *Elisha* very much conversant in Galilee, who were all famous prophets of the *Gentiles*. The angel was sent to her at Nazareth. Note, No distance or disadvantage of place shall be a prejudice to those whom God has favors in store for. The angel carries his message as cheerfully to Mary at Nazareth in Galilee, as to Zacharias in the temple at Jerusalem.

II. The angel's address to her, v. 28. We are not told what she was doing, when he came unto her; but he surprised her with this salutation, *Hail, thou that art highly favored*. This was intended to raise in her, 1. A value for herself; which though it is very rare that any need, yet in some, who, like Mary, pore only on their low estate, there is occasion for. 2. An expectation of great news, not from abroad, but from above. Heaven designs, no doubt, uncommon favors for one whom an angel visits with such respect. *Hail thou—rejoice thou*; it was the usual form of salutation, and expresses esteem and good will.

(1.) She is dignified; 'Thou art highly favored. God, in his choice of thee to be the mother of the Messiah, has put peculiar honor on thee above that of Eve, who was the mother

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 8-25. While by faith we view our great High Priest ministering in the temple above; and are encouraged to join in our petitions with those all over the earth, who every hour are approaching the mercy-seat by this 'new and living Way.' (Note, Heb. 10:19-22,) let us think how terrifying would be the appearance of visitants from the world of spirits; that we may be thankful for the invisible ministry of angels, and that the Lord sends his messages to us by men like ourselves, whose 'terror cannot make us afraid.' (Notes, Job 4:12-16. 33:1-7. If faithful, we need fear no evil, but may expect glad tidings; and if our prayers be accepted, all blessings will in due time be communicated. Nor should delays be construed into denials, for our prayers may be abundantly answered after we are gone to heaven.—We ought not to be anxious about having children, for we know not whether they would be cause of 'joy and gladness,' or the contrary.... Yet it is a peculiar favor to have children, who shall be gratefully remembered for their piety and usefulness; though in seeking that ours may be such, we should carefully observe the difference between a great man in the world's esteem, and one who is 'great in the sight of the Lord.' The great ones of the earth are mean and obscure, in the judgment of God, compared with a poor prophet or minister, who makes it his employment and joy to

bring sinners to repentance, and to call on men to believe in Christ, and prepare for his coming to judge the world. This kind of greatness we may desire for our children; and with that view, we should early devote them to God, and bring them up for Him. Nor should we forget, that early and constant temperance, and indifference about worldly pleasures, are proper indications of future eminence and usefulness; that the increase of true godliness tends to the termination of contention; and that nominal Christians in general need conversion, as much as the heathen; even as the Israelites by birth did of old.—Even real believers are not always alike strong in faith; but are apt, when they lose sight of the power, truth, and love of God, to dishonor Him by unbelief; and their mouths are stopped in silence and confusion, when otherwise they would have been praising God with the voice of joy and gratitude. It is good, however, even under divine chastisement, to go on with our work, as far as we are able: for thus our afflictions may be mitigated and sanctified, and returning mercies will be preparing for us. But when we are peculiarly favored, we should shun all ostentation; and every interposition of the Lord, to take away our reproach or trouble, should remind us to court retirement, in order to a due improvement of his mercies.

SCOTT.

(35.) Reproach.] 'The Jews looked upon it as a singular happiness to be instrumental in multiplying the holy seed.' DODDRIE. And the hope of giving birth to the Messiah rendered the Jewish women extremely anxious for children.' LIGHTFOOT.

Verses 26-33.

(Notes, Matt. 1:18-25. Ex. 3:15, 20. 15:21.) It is remarkable that the name 'Elisabeth' was the same with *Elisheba*, the wife of Aaron, and that of 'Mary,' the same with that of *Miriam* his sister. (Marg. and Ref.) The Papists have unaccountably turned this salutation of the angel into an act of adoration; and the word for 'highly favored,' having been rendered in the Vulgate, 'full of grace,' they have thus addressed the virgin Mary with idolatrous worship, and very great numbers do so to this day. But there is no expression in this address, but that might properly be used by a superior to an inferior, in Mary's situation; and doubtless it was thus intended for a greater abatement of our carnality, than to suppose that the angel Gabriel came down from heaven, to worship a poor sinful mortal here on earth, as Mary well knew herself to be! Mary, however, was disquieted in her mind: she was not only alarmed at the angel's presence; but was greatly perplexed about the meaning and consequences of so uncommon an address. But the angel calmed her fears, and assured her, that she had 'found favor with God,' and would shortly conceive and bear a Son, whom she was directed to call *Jesus*. He would be great, above all who ever appeared on earth, being called, and acknowledged to be, the Son of the Highest; as being one in nature and perfection with the 'Lord God,' who would in due time exalt Him, in his mediatorial character, to the throne of David, his father as to his human nature; and on that throne He would reign 'over the house of Jacob,' and over the true Israel of God, not only for a few years, as David and his suc-

cessors had done, but forever; so that 'of his kingdom there should be no end.' (Marg. Ref. i.—Notes, 2 Sam. 7:12-16. Ps. 2:4-9. 89:19-37. Is. 9:6, 7. Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45. 7:13, 14. 1 Cor. 15:20-23. Rev. 11:15-18.) (35.) His father David.] *Mary's Ref. i.* 'The virgin must therefore be of the house of David; for seeing the angel told her she should not have this Son by the knowledge of a man, it was not Joseph's, but Mary's being of the house of David, which made David his father.' WHITBY.

SCOTT.

(26.) A city of Galilee.] 'As Joseph and Mary were both of the family of David, the patrimonial estate of which lay in Bethlehem, it seems as if the family residence should have been in that city, and not in Nazareth; for we find that even after the return from the captivity, the several families went to reside in those cities, to which they originally belonged.' See Neh. 11:3. But it is probable that the holy family moved to Galilee, for fear of exciting the jealousy of Herod, who had usurped that throne to which they had an indisputable right. See on ch. 2:39. Thus by keeping out of the way, they avoided the effects of his jealousy.' DR. A. CLARKE.

Nazareth.] 'A city in the tribe of Zabulon, which was reduced to so low and contemptible a condition, that no good thing was expected from thence. John 1:46.' DODDRIE.

(27.) To a virgin espoused, &c.] 'At length the moment is come which is to give a Son to a virgin, a Savior to the world, a pattern to mankind, a sacrifice to sinners, a temple to the divinity, and a new principle to the new world. The Son of God comes to humble the proud, and to honor poverty, meekness and contempt. He chooses an obscure place for the mystery which is most glorious in his 'unity, its union with the Divinity, and for that which is most degrading (his sufferings and death) he will choose the greatest city! How far we men from such a conduct as this.' QUEEN.

28 And the angel
came in unto her, and
said, ^b Hail, *thou that
art* * highly favored,
^c the Lord is with thee:
* blessed art thou a-
mong women.

29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

30 And the angel
said unto her, ° Fear
not, Mary: for thou
hast found favor with
God.

31 And, behold,
thou shalt conceive
in thy womb, and
bring forth a son, and
shalt call his name
JESUS.

32 He shall be great,
and shall be called
'The Son of the High-
est: and the Lord God
shall 'give unto him
the throne of his father
David:

33 And ^u he shall
reign over ^x the house
of Jacob for ever; and
of his kingdom there
shall be no end.

34 Then said Mary
unto the angel, ^yHow

Dan. 9:21-23. 10:19.
 Or, *graciously accepted*, or, *much*
graced. 30. Hos 14:2. Eph. 1:6.
 1 Judg. 6:12. Is. 43:5. Jer. 1:8,19.
 Acts 18:10.
 42. 11:27,28. Judg. 5:24. Prov.
 31:29-31. Matt. 12:45-50.
 12. Mark 6:49,50. 16:5,6. Acts
 10:4.

66. 2:19,51.
Judg. 6:13-15. I Sam. 9:20,21.
Acts 10:4,17.
13. 12:32. Is. 41:10,14. 43:1-4.
44:2. Matt. 28:5. Acts 18:9,10.
27:24. Rom 8:31,32. Heb. 13:5.

p 27. Is. 7:14. Matt. 1:23. Gal. 4:4.
q 13. 2:21. Matt. 1:21, 25.
r 15. 3:16. Matt. 3:11. 12:42. Phil.

2:9-11
■ 35. Mark 5:7. 14:61. John 6:69.
Act^s 16:17. Rom. 1:4. Heb. 1:2-6.
1:2 Sam. 7:12, 13. Ps. 132:11. Is. 9:6.

7. 16:5. Jer. 23:5, 6. 33:11-17.
 Ps. 17:22-24. 34:23, 24. 37:24, 25.
 Am. 9:11, 12. Matt 28:18. John 3:
 16-18. 19:21. Luke 2:29.

85. 28. 5:21-29. 12:34. Acts 2:30,
86. Eph. 1:20-23 Rev. 37.
Ps 45:6. 89 35-37. Dan. 2:44. 7:
13, 14, 27. Ob. 21. Mic. 4:7. 1 Cor.

15:24, 25. Heb. 1:8. Rev. 11:15.
20:4-6, 22:3-5.
Rom. 9:6. Gal. 3:29. 6:16. Phil.
2:3

(28) *The angel came in &*

of all living! The Vulgate translates it *full of grace*, and thence gathers, that she had more of the inherent graces of the Spirit than even any had; whereas it is certain it bespeaks only the singular favor done her, in preferring her to conceive and bear our blessed Lord; an honor, which, since He was to be the seed of the woman, some woman must have, not for personal merit, but purely for the sake of free grace, and she is pitched upon; *even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.*

(2.) She has the presence of God with her; '*The Lord is with thee*, though poor and mean; and perhaps now forecasting how to get a livelihood, and maintain a family in the married state.' The angel with this word raised the faith of Gideon; (Judg. 6: 19) *The Lord is with thee*. Nothing is to be despised of, if we have *God with us*. This word might put her in mind of Immanuel, *God with us*; which a virgin shall conceive and bear: (Isa. 7: 14), and why not she?

(3.) She has the blessing of God upon her; *Blessed art thou among women*; not only accounted so, but really so; and thou mayst expect to be blessed.³ She explains it herself, (v. 43.) *All generations shall call me blessed*. Compare it with what Deborah saith of Jael, another that was the glory of her sex; (Judg. 5. 24.) *Blessed shall she be above the women in the tent*.

III. The consternation she was in, upon this address, p. 29. *When she saw him, she was troubled at the sight of him, and much more at his sayings.* Had she been a proud young woman, ambitions of distinction in the world, she would have been *pleased* and puffed up with it; but, instead of this, she is *confounded* at it, as not conscious to herself of any thing that either merited or promised such great things; and she cast in *her mind what manner of salutation this should be*: Was it from heaven or of men? to amuse, or to ensnare her,—was it to hant her, or was there something substantial and weighty in it? But of all the thoughts she had, I believe she had not the least idea of its being ever intended or used for a prayer, as it is, and has been, for many ages, by the corrupt, degenerate, and anti-Christian ages of the church, and to be ten times repeated for the Lord's prayer once; so it is in the church of Rome. But her thoughtfulness on this occasion gives a very useful intimation to young people of her sex, when addresses are made to them, to consider and cast in *their minds* what manner of *salutations* they are, whence they come, and what their tendency is, that they may receive them accordingly, and may always *sing on their guard*.

IV. The message itself which the angel had to deliver to her. The angel paused for her reply; but, observing her perplexity increased, he went on, v. 30. 'Fear not, Mary, my only design is to assure thee that thou hast found favor with God more than thou thinkest of, as many think they are more favored of God than really they are.' Note, Those that have found favor with God, should not give way to disquieting, distrustful fears. Both God favor thee? Fear not, though the world frown on thee. Is He for thee? No matter who is against thee.

1. Though a virgin, she shall have the honor of being a mother: 'Thou shalt bring forth a son, and call his name Jesus,' v. 31. Eve, though she should have the honor to be the mother of all living, was to have this allay to that honor, that her desire should be to her husband, and he should rule over her, Gen. 3: 16. But Mary has the honor without the allay.

2. Though she lives in *poverty* and *obscurity*, yet she shall have the honor to be the mother of the Messiah; whose name shall be *Jesus*—a *Savior*, such a one as the world *needs*, rather than such a one as the Jews *expect*.

(1.) He will be *very nearly allied to the upper world. He shall be great, truly, incontestably great, for He shall be called the Son of the Highest, the Son of God, who is the Highest;* of the same nature, as the son is of the father; and very dear to Him, as the son is to the father. He shall be *called, and not mis-called, the Son of the Highest, for He is Himself God over all, blessed forevermore;* Rom. 9: 5. Note, Those who are the children of God, though but by adoption and regeneration, are *truly great, and therefore* are concerned to be *very good,* 1 John 3: 12.

(2.) He will be very *highly preferred* in the *lower world*; for, though born under the most disadvantageous circumstances, and appearing in the form of a servant, yet *the Lord shall give unto Him the throne of his father David*; (32.) to which, since the entail took place, neither *by the Salique law*, nor by the right of primogeniture, it was not impossible he might bring forth an heir, and therefore might the more easily believe it, and that, after the sceptre had been long departed from that ancient and honorable family, it should now at length return to it again, to remain in it, not by succession, but in the same hand to eternity. His people will not give him that throne, nor acknowledge his right to rule them; but *the Lord God shall give him the right, and set him as his King upon the holy hill of Zion*. He assures her, [1.] That his kingdom shall be *spiritual*; He shall reign *over the house of Jacob, not Israel according to the flesh*, for they neither came into his interests nor continued long a people; it must therefore be a *spiritual kingdom*, the house of Israel according to promise, that He must rule over, [2.] That it shall be *eternal*; He shall reign *forever*, and of his kingdom there shall be no end; other crowns endure not to every generation, but Christ's doth, Prov. 27-24. The Gospel is the last dispensation: we are to look for no other.

V. The further information given her, upon her inquiry concerning the birth of this Prince

1. Her inquiry is just; '*How shall this be?*' v. 34. She knew that the Messiah must be born of a *virgin*; and if she must be his mother, she desires to know how. This was not the language of her distrust, or any doubt of what the angel said, but of a desire to be further instructed.

2. The answer is satisfactory, v. 35. (1.) She shall conceive by *the power of the Holy Ghost*, whose proper work and office it is to *sanctify*. Doth she ask how this shall be? This is enough to help her over all her difficulty, that a divine power will undertake it, not the power

(28.) *The angel came in. &c.]* 'Some think that this was all a vision, and that there was no personal appearance of an angel. But when divine visions are given, they are announced as such in the sacred writings; nor can we with safety attribute any thing to a vision, where a divine communication is made; unless it be specified as such in the text.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

(3) *He shall be great.*] 'Great, in respect of his person: great, in respect of his offices: great, in respect of his kingdom.' BURKITT.
Called the Son of the Highest: See Notes on 35. Ed.

(33; *The house of Jacob*.) 'All who belong to the twelve tribes, the whole Israelitish people.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

2: 28, 29.) and an addition of the Gentiles.' STORR and FLATT.
Verses 34—38.

This? (18). The latter implies a doubt of the truth of the prediction; the former merely asks directing. Mary's question seems entirely the language of faith and humble admiration. She probes the angel's words, quire, what he can conclude ought to be possible from her epousia with Joseph, and thus she does not seem to be posing her question with Josaphat, as if she suspected that he was deceiving her. (Note *Judg.* 13: 8.) She seems to have understood it, as implying that she was to conceive miraculously; but she asked no sign for the confirmation of her faith, as Zacharias had done; and the angel in fact merely told her that she would conceive

by the Holy Spirit descending upon her, by whose creative energy, and under whose special protection, the Infant would be formed in her womb. Thus the promised Seed would properly be 'made of a woman,' and be a partaker of human nature, without the pollution of sin, which is common to all others descended from fallen Adam. (*Notes, Gen. 3: 14, 15. Joh. 1: 1-8, 4. Is. 7: 14. Jer. 31: 21, 22. Gal. 4: 4-7.*) This child might therefore be called 'that holy thing,' or *poly child* and even in respect of his human nature, He should be acknowledged to be 'the Son of God,' as well as in his divine nature, and his mysterious Person, as 'God made manifest in the flesh.' The Man, Christ Jesus, being the Son of God, and the God, who was conceived by the operation of the Holy Spirit, is a full proof of the Deity of Christ, and His Father's conception in virginity was more evidently miraculous, than Eve's both in her old age; but nothing was, or could be, impossible to the power of God. (*Note, Gen. 18: 13-15.*) (*Marr. Ref. a, h, d. a.*)

(34.) *How can this be?* 'Some would render this as if she would be resolved whether this birth were to be produced in a common or a miraculous manner. But I think it is more natural to suppose that she understood the former words as an intimation that the effect was immediately to take place, to which her present circumstances seemed, humanly speaking, an invincible objection.' DODDRIEGE.

'Being only betrothed; and not as yet married, she knew this one

shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

35 And the angel answered and said unto her, 'The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.'

36 And behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age; and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.

37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

[Practical Observations.]

39 ¶ And Mary a-

- 27:31. Matt. 1:20.
- Job 14:1. 116. 25:4. Ps. 51:5.
- Eph. 1:13. 16. 16. 1:28-28.
- Ps. 27. 14. 14:35. 25:63.
- 84. 27:5. Mark 1:1. John 1:34.
- 49. 20:2. Acts 8:37. Rom. 1:14.
- Gal 3:20.
- 21-26.
- 18:27. Gen. 18:14. Num. 11:23.
- Job 42:2. Jer. 32:17, 27. Zech. 9:8.
- Matt. 13:28. Mark 10:27. Phil. 1:21.
- 8 Sam. 7:25-29. Rom. 4:20, 21.

of an angel, as in other works of wonder, but the power of the Holy Ghost.

(2.) She must ask no questions as to the way and manner how it shall be wrought; for the Holy Ghost, as the power of the Highest, shall overshadow her, as the cloud covered the tabernacle when the glory of God took possession of it to conceal it from those that would too curiously observe, and pry into the mystery of it. The formation of every babe in the womb, and the entrance of the spirit of life into it, is a mystery in nature; none knows the way of the spirit, nor how the bones are formed in the womb of her that is with child, Eccl. 11:5. We were made in secret, Ps. 139:15, 16. Much more was the formation of the child Jesus a mystery; without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3:16. It is a new thing created in the earth, (Jer. 31:22.) concerning which we must not covet to be wise above what is written.

(3.) The child shall be a holy thing, and therefore must not be conceived by ordinary generation, for he must not share in the common corruption and pollution of the human nature; he is spoken of emphatically, *That Holy Thing*, such as never was; called the Son of God, as the Son of the Father by eternal generation, as an indication of which, He shall now be formed by the Holy Ghost. His human nature was to be so produced, as was fit, and taken into union with the divine nature.

3. A further encouragement to her faith, in the situation of her cousin Elisabeth, v. 36. Here is an age of wonders beginning, and therefore be not surprised; here is one among thy own relations truly great, though not altogether so great as this; it is usual with God to advance in working wonders. Greater works than these shall he do. Elisabeth was, on the father's side, of the daughters of Aaron, (v. 5.) yet on the mother's side she might be of the house of David, for those two families often intermarried, as an earnest of the uniting of the royalty and the priesthood in the Messiah. This is the sixth month with her that was called barren. This intimates, as Dr. Lightfoot thinks,

that all the instances in the Old Testament, of those having children that had been long barren, which was above nature, were designed to prepare the world for the belief of a virgin's bearing a son, which was against nature. Thus Abraham saw Christ's day in the birth of Isaac. The angel assures Mary of this, to encourage her faith, and concludes with that great truth, that with God nothing shall be impossible, v. 37. Abraham therefore staggered not at the promise, Rom. 4:20, 21. No word of God must be incredible to us, as long as no work of God is impossible to Him.

VI. Her acquiescence, v. 38. She owns herself, 1. A believing subject to the divine authority; 'Behold, the handmaid of the Lord. Lord, I am at thy disposal.' She objects not the danger of spoiling her marriage, and blemishing her reputation, but leaves the issue with God, and submits entirely to his will. 2. A believing expectant of the divine favor. She is not only content that it should be so, but humbly desires it; *Be it unto me according to thy word*. Such a favor, it was not for her to slight, or be indifferent to; and for what God has promised, He will be sought unto. Remember, and perform thy word unto thy servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. We must, as Mary here, guide our desires by the word of God, and ground our hopes upon it. Be it unto me according to thy word.

Hereupon, the angel departed from her; having completed the errand, he returned, to give account of it, and receive new instructions. Converse with angels was always a transient thing, and soon over; it will be constant and permanent in the future state. It is generally supposed that at this instant the virgin conceived, by the overshadowing power of the Holy Ghost; but of this, the Scripture being silent, we should not be inquisitive.

V. 39-56. We have here an interview between Elisabeth and Mary, occasioned probably by the intimation of the angel; v. 36. Sometimes it may prove a better service than we think, to bring good people together, for conference. Here is,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 26-38. Whilst we contemplate the peculiar honor conferred on the virgin-mother of our Lord, we should remember that angels rejoice over every sinner who repenteth, and deem every believer 'highly favored,' in whose heart 'Christ dwells by faith.' (Notes, 2:8-14. Eph. 1:3-9.) Happy indeed must they be, to whom the Lord is graciously reconciled, and with whom He is present by his sanctifying Spirit! They may be troubled and perplexed, and can scarcely raise their hopes so high, as to expect the blessings intended for them; but they may be assured that they have 'found favor with God,' as most nearly related to 'the Savior of the world.' (Notes, Matt. 12:46-50. 25:34-40. P. O. 31-40.) Let us then rejoice in his personal and mediatorial exaltation, not only 'over the

house of Jacob,' but over 'angels, principalities, and powers in heavenly places,' as 'the Son of God' and 'the Son of David.' Let us seek to be, and to approve ourselves, the subjects of 'his kingdom of which there shall be no end;' and if we meet with sufferings, let us remember how Jesus suffered, before He entered into his glory. Relying on his promises, we should carefully and diligently keep his commandments, that we too may be 'the sons and daughters of the Lord almighty.' (Notes, 2 Cor. 6:14-18. v. 18. 7:1.)—In all our conflicts and temptations we should still remember, that 'with God nothing shall be impossible;' and when we read and hear his promises, we should turn them into prayers, saying, 'Behold the servant of the Lord, let it be unto me according to this thy word.'

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ception could not have yet taken place; and she modestly inquires by what means the promise of the angel is to be fulfilled, in order to regulate her conduct accordingly.

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(35.) The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, &c. It was necessary to the scheme of redemption, by the Redeemer's offering Himself up as an expiatory sacrifice, that the manner of our Lord's conception should be such, that He should in no degree partake of the natural pollution of the fallen race for whose guilt He came to atone, nor be included in the general condemnation of Adam's progeny. In order to reverse the universal sentence passed upon mankind, and to purge their universal corruption, a Redeemer was to be found, pure of every stain of inbred and contracted guilt. And since every person, produced in the ordinary course of generation, could not but be of this contaminated race; the purity, requisite to the efficacy of the Redeemer's atonement, could it be necessary, that the manner of his conception should be supernatural. Thus the miraculous conception has a natural connection with the other articles of our faith. Without it, it could not have been true, as St. John asserts, that 'the Word was made flesh,' (John 1:14.) and the atonement of the Redeemer would have been inadequate and ineffectual.

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Son of God.' The angel does not give the appellation Son of God to the divine nature of Christ, but to that holy person or thing, which was to be born of the virgin, by the energy of the Holy Spirit. The divine nature could not be born of the virgin, the human nature was born of her. The divine nature had no beginning; it was God manifest in the flesh, (1 Tim. 3:16.) It was that Word, which, being in the beginning (from eternity) with God, (John 1:2.) was afterward made flesh (became manifest in human nature) and tabernacled among us, John 1:14. Two natures must ever be distinguished in Christ: the human nature, in reference to which He is the Son of God, and inferior to Him, (Mark 13:32. John 5:19. 14:28.) and the divine na-

ture, which was from eternity, and equal to God, John 1:1. 10:30. Rom. 9:5. Col. 1:16-18.)

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(36.) Who was called barren. Probably by way of reproach, or to distinguish her from some other Elisabeth, also well known, who had been blest with children.

It shall be called. The phrase, to be called, seems to signify in the language of Scripture, not only that the thing shall really be what is called, but also that it shall be taken notice of in that view. Compare Is. 1:26. 9:6. 35:8. 47:1, 5. 56:7. 61:36. Matt. 5:9. 19:21. 13. Mark 11:17. 1 John 3:1.

DODDRIDGE.

Verbes 39-45.

(Marg. Ref. 1. Marg. Ref. h-k. Marg. Ref. 1.—Note, Matt 8:8. 9. Marg. Ref. m.—Note, Matt. 22:41-46. Note, Gen. 28:22, 23.) Mary was peculiarly happy, in that she had so readily and implicitly believed the divine message; by which means she had honored God, and had received her mercies unmingled with rebukes; for the promise would surely and exactly be accomplished. There was in this a reference to Zacharias's unbelief, and the painful rebuke under which he lay; but the subject was touched very gently, as it was proper from the mouth of Elisabeth. It is remarkable, that Mary, though young and inexperienced, so readily believed a far more difficult promise, than that about which Zacharias, an aged priest and an experienced believer, had hesitated. (Marg. and Marg. Ref. o.—Note, 18-20.) It does not appear, that Elisabeth knew the circumstances of Mary's vision, or her faith in the divine message, except by the Spirit of prophecy; for it may be concluded from the narrative, that she thus addressed Mary, before she had time to inform her of these matters. The words of Elisabeth, and all the circumstances of her interview with Mary, must have had a powerful effect in establishing the faith, and enlarging the expectations, of the latter: and the favor and testimony of persons, so highly respected as Zacharias and Elisabeth, would

rose in those days, and went 'into the hill-country with haste, into a city of Judah;

40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth.

41 And it came to pass, that when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb: and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.

42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy.

45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord.

46 ¶ And Mary said,

¶ *Jo. 10:40. 15:48-59. 21:9-11. 13:44. Gen. 22:2. Ps. 22:10. 67. 1. Acts 2:4. 4:3. 6:3. 7:55. Eph. 5:18. Rev. 1:10. 1:15-18. Jude. 5:25. 19:38. Gen. 22:18. Ps. 21:6. 45:2. 72:17-19. Acts 2:26-28. Rom. 9:5. Heb. 12:2. 1:7. Ruth 3:10. 1 Sam. 25:41. Matt. 8:14. John 13:6-8. Phil. 2:3. 20:42-44. Pa. 110:1. John 20:28. 11:11. 3:8. 4:41. 20:20. 11:27-28. 2 Chr. 20:20. John 11:40. 20:29. 27. which believed, that there shall be, &c.*

I. Mary's visit to Elisabeth. Mary was the younger, and younger with child; if therefore they must come together, it was fit she should take the journey, and not insist on the preference which the greater dignity of her conception gave her, v. 39. She arose, in those days, at that time, (as it is commonly explained, Jer. 33:16. 50:4.) in a day or two after the angel had visited her, taking time first, as is supposed, for her devotion, or rather hastening away to her cousin's, where she would have more leisure, and better help, in the family of a priest. She went, with care, diligence, expedition; not as young people commonly go abroad and visit their friends, to divert herself, but to inform herself: she went to a city of Judah in the hill-country; probably Hebron, for that is said, (Josh. 21:10, 11.) to be in the hill-country of Judah, and to belong to the priests; thither Mary hastened, though it was a long journey, some scores of miles.

1. Dr. Lightfoot conjectures that she was to conceive our Savior there at Hebron, and perhaps had it intimated to her by the angel, and hastened thither on that account. He thinks it probable that Shiloh, of the tribe of Judah, and the seed of David, should be conceived in a city of Judah and of David, as He was to be born in Bethlehem, another city which belonged to them both. In Hebron the promise was given of Isaac, and circumcision instituted. Here (saith he) Abraham had his first land, and David his first crown: here lay interred, Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebecca, Jacob and Leah, and, as antiquity has held, Adam and Eve. He therefore thinks it suits singularly with the harmony God uses in his works, that the promise should begin to take place by the conception of the Messiah, among those patriarchs to whom it was given. I see no improbability in the conjecture, but add this for the support of it, that Elisabeth said, (v. 45.) There shall be a performance; as if it were not performed yet, but was to be performed there.

2. It is generally supposed that she went thither to confirm her faith, and rejoice with her cousin. She might hope also to be more retired from company, or to have more agreeable company there, than she could have in Nazareth. We may suppose she made no mention to her neighbors in Nazareth of the angel's message to her, and she knew no person with whom she could freely converse concerning it but her cousin Elisabeth, and therefore she hastened to her. Note, It is well for those that have a work of grace begun in their souls, and Christ forming there, to communicate experiences one to another; and they will find that, as in water, face answers to face, so doth the heart of man to man,—of Christian to Christian.

II. The meeting of Mary and Elisabeth. Mary entered the house of Zacharias; but he, being dumb and deaf, kept his chamber, and probably, saw no company; therefore she saluted Elisabeth, (v. 40.) and told her how she was come to make her a visit, and rejoice with her in her joy.

What now occurred was for the confirmation of their faith, and very extraordinary. Mary knew that Elisabeth was with child, but nothing had been told Elisabeth of her cousin Mary's being designed for the mother of the Messiah; and what knowledge she had of it, must have come by a revelation.

1. The babe leaped in her womb. Probably she had been several weeks quick, (for it was now her sixth month,) and had often felt the child stir; but this was an unusual motion, which alarmed her to expect something very extraordinary. It is the same word in the Greek, that is used by the LXX (Gen. 25:22.) for the struggling of Jacob and Esau in Rebecca's womb, and the mountains skipping, Ps. 114:4. The babe leaped as it were to give a signal to his mother that He was now at hand, whose forerunner he was to be, about six months in ministry, as in his birth; or, it was the effect of some strong impression made on the mother. Now began to be fulfilled what the angel said to his father, (v. 15.) that he should be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb; and perhaps he himself had some reference to this, (John 3:29.) The friend of the Bridegroom's voice, heard, though not by him, yet by his mother.

2. Elisabeth was herself filled with the Holy Ghost, or a Spirit of prophecy; by which, as well as by his particular suggestions, she was given to understand that the Messiah was at hand, in whom prophecy should revive, and by whom the Holy Ghost should be more plentifully poured out than ever, according to the expectations of those who waited for the consolation of Israel. The uncommon motion of the babe in her womb, was a token of the extraordinary emotion of her spirit under a divine impulse. Note, Those whom Christ graciously visits, may know it by their being filled with the Holy Ghost; for if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

III. Elisabeth's uncommon welcome to Mary, as to one of whom the Messiah was to be born.

1. She congratulates her on her honor, which she acknowledges with the greatest assurance and satisfaction; speaking out with a loud voice in a transport of joy, and saying what she cared not who knew,—Blessed art thou among women, as said the angel; v. 28. She adds a rea-

powerfully operate to prevent any injurious reflections on her character. (Note, Matt. 1:18, 19.)

(39.) City of Judah. 'Hebron, the city of the priests, (Josh. 21:14.) situated in the tribe of Judah, about forty miles south of Jerusalem, and upwards of seventy from Nazareth.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

'Josh. 11:21. 15:48, 54. These hills, running across the middle of Judah, from south to north, gave to the tract, along which they ran, the name of the hill country.'

'Hebron was the chief city of that part of Judah, as may be gathered from 2 Sam. 2.'

(45.) Blessed is she that believeth. 'Not doubting an oblique reference here to the unhappiness of Zacharias,' Doddridge notices the 'great decorum which the Spirit of God, as well as the rules of modesty and piety, taught Elisabeth to observe, when the faults of a husband were in question.'

Faith = here represented as the foundation of true happiness, because it receives the fulfilment of God's promises.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 46-55.

(Note, 1 Sam. 2:1-3.) From this song of Mary it is evident, that she confessed herself a sinner, who needed a Savior, and who could no otherwise rejoice in God, than as she was interested in his salvation through the promised Messiah. (Marg. Ref. p. q.—Notes, Is. 12:2: 15:17. Tit. 2:13. 3:4-7.) It is also supposed by many, that by 'God my Savior' she meant that divine Person who was about to receive his human nature from her. (See Matt. 1:20, 21.) She however added, that the Lord had graciously condescended to regard the low estate of his handmaiden, when it might have been expected that the Messiah would assume his human nature from one of more illustrious station, and more honored among men. (Marg. Ref. t.—Notes, Gen. 32:9-12. 2 Sam. 7:13, 19. 1 Cor. 1:26-31.) Indeed his mercy had always been extended towards those who feared Him, and his humble worshippers and servants, in every generation, and would be to the end of the world; and was only withheld from the proud, im-

penitent, and unbelieving. (Marg. Ref. s-y.—Notes, Ex. 34:5-7. Ps. 103:15-18.) He had often shown his power, in delivering his people and scattering his enemies, confounding them even in their most sagacious schemes. (Marg. Ref. z-c.—Notes, 1 Sam. 2:4-8. Job 5:8-16. 2 Cor. 10:1-6.) Thus He ruined Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Nebuchadnezzar, and Belshazzar, and exalted Joseph, David, and Daniel. (Note, Ex. 13:7-9.) He had also been used to satisfy the poor and hungry, whilst the rich were impoverished and reduced to deep distress; and this was an emblem of the methods of his grace. (Marg. Ref. d, e.—Notes, 6:21-26. 13:9-14. Ps. 107:8, 9.) Thus He had, in former ages, helped his people Israel, and thus He was about to help them at that time, by fulfilling his promises concerning the Messiah.

This would be done 'in remembrance of his mercy,' and in accomplishment of his promises, especially to Abraham, with relation to that Seed in particular, 'in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed.' (Marg. Ref. f, g.—Notes, 6:16-75. Gen. 12:1-3. 22:15-18. 49:9, 10. Mic. 7:13-20. Heb. 8:13-15. 11:39, 40.) (48.) The low estate. (Acts 8:33. Phil. 3:21. Jam. 1:10. Gen. 16:11. 29:32. 31:42. 41:52. Ps. 136:23. Is. 53:8. Lam. 1:3, 7, 9. Sept.) The original Greek word here is uniformly used for a low and afflicted condition, and not for the grace of humility, or lowliness. And it is certain, that Mary did not mean to commend her own humility, but to show her low and impoverished condition, and that of David's family, when God so noticed her.

(46.) And Mary said. 'The Hebrews were accustomed to express their joy or affliction in irregular hymns without metre.'

'The song of Elisabeth is a counterpart of the song of Hannah, as related in 1 Sam. 2:1-10.'

This is allowed by many to be the first piece of poetry in the New Testament: but the address of the angel to Zacharias, (p. 13-17.) is delivered in the same way: so is that to Mary, (p. 30-33.) and so also is Elisabeth's answer to Mary, v. 42-45. All these portions are easily

My son, doth magnify the Lord,

47 And my spirit hath rejoiced in ^a God my Savior.

48 For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

49 For ^a he that is mighty ^b hath done to me great things; ^{*} and holy is his name.

50 And ^a his mercy is on them that fear him, from generation to generation.

51 He hath ^a shewed strength with his arm: ^a he hath scattered the proud in ^b the imagination of their hearts.

1 Sam. 21. Ps. 34:2, 3. 35:9. 109:1. 124:16. 125:5. 131:10. Hab. 3:17, 18. Rom. 5:11. 1 Cor. 1:31. 2 Cor. 2:14. Phil. 3:3. 4:4. 1 Pet. 1:3.

q Ex. 12:2, 3. 45:21, 22. Zeph. 3:14-17. Zech. 9:9. 1 Tim. 1:1. Tit. 2:10, 13. 3:4-5. 1 Sam. 1:11. 2:8. 3 Sam. 7:8, 19, 19. Ps. 102:17. 113:8. Ec. 9:6, 12. 1 Cor. 1:23-28. Jam. 2:5, 6. 28:42. 11:27. Gen. 5:13. Mal. 3:12.

Ex. 24:8. Is. 1:24. 63:1. Jer. 10:6. 20:11. Ps. 71:19-21. 126:2, 3. Mark 5:19. Ex. 15:11. 1 Sam. 2:2. Ps. 99:3, 9. 119:9. Is. 63:7, 16. Rev. 4:8. 15:4.

Ex. 20:6. 34:6, 7. Ps. 31:19. 85:9. 139:11, 17. 155:13. 184:19. 145:19. 147:11. Mal. 3:18-41. Rev. 19:5. Ex. 15:6, 7, 12, 13. Deut. 4:34. Ps. 89:13. 89:1. 118:15, 16. Is. 40:10. 61:9. 62:10. 63:1. Rev. 19:6.

a Ex. 15:9-11. 18:11. 1 Sam. 2:3, 4. 10. Job 40:9-12. Ps. 24-5. 33:10. 39:10. Is. 10:34-36. Jer. 48:20, 30. Dan. 4:7. 5:23, 32. 1 Pet. 5:5.

b Gen. 6:5. 8:21. Dent. 28:19, 30. Rom. 1:21. 2 Cor. 10:5.

the blessedness of the faith of the saints. Those that have experienced the performance of God's promises themselves, should encourage others to hope that He will be as good as his word to them also; *I will tell you what God has done for my soul.*

IV. Mary's song of praise, on the occasion. Elisabeth's prophecy was an echo to Mary's salutation, and this song is yet a stronger echo to that prophecy, and shows her to be no less filled with the Holy Ghost than Elisabeth was. We may suppose Mary came in, *fatigued* with her journey; yet she forgets that, and is inspired with new life, and vigor, and joy, upon the confirmation she here meets with of her faith; and finding by this sudden inspiration and transport, that this was designed to be her errand hither, weary as she is, like Abraham's servant, she would *neither eat nor drink till she had told her errand.*

Some compare this song with that of her namesake Miriam, Moses' sister, upon the departure of Israel out of Egypt, and their triumphant passage through the Red sea; others think it better compared with the song of Hannah, on the birth of Samuel, which, like this, passes from a family-mercy to

son also; *for blessed is the fruit of thy womb*; thence it was that she derived this excellent dignity. Elisabeth was the wife of a priest, and in years, yet she *grudges* not, that her kinswoman, who was many years younger than she, and every way her inferior, should have the honor of conceiving in her virginity, and being the mother of the Messiah, whereas the honor put on her was *much less*; she *rejoices* in it, and is well pleased, as her son was afterward, that she who *cometh after her, is preferred before her*, John 1:27. Note, While we cannot but own that we are more *avored* of God than we deserve, let us by no means envy, that others are more *highly* favored than we are.

2. She acknowledges her condescension, in making her this visit, v. 45. Observe, She calls Mary the mother of her Lord, (as David, in spirit, called the Messiah, Lord, his Lord,) for she knew He was to be Lord of all. She not only bids her welcome, but reckons the visit a great favor, which she thought herself unworthy of; *Whence is this to me?* It is in reality, and not in compliment, that she saith, 'This was a greater favor than I could have expected.' Note, Those that are filled with the Holy Ghost, have low thoughts of their own merits, and high thoughts of God's favors. Her son the Baptist spake to the same purport with this, when he said, *Comest Thou to me?* Matt. 3:14.

3. She acquaints her with the concurrence of the babe in her womb, v. 44. 'Thou certainly bringest some extraordinary tidings, some extraordinary blessing, with thee, for as soon as the voice of thy salvation sounded in my ears, not only my heart leaped for joy, but the babe in my womb did so too.' He leaped as it were for joy that the Messiah, whose harbinger he was to be, would Himself come so soon after him. This would serve very much to strengthen Mary's faith, and would be in part the accomplishment of what had been so often foretold, that there should be *universal joy before the Lord, when He cometh*, Ps. 98:9.

4. She commends and encourages her faith, v. 45. Believing souls are blessed souls, and will be found so at last; being related to Christ *through faith*, and having Him *formed in the soul*. They are *blessed*, who *believe*, for the word of God will never fail. Note, The inviolable certainty of the promise is the undoubted felicity of those that build upon it, and expect their all from it. The faithfulness of God

a public and general one. This begins, like that, *My heart rejoiceth in the Lord*, 1 Sam. 2:1.

Observe here, with what reverence Mary speaks of God as the Lord; 'My soul doth magnify the Lord; I never saw Him so great as now I find him so good.' Note, Those, and those only, are *advanced* in mercy, who are *thoroughly* brought to think the more *highly* and *honorably* of God; whereas there are those whose prosperity and preferment make them say, *What is the Almighty, that we should serve Him?* The more honor God has any way put on us, the more honor we must study to give to Him; and then only we are accepted in magnifying the Lord, when our souls magnify Him, and all that is *within us*. Praising-work must be soul-work.

With what complacency she speaks of Him as her Savior; 'My spirit rejoiceth in God my Savior.' This seems to have reference to the Messiah, whom she was to be the mother of. She calls Him God her Savior, for the angel had told her that He should be the Son of the Highest, and that his name should be Jesus, a Savior; this she fastened on, with application to herself; *He is God my Savior*. Even the mother of our Lord had need of an interest in Him as her Savior, and would have been undone without it; and she glories more in that happiness, which she had in common with all believers, than in being his mother, which was an honor peculiar to herself; and this agrees with the preference Christ gave to obedient believers above his mother and brethren; see Matt. 12:50. Luke 11:27, 28. Note, Those that have Christ for their God and Savior, have great reason to rejoice—to rejoice in spirit, that is, rejoicing as Christ did, (Luke 10:21.) with spiritual joy.

Just causes are assigned for this joy and praise.

Her spirit rejoiced in the Lord, on her own account, (v. 48, 49,) because of the kind things He had done for her; *He has regarded the low estate of his handmaiden*; He has looked on her with pity, for so the word is commonly used. 'He has chosen me to this honor, notwithstanding my great meanness, poverty, and obscurity.' Nay, the expression seems to intimate, not only (to allude to that of Gideon, Judg. 6:15,) that her family was poor in Judah, but that she was the least in her father's house, as if she was unjustly neglected, and the outcast of the family and God put this honor on her, to balance abundantly that contempt. I like the rather suggest this, for we find something like it in the case of others; as Leah, and Hannah, Gen. 29:31. 1 Sam. 1:19. Whom men wrongfully depress and despise, God sometimes, especially if they have borne it patiently, doth prefer and advance; see Judg. 11:7. So in Mary's case. And if God regard her low estate, He not only thereby gives a specimen of his favor to the whole race of mankind, whom He remembers in their low estate, as the psalmist speaks, (Ps. 136:23.) but secures a lasting honor to her; (for such the honor is that God bestows, honor that fades not away;) 'From henceforth all generations shall call me blessed, shall think me a happy woman, and highly advanced.' All that embrace Christ and his Gospel will say, *Blessed was the womb*

reducible to the *hemistich* form in which the Hebrew poetry of the Old Testament is found in many MSS., and in which Dr. Kennicott has arranged the Psalms, and other poetical parts of the sacred Writings.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'Most of the phrases here are borrowed from the Old Testament, with which the pious virgin seems to have been very conversant; especially from the song of Hannah, in which there were so many passages remarkably suitable to her case. Compare 1 Sam. 2:1-10. Gen. 30:13. Ps. 103:17. 98:10. 107:9. and Mic. 7:20.' DODDRIDGE.

(48.) He hath regarded, 'Looked favorably, &c. In the most tender and compassionate manner He has visited me in my humiliation, drawing the reasons of his conduct, not from any excellence in me, but from his own eternal kindness and love.' All generations shall call me blessed; 'This was the character by which alone she wished to be known, viz. The blessed or happy virgin. What dishonor do those do to this holy woman, who give her names and characters which her pure soul would abhor; and which properly belong to God her Savior! By her votaries she is addressed as Queen of heaven, Mother of God, &c. titles both absurd and blasphemous.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(50.) His mercy, &c. 'His abundant kindness manifests itself in acts of mercy to all those who fear or reverence his name; and this is continued from generation to generation, because He is abundant

in goodness, and because He delighteth in mercy. This is a noble, becoming and just character of the God of the Christians; a Being who delights in the salvation and happiness of all his creatures, because his name is mercy, and his nature, love.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

(51.) Shewed strength, 'Or, gained the victory. The word translated strength is used for victory, by Homer, Hesiod, Sophocles, Euripides, and others.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Arm., 'Grotius has well observed that God's efficacy is represented by his finger, (Ec. 8:19,) his great power by his hand, (Ec. 3:20,) and his omnipotence by his arm. Ec. 15:16.'

Is.

He hath scattered the proud, &c. 'This may be rendered, He hath scattered those that prided themselves in the imagination, or thought, of their hearts; but the words will well bear a more copious sense; and they are peculiarly applicable to the Gospel, in which God doth not only cast down imaginations and every high thing, &c. (2 Cor. 10:5.) by the tumbling scheme of his recovering grace but hath remarkably confounded his most insolent enemies in their own most elaborate projects, and established his sacred cause by the victory attempts they have made to suppress it. Compare Ps. 2:1-3. a triumph of divine wisdom, of which succeeding ages furnish out memorable and frequent instances.'

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52 He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.

53 He hath filled the hungry with good things; and the rich he hath sent empty away.

54 He hath holpen his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy;

55 As he spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to his seed for ever.

56 And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

[Practical Observations.]

1 Sam. 2:4-8, Job 5:11-13, 34:21-25, Ps. 107:40, 113:7-8, Ps. 114, Is. 17:34, Am. 9:11, Mark 6:8, Jan. 19:10, 4:10, 16:21, 1 Sam. 2:5, Ps. 34:10, 107:8, 9, 147:7, Ps. 34:89, Matt. 5:6, John 6:11-13, 35, Jan. 2:5, Rev. 7:16, 17, 6:21, 12:16-21, 16:19-25, 18:11-14, 24:25, 1 Cor. 12:8, 4:8, Jan. 2:6, 5:1-6, Rev. 3:17, 18, 70-75, Ps. 93:3, Is. 43:21, 46:3, 4, 49:14-16, 54:10, 63:7-16, Jer. 31:3-20, 33:24-6, 31:1, Zeph. 3:14-20, Zech. 9:9-11, Gen. 12:3, 17:19, 22:18, 28:4, 28:9, Ps. 103:6-10, 122:11-17, Rom. 11:23, 29, Gal. 3:16, 17.

couraged to hope for mercy in Him, through His Mediator and Advocate; and in Him mercy is settled on all that fear God, from generation to generation, while the world stands. In Christ He keepeth mercy for thousands.

It has been a common observation, that God puts contempt on the haughty, and honor on the humble; and this He has done remarkably in the work of redemption. First, in the course of his providence, it is his usual method to cross the expectations of men. Proud men expect to carry all before them, and to have their way; but He scatters them in the imagination of their hearts, breaks their measures, and brings them down, by the very counsels with which they thought to advance and establish themselves; while, on the other hand, those of low degree, who thought of no other than of being ever low, are wonderfully exalted. The same holds likewise concerning riches; many, who were so poor, that they had not bread for themselves and families, have come, by some surprising providence in their favor, to be filled with good things; while, on the other hand, those who were rich, and thought no other than that their mountain stood strong, and they should never be moved, have been strangely impoverished, and sent away empty. Such was the observation Hannah made in her song, with application to the case of herself and her adversary, 1 Sam. 2: 4-7. Compare also Ps. 107: 33-41, Ps. 113: 7-9, and Eccl. 9: 11. Secondly, This doth especially appear in the methods of gospel-grace.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 39-56. Those who are experienced in the things of God will delight in each other's company, and value each other's pious counsels, cautions, and exhortations.—The influences of the Spirit of God effectually counteract emulation and ambition; and in proportion to his sacred illumination, we feel our own unworthiness, learn thankfulness for every favor, and rejoice in the gifts and graces bestowed on others. (Notes, Rom. 12: 3-16, 7, 10, 16, Phil. 2: 1-4.) Humble believers will appropriate to glory to themselves; but will take occasion, from congratulations and commendations, to 'magnify the Lord, and to rejoice in Him' as their 'God and Savior.' Notwithstanding every other distinction, they must have been never miserable without this salvation: their thankfulness will therefore always be connected with an humble sense of sinfulness, and of his mercy, who has looked down with pity

(53.) The rich hath sent empty away. 'The original word strictly signifies, hath sent or turned them out of doors; and very beautifully represents God as the great Proprietor of all, and the greatest of men as his tenants at will, whom He can strip and turn out whenever He pleases.' DODDRIDGE.

The poor man comes through a sense of his want, to get his daily support, and God feeds him; the rich man comes through the lust of gain, to get more added to his abundance, and God sends him empty away—not only gives him nothing more, but often deprives him of that which he has, because he has not improved it to the honor of the Giver.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(54, 55.) In remembrance of his mercy. 'The beginning of the 55th verse should, I think, be included in a parenthesis. It makes an easier and stronger sense to suppose that this remembrance of his

that bore Him, and the pains which He sucked, Luke 11: 27. Elisabeth had once and again called her blessed: 'But that is not all,' saith she, 'all generations of Gentiles as well as Jews shall call me so.' Her soul magnifies the Lord, because of the wonderful things He has done for her; (p. 49.) He that is mighty, has done to me great things. A great thing indeed, that a virgin should conceive. A great thing indeed, that Messiah should now at length be born. It is the power of the Highest that appears in this. She adds, and holy is his name; for so Hannah saith in her song, There is none holy as the Lord, which she explains in the next words, for there is none beside Thee, 1 Sam. 2: 2. God is a being by Himself, and he manifests Himself to be so, especially in the work of our redemption. He that is mighty, even He whose name is holy, has done to me great things. Glorious things may be expected from Him that is both mighty and holy; who can do ever a thing; and will do every thing well and for the best.

She rejoices in the Lord on the account of others. As the mother of the Messiah, Mary becomes now a kind of public person. Immediately, therefore she is endued with another spirit, and takes notice of God's various dealings with the children of men, (p. 50 &c.) as Hannah; (1 Sam. 2: 3,) in this she has especially an eye to the coming of the Redeemer, and God's manifesting Himself therein.

God has mercy for all that reverence his majesty, and duly regard his sovereignty and authority. But never did this appear so, as in his sending his Son into the world to save us; v. 50. His mercy is on them that fear Him; it has always been so; He has ever looked on them with an eye of peculiar favor, who have looked up to Him with an eye of filial fear. Those that fear God, as their Creator and Judge, are engaged to Him, through His Mediator and Advocate; and in Him mercy is settled on all that fear God, from generation to generation, while the world stands. In Christ He keepeth mercy for thousands.

It has been a common observation, that God puts contempt on the haughty, and honor on the humble; and this He has done remarkably in the work of redemption. First, in the course of his providence, it is his usual method to cross the expectations of men. Proud men expect to carry all before them, and to have their way; but He scatters them in the imagination of their hearts, breaks their measures, and brings them down, by the very counsels with which they thought to advance and establish themselves; while, on the other hand, those of low degree, who thought of no other than of being ever low, are wonderfully exalted. The same holds likewise concerning riches; many, who were so poor, that they had not bread for themselves and families, have come, by some surprising providence in their favor, to be filled with good things; while, on the other hand, those who were rich, and thought no other than that their mountain stood strong, and they should never be moved, have been strangely impoverished, and sent away empty. Such was the observation Hannah made in her song, with application to the case of herself and her adversary, 1 Sam. 2: 4-7. Compare also Ps. 107: 33-41, Ps. 113: 7-9, and Eccl. 9: 11. Secondly, This doth especially appear in the methods of gospel-grace.

1. In the spiritual honors it dispenses; as on publicans and sinners, to the rejection of proud Pharisees; Gentiles instead of Jews; (Rom. 9: 30, 31,) and especially the disciples instead of wise men after the flesh, the mighty, and the noble, to preach the Gospel and plant Christianity in the world, 1 Cor. 1: 26, 27. When the chief priests and elders were brought down, who had long lorded it over God's heritage, and hoped always to do so; and Christ's disciples, a company of poor despised fishermen, by the power they were clothed with, were made to sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel; when the power of the four monarchies was broken, and the kingdom of the Messiah, that Stone cut out of the mountain without hands, made to fill the earth; then are the proud scattered, and those of low degree exalted.

2. In the spiritual riches it dispenses, v. 53. (1.) Those who see their need of Christ, and are importunately desirous of righteousness and life in Him, He fills with good things, with the best things, and they are abundantly satisfied with the blessings He gives. Those who are weary and heavy-laden, shall find rest with Christ, and those who thirst, are called to come to Him, and drink; for they only know how to value his gifts; to the hungry soul every bitter thing is sweet, manna is angel's food; and to the thirsty, fair water is honey out of the rock. (2.) Those of an opposite character, who, like Laodiceans, think they have need of nothing, are full of themselves and their own righteousness, those He sends empty away; they come full of self, and are sent away empty of Christ: He sends them to the gods whom they served, to their own righteousness and strength, which they trusted to.

It was expected the Messiah should be the Strength and Glory of his people Israel, and so He is in a peculiar manner; v. 54. He hath taken them by the hand, and helped them up that were fallen, and could not help themselves. Those that were sunk under the burdens of a broken covenant of innocence, are helped up by the blessings of a renewed covenant of grace. The sending of the Messiah was the greatest help that could be provided for his people Israel, and that which magnifies it is,

First, That it is in remembrance of his mercy; the mercifulness of his nature, the mercy He has in store for his servant Israel. While this blessing was deferred, his people, who waited for it, were often ready to ask, Has God forgotten to be gracious? But now He made it appear that He had not forgotten, but remembered, his mercy. He remembered his former mercy, and repeated that to them in spiritual blessings, which He had done formerly to them in temporal favors. He remembered the days of old, Where is He that brought them out of the sea

on their low estate, and raised them to the hope of everlasting happiness. Indeed, God might have been expected to do great things against us; but He has greatly glorified even his holiness in extending mercy to all that fear Him, in every age and nation. Proud infidels and Pharisees, and presumptuous sinners of every description, will be 'scattered,' and disappointed, and cast down; but the broken-hearted sinner shall be exalted; and our gracious Lord will satisfy the desires of the poor in spirit, who long for spiritual blessings; whilst the rich and self-sufficient shall be 'sent empty away.' This is the true reason why so many frequent those ordinances in vain, from which others go away abundantly satisfied, and rejoicing in the goodness of the Lord. For He still helps his true Israel, not shall the believing seed of Abraham be ashamed forever.

SCOTT.

mercy forever, refers to his everlasting mercies promised to the patriarchs. Compare Gen. 17: 19, Is. 55: 3, Rom. 11: 29. Yet 1 ac knowledge those blessings might be said to be promised to them at their seed forever, which were entailed on their remoter generations. Compare Gen. 12: 15, 18: 8 &c. DODDRIDGE.

'By mercy' is intended the covenant God made with Abraham, (Gen. 15: 18,) which covenant proceeded from God's eternal mercy, as in it salvation was promised to all the nations of the earth; (see Gen. 17: 19, and 22: 18,) and this promise was, in one form or other, given to all the fathers, v. 55. Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 56. After Mary's return home, those events seem to have occurred which have already been considered, concerning the difficulties and conduct of Joseph in respect of her. (Notes, Matt. 1: 18, 19.) SCOTT.

57 ¶ Now Elisabeth's full time came that she should be delivered; and she brought forth a son.

58 And her neighbors and her cousins heard how the Lord had shewed great mercy upon her: and they rejoiced with her.

59 And it came to pass, that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child; and they called him Zacharias, after the name of his father.

60 And his mother answered and said, Not so; but he shall be called John.

61 And they said unto her, There is none of thy kindred that is called by this name.

62 And they made signs to his father, now he would have him called.

h 13. 2:57, Gen. 21:2, 3. Num. 23: 18.
i 25. Ruth 4:14-17. Ps. 113:9.
k 14. Gen. 21:6. Is. 66:10, Rom. 12:15.
l 24. Gen. 17:19. 21:2, 4. Lev. 12: 3. Acts 7:3. Phil. 3:5.
m 13. 2 Sam. 12:25. Is. 8:3. Matt. 1:23.
n 22.

these here discovered, 1. A pious regard to God; they acknowledged that the Lord had magnified his mercy to her; so the word is. It was a mercy to have her reproach taken away, and her family built up, and the more, being a family of priests. Many things concurred to make the mercy great—she had been long barren, was now old, and, especially, the child should be great in the sight of the Lord. 2. A friendly regard to Elisabeth; when she rejoiced, they rejoiced with her. We ought to take pleasure in the prosperity of our neighbors and friends, and to be thankful to God for their comforts as for our own.

III. The dispute among them about naming him; v. 59. They that rejoiced in the birth of the child, came together on the eighth day, as God had appointed, to the circumcising of him. Note, The greatest comfort we can take in our children, is, in giving them up to God, and recognising their covenant relation to him. The baptism of our children should be more our joy than their birth.

Now it was the custom, when they circumcised their children, to name them, because, when Abram was circumcised, God gave him a new name, and called him Abraham; and it is not unfit that they should be left nameless till they are by name given up to God.

Verases 57-66.

(Marg. Ref. h-1.—Notes, Gen. 17:4-12. 21:1-7.—Notes, 19-25. John 1:16.) *Whitby.* (Marg. Ref. l-o.—Notes, 11-17. John 1:15-17.) Probably, Zacharias returned thanks for God's goodness and faithfulness in the birth of his son, acknowledging the righteousness of the rebuke under which he had lain, and praising the mercy of God in restoring to him the use of his tongue. It is supposed that the prophetic hymn which follows was spoken at the same time; but this is not certain. Zacharias seems also, on this occasion, to have made public all the circumstances of the vision that he had in the temple. (Marg. Ref. p-u.—Notes, 80. 2:40. Judg. 13:25.) Scott.

(58.) *Her neighbors and cousins rejoiced with her.* [To rejoice with those whom God has favored, and to congratulate them on the advantages which He has granted to them, is a duty which humanity, clarity, and religion call upon us to fulfil.] Dr. A. CLARKE.

(59.) *On the eighth day.* [This was the constant usage, (see Lev. 12:3.) though in Gen. 17:12, circumcision is enjoined to be performed when a child is eight days old. This passage therefore explains ch. 2:21.]

Baptism, though no more necessary to salvation than circumcision was, is generally allowed to have been substituted for circumcision. Both are signs of the covenant—circumcision, of the putting away the impurity of the flesh; and baptism, of the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, producing the answer of a good conscience towards God. Confer 1 Pet. 3:21 with Tit. 3:5. Baptism should never be neglected; it is a sign and token of the spiritual grace.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Called. [Were they naming, were about to name, or would have named. This is frequently the source of the imperfect tense here used.]

out of Egypt? Isa. 63:11. He will do the like again; of which that was a type.

Secondly, That it is in performance of his promise. It is a mercy not only designed, but declared; (v. 55.) what He spoke to our fathers, that the seed of the woman should break the head of the serpent; that God should dwell in the tents of Shem; and particularly to Abraham, that in his Seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, with the best of blessings, blessings that are forever, and to the seed that shall be forever; that is, his spiritual seed. Note, What God hath spoken to the fathers, he will make good to their seed, even their seed's seed forever.

Lastly, Mary's return to Nazareth, (v. 56.) after about three months, so long as to be fully satisfied that she was with child, and to be confirmed therein by her cousin Elisabeth. Some think this return, though here mentioned before Elisabeth's delivery, because the evangelist would finish the story of Mary, before he proceeded with that of Elisabeth, 'was yet not till after, and that Mary staid to be with her in that season,' and have her own faith confirmed by the full accomplishment of the promise of God concerning Elisabeth. But most prefer the order of the story as it lies, because Mary still affected retirement, and therefore would not be there, when the birth of this child of promise would draw a great deal of company to the house. Those in whose hearts Christ is formed, take more delight than they used to do, in sitting alone and keeping silence.

V. 57-66. In these verses we have, I. The birth of John Baptist, v. 57. Promised mercies are to be expected when the full time for them is come, and not before.

II. The great joy of all the relations of the family, on this extraordinary occasion; v. 58. Dr. Lightfoot observes, that Hebron was inhabited by priests of the family of Aaron, and that those were the cousins here spoken of; but the fields and villages about, by the children of Judah, and that those were the neighbors. Now

Now some proposed that he should be called Zacharias; we have not any instance in Scripture, that the child should bear the father's name; but perhaps it was of late come into use among the Jews, as it is with us, and they intended hereby to do honor to the father, who was not likely to have another child.

The mother opposed it, and would have him called John; having learned, either by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, (as is most probable,) or by information in writing from her husband that God appointed this to be his name, v. 60. See on verse 13.

The relations objected, (v. 61.) that there was none of his kindred, called by that name; therefore say they, 'if he may not have his father's name, yet let him have the name of some of his kindred, who will take it as a piece of respect to have such a child of wonders as this named from them.' Note, As those that have friends must show themselves friendly, so those that have relations, must be obliging to them in all the usual regards that are paid to kindred.

They appealed to the father, for it was his office to name the child, v. 62. They made signs to him, by which it appears that he was deaf as well as dumb; whereupon he made signs to them to give him a table-book, such as they then used, and with the pencil wrote,—His name is John, v. 63. Not, 'It shall be so,' or, 'I would have it so,' but, 'It is so.' The matter is determined already; the angel had given him that name. Observe, When Zacharias could not speak, he wrote. When ministers have their mouths stopped, that they cannot preach, yet they may be doing good as long as they have not their hands tied, that they cannot write. Many of the martyrs in prison wrote letters to their friends, which were of great use; blessed Paul himself did so. Zacharias' pitching upon the same name that Elisabeth had chosen, was a great surprise to the company; They marvelled all; for they knew not that, though he reason of his deafness and dumbness they could not converse together, yet they were both guided by one and the same Spirit; or, perhaps they marvelled that he wrote so distinctly and legibly, which (the stroke he was under, being somewhat like that of a palsy) he had not done before.

He thereupon recovered the use of his speech, v. 64. The time prefixed for his being silenced, was, till the day that these things should be fulfilled, (v. 20.) not all the things going before concerning John's ministry, but those which relate to his birth and name; (v. 13.) that time was now expired, whereupon the restraint was taken off, and God gave him the opening of the mouth again, as he did to Ezekiel, ch. 3:27. Dr. Lightfoot compares the case to that of Moses, Exod. 4:24, 26. Moses, for distrust, is in danger of his life, as Zacharias, for the same fault, is struck dumb; but, on the circumcising of his child, and recovery of his faith, there, as here, the danger is removed. Unbelief closed

Previous to the introduction of circumcision, the name of the child was probably given immediately after its birth.

The giving the child its name was an incidental circumstance which custom had added; and in administering the Christian ordinance, care should be taken, that it may plainly appear we only speak to the child by the name which hath been already given it.

The acknowledgement of infant baptism as of divine origin and authority, and the privilege and duty of believing parents in relation to it, seem here clearly implied.

(61.) *None of thy kindred.* [As the Jewish tribes and families were kept sacredly distinct, it appears the very names of the ancestors were continued among their descendants, partly through reverence for them, and partly to avoid confusion in the genealogical tables, which, for the sake of distinguishing the inheritances, were carefully preserved in each of the families. It seems to be on this account that the neighbors and relatives objected to a name, which had not before existed in any branch of the family.]

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Laftau (in his *Manners of the Savages of America*) says, among the Hurons and Troquois (probably Hurons and Troquois,) they always retain in every family, a certain number of names, of the ancestors of the family, both of men and women. These names are quite peculiar to them, and it is presumed to be generally known, that they belong to such or such a family. Now, in every family, it is the custom, as it were, to revive, to call back to life those members of it who have made themselves famous. They, therefore, look out, at the same time, the names of those whom they revere, and give them to such of their descendants as are to represent them. The Jews have, in the same manner, certain names in every family, which they took care to preserve.

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63 And he asked for a writing-table, and wrote, saying, His name is John. And they marvelled all.

64 And his mouth was opened immediately, and his tongue loosed, and he spake, and praised God.

65 And fear came on all that dwelt round about them: and all these sayings were noised abroad throughout all the hill-country of Judea.

66 And all they that heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him.

[Practical Observations.]
67 ¶ And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

68 Blessed be the

his mouth, and now believing opens it again; he believes, therefore he speaks. David lay under guilt from the conception of his child till a few days after its birth; then the Lord takes away his sin; upon his repentance, he shall not die, so here he shall be no longer dumb: his mouth was opened, and he spake, and praised God. Note, When God opens our lips, our mouths must show forth his praise; as good be without our speech as not use it in praising God; for then our tongue is most our glory, when it is employed for God's glory.

These things were told all the country over, to the great amazement of all that heard them, v. 65, 66. The sentiments of the people are not to be slighted, but taken notice of. These sayings were discoursed of, and made common talk all about the hill-country of Judea; it was pity but a narrative of them had been drawn up, and published in the world, immediately.—Most people who heard of them, were put into consternation by them: Fear came on all them that dwelt round about them. If we have not a good hope, as we ought to have, built on the Gospel, we may expect that the tidings of it will fill us with fear. They believed and trembled, whereas they should have believed and triumphed.—It raised the expectations of people concerning this child, and obliged them to have their eye on him, to see what he would come to. They laid up these presages in their hearts, foreseeing they should hereafter have occasion to recollect them. Note, What we hear, that may be of use to us, we should treasure up, that we may be able to bring forth, for the benefit of others, things new and old, and when things come to perfection, may be able to look back on the presages thereof, and to say, 'It was what we might expect.' They said within themselves, and said among themselves, 'What manner of child shall this be? What will be the fruit when these are the buds, or rather, when the root is out of such a dry ground?' Note, When children are born into the world, it is very uncertain what they will prove; yet sometimes there have been early indications of something great, as in the birth of Moses, Samson, Samuel, and here of John. And probably there were some living at the time when John began his public ministry, who could, and did, remember these things, and relate them to others, which contributed as much as any thing to the great flocking there was after him.

Lastly, It is said, The hand of the Lord was with him; that is, he was taken under the especial protection of the Almighty, from his birth, as one designed for something great and considerable. It appeared also that the Spirit was at work very early on his soul. As soon as he began to speak or go, you might perceive something in him very extraordinary. Note, God has ways of operating on children in their infancy, which we cannot account for. God never made a soul but He knew how to sanctify it.

V. 67—80. We have here Zacharias' song of praise to God when his mouth was opened; in it he is said to prophesy, (v. 67,) and so he did in the strictest sense, for he foretold things to come concerning the kingdom of the Messiah, to which all the prophets bear witness. Observe,

I. How he was qualified for this; He was filled with the Holy Ghost; that is, he was divinely inspired. God not only forgave him his unbelief and distrust, (which was signified by his discharge from the punishment of it), but as a specimen of the abounding of grace toward believers, he filled him with the Holy Ghost, and put this honor on him, to employ him for his honor.

II. What the matter of his song was. He said nothing of the private concerns of his own family, the rolling away of their reproach, and the honor conferred on them, by the birth of this child, though, no doubt, he found a time to give thanks to God for this, with his family; but in this song he is wholly taken up with the kingdom of the Messiah, and the public blessings to be introduced by it. He could have little pleasure in this fruitfulness of his vine, and the hopefulness of his olive-plant, if herein he had not foreseen the good of Jerusalem, peace upon Israel, and blessings on both out of Zion, Ps. 128: 3, 5, 6. The Old-Testament prophecies are often expressed in praises and new songs, so is this beginning of New-Testament prophecy; Blessed is the Lord God of Israel. The God of the whole earth shall be called; yet Zacharias, speaking of the work of redemption, called Him the Lord God of Israel, because to Israel the prophecies, promises, and types of the redemption had hitherto been given, and to them the first proffers and proposals of it were now to be made. Israel, as a chosen people, was a type of the elect of God out of all

Prov. 33. Is. 308. Jer. 171. Hab. 2.2.
20 Ez. 4:15, 16. Ps. 51:15. Jer. 10. Rn. 3:27. 38:21. 33:22. Matt. 9:30. Mark 7:23—37.
P. 307—728. 118:19, 12. Is. 12:1. Dan. 4:34—37.
1:16 Acts 2:43. 5:5, 11. 19:17. Rev. 21.
* Or, things.
39. Josh. 10:40. Gen 37:11. Ps. 119: 11.
21:9, 51. 9:44. Gen 37:11. Ps. 119: 11.
30. 2:40. Gen. 39:2. Judg. 13:24. 25. 1 Sam. 2:18. 16:18. 1 Kings 15:16. Acts 11:2.
15:1. N. m. R. 25. 2 Sam. 23:2. Joe. 2:28. 2 Pt. 2:1.
Y Gen 9:26. 2 Kings 1:48. 1 Chr. 3:10, 20. 2 Kings 19:10, 106: 48. 2 Th. 1:13. 1 Pet. 1:13.

V. 57—66. We should trace back every rill of comfort to the full fountain of the Lord's mercy, which He is continually magnifying; and it is beautiful, when believers so behave, that all their neighbors cordially rejoice in the tokens of the divine favor towards them.—We should study, by every method, to perpetuate the remembrance of God's mercies to us. We ought likewise to observe the dealings of God with our

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neighbors, and wait the event of his dispensations with attentive expectation; and when our children grow up healthy, and improve in the exercise of their faculties, we should ascribe it to the good hand of the Lord upon them, and take occasion to entreat Him to give them also his heavenly grace and wisdom.

SCOTT

(63.) Writing-table.] 'The boys in Barbary are taught to write upon a smooth thin board, slightly daubed over with whitening, which may be rubbed off or renewed at pleasure. Such probably (for the Jewish children used the same) was this writing-table.' SHAW.
A thin board made out of the pine tree, smeared over with wax, was used among the ancients; and to this the Anglo-Saxon version seems to refer, as it translates, a *teaz board* or *cloath*.

Dr. A. CLARKE.
'In the east, these tables were not covered with wax as they were in the west; or at any rate very rarely so.' JAHN.

Verses 67—75.

When Zacharias had recovered the gift of speech, he was also filled with the Holy Spirit, and uttered the following prophecy, concerning the kingdom and salvation of the Messiah. (Note, 46—55.) He began with blessing and praising 'the Lord God of Israel,' especially, for again visiting his people in mercy, after having for a long time left them without inspired prophets; and having begun that work of redemption, which had so long been predicted and expected, in the birth of him, who was to be the forerunner of the Messiah; which was a certain proof that He Himself would shortly appear. (Marg. Ref. y, z.) So that, speaking of the Savior as already come, according to the language frequently used by the prophets, he declared that God had 'raised up an Horn of salvation for his people.' (Marg. Ref. a.—Notes, 1 Sam. 2: 10. 2 Sam. 22: 2, 3. Ps. 132: 17.) The horn, which is the ornament, and weapon of protection and annoyance of every enemy, in many animals, is an apt emblem of the divine Savior; 'the glory of his people,' their Defender against every assailant, who makes them 'in all things more than conquerors.' This salvation God had 'raised up in the house of his servant David,' even Jesus, the Son of the virgin Mary. (Marg. Ref. b.—Notes, Ps. 89: 1—4, 19—37. Is. 7: 14. 9: 6, 7. It. . Jer. 23: 5, 6.) His birth, character, and salvation would

accomplish the predictions of the holy prophets, from the beginning of the world: all of whom, in one way or other, gave intimations of the promised Messiah; and assured the people of God, that by Him they should be 'saved from their enemies,' and protected against all those wicked men and apostate spirits, who hated them and sought their destruction. So that the coming of this Savior was intended to 'perform' the mercy, which God had been bestowing on their ancestors for ages past; and to accomplish the gracious and faithful covenant, which He had entered into with believers under all preceding dispensations, from the first promise made to fallen Adam; and which He had ratified to Abraham by a solemn oath, in behalf of himself and all his spiritual seed; the blessings of which were also shadowed forth under external signs and advantages, secured to his natural posterity. (Marg. Ref. c.—Notes, 24: 25—31. 44—49, v. 44—46. Gen. 22: 16—18. 2 Sam. 23: 5. Is. 55: 1—3. John 5: 45—47. Acts 10: 36—43. Heb. 6: 13—30. 1 Pet. 1: 10—12. Rev. 19: 9, 10.) This promise, covenant, and oath, engaged, to all believers, deliverance from the power of Satan, sin, the world, death, and every enemy, as well as redemption from the curse of the holy law and the righteous vengeance of God; that, being safe under his protection, and partakers of his mercy and grace, they might worship and serve Him, as under his immediate eye, 'without fear' of being destroyed by their foes, or cast off by Him, 'in all righteousness and holiness' (during the remainder of their lives in this world; and so at length inherit eternal felicity in heaven. (Marg. Ref. i, k.)

SCOTT

(77—79.) Bishop Jebb considers this hymn of Zacharias as a dramatic ode in the form of dialogue; and, in confirmation of his opinion, he remarks that Zacharias must have been familiar with this character of composition, both as a pious and literary Jew, much conversant with the devotional and lyric poetry of his country, and also as an officiating priest, accustomed to bear his part in the choral service of the temple.

HOBBS.

Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people,
69 And hath raised up an Horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David;

70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been since the world began;

71 That we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us;

72 To perform the mercy promised to our fathers, and to remember his holy covenant

73 The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,

74 That he would grant unto us, that we, being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, might serve him without fear,

75 In holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life.

76 And thou, child,

77 Inasmuch as thou shalt be called a prophet of the Lord, thou shalt say in the name of the Lord thy God, saying, My heart is comforted by thy words, O Lord.
78 And thou shalt be called a prophet of the Lord, saying, My heart is comforted by thy words, O Lord.

79 And thou shalt be called a prophet of the Lord, saying, My heart is comforted by thy words, O Lord.

80 And thou shalt be called a prophet of the Lord, saying, My heart is comforted by thy words, O Lord.

81 And thou shalt be called a prophet of the Lord, saying, My heart is comforted by thy words, O Lord.

82 And thou shalt be called a prophet of the Lord, saying, My heart is comforted by thy words, O Lord.

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nations, whom God had a particular eye to, in sending the Savior; and therefore He is therein called the Lord God of Israel.

Now Zacharias here blesses God,
1. For the work of salvation that was to be wrought out by the Messiah himself, v. 68—75. This it is that fills him, when he is filled with the Holy Ghost, and it is this which all are full of, who have the Spirit of Christ.

(1.) In sending the Messiah, God has made a gracious visit to his people, whom for many ages He had seemed to neglect, and to be estranged from; He hath visited them as a friend, to take cognizance of their case. God is said to have visited his people in bondage, when He delivered them, (Exod. 3: 16, 4: 34.) and in famine, when He gave them bread, Ruth 1: 6. He had often sent to them by his prophets, and had still kept up a correspondence with them; but now He Himself made them a visit.

(2.) He has wrought out redemption for them. This was his errand into the world, to redeem those that were sold under sin; even God's own people, his Israel, need to be redeemed, and are undone if they be not. Christ redeems them by price out of the hands of God's justice, and by power out of the hands of Satan's tyranny, as Israel out of Egypt.

(3.) He has fulfilled the covenant of royalty made with the most famous Old-Testament prince, that is, David. Glorious things had been said of his family; (Ps. 89: 19, 20, 24, 29.) but it had been long in a manner cast off and abhorred, Ps. 89: 38. Now here it is gloried in, that, according to the promise, the horn of David should again be made to bud, (Ps. 132: 17.) v. 69. David is called God's servant, not only as a good man, but as a king that ruled for God; and he was an instrument of the salvation of Israel; so Christ is the Author of eternal redemption, to those only that obey Him. There is in Christ, and in Him only, salvation for us, and it is a horn of salvation. It is an honorable salvation, it is raised up above all other salvations, none of which are to be compared with it; in it the glory both of the Redeemer and of the redeemed are advanced, and their horn exalted with honor. It is a plentiful salvation; a horn of plenty, a salvation in which we are blessed with spiritual blessings, in heavenly things, abundantly. It is a powerful salvation; the strength of the beast is in his horn; He has raised up such a salvation, as shall pull down our spiritual enemies, and protect us from them.

In the chariots of this salvation the Redeemer shall go forth, and go on, conquering and to conquer.

(4.) He has fulfilled all the precious promises made to the church by the mouth of his holy prophets, v. 70. His doctrine of salvation by the Messiah is confirmed by an appeal to the prophets, and the greatness and importance of that salvation thereby evidenced and magnified; it is the same that they spake of, which therefore ought to be expected and welcomed; it is what they inquired and searched diligently after, (1 Pet. 1: 10, 11.) which therefore ought not to be slighted, or thought meanly of. God is now doing that which He has long ago spoken of; and therefore be silent, O all flesh, before Him, and attend to Him. See, [1.] How sacred

the prophecies of this salvation were: the prophets who delivered them, were holy prophets who durst not deceive; and who aimed at promoting holiness among men; and it was the holy God Himself that spake by them. [2.] How ancient they were: ever since the world began. God having promised, when the world began, that the Seed of the woman should break the serpent's head, that promise, was echoed to when Adam called his wife's name Eve—Life, for the sake of that Seed of hers; when Eve called her first son Cain, saying, I have gotten a man from the Lord, and another son Seth, settled; when Noah was called, rest, and foretold that God should dwell in the tents of Shem. And it was not long after the new world began in Noah, that the promise was made to Abraham, that in his Seed the nations of the earth should be blessed. [3.] What a wonderful harmony and concert we perceive among them; God spake the same thing by them all, and therefore it is said to be, not by the mouths, but by the mouth, of the prophets, for they all speak of Christ as it were with one mouth.

Now what was this salvation which was prophesied of? First, it is a rescue—a salvation from our enemies; (v. 71.) it is a salvation from sin and the dominion of Satan over us; both by corruptions within and temptations without. The carnal Jews expected to be delivered from the Roman yoke, but intimation was betimes given that it should be a redemption of another nature. He shall save his people from their sins, Matt. 1: 21.

Secondly, It is a restoration to the favor of God, v. 72. The Redeemer shall not only break the serpent's head, but re-instate us in the mercy of God, and re-establish us in his covenant; He shall bring us, as it were, into a paradise again, which was signified by the promises made to the patriarchs, and the holy covenant made with them, the oath which He sware to our father Abraham, v. 73. What was promised to the fathers, and is performed to us, is mercy, pure mercy; nothing in it is owing to our merit; we deserve wrath and the curse, but God designed us grace and life: of his own good pleasure He loved us, because He would love us. God here had an eye to his covenant, his holy covenant, that covenant with Abraham; I will be a God to thee and thy seed. This, his seed had forfeited by their transgressions; this, He seemed to have forgotten in the calamities brought on them, but He will now remember it—will make it appear that He remembers it, for on that are grounded all his returns of mercy; (Lev. 26: 42.) Then will I remember my covenant.

Thirdly, It is a qualification for, and an encouragement to, the service of God. Thus the oath He sware to our father Abraham was, that He would give us power and grace to serve Him, in a manner acceptable to Him, and comfortable to ourselves, v. 74, 75. Here seems to be an allusion to the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, which was in pursuance of his covenant with Abraham, (Exod. 3: 6—8.) and this was the design of his bringing them out of Egypt, that they might serve God, Exod. 3: 12. Note, The great design of gospel-grace is, not to discharge us from, but to engage us to, and encourage us in, the service of God. Christianity is to be looked

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(68.) God of Israel. It may be asked, why the Almighty is called God of Israel only, when He is God not only of the Israelites, but (I all men, as being the Creator of all)? To which it may be answered, that He was the God of all men, whether they would or not: but of the Jews only by free will and knowledge. EUTHYMUS.

(69.) And hath raised up a horn of salvation. It is likely allusion is here made to the horns of the altar; and as the altar was a place of refuge and safety, and those who laid hold on its horns were considered to be under the protection of the Lord; so, according to the expression of Zacharias, Jesus Christ is a new altar, to which whose flesh shall find refuge.

House of his servant. Or, in the family; so the original word ne; rendered house, is often used in the sacred Writings. In v. 32, the angel states that Mary was of the family of David; and Zacharias, who, from the nature of his office, must have been well acquainted with the public genealogical tables, attests the same thing. This is a matter of considerable importance; because it shows the truth of all the prophetic declarations, which uniformly state that the Messiah should come from the family, and sit on the throne of David.

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shall be called the prophet of the "Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways;

77 To give knowledge of salvation unto his people, * by the remission of their sins,

78 Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the Day-spring from on high hath visited us,

79 To give light to them that sit in darkness, * and in the shadow of death, 'to guide our feet into the way of peace.

80 ¶ And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, * and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

17:28. Matt. 14:5. 21:28. Mark 11:25.

17:28. 23:65. Ps. 97:5. Acts 15:17. 16:17. 34-46. Is. 40:3-5. Mal. 3:1. 4:5. Matt. 3:3, 11. 11:10. Mark 1:2, 3. John 1:23, 27. 3:28. Acts 13:25.

33:8. 3. Mark 1:4. John 1:7-9, 15-17. 29:34. 3:27-36. Acts 19:4.

7:47. 17:28. Acts 2:38. 3:19. 10:43. 13:28-39. Rom. 3:25. 4:6-8. Eph. 1:7.

q Is. 43:7. John 3:16. Eph. 2:4, 5. 1 John 4:19.

Or, bowels of the mercy. Ps. 25:6. marg. Is. 63:15. Phil. 1:3. 21.

17:28. 1 John 3:17.

Or, sun-rising, or, branch. Num. 24:17. Is. 11:1. Zech. 3:8. 6:12. Mal. 4:2. Rev. 22:16.

of the most high God,' who was appointed to 'go before the face of the Lord,' even of Christ, 'to prepare his ways' (Marg. Ref. 1-n. Notes, 11-17. Matt. 11:7-15.) The grand object of his preparatory ministry would be, to give the 'knowledge of salvation,' by the sure testimony and faithful promise of God, 'to all people,' through the full remission of all sins to every one who believed in Christ; and by this assurance to call men to repent, and accept of this inestimable blessing, that they might have the experience of it in their own souls, and know themselves to be partakers of it. (Note, 1 John 5:9-13.) All these benedictions would come to them 'through the tender mercy,' or bowels of compassion, of Israel's God; who, pitying the misery of perishing sinners, had caused this Day-spring from heaven to visit them, ushering in the appearance of 'the Sun of righteousness,' and the evangelical dispensation. (Marg. Ref. 0-q. Notes, Is. 60:1-3. Mal. 2:2, 3. 2 Pet. 1:19. Rev. 22:16, 17.) Thus, light would be afforded to sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, whose ignorance, guilt, and misery resembled the darkness of a dungeon, in which condemned criminals are confined; and whose dreary situation was like the dark shade of death and hell. (Marg. Ref. r, s. Notes, Matt. 4:12-17. Acts 26:16-18.) Then would their minds be enlightened, and their path marked out; they would see their danger and their refuge; they would be inspired with hope and encouragement; they would be directed into the way of peace with God, with their consciences, and with each other; and would learn to walk in those holy and happy paths, which lead to everlasting peace and felicity, and are an earnest of them. (Marg. Ref. t. Notes, Is. 59:3-8. Rom. 3:9-18. 5:1, 2.) This was evidently a very remarkable prophecy, describing the nature, privileges, and effects of the salvation of the Gospel; and foretelling the success of Christianity both among the Jews and Gentiles. Probably, it was much circulated, and attended to, among Zacharias's friends, and the pious remnant of the nation.

(76.) Prophet of the Highest—before the face of—to prepare his ways.] 'John had the honor of being the last and clearest prophet of the old covenant, and the first of the new.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(77.) By the remission of sins.] 'Remission of sins is the doctrine in which the Christian religion justly glorieth, as that most necessary and fundamental point in which every other religion fails. The heathen here confesses himself to be in the dark. The blood of bulls and goats cannot wash away the sins of the Jew; and his oblations, since the law came which he was intended to prefigure, are preposterous and impious. The doctrine of salvation by the remission of sins, through faith in a Redeemer, was, from the beginning, the sum and substance of true religion, which subsisted in promise, prophecy, and figure, till John preached their accomplishment in the person of Jesus.'

Bp. HORNE. (78.) Day-spring.] 'The dawning of the celestial day hath visited us from on high. I doubt not here is a reference to such texts as Mal.

ed upon, as intended to make us truly religious. We are therefore delivered from the iron yoke of sin, that our necks may be put under the sweet and easy yoke of the Lord Jesus. The very bonds which He has loosed, bind us faster to Him, Ps. 116:16. Thus we are enabled, 1. To serve God without fear. We are put into a state of holy safety, that we might serve God with holy security and serenity of mind, as those that are quiet from the fears of evil. God must be served with a filial fear—a reverent, obedient, an awakening, a quickening fear, but not with a slavish fear, like that of the slothful servant,—not with a fear that has torment in it; not with the fear of a legal spirit, a spirit of bondage, but with the boldness of an evangelical spirit, a spirit of adoption. 2. To serve Him in holiness and righteousness, which includes the whole duty of man. It is both the intention and tendency of the Gospel, to renew in us that image of God, in which man was at first made, which consisted in righteousness and true holiness, Eph. 4:24. Christ redeemed us, that we might serve God, not in the legal services of sacrifice and offerings, but in the spiritual services of holiness and righteousness, Ps. 50:14. 3. To serve Him, before Him, in the duties of his immediate worship, wherein we present ourselves before the Lord, to serve Him as those that have an eye always on Him, and see his eye always on us, upon our inward man; that is serving Him before Him. 4. To serve Him all the days of our life. The design of the Gospel is to engage us to constancy and perseverance in the service of God, by showing us how much depends on it, that we do not draw back; and by showing us how Christ loved us to the end, and thereby engaged us to love Him to the end.

2. He blessed God for the work of preparation for this salvation, which was to be done by John Baptist, v. 76. Jesus Christ is the Highest, for He is God over all, blessed forevermore, (Rom. 9:5.) equal with the Father. John Baptist was his prophet, as Aaron was Moses's prophet, Exod. 7:1. Prophecy had now long

2:32. Is. 9:2. 42:7, 16. 49:6. 60:1-3. Matt. 4:16. John 1:8:12. 9:1. 3:17. 8:20. Is. 48:17, 18, 22. 57:19-21. 59:8. Jer. 6:16. Matt. 11:28, 29. Rom. 3:17.

10:14. Jer. 2:8. Is. 25:8-10, 12, 13. 55:10-13. Prov. 3:17. 8:20. Is. 48:17, 18, 22. 57:19-21. 59:8. Jer. 6:16. Matt. 11:28, 29. Rom. 3:17.

ceased, but in John it revived, as it had done in Samuel, who was born of an aged mother, as John was, after a long cessation. John's business was,

(1.) To prepare people for the salvation, by preaching repentance and reformation as great Gospel duties; Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, and but a little before Him, to prepare his ways, to call his people to make room for Him, and get ready for his entertainment. Let every thing that may obstruct his progress, or embarrass it, or hinder people from coming to Him, be taken away; see Isa. 40:3, 4. Let valleys be filled, and hills be brought low.

(2.) To give people a general idea of the salvation, that they might know, not only what to do, but what to expect; for the doctrine he preached was, that the kingdom of heaven is at hand. There are two things in which you must know that this salvation consists.

[1.] The forgiveness of what we have done amiss; it is salvation by the remission of sins those sins which stand in the way of the salvation, and by which we are all become liable to ruin and condemnation, v. 77. John Baptist gave people to understand that, though their case was sad, by reason of sin, it was not desperate, for pardon might be obtained through the tender mercy of our God; the bowels of mercy, so the word is; there was nothing in us but a piteous case to recommend us to the divine compassion.

[2.] Direction to do better, for the time to come. The gospel-salvation not only encourages us to hope for pardon, but gives us instruction, by which we may order our steps aright. In it the day-spring hath visited us from on high; (v. 78.) and this also is owing to the tender mercy of our God. Christ is the Morning Light, the rising Sun, Mal. 4:2. The Gospel brings light with it, John 3:19—leaves us not to wander in the darkness of pagan ignorance, or in the moonlight of the Old-Testament types or figures, but in it the day dawns; in John Baptist it began to break, but increased

Is. 25:8-10, 12, 13. 55:10-13. Prov. 3:17. 8:20. Is. 48:17, 18, 22. 57:19-21. 59:8. Jer. 6:16. Matt. 11:28, 29. Rom. 3:17.

4:2. and Is. 60:1-3, and possibly to Jer. 23:5. and Zech. 3:8. It is well known the original Hebrew word in these passages signifies that part of the heavens where the light begins to rise. Compare Rev. 7:2. The dawning of the day seems therefore a very literal version, and I apprehend it more beautifully describes the state of things just at this interval, than if the sun had been represented as actually risen.

DODDRIE. 'The day-break seems to arise from on high, especially to any who are situated in a valley or dell, as the valley of the shadow of death.'

(79.) Shadow of death.] 'Such phrases describe, with peculiar propriety, the ignorant and miserable state of the Gentile world, and perhaps the former part of the verse may refer to them; but as Christ's preaching to the Jews in Galilee, (for it was only to the Jews He applied Matt. 15:24. 10:5, 6. and Rom. 15:8,) is said (Matt. 4:14-16.) to be an accomplishment of Is. 9:1, 2, to which Zacharias here probably refers, I am unwilling to fix it to the Gentiles. The sad character and circumstances of the Jews at this time too well suit the representation here made.'

Verse 80. As John grew in stature, his understanding and judgment matured; and he gave indications not only of superior natural abilities, and energy of mind, but also of strong faith, vigorous holy affections, great fortitude and resolution in the cause of God, a superiority to grovelling desires and pursuits, and a victory over the fear and love of the world. Thus did he ripen for usefulness; but whether his parents died whilst he was young, or whether they were specially directed by God in this matter, he seems neither to have received an education from the Jewish scribes, nor attended on any sacerdotal services at the temple, but to have lived privately in the most retired and unfrequented part of the country, being given up to meditation, devotion, and mortification, till the time when he openly appeared among the people as the Messiah's forerunner. (Marg. Ref.—Note, 57-66.)

In the deserts.] 'Led thither by divine dispensation and direction to prepare, in solitude, for his public manifestation to Israel.'

DODDRIE. 'The Great Desert, called the Wilderness or Desert of Judea, (Ps. 63. title.) commencing from Tekoa in the tribe of Judah, (then termed the wilderness of Tekoa, 2 Chron. 20:20.) and extending through Arabia Petraea to the Persian gulf.' HORNE. 'Till the time of his age, before which time the law did not permit a man to enter into the public ministry. Num. 4:3. See also ch. 3:23. Such a retirement naturally prevented any such intimacy with Christ, in their childhood or youth, as might possibly have occasioned some suspicion as to the impartiality of the testimony which John afterwards bore Him. Compare John 1:31.'

DODDRIE.

CHAP. II.

Joseph and Mary go to Bethlehem, to enrolled there, according to the decree of Augustus, that all Jews should be enrolled in their own cities. Joseph and Mary, and Jesus, are enrolled in the register of the city of Bethlehem. The shepherds, finding it to be the angel had said, report these transactions, and glorify God, 15-20. Jesus is circumcised, 21; and presented at the temple, with the accustomed sacrifice of the poor, for the purifying of Mary, 22-24. Simeon's prophecy concerning Him, 25-35; and that of Anna, 36-38. He grows, and increases in wisdom, 40. At twelve years of age, He goes with his parents to Jerusalem, and hears and asks questions of the doctors in the temple, 41-50. He returns to Nazareth, and is subject to his parents, 51, 52.

AND it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from ^a Cæsar Augustus, that ^b all the world should be ^c taxed.

^a From the account called *Anno Domini*, the fourth year, 31. Acts 11:28, 25:11, 21. Phil. 4:22.
^b Matt. 24:14. Mark 14:9. 16:15. Rom. 1:8.
^c Or, enrolled.

1. Of his eminence as to the *inward man*: The child grew in the capacities of his mind, much more than other children; so that he *wased strong in spirit*, had a strong judgment and strong resolution. Reason and conscience (both which are the candle of the Lord) were so strong in him, that he had the inferior faculties of appetite and passion early in complete subjection. By this it appeared that he was *beset with the Holy Ghost*; for those that are strong in the Lord, are strong in spirit.

2. Of his *obscurity* as to the *outward man*: He was in the deserts; not that he lived a hermit; we have reason to think he went up to Jerusalem at the feasts, and frequented the synagogues on the Sabbath day; but his constant residence was in some of those scattered houses that were in the wilderness of Zuph or Maon, which we read of in the story of David. There he spent most of his time, in contemplation and devotion, and had not his education in the schools, or at the feet of the rabbins. Note, Many a one is qualified for great usefulness, who yet is buried alive; and many are long so buried who are designed, and are thereby in the fitting, for so much greater usefulness at last; as John Baptist, who was in the desert only till the day of his showing to Israel, when he was in the thirtieth year of his age. Note, There is a time fixed for the showing of those favors to Israel, which are reserved;

apace, ^a one more and more to the perfect day. We have ^b as much reason to welcome the gospel, enjoy it, as those have to welcome the who had long waited for it. First, The ^c discovering; it shows us what before we were utterly ignorant of, (p. 79.) it is to give light to them that sit in darkness, the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The day-spring visited this dark world, to lighten the Gentiles, Acts 26: 18. Secondly, It is *renewing*; it brings light to them that sit in the shadow of death, as condemned prisoners in the dungeon, to bring them the tidings of a pardon, at least of a reprieve, and opportunity of procuring a pardon; it proclaims the opening of the prison, (Isa. 61: 1.) brings the light of life. How pleasant is that light! Thirdly, It is *directing*; it is to guide our feet in the way of peace, into that way which will bring us to peace at last. It is not only a light to our eyes, but a light to our feet; (Ps. 119: 105.) it guides us into the way of making our peace with God, of keeping up a comfortable communion; that way of peace, which as sinners we have wandered from, and have not known, (Rom. 3: 17.) nor could ever have known of ourselves.

In the last verse, we have a short account of the younger years of John Baptist. Though the son of a priest, he did not, like Samuel, go up, when a child, to minister before the Lord, for he was to prepare the way for a better priesthood. But we are here told,

the vision of them is for an appointed time, and at the end it shall speak, and shall not lie.

CHAP. II. v. 1-7. In this chapter we have an account of the birth and infancy of our Lord Jesus; having had notice of his conception, and of the birth and infancy of his forerunner in the former chapter.

Here we have an account of the time, place, and circumstances of the birth of Christ.

I. The time. Several things may be gathered out of these verses, which intimate that it was the proper time.

He was born in the days of Augustus Cæsar, when the Roman empire, the fourth monarchy, was in its height, extended itself further than ever before or since, including Parthia one way, and Britain another way; so that it was then called, the empire of the whole earth; as it is here called *all the world*, (p. 1.) there being scarcely any part of the civilized world, but what was dependent on it. Now this was the time when the Messiah was to be born, according to Daniel's prophecy, (Dan. 2: 44.) In the days of these kings, the kings of the fourth monarchy, shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed.

He was born when Judea was become a province of the empire, and tributary to it; as appears evidently by this, that, when all the Roman empire was taxed, the Jews were taxed among the rest. Jerusalem was taken by Pompey the Roman general, about sixty years before this, who granted the government of the church to Hyrcanus, but not the government of the state; by degrees it was more and more reduced, till now at length it was quite subdued; for Judea was ruled by Cyrenius, the Roman governor of Syria; (p. 2.) the Roman writers call him *Sulpicius Quirinus*. Now just at this juncture, the Messiah was to be born, for so was dying Jacob's prophecy, That Shiloh should come when the sceptre was departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet, Gen. 49: 10. This was the first taxing that was made in Judea, the first badge of their servitude; therefore now Shiloh must come, to set up his kingdom.

There is another circumstance as to the time, implied in this general enrolment of all the subjects of the empire, which is, that there was now universal peace in the empire. The tem

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V 67-80. What multiplied praises, in heaven and earth, did the Saviour's advent occasion! Shall not we also unite in blessing the Lord God of Israel, who hath thus visited and redeemed his people? We are as deeply concerned in the raising up of this Horn of Salvation, and in the redemption which He made for sinners with his blood, as the Jews of old were. Predictions fulfilled in Christ, confirm the truth to us, as well as to them. Even John the Baptist's ministry calls on us to repent, and welcome our incarnate Prince and Savior; and 'through the tender mercy of our God, this Day-spring from on high hath visited' us, that, being set at liberty from bondage, as well as from condemnation, 'we may serve God without fear,' under the influence of the Spirit of adoption, 'in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our future lives.' Is this then the salvation we desire? Do we experience its power in our hearts and consciences? Do we

use the light of the Gospel 'to guide us into the ways of peace' and purity? If so, we may be thankful and joyful, and expect complete victory over Satan, sin, and death, and an abundant entrance into heavenly felicity. Let us then repent, and mortify every sin; let us pray that the light which shines around us, may shine into our hearts, and appear in our lives; and, if it be the will of the Lord that we should live in obscurity, let us the more diligently seek to grow 'strong in the grace of Jesus Christ,' and let those who are preparing for public usefulness, here retired and mortified to the world; employing their time in useful studies, attended by searching the Scriptures, by meditation, and devotion, till the Lord shall open their way to some proper service for the benefit of his people, and the enlargement, purity and peace of his kingdom.

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. v. 1. It had been predicted many ages before, that the Messiah should be born at Bethlehem; (Notes, Mic. 5: 2. Matt. 2: 3-6.) yet the mother of Jesus resided at Nazareth, sixty or seventy miles from that city; and she continued there till far advanced in her pregnancy. Nor was she directed to Bethlehem; indeed that would have appeared too much the effect of design. But Augustus Cæsar, the Roman emperor, in pursuance of his own purposes, issued an edict, that an account should be taken of the number and degree of all the subjects in his extensive empire; (*marce*) commonly called, 'all the world,' or the whole habitable earth; (*Marg. Ref. b*) or as some interpreters suppose, only the whole land of Israel, then governed by king Herod, and soon after divided into several distinct provinces—though this gives a very restricted interpretation of the word translated 'all the world,' of which no indisputable instances have been produced. 'Such an account used to be taken of the citizens of Rome every fifth year, for which they had officers on purpose, called censors. Their business was to take an account, and make a register, of all the Roman citizens, their wives and children, with the age, qualities, trades, offices, and estates, real and personal, of all of them. Augustus first extended this to the provinces—Three times, during his reign, he caused the like description to be

made. The second is the description, which Luke refers to. The decree concerning it was issued out three years before that in which Christ was born. No payment of any tax was made, (as this survey) till the twelfth year after; till then Herod, and after him Archelaus, his son, reigning in Judea. But when Archelaus was deposed, and Judea put under the command and government of a Roman procurator, then first were taxes paid the Romans for that country. If it be asked, for what reason then was this survey or description of Judea made, if no taxes were then to be paid upon it? The answer is, he was then at work on the composition of a book, containing such a survey and description of the whole Roman empire, as that which our Doomsday-book doth for England. In order whereto, his decree for this survey was made to extend to the depending kingdoms, as well as the provinces of the empire, that he might have a full account of both, for the thorough completing of the work. However, taxes were by the people of the provinces only paid to the Romans, and those of the dependent kingdoms to their own proper princes; the people paid their taxes to their princes, and the princes paid their tribute to the Roman emperors. Prideaux.—It is plain from this account, that the sceptre was at least departing from Judah, when Christ was born. (Gen. 49: 10.)

SCOTT

5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child.

6 And so it was, that while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered.

7 And she brought forth her first-born son, and wrapped him in swaddling-clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.

[Practical Observations.]

k Deut. 22:22-27. Matt. 1:18, 19.
l Ps. 33:11. Prov. 19:21. Mic. 5:2.
m 157. Rev. 12:1-5.
n Is. 7:14. Matt. 1:25. Gal. 4:4.
o 11:12. Ps. 22:6. Is. 53:2, 3. Matt. 8:20. 13:35. John 1:14. 2 Cor. 8:9.
p 10:34. Gen. 42:27. 43:21. Ex. 4:24.

want of rulers, Isa. 49:7. Many suppose that, being born during the time of the taxing, He was enrolled as well as Joseph and Mary, that it might appear how He made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant;—instead of having kings tributaries to Him, when He came into the world, He was Himself a tributary.

III. The circumstances. Those were very mean, and under all possible marks of contempt. He was indeed a *First-born Son*; but it was poor honor to be the first-born of such a poor woman as Mary was, who had no inheritance to which He might be entitled as First-born, but what was *in nativity*.

1. He was under some abasements, in common with other children; being wrapped in swaddling clothes, as they are when new-born. He that makes darkness a swaddling band for the sea, was Himself wrapped in swaddling bands, Job 38: 9. The everlasting Father became a child of

with the family of David, concerning which, it is probable, the emperor gave particular orders, it having been the royal family, and still talked of as designed to be so, that he might know its number and strength. Divers ends of Providence were served by this.

1. Mary, great with child, was hereby brought to Bethlehem, to be delivered there, according to the prediction; whereas she had designed to lie in at Nazareth. See how man purposes and God disposes; and how Providence orders all things for the fulfilling of the Scripture, and makes use of the projects men have for the serving their own purposes, quite beyond their intention, to serve his.

2. Hereby Jesus Christ was proved to be of the seed of David; for what brings his mother to Bethlehem now, but because she was of the stock and lineage of David? This was a material thing to be proved, and required such an authentic proof as this. Justin Martyr and Tertullian, two of the most early advocates for the Christian religion, appeal to these rolls or records of the Roman empire, for the proof of Christ's being born of the house of David.

3. Hereby it appeared that He was made under the law; for He became a subject of the Roman empire as soon as He was born, a ser-

time, and men said of Him, whose out-gone were of old from everlasting, *We know this man whence He is*, John 7: 27. The Ancient of days became an Infant of a span long.

2. He was under some abasements peculiar to Himself.

He was born at an inn. This was to intimate, that He came into the world but to sojourn here for a while, as in an inn, and to tell us to do likewise. An inn receives all comers, and so does Christ. He hangs out the banner of love for his sign, and whoever comes to Him, He will in no wise cast out; only, unlike other inns, He welcomes those that come without money and without price. All is on free cost.

He was born in a stable; so some think the word signifies, which we translate a manger, a place for cattle to stand to be fed in; because there was no room in the inn, and for want of conveniences, nay, for want of necessities, He was laid in the manger, instead of a cradle. The word which we render swaddling clothes, some derive from a word that signifies to 'rend, or tear, and thence infer that his very swaddles were ragged and torn. His being born in a stable and laid in a manger, was an instance, 1. Of the poverty of his parents'. Had they been rich, room would have been made for them but, being poor, they must shift as they could. 2. Of the corruption and degeneracy of men in that age; that a woman in reputation for virtue and honor, should be used so barbarously. If there had been any common humanity among them, they would not have turned a woman in travail into a stable. 3. It was an instance of the humiliation of our Lord Jesus. We were become by sin like an out-cast infant helpless and forlorn; and such a one Christ was. Thus He would answer the type of Moses, the great prophet and lawgiver of the Old Testament, who was in his infancy cast out in an ark of bulrushes, as Christ in a manger.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

V. 1-7. The omniscient God foresees and permits the innumerable volitions of free agents, and overrules them for the accomplishment of his own righteous purposes: thus He performs his prophecies and confirms his truth, even by wicked men, and by events which seem to us most casual. But who would have expected, that 'the Lord of glory,' when He became a Child, would have been lodged in a stable, or laid in a manger? Yet this was but a faint shadow of 'his grace, who though He were rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.' (John 13: 1-5. 2 Cor. 8: 6-9, v. 9. Phil. 2: 5-8. Heb. 2: 10-13.) He well knew what deference would be paid, even by his ministers and disciples, to wealth and rank, and what an improper distinction would be made between the rich and the poor, even in religious societies and places of worship. (Jam. 2: 1-4.) Too much of these evils is every where to be seen; and they must have been much more predominant, had our Lord appeared on earth attended with outward splendor and magnificence. But his condition, from his birth in a stable to his death on the cross, was suited to expose the vanity of outward distinctions, and to ennoble and dignify poverty, and all its mean attendants. When we by faith view the incarnate Son of God lying in a manger, we cannot but feel a check given to our vanity and ambition, our coveting and envying; our souls must in some degree grow more weaned from the world; we cannot, with this object before our eyes, 'seek great things; for ourselves or

our children, or disdain the poor believer; we cannot flatter the rich or honorable, or refuse respect to those who are the most apt representatives of our poor and suffering Redeemer; and we should be more effectually delivered from such errors in judgment and practice, did we more fully 'ponder these things in our hearts.'—Nor let us forget to copy the meekness and patience of Mary, who willingly endured fatigue, contempt and neglect, contentedly lodged in a stable, and there met the pains of child-birth, without complaining of the unkindness of the citizens of Bethlehem. If any persons, when performing the tender duties of the parental character, should be ready to complain, that their beloved offspring are not provided for as they could wish; let them think of Mary, wrapping her holy Babe in swaddling-clothes, and laying Him in the manger: this will silence the rising murmur, or change it into admiring praise. And, whilst we contrast her conduct with that of those, who at that time shut their doors against the most excellent and honored persons who ever visited the city, that they might entertain the sons and daughters of pride and affluence, let us learn to 'use hospitality without grudging,' especially to poor believers; and, instead of feasting the rich with ostentatious expense, let us entertain Christ in the person of his poor disciples. Thus we shall approve ourselves 'followers of God, as dear children,' and insure a gracious recompense at the 'resurrection of the just.' (See 14: 12-14. P. O. 12: 24.)

SCOTT.

(5) To be taxed.] 'To enrol himself, &c. Cyrenius, whom Tacitus calls "an active soldier and a rigid commissioner," was well qualified for an employment so odious to Herod—to whom Augustus had written that he would no longer treat him "as a friend, but as a subject," and to his subjects. By the very policy of Roman jurisprudence, to prevent insurrections and to expedite the business, all were required to repair to their own cities. Even in Italy, the consular edict commanded the Latin citizens "not to be enrolled at Rome, but all in their own cities," and this precaution was still more necessary in the turbulent provinces, like Judea and Galilee; and the decree was pre-emptory, and admitted of no delay. Joseph, therefore, was obliged to go with Mary, notwithstanding her advanced state of pregnancy, to his family town. Thus did "the fierceness of man," or the anger of Augustus towards Herod; "turn to the praise of God," and to the fulfilment of prophecy.'

Dr. HALES.

(7) Swaddling clothes.] 'This binding in swaddling clothes was studiously acquired to by the ancients, lest the tender frame of the infant might acquire, through weakness, or an accidental wrench, any distortion. The practice of confining the limbs of infants was not peculiar to the ancients, but was in use in England, till the last century.'

BLOOMFIELD.

Inn.] 'A *Xenodochium*, found only in a few places. It receives no cattle, but the strangers huddled together, as in the caravansary, 42a.]

but are decently accommodated in separate apartments, and supplied at the public charge, for three days, if they choose to stay so long, in moderate but wholesome food.' CAMPBELL, after BUSBESQUIUS.

Stable, manger.] 'A grotto or cave must to them that live in tents be the most convenient stable they could have. There is nothing thus improbable in the tradition, that our Lord, who was confessedly born in a stable, was born in a grotto in or very near the city of Bethlehem. Natural or artificial grottoes are very common in the eastern countries, particularly in Judea, and are often used for their cattle. Pococke observes, "there were three uses for grottoes: for they served either for sepulchres, cisterns, or as retreats for herds; and their cattle in bad weather, and especially in the winter nights." HANMER.

The place was not properly a stable, in our sense of the word, a house only for cattle, but was intended for supplying travellers, as to this day they are supplied in the East, with both stable and lodging under the same roof.'

CAMPBELL.

The traveller frequently observes similar grottoes put to similar uses, along the shores of the Mediterranean, formed with but little assistance from art; as, especially, in the porous and cavernous tufa rocks in the vicinity of Syracuse—where the beasts are sometimes fed from a rude manger, hollowed in the side of the cavern, either expressly for that purpose, or as a tomb for one of the ancient inhabitants of that populous city.

Ps.

8 ¶ And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping flocks by night.

9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid.

10 And the angel said unto them, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, which is Christ, the Lord.

Christ would hereby put a contempt on all worldly glory, and teach us to slight it. Since his own received Him not, let us not think it strange if they receive us not.

V. 8—20. The meanest circumstances of Christ's humiliation were all along attended with some discoveries of his glory; for even when He humbled Himself, God did in some measure exalt Him, and give Him earnestness of his future exaltation. When we saw Him wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger, we were tempted to say, 'Surely, this cannot be the Son of God.' But see his birth attended, as it is here, with a choir of angels, and we shall say, 'Surely, it can be no other than the Son of God, concerning whom it was said, when He was brought into the world, Let all the angels of God worship Him,' Heb. 1: 6.

We had in Matthew an account of the appearance of a star pointing out his birth to the wise men, who were Gentiles; here we are told of the notice given of it by an angel to the shepherds, who were Jews; to each God chose to speak in the language they were most conversant with. 1. See here the shepherds' employment; they were in the fields adjoining Bethlehem, keeping watch over their flocks, v. 8. To these, not to the chief priests or the elders, was the angel sent. They were like Jacob, plain men, dwelling in tents, not like Esau, cunning hunters. The patriarchs were shepherds, Moses and David particularly were called from keeping the sheep, to rule God's people; and by this instance God would show, that He had still a favor for those of that innocent employment. Tidings were brought to Moses of the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, when he was keeping sheep, and to these shepherds, who, it is probable, were devout, pious men, the tidings were brought of a greater salvation. Observe, 1. They were not sleeping in their beds, when this news was brought them, but broad awake: (those that would hear from God, must stir up themselves;) and therefore could not be deceived

in what they saw and heard, so as those may be, who are half asleep. 2. They were employed now, not in acts of devotion, but in the business of their calling; keeping watch over their flock, to secure them from thieves and beasts of prey, it probably, being in the summer time, when they kept their cattle out all night, as we do now, and did not house them. Note, We are not out of the way of divine visits, when we are sensibly employed in an honest calling, and abide with God in it.

II. Their surprise at the appearance of an angel, (v. 9.) who came upon them of a sudden, or stood over them, most probably, in the air over their heads, as coming immediately from heaven. We read it, the angel, as if it were the same that appeared once and again in the chapter before, the angel Gabriel, that was caused to fly swiftly: but that is not certain. The angels coming upon them intimates that they little thought of such a thing, or expected it; for it is in a preventing way that gracious visits are made us from heaven, or ever we are aware. That they might be sure it was an angel from heaven, they saw and heard the glory of the Lord round about them; such as made the night as bright as day, such a glory as used to attend God's appearance, a heavenly glory, or an exceeding great glory, such as they could not bear the dazzling lustre of. This made them sore afraid, put them into a consternation, as fearing some evil tidings: while we are conscious to ourselves of so much guilt, we have reason to fear, lest every express from heaven be a messenger of wrath.

III. The angel's message to the shepherds, v. 10—12. 1. He gives a supersedeas to their fears; 'Fear not, for we have nothing to say to you, that needs be a terror to you; you need not fear your enemies, and should not fear your friends.' 2. He furnished them with abundant matter for joy; 'Behold, I evangelize to you great joy; I solemnly declare it, and you have reason to bid it welcome, for it shall bring joy to all men.'
16:18. John 1:41, 45. 6:59. 7:25—
27:41. 20:31. Acts 2:36. 17:3. 1
15:47. Phil: 2:11. 3:8. Col. 2:6.

q Gen. 31:39, 40. Ex. 3:12. 1 Sam. 17:81, 35. Ps. 78:70, 71. Ez. 34:11. John 10:8—12.
* Let the angels watch.
1:11, 12. Judg. 6:11, 12. Matt. 1:20. Acts 27:23. 1 Tim. 3:16.
Ex. 107:10. 40:34, 35. 1 Kings 8:11. 1:6, 35. 32:2. 40:5. 62:1. Ez. 3:23. John 12:41. 2 Cor. 3:18. 4:8. Rev. 18:1.
1:12. 1:6, 45. Acts 22:9—9. 28:13, 14. Heb. 12:21. 12:20, 11.
1:13, 30. Dan. 10:11, 12, 18. Matt. 28:5. Rev. 1:17, 18.
1:19. 8:1. 1:40, 9. 41:27. 52:7.
8:11. Acts 13:22. Rom. 10:15.
5:12. 24:47. Gen. 12:3. Ps. 67:12. 68:23. 1:6. 49:6. 52:10. Matt. 24:26. Mark 16:7. Rom. 16:9—12.
Eph. 8:1. Col. 1:23.
1:89. 1:96. Matt. 1:21. Gal. 4:3. 2 Tim. 1:9, 10. Tit. 2:10—14. 3:4—7. 1 John 4:14.

Veres 8—14.

'As Abraham and David, to whom the promise of the Messiah was first made, were shepherds.' (Moses likewise might have been added, Ex. 2: 21.) so was the completion of this promise first revealed to shepherds. The shepherds watched severally in their courses.' Whithy.—It was proper that so important an event should be announced with peculiar solemnity, and angels were the heralds of the new-born Savior: (Matt. 2: 1, 2. Marg. and Marg. Ref. q. Marg. Ref. r, s.) The angel encouraged them not to fear, for he was come to bring them good tidings, for to them, as men, as sinners, and as believers, was born on that day, at Bethlehem, a Savior from wrath, Satan, sin, and death, who was indeed the promised and expected Messiah, Israel's anointed Prophet, Priest, and King; nay, 'the Lord of glory,' the Lord of all, 'the Lord from heaven,' God manifest in the flesh.' (Marg. Ref. u—c. Ja. 7: 14, 3. 5, 7.) No sooner had the angel finished this address to the poor shepherds, than he was visibly joined by 'multitudes of the heavenly host,' or of the angelic armies; who, being filled with inexpressible admiration of the love of God, and the display of all his glorious perfections, in this surprising transaction, audibly celebrated his praises with triumphant acclamations, saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, &c.' implying that this was the grand display of the divine glory, and superior to all others which they had ever witnessed. (19: 38.) They therefore called on all the inhabitants of the highest heavens, to praise God in their loftiest strains of adoration: for now peace was prepared for the earth, which had so long lain in a state of rebellion, enmity, discord and misery: peace inward and outward, with God and with each other, would be found on earth, through the gracious work of the divine Peace-maker, whom the Father, out of 'good-will to men,' fallen men, had provided and sent among them. (Marg. Ref. d—f. John 3: 16. Rom. 5: 10. Eph. 1: 3—8. 2: 14—18. 3: 9—12. 1 Pet. 1: 10—12. Rev. 5: 11—14. 20: 4—6.) 'So rich and free is the good-will of God to fallen men; and such blessed peace, external and internal, will eventually be produced on earth, that the glory of God will be more displayed and adored, in this, than in all his other works.'—This seems the purport of these angelic praises; but the abrupt, sententious manner in which they were delivered, while it rendered them more suited to their fervent acclamations, increased the difficulty of unfolding the full meaning of each expression. (Ps. 85:10—13.)

(8.) Abiding the field, keeping watch by night. Commentators were peculiarly solicitous to provide some shelter for these shepherds—tents, cottages, booths, &c. but, not more probable, that they spent the night as the Spanish shepherds do, enveloped in their long mantle, an oblong garment, woven like a carpet, of coarse woollen stuff, of this shape? The head is put through the opening in the middle.

'It was a custom among the Jews, to send out their sheep to the desert, about the passover, and bring them home at the commencement

of the first rain. As the passover occurred in the spring, and the first rain began early in the month of Marchesvan, which answers to part of our October and November, we find that the shepherds were kept in the open country during the whole of the summer.' And as the shepherds had not yet brought home their flocks, it is a presumption, to argue that October had not yet commenced, and that consequently our Lord was not born on the 25th of December, when no flocks were out in the fields; nor could he have been born later than September as the flocks were still in the fields by night. (On this very ground the nativity in December should be given up.) [So Loddridge add others.

Ed.
'The first Christians placed the baptism of Christ about the beginning of the fifteenth year of Tiberius; and thence, reckoned back thirty years, they placed his birth in the forty-third year of the Julian period, the forty-second of Augustus, and the twenty-eighth after the victory at Actium. This opinion prevailed till A. D. 527, when Dionysius Exiguus invented the vulgar account. Learned and pious men have trifled egregiously on this subject, making that of importance which the Holy Spirit, by his silence, has plainly informed them is of none. Fabricius gives a catalogue of no less than one hundred and thirty-six different opinions concerning the year of Christ's birth; and as to his birth-day, that has been placed by Christian sects and learned men, in every month of the year. The Egyptians placed it in January—Wagenseil in February—Bochart in March—some mentioned by Clement Alexandrinus, in April—others in May—Epiphanius speaks of some who placed it in June, and others who supposed it to have been in July—Wagenseil, who was not sure of February, fixed it probably in August—Lightfoot on the 15th September—Scaliger, Casaubon, and Calvisius, in October—others in November—but the Latin church, supreme in power, and infallible in judgment, placed it on the 25th December, the very day on which the ancient Romans celebrated the feast of their goddess Bruma.' 'Pope Julius I was the person who made this alteration, and it appears to have been done for this reason: the sun now began his return towards the northern tropic ending the winter, lengthening the short days, and introducing the spring. All this was probably deemed emblematical of the rising of the Sun of righteousness on the darkness of the world, and causing the day-spring from on high to visit mankind.' [But see Bloodfield.]

Dr. A. CLARKE.
(9.) The glory of the Lord. 'A divine glory. It was a known figure among the Hebrews, to raise, by the name of God, the import of any thing mentioned, to the highest degree possible.' CAMPBELL.
(11.) The Lord. 'The supreme, eternal Being, the Ruler of the heavens and the earth. As Christ's lordship must necessarily be wholly spiritual, he never having set up any secular government on earth, nor commanded any to be set up in his name; and as there is certainly no spiritual government but that of God, the word Lord here appears properly understood of the Deity of Christ.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger.

13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

14 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, a good-will towards men.'

[Practical Observations.]

15 ¶ And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, 'Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us.'

16 And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

17 And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

d Ex. 3:12. 1 Sam. 10:2-7. Ps. 22:6. Ia. 53:1-2.
e Gen. 28:12. 32:1-2. 1 Kings 22:19. c. 38:7. Ps. 68:17. 103:20. 149:2. Is. 62:3. Ez. 3:12. Dan. 7:10. Luke 15:10. Eph. 3:10. Heb. 1:14. 1 Pet. 1:12. Rev. 5:11.
f 1:28. Ps. 68:34. 85:9-12. 95: 11-13. Is. 44:23. 49:13. John 17: 4. Eph. 1:8. 3:20, 21. Phil. 2:11. Rev. 5:13.
g 1:7. Is. 9:8, 7. 67:19. Jer. 23:5, 6. Mic. 5:5. Zech. 6:12, 13. John 14: 27. Acts 10:38. Rom. 5:1. 2 Cor. 8:18-20. Eph. 2:14-18. Col. 1:20. Heb. 10:20, 21.
h John 3:16. Tit. 3:4-7. 1 John 4: 9, 10.

to all people; and not to the people of the Jews only; th t unto you is born this day, at this time, a Savior, the Savior that has been so long expected, which is Christ the Lord, in the city of David; v. 11. Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed; The Lord, Lord of all; a sovereign Prince; nay, He is God, for the Lord, in the Old Testament, answers to Jehovah. He is a Savior, and He will be a Savior to those only that accept of Him for their Lord. 'The Savior is born, He is born this day; and since it is matter of great joy to all people, it is not to be kept secret, you may proclaim it, may tell it to whom you please. He is born in the place where it was foretold He should be born, in the city of David; and He is born to you, to you Jews He is sent in the first place, to bless you, to you, shepherds, though poor and mean in the world.' This refers to Isa. 9: 6. Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given. To you men, not to us angels; He took not on Him our nature. This is matter of joy indeed to all people, great joy. Long-looked-for is come at last. Let heaven and earth rejoice before this Lord, for He cometh. 3. He gives them a sign for the confirming of their faith in this matter. 'You will find Him by this token; He is lying in a manger, where surely never any new-born infant was laid before.' They expected to be told, 'You shall find Him, though a Babe, dressed up in robes, and lying in the best house in the town, lying in state, with a numerous train of attendants in rich liveries.' 'No, you will find Him wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger.' When Christ was here on earth, He distinguished Himself, and made Himself remarkable, by nothing so much as the instances of his humiliation.

IV. The angels' doxology, and congratulations, v. 13, 14. The message was no sooner delivered by one angel, (that was sufficient to go express,) than suddenly there was with that angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts; sufficient, we may be sure, to make a chorus, that were heard by the shepherds, praising God; and certainly their song was not like that (Rev. 14: 3.) which no man could learn, for it was designed that we should all learn it. 1. Let God have the honor of this work; Glory to God in the highest. God's good-will to men; manifested in sending the Messiah, redounds very much to his praise; and angels in the highest heavens, though not immediately interested in it themselves, will celebrate it in his honor, Rev. 5: 11, 12. Glory to God, whose kindness and love designed this favor, and whose wisdom contrived it in such a way, as that one divine attribute should not be glorified at the expense of another, but the honor of all effectually secured and

advanced. Other works of God are for his glory, but the redemption of the world is for his glory in the highest. 2. Let men have the joy of it; On earth, peace, good-will toward men. God's good-will in sending the Messiah, introduced peace in this lower world, slew the enmity that sin had raised between God and man, and resettled a peaceful correspondence. If God be at peace with us, all peace results from thence; peace of conscience, peace with angels, peace between Jew and Gentile; peace is here put for all good, all that good which flows to us from the incarnation of Christ. All the good we have, or hope, is owing to God's good-will; and if we have the comfort of it, He must have the glory of it. Nor must any peace, any good, be expected in a way inconsistent with the glory of God; therefore not in any way of sin, nor in any way but by a Mediator. Here was the peace proclaimed with great solemnity; whoever will, let them come and take the benefit of it. It is on earth peace to men of good-will, (so some copies read it,) to men who have a good-will to God, and are willing to be reconciled; or to men whom God has a good-will to, though vessels of his mercy. See how well affected the angels are to man, and to his welfare and happiness; how well pleased they were in the incarnation of the Son of God, though He passed by their nature; and ought not we much more to be affected with it? This is a faithful saying, attested by an innumerable company of angels, and well worthy of all acceptance—That is good-will of God toward men, is glory to God in the highest, and peace on the earth.

V. The shepherds' visit to the new-born Savior. 1. They consulted about it, v. 15. While the angels were singing their hymn, they could attend to that only; but when they were gone away to heaven, (for angels never made long stay, but returned as soon as they had despatched their business,) the shepherds said one to another, Let us go to Bethlehem. Note, When extraordinary messages from heaven are no more to be expected, we must set ourselves to improve what we have. Nor is it any reflection on the testimony of angels, nor upon even a divine testimony itself, to get it corroborated by observation and experience. But observe, These shepherds do not speak doubtfully, 'Let us go see whether it be so or no;' but with assurance, Let us go see this thing which is come to pass; for what room was left to doubt of it, when the Lord had thus made it known to them? The word spoken by angels was steadfast and unquestionably true. 2. They immediately made the visit, (v. 16.)—came with haste to the place, which, probably, the angel directed

i 24:51. 2 Kings 21:11. 1 Pet. 3:22. 11. 12:42. John 20:1-10.
k Gr. men the shepherds. 1 13:39. Ec. 9:10.
l Ex. 3:3. Ps. 111:2. Matt. 21:2, 9—m See on 7:12. 19:32. 22:13.

11:38. 8:39. Ps. 40:9, 10. 66:16. 71: 17, 19. Mal. 3:16. John 1:1-46. 4:28, 29.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 8-14. We should learn to judge and act as holy angels do: they did not regard the holy family the less, for being lodged in a stable; and the Savior never appeared so honorable and excellent, according to their judgment, as when He lay in the manger, except when He hung expiring on the cross for our sins, and praying for his crucifiers. Humble, simple piety, and honest industry, are more approved by the inhabitants of heaven, than all the dignities and wisdom of the world. (Heb. 1: 13, 14.) The angels delight in celebrating the praises of God, for those displays of his glory, in which they are not personally interested; and they still, as it were, proclaim in our ears, 'To you is born a Savior, who is Christ, the Lord.' These then ought to be glad tidings to all who hear them.—But most happy for us the hour, in which we were enabled to believe in Christ for the salvation of our souls. Unless this

has been vouchsafed, we can have no reason to rejoice at the nativity of Jesus; for that event will but enhance our guilt and condemnation; and if real Christians deem it proper to commemorate it, as a season set apart for that purpose, they will not do it with bacchanalian revels, or luxurious feasting, but with more abundant thanksgivings to God, and liberality to the poor. Joining their feeble hymns to the songs of angels, with adoring, grateful acclamations will they repeat, 'Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men;' they will employ their prayers, and examples, and endeavors, to give glory to God, by making known the Gospel to those who sit in darkness all over the world, and by copying his good-will to men: thus will they ripen for the joys of heaven, by their worship and services here on earth.

SCOTT.

(14.) *Glory to God.* 'The incarnation of Jesus Christ is an infinite and eternal benefit.'

DR. A. CLARKE.

In the highest. 'As the Jews reckoned three heavens, the highest was considered as the place of the throne of God. When we find it contrasted with earth, (as in the present verse,) we have reason to assign it this meaning: The one is mentioned as the habitation of God, the other as that of men. This is entirely in the Jewish manner. Ecc. 5: 2.'

Verses 15-20.

(Marg. Ref. 1-10. Marg. Ref. p. q.—v. 51.) SCOTT.
(15.) *Kept, &c.* Mark 6: 20. v. 51.—Pondred.] 14: 31. Acts 17: 18. 18: 27. 20: 14. The word is peculiar to Luke, and in his place seems to imply a careful and persevering consideration of

all circumstances, relating to these interesting events; with a diligent comparison of each part with all the rest. (1 Cor. 2: 13.) SCOTT.

(15.) *The Shepherds.* 'Rather, the men, i. e. those shepherds.'

BLOOMFIELD, after VALKENAER.

(17.) *They made known abroad the saying.* 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, comprises the sum and substance of the Gospel of God; and of this the shepherds were the first preachers. This, and this only, is the message which all Christ's true pastors or shepherds bring to men. How can religious contentions, civil broils, or open wars, look that Gospel in the face, which publishes nothing but glory to God, and peace and good-will among men? Crusades for the recovery of a holy land, as wars for the support of religion are an insult to the Gospel.'

I. A. CLARKE.

18 And all they that heard it, wondered at those things, which were told them by the shepherds.

19 But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.

20 And the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.

21 And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called JESUS, which was so named of the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

22 And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

23 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

24 And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

25 (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)

26 And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

27 And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

28 And when the days of her purification, according to the law of Moses, were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord;

them to more particularly than is recorded; ('Go to the stable of such an inn?') and there they found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. The poverty, and meanness in which they found Christ the Lord, were no shock to their faith, who themselves knew what it was to live a life of comfortable communion with God in very poor and mean circumstances. We have reason to think that the shepherds told Joseph and Mary of the vision of the angels they had seen, and the song of the angels they had heard, which was a great encouragement to them. And it is probable that Joseph and Mary told the shepherds what visions they had had concerning the child; and so, by communicating their experiences to each other, they greatly strengthened one another's faith.

VI. The care which the shepherds took to spread the report of this; (v. 17.) though they saw nothing in the child that should induce them to believe that he was Christ the Lord, yet the circumstances, how mean soever they were, agreeing with the sign given by the angel, they were abundantly satisfied; and as the helpers argued, (2 Kings 7: 9. This being a day of good tidings, we dare not hold our peace,) so they made known abroad the whole story of what was told them, both by the angels, and by Joseph and Mary, concerning this child, that he was the Savior, even Christ the Lord, that in him there is peace on earth, and that he was conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, and born of a virgin. They told every body, and agreed in their testimony concerning it. And now, if when He is in the world, the world knows Him not; it is their own fault, for they have sufficient notice given them. But what impression did it make on people? Why truly, All they that heard it, wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds, v. 18. The shepherds were plain, downright, honest men, and they could not suspect them guilty of any design to impose upon them; what they had said therefore, was likely to be true; and if it were true, they could not but wonder at it, that the Messiah should be born in a stable, and not in a palace; that angels should bring news of it to poor shepherds, and not to the chief priests. They wondered, but never inquired further about the Savior, their duty to Him, or advantages by Him. O the amazing stupidity of the men of that generation! Justly were the things which belonged to their peace, hid from their eyes, when they thus wilfully shut their eyes against them.

VII. The use made of these things, by those who believed them, and received the impression of them.

1. Mary made them the matter of her private meditation; she said little, but kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart, v. 19. She laid the evidences together, and kept them in reserve, to be compared with the discoveries that should afterwards be made her. As she had silently left it to God to clear up her virtue, when that was suspected, so she silently leaves it to Him to publish her honor, now when it was veiled; and it is satisfaction enough to find, that if no one else takes notice of the birth of her child, angels do. Note, The truths of Christ are hard keeping; and the way to keep them safe, is to ponder them. Meditation is the best help to memory.

2. The shepherds made them the matter of their more public praise. If others were not affected with those things, yet they were; (v. 20.) They returned, glorifying and praising God, with the holy angels. If others would not regard their report, God would accept their thanksgivings. They praised God for what they had heard, and for what they had seen, as

it had been spoken to them. They thanked God that they had seen Christ, though in the depth of his humiliation; and as afterward the cross of Christ, so now his manger, though some saw in it only foolishness and a stumbling block, others saw in it, the wisdom of God and the power of God.

V. 21—24. Our Lord Jesus, being made of a woman, was made under the law, Gal. 4: 4. Not only the law of nature, but, the law of Moses; he puts his neck under that yoke, though a heavy yoke, and a shadow of good things to come. And though its institutions were beggarly elements, and rudiments of this world, He submitted to it, that He might the better cancel it, and set it aside for us.

Now here we have two instances of his being made under that law, and submitting to it.

1. He was circumcised, on the very day that the law appointed, (v. 21.) that day seven-night that He was born. Though a painful operation, (Exod. 4: 25.) yet Christ would undergo it for us, to give an instance of his early obedience even unto blood. Then He shed his blood by drops, which afterward He poured out in purple streams. Though it supposed Him a stranger, nay, a sinner, yet He submitted to it, because He would be made in the likeness, not only of flesh, but of sinful flesh, Rom. 8: 2. Though thereby He made Himself a Debtor to the whole law, (Gal. 5: 8.) yet He submitted to it, because He would take on Him the form of a servant, though free-born. Christ was circumcised, 1. That He might own Himself of the seed of Abraham, of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who was to take on Him the seed of Abraham, Heb. 2: 16. 2. That He might own Himself our surety, and undertaker. Circumcision (saith Dr. Goodwin) was our bond, whereby we acknowledged ourselves debtors to the law; and Christ, by being circumcised, did, as it were, set his hand to it, being made Sin for us. The ceremonial law consisted much in sacrifices; Christ here offered Himself to offer, not the blood of bulls or goats but his own blood, which none that ever were circumcised before, could oblige themselves to. 3. That He might justify, and put an honor on the dedication of the infant seed of the church of God, by that ordinance which is the instituted seal of the covenant, and of the righteousness which is by faith; as circumcision was (Rom. 4: 11.) and baptism is. And certainly his being circumcised at eight days old, doth make much more for the dedicating of the seed of the faithful by baptism in their infancy, than his being baptized at thirty years old doth, for the deferring of it till they are grown up. The change of the ceremony alters not the substance.

At his circumcision, according to the custom, He had his name given him.—Jesus or Joshua, for he was so named of the angel to his mother Mary, before he was conceived in the womb (Luke 1: 31.) and to his supposed father Joseph after, Matt. 1: 21. It was a common name among the Jews, as John was; (Col. 4: 11.) and in this He would be made like unto his brethren. It was the name of two eminent types of him in the Old Testament; Joshua, the successor of Moses, who was commander of Israel, and conqueror of Canaan; and Joshua, the high priest, who was therefore purposely

Varus 21.
(Marg. Ref. c. 1. 57. 65. Gen. 17: 9—12. Matt. 3: 13—15.) This painful ceremony was, in his case, a pledge given of his future perfect obedience to the whole law. (Gal. 5: 3.) in the midst of sufferings and temptations, even unto death for us; and it was an entrance on that vicarious work which He finished on the cross. The name Jesus has already been explained. (Matt. 1: 21, 21.) Eight. That is, not when the eighth day was ended, but when it was come. Whithy. This illustrates the expression 'after three days,' as used concerning our Lord's resurrection. (Mark 8: 31.)

And when eight days were accomplished, [See note from Horne c. 1. 53.]

Varus 22—24.
(Marg. Ref.—Ex. 13: 2, 11—13. Lev. 12: 2—5.) At the end of four days, Mary went up to the temple, to offer the appointed sacrifice for her purification; for though in her case, there were not the same reasons for this observance, as in that of other women, yet she cannot on exemption. Joseph also attended her, taking the holy child Jesus; because, being a first-born Son, He was to be presented to the Lord, and redeemed according to the law. (24.) A pair, &c.] Lev. 12: 6. & (23.) Every male, &c.] The quo, don is not made

either from the Septuagint or the Hebrew; but the general meaning of several texts is condensed into one. (Marg. Ref. n.) Scotts. (22.) Her purification.] 'Rather, their purification. There is here some variety of reading. Some copies have "their," others "her," but the great majority "their." The reading "her," is justly suspected to have proceeded from the superstition of those, who were scandalized at the idea of impurity being ascribed to Jesus. But it should be considered that the impurity was only external and ceremonial, not moral, it being merely an obligation and restraint laid on women newly brought to bed, till after certain rites. And although the law of purification does only specify the mother, yet it cannot be doubted but that the infant at the breast must have been comprehended, since the impurity being communicable by contact, the infant could not but be impure also. "Their" has therefore been deservedly adopted by recent modern critics.'

(23.) The law.] 'Agreeably to this precept. (Ex. 13: 2. Num. 8: 16, 17.) they went up to, redeem Him [the Infant Jesus] at the price of five shekels, which was the sum appointed to be paid for every eldest son, without any regard to the condition of the family. Compare Num. 18: 15, 16'

ROBERTSON.

24 And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, ^a A pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons.

[Practical Observations.]
25 ¶ And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon: and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him.

26 And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

x Lev. 12:6-8. 2 Cor. 8:9.
y 1:6. Gen. 6:9. Job 1:1, 8. Dan. 6:23.
z 1:21. Mic. 6:8. Acts 10:22, 24.
16 Tit. 2:11-14.
a 1:41. 5:9. 40:1. Mark 15:43.
b 1:41. 6:7. Num. 11:25, 29. 2 Pet. 1:21.
c 2:27. 14. Am. 3:7.
d 2:27. Ps. 89:48. John 8:51. Heb. 11:5.
e Jn. 2:2, 6. Is. 61:1. Dan. 9:24-26. John 1:41. 4:29. 20:21. Acts 2:36. 9:20. 10:38. 17:3. Heb. 10:5.

to the Lord, so as never any other was; yet He was presented to the Lord, as other first-born were, and no otherwise; which now signified his presenting Himself to the Lord as Mediator, when He was caused to draw near and approach unto Him, Jer. 30: 31. But, according to the law, he was redeemed, Num. 18: 15. The first-born of man shall thou redeem, and five shekels was the value, Lev. 27: 6. Num. 18: 16. But probably, in case of poverty, the priest was allowed to take less, or perhaps nothing, for no mention is made of it here. Christ was presented to the Lord, not to be brought back, but to serve Him forever; and though not left in the temple as Samuel was, to minister there, yet like him He is given to the Lord as long as He lives, and ministers to Him in the true temple not made with hands.

2. The mother brought her offering, v. 24. When she had presented that Son of hers unto the Lord, who was to be the great Sacrifice, she might have been excused from offering any other; but so it is said in the law of the Lord, she must offer a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; had she been of ability, she must have brought a lamb for a burnt-offering, and a dove for a sin-offering; but, being poor, and not able to reach the price of a lamb, she brings two doves, one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering; (see Lev. 12: 7, 8.) to teach us in every address to God, and particularly in those on special occasions, both to give thanks to God for his mercies to us, and to acknowledge with sorrow and shame our sins against Him; in both we must give glory to Him, nor do we ever want matter for both. Christ was not conceived and born in sin, as others are, so that there was not that occasion

crowned, that he might prefigure Christ, as a priest upon his throne, Zech. 6: 11, 13. It was very significant of his undertaking. Jesus signifies a Savior. He would be denominated, not from the glories of his divine nature, but from his gracious designs as a Mediator: He brings salvation.

II. He was presented in the temple. This was done with an eye to the law, and at the time appointed by the law, when He was forty days old, when the days of her purification were accomplished, v. 22. Many copies, and authentic ones, read the days of their purification, the purification both of the mother and of the child, for so it was intended to be by the law; and our Lord Jesus, though He had no impurity to be cleansed from, yet submitted to it, as He did to circumcision, because, He was made sin for us; and that, as by the circumcision of Christ we might be circumcised, in the virtue of our union and communion with Him, with a spiritual circumcision made without hands, (Col. 2: 11.) so in the purification of Christ we might be spiritually purified from the filthiness and corruption which we brought into the world with us. Now, according to the law,

1. The child Jesus, being a first-born Son, was presented to the Lord, in one of the courts of the temple. The law is here recited, v. 23. Every male that opens the womb, shall be called holy to the Lord, because by a special writ of protection the first-born of Israel were preserved, when the first-born of the Egyptians were slain by the destroying angel; so that Christ, as First-born, was a Priest by a title surer than that of Aaron's house. Christ was the first-born among many brethren, and was called holy

to the Lord, so as never any other was; yet He was presented to the Lord, as other first-born were, and no otherwise; which now signified his presenting Himself to the Lord as Mediator, when He was caused to draw near and approach unto Him, Jer. 30: 31. But, according to the law, he was redeemed, Num. 18: 15. The first-born of man shall thou redeem, and five shekels was the value, Lev. 27: 6. Num. 18: 16. But probably, in case of poverty, the priest was allowed to take less, or perhaps nothing, for no mention is made of it here. Christ was presented to the Lord, not to be brought back, but to serve Him forever; and though not left in the temple as Samuel was, to minister there, yet like him He is given to the Lord as long as He lives, and ministers to Him in the true temple not made with hands.

2. The mother brought her offering, v. 24. When she had presented that Son of hers unto the Lord, who was to be the great Sacrifice, she might have been excused from offering any other; but so it is said in the law of the Lord, she must offer a pair of turtle-doves, or two young pigeons; had she been of ability, she must have brought a lamb for a burnt-offering, and a dove for a sin-offering; but, being poor, and not able to reach the price of a lamb, she brings two doves, one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin-offering; (see Lev. 12: 7, 8.) to teach us in every address to God, and particularly in those on special occasions, both to give thanks to God for his mercies to us, and to acknowledge with sorrow and shame our sins against Him; in both we must give glory to Him, nor do we ever want matter for both. Christ was not conceived and born in sin, as others are, so that there was not that occasion

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15-24. When favored with peculiar discoveries of the glory of the Lord, and of his love to us, we should excite one another to a more unreserved attention to his directions, examine more fully what He has made known to us, and seek to have our faith confirmed by experience; we should also endeavor to interest others in what He has taught us concerning the divine Savior; and, pondering such things in our hearts, we should return from holy ordinances to our secular employments, glorifying God for all we have heard and experienced.—While we trust in the perfect righteousness of our divine Surety, we ought to copy his example; seeking the true circumcision of

in his case, that is in others; yet, because He was made under the law, He complied with it. Thus it became Him to fulfil all righteousness. Much more doth it become the best of men to join in confession of sin; for who can say, I have made my heart clean?

V. 25-40. Still Christ has honor done Him, when He humbles Himself. But we might not be stumbled at the meanness of his birth, angels then did Him honor; and now, that we may not be offended at his being presented in the temple, like other children born in sin, Simeon and Anna do Him honor by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

1. A very honorable testimony is borne to Him by Simeon, which was both a reputation to the Child, and an encouragement to the parents, and might have been a happy introduction of the priests into an acquaintance with the Savior, if those watchmen had not been blind. Now observe here,

1. The account given concerning this Simeon, or Simon. He dwelt now in Jerusalem, and was eminent for his piety, and communion with God. Some learned men, who have been conversant with the Jewish writers, find that there was at this time one Simeon, a man of great note in Jerusalem, the son of Hillel, and the first to whom they gave the title of Rabbani, the highest title that they gave to their doctors, and which was never given but to seven of them. He succeeded his father Hillel, as president of the college which his father founded, and of the great sanhedrim. The Jews say he was endued with a prophetic spirit, and turned out of his place, because he witnessed against the common opinion of the Jews concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, and they likewise observe, that there is no mention of him in their Mishna, or book of traditions; which intimates that he was no patron of those fooleries. One thing objected against this conjecture, is, that at this time his father Hillel was living, and that he himself lived many years after this, as appears by the Jewish histories; but as to that, he is not here said to be old; and his saying, Now let thy servant depart, intimates that he was willing to die now, but doth not conclude that therefore, he did die quickly. Paul lived many years after he had spoken of his death as near, Acts 20: 25. Another thing objected is, that the son of Simeon was Gamaliel, a Pharisee, and an enemy to Christianity; but as to that, it is no new thing for a faithful lover of Christ to have a son a bigoted Pharisee.

The account given of him here, is, That he was just and devout,—just towards men, and devout towards God, which two must always go together. He waited for the consolation of

the heart, the genuine purification from the pollution of sin and the dedication of body and soul to God, which were shad-
dowed forth in the ancient types and institutions of the Mosaic law. We ought also to present our children to the Lord, who gave them to us; desiring that He would redeem them from sin and death, make them holy to Himself, and number them with the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven; and such poor services, if they be the fruit of a humble and upright heart, will not be rejected. (Notes, Matt. 19: 13-15. Mark 10: 13-16.)

SCOTT.

Verses 25-32.

The Jewish priests and scribes remained ignorant of the birth of the promised Messiah, till some time after this. (Matt. 2: 1-12.) But there was a small remnant, who had more spiritual views and expectations; and to them it pleased God to give intimations of what had taken place. Among these was Simeon; concerning whom we know no more than what is here recorded. (38-38. Acts 10: 1, 2. Hag. 2: 6-9. Marg. Ref. y-g.—Is. 12: 2. 45: 8, 15-17, 20-25. Hos. 1: 6, 7. Zech. 9: 9, 10. Matt. 1: 20, 21. Acts 4: 5-12. Tit. 2: 13, 14. 3: 4-7.) The Lord Jesus Himself is here called 'the Salvation of God,' because the whole salvation of a sinner centres in His Person, as 'God manifest in the flesh,' all the purposes and promises of salvation had reference to Him: He obtained all the blessings of it by shedding his blood; they are all treasured up in Him, and dispensed by Him to believers; and they are all applied, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, who is given to us through his intercession. (Is. 9: 2. 42: 5-7. 49: 5, 6. 60: 1-3. John 1: 4-9. 3: 19-21. 8: 12. 12: 34-36. Marg. Ref. k-r-p.—Notes, Rom. 9: 4, 5. Phil. 3: 1-7, r-3.) Not that the Spirit of prophecy opened Simeon's enlarged

view, the glorious and blessed consequences, both to Israel and the Gentiles, in all subsequent generations, arising from the birth of the Child which he held in his arms; and joyfully anticipating these glories and blessings, he counted himself to have lived long enough upon earth, and was ready for the society, worship, and joy of heaven, to join the songs of 'the heavenly host,' who had before sang at his birth, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men,' p. 14. 'It is wonderful that, after so many clear prophecies, in the Old Testament, of the calling of the Gentiles, the Jews should have been all so blind, as to imagine God had no kindness for them.' Why? It is likewise worth inquiring, in this view, how far the bulk of professed Christians also may be blinded by prejudice, concerning many things as plainly revealed in the New Testament.

(25.) Simeon.] 'Had Simeon been, as some suppose, the president of the council, and father of the celebrated Gamaliel, Luke would probably have inserted so honorable a circumstance.'

(36.) The Lord's Christ.] 'Thou art, "Thy Lord's anointed".'

DR. A. CLARKE.

27 And he came * by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,

28 Then * took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said

29 Lord, * now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, * according to thy word;

30 For mine eyes have seen thy Salvation,

31 Which * thou hast prepared before the face of all people;

• 411. Acts 8:29. 10:19. 11:12. 16:7. Rev. 1:10. 17:3. 11:18, 51. 12:22. 13:10. 14:6. 15:2. 16:1. 17:3. 18:1. 19:1. 20:1. 21:1. 22:1. 23:1. 24:1. 25:1. 26:1. 27:1. 28:1. 29:1. 30:1. 31:1. 32:1. 33:1. 34:1. 35:1. 36:1. 37:1. 38:1. 39:1. 40:1. 41:1. 42:1. 43:1. 44:1. 45:1. 46:1. 47:1. 48:1. 49:1. 50:1. 51:1. 52:1. 53:1. 54:1. 55:1. 56:1. 57:1. 58:1. 59:1. 60:1. 61:1. 62:1. 63:1. 64:1. 65:1. 66:1. 67:1. 68:1. 69:1. 70:1. 71:1. 72:1. 73:1. 74:1. 75:1. 76:1. 77:1. 78:1. 79:1. 80:1. 81:1. 82:1. 83:1. 84:1. 85:1. 86:1. 87:1. 88:1. 89:1. 90:1. 91:1. 92:1. 93:1. 94:1. 95:1. 96:1. 97:1. 98:1. 99:1. 100:1. 101:1. 102:1. 103:1. 104:1. 105:1. 106:1. 107:1. 108:1. 109:1. 110:1. 111:1. 112:1. 113:1. 114:1. 115:1. 116:1. 117:1. 118:1. 119:1. 120:1. 121:1. 122:1. 123:1. 124:1. 125:1. 126:1. 127:1. 128:1. 129:1. 130:1. 131:1. 132:1. 133:1. 134:1. 135:1. 136:1. 137:1. 138:1. 139:1. 140:1. 141:1. 142:1. 143:1. 144:1. 145:1. 146:1. 147:1. 148:1. 149:1. 150:1. 151:1. 152:1. 153:1. 154:1. 155:1. 156:1. 157:1. 158:1. 159:1. 160:1. 161:1. 162:1. 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part, or the priest's part; for divers of the ancients say that he was himself a priest. When we receive the record which the Gospel gives us of Christ, with a lively faith, and the offer it makes us of Christ, with love and resignation, then we take Christ in our arms.

4. The solemn declaration he made hereupon; *He blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest Thou thy servant depart in peace,* v. 29—32.

(1.) He has a pleasant prospect concerning himself, and (which is a great attainment) is got quite above the love of life, and fear of death; nay, is arrived at a holy contempt of life, and desire of death, v. 29, 30. Here is, [1.] An acknowledgment that God had been as good as his word; as Solomon owns, 1 Kings 8: 56. Note, Never any that hoped in God's word, were made ashamed of their hope. [2.] A thanksgiving for it; *He blessed God* that he saw that Salvation in his arms, which many prophets and kings desired to see, and might not. [3.] A confession of his faith, that this Child in his arms was the Saviour, the Salvation itself; *thy Salvation*, the Salvation of thine appointing, the Salvation which Thou hast prepared. [4.] It is a farewell to this world; *Now let thy servant depart*; now mine eyes have been blessed with this sight, let them be closed, and see no more in this world. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, (Eccl. 1: 8.) till it hath seen Christ, and then it is. What a poor thing doth this world look to one that hath Christ in his arms, and salvation in his eye! Now adieu to all my friends and relations, all my enjoyments and employments here, even the temple itself. [5.] It is a welcome to death; *Now let thy servant depart*. Note, Death is a departure, the soul's departure out of the body, from the world of sense to the world of spirits. We must not depart till God gives us our discharge, for we are his servants, and must not quit his service till we have accomplished our time. Moses would have had more than was promised, (Deut. 3: 24, 25.) but Simeon is more than satisfied with what is promised him. See here, First, How comfortable the death of a good man is; he departs as God's servant from the place of his toil to that of his rest. He departs in peace, peace with God, peace with his own conscience; in peace with death, well reconciled to it, well acquainted with it. He departs according to God's word, as Moses, Deut. 34: 5. Secondly, What is the ground of this comfort? For mine eyes have seen thy Salvation. This speaks more than a great complacency in the sight, like that of Jacob, (Gen. 46: 30.) *Now let me die, since I have seen thy face*. It speaks a believing expectation of a happy state on the other side death, through this salvation he now had a sight of, which not only takes off the terror of death, but makes it gain, Phil. 1: 21. Note, Those that have welcomed Christ, never welcome death.

Israel, that is, for the coming of the Messiah, in whom alone the nation of Israel, that was now miserably harassed and oppressed, would find consolation. He understood by books, as Daniel, that the time was at hand, and therefore was now more than ever big with expectation of it. The unbelieving Jews, who still expect that which is already come, use it as an oath, or solemn protestation, *As ever I hope to see the consolation of Israel*, so and so it is. Note, The consolation of Israel is to be waited for, is worth waiting for, and will be welcome to those who have waited for it, and continue waiting. The Holy Ghost was upon him, not only as a Spirit of holiness, but as a Spirit of prophecy; he was filled with the Holy Ghost, and enabled to speak things above himself. He had a gracious promise made him, that before he died he should have a sight of the Messiah, v. 26. Note, Those, and those only, can with courage see death, and look it in the face without terror, that have had by faith a sight of Christ.

2. The seasonable coming of Simeon into the temple, at the time when Christ was presented there, v. 27. Just then, when Joseph and Mary brought in the child, to be registered, as it were, in the church-book, among the first-born, Simeon came, by direction of the Spirit, into the temple. Note, Those that would see Christ, must go to his temple: for there the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to meet you, and there you must be ready to meet Him.

3. The abundant satisfaction wherewith he welcomed this sight; (v. 28.) he embraced Him with the greatest affection imaginable. He took Him up in his arms, to present Him to the Lord, (so some think,) to do either the parent's

(2.) He has a pleasant prospect concerning the world, and concerning the church. This Salvation shall be,

[1.] A blessing to the world. It is prepared before the face of all people, not to be hid, but to be made known; to be a Light to lighten the Gentiles; they shall have the knowledge of Him, and of God, and another world, through Him. This has reference to Isa. 49: 6. *I will give thee for a Light to the Gentiles*; for Christ came to be the Light of the world, not a candle in the Jewish candlestick, but the Sun of righteousness.

[2.] A Blessing to the church; the Glory of thy people Israel. It was an honor to the Jewish nation, that the Messiah sprang out of one of their tribes, and was born, and lived, and died, among them. And of those who were of the spiritual Israel, He was indeed the Glory, and will be so to eternity, Isa. 60: 19. *They shall glory in Him*. In the Lord shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory, Isa. 45: 25. When Christ ordered his apostles to preach the Gospel to all nations, therein He made Himself a Light to lighten the Gentiles; and when He added, beginning at Jerusalem, He made Himself the Glory of his people Israel.

5. The prediction concerning this Child, which he delivered, with his blessing, to Joseph and Mary, v. 33. And because they were affected with, and had their faith strengthened by, that which was said to them, here is more said to them.

(1.) Simeon shows them what reason they had to rejoice; for he blessed them, (v. 34.) that is, pronounced them blessed. He prayed for them, that God would bless them, and would have others do so too. They had reason to rejoice, for this Child should be not only a Comfort and Honor to them, but a public Blessing. He is set for the rising again of many in Israel, for the conversion of many to God, that are dead and buried in sin, and for the consolation of many in God, that are sunk and lost in sorrow and despair. Those whom He is set for the fall of, may be the same with those whom He is set for the rising again of. He is set for their fall, in order to their rising again; to humble and abase them, and bring them off from all confidence in themselves, that they may be exalted by relying on Christ; He wounds and then heals. Paul falls and rises again.

(2.) He shows them likewise what reason they had to rejoice with trembling, according to the advice given of old, with reference to the Messiah's kingdom, Ps. 2: 11. *Lest they should be lifted up with the abundance of the revelations, here is a thorn in the flesh* for them, an alloy to their joy; and it is what we sometimes need.

[1.] It is true, Christ shall be a Blessing to Israel; but there are those in Israel, whom He is set for the fall of, many who will extract poison to themselves out of the balm of Gilead, and split their souls on the Rock of salvation, to whom this precious Foundation-stone will be a stone of stumbling. This refers to that prophecy, (Isa. 8: 14, 15.) *He shall be for a Sanctuary to some, and yet for a Snare to others*, 1 Pet. 2: 7, 8. Note, As it is pleasant to think how many there are, to whom Christ and his Gospel are a savor of life unto life, so it is sad to think how many there are, to whom it is a savor of death unto death. He is set for a Sign, to be admired by some, but by others, by many, spoken against; that is, on occasion of

(27) By the Spirit.] 'A thought not to be suppressed, rose in his mind, that on that very day he was to see the temple.' ROSENKR. 'Mal. 3: 1. was just going to be fulfilled, and the Holy Spirit, who dwelt in the soul of this righteous man, directed him to go and see its accomplishment.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(28) Then took he Him, &c.] 'Inestimable privilege! and yet none need not be inferior: If a man love Me, says Christ, he will keep My word: and I and the Father will come in unto him, and make ever abode with him. And indeed, even Christ in the arms could not avoid a man, if He were not formed in his heart.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(29) Lettest—depart.] (6: 37. 13: 12. Matt. 1: 19. 18: 27. 27:

21. Acts 5: 40. 16: 35, 36.)—'It signifies, a release from a sorrowful and dark prison, such as this wretched life certainly is.' Victor Striz, in Leigh. 'The forgiveness of sin, and deliverance from sin, are also implied, and an entrance into perfect peace and felicity; else death would not be such a release.' SCOTT.

(29) Depart.] 'The result of the researches of critics on the original word here translated depart is this, that it is used partly of death partly of deliverance from prison and bonds, from difficulties of various sorts, dismissal from military office or function, &c. In the use of the word, as found in the Scriptures, and the philosophers, there is a manifest profession of hope in a future state, since the body is supposed to enchain the soul, and detain it from its native home.' BLOOMFIELD.

32 A ^o Light to lighten the Gentiles, ^{and} and the Glory of thy people Israel

33 An ^o Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.

34 And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is ^o set for the fall ^{and} and rising again of many in Israel; and ^o for a sign which shall be spoken against;

35 (Yea, ^a a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also; ^{and} that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.

36 ¶ And there was one Anna, ^a a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of ^a Aser; ^b she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity:

o Is. 9:2, 42:6, 7, 49:6, 60:1-3, 18, Matt. 4:16, Acts 13:47, 26:28, Rom. 1:2, 9.

F. Ps. 85:9, Is. 42, 45:25, 60:19, Jer. 2:11, Zech. 2:5, 1 Cor. 1:31, R. 2:23.

48, 155:65 Is. 8:18, Gen. 14:19, 47:7 Ex. 39:43, Lev. 9:22, 33, Heb. 7:17.

Is. 8:14, 15, 49:14, 14:9 Matt. 21:44, John 3:20, 9:29, Rom. 9:32, 33, 1 Cor. 1:23, 34, 2 Cor. 2:15, 16, 1 Pet. 2:7, 8.

1 Pet. 2:38-41, 9:15-19 6:7, 9:1-20, 2 Pet. 2:18, 3:9, 13, Is. 8:18, Matt. 11:19, 23:34, 27:40-45, 28:41-45, John 6:18, 8:43-52, 9:34-38, Acts 4:26-27, 14:17, 17:5, 24:5, 28:20, 1 Cor. 1:23, Heb. 12:1-3, 1 Pet. 4:14.

Ps. 42:10, John 19:25, 16:14, 5, Dent. 8:2, Matt. 12:24-35, John 8:44-47, 15:22-34, Acts 1:41-52, 1 Cor. 11:9, 1 John 2:19, 14, 15:20 Jude, 4, 2 Kings 22:14, Acts 2:18, 21:9, 1 Cor. 12:1, 1 Cor. 9:13, 13:1, Rev. 7:5, Job 5:28, Ps. 12:4.

a widow of about eighty-four years; some think she had now been eighty-four years a widow; and then she must be considerably above a hundred years old; others, rather than suppose that a woman so very old should be capable of fasting and praying as she did, suppose that she was only eighty-four years of age, and had been long a widow. Though she was a widow young, and had lived with her husband but seven years, yet she never married again, but

his being presented, men will *show themselves*, will discover, and so distinguish themselves, v. 35. The secret good affections and dispositions in the minds of some, will be revealed by their embracing of Christ, and closing with Him; the secret corruptions and vicious dispositions of others, that otherwise would never have appeared so bad, will be revealed by their enmity to Christ, and their rage against Him. Men will be judged of by the thoughts of their hearts, their thoughts concerning Christ; are they for Him, or are they for his adversaries? The Word of God is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, and by it we are discovered to ourselves, and shall be judged hereafter.

[2.] It is true, Christ shall be a Comfort to his mother; but be not thou too proud of it, for a sword shall pass through thine own soul also. He shall be a suffering Jesus; 'Thou shalt suffer with Him, by sympathy, more than any other of his friends, because of the nearness of thy relation, and strength of affection, to Him.' When He was abused, it was a sword in her bones. When she stood by his cross, and saw Him dying, we may well think her inward grief was such, that it might truly be said, A sword pierced through her soul, it cut her to the heart. 'Thou shalt suffer for Him.' Many understand it as a prediction of her martyrdom; and some of the ancients say, that it had its accomplishment in that. Note, In the midst of our greatest delights and advancements in this world, it is good for us to know that bonds and afflictions abide us.

II. He is taken notice of by one Anna, or Ann, a prophetess, that one of each sex might bear witness to Him, in whom both men and women are invited to believe, that they may be saved. Observe,

1. The account here given of this Anna, who she was. She was a prophetess; the Spirit of prophecy now began to revive, which had ceased in Israel above three hundred years. Perhaps no more is meant than that she had understanding in the Scriptures above other women, and made it her business to instruct the younger women in the things of God. She was the daughter of Phanuel; her father's name (saith Grotius) is mentioned, to put us in mind of Jacob's Phanuel, or Peniel, (Gen. 32:30) that now the mystery of that should be unfolded, when in Christ we should, as it were, see God face to face, and our lives be preserved; and her name signifies *gracious*. She was of the tribe of Asher, which was in Galilee; this, some think, is taken notice of, to refute those who said, *Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet*, when, no sooner did prophecy revive but it appeared from Galilee. She was of a great age,

continued a widow to her day, which is mentioned to her praise. She was a constant resident in, or at least attendant on, the temple. Some think she had lodgings in the courts of the temple, being maintained by the temple charities; or, as a prophetess, lodged there, as in a proper place to be consulted and advised with by those that desired to know the mind of God; others think her not departing from the temple means no more, but that she was constantly there at the time of divine service: when any good work was to be done, she was ready to join in it. It is most probable she had an apartment of her own among the out-buildings of the temple; and besides her constant attendance on the public worship, abounded in private devotions, for she served God with fastings and prayers night and day; having no secular business to employ herself in, or being past it, she gave up herself wholly to her devotions, and not only fasted twice in the week, but always lived a mortified life, and spent that time in religious exercises, which others spent in eating and drinking and sleeping; she not only observed the hours of prayer, but prayed night and day; was always in a praying frame, lived a life of prayer, gave herself to prayer, frequent in ejaculations, large in solemn prayers, and very particular in her intercessions. And in those she served God; that was it that put a value on them, and an excellency into them. The Pharisees fasted often, and made long prayers, but in this they served themselves, and their own pride and covetousness; but not so this good woman; she did it from a good principle, and with a good end; she served God, and aimed at his honor, in her fasting and prayers. Note, [1.] Devotion is a thing we ought to be constant in; other duties are in season now and then, but we must pray always. [2.] It is a pleasant sight to see aged Christians abounding in acts of devotion, as those that are not weary of well-doing, that do not think themselves above these exercises, or past them, but that take more and more pleasure in them, and see more and more need of them, till they come to heaven. [3.] Those that are diligent and faithful in improving the light and means they have, shall have further discoveries made them. Anna is now at length abundantly recompensed for her attendance so many years in the temple.

2. The testimony she bore to our Lord Jesus; (r. 35.) She came in at that instant when the child was presented, and Simeon discoursed concerning Him; she, who was so constant to the temple, could not miss the opportunity.

Now, (1.) She gave thanks likewise to the Lord, just as Simeon; perhaps, like him, wishing now to depart in peace. Note, Those to whom Christ is made known, have reason enough to give thanks to the Lord for so great a favor; and we should be excited to that duty by the praises and thanksgivings of others; why should not we give thanks likewise, as well as they? Anna concurred with Simeon, and

Verses 33-35.

(Marg. Ref. r.) Many would reject, despise, persecute, and crucify Him, through the pride and enmity of their hearts against the truth; and this would terminate in the temporal ruin of the nation, as well as in the reprobation of many souls: but, at the same time, numbers, yea, many who at first rejected and persecuted Him, would at length repent, and by faith in Him obtain pardon, and so be raised up again to walk in newness of life. His external meanness, his holy character, his humbling doctrine, and his spiritual salutation, proved equally offensive to the Pharisees and Sadducees, and interfered as much with the reputation, interests, and authority of the hypocritical priests and scribes, as with the carnal prejudices of the nation in general. (Notes, Ps. 42:9, 10, John 19:25-27.) The event of the ministry of Jesus, and of the dispensation which He came to introduce, would, also, be that 'the thoughts of many hearts would be revealed,' or the imaginations and reasonings which secretly occupied men's minds, detected. The plausible characters of numbers would thus be shown to be leavened with pride, malice, covetousness, and hypocrisy; while the humility, faith, and piety of others, who had been disregarded, would thus be brought forth and made manifest. (Marg. Ref. s-y.) (34.) This, &c. Neither look that He shall be applauded of all; yea rather, He shall be as a common mark, whereto the arrows of contumely and reproach shall be generally shot, throughout the world: and his name and religion shall be sure to receive opposition and contradiction, every where. And thereby men shall be tried, and occasions shall be given them, to show either the truth or falsehood of their hearts, towards his name and profession. Ep. Mail. (Is. 8:11-13)

1 Pet. 2:7, 8.) (35.) The thoughts. See Mark 7:21. 'It signifieth more than thoughts, even reasonings, disputations, discourses, done with 'weighing and poising things.' Leigh. 'That reasonings out of many hearts may be revealed.' May be revealed. See Matt. 16:17.

(34.) Sign. 'The word seems here to be used for a mark or butt to shoot or dart at; which finely intimates the deliberate malice and hellish artifice with which the character and person of Christ was assaulted, while He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself, Heb. 12:3.'

(35.) That the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed. 'The sense is, "Thus will it be evinced what is the real disposition of every one to the Messiah." The word translated thoughts is a word of multiple signification, and denotes imaginations, whether good or bad.'

Verses 36-38.

(Marg. Ref. z. Marg. Ref. a-d.—Notes, Dan. 3:2, 3, 10:2, 3, 1 Tim. 5:5, 6. Marg. Ref. i, g.—Note, 25-32.)

(36.) A prophetess. 'Not in the strictest sense of the word, i. e. one who could foretell future events; but rather a holy woman, who from her extensive knowledge and deep experience in divine things, was capable of instructing others, according to the use of the word prophetess, 1 Cor. 14:3.'

The circumstances of her young and long widowhood are particularly mentioned, since widows who did not marry again are especially honored among the Jews.

BLOOMFIELD.

37 and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, and served God with fastings and prayers night and day.

38 And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.

39 ¶ And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.

40 And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Practical Observations.

V. 35—40. Professing to depend on the salvation of the Lord, and to 'wait for the consolation' of Israel, justice, truth and mercy, as well as piety, should adorn our conduct; and if the Holy Spirit rest upon us, our feet will be directed to the courts and ordinances of the Lord. In this way we shall experience the fulfilment of the promises, and embracing the Savior, be willing to leave this world and go to heaven; provided our work be done, and God be pleased to dismiss us to his heavenly rest. (Heb. 4: 3—11.) Blessed be his name, that this Salvation 'is prepared before the face of all people,' and that this Light hath lightened our Gentile land: may we become a part of the true Israel, who glory in Christ alone! (Note, Phil. 3: 1—7, v. 3.)—But let us not look merely on one side of this subject. This blessed Gospel eventually occasions the fall of many professed Christians, as well as causes the rising again of many, who were sunk deep into guilt and impiety. Still Jesus, his doctrine and his people, are for a 'sign, that is every where spoken against,' still his truth and holiness are contradicted and blasphemed; still the preaching of his word is the touch-stone of men's characters; still they, who are blessed by their relation to Jesus, must expect such things in this evil world, as will wound and distress their souls; and still they

helped to make up the harmony. *She confessed unto the Lord;* (so it may be read;) she made an open profession of her faith concerning this Child.

(2.) She, as a prophetess, instructed others concerning Him; she spake of Him to all them that believed the Messiah would come, and with her looked for redemption in Jerusalem. Redemption was the thing wanted, waited for, and wished for; redemption in Jerusalem, for from thence the word of the Lord was to go forth, Isa. 2: 3. Some there were in Jerusalem, that looked for redemption; yet but a few, for Anna, it should seem, had acquaintance with them all that were joint-expectants with her of the Messiah; she knew where to find them, or they where to find her, and she told them all the good news, that she had seen the Lord; and it was great news, this of his birth now, as afterward that of his resurrection. Note, Those that have got an acquaintance with Christ themselves, should do all they can, to bring others acquainted with Him.

Lastly, Here is a short account of the infancy and childhood of our Lord Jesus.

1. Where He spent it, v. 39. When the ceremony of presenting the child, and purifying the mother, was all over, they returned into Galilee. Luke relates no more concerning them, till they were returned into Galilee; but it appears by Matthew's gospel, (ch. 2.) that from Jerusalem they returned to Bethlehem,

c Ex. 33:8. 1 Sam. 2:22. Ps. 23:6.
27:4. 84:4, 10. 92:13. 135:1, 2. Rev.
3:12.
d Ps. 22:2. Acts 26:7. 1 Tim. 5:5.
Rev. 7:15.
e 27.

f 28—82. 1:46, &c. 64, &c. 2 Cor. 9:15.
Eph. 1:3.
g 25, 23:51. 24:21. Mark 15:43.
Or, Israel.
h 21:4. 1:46. Deut. 12:32. Matt.
3:15. Gal. 4:4.

i 4. Matt. 2:22, 23.
k 32. John. 15:24. 1 Sam. 2:18, 28.
l 3:19. Ps. 22:9, 10. Is. 53:1, 2.
m 1:80. Eph. 6:10. 2 Tim. 2:1.
n 47. Is. 11:1—5. Col. 2:2, 3.
o Ps. 45:2. John 1:14. Acts 4:33.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

must prepare to endure contradiction, reproach, and contempt, because they resemble their blessed Savior.—We should be careful how we indiscriminately condemn practices, or modes of life, because many have disgraced them: for who can refuse a tribute of commendation to the pious Anna? When the relative and social duties have been attended to, or as far as consists with a due performance of them, it is very proper to spend the decline of life especially, in retirement and devotion; and to serve God with fastings and prayers, day and night, as connected with deep humility, and a readiness to welcome Christ and his Salvation, and to speak of Him to all who wait for his redemption, must be allowed to be essentially different from the proud austerities and hypocritical devotions of self-righteous Pharisees, ancient and modern. But, whether zeal against the latter has not led many persons to overlook and even despise the former, instead of considering them, in similar circumstances, as models for imitation, is a question which ought seriously to be examined. They, however, who are most mortified to the world, and abstracted from it, or abundant in every good work from proper principles, will with one consent bear testimony to Christ, 'as the end of the law, for righteousness, to every one that believeth.' (Note, Rom. 10: 1—4.) SCOTT.

Verse 39.

Luke passes over the coming of the wise men, and the flight of the holy family into Egypt; for it is evident, that this return to Nazareth did not occur till some time afterwards. Probably they returned to Bethlehem, supposing that Jesus was there to be educated. After some time the wise men arrived, and then, by the divine monition, they fled into Egypt, and on their return went to reside at Nazareth. (Notes, Matt. 3.)

Returned into Galilee.] Not immediately to Galilee, but probably first to Bethlehem, when they received the visit of the wise men, whence they then fled into Egypt, and afterward thence returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. Doddridge, Dr. A. Clarke, and Horne.

Luke has omitted the account Matthew gives of the visit of the wise men, and of the holy family's retiring into Egypt; and so has taken no notice of their returning any more to Bethlehem. But there is no sufficient reason to conclude from hence that these occurrences were antecedent to the purification of Mary, and that the holy family immediately returned from Jerusalem to Nazareth; for we have many other instances of a like kind, where events are connected by Luke and the other evangelists, which did not immediately follow each other.

DODDIDGE.

Verse 40.

It was manifest, that as the faculties of his human soul unfolded, all holy affections and dispositions became proportionally vigorous; and all his words and actions were regulated in perfect conformity to the divine law, so that the special favor of God ev. Jently rested on Him. As to the manner, in which the indwelling Deity gradually communicated knowledge, wisdom, and holiness to the human nature of Christ we must confess that we know nothing. Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh. (1 Tim. 3: 16.) That, as man, his wisdom and knowledge could not be infinite or incapable of increase, we know: but how the union was formed.

DODDIDGE.

ther said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

49 And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?

50 And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them.

51 And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them; but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart.

52 And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

45 P. 488 Mt. 3:12 Matt. 2:12, 2:16, 17 4:34, 6:33. 8:29. 9:45, 15:24. 20. 21. Mt. 3:15, Mt. 4:6, 3. Eph. 5:21. 6:12. 1 P. 2:21. 12. Gen. 37:11. Dan. 7:28. 4:2. 10:10. 1 Sam. 2:26. 17:17. 18:1. Ps. 33:4. Acts 7:9, 10. Rom. 14:15.

to them, which were very surprising and satisfactory. r. 47. And his wisdom and understanding appeared as much in his questions, as in his answers; so that all who heard Him were astonished: they never heard one so young, nor indeed any of their greatest doctors, talk sense at the rate He did; like David. He had more understanding than all his teachers, yea, than the ancients, Ps. 119: 99, 100. Now Christ showed forth some rays of his glory which were presently drawn in again. He gave them a taste (saith Calvin) of his divine wisdom and knowledge. Metinks, this public appearance of Christ in the temple, as a Teacher, was like Moses' early attempt to deliver Israel, which Stephen put this construction on, that he supposed his brethren would have understood, by that, *honest God by his hand would deliver them*, Acts 7:24, 25. They might have taken the hint, and been delivered then, but they understood not; so they here might have had Christ (for aught I know) to enter on his work now, but they were only astonished, and understood not the indication; and therefore, like Moses, He retires into obscurity again, and they hear no more of Him for many years after.

5. His mother talked with Him privately about it, when the company broke up, r. 48. Joseph and Mary were both amazed to find Him there, and to find that He had so much respect showed Him, as to be admitted to sit among the doctors. His father knew he had only the name of a father, and therefore said nothing. But, (1.) His mother told Him how ill they took it:

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 41—52. Let us not pass over unimproved the only authentic record which we have, of our Redeemer's conduct in his youth. When we read that He 'waxed strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom, and that the grace of God was with Him,' (alas! most of us may say, 'How contrary to my youthful years, in which I grew in sin and folly, as I grew in stature, and as the powers of my mind unfolded') we might have expected to hear many extraordinary things concerning Him; yet nothing is related, of such matters as are commonly reported about promising children. We are, however, informed that the ordinances and temple of God were his delight; and that, in Jerusalem, nothing so much attracted his attention, as the instructions of the public teachers of the divine law. (Matt. 23: 1—4.) Thus young persons should employ their early days; and from the earliest youth, every one should deem the service of God his great business: the glory of his name, and the duty owing

(49.) *About my Father's business.* In my 'Father's house?' In those things, or places, 'which are my Father's.' Scott. 'Father, at my Father's.' There is a known ambiguity in the original. I have chosen with Grotius, Capellus, Fuller, &c. to follow the Syriac version of the words, where it is rendered, *in my Father's house*, which it is certain they will well bear; and so Josephus puts an expression exactly similar to the original Greek, for, in Jupiter's temple; and, indeed, though a general apprehension of his being well employed might be a reason against their excessive anxiety, yet it could not (as the words in this connection seem to imply,) have directed them where to find Him.

POPPINGHAM

'Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Why dost Thou put us into such a fright?' They were ready to say, as Jacob of Joseph, 'A wild beast has devoured him; or, He is fallen into the hands of some more cruel enemy, who at length found out that He was the young Child whose life Herod had sought some years ago.' A thousand imaginations, we may suppose, they had concerning Him, each more frightful than another. 'Now, why hast Thou given us occasion for these fears?' Thy father and I have sought Thee, sorrowing; not only troubled that we lost Thee, but vexed at ourselves that we did not take more care of Thee, to bring Thee along with us.' Note, Those may have leave to complain of their losses, that think they have lost Christ; but their weeping did not hinder sorrowing; they did not sorrow, and sit down in despair, but sorrowed, and sought. Note, If we would find Christ, we must seek Him sorrowing, sorrowing that we have provoked Him to withdraw, and that we have sought Him no sooner. They that thus seek Him, shall find Him, at length, with so much the greater joy. (2.) He gently reproved their inordinate solicitude about Him; (r. 49.) 'How is it that ye sought Me? Ye might have depended on it. I would have followed you home when I had done the business I have to do here; I could not be lost in Jerusalem. Wist ye not that I ought to be in my Father's house?' (so some read it;) 'where else should the Son be, who abideth in the house forever? I ought to be; [1.] Under my Father's care and protection; and therefore you should have cast the care of Me on Him, and not have burdened yourselves with it.' Christ is a shaft hid in his Father's quiver, Isa. 49: 2. He takes care of his church likewise, and therefore let not us ever despair of its safety. [2.] 'At my Father's work;' (so we take it;) 'I must be about my Father's business, and therefore could not go home so soon as you might. Wist ye not? Have you not already perceived that I have devoted myself to the service of religion, and therefore must employ myself in the affairs of it?' Herein He hath left us an example; for it becomes the children of God, in conformity to Christ, to attend their heavenly Father's business, and to make all other business give way to it. This word of Christ, we now think, we understand very well, for He hath explained it in what He hath done and said; it was his errand into the world and his meat and drink in the world to do his Father's will, and finish his work; a duty at that time his parents understood not this saying, v. 50. They did not understand what business He had to do then in the temple of his Father. They believed Him to be the Messiah, that should have the throne of his father David; but they thought that should rather bring Him to the royal palace than to the temple. They

to Him, must be allowed a pre-eminence, even above that of children to their parents; and must be attended to, even when it interferes with their inclination and satisfaction. In all things else the blessed Savior has left an example to young persons, of unreserved subjection, not only to their own parents, but even to those who are by any means intrusted with parental authority; and He has also taught them patient industry and contentment in a mean condition. These, when connected with piety and humility, are proper evidences of an increase of true wisdom, and of having obtained favor with God; they have a tendency to render the possessor dear to his fellow-creatures also; especially to those who most deserve estimation, and whose friendship is a privilege. Let us then endeavor to keep the sayings of Jesus in our hearts, and to transcribe his example in our life.

SCOTT.

(52.) 'It seems a very just and important remark of Erasmus here, that all the endowments of the Man Christ Jesus were owing to the divine beneficence, and that the Deity communicated itself in a gradual manner to that human nature which it had assumed.'

DODDIDGE.

'Nor is it improbable that the extraordinary improvement made by Jesus in his childhood was promoted by that divine nature which his human nature was united to; but (though) promoted, in a manner which did not interfere with the plan, according to which his physical and intellectual abilities were, like those of other men, gradually to increase.'

STOKES AND FLATT.

CHAP. III.

the time when John the Baptist entered on his ministry, 1, 2. His teaching and exhortations, 2-14. His testimony to Jesus, 15-18. He is put in prison by Herod, 19, 20. Christ is baptized, and receives testimony from heaven, 21, 22. His genealogy is traced back to Adam, 23-38.

NOW in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judæa, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituræa, and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene,

a 2:1.
b 23:1-4 24:25. Gen. 49:10. Acts 4:27. 23:28. 24:27. 26:30.
c 19. 9:7. 2:3-11.
d Matt 14:3. Mark 6:17.

selves to Him a faithful seed. Though his parents were poor and mean, though his father was only his supposed father, yet He was *subject to them*; though He was *strong in spirit, and filled with wisdom*, nay, though He was the Son of God, yet He was subject to his parents; how then will they answer it, who, though foolish and weak, yet are disobedient to their parents?

2. That his mother, though she did not perfectly understand her Son's sayings, yet kept them in her heart, expecting that hereafter they would be explained to her, and she should fully understand them, and know how to make use of them. However we may neglect men's sayings, because they are obscure, yet we must not neglect God's sayings. That which at first is dark, so that we know not what to make of it, may afterward become plain and easy; we should therefore lay it up for hereafter; see John 2:22. We may find use for that, another time, which now we see not how to make useful to us.

3. That He improved, and came on, to admiration; (v. 52.) this is meant of his human nature, his body increased in stature and bulk, He grew in the growing age; and his soul increased in wisdom, and in all the endowments of a human soul. Though the eternal Word was united to the human soul from his conception, yet the Divinity that dwelt in Him, manifested itself to his humanity by degrees, in proportion to his capacity; as the faculties of his human soul grew more and more capable, the gifts it received from the divine nature were more and more communicated. And He increased in favor with God and man, that is, in all those graces that rendered Him acceptable both to God and man. Herein Christ accommodated Himself to his estate of humiliation, that, as He condescended to be an Infant, a Child, a Youth, so the image of God shone brighter in Him, when He grew up to be a Youth, than it did, or could, while He was an Infant and a Child. Note, Young people, as they grow in stature, should grow in wisdom; and then, as they grow in wisdom, they will grow in favor with God and man.

CHAP. III. v. 1-14. Nothing is related concerning our Lord Jesus from his twelfth year to his entrance on his thirtieth; we often think it would have been a pleasure and advantage to us, if we had journals, or at least annals, of occurrences concerning Him; but we have as much as Infinite Wisdom thought fit to communicate to us, and if we improve not that, neither should we have improved more, if we had it. The great intention of the evangelists was, to give us an account of the Gospel of Christ, which we are to believe, and by which we hope for salvation: now that began in the ministry

NOTES.

CHAP. III. v. 1. In the interval, between the birth of Jesus, and the entrance of John the Baptist on his public ministry, various changes had taken place in the government of Judæa, and the adjacent countries. Augustus Cæsar, having admitted his nephew Tiberius to a share in the imperial authority, died about three years after: and Tiberius was at that time in the fifteenth year of his reign, from his appointment as the colleague of Augustus. Not long after the death of Herod the Great, his dominions were divided into four distinct governments, under the Roman emperor. Pontius Pilate had just been appointed procurator of Judæa. Herod Antipas, the son of king Herod, held, as tetrarch, the government of Galilee; his brother Philip, that of Ituræa and Trachonitis, to the west of Herod's district; and Lysanias (who seems not to have been of Jewish extraction) held the government of Abilene, to the north of Galilee on the borders of Syria. (See on Matt. 14:1.)

His fifteenth year.] That is, from the time when Augustus made him his colleague in the empire. If the birth of Christ be placed (as seems most probable) in September, A. U. 749, and Tiberius was admitted to part in the empire (three years before Augustus died) in August, 764, the fifteenth year of Tiberius on this computation, began in August, 779. And if John entered on his ministry the spring following, A. U. 779, in the same year of Tiberius, and, after he had preached about twelve months, baptized Jesus in the spring of 780, then Jesus at his baptism would be but thirty years of age and some odd months, which perfectly agrees with what Luke says, of his being at that time about thirty years of age!

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understood not his prophetic office; and He was to do much of his work in that.

Lastly, Here is their return to Nazareth. This glimpse of his glory was to be short; it was now over, and He did not urge his parents either to come and settle at Jerusalem, or to settle Him there, but very willingly retired into Nazareth, where for many years He lived in obscurity. Doubtless, He came up to Jerusalem, to worship at the feasts, three times a year, but whether He ever went again into the temple, to dispute with the doctors there, we are not told: it is not improbable but He might. But here we are told,

1. That He was subject to his parents; though once, to show that He was more than a man, He withdrew Himself from his parents, to attend his heavenly Father's business, yet He did not, as yet, make that his constant practice, nor for many years after, but was subject to them, observed their orders, and went and came as they directed; and, as it should seem, worked with his father, at the trade of a carpenter. Herein He hath given an example to children to be dutiful and obedient to their parents in the Lord. Being made of a woman, He was under the law of the fifth commandment, to teach the seed of the faithful, thus to approve themselves to Him a faithful seed. Though his parents were poor and mean,

and baptism of John, and therefore they hasten to give us an account of that. We could wish, perhaps, that Luke had wholly passed by what was related by Matthew and Mark, and had written only what was new, as he had done in his first two chapters. But it was the will of the Spirit, that some things should be established out of the mouth, not only of two, but of three witnesses; and we must not reckon it a needless repetition, nor shall we do so, if we renew our meditations upon these things, with satisfaction.

John's baptism introducing a new dispensation, it was requisite that we should have a particular account of it. Observe,

1. The date of the beginning of John's baptism, here taken notice of, (which was not by the other evangelists,) that the truth of the thing might be confirmed by the exact fixing of the time. And it is dated,

1. By the government of the heathen, which the Jews were under, to show that they were a conquered people, and therefore it was time for the Messiah to come to set up a spiritual kingdom, and an eternal one, upon the ruins of all the temporal dignity and dominion of David and Judah.

It is dated by the reign of the Roman emperor, the fifteenth year of Tiberius Cæsar, the third of the twelve Cæsars, a very bad man, given to covetousness, drunkenness, and cruelty. The people of the Jews, after a long struggle, were of late made a province of the empire, and were under the dominion of this Tiberius; and that country, which once had made so great a figure, and had many nations tributaries to it, in the reigns of David and Solomon, is now itself an inconsiderable, despicable part of the Roman empire, and rather trampled on than triumphed in. The lawgiver was now departed from between Judah's feet; and as an evidence of that, their public acts are dated by the reign of the Roman emperor, and therefore now Shiloh must come.

It is dated by the governments of the viceroys that ruled in the several parts of the Holy Land under the Roman emperor, which was another badge of their servitude, for they were all foreigners, which bespeaks a sad change with that people whose governors used to be of themselves, (Jer. 30:21.) and it was their glory. How is the gold become dim? [1.] Pilate is here said to be the governor, president, or procurator, of Judæa, as some say, a wicked man, and one that made no conscience of a lie. He reigned ill, and at last was displaced by Vitellius, president of Syria, and sent to Rome, to answer for his mal-administrations. [2.] The other three are called tetrarchs, from the countries which they had the command of, each of them being over a fourth part of that which had been entirely under the government of Herod the Great: (so some) or as others think, from the post of honor they were in, in the government; they having the fourth place; the emperor being first; the *proconsul*, who governed a province,

Tiberius Cæsar.] 'He began his reign August 19, A. D. 14, reigned twenty-three years, and died March 16, A. D. 37, aged seventy eight years. He was a most infamous character.'

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Herod.] 'The same who beheaded John Baptist, and to whom our Lord was sent by Pilate.' See on Matt. 2:1.

Id.

Ituræa and Trachonitis.] 'Two provinces of Syria, on the confines of Judæa.'

Id.

Abila, its chief city.] 'Another province of Syria, which had its name from Abila, its chief city.'

Id.

'Situated between Baalbec and Damascus, from latitude thirty-three degrees thirty minutes to thirty-three degrees forty minutes.' JAHN.

'The facts here powerfully confirm the evangelical history. Persons, places and times, are all marked with the utmost exactness. It was in the time of the Cæsars that the preaching of the Gospel took place, and the facts on which the whole of Christianity is founded made their appearance—an age the most enlightened and best known, from the multitude of its historic records. It was in Judæa, where every thing that professed to come from God, was scrutinized with the most exact and rigid criticism. Now let it be observed, that the persons of that time only, could confute these things, had they been false; yet they never attempted it. All are silent. None appears to offer even an objection. Therefore these facts are absolute and incontrovertible truths: this conclusion is necessary. Shall a man then give up his faith in such attested facts as these, because more than a thousand years after, an infidel creeps out, and ventres publicly to sneer at what his iniquitous soul hopes is not true?'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

DODDRIDGE.

2 *Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness.

3 And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins;

4 As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

e John 11:49-51. 18:13, 14, 24. Acts 4:8.
f 1:59-63. Jer. 1:2. 21. Ez. 1:3. Hos. 11:2. Jon. 1:1. Mic. 1:1. Zeph. 1:1.
g 1:80. 1e. 40:3. Matt. 3:1. 11:7. Mark 1:3. John 1:23.
h Matt. 3:5, 6. Mark 1:3. John 1:28, 29.
i Matt. 3:5, 11. Mark 1:4. John 1:31-33. Acts 18:24. 19:4. 22:16.
k 1e. 40:3-5. Matt. 3:3. Mark 1:3. John 1:23.
l 1:16, 17, 78-79. Is. 57:14. 62:10. Mal. 4:8. John 1:7, 26-36. 3:28-36.

word of the Lord is not *lost in the wilderness*. The word of the Lord made its way to Ezekiel among the captives by the river of Chebar, and to John in the Isle Patmos. John was the son of a priest, now entering on the thirtieth year of his age; and therefore, according to the custom of the temple, he was now to be admitted into the temple service, where he should have attended as a candidate five years before; but God had called him to a more honorable ministry, and therefore the Holy Ghost enrolls him here, since he was not enrolled in the archives of the temple; John the son of Zacharias began his ministration such a time.

Verses 2, 3.

The ecclesiastical affairs of the Jews were at this time fallen into great disorder, and the high priesthood was disposed of at the will of the ruling powers, from secular motives, without regard to the regular succession; and frequently the high priest was deposed, and another substituted in his place; so that, in some instances, it appeared more like an annual office, than one held during life. It cannot be supposed, that there were, strictly speaking, two high priests at the same time; but in the New Testament the same word is used for the *high priest*, and the *chief priests* who were the heads of the twenty-four courses; both singular when the high priest is intended, and plural when used for the chief priests. The two persons, therefore, whom the Roman governor considered as the chief of the priests, and whose names stood as such in the public registers, may be intended. From the time of the Maccabees, the high priesthood had been held by persons, who also exercised a kind of regal authority. And when the nation was subdued under the Roman government, the ruler of the people, (Acts 23:5) and the president of the sanhedrim, was the high priest, or a chief priest. Now Annas had been high priest, in the ordinary sense of the word, but had been deposed by the Roman governor; yet it seems that he still continued ruler of the people and president of the sanhedrim; while, after several other changes, Caiaphas, his son-in-law, had been appointed by Pilate high priest, to officiate at the temple. So that an irregularity had arisen out of the confusion of the times; and the ruler or prince under the Romans, though a chief priest, was a distinct person from the high priest; Annas being the one, and Caiaphas the other. Thus John mentions the carrying of Christ to Annas first, as to an officer of principal authority among them, who sent him bound to Caiaphas, who "was the high priest that year," (John 18:13, 14, 21. Acts 4:6) and so continued all the time of Pilate's procuratorship. *Hammond*.—Some indeed suppose that Annas was high priest, and Caiaphas acted as his deputy; but no deputy of the high priest was allowed to officiate, except when the high priest was sick, or by some means incapacitated, and it does not appear that Annas was either; and the above statement seems satisfactorily to solve the difficulty, of two persons being considered as chief or high priests, one as the ruler of the people, and the other as performing the office of high priest at the temple. Thus the sceptre was departing from Judah, and consequently Shiloh was at hand, at the time when the word of the Lord came to John; as to the prophets of old; (Gen. 49:10) and when by immediate inspiration he was directed to go into the country about Jordan, and to preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sin. From these words we learn that John preached the necessity of repentance, in order to the remission of sin; and that the baptism of water was an outward sign of that inward cleansing and renewal of heart, which attend or spring from true repentance; so that if the baptized persons were really partakers of this inward humiliation and cleansing, they would certainly receive forgiveness of sins through the Savior, who was about to appear; for they would then be prepared to

the second; and a king the third. So Lightfoot.

2. By the government of the Jews among themselves, to show that they were a corrupt people, and that therefore it was time that the Messiah should come, to reform them, v. 2. Annas and Caiaphas were the high priests. God had appointed that there should be but one high priest at a time, but here were two, to serve some ill turn or other, one served one year, and the other the other year; so some. One was the high priest, and the other the *sagan*, as the Jews called him, to officiate for him when he was disabled; or, as others say, one was high priest, and represented Aaron, and that was Caiaphas; Annas, the other, was *Nasi*, or head of the sanhedrim, and represented Moses. But to us there is but one High Priest, one Lord of all, to whom all judgment is committed.

II. The original and tendency of John's baptism.

1. It was from heaven, v. 2. He received full commission and full instructions from God to do what he did; it is the same expression that is used concerning the Old Testament prophets; (Jer. 1:2) for John was a prophet, yea, more than a prophet, and in him prophecy revived, which had been long suspended. We are not told how the word of the Lord came to John, whether by angel, dream, vision, or voice, but it was to his satisfaction, and ought to be to ours. John is here called the son of Zacharias, to refer us to what the angel said to his father, when he assured him that he should have this son. The word of the Lord came to him in the wilderness; for those whom God fits, He will find out, wherever they are. As the

word of the Lord is not *lost in the wilderness*. The word of the Lord made its way to Ezekiel among the captives by the river of Chebar, and to John in the Isle Patmos. John was the son of a priest, now entering on the thirtieth year of his age; and therefore, according to the custom of the temple, he was now to be admitted into the temple service, where he should have attended as a candidate five years before; but God had called him to a more honorable ministry, and therefore the Holy Ghost enrolls him here, since he was not enrolled in the archives of the temple; John the son of Zacharias began his ministration such a time.

2. The scope and design of it were, to bring all the people of his country off from their sins, and home to their God, v. 3. He came first into all the country about Jordan, the neighborhood wherein he resided, that part of the country which Israel took possession of first, when they entered the land of promise under Joshua, there was the banner of the Gospel first displayed. John resided in the most solitary part of the country; but, when the word of the Lord came to him, he quitted his deserts, and came into the inhabited country. Those that are best pleased in their retirements, must cheerfully exchange them, when God calls them into places of con-course. He came out of the wilderness into all the country, with some marks of distinction, preaching a new baptism; not a sect, or party, but a profession, or distinguishing badge; the sign or ceremony, such as was ordinarily used among the Jews, washing with water, by which proselytes were sometimes admitted, or disciples to some great master; but the meaning of it was, repentance for the remission of sins; that is, all that submitted to his baptism,

(1.) Were thereby obliged to repent of their sins, to be sorry for what they had done amiss, and to do so no more; the former they professed and were concerned to be sincere in their professions; the latter they promised, and were concerned to make good what they promised. He found them, not to such ceremonious observances as were imposed by the tradition of the elders, but to change their mind, and change their way, to cast away from them all their transgressions, and to make them new hearts, and to live new lives. The design of the Gospel, which now began, was, to make men devout and pious, holy and heavenly, humble and meek, sober and chaste, just and honest, charitable and kind, and good in every relation, who had been much otherwise; and this is to repent.

(2.) They were thereby assured of the pardon of their sins, upon their repentance; the baptism he administered, sealing them a gracious and pleasurable discharge from the guilt of sin. Turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin; agreeing with

welcome and participate the privileges and blessings of his spiritual redemption and kingdom. (Marg. Ref. g-i.—Matt. 3:1, 2, 5, 6, 11, 12. Mark 1:4-11.) (2.) The word, &c. These are the very words used of the prophets of the Old Testament: (Jer. 1:2, 4, 11. Ez. 1:3, 6:1, 7:1, 12:1, 13:1, 14:2, 12) and it is so said of the rest. Shall we then think that this forerunner of the Messiah spoke the words of the Lord, as did the prophets of the Old Testament; and the prophets and apostles of the New Testament, on whom the Holy Ghost descended, to enable them to teach the mind of Christ, 'all future ages of the church, should not speak and write what they delivered as the rule of faith, by like divine assistance?' Whittby. Nothing can be determined concerning the time of our Lord's baptism, from the date of John's beginning to preach. I believe there are no data, from whence to conclude the age of John at that time. (Num. 4:3, 8:25, 26. 1 Chr. 23:24-28.) Probably he preached and baptized longer, before our Lord entered on his ministry, than some harmonists have allotted him. Nothing, however, can be more frivolous than an objection started by some against the narrative of the evangelists, because the thirtieth year of our Lord's age, (Note, 23.) being supposed coincident with the fifteenth of Tiberius' reign, according to their computation, would fix the birth of Christ, subsequent to the death of king Herod. But John might come forth in the fifteenth of Tiberius; and Jesus might not be baptized till the seventeenth or eighteenth, without the least inconsistency with any thing taught or recorded in Scripture.

(2.) Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests: 'There is no little indeterminateness in the use of the title of high priest in the Gospel; sometimes it is applied exclusively to the person who held the office at the time; sometimes to one or two more, who probably shared with him some of the powers or functions of the office; and sometimes to such of the priests as were eminent by their station and character, Mark 14:53. And the same indeterminateness is found in Josephus, who on one occasion mentions two high priests, Jonathan and Annas, a case precisely similar to this of Annas and Caiaphas.' Farrar.

Word.) That is, order. What this order was, we learn from the event; namely, that he should act the part of precursor to Christ, should excite the people to repentance and reformation, and by baptism lay them under a sacred obligation to perform their vows of amendment of life.

Verses 4-6.

(Marg. Ref. k-o.—Is. 40:3-5. Matt. 3:4. Mark 1:1-3.) This quotation is nearly according to the Septuagint, though it does not exactly accord to it. Instead of the words, 'The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together;' (Is. 40:5) the clause from the Septuagint is here added, 'All flesh shall see the salvation of God.' (Is. 52:9, 10.) The glory of God especially shows in Christ, the salvation of God; and it shall at length be made known to all mankind. The word in the Hebrew is JEHOVAH, 'Prepare ye the way of JEHOVAH, &c.'

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth;

6 And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.

7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance; and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

m 1:51-53. Is. 2:11-17. 35:6-8. 40:4. 49:11. 61:1-3. Ez. 17:24. Jer. 18:11.

n Is. 42:16. 45:2. Heb. 12:12, 13. o 2:10, 11, 30-32. Ps. 98:2, 3. Is. 40:5. 48:17. 52:10. Mark 16:15, 16. Rom. 10:12.

p Gen. 3:15. Ps. 58:4, 5. Is. 59:5. Matt. 3:7-10. 23:33. John 8:44. Acts 1:10. 1 John 3:8-10.

q 1 Thes. 1:10. Heb. 6:18. r Is. 1:16-18. Ez. 18:27-31. Acts 2:22. 2 Cor. 7:10, 11. Gal. 5:22-24. Phil. 1:11. Heb. 6:7, 8.

s Or, *meat for*. t 19:28, 29. 16:23-31. Is. 48:1, 2. Jer. 7:4-10. John 8:33, 39. Rom. 4:16. 8:17.

u 19:40. Josh. 4:3-8. Matt. 8:11, 12. 21:43. Gal. 3:28, 29. v 23:28-31. Is. 10:33, 34. Ez. 15:2-4. 31:18. Dan. 4:14, 23. Matt. 3:10. 7:19. John 15:6. Heb. 10:28, 29. 12:29.

forth to be baptized of him, v. 7. This was the purport of his preaching to all that came to him. He neither flattered the great, nor complimented the many, but gave the same reproofs of sin and warnings of wrath to the multitude, that he did to the Sadducees and Pharisees; for if they had not the same faults, they had others as bad. Now observe here,

1. That the guilty, corrupted race of mankind is become a generation of vipers; not only poisoned, but poisonous; hateful to God, hating one another. This magnifies the patience of God, in continuing the race of mankind, and not

the word of the Lord, by the Old-Testament prophets, Ezek. 18:30.

III. The fulfilling of the Scriptures in the ministry of John. The other evangelists had referred us to the same text that is here referred to, that of Esaias, ch. 40: 3. It is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, those words of his which were written for the generations to come. Among them it is found, that there should be the voice of one crying in the wilderness; and John is that voice, v. 4. John's business is to bring the people into such a frame and temper, as that Christ might be welcome to them, and they welcome to Christ. Luke goes further on with the quotation than Matthew and Mark had done, and applies the following words likewise to John's ministry, (v. 5, 6.) Every valley shall be filled. Dr. Hammond understands this as a prediction of the desolation coming on the Jews for their infidelity: the land should be made plain by the pioneers for the Roman army, and should be laid waste by it, and there should then be a visible distinction made between the impenitent and the receivers of the Gospel. But it seems rather to be meant of the immediate tendency of John's ministry, and of the Gospel of Christ, which that was the introduction of. 1. The humble shall by it be enriched with grace, for Every valley shall be exalted. 2. The proud shall by it be humbled; the self-confident made to stand on their own bottom, and the self-conceited condemned; for, Every mountain and hill shall be brought low; if they repent, they are brought to the dust; if not, to the lowest hell. 3. Sinners shall be converted to God; The crooked ways and the crooked spirits shall be made straight; for though none can make that straight which God hath made crooked, (Eccl. 7:13.) yet God by his grace can make that straight which sin hath made crooked. 4. Difficulties that were hindering and discouraging shall be removed; The rough ways shall be made smooth; and they that love God's law, shall have great peace, and nothing shall offend them. The Gospel has made the way to heaven plain, and easy to be found, smooth, and easy to be walked in. 5. The great salvation shall be more fully discovered than ever, and the discovery of it shall spread further, (v. 6.) not Jews only, but Gentiles. All shall see it, and some of all sorts enjoy it. When way is made for the Gospel into the heart, by captivating high thoughts, and levelling, and removing all obstructions that stand in the way of Christ and his grace, then prepare to bid the salvation of God welcome.

IV. The general warnings and exhortations which he gave to those who submitted to his baptism, v. 7-9. In Matthew he is said to have preached these same things to many of the Pharisees and Sadducees, that came to his baptism: (Matt. 3: 7-10.) but here he is said to have spoken them to the multitude, that came forth to be baptized of him, v. 7. This was the purport of his preaching to all that came to him. He neither flattered the great, nor complimented the many, but gave the same reproofs of sin and warnings of wrath to the multitude, that he did to the Sadducees and Pharisees; for if they had not the same faults, they had others as bad. Now observe here,

(5.) Every valley shall be filled.) 'By the import of the language that the prophet uses, it is plainly to be seen that the main work is God's, though men are called to concur with Him in it; which is every where the scheme of Scripture, as it certainly is of sound reason. Compare Phil. 2: 12, 13.'

'It is observable that Luke, who wrote his gospel for the instruction of the Gentile converts, quotes here no less than three verses out of Esaias: whereas the other evangelists, Matthew and Mark, quote only the first of them. But it was necessary for Luke's purpose that he should thus extend the quotation, in order to assure the Gentiles, for whom he wrote, that they were destined to be partakers of the privileges of the Gospel, and to "see the salvation of God."

Dr. H. OWEN.

(6.) 'These words are cited from Esaias 3: 10, in which chapter the ancient Jews allow that the prophet is speaking of the Messiah.'

WHITNEY.

Verses 7-9.

Marg and Marg Ref.—Note, Matt. 3: 7-10. 23:29-33. John 8: 30-37.)

Scott.

(7.) Generation of vipers. 'No reflection on their parents is necessarily implied. The children of pious Eli are called sons of Be-

destroying that nest of vipers. He did it once by water, and will again by fire.

2. This generation of vipers is fairly warned to flee from the wrath to come, which is certainly before them, if they continue such; and their being a multitude will not be at all their security, for it will be neither reproach nor loss to God, to cut them off. We are not only warned of this wrath, but are put into a way to escape it, if we look about us in time.

3. There is no way of fleeing from the wrath to come, but by repentance. They that submitted to the baptism of repentance, thereby evidenced that they were warned to flee from the wrath to come, and took the warning; and we by our baptism profess to have fled out of Sodom, for fear of what is coming on it.

4. Those that profess repentance, are highly concerned to live like penitents; (v. 8.) 'Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance; else, notwithstanding your professions of repentance, you cannot escape the wrath to come.' By the fruits of repentance it will be known whether it be sincere or no. By the change of our way must be evidenced the change of our mind.

5. If we be not really holy, both in heart and life, our profession of religion and relation to God and his church will stand us in no stead at all; Begin not now to frame excuses from this great duty of repentance, by saying within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father. What will it avail us, to be the children of godly parents, if we be not godly? or to be within the pale of the church, if we be not brought into the bond of the covenant?

6. We have therefore no reason to depend on our external privileges and professions of religion, because God has no need of us or of our services, but can effectually secure his own honor and interest without us. If we were cut off and ruined, He could raise up to Himself a church out of the most unlikely; children to Abraham even out of stones.

7. The greater professions we make of repentance, and the greater assistances and encouragements are given us to repentance, the nearer and the sorer will our destruction be, if we do not bring forth fruits meet for repentance. Now that the Gospel begins to be preached, the kingdom of heaven to be at hand, and the axe laid to the root of the tree; threatenings to the wicked and impenitent are now more terrible than before, as encouragements to the penitent are now more comfortable. 'Now that you are upon your behavior, look to yourselves.'

8. Barren trees will be at length cast into the fire, as the fittest place for them; Every tree that doth not bring forth fruit, good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. If it serve not for fruit, to the honor of God's grace, let it serve for fuel, to the honor of his justice.

V. The particular instructions he gave to several sorts of persons, that inquired of him concerning their duty; the people, the publicans, and the soldiers. Some of the Pharisees and Sadducees came to his baptism; but we do not find them asking, What shall we do? For they thought that they knew what they had to do as well as he could tell them; or were determined to do what they pleased whatever he told them.

lial, merely with reference to their own licentious characters, as they knew not the Lord. See 1 Sam. 2: 12.' DODDRIDGE.

(8.) We have Abraham to our father.) 'Dr. Whitby well shows how great the presumption of the Jews on this relation to Abraham was. Munster, on this text, quotes a remarkable passage from the Talmud, in which it is said, "that Abraham sits next the gates of hell, and doth not permit any wicked Israelite to go down into it." These Jews might perhaps pervert the promise in Jer. 31: 35, 36, to support this vain and dangerous confidence, in opposition to such a multitude of most express and awful threatenings; particularly Deut. 32: 19. et seq.'

Id.

These stones.] 'These very stones that are before your eyes. The many learned commentators who refer this to God's calling the Gentiles, seem to lose all the beauty of the expression; and few, I think, if any, have set it in so strong a light as it will bear.'

Id.

(9.) Is hewn down.] 'Is very certainly and quickly to be cut down. In Scripture language, that which is very sure and very near is spoken of as if it was already done. Thus Christ speaks of Himself as if He was already in possession of his glory, while He was here on earth, (John 17: 14.) sinners too are represented as condemned already, (John 3: 18.) and saints are spoken of as already glorified Eph. 2: 6. and Heb. 12: 22, 23.'

Id.

10 And the people asked him, saying, 'What shall we do then?'

11 He answereth and saith unto them, 'He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat let him do likewise.'

12 Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do?'

13 And he said unto them, 'Exact no more than that which is appointed you.'

14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, 'Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.'

15 ¶ And as the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts

But the people, the publicans, and the soldiers, who knew that they had done amiss, and that they ought to do better, and were conscious to themselves of great ignorance and unacquaintance with the divine law, were particularly inquisitive; *What shall we do?* Note, 1. Those that are baptized, must be taught, and those that have baptized them, are concerned, as they have opportunity, to teach them, Matt. 28: 19, 20. 2. Those that profess and promise repentance in general, must evidence it by particular instances of reformation, according to their place and condition are. 3. They that would do their duty, must desire to know it, and inquire concerning it. The first good word Paul said, when he was converted, was, *Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?* These here inquire not *What shall this man do?* but, *What shall we do?* What fruits meet for repentance shall we bring forth? Now John gives answer to each, according to their place and station.

(1.) He tells the people their duty, and that is, to be charitable; (v. 11.) *He that has two coats, and, consequently, one to spare, let him give, or lend at least, to him that has none, to keep him warm.* He puts those who had superfluities, upon contributing to the relief of those that had not necessities. The Gospel requires mercy, and not sacrifice; and the design of it is, to engage us to do all the good we can. *Food and raiment* are the two supports of life; he that hath meat or clothes to spare, let him give to him that is destitute: what we have, we are but stewards of, and must use it accordingly, as our Master directs.

(2.) He tells the publicans their duty, the collectors of the emperor's revenue, v. 13. They must do justice between the government and the merchant, and not oppress the people in levying the taxes, nor any way make them heavier or more burdensome than the law had made them. They must not think that because it was their office to take care that the people did not defraud the prince, they might therefore hear hard on the people; as those that have ever so little a branch of power, are apt to abuse it; 'No, keep to your book of rates, and reckon it enough that you collect for Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and do not enrich yourselves by taking more.' The public revenues must be applied to the public service, and not to gratify the avarice of private persons. Observe, He does not direct the publicans to quit their places, and to go no more to the receipt of custom; the employment is in itself lawful and necessary, but let them be just and honest in it.

(3.) He tells the soldiers their duty, v. 14. Some think that these soldiers were Jews; others, that they were Romans; for it was not likely either that the Jews would serve the Ro-

mans, or that the Romans would trust the Jews in their garrisons in their own nation: and then it is an early instance of Gentiles embracing the Gospel, and submitting to it. Military men seem inclined to religion; yet these submitted even to the Baptist's strict profession, and desired to be directed by him. Those who, more than other men, have their lives in their hands, and are in deaths often, are concerned to inquire what they shall do, that they may be found in peace. In answer to this inquiry John does not bid them lay down their arms and desert the service; but cautions them against the sins that soldiers were commonly guilty of; for this is fruit meet for repentance, *to keep ourselves from our iniquity.* [1.] They must not be injurious to the people among whom they were quartered, and over whom indeed they were set; 'Do violence to no man.' Your business is to keep the peace, and prevent men's doing violence to one another; but do not you do violence to any; *shake no man;* (so the word signifies); 'do not put people into fear; for the sword of war, as well as that of justice, is to be a terror only to evil doers, but a protection to those that do well. Be not rude in your quarters; force not money from people by frightening them. Shed not the blood of war in peace; offer no incivility either to man or woman, nor have any hand in the barbarous devastations that armies sometimes make.' Nor must they accuse any falsely to the government, thereby to make themselves formidable, and get bribes. [2.] They must not be injurious to their fellow-soldiers, for some think the caution, not to accuse falsely, has special reference to them; 'Be not forward to condemn one of another to your superior officers, that you may be revenged or those whom you have a pique against, or undermine those above you, and get into their places.' Do not oppress any; so some think the word here signifies, as used by the LXX in several passages of the Old Testament. [3.] They must not be given to mutiny, or contend with their generals about their pay; 'Be content with your wages.' While you have what you agreed for, do not murmur that it is no more.' It is discontent with what they have, that makes men oppressive and injurious: they that never think they have enough themselves, will not scruple any the most irregular practices, to make it more, by defrauding others. It is a rule to all servants, that they be content with their wages; for they that indulge themselves in discontents, expose themselves to many temptations, and it is wisdom to make the best of that which is.

V. 15—20. We are here told,

I. How the people took occasion, from the ministry and baptism of John, to think of the

- a. 2. Acts 2:37, 9:6, 16:30.
b. 11. 1. 15:22, 15:23, 15:24, 15:25, 15:26, 15:27, 15:28, 15:29, 15:30, 15:31, 15:32, 15:33, 15:34, 15:35, 15:36, 15:37, 15:38, 15:39, 15:40, 15:41, 15:42, 15:43, 15:44, 15:45, 15:46, 15:47, 15:48, 15:49, 15:50, 15:51, 15:52, 15:53, 15:54, 15:55, 15:56, 15:57, 15:58, 15:59, 15:60, 15:61, 15:62, 15:63, 15:64, 15:65, 15:66, 15:67, 15:68, 15:69, 15:70, 15:71, 15:72, 15:73, 15:74, 15:75, 15:76, 15:77, 15:78, 15:79, 15:80, 15:81, 15:82, 15:83, 15:84, 15:85, 15:86, 15:87, 15:88, 15:89, 15:90, 15:91, 15:92, 15:93, 15:94, 15:95, 15:96, 15:97, 15:98, 15:99, 16:1, 16:2, 16:3, 16:4, 16:5, 16:6, 16:7, 16:8, 16:9, 16:10, 16:11, 16:12, 16:13, 16:14, 16:15, 16:16, 16:17, 16:18, 16:19, 16:20, 16:21, 16:22, 16:23, 16:24, 16:25, 16:26, 16:27, 16:28, 16:29, 16:30, 16:31, 16:32, 16:33, 16:34, 16:35, 16:36, 16:37, 16:38, 16:39, 16:40, 16:41, 16:42, 16:43, 16:44, 16:45, 16:46, 16:47, 16:48, 16:49, 16:50, 16:51, 16:52, 16:53, 16:54, 16:55, 16:56, 16:57, 16:58, 16:59, 16:60, 16:61, 16:62, 16:63, 16:64, 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of John, whether he were the Christ or not.

16 John answered, saying unto them all, 'I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:

17 Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable.

18 And many other things in his exhortation preached he unto the people.

[Practical Observations.]

19 But Herod the tetrarch, being reproved by him, for Herodias his brother

Messiah as just at hand. Thus the way of the Lord was prepared; for when men's expectations are raised, that which they are in expectation of, becomes doubly acceptable. Now when they observed what an excellent doctrine John Baptist preached, what a divine power went along with it, and what a tendency it had to reform the world,

1. They began presently to consider that now was the time for the Messiah to appear; the sceptre was departed from Judah, for they had no king but Cæsar; the lawgiver too was gone from between his feet, for Herod had lately slain the sanhedrim; Daniel's seventy weeks were now expiring; and in three or four years, they looked that the kingdom of heaven should appear immediately, Luke 19: 11. Never did the corrupt state of the Jews more need a reformation, nor their distressed state more need a deliverance than now.

2. Their next thought was, 'Is not this He that should come?' All thinking men mused, or reasoned, in their hearts, concerning John, whether he were the Christ or not. He had indeed nothing of the external pomp and grandeur in which they generally expected the Messiah to appear; but his life was holy and strict, his preaching powerful and with authority, and therefore why may we not think him to be the Messiah, and that he will shortly throw off this disguise, and appear in more glory? Note, That which puts people upon considering, reasoning with themselves, prepares the way for Christ.

II. How John disowned all pretensions to the honor of being himself the Messiah, but confirmed them in their expectations of Him that really was the Messiah, v. 16, 17. John's office, as a crier or herald, was to give notice that the kingdom of God and the King of that kingdom were at hand; and that therefore they must expect the Messiah now shortly to appear. And this serves as an answer to their misgivings and debates concerning himself. Though he knew not their thoughts, yet, in declaring this, he answered them.

1. He declares that all he could do, was, to baptize them with water; he had no access to the Spirit, nor could command that; he could only exhort them to repent, and assure them of

forgiveness, on repentance; he could not work repentance in them, or confer remission or them.

2. He consigns them, turns them over, as it were, to Jesus Christ, for whom he was sent to prepare the way, and to whom he was ready to transfer all the interest he had in the affections of the people, and would have them no longer to debate whether John was the Messiah or no, but to look for Him that was really so.

John owns the Messiah to have a greater excellency than he had, and that He was in all things preferable to him; He is One, the latchet of whose shoe he does not think himself worthy to unloose; he does not think himself worthy to be the meanest of his servants. John was a prophet, yea, more so than any of the Old-Testament prophets; but Christ more than John, for it was both by the Spirit of Christ, and of the grace of Christ, that all the prophets prophesied, and John among the rest, 1 Pet. 1: 10, 11. This was a great truth which John came to preach. Thus highly does it become us to speak of Christ, and thus humbly of ourselves.

He owns Him to have a greater energy than he had. They thought a wonderful power went along with John; but what was that, compared with the power which Jesus would come clothed with? John can only baptize with water, in token that they ought to purify and cleanse themselves; but Christ can give the Spirit, to cleanse and purify the heart, even as fire purges out the dross and melts down the metal, that it may be cast into a new mould. John can separate between the precious and the vile only by word and sign; but Christ hath his fan in his hand, and will perfectly part between the wheat and the chaff, will cast out of his church the unbelieving, impenitent Jews, and confirm therein all that faithfully follow Him. John can only speak comfort, and, like other prophets, say to the righteous that it shall be well with them; but Jesus Christ will give them comfort. John can only promise them that they shall be safe; but Christ will make them so. He will gather the wheat into his garner; good, serious, solid people He will gather now into his church on earth, and shortly into his church in heaven, where they shall be forever sheltered. John can only threaten hypocrites, and tell the barren trees that they shall

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—18. The servants of God often grow up in obscurity: but when the Lord has prepared them for usefulness, He will bring them forth and employ them.—The true doctrine of the Holy Scriptures is equally calculated to encourage the humble, and to abase the proud. But many attend the preaching of the Gospel, and come to sacred ordinances, who are no better than 'a generation of vipers;' they should therefore be dealt with very plainly, nay, sometimes roughly; that they may be made sensible that it is vain to rely on forms, notions, or external privileges.—Men should not only ask, What 'must we do to be saved?' but also inquire particularly concerning the proper evidences and effects of faith and repentance; and ministers should enter into the detail, and be exact and particular in answering these inquiries. In general, these must be evinced by love to our neighbors and brethren; and surely our clearer discoveries of the unspeakable mercy of the Lord Jesus to our sinful souls, ought not to render us more niggardly in relieving the distresses of our fellow-sinners: yet the rule laid down by this 'man of God' would be deemed extremely rigorous, if we now should attempt to insist on its being strictly observed. Thus much, however, we must say: 'He who soweth liberally,

shall reap also liberally;' and that 'God loveth a cheerful giver.' (2 Cor. 8: 1—15.)—It is not generally advisable for men to quit their stations, provided they are not directly criminal; for though attended with peculiar temptations, yet they may afford peculiar advantages for showing the excellency of the Gospel, and the power of divine grace; and there are many employments, that could have no existence, were men not wicked, which are nevertheless needful in the present state of the world, and a person may conscientiously serve God in them. Men should first be cautioned against the peculiar temptations of their respective employments, and warned to avoid the sins, and to give up the iniquitous gains, which generally attend them; (Ez. 22: 25—27.) and when they are prevailed on to make these sacrifices for conscience' sake, their hearts are prepared to welcome the salvation of Christ, and to receive instructions in every thing belonging to Christianity; and eminent holiness so far from rendering a man proud, will proportionably abase him in his own esteem, and render him regardless of his own glory, and make Christ more precious to his heart, and glorious in his eyes.

SCOTT.

Verses 15—17.

(Marg.) Some expositors seem to interpret 'the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire,' almost exclusively of the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, and of the miraculous powers thus communicated; but it seems rather to refer to his penetrating, purifying, and transforming influences in the hearts of true Christians, of which those miraculous operations were an earnest and emblem. (Marg. Ref.—Matt. 3: 11, 12. John 1: 19—23. 10: 40—42. Acts 1: 4—8.)

SCOTT.

(15.) Whether he were the Christ. 'So general was the reformation which was produced by the Baptist's preaching, that the people were ready to consider him as the promised Messiah.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

(16.) Whose shoes, &c.] 'Servants were accustomed, (as among Mohammedans they do to this day) to take off their master's sandals or slippers, when they entered the house, and to return them again, when they departed; it is this usage which is here alluded to.'

HORNE.

(17.) The chaff He will burn, &c.] 'It may in part refer to the calamities to come on the Jewish nation for rejecting Christ, (as Bishop

Chandler has observed) yet it seems chiefly to intend the final destruction of all sinners in hell, which alone is properly opposed to the gathering the wheat into the garner. The phrase, unquenchable fire, is absolutely inconsistent with all the views of the restoration of the wicked; and however the phrase of being consumed like chaff might seem to favor the doctrine of their annihilation, the epithet of unquenchable given to this fire, is so far from proving it, that it cannot, by any easy and just interpretation, be reconciled with it.'

DOODMAN.

Verses 18.

Preached, &c.] 'Preached the Gospel.' John's testimony to Jesus, as 'the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world,' as 'the Son of God,' as 'the Bridegroom' of the church, and as 'baptizing with the Holy Ghost,' fully answers the import of this appropriate term. (John 1: 29—34, 37: 27—38.) John was a preacher of the Gospel; though many consider his ministry in another light. (Marg. Ref.) SCOTT.

Preached he, &c.] 'As it was a very imperfect intimation, rather than a full discovery of the Gospel that was given by the Baptist, it does not seem so proper here to render the original word by preaching the Gospel, though the word has often that signification; see Matt. 11: 6 Luke 4: 18. and Acts 8: 4, &c.'

DOODMAN.

Philip's wife, and for all the evils which Herod had done,

20 Added yet ^{to} this above all, that he shut up John in prison.

21 ¶ Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened:

22 And the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, 'Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'

23 ¶ And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli,

24 Which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi, which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Janna, which was the son of Joseph,

25 Which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Amos, which was the son of Naum, which was the son of Esli, which was the son of Nagge,

26 Which was the son of Maath, which was the son of Mattathias, which was the son of Semei, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Juda,

be *hewn down, and cast into the fire*; but Christ can execute that threatening; those that are as *chaff, light, and vain, and worthless, He will burn with fire unquenchable*. John refers here to Mal. 3: 18, 4: 1, 2. Then, when the floor is purged, ye shall return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, for the day comes, that shall burn as an oven.

The evangelist concludes his account of John's preaching, with *an et cetera*, (v. 18.) which are not recorded. 1st. John was an affectionate preacher; he was hortatory and beseeching; he pressed things home upon his hearers, followed his doctrine close, as one in earnest. 2dly. He was a practical preacher; quickening to duty, directing in it, and not amusing with matters of nice speculation. 3dly. He was a popular preacher; though he had scribes and Pharisees, men of polite learning, attending his ministry, and Sadducees, men of free thought, as they pretended, yet he addressed himself to the people, and accommodated himself to their capacity, as promising himself best success among them. 4thly. He was an evangelical preacher, for so the word here used signifies; he preached the Gospel; in all his exhortations, he directed people to Christ, and excited and encouraged their expectations of Him. When we press duty on people, we must direct them to Christ, both for righteousness and strength. 5thly. He was a copious preacher; many other things he preached—many things, and different. He preached a great deal, shunned not to declare the whole counsel of God; and he varied in his preaching, that those who were not reached, and touched, and wrought upon, by one truth, might be by another.

III. How full a stop put to John's preaching, by the malice of Herod, v. 19, 20. Because he could not bear his reproofs, others should be deprived of the benefit of his instructions and counsels. Some little good he might do to those who had access to him, when he was in prison; but nothing to what he might have done, if he had had liberty to go about all the country, as he had done. We cannot think of Herod's doing this, without the greatest compassion and lamentation; nor of God's permitting it, without admiring the depth of the divine counsels, which we cannot account for; must he be silenced, who is the voice of one crying in the wilderness? Must such a preacher be shut up in prison, who ought to have been set up in the courts of the temple? But thus the faith of his disciples must be tried; thus the unbelief of those who rejected him must be punished;

n 13:31-34. 2 Kings 21:16. 24:4. 2 Chr. 24:17-22. 36:16. Neh. 9:26. Jer. 2:30. Matt. 21:35-41. 22:6, 7. 23:31-33. 1 Thes. 2:15, 16. Rev. 16:6.

o Matt. 3:13-15. Mark 1:9. p 2:18, 29. Luke 12:27, 28. q Matt. 3:16, 17. Mark 1:10, 11. John 1:32-34. r 5:34, 35. Ps. 27. Is. 42:1. Matt. 12:18. 17:5. 27:43. Col. 1:13. 1 Pet. 2:4. 2 Pet. 1:17, 18. e Gen. 41:46. Num. 4:3, 35, 39, 43. f 2:22. Matt. 13:55. Mark 6:3. John 6:42.

Verses 19, 20.

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 14: 3-11. Mark 6: 15-29.) Herod's persecution of so eminent a servant of God, was a more direct act of hostility against God, than his most atrocious licentiousness; and so filled up the measure of his crimes. (Marg. Ref. 3: 31-33. 23: 6-12.)

SCOTT.

Verses 21, 22.

(Matt. 3: 13-17.) (21.) Praying, &c.] 'It is observable, that all the three voices from heaven, by which the Father bore witness to Christ, were pronounced while He was praying, or very quickly after it.' Doddridge. (9: 28, 35, John 12: 27, 28.) (22.) Bodily, &c.] It is evident that this was an appearance, resembling a material substance, descending on Christ, as a dove lights on the ground; probably in the shape, as well as after the manner, of a dove. The emblem has before been considered.

Verses 22.

Jesus 'began to be about thirty years of age,' at his baptism; or perhaps He began his public ministry, by being baptized of John, when He was about thirty years old. Some understand the clause to mean, that He was ruled, or was in subjection to Joseph and Mary, for about thirty years. He was however about thirty years of age when He entered on his ministry. (Note, 2, 3.) This single decision of an inspired writer outweighs all the specious conjectures of learned men, concerning the duration of our Lord's ministry; and if He was crucified in the year A. D. 33, it must have lasted longer than they generally allow; for He would be thirty years old A. D. 27. (Note, Matt. 4: beginning.) But the word about, and the decimal number, concur in warranting an opinion, that He might be rather above thirty at this time.

Id.

(23.) See notes Matt. 1: 2-17. And Jesus began to be about thirty, &c.] 'Rather, "Jesus was about thirty years old, when he began to teach."'

GRIZZBACH. DODDIDGE. LARDNER.

ANOM. 'The very use of this adverb mainly teaches that nothing

thus he must be Christ's forerunner in suffering as well as preaching; and thus, having seen for about a year and a half preparing people for Christ, he must now give way to Him, and, the Sun being risen, the morning-star must of course disappear.

V. 21, 22. The evangelist mentioned John's imprisonment before Christ's being baptized, though it was near a year after it, because he would finish the story of John's ministry, and then introduce that of Christ. Now here we have,

I. A short account of Christ's baptism, which had been more fully related by Matthew. Jesus came to be baptized of John, and He was so, v. 21, 22.

1. It is here said, that when all the people were baptized, then Jesus was baptized; all that were then present. Christ would be baptized last, among the common people; thus He humbled Himself, and made Himself of no reputation, as one of the least, nay, as less than the least. He saw what multitudes were hereby prepared to receive Him, and then He appeared.

2. Notice is here taken of Christ's praying when He was baptized, which was not in Matthew. He did not confess sin, as others did, for He had none to confess; but He prayed, as others did, for He would thus keep up communion with his Father. Note, The inward and spiritual grace which sacraments are the outward and visible signs of, must be fetched in by prayer; and therefore prayer must always accompany them. We have reason to think that Christ now prayed for this manifestation of God's favor to Him, which immediately followed; He prayed for the discovery of his Father's favor to Him, and the descent of the Spirit. What was promised to Christ, He must obtain by prayer; Ask of Me, and I will give Thee. Thus He would put an honor on prayer, would tie us to it, and encourage us in it.

3. When He prayed, the heaven was opened. He that by his power parted the waters, to make a way through them to Canaan, now by his power parted the air, to open a correspondence with the heavenly Canaan. Thus was there opened to Christ, and by Him to us, a new and living way into the holiest: sin had shut up heaven, but Christ's prayer opened it again. Prayer is an ordinance that opens heaven; Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

4. The Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him; our Lord Jesus was now to receive greater measures of the Spirit than

certain can be defined respecting the age of Christ at his baptism, and commencement of his ministry. Hence it is no wonder that the conjectures of commentators should be so various.

Which was the son of Heli.] 'The son of Joseph, who, by adoption, or rather by the marriage of his daughter, was the son of Heli.'

DODDIDGE.

'In the latter times, names were selected from those of the progenitors of a family; hence in the New Testament hardly any other than ancient names occur.'

JAHN.

As was supposed, the son of Joseph.] 'Matthew, in descending from Abraham to Joseph, the spouse of Mary, speaks of sons properly such, by way of natural generation; but Luke, in ascending from the Savior to God Himself, speaks of sons either properly or improperly such; on this account he uses an indeterminate mode of expression which may be applied to sons either putatively, or really such.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'As the Hebrews never permitted women to enter into their genealogical tables, whenever a family happened to end with a daughter, instead of naming her in the genealogy, they inserted her husband as the son of him who was in reality but his father-in-law.'

Bp. Pearce, in CLARKE.

Verses 24-38.

(Marg. Ref.) There seems no reason to doubt, that the following is the genealogy of Jesus in the line of Mary: (Matt. 1: 2-17.) but as the names of men alone, or chiefly, stood in public registers, so the name of Joseph, not that of Mary, must have been inserted. It had been said that Jesus was 'supposed to be the Son of Joseph; which may refer to the legal constitution, as well as to the common opinion of the Jews, as He was born of Mary after she was married to Joseph. Joseph's father was called Jacob: (Matt. 1: 16.) but marrying the daughter of Heli, and being perhaps adopted by him, he was called his son, and as such his name seems to have been inserted in the public registers; and so the pedigree is carried backward in the line of Nathan to David, and from him to Adam 'who was the son of God,' as created

27 Which was the son of Joanna, which was the son of Rhesa, which was the son of Zorobabel, which was the son of Salathiel, which was the son of Neri,

25 Which was the son of Melchi, which was the son of Addi, which was the son of Cosam, which was the son of Elmodam, which was the son of Er,

29 Which was the son of Jose, which was the son of Eliezer, which was the son of Jorim, which was the son of Matthat, which was the son of Levi,

20 Which was the son of Simeon, which was the son of Juda, which was the son of Joseph, which was the son of Jonan, which was the son of Eliakim,

31 Which was the son of Melea, which was the son of Menan, which was the son of Mattatha, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David,

32 Which was the son of Jesse, which was the son of Obed, which was the son of Booz, which was the son of Salmon, which was the son of Naasson,

33 Which was the son of Aminadab, which was the son of Aram, which was the son of Esrom, which was the son of Phares, which was the son of Juda,

34 Which was the son of Jacob, which was the son of Isaac, which was the son of Abraham, which was the son of Thara, which was the son of Nachor,

before, to qualify Him for his prophetic office, Isa. 61: 1. When He begins to preach, the Spirit of the Lord is upon Him; which is here expressed by a sensible evidence for his encouragement, and for the satisfaction of John, who was told before, that by this sign it should be notified to him, which was the Christ. Dr. Lightfoot suggests, that the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, that He might be revealed to be a personal Substance, and not merely an Operation of the Godhead; and thus (saith he) was made a full, clear, and sensible demonstration of the Trinity, at the beginning of the Gospel; and very fitly is this done at Christ's baptism, who was to make the ordinance of baptism a badge of the profession of that faith, in the doctrine of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

5. There came a voice, from heaven, from God the Father, from the excellent glory; (so it is expressed, 2 Pet. 1: 17.) Thou art my beloved Son. Here, and in Mark, it is expressed as spoken to Christ; in Matthew, as spoken of Him; This is my beloved Son; it comes all to one, it was intended to be a notification to John, and as such was properly expressed by, This is my beloved Son; and likewise an answer to his prayer, and so it is most fitly expressed by, Thou art. It was foretold concerning the Messiah, I will be his Father, and He shall be my Son, 2 Sam. 7: 14. I will make Him my First-born, Ps. 89: 27. It was also foretold that He should be God's Elect in whom his soul delighted; (Isa. 42: 1.) and, accordingly, it is here declared, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

II. A long account of Christ's pedigree, which had been more briefly related by Matthew, v. 23—38. Here is,

1. His age, v. 23. So old Joseph was, when he stood before Pharaoh, (Gen. 41: 46.) David, when he began to reign; (2 Sam. 5: 4.) and at this age the priests were to enter on the full execution of their office, Num. 4: 3. Dr. Lightfoot thinks it plain, by the manner of expression here, that He was just twenty-nine years old complete, and entering on his thirtieth year, in the month Tisri; that, after this, He lived three years and a half, and died when He was thirty-

35 Which was the son of Saruch, which was the son of Ragau, which was the son of Phalec, which was the son of Heber, which was the son of Sala,

36 Which was the son of Cainan, which was the son of Arphaxad, which was the son of Sem, which was the son of Noe, which was the son of Lamech,

37 Which was the son of Mathusala, which

was the son of Enoch, which was the son of Jared, which was the son of Maleleel, which was the son of Cainan, 38 Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God.

u 2 Sam. 5: 14. 1 Chr. 3: 5. 14: 4. z Ruth 4: 18—22. Sam. 17: 26. 20: 31. 1 Kings 12: 16. 1 Chr. 2: 13—15. Ps. 72: 20. Is. 11: 1, 2. Matt. 1: 3—6. Acts 13: 22, 23. y Num. 17: 2, 3. 7: 12. 1 Chr. 2: 11, 12. Nahash, Salma, Boaz.

two years old and a half. Three years and a half, the time of Christ's ministry; is a period of time very remarkable in Scripture; three years and six months the heavens were shut up in Elijah's time, Luke 4: 25. Jam. 5: 17. This was the half week in which the Messiah was to confirm the covenant, Dan. 9: 27. This period is expressed in the prophetic writings, by a time, times, and half a time, (Dan. 12: 7. Rev. 12: 14.) and by forty-two months, and a thousand two hundred and three score days, Rev. 11: 2, 3. It is in the time fixed for the witnesses' prophesying in sackcloth, in conformity to Christ's preaching in his humiliation just so long.

2. His pedigree, v. 23, &c. Matthew had given us somewhat of this, (he goes no higher than Abraham,) but Luke brings it as high as Adam. Matthew designed to show that Christ was the son of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth are blessed, and that He was Heir to the throne of David; and therefore he begins with Abraham, and brings the genealogy down to Jacob, who was the father of Joseph, an heir-male of the house of David; but Luke, designing to show that Christ was the Seed of the woman, that should break the serpent's head, traces his pedigree upward as high as Adam, and begins it with Eli, or Heli, who was the father, not of Joseph, but of Mary. And some suggest, that the supply which our translators all along insert here, is not right, and that it should not be read which, that is, which Joseph was the son of Heli, but which Jesus; he was son of Joseph, of Eli, of Matthat, &c. and He, that is, Jesus, was the son of Seth, of Adam, of God, v. 38. The difference between the two evangelists, in the genealogy of Christ, has been a stumbling-block to infidels that cavil at the Word; but such a one as has been removed by the labors of learned men, both in the early ages of the church, and in latter times. Matthew draws the pedigree from Solomon, whose natural line ending in Jeconias, the legal right was transferred to Salathiel, who was of the house of Nathan, another son of David, which line Luke here pursues, and so leaves out all the kings of Judah. It is well for us, that our salvation doth not depend on our being able to

z Ruth 4: 19—20. 1 Chr. 2: 9, 10. Aminadab, Ram, Hezron, Matt. 1: 3, 4. a Gen. 46: 12. Num. 26: 20, 21. Hezron. b Gen. 38: 29. Ruth 4: 12. 1 Chr. 2: 5, 6. Pharez. c Gen. 29: 35. Judas. d Gen. 21: 3. 25: 26. 1 Chr. 1: 34. Matt. 1: 2. Acts 7: 8. e Gen. 11: 21—29. Josh. 24: 2. 1 Chr. 1: 24—28. Terah, Nahor, Reu, Serug, Lezer, Eber, Shelah. f Gen. 11: 18—21. Serug, Reu. g Gen. 10: 25. Eber. h Gen. 11: 17. Eber. i Gen. 10: 24. 11: 12—15. Salah. k Gen. 5: 22. 7: 13. 9: 18, 22, 27. 10: 21, 22. 1 Chr. 1: 17. Shem. l 1 Chr. 2: 5, 6. 5: 29, 30. 6: 8—10, 12. 7: 12, 8: 1, 9: 1, 10: 14, 14: 14. Heb. 11: 1. 1 Pet. 3: 21. 2 Pet. 2: 25. N. m Gen. 5: 28—29. 1 Chr. 1: 1—3. Methuselah, Mahalaleel. n Gen. 4: 25, 26. S. 3. o Gen. 12: 17. 21: 7. 5: 1, 2. Is. 64: 8. Acts 17: 28—29. 1 Cor. 15: 45.

by Him in his own image, though he soon lost it by sin. Some of the same names indeed occur, which are in Joseph's genealogy; but as different persons often bear the same name, it seems needless to perplex ourselves about so common a case. Indeed Joseph could not, in the male line, be descended both from Solomon and Nathan. Yet the arguments urged to prove that this is Joseph's genealogy, not Mary's, are formed on the supposition that the female line was excluded. Cainan (35) is not found in the Hebrew text in any of the genealogies, but only in the Septuagint. It is probable the evangelists transcribed the registers as sufficiently exact for their purpose, and as more generally suited to command attention, than if they had even rendered them more accurate. The interpretation of this genealogy as that of Mary, and in the line of Nathan, is objected to, on the supposition that the Messiah was to descend from Solomon; which in this case He did not. But it is no where said, that He was to descend from Solomon; but merely, that He was to be the Son of David, and spring from the root of Jesse. Solomon was an eminent type of Christ, and is spoken of as such; but it is not said to David, 'In Solomon shall thy seed be called'; as to Abraham, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called.' (2 Sam. 7: 12—16. Ps. 72: 89: 19—37. Jer. 22: 28—30.) Scott.

(38.) Adam—son of God. Who, being descended of no human parents, but formed by the immediate power of a Divine Creating Hand,

might, with peculiar propriety, be called (the son) of God, in his original state the heir of immortality and glory.

'Luke, when he here calls Adam the son of God, signifies that Christ, born of a virgin, was the second Adam; and that his production by the Holy Spirit was no less the peculiar work of the divine power, than was the creation of Adam. Son of God, therefore, in this passage, is one who, other than God, has no natural father.' Gen. 5: 1, 2. Compare ch. 1: 27. The Syriac has it, Who was of God, referring his descent or origin to God as the author of it.' JOSEPHUS.

'Some think that Luke carried up the pedigree from Abraham to Adam, that he might intimate the right of the Gentiles in the Messiah.'

Abp. NEWCOMB.

'When we survey any such series of generations, it is obvious to reflect how, like the leaves of a tree, one passeth away and another cometh; yet the earth still abideth, and with it the goodness of the Lord, which runs on, from generation to generation, the common home of parents and children. Of those who formerly lived upon the earth, and perhaps made the most conspicuous figure among the children of men, how many have there been whose names have perished with them; and how many of whom nothing but their names are remaining. Thus we are passing away, and thus shall we be shortly forgotten. Happy, if, while we are forgotten of men, we are remembered by God, and our names are found written in the book of life.' DODDRIEDGE.

CHAP. IV.

Jesus fasts forty days, being tempted of the devil, and overcomes all his temptations, 1-13. He preaches in Galilee with great renown, 14, 15. He goes to Nazareth; and while his words excite admiration, the citizens are so offended, that they seek to kill him; but He avoids them by miracle, 16-30. He casts out an unclean spirit, 34-37; heals Peter's wife's mother, 38, 39; and works many other miracles, 40, 41. He preaches through the cities of Galilee, 42-44.

AND ^a Jesus, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, ^c and was led by the Spirit into ^d the wilderness,

2 Being ^e forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days ^f he did eat nothing: and when they were ended, ^h he afterward hungered.

^b Matt. 4:1. 14, 15. 3:22. Jo. 1:12-4. 6:1. Matt. 3:16. Luke 1:22. 3:34. Acts 1:2. 10:38. 2:27. 1 Kings 18:12. Ez. 3:14. Mark 1:12. Acts 8:39. d 1 Kings 19:4. Mark 1:9. e Ez. 24:18. 34:28. Deut. 1:8, 19, 25. 1 Kings 19:8. Matt. 4:2. f Gen. 3:15. 1 Sam. 17:16. Heb. 2:18. g Eph. 4:16. Jo. 3:7. h Matt. 21:18. John 4:6. Heb. 4:13.

time, translated the Old Testament into Greek, for reasons best known to themselves, inserted that Cainan; and Luke, writing among the *Hellenist Jews*, was obliged to make use of that translation, and therefore to take it as he found it.

The genealogy concludes with this, *who was the son of Adam, the son of God*. (1.) Some refer it to Adam; he was in a peculiar manner the *son of God*, being, more immediately than any of his offspring, the offspring of God by creation. (2.) Others refer it to Christ, and so make the last words of this genealogy to speak his divine and human nature. He was both the *Son of Adam* and the *Son of God*, that He might be a proper Mediator between God and the sons of Adam, and might bring the sons of Adam to be, through Him, the *sons of God*.

CHAP. IV. v. 1-13. The last words of the foregoing chapter, that Jesus was the *Son of Adam*, bespeak Him to be the *Seed of the woman*; being so, we have Him here, according to the promise, *breaking the serpent's head*, baffling and foiling the devil in all his temptations, who, by one temptation, had baffled and foiled our first parents. Thus, in the beginning of the war,

V. 19-38. The faithful servants of God will be sure to make themselves enemies, among the proud and licentious; and contempt, reproach and persecution are the general recompense of their honest reproofs. Yet those who thus injure them, add a *greater evil* to all their other sins, and one expressive of more determined enmity to God and holiness, than any of the rest.—While, after the example of our righteous Surety, we are pouring out our hearts in prayer, and honoring the ordinances of God, we may expect to have the heavens, as it were, opened to pour down blessings on our heads. Indeed *all good things* may be said to be comprised in the Spirit of adoption communicated to us, to glorify the Savior, and to be the pledge

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. v. 1-13. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 4: 1-11. Mark 1: 12, 13.) (1.) *Led by, &c.* (Note, Rom. 8: 14-7.) (2.) *He did eat, &c.* Jesus not only abstained from some kinds of food, or for a certain portion of each day, as fasting is often understood; but He ate nothing all those days. (4.) *Man shall not live by bread, &c.* (Note, Luke 4: 4.) and then "led them with manna." (A light aerial sort of food,) giving them as great strength from that, as from the bread and flesh thou didst eat in Egypt; and this He did, providing it miraculously every day, "that He might teach thee" (by this example) "that man doth not live by bread alone, but by every word of God," every thing that He shall please to command to give him nourishment. So that, though I am now hungry, as they were; I have no need to work a miracle myself to satisfy my hunger; seeing I know by this example, that God, though He suffer his children to want bread, yet will command some other thing to keep them alive, and will Himself rather work a miracle, than they shall want nourishment." *Whitby*. (Deut. 8: 2, 3.) (5.) *In a moment, &c.* This circumstance is noted by Luke alone; and it confirms the opinion, that the whole was an illusion of the senses, effected by "the prince of the power of the air." (Eph. 2: 1, 2.) (6.) *That is delivered, &c.* A most direct falsehood spoken by "the father of lies," who, in this and similar ways, has always deceived the children of men. (Gen. 3: 1-5.) (9.) *A pinnacle.* The porch of the temple, (1 Kings 6: 2, 3.) (3.) *All the, &c.* Christ being tempted by Satan, first to

solve all these difficulties, nor is the divine authority of the gospels at all weakened by them: for the evangelists are not supposed to write these genealogies, either of their own knowledge, or by divine inspiration, but to have copied them out of the authentic records of the genealogies among the Jews, in which they found the pedigree of Jacob, the father of Joseph, to be as it is set down in Matthew; and the pedigree of Heli, the father of Mary, to be as it is set down here in Luke; and this is the meaning of v. 23. not, as it was supposed, referring only to Joseph, but, as it is entered into the books—as we find it on record; by which it appeared, that Jesus was both by father and mother's side, the Son of David; witness this extract out of their own records, which any one might at that time have liberty to compare with the original, and further the evangelists needed not to go; nay, had they varied from that, they had not gained their point. Its not being contradicted at that time, is satisfaction enough to us now, that it is a true copy, as it is further worthy of our observing, that, when those records of the Jewish genealogies had continued thirty or forty years after these extracts out of them, long enough to justify the evangelists therein, they were all lost and destroyed with the Jewish state and nation; for now there was no more occasion for them.

One difficulty occurs between Abraham and Noah, which gives us some perplexity, v. 35, 36. Sala is said to be the son of Cainan, and he the son of Arphaxad, whereas Sala was the son of Arphaxad, (Gen. 10: 24. 11: 12.) and there is no such man as Cainan found there. But as to that, it is sufficient to say, that the Seventy interpreters, who, before our Savior's entry into Greece, for reasons best known to themselves, inserted that Cainan; and Luke, writing among the *Hellenist Jews*, was obliged to make use of that translation, and therefore to take it as he found it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

and earnest of eternal felicity. (ch. 11: 5-13. Matt. 7: 7-11, v. 11.) If our souls be renewed, by his sacred influences, to a conformity with Christ, we shall thus be evinced to be the children of our Father, with whom for his sake He will be well pleased, though in ourselves we are most unworthy; and thus also we shall be qualified for every service to which we are called. These are privileges worthy of our estimation.—'All flesh,' as descended from the first Adam, is indeed 'as grass,' and 'withers as the flower of the field;' but He who partakes of 'the Spirit of life' from the second Adam, has that eternal happiness 'which by the Gospel is preached to us.' (1 Cor. 15: 45-49.)

SCOTT.

'distrust God, then to covet riches and worldly good, and thirdly to vain confidence, thrice conquers him by the word of God. Hardly any kind of temptation will be found, which may not be referred either to distrust of God, the desire of perishing things, or vain ostentation.' *Beza*. 'If this enemy of mankind omitted no season of tempting Christ, we have reason to believe he will omit no opportunity of tempting us.' *Whitby*. (3.) *The Son of God.* See on Matt. 14: 33. 27: 54. (13.) *For a season.* 'Till the time of his passion, that was his hour. (Luke 22: 53. John 14: 30.)' *Whitby*.

SCOTT.

(1.) *Was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.* Christ probably intended this as a devout retirement, to which He found Himself strongly inclined, that He might give vent to those sacred passions, which the late occurrences of the descent of the Spirit upon Him, and the miraculous attestation of a voice from heaven, had such a tendency to inspire. It seems to be a groundless conjecture of Mr. Fleming, that He was carried through the air to mount Sinai. Mr. Maundrell's is much more probable, that it might be the wilderness near Jordan; which, as Le, who travelled through it, assures us, is a miserable and horrid place, consisting of high and barren mountains, so that it looks as if nature had suffered some violent convulsions there. This is the scene of the parable of the good Samaritan. Luke 10: 30. Our Lord probably was assaulted in the northern part of it, near the sea of Galilee, because He is said here to be returning or going back to Nazareth, from whence He came to be baptized, Mark 1: 9.

DOUBLEDAY.

3 And the devil said unto him, 'If thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.

4 And Jesus answered him, saying, 'It is written, 'That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.

5 And the devil, taking him up into a high mountain, shewed unto him all the kingdoms of the world 'in a moment of time.

6 And the devil said unto him, 'All this power will I give thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me, and to whomsoever I will I give it.

7 If thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be thine.

8 And Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Get thee behind me, Satan; 'for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

9 And he brought him to Jerusalem, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, and said unto him, 'If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down from hence:

more than a conqueror in every assault. During the forty days, He was tempted, not by any inward suggestions, for the prince of this world had nothing in Christ by which to inject any such, but by outward solicitations, perhaps in the likeness of a serpent, as he emptied our first parents. But at the end of the forty days, he came nearer Him, and did, as we were, close with Him, when he perceived that He was a *hungred*, v. 2.

1. He tempted Him to distrust his Father's care, and to shift for Himself in such a way, as his Father had not appointed for Him; (v. 3.) *If Thou be the Son of God*, as the voice from heaven declared, *command this stone to be made bread*. (1.) 'I counsel Thee to do it; for God, if He be thy Father, has forgotten Thee, and it will be long enough He sends either ravens or angels to feed Thee.' If we begin to think of being our own carvers, and of living by our own forecast, without depending on Divine Providence, we must look on it as a temptation of Satan's, and reject it accordingly: 'it is Satan's counsel to think of an independence on God. (2.) 'I challenge Thee to do it, if Thou canst; if Thou dost not do it, I will say Thou art not the Son of God; for John Baptist said lately, *God is able of stones to raise up children to Abraham*, which is the greater; Thou therefore hast not the power of the Son of God, if Thou dost not of stones make bread for Thyself, when Thou needest it, which is the less.' Thus was God Himself tempted in the wilderness: *Can He furnish a table? Can He give bread?* Ps. 73: 19, 20.

Now, [1.] Christ yielded not to the temptation: *First*, Because He would not do what Satan bid Him do, for that would have looked as if there had been indeed a compact between Him and the prince of the devils. Note, We must not do any thing that looks like *giving place to the devil*. Miracles were wrought for the confirming of faith, and the devil had no faith to be confirmed, and therefore He would not do it for him. He did his signs in the presence of his disciples, (John 20: 30,) and particularly the beginning of his miracles, that his disciples might believe on Him; (John 2: 11.) but here in the wilderness He had no disciples with Him. *Secondly*, He wrought miracles for the ratification of his doctrine, and therefore till He began to preach, He would not begin to work miracles. *Thirdly*, He would not work miracles for Himself and his own supply, lest He should seem impatient of hunger, whereas He came not to please Himself, but to suffer grief, and that grief among others. *Fourthly*, He would reserve the proof of his being the Son of God for hereafter, and would rather be upbraided by Satan with being not able to do it, than be persuaded by Satan to do that which it was not fit for Him to do; thus He was upbraided by his enemies as if He could not save Himself, and come down from the cross, when He could have come down, but would not, because it was not fit that He should. *Fifthly*, He would not do any thing that looked like distrust of his Father, or acting separately from Him, or any thing disagreeable to his present state. Being in all things made like unto his brethren, He would, like the other children of God, live in a dependence on the Divine Providence and promise, and trust God either to send Him a supply into the wilderness, or to lead Him to a city of habitation where there was a supply, as He used to do, (Ps. 107: 5-7.) and in the mean time support Him, though hungry, as He had done, these forty days past.

[2.] He returned a scripture answer to it; (v. 4.) *It is written*. This is the first word recorded as spoken by Christ after his instalment in his prophetic office. Though He had the Spirit without measure, a doctrine of his

own to preach, and a religion to found, yet it agreed with Moses and the prophets, whose writings He therefore lays down as a rule to Himself, and recommends to us, as a reply to Satan and his temptations. The Word of God is our sword, and faith in that Word is our shield; we should therefore be mighty in the Scriptures, and go forth, and go on, in our spiritual warfare in that might; know what it is written, for it is for our learning, for our use. The text of Scripture He made use of, is quoted from Deut. 8: 3. 'Man shall not live by bread alone. I need not turn the stone into bread, for God can send manna for our nourishment, as He did for Israel; man can live by every word of God, by whatever God will appoint, that he shall live by.' How had Christ lived, lived comfortably, these last forty days? Not by bread, but by the Word of God, by meditation on that Word, and communion with it, and with God in and by it: and in like manner He could live yet, though now He began to be a *hungred*. God has many ways of providing for his people, without the ordinary means of subsistence; and therefore He is not at any time to be distrusted, but at all times to be depended on, in the way of duty. If meat be wanting, God can take away the appetite, or give such degrees of patience as will enable a man even to laugh at destruction and famine, (Job 6: 22.) or make pulse and reater more nourishing than all the portion of the king's meat, (Dan. 1: 12, 13.) and enable his people to rejoice in the Lord, when the fig-tree doth not blossom, Hab. 1: 12, 13. She was an active believer, who said that she had made many a meal's meat of the promises, when she wanted bread.

2. He tempted Him to accept from him the kingdom, which, as the Son of God, He expected to receive from his Father, and to do Him homage for, v. 5-8. This evangelist put this temptation second, which Matthew had put last, and which, it should seem, was really the last: but Luke was full of it, as the blackest and most violent, and therefore hastened to it. In the devil's tempting of our first parents, he represented to them the forbidden fruit, first, as good for food, and then, as pleasant to the eyes; and they were overpowered by both these charms. Satan here first tempted Christ to turn the stones into bread, which would be good for food, and then showed Him the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, which was pleasant to the eyes; but in both these, He overpowered Satan, and perhaps, with an eye to that, Luke changes the order. Now observe,

(1.) How Satan managed this temptation, to prevail with Christ to become a tributary to him, and to receive his kingdom by delegation from him.

[1.] He gave him a prospect of all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, an airy representation of them, such as he thought most likely to strike the fancy, and seem a real prospect; to succeed the better, he took Him up for this purpose into a high mountain; and because we next, after the temptation, find Christ on the other side Jordan, some think it probable that it was to the top of Pisgah, whence Moses had a sight of Canaan; that it was but a phantasm that the devil here presented our Savior, with, as the prince of the power of the air, is confirmed by that circumstance which Luke here takes notice of, that it was done in a moment of time; whereas, if a man take a prospect of but one country, he must do it successively, must turn himself round, and take a view first of one part, and then of another. Thus the devil thought to impose on our Savior with a fallacy,

(3.) *If Thou be the Son of God*, 'If Thou art the Son of God, in such an extraordinary manner as Thou hast been declared to be, and art indeed the promised Messiah, who is expected under that character.' That the Jews supposed the Messiah would be in a very extraordinary manner, the Son of God, appears from comparing Matt. 14: 33. 16: 16. 26: 63. John 1: 34, 49. 11: 27. 20: 31. and Acts 8: 37.

DONDRIDGE.

(5.) *Taking Him up, &c.* 'Taking Him along with him, is the exact English of the original Greek. But whether he did, or did not, transport Him through the air, I think be determined from this passage

(9.) 'One of the battlements of the temple. Pinnacle leads the English reader to imagine that He stood on the point of a spire. The truth is, the roof of the temple was flat, and had a kind of balustrade round it; (Deut. 22: 8.) and somewhere on the edge of this battlement, we may suppose that Satan placed Christ, in attacking Him with this temptation.

The south-east corner of the roof of Solomon's Porch (as is supposed) raised from the valley beneath, four hundred cubits high.

[Pinnacle.] See notes, Matt. 4: 5.

HOWARD.

10 For ^a it is written, ^b He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee;

11 And in ^c their hands they shall bear thee up; ^d est at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.

12 And Jesus answering, said unto him, It is said, ^e Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

13 And ^f when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season.

14 ¶ And Jesus ^g re-

^a 2.8. 2 Cor. 11:14.

^b Ps. 91:11, 12. Heb. 1:14.

^c Deut. 32:16. Ps. 95:9. 106:14. Mal. 3:16. Matt. 4:7. 1 Cor. 10:9. Heb. 3:8, 9.

^d Matt. 4:11. John 14:30. Heb. 4:15. Jam. 4:7.

^e Matt. 4:12. Mark 1:14. John 4:43. Acts 10:37, 38.

action; ^g 7. First, He would have Him worship himself. Perhaps he does not mean so as never to worship God, but let Him worship him in conjunction with God; for the devil knows, if he can but once come in a partner, he shall soon be sole proprietor. Secondly, He would contract with Him, that, when, according to the promise made to Him, He had got possession of the kingdoms of this world, He should make no alteration of religions in them, but permit and suffer the nations, as they had done hitherto, to sacrifice to devils. (1 Cor. 10: 20.) that He should still keep up demon-worship in the world, and then let Him take all the power and glory of the kingdoms, if He pleased. Let who will take the wealth and grandeur of this earth, Satan has all he would have, if he can but have men's hearts and affections, and adulations, for then he effectually devours them.

(2.) How our Lord Jesus triumphed over this temptation. He gave it a peccatory repulse, rejected it with abhorrence; (^g 8.) 'Get thee behind Me, Satan; I cannot bear the mention of it. What! worship the enemy of God, whom I came to serve? and of man whom I came to save? No, I will never do.' Such a temptation as this, was not to be reasoned with, but in a word immediately refused. It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God; and not only so, but Him only, Him, and no other. And therefore Christ will not worship Satan, nor, when He has the kingdoms of the world delivered to Him by his Father, as He expects shortly to have, will He suffer any remains of the worship of the devil to continue in them. No, it shall be perfectly rooted out and abolished, wherever his Gospel comes. He will make no composition with him. Polytheism and idolatry must sink, as Christ's kingdom rises. Men must be turned from the power of Satan unto God, from the worship of devils to the worship of the only living and true God; this is the great, divine law that Christ will re-establish among men, and by his holy religion reduce men to the obedience of, That God only is to be served and worshipped; and therefore whoever sets up any creature as the object of religious worship, though it were a saint, or an angel, or the virgin Mary herself, they directly thwart Christ's design, and relapse into heathenism.

3. He tempted Him to be his own murderer, in a presumptuous confidence of his Father's protection, such as He had no warrant for. Observe,

(1.) What he designed in this temptation, ^g 9. [1.] He would have Him seek for new proof of his being the Son of God, (as if the voice from heaven, and the descent of the Spirit on Him, were not sufficient,) which would have been a dishonor to God, (as if He had not chosen the most proper way of giving him the assurance of it,) and would have argued a distrust of the Spirit's dwelling in Him, which to Himself was the great and most convincing proof of his being the Son of God, Heb. 1: 8, 9. [2.] He would have Him seek a new method of proclaiming and publishing this to the world. As if it had been done in an obscure corner, only among a company of ordinary people who attended John's baptism, he would have Him now declare it from the pinnacle of the temple, among all the great people who attended the temple-service, and then, for proof of it, throw Himself down thence, when He would presently be received by every body as a Messenger sent from heaven. Thus Satan would have Him seek honors of his devising, in contempt of those which God had put on Him. [3.] It is probable, that he had some hopes, that, though he could not throw Him down,

and by making Him believe that he could show Him all the kingdoms of the world, would draw Him into an opinion that he could give Him all those kingdoms.

[2.] He boldly alleged, that these kingdoms were all delivered to him, that he had power to dispose of them, and all their glory, and to give it to whomsoever he would, ^g 6. Some think that herein he pretended to be one of the angels of light, that was set over the kingdoms, who had out-bought, or out-fought, all the rest, and so was intrusted with the disposal of them all, and in God's name, would give them Him, if He would fall down and worship him. But a good angel would not have admitted this: (Rev. 14: 10. 22: 9.) and I rather take it, that he claimed this power as Satan, and as delivered to him, not by the Lord, but by the kings and people of these kingdoms, who gave their power and honor to the devil, Eph. 2: 2. Hence he is called the god of this world, and the prince of this world. It was promised to the Son of God, that He should have the heathen for his inheritance, Ps. 2: 8. 'Why,' saith the devil, 'the heathen are mine, my subjects and votaries: however, they shall be thine, I will give them Thee, on condition that Thou worship me for them, and say they are the rewards which I have given Thee, as others have done before Thee; (Hos. 2: 12.) and consent to have and hold them by, from, and under me.'

[3.] He demanded of Him homage and adoration; ^g 7. First, He would have Him worship himself. Perhaps he does not mean so as never to worship God, but let Him worship him in conjunction with God; for the devil knows, if he can but once come in a partner, he shall soon be sole proprietor. Secondly, He would contract with Him, that, when, according to the promise made to Him, He had got possession of the kingdoms of this world, He should make no alteration of religions in them, but permit and suffer the nations, as they had done hitherto, to sacrifice to devils. (1 Cor. 10: 20.) that He should still keep up demon-worship in the world, and then let Him take all the power and glory of the kingdoms, if He pleased. Let who will take the wealth and grandeur of this earth, Satan has all he would have, if he can but have men's hearts and affections, and adulations, for then he effectually devours them.

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to do Him the least mischief, yet, if he won, he'd throw Himself down, the fall might be his death, and then he should have got Him finely out of the way.

(2.) How he backed and enforced this temptation, (^g 10.) It is written. Christ had quoted Scripture against him; and he thought he would show that he could quote Scripture as well as He. It has been usual with heretics and seducers, to pervert Scripture, and to press the sacred writings into the service of the worst of wickedness. He shall give his angels charge over thee, if Thou be his Son, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up. And now that He was upon the pinnacle of the temple, He might especially expect this ministration of angels; for if He were the Son of God, the temple was the proper place for Him to be in, (^g 2: 46.) and if any place under the sun had a guard of angels constantly, it must needs be that, Ps. 68: 17. It is true, God has promised the protection of angels, to encourage us to trust Him, not to tempt Him; as far as the promise of God's presence with us, so far the promise of the angels' ministration goes, but no further; 'They shall keep Thee when Thou goest on the ground, where thy way lies, but not if Thou wilt presume to fly in the air.'

(3.) How he was baffled and defeated in the temptation, ^g 12. Christ quoted Deut. 6: 16. where it is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God, by desiring a sign for the proof of divine revelation, when He has already given that which is sufficient; for so Israel did, when they tempted God in the wilderness, saying, He gave us water out of the rock; but can he give flesh also? This Christ would be guilty of, if He should say, 'He did indeed prove Me to be the Son of God, by sending the Spirit upon Me, which is the greater; but can He also give his angels a charge concerning Me, which is the less?'

III. What was the result and issue of this combat, ^g 13. Our victorious Redeemer kept his ground, and came off a Conqueror, not for Himself only, but for us also.

1. The devil emptied his quiver; He ended all the temptation. Christ gave him opportunity to say and do all he could against Him; He let him try all his force, and yet defeated him. Did Christ suffer, being tempted, till all the temptation was ended? And must not we expect also to pass all our trials, to go through the hour of temptation assigned us?

2. He then quitted the field; he departed from Him; he saw it was to no purpose to attack Him; he had nothing in Him for his fiery darts to fasten upon; He had no blind side, no weak or unguarded part, and therefore Satan gave up the cause. Note, If we resist the devil, he will flee from us.

3. Yet he continued his malice against Him, and departed with a resolution to attack Him again; he departed but for a season, till a season, or till the season when he was again to be let loose upon Him, not as a tempter, to draw Him to sin, and so to strike at his head, which was what He now aimed at, and was wholly defeated in; but as a persecutor, to bring Him to suffer by Judas, and the other wicked instruments by whom he was employed, and so to bruise his heel, Gen. 3: 15. He deserted now till that season came, which Christ calls the power of darkness, (^g 22: 53.) and when the prince of this world would again come, John 14: 30.

V. 14—30. After Christ had vanquished the evil spirit, He made it appear how much He was under the influence of the good Spirit; and having defended Himself against the devil's assaults, He now begins to act offensively, and to make those attacks upon him by his preaching

(10.) Charge over Thee, &c.) 'Many (after Jerome) have observed that Satan made his advantage of quoting Scripture merely by scraps, leaving out those words, in all thy ways. The cause of truth, and sometimes of common sense, hath suffered a great deal by those who have followed his example.'

(12.) Tempt 1. To demand further evidence of what is already made sufficiently plain. That this is the purport of the phrase, tempting God, is easy to be seen from comparing Ex 17: 2, 7. Num. 14: 22. Ps. 78 15. and 106: 14.

(^g 13 from ^g 2.) 'Who can read this account without amazement, when he compares the insolence and malice of the prince of darkness, with the condescension and grace of the Son of God? But how highly are we obliged and indebted to our great Deliverer! Who can sufficiently adore thy condescension, O blessed Jesus! who wouldst permit Thyself to be thus assaulted and led from place to place by an infernal spirit, whom Thou couldst in a moment have reined back to hell, to be bound in chains of darkness, and overwhelmed with flaming ruin!'

Donniboz.

turned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about.

15 And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all.

[Practical Observations.]

16 ¶ And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read.

¶ Matt. 4:23—25, Mark 1:28.
 16, 13:10, Matt. 4:23, 9:35, 13:13, Mark 1:39.
 15, 55:5, Matt. 9:38, Mark 1:27, 45:1, 26:27, 2:39, 51, Matt. 2:23, 13:54, Mark 6:1.
 15, 2:42, Acts 17:2.
 16, Acts 13:14—16.

(1.) The opportunity He had for it; *He came to Nazareth* when He had gained a reputation in other places, in hopes that thereby something at least of the contempt and prejudice with which his countrymen would look on Him, might be worn off. There He took occasion to preach, [1.] In the *synagogue*, the proper place, where it had been his custom to attend when He was a private person, v. 16. We ought to attend on the public worship of God, as we have opportunity. But now that He was entered on his public ministry, there He preached. [2.] On the *Sabbath-day*, the proper time, which the pious Jews spent, not in a mere ceremonial rest from worldly labor, but in the duties of God's worship, as of old they frequented the schools of the prophets, on the *new moons*, and the *Sabbaths*. Note, It is good to keep sabbaths in solemn assemblies.

(2.) The call He had to it. [1.] *He stood up to read*. They had in their synagogues seven readers every Sabbath, the first a priest, the second a Levite, and the other five Israelites of that synagogue. We often find Christ *preaching*

and miracles, which he could not resist or repel. Observe,

I. What is here said, in general, of his preaching, and the entertainment it met with in *Galilee*, a remote part of the country, distant from Jerusalem: it was a part of Christ's humiliation, that He began his ministry there. But, 1. Thither He came in the power of the Spirit. He was not to wait for a call from men, for He had light and life in Himself. 2. There He taught in their synagogues, their places of public worship, where they met, not, as in the temple, for ceremonial services, but for the moral acts of devotion, to read, expound, and apply the Word, to pray and praise, and for church-discipline; these came to be more frequented since the captivity, when the ceremonial worship was near expiring. 3. This He did so as that He gained a great reputation; *A fame of Him went through all that region*, (v. 14,) and it was a good fame; for (v. 15.) *He was glorified of all*. Every body admired Him. At first, He met with no contempt or contradiction.

II. Of his preaching at Nazareth, where He was brought up, and the entertainment it met with there. And here we are told how He preached there, and how He was persecuted.

1. How He preached there. In that observe,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—15. Fervent devotion, or sharp conflicts, may render us for a time regardless of the concerns of our animal life, and this may conduce to our earnestness and success; but the cravings of nature will again return, and then the devil will tempt us to impatience, to irregular methods of obtaining a supply, or to excessive indulgence: we ought therefore to be especially on our guard, after remarkable seasons of abstraction and communion with God; and it is our wisdom and duty to study all the peculiarities of our situation, that we may be prepared for assault.—To whatever sin we are tempted, the Scripture supplies us with spiritual armor, with which to baffle the tempter. All Satan's promises and pretensions are illusion and deceit; and as far as he is permitted to have any influence, in disposing of the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, he uses them merely as baits, by which to ensnare men to their destruction. We should therefore reject

every opportunity of sinful gain or advancement, with decision and abhorrence; (*P. O. Matt. 16:21—28.*) and seek our riches, honors and happiness, in the worship and service of God only. Thus, as his beloved children, angels will have it in charge to 'keep us in all our ways,' and we shall be preserved from presumptuously or ostentatiously 'tempting the Lord our God.'—As seasons of peculiar consolation are commonly transient, so are those of distressing temptation, especially when the enemy is vigorously resisted. And though we shall never be out of his reach, till we are removed from this evil world: yet when, in the strength and after the example of our Redeemer, we have obtained a decisive victory, we may hope for a respite, and an opportunity of applying ourselves, with composure and diligence, to our proper work. (*P. O. Matt. 4:1—11.*)

SCOTT.

Verses 14, 15.

(Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 4:12—25.) 'The power of the Spirit' may here refer, either to the impulse on our Lord's own mind; or to the miracles which He wrought in confirmation of his doctrine; or to the energy which attended his word to the hearts and consciences of the hearers.

SCOTT.

(14.) *Returned in the power of the Spirit.* 'He who, through the grace of God, resists and overcomes temptation, is always bettered by it. This is one of the wonders of God's grace, that those very things which are designed for our utter ruin, He makes the instruments of our greatest good.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

(15.) *Being glorified of all.* 'That is, with universal applause.'

DODDRIEGE.

Verses 16—19.

When our Lord had made a circuit through the other parts of Galilee, He came at length to Nazareth, where He had spent his former life; 'that He by his example might teach us, saith Theophylact, first to teach and do good to those of our own family and abode.' *Whitby*. On the Sabbath-day, according to his constant custom in every place, He resorted to the synagogue, that He might join in the public worship there performed, and embrace the opportunity of instructing the people: (*Marg. Ref. h, i.*) and, either because He had been used to join in their stated worship, and perhaps sometimes to officiate as a reader; or because of the reputation, which He had acquired by his miracles and doctrine in other places; they gave Him a roll containing the prophecy of Isaiah, that He might read the Scriptures to them, which was always a part of their stated service. (*Marg. Ref. k—m.*) 'The day of vengeance of our God,' which the prophet connected with 'the acceptable year of the Lord,' seems not to have been insisted on by Jesus; that the Nazarenes might have the less pretence for rejecting Him, when his whole discourse breathed nothing but mercy and com-

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passion. (*Marg. Ref. n—u.*) The passage, as here quoted, does not exactly accord either to the Hebrew or to the Septuagint; yet it loses not very materially from either. (18) *To preach the Gospel.* The word *gospel* is used in rather different meanings, both in the subsequent part of the New Testament, and in modern divinity: sometimes signifying the publication of Christianity, or the coming and kingdom of the Messiah, in general; at other times, the glad tidings of salvation, as distinguished from other parts of revealed truth.

SCOTT.

(15.) *As his custom was.* 'Our Lord regularly attended the public worship of God in the synagogues; for there the Scriptures were read—other parts of the worship were very corrupt, but it was the best at that time to be found in the land. To worship God publicly is the duty of every man; and no man can be guiltless who neglects it. If a person cannot get such public worship as he likes, let him frequent such as he can get. Better to attend the most indifferent, than to stay at home, especially on the Lord's day. The place and the time are set apart for the worship of the true God: if others do not conduct themselves well in it, that is not your fault, and need not be any hindrance to you. You come to worship God—don't forget your errand—and God will supply the lack in the service by the teachings of his Spirit.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Went into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day. 'We do not find mention of public worship in the synagogues, except on the Sabbath; yet there can be no doubt, that these Jews, who were unable to go to Jerusalem, attended worship on their festival days, as well as on the Sabbath, in their own synagogues.'

JAHN.

He stood up to read. 'One cannot but be amazed at the ignorance of Suidas, in arguing from hence that Christ was a priest. It is well known that any man of gravity and reputation might at the request of the ruler, officiate on such occasions; compare Acts 13:15.'

DODDRIEGE.

17 And there was delivered unto him 'the book of the prophet Esaias: and when he had opened the book, he found "the place where it was written,

18 The "Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me "to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me "to heal the broken-hearted, "to preach deliverance to the captives, "and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are 'bruised,

19 To "preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

20 And he closed the book, "and he gave it again to the minister,

1 20:42. Acts 7:42. 13:15, 27.

m Is. 61:1-3.

n Ps. 45:7. Is. 11:2-5. 42:1-4. 50:

4. 59:21.

o Ps. 22:6. marg. Dan. 9:24. John

1:41. marg. Acts 4:27. 10:38.

p 6:20. 7:22. Is. 59:19. Zeph. 3:12.

q Zech. 11:11. Matt. 5:3. 11:3. Jam.

2:5.

r 2 Chr. 34:27. Ps. 34:18. 51:17. 147:

3. Is. 57:15. 65:1. Ex. 9:4.

s Ps. 102:20. 107:10-16. 145:7. Is.

42:7. 45:13. 49:9, 24, 25. 54:2, 3.

z Zech. 9:11, 12. Col. 1:13.

a Ps. 145:8. Is. 59:18. 32:3. 35:5.

b 42:16-18. 60:1, 2. Mal. 4:2. Matt.

4:16. 9:37-39. 11:5. John 9:38.

c 11:12, 46. Acts 26:18. Eph. 5:8.

d 14. 1 Thes. 5:5, 6. 1 Pet. 2:9. 1

John 2:8-10.

e Gen. 3:15. Is. 42:3. Matt. 12:20.

f 19:42. Lev. 25:8-13, 50-4. Num.

36:4. Is. 61:2. 63:4. 2 Cor. 6:1.

g 17. Matt. 20:26-28.

without measure, John 3: 34. He now came in the power of the Spirit, v. 14.

Secondly, How He was commissioned; *Because He has anointed Me, and sent Me.* His extraordinary qualification amounted to a commission; his being anointed, signifies both his being fitted for the undertaking, and called to it. Those whom God appoints to any service, He anoints for it.

Thirdly, What his work was; He was qualified and commissioned,

1. To be a great Prophet. He was anointed to preach; that is three times mentioned here, for that was the work He was now entering upon. Observe, (1.) To whom He was to preach; to the poor; to the poor in the world, whom the Jewish doctors disdained; to the poor in spirit, to the meek and humble, and to those that are truly sorrowful for sin: to them the Gospel and the grace of it will be welcome, and they shall have it, Matt. 11: 5. (2.) What He was to preach; in general, He must preach the Gospel. He is sent to evangelize them; not only to preach to them, but to make that preaching effectual; to bring it, not only to their ears, but to their hearts, and deliver them into the mould of it.

Three things He is to preach:

[1.] *Deliverance to the captives.* The Gospel is a proclamation of liberty, like that to Israel in Egypt and in Babylon. By the merit of Christ, sinners may be loosed from the bonds of guilt, and, by His Spirit and grace, from the bondage of corruption. It is a deliverance from the worst of thralldoms, which all those shall have the benefit of, that are willing to make Christ their Head, and are willing to be ruled by Him.

[2.] *Recovering of sight to the blind.* He came, not only by the word of his Gospel to bring light to them that sat in the dark, but by the power of his grace to give sight to them that were blind—to every unregenerate soul; to tell us that He has eye-salve for us, which we may have for the asking; that, if our prayer be, Lord, that our eyes may be opened, his answer shall be, *Receive your sight.*

[3.] *The acceptable year of the Lord, v. 19.*

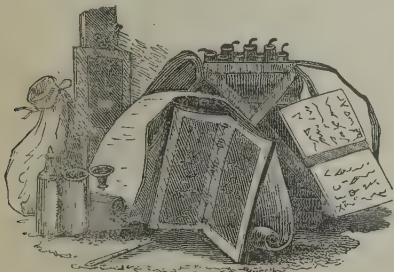
He came, to let the world know, that the God whom they had offended was willing to be reconciled to them, and to accept of them on new terms; that there is now a time of good-will toward men. It alludes to the year of release, or that of jubilee, which was an acceptable year to servants, who were then set at liberty; to debtors, against whom all actions then dropped; and to those who had mortgaged their lands, for then they returned to them again. Christ came, to sound the jubilee-trumpet; and blessed are they that heard the joyful sound, Ps. 89: 15. It was an acceptable time, for it was a day of salvation.

2. Christ came, to be a great Physician; for He was sent to heal the broken-hearted, to comfort and cure afflicted consciences, to give peace to those that were troubled and humbled for sins, and under a dread of God's wrath against them for them, and to bring them to rest, who were weary, and heavy-laden, under the burden of guilt and corruption.

3. To be a great Redeemer. He not only proclaims liberty to the captives, as Cyrus did to the Jews in Babylon; (*Whoever will, may go up*;) but He sets at liberty them that are bruised; He doth by his Spirit incline and enable them to make use of the liberty granted, as then none did but those whose spirit God stirred up, Ezra 1: 5. He came, in God's name, to discharge poor sinners that were debtors and prisoners to divine justice. The prophets could but proclaim liberty; but Christ, as One having authority, as One that had power on earth to forgive sins, came to set at liberty; and therefore this clause is added here. Dr. Lightfoot thinks that, according to a liberty the Jews allowed their readers, to compare Scripture with Scripture, in their reading, for the explication of the text, Christ added it from Isa. 58: 6. where it is made the duty of the acceptable year, to let the oppressed go free, where the phrase the LXX use, is the same with this here.

(4.) Here is Christ's application of this text to Himself; v. 21. When He had read it, He rolled up the book, and gave it again to the minister, or clerk, that attended, and sat down, according to the custom of the Jewish teachers,

(17.) *Opened.* 'Rather, unrolled. The sacred Writings used to this day, in all the Jewish synagogues, are written on skins of basil, parchment or vellum, pasted end to end, and rolled on two rollers,



rolling at each end; so that, in reading from right to left, they roll on the left, while they roll on with the right. Probably the place in the prophet Isaiah here referred to, was the lesson for that day.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'The book was selected by the ruler of the synagogue; but the parts to be read do not appear to have been previously pointed out.' JAHN.

(18.) *The Spirit of the Lord.* 'The proclaiming of liberty to the captives, and the acceptable year (or year of acceptance) of the Lord, is a manifest allusion to the proclaiming of the year of jubilee by sound of trumpet, see Lev. 25: 9. &c. Our Savior, by applying this text to Himself, a text so manifestly relating to the institution above mentioned, plainly declares the typical design of that institution.'

LOWRY.

He hath anointed Me.] 'All the functions of this new prophet are exercised on the hearts of men; and the grace by which He works in the heart is a grace of healing, deliverance, and illumination; which, by an admirable virtue, causes them to pass from sickness to health, from slavery to liberty, from darkness to light, and from the lowest degree of misery to supreme, eternal happiness. To those who feel their spiritual poverty; whose hearts are broken through a sense of their sins; who see themselves tied and bound with the chains of many evil habits; who sit in the darkness of guilt and misery, without a friendly hand to lead them in the way in which they should go—to these the Gospel of the grace of Christ is a pleasing sound, because a present and full salvation is proclaimed by it; and the present is shown to be the acceptable year of the Lord; the year, the time, in which

He saves to the uttermost all who come unto Him in the name of His Son Jesus. Reader! what dost thou feel? *Sin—wretchedness—misery* of every description? Then come to Jesus—*He will save thee*—He came into the world for this very purpose. Cast thy soul upon Him, and thou shalt not perish, but have everlasting life.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

To the poor.] 'That, in the exposition of these prophecies, the figurative sense of the expression is not to exclude the literal, is evident from this consideration, that the discoveries of the Christian revelation are in fact emphatically glad tidings to the poor, in the literal acceptance of the word; to those who are destitute of worldly riches, who from their present condition might be likely to think themselves forsaken of their Maker.'

Bp. HORSLEY.

Recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised.] 'The former clause seems an allusion to the wretched state of those prisoners, who, according to the inhuman custom still retained in the eastern countries, had their eyes put out; and, with regard to such as these, this great Deliverer is represented as restoring them, a work far beyond all human power. I take them to be the same with those who are spoken of in the next clause, as bruised with the weight of their fetters; for it is plain that even the blind captives were sometimes loaded with them; as Samson, (Judg. 16: 21.) and Zedekiah, 2 Kings 25: 7.'

DOODRIDGE.

Bruised.] 'Meaning the Jews, bruised in their consciences by the galling fetters of a religion of external ordinances, whom our Lord released by the promulgation of his perfect law of liberty.'

Bp. HORSLEY.

Verses 20-22.

(Marg. Ref. x, y) 'He stood up to read, (20.) and closing the book, 'He sat down to teach. Here Christ conforms to the ceremonies of the Jewish doctors, who, in honor of the law and prophets, stood up when they read them, and sat down to teach.' Whitby.—He began by explicitly declaring, that the words, read to them, had been that 'day fulfilled in their ears;' which implied that He was the promised Messiah of whom the prophet spake; and doubtless He explained the words, as referring to the spiritual redemption which He came to effect in behalf of enslaved sinners, and earnestly exhorted and persuaded his hearers to seek these important blessings. Yet, instead of inferring that He had his wisdom and utterance immediately from heaven, they rejected his claim to be the Messiah, and seem even to have doubted of the reality of the miracles, which it was reported that He wrought. (Matt. 11: 2-6. 13: 54-58. Mark 6: 1-6.) 'It does not appear to me likely, that persons of every kind were rashly admitted to speak publicly in the synagogues; but that this was the ordinary office of the scribes and lawyers; the Levites for this purpose having been dispersed into many places. But, moreover, that certain persons, as invited by the rulers of the synagogues, sometimes officiated, besides this settled order, appears from Acts 13: 15. The majesty and the miracle

'and sat down.' And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

21 And he began to say unto them, 'This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.

22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words, which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, 'Is not this Joseph's son?

23 And he said unto them, Ye will surely say unto me this proverb, 'Physician, heal thyself: 'whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, 'do also here in 'thy country.

24 And he said, Verily I say unto you, 'No prophet is accepted in his own country.

v. 58. Matt. 5:12, 13:21, John 8:2, Acts 13:14-16, 16:13.
v. 59. Acts 13:12.
v. 60. Matt. 13:14, John 4:25, 26, 53:39, Acts 2:16-18, 29-33, 3:18, 2:47, 21:15, Ps. 45:24, Prov. 10:26, 16:21, Ec. 12:10, 13:14, Cant. 5:16, Is. 50:4, Matt. 13:51, Mark 6:2, John 7:46, Acts 6:10, 7:28.
v. 61. Acts 13:55, Mark 6:3, John 6:42.
v. 62. Rom. 2:21, 9:2.
v. 63. Matt. 13:23, 11:23, John 4:48, 1 John 2:24, 4:28, 7:3, 4, Rom. 11:24, 3, 2 Cor. 5:16.
v. 64. Matt. 13:24, Mark 6:4.
v. 65. Matt. 13:57, Mark 6:4, 5, John 4:41, Acts 22:3, 18-22.

melting way. Note, Christ's words are words of grace, (Ps. 45: 2.) and words to be wondered at; Christ's name was Wonderful, and in nothing was He more so, than in the words of his grace, and the power that went along with them. We may well wonder that He should speak such words of grace to such graceless wretches as we are. Secondly, What it was that increased their wonder; Is not this Joseph's Son? Hence some took occasion, perhaps, so much the more to admire his gracious words, concluding He must needs be taught of God, for they knew no one else had taught Him; while others, perhaps, with this consideration corrected their wonder at his gracious words, and concluded there could be nothing really admirable in them, whatever appeared, because He was the Son of Joseph. Can any thing great, or worthy our regard, come from one so mean?

'of Christ every where procured Him a hearing.' Beza. (22.) The gracious words.] 'The words of the grace, &c.' which, it is probable, may refer to the agreeable manner of Christ's discourse, as well as to the matter of it. Doddridge. That our Lord's elocution was peculiarly becoming, majestic, solemn, impressive, and persuasive, can scarcely be doubted. In every sense, 'He spake as never man spake'; and this would excite the additional astonishment of those, who knew the reasonableness of his birth and education. It may, however, be questioned, whether the original word ever has this meaning in the New Testament. Scott.

(20.) And sat down.] 'As did the doctors; thus rightly claiming the office of doctor, for others, of the common people, even when they took any part in the sacred offices, did it standing.' Grotius.

'The custom of preaching from a text of Scripture, which now prevails throughout all the Christian churches, seems to have derived its origin from the authority of this example.' Macknight.

(22.) Bare Him witness.] 'This is a phrase which signifies "to bear testimony to any one's merits, to praise him." Bloomfield.

At the gracious words.] 'At the words of grace, or the doctrines of grace, which He then preached. It is very strange, that none of the evangelists give any account of this sermon! There was certainly more of it than is related in the 21st verse. To-day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears, seems to have been no more than the first sentence He spoke on the occasion. But had it been necessary for our salvation, it would have been recorded. It was a demonstration to those Jews that Jesus, who preached to us, was the Person of whom the prophets there spoke; it was not designed for general edification. The ear is never satisfied with hearing: we wish for another and another revelation, while sadly unacquainted with the nature and design of that which God's mercy has already given us.' Dr. A. Clarke.

(6.) Christ's anticipation of an objection, which He knew to be in the mind of many of his hearers. Observe,

[1.] What the objection was, v. 23. 'Because ye know that I am the Son of Joseph, your neighbor, you will expect that I should work miracles among you, as I have done in other places; as one would expect that a physician, if he be able, should heal, not only himself, but those of his own family and fraternity.' Most of Christ's miracles were cures; 'Now, why should not the sick in this town own they are healed, as well as those in other cities?' 'Why should not the disease of unbelief, if it be indeed a disease, be cured in those of this town city, as well as in those of others? Whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, that has been so much talked of, do here also in this town country.' They were pleased with Christ's gracious words, only because they hoped they were but the introduction to some wondrous works of his; they wanted to have their lame, and blind, and sick, and lepers, healed, that the charge of their town might be eased; and that was the chief thing they looked at. They thought their own town as worthy to be the stage of miracles, as any other; and why should not He rather draw company to that, than to any other? And why should not his neighbors and acquaintance have the benefit of his preaching and miracles, rather than any other?

[2.] How He answers this objection against the course He took.

First, By a plain and positive reason; v. 24. No prophet is accepted in his own country; experience seals this. When prophets have been sent with messages and miracles of mercy, few of their own countrymen, that have known their extraction and education, have been fit to receive them. So Dr. Hammond. Familiarity breeds contempt; we are apt to think meanly of those, whose conversation we have been accustomed to; and they will scarcely be duly honored as prophets, who were well known when private men. That is most esteemed, which is far-fetched and dear-bought, though what is home-bred, is really more excellent. This arises likewise from the envy which neighbors commonly have towards one another. For this reason, Christ declined working miracles, or doing any thing extraordinary, at Nazareth, because of the rooted prejudices they had against Him there.

Secondly, By pertinent examples of two of the most famous prophets of the Old Testament, who chose to dispense their favors among foreigners, rather than among their own countrymen, and that, no doubt, by divine direction.

(1.) Elijah maintained a widow of Sarepta, a city of Sidon, one that was a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, when there was a famine in the land, v. 25, 26. The story we

Verses 23-32.

They were disposed to dictate to our Lord, or to cavil at his ministry, because He did not comply with their unreasonable demands, or pay court to them; nay, they spake as if they had a just claim to his miraculous cures, in preference to others. (Marg. Ref. d-g.) He therefore now first applied to them that proverb, which has already been considered; (Marg. Ref. h.-Matt. 13: 54-58, John 4: 43-45.) and then further observed, that He had a right to dispense his favors as He saw good; in which He did the same as the ancient prophets had done; (1 Kings 17. 2 Kings 5.) so that if He had not only given Capernaum the preference to Nazareth, but had even neglected the Jews, and conferred his favors on the Gentiles, they could not have objected to his conduct, without condemning the prophets. This declaration exceedingly enraged them, so if it had been an inexcusable injustice! (Marg. Ref. i-o.) 'When they heard Christ declaring them unworthy of the benefit of those miracles which He had done at Capernaum, and plainly intimating, that this Gospel should chiefly be received among the Gentiles, they, in a furious zeal, seek to destroy Him.' Whitby. The inhabitants, however, of the cities in which our Lord's miracles were principally wrought, were expressly declared by Him to be unworthy of them; (10: 13-15, Note, Matt. 11: 20-24.) yet their prejudices were not so strong as those of the Nazarenes, nor were they disposed to persecute Him; and there were more believers among them than at Nazareth. But, in fact, the indignation shown on this occasion, was excited by the doctrine of the divine sovereignty. 'May I not do what I will with my own?' 'May I not confer unmerited favors on whom I will, without doing injustice to those who do not share them?' The doctrine, which is supported against all objections by these questions, offended the men of Nazareth; as it ever did, and ever will, offend those, who 'have not submitted to the righteousness of God.' (Matt. 20: 1-16, v. 13-15. P. O. 1-16. Rom. 9: 15-21) Acce.

25 But I tell you of a truth, 'Many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land :

26 But unto none of them was Elias sent, 'save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.

27 And many lepers were in Israel in the time of 'Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, 'saving ' Naaman the Syrian.

28 And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, 'were filled with wrath,

29 And rose up, 'and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the 'brow of the hill, whereon their city was built, 'that they might cast him down headlong.

30 But he, 'passing through the midst of them, went his way,

31 And 'came down

10:21. Is. 55:8. Matt. 20:15. Mark 7:28-29. Rom. 9:15,30. Eph. 9:11.

1 Kings 17:1. 19:2. Elisha. Jam. 5:7.

1 Kings 17:9, &c. Zarephath. Ob. 30.

1 Kings 19:19-21. Elisha.

Mat. 14:5. John 7:12.

2 Kings 6: Job 21:22. 33:13. 36:23.

Dan. 4:35.

6:11. 11:53,54. 2 Chr. 16:10. 24:25.

27:32. Jer. 37:15,16. 38:5. Acts 5:33. 7:54. 22:21-23. 1 Thes. 2:15,16.

John 8:7,40,59. 15:24,25. Acts 7:57,58. 16:23,34. 21:28-32.

'Or, edge.

2 Chr. 25:12.

John 8:59. 10:39. 18:6,7. Acts 12:18.

Mat. 4:13. Mark 1:21.

to his own, and they received Him not. [1.] They rose up in a tumultuous manner against Him, interrupted Him in his discourse, and themselves in their devotions, for they could not stay until their synagogue-worship was over. [2.] They thrust Him out of the city, thrust from them the Savior of their salvation, as if He had been the offscouring of all things. How justly He have called for fire from heaven upon them! But this was the day of his patience. [3.] They led Him to the brow of the hill, with a purpose to throw Him down headlong, as one not fit to live. Though they knew

have, 1 Kings 17:9, &c. 18:1. As God would hereby show Himself a Father of the fatherless, and a Judge of the widows, so He would show that He was rich in mercy, to all, even to the Gentiles.

(2.) Elisha cleansed Naaman the Syrian of his leprosy, though he was a Syrian, and not only a foreigner, but an enemy to Israel; v. 27. Many lepers were in Israel in the days of Elisha, four particularly, that brought the news of the Syrians' raising the siege of Samaria with precipitation, and leaving the plunder of their tents to enrich Samaria, when Elisha was himself in the besieged city, and this was the accomplishment of his prophecy too; see 2 Kings 7:1, 3, &c. And yet we do not find that Elisha cleansed them, no, not for a reward of their service, and the good tidings they brought, but only this Syrian; for none besides had faith to apply himself to the prophet for a cure. Christ Himself often met with greater faith among Gentiles than in Israel. And here He mentions both these instances, to show that He did not dispense the favor of his miracles by private respect, but according to God's wise appointment. And the people of Israel might as justly have said to Elijah or Elisha, as the Nazarenes to Christ, Physician, heal thyself. Nay, Christ wrought his miracles, though not among his townsmen, yet among Israelites; whereas these great prophets wrought theirs among the Gentiles. The examples of the saints, though they will not make a bad action good, yet will help to free a good action from the blame of exceptive people.

2. How He was persecuted at Nazareth.

(1.) That which provoked them was, his taking notice of the favor which God by Elijah and Elisha showed to the Gentiles; (v. 28.) a great change since v. 22. when they wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth; thus uncertain are the opinions and affections of the multitude, and so very fickle. They were angry that He should compare Himself, whom they knew to be the Son of Joseph, with those great prophets, and compare them with the men of that corrupt age, when all had bowed the knee to Baal. But that which especially exasperated them was, that He intimated some kindness God had in reserve for the Gentiles, which the Jews could by no means hear the thoughts of, Acts 22:21. Their pious ancestors pleased themselves with the hopes of adding the Gentiles to the church; (witness many of David's psalms and Isaiah's prophecies;) but this degenerate race, when they had forfeited the covenant themselves, hated to think that any others should be taken in.

(2.) They were provoked to that degree, that they made an attempt on his life. This was a severe trial, now at his setting out, but a specimen of the usage He met with, when He came to his own, and they received Him not. [1.] They rose up in a tumultuous manner against Him, interrupted Him in his discourse, and themselves in their devotions, for they could not stay until their synagogue-worship was over. [2.] They thrust Him out of the city, thrust from them the Savior of their salvation, as if He had been the offscouring of all things. How justly He have called for fire from heaven upon them! But this was the day of his patience. [3.] They led Him to the brow of the hill, with a purpose to throw Him down headlong, as one not fit to live. Though they knew

how inoffensively He had for so many years lived among them, how shining his conversation had been, though they had heard such a fame of Him, and had but just now themselves admired his gracious words, though in justice He ought to have been allowed a fair hearing and liberty to explain Himself, yet they hurried Him away in a popular fury, or frenzy rather, to put Him to death in a most barbarous manner. Sometimes they were ready to stone Him for the good works He did; (John 10:32.) here, for not doing the good works they expected from Him. To such a height of wickedness was violence sprung up.

(3.) Yet He escaped; He passed through the midst of them, unhurt; either He blinded their eyes, as the Sodomites and Syrians were, or He bound their hands, or filled them with confusion, so that they could not do what they designed; for his work was but just begun, his hour not yet come; when it was come, He freely surrendered Himself. They drove Him from them, and He went his way. He would have gathered Nazareth, but they would not, and therefore their house is left to them desolate. This added to the reproach of his being Jesus of Nazareth, that not only it was a place whence no good thing was expected, but that it was such a wicked, rude place, and so unkind to Him. Yet there was a providence in it, that He should not be much respected by the men of Nazareth, for that would have looked like collusion between Him and his old acquaintance; but now, though they received Him not, there were those that did.

V. 31-44. When Christ was expelled Nazareth, He came to Capernaum, another city of Galilee; the account we have in these verses of his preaching and miracles there, we had before, Mark 1:21, &c. Observe,

I. His preaching, v. 31. In hearing the Word preached, as an ordinance of God, we worship God, and it is a proper work for sabbath days. Christ's preaching much affected the people; (v. 32.) there was weight in every word He said, and admirable discoveries were made to them by it. The doctrine itself was astonishing, and not only as it came from One that had not had a liberal education. His word was with power; there was a commanding force in it, and a working power went along with it to the consciences of men. The doctrine Paul preached, hereby proved itself to be of God, that it came in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.

II. His miracles. Of these we have here, 1. Two particularly specified, showing Christ to be,

(1.) A Controller and Conqueror of Satan. Observe, [1.] The devil is an unclean spirit, his nature directly contrary to that of the pure and holy God, and degenerated from what it was at first. [2.] He works in the children of men; in the souls of many, as then in men's bodies. [3.] Those who are very much under his power and working, may yet be found in the synagogue, among the worshippers of God. [4.] Even the devils know and believe, that Jesus Christ is the Holy One of God, is sent of God, and is a Holy One. [5.] They believe and

(25.) Three years and six months.] 'As to the difficulty of the six months, which both our Lord here, and James (5:17) mention, and which are not mentioned in the book of Kings, whence the account is taken, it may be easily understood thus: The rains fell in Judea, twice in the year, about April, and about October. At this latter period, when the rain was expected, the prophet prayed that it might not rain; the rain therefore of Marchesvan, or October, &c. was then restrained: this restraint continued for three full years, but six months had elapsed from Nisan, April, &c. when they had their last rain; add these six months to the three full years that the rain was restrained at the prayer of Elijah, and then we have a period of three years and six months, according to our Lord and James.'

Dr. A. CLARKE. (26, 27.) 'This verse is elliptical, and means, To none of them was Elias sent; he was not sent, except to Sarepta; for the widow at Sarepta was a Sidonian, and not a widow of Israel.' PEARCE. 'The 27th verse is to be understood in the same way. The meaning of these verses is, God dispenses his benefits when, where, and to whom He pleases. No person can complain of his conduct in these respects, because no person deserves any good from his hand. God never enriches any but those who deserve it; but He blesses incessantly those who deserve it not! The reason is evident: justice depends on certain ruins; but beneficence is free. Beneficence can bless both the good and the evil; justice can punish the latter only. Those who

do not make this distinction, must have a very confused notion of the conduct of Divine Providence among men.'

Dr. A. CLARKE. (29.) The brow of the hill.] 'After dinner, we made a small excursion, in order to see that which they call the mountain of the precipitation. This precipice is at least half a league distant from Nazareth southward. In going to it, you cross first over the vale in which Nazareth stands, and then going down two or three furlongs in a narrow cleft between the rocks, you there climb up a short, but difficult way on the right hand, at the top of which you find a great stone standing on the brink of a precipice, which is said to be the very place where our Lord was destined to be thrown down by his enraged neighbors, had He not made his escape out of their hands.'

MAUNDRELL. 'Precipitation was a punishment rarely used, though we meet with it in the history of the kings, and in subsequent times. 2 Kings 9:30, 33. 2 Chron. 25:12.'

HORN. (30.) 'Passed through the midst of them.] 'Whether the miracle lay in rendering Himself entirely invisible, or in putting on some other form, or in affecting their eyes or minds, in such a manner that they should not know Him, we cannot certainly determine; but it seems evident, that there was something miraculous in the case. Compare John 8:5, 9. Luke 24:16. and 2 Kings 6:8-20.'

JODDAIDGE.

to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, 'and taught them on the sabbath-days.

[Practical Observations.]

32 And 'they were astonished at his doctrine; for his word was with power.

33 ¶ And 'in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice,

34 Saying, *Let us alone: 'what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? 'art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; 'the Holy One of God.

35 And 'Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had 'thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.

36 And 'they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, 'What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out!

37 And 'the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about.

38 ¶ And 'he arose out of the synagogue, and entered into Simon's house: and Si-

tremble. This unclean spirit cried out with a loud voice, under a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and apprehensive that Christ was now come to destroy him. Unclean spirits are subject to continual frights. [6.] The devils have nothing to do with Jesus Christ, nor desire to have any thing to do with Him; for He took not on Him the nature of angels. [7.] Christ has the devil under check; He rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace; and this word He spake with power; He muzzled; Christ did not only enjoin him silence, but stopped his mouth, and forced him to be silent against his will. [9.] In the breaking of Satan's power, both the enemy that is conquered, shows his malice, and Christ, the Conqueror, shows his overruling grace. The devil showed what he would have done, when he threw the man in the midst, as if he would have dashed him to pieces. But Christ showed what a power He had over him, in that He not only forced him to leave him, but to leave him without so much as hurting him. Whom Satan cannot destroy, he will hurt all he can; but this is a comfort, he can harm them no further than Christ permits; nay, he shall not do them any real harm. He came out, and hurt him not; that is, the poor man was perfectly well in an instant, though the devil left him with so much rage,

mon's wife's mother was taken with a great fever; 'and they besought him for her.

39 And he stood over her, 'and rebuked the fever; and it left her. And immediately 'she arose, 'and ministered unto them.

40 ¶ Now 'when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; 'and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them.

41 And devils also came out of many, 'crying out, and saying, 'O Thou art Christ, the Son of God. And he, rebuking them, suf-

fered them not to speak; for they knew that he was Christ.

42 And 'when it was day, he departed and went into a desert place; 'and the people sought him, and came unto him, 'and stayed him, that he should not depart from them.

43 And he said unto them, 'I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for 'therefore am I sent.

44 And 'he preached in the synagogues of Galilee.

that all that were present thought he had torn him to pieces. [9.] Christ's power over devils was universally acknowledged and adored, v. 36. No one doubted of the truth of the miracle, it was evident beyond contradiction, nor was any thing suggested to diminish the glory of it, for they were all amazed, saying, What a word is this? They that pretended to cast out devils did it with abundance of charms and spells; (to pacify the devil, and lull him asleep, as it were;) but Christ commanded them with authority and power, which they could not gain-say or resist. Even the prince of the power of the air is his vassal, and trembles before Him. [10.] This, as much as any thing, gained Christ a reputation, and spread his fame. This instance of his power, which many now-a-days make light of, was then, by them that were eye-witnesses of it, (and those no fools neither, but men of penetration,) magnified, and was looked upon as greatly magnifying Him; (v. 37.) on the account of this, the fame of Him went out, more than ever, into every place of the country round about. Our Lord Jesus, when He set out at first in his public ministry, was greatly talked of, more than afterward, when people's admiration wore off with the novelty of the thing.

(2.) A Healer of diseases. In the former,

- * Or, Anan. 8:37. Acts 16:29.
- y 41. 8:26. Matt. 8:29. Mark 1:24, 34. 5:7.
- z Gen. 3:15. Heb. 2:14, 15. 1 John 3:8. Rev. 20:2.
- a 1:35. Ps. 16:10. Dan. 9:24. Acts 2:27. 4:27. Rev. 3:7.
- b 39:41. Ps. 50:15. Zech. 3:2. Matt. 8:26. 17:18. Mark 3:11, 12. 16:17, 18.
- c 9:39, 42. 11:22. Mark 1:26. 9:26. Rev. 12:12. 12:22, 23. Mark 1:27. 7:37.
- d 32. 10:17-26. Mark 16:17-20. Acts 19:12-16.
- f 1. 12. 32:13. Matt. 4:23-25. 9:1. 28. Mark 1:28-45. 6:14.
- g Matt. 8:14, 15. Mark 1:28-31. 1 Cor. 9:5.
- h 7:34. Matt. 15:23. John 11:22. Jam. 5:14, 15.
- i 25. 8:24.
- k 8:23. Ps. 116:12. 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. 1 Matt. 8:16, 17. Mark 1:32-34.
- m 7:21-23. Matt. 4:23-24. 11:5. 14:13, 14. Mark 3:10. 6:5, 55, 56. Acts 6:15. 19:12.
- n 34. Mark 1:34. 3:11.
- o Matt. 8:29. 26:63. John 20:31. Acts 16:17, 18. Jam. 2:19.
- p 18. Or, say, that they knew him to be Christ.
- q 6:12. Mark 1:35. John 4:34. Matt. 14:13, 14. Mark 1:37, 45. 9:1.
- r 8:27. Matt. 9:24. 12:29. John 4:40.
- s Mark 1:14, 15. 38, 39. John 9:4. Acts 10:38. 2 Tim. 4:2.
- t 12. 42:1-4. 42:16. 61:1-3. John 6:38-40. 20:21.
- u 15. Matt. 4:23. Mark 1:39.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16—31. When, for a time, we meet with acceptance in our endeavors to do good, we should expect some change or alloy; nor can we reasonably hope to escape that reproach and contempt, which our Redeemer continually experienced: yet this ought not to damp our ardor, or dismay us from constancy in our attempts to be useful. It should be our custom, as it was our Savior's, to resort, on 'the Lord's day' at least, to the assemblies of his people; and whether we read, hear, or preach the Word of God, we should inquire diligently into its meaning, and faithfully apply it to ourselves or others. 'The Spirit of the Lord,' who anointed the Savior for his work, and who has revealed Him in the Scriptures, must also discover Him to our hearts, in all his gracious characters and offices: we ought, therefore, to seek his blessing, by fervent prayer, especially when attending on 'the means of grace,' or when about to use them. Under this blessed influence we shall perceive, that the message of the Gospel is indeed 'glad tidings to the poor' and humble.—The divine Redeemer came on purpose to 'bind up the broken in heart,' and to give peace to the wounded conscience; to rescue the wretched captives of Satan; to bring them forth into the blessed light of divine truth; and to open their blinded eyes, that they may behold and rejoice in the light, and be delivered from all the galling chains of their own destructive lusts; and thus to admit them 'to the glorious liberty of the children of God.' Let sinners then attend to the Savior's invitation, in 'the acceptable year of the Lord,' when liberty is

thus proclaimed to 'those that are bruised' let them seek to Him for this blessed deliverance, that this Scripture may not only be fulfilled in their ears, but in their hearts and experience.—But many will attend to the Gospel, and express their approbation of the things which are spoken; yea, many will give the Lord Himself good words, who will not give Him their hearts. Some prejudice intervenes, to furnish an objection against the humbling doctrine of the cross; and, while the Word itself excites their enmity, they lay the blame on something in the conduct or manner of the speaker, that they may not be self-condemned in neglecting his message.—Many seem to think themselves entitled almost exclusively to the favor of God, yet they will not seek it in *his appointed way*; when, therefore, others enjoy the privileges which they have forfeited, they are greatly offended. In vain do we show, that God has asserted his undoubted right to 'do what He will with his own,' that He has frequently passed by formalists, to save pagans and prodigals; and that He always dispenses his favors in that manner, which tends most to display his own glory, and especially the riches of his unmerited grace and mercy. Instead of being silenced, they are the more exasperated by such representations; and their enmity to God often shows itself in revilings, outrages, and persecutions against his servants. But He, who avoided the assaults of his enraged enemies, till his appointed hour arrived, will uphold and protect all his ministers, till they have 'finished their testimony.'

SCOTT

(31.) *Came down to Capernaum.* 'It is likely He made Capernaum 1. a ordinary place of residence, from this time.'

Dr. A. CLARK.

Verses 33—37.

(Marg. Ref.—Notes, Mark 1: 23—25. 5: 2. 15.—See also Mark 1: 21.) (34.) *The Holy One.* &c.] 'When this word is used, in the

CHAP. V.

Jesus teaches the people from Simon's ship, 1-3; whom, by his divine authority and power, takes a large draught of fishes, 4-7. Simon, James, and John, follow Him, 8-11. He cleanses a leper, 12-15; with prayers for prayer, 16; heals a paralytic, and silences the objections of the scribes and Pharisees against his forgiving sins, 17-25; calls Levi, and justifies his own eating with publicans and sinners, 27-32; and vindicates his disciples, for not fasting, at present, after the manner of the Pharisees and John's disciples, 33-38.

AND it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

a 8:45, 12:1. Matt. 11:22. Mark 3:9, 5:24.

b Num. 34:11. Chinnereth. Josh. 12:3. Gennesaret. Matt. 14:34. Mark 6:53.

grievous than others; she was taken with a great fever, very acute, and high, and threatening. [4.] No age can exempt from diseases. It is probable that Peter's mother-in-law was in years. [5.] When our relations are sick, we ought to apply ourselves to Christ, by faith and prayer, on their account; *They besought Him for her*: and there is a particular promise, that the prayer of faith shall benefit the sick. [6.] Christ has a tender concern for his people when they are in sickness and distress; *He stood over her*, as one concerned for her, and compassionating her case. [7.] Christ had, and still has, a sovereign power over bodily diseases; with a word's speaking, He commanded the fever away, and it left her. He saith to diseases, *Go*, and they go, *Come*, and they come; and can still rebuke fevers, even great fevers. [8.] This proves Christ's cures to be miraculous, that they were done in an instant; *Immediately she arose*. [9.] Where Christ gives a new life, in recovery from sickness, He designs and expects that it should be a new life indeed, spent more than ever in his service, to his glory. If distempers be rebuked, and we arise from a bed of sickness, we must set ourselves to minister to Jesus Christ. [10.] Those that minister to Christ, must be ready to minister to all that are his for his sake; she ministered to them, not only to Him that had cured her, but to them that had besought Him for her. We must study to be grateful to them that have prayed for us.

2. A general account given of many other miracles of the same kind, which Christ did.

(1.) He cured many that were diseased, even all without exception that made their application to Him; (v. 40.) it was when the sun was setting, in the evening of that sabbath-day which He had spent in the synagogue. Note, It is good to do full sabbath-day's work, to abound in some good work or other, even till sunset; as those that call the Sabbath, and the business of it, a delight. Observe, He cured all that were sick, poor as well as rich, and though they were sick of divers diseases; so that there was no room to suspect that He had only a specific for some one disease; He had a remedy for every malady. The sign He used in healing was, *laying his hands on the sick*; not lifting up his hands for them, for He healed as having authority. He healed by his own power. And thus He would put honor on that sign, which was afterward used in conferring the Holy Ghost.

(2.) He cast the devil out of many that were possessed, v. 41. Confessions were extorted from the demons; they said, *Thou art Christ, the Son of God*, but they said it, crying with rage and indignation; it was a confession on the rack, and therefore was not admitted in evidence; Christ rebuked them, and did not suffer them to say that they knew Him to be the Christ, that it might appear, beyond all contradiction, that He had obtained a conquest over them, and not a compact with them.

3. Christ's removal from Capernaum, v. 42, 43.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 32-44. If the ministers of Christ be persecuted from one place, and driven to another, let them still boldly proceed in declaring to 'all men every where' the way of salvation. The word which they speak, being attended with the power of their Lord, will be made effectual to convince, alarm and convert. No case can be desperate if Jesus see good to work. We ought therefore to spread abroad the fame of the Savior in every place; to beseech Him for those who are diseased in body or mind; and to use our influence in bringing sinners to Him, that his powerful hands may be laid on them for their healing. Thus relying on his power, truth and love, we should seek to

(1.) He retired for a while into a place of solitude; it was but a little while that He allowed Himself for sleep; not only that a little served Him, but He was content with a little, and never indulged Himself in ease; but when it was day, He went into a desert place, not to live constantly like a hermit, but to be sometimes alone with God, as even those should be and contrive to be, that are most engaged in public work, or else their work will go on but poorly; and they will find themselves never less alone than when thus alone.

(2.) He returned again to the places of con course, and to the work He had to do there. A desert place may be a convenient retreat, but it is not a convenient residence: we were sent into the world not to live to ourselves, not to the best part of ourselves only, but to glorify God, and do good in our generation.

[1.] He was earnestly solicited to stay at Capernaum. I doubt, more because He had healed their sick, than because He had preached repentance to them. They sought Him, inquired which way He went; and, though it was in a desert place, they came unto Him. A desert is no desert if we be with Christ there. His old neighbors at Nazareth had driven Him from them, his new acquaintance at Capernaum were very importunate for his continuance with them. Note, It ought not to discourage the ministers of Christ, that some reject them, for they will meet with others that will welcome them and their message.

[2.] He chose rather to diffuse the light of his Gospel to many places, than to fix it to one that no one might pretend to be a mother-church to the rest. Though He was welcome at Capernaum, and had done abundance of good there, yet He is sent to preach the Gospel to other cities also; and Capernaum must not insist on his stay there. They that enjoy the benefit of the Gospel, must be willing that others also should share in that benefit, and not covet the monopoly of it. And those ministers who are not drawn from one place, may yet be drawn to another by a prospect of greater usefulness. Christ, though He preached not in vain in the synagogue at Capernaum, yet would not be tied to that, but preached in the synagogues of Galilee, v. 44. What is good, is self-diffusive. It is well for us, that our Lord Jesus has not tied Himself to any one place or people, but wherever two or three are gathered in his name, He will be in the midst of them; and even in Galilee of the Gentiles, his special presence is in the Christian synagogues.

CHAP. V. V. 1-11. This passage of story fell in order of time, before the two miracles we had in the close of the foregoing chapter, and is the same with that which was more briefly related by Matthew and Mark, of Christ's calling Peter and Andrew to be fishers of men, Matt. 4:18, and Mark 1:16. They had not related this miraculous draught of fishes at that

NOTES.

CHAP. V. V. 1-11. (Matt. 4:18-22. 13:1, 2. Mark 1:16-22.) This is generally supposed to be a more particular account of the manner, in which Andrew and Peter, James and John, were called to be the constant followers of Christ; in order to their appointment to the apostolical office. Andrew indeed is not mentioned; but it is probable that he was present. The exact order of the history is not, on that supposition, observed. Some of the company might be employed in 'mending their nets' after washing; and others in 'washing their nets,' by casting them from the shore into the lake. All of them had become acquainted with Jesus some time before; were called his disciples; and

New Testament, with the article in the singular, and applied to a person, the application is always to God, or to Christ.' Campbell.

Scott.

Id.

Id.

Verses 38, 39. (Marg. Ref.—Note, Matt. 8:14, 15.)
Verses 40-44. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 8:16, 17. Mark 1:32-39.) (42.) When it was day. This may be rendered, 'When the day was coming on.' Stayed Him, &c. (3:15, 14:9. 1 Cor 7:30, 11:2. 2 Cor. 6:10. 1 Thes. 5:21. Philem. 11.) They held Him fast, or earnestly detained Him.

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, 'Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.'

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless, at thy word I will let down the net.

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

c Matt. 4:21. Mark 1:19.
d Matt. 4:18. John 1:41, 42.
e Matt. 13:1-2. Mark 4:1-2. John 8:2.
f Matt. 17:27. John 2:16.
g Ps. 127:1. John 2:13.
h 64:4-48. 2 Kings 3:10-14. Ez. 37:4-7. John 2:5. 15:14.
i 2 Kings 4:3-7. Ec. 11:5. John 21:6-11. Acts 2:41. 4:4. 1 Cor. 13:58. Gal. 6:9.

had had some conversation with Him before, which began at John's baptism, (John 1:40, 41.) they were with Him at *Cana of Galilee*, (John 2:2.) and in *Judea*; (John 4:2.) but as yet they were not called to attend Him constantly, and therefore here we have them at their calling, and now it was that they were called into a more intimate fellowship with Christ.

1. When Christ had done preaching, He ordered Peter to apply himself again to the business of his calling, v. 4. It was not the sabbath-day, and therefore as soon as the lecture was over, He set them to work. Time spent on week-days in the public exercises of religion, may be but little hindrance to us *in time*, and a great furtherance to us *in temper of mind*, in our worldly business. It is our wisdom and duty so to manage our religious exercises, as that they may befriend our worldly business, and so to manage our worldly business, as that it may be no enemy to our religious exercises.

2. Peter having attended Christ in his preaching, Christ will accompany him in his fishing. Note, Those that will be constant followers of Christ, shall have Him a constant Guide to them.

3. Christ orders Peter and his ship's crew to cast their nets into the sea, which they do, in obedience to Him, though they had been hard at it all night, and had caught nothing, v. 4, 5.

We may observe here,

time, having only in view the calling of his disciples. Now observe here,

I. What vast crowds attended Christ's preaching; v. 1. No house would contain them, but He was forced to draw them out to the strand. The people flocked about Him; (so the word signifies;) they showed respect to his preaching, though not without some rudeness to his person, for they pressed upon Him. Some would reckon this a diminution to Him, to be thus cried up by the vulgar, when none of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed on Him; but He reckoned it an honor to Him, for their souls were as precious as the souls of the grandees; and it is his aim to bring not so much the mighty as the many sons to God; and it was foretold of Him, that to Him shall the gathering of the people be. Christ was a popular Preacher; and though able, at twelve, to dispute with the doctors, He chose, at thirty, to preach to the capacity of the vulgar. See how the people relished good preaching, though under all external disadvantages; they pressed to hear the Word of God; they could perceive it to be the Word of God, by the divine power and evidence that went along with it, and therefore they coveted to hear it.

II. What poor conveniences Christ had for preaching; v. 1. None of his hearers appear to have had any contrivance to give Him advantage, but there were two ships, or fisher-boats, brought to shore, one belonged to Simon and Andrew, the other to Zebedee and his sons, v. 2. At first, Christ saw Peter and Andrew fishing at some distance; (so Matthew tells us, ch. 4:13.) but He waited till they came to land, and till the fishermen, that is, the servants, were gone out of them, having washed their nets, and taken care of them: then He entered into Simon's ship and begged it of him for a pulpit; so having prayed him, for convenience' sake, to thrust out a little from the land, there He sat down, and taught the people the good knowledge of the Lord. Wisdom cries in the top of high places; (Prov. 8:2.) it intimates that Christ had a strong voice, and that He did not desire to favor Himself.

III. What a particular acquaintance Christ, hereupon, fell into with these fishermen. They hereupon, fell into with these fishermen. They hereupon, fell into with these fishermen. They hereupon, fell into with these fishermen.

(1.) How melancholy their business had now been, v. 5. But they mention it to Christ, only as He bids them go a fishing again. Note, [1.] Some callings are much more *unlucrative* than others are, and more perilous; yet Providence has so ordered it for the common good, that there is no useful calling so discouraging, but some or other have a genius for it. Those who with great ease get abundance by their business; should think with compassion of those who, by theirs, with great fatigue, can hardly get a bare livelihood. When we have rested all night, let us not forget those who have toiled all night, as Jacob, when he kept Laban's sheep. [2.] Be the calling ever so laborious, it is good to see people diligent in it, and make the best of it; these fishermen, that were thus industrious, Christ singled out for his favorites. [3.] Even those who are most diligent in their business, often meet with disappointments; the race is not always to the swift. God will have us to be diligent, purely in duty to his command, and dependence on his goodness, rather than with an assurance of worldly success. We must do our duty, and then leave the event to God. [4.] When we are tired with our worldly business, and crossed in our worldly affairs, we are welcome to come to Christ, and spread our case before Him, who will take cognizance of it.

(2.) How ready their obedience was to the command of Christ; v. 5. Though they had toiled all night, yet, if Christ bid them, they will renew their toil, for they know that they who wait on Him, shall renew their strength, as work is renewed on their hands; for every fresh service they shall have a fresh supply of grace sufficient. Though they have taken nothing, yet, if Christ bid them let down for a draught, they will hope to take something. Note, We must not abruptly quit the callings wherewith we are called, because we have not the success in them we promised ourselves; and this is thankworthy, to continue unwearied in our labors, though we see not the success of them. [3.] In this, ministers should have an eye to the word of Christ, and a dependence on that; 'At thy word, I will let down the net, because Thou dost enjoin it, and Thou dost encourage it.' We are then likely to speed well, when we follow the guidance of Christ's word.

4. The draught of fish they caught, was so much beyond what was ever known, that it amounted to a miracle; (v. 6.) their net brake, and yet, which is strange, they did not lose their draught; it was so great a draught, that they had not hands sufficient to draw it up, but beckoned to their partners, at a distance, to come, and help them, v. 7. But the greatest evidence of the vastness of the draught was, that they filled both the ships with fish, so that degree that they began to sink, so that the fish had like to have been lost again with their own weight; as many an overgrown estate, raised out of the water, returns to the place whence it came. Suppose these ships were but five or six tons apiece; what a vast quantity of fish must there be to load, nay, to overload them both!

Now, by this vast draught of fishes, Christ

even baptized those who became his followers: and probably had attended Him to Jerusalem, and returned with Him through Samaria into Galilee: (Notes. John 1:35-42. 2:1-5. 3:22-24. 4:1-9.) yet they seem to have followed their ordinary employments, from time to time, till, on this occasion, they became his constant attendants, which was after John the Baptist had been 'cast into prison.' (Matt. 4:12-17. v. 12.) Jesus had hitherto, generally, preached in the synagogues; but now such numbers thronged around Him, that those places of worship could no longer contain them. (Marg. Ref. a. b. Marg. Ref. c. d. e. Matt. 13:1. 2. Marg. Ref. f. g. h. i. Notes, John 21:1-14.) Peter very humbly, but ignorantly, desired Jesus 'to depart from him,' being afraid of some fatal consequence from his presence with so great a sinner. (Marg. Ref. l. m. n. Job 42:1-6. v. 6. Is. 6:5-8. Matt. 8:5-9.) Depart, &c. He spoke according to the notions which have generally been entertained of sinful man's danger, from the power and presence of a holy God, or of those whom He especially approves and favors. (8:37. Notes. Deut. 5:22-29. Judg. 13:18-23. 1 Sam. 6:19-21. 2 Sam. 6:8, 9. 1 Kings 17:18.) The miracle itself was emblematic of many things relative to the preaching of the Gospel, and especially of Peter's great success on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:41.) When Christ had encouraged him and his companions, and assured them, that He purposed to employ them in bringing sin-

ners by His Gospel to the obedience of faith, they did not hesitate to leave all and follow Him. (Marg. Ref. Matt. 19:27, 28.) Scott.

(3, 4.) Ships—Draught.] It is highly improper to term these ships. They appear to have been only such small boats, as are used to manage nets on flat, smooth beaches; one end of the net is attached to the shore; the fishermen row out and return, dipping the net as they go, and making a kind of semi-circle from the shore; and as it was sunk with weights to the bottom, and floated with corks at the top, all the fish in that compass were included, and drawn ashore.

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(5.) Nevertheless at thy word, &c.] 'They were not discouraged by the weariness of a whole night's fruitless labor, but willingly renewed their toil, at the instance of our Lord. A seasonable warning to every servant of his, not to depend upon any unsuccessful trials in his Master's business; nor to sink his spirits for any disappointments in the way of his ordinary calling; when He contemplates this eminent example of such a blessing upon a mind ready to labor at his word, and so large amends made at once for so many fruitless experiments before.'

Dean STANHOPE.

(6.) Brake.] 'Or, began to break, or was likely to be broken. Raphaelus gives some very pertinent examples of this usage out of Herodotus.'

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7 And they beckoned unto *their* partners, which were in the other ship, * that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw it, *he fell down at Jesus' knees*, saying, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.*

9 For *he* was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so was also James and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were *partners* with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, *Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.*

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, * they forsook all, and followed him.

12 ¶ And it came to pass, when he was in a certain city, behold, *a man, full of leprosy*; who, seeing Jesus, * fell on *his* face, and besought him, saying, *Lord, so if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

13 And he put forth *his* hand, and touched

intended to show his *dominion* in the seas, as well as on the dry land; over its *wealth* as over its *vases*, Ps. 8: 8. He intended hereby to confirm the doctrine He had just now preached. We may suppose that the people on shore, who heard the sermon, staid halting about there, to see what He would do next; and his miracle immediately following, would be a confirmation to their faith, that he was a *Teacher come from God*. He intended hereby to repay Peter for the loan of his boat; for Christ's Gospel now, as his ark formerly in the house of Obed-edom, will make rich amends for its kind entertainment. None shall shut a door, or kindle a fire in God's house for nought, Mal. 1: 10. Christ's recompenses for services done to his name, are abundant, they are superabundant. He intended hereby to give a specimen to those who were to be his ambassadors to the world, of the success of their embassy, that, though they might, for a time, and in one particular place, *toil and catch nothing*, yet they should be instrumental to bring in many to Christ, and inclose many in the gospel-net.

5. The impression which this miraculous draught of fishes made on Peter, was very remarkable.

(1.) All concerned were *astonished*, all the boat's crew, (v. 9.) and the more they considered it, and all the circumstances of it, the more they *wondered*, and so were also James and John, who were *partners* with Simon, (v. 10.) and, for aught that appears, were not so well acquainted with Christ, before this, as Peter and Andrew were. Now they were the more affected with it, [1.] Because they understood it better than others did. They were well acquainted with the sea, probably had plied upon it many years, yet never had seen such a draught of fishes, nor any thing like it; they therefore could not be tempted to diminish it, as others might, by suggesting that it was accidental, and what might as well have happened at any time. It greatly corroborates the evidence of Christ's miracles, that those who were best acquainted with them, most admired them. [2.] Because they were most interested in it, and benefited by it. It was a rich booty to Peter and his part-owners; therefore it transported them, and their joy was a *helper to their faith*. Note, When Christ's works of wonder are, to us in particular, works of grace, then especially they command our faith in his doctrine.

(2.) Peter, above all the rest, was so astonished, that he *fell down at Jesus' knees*, as He sat in the stern of his boat, and said, as one in an ecstasy or transport, that knew not where he was, or what he said, *Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord, &c.* 8. He thought himself unworthy of the favor of Christ's presence in his boat, and worthy that it should be to him a matter rather of terror than of comfort, as those who, under the Old Testament, so often said that they did *exceedingly fear and quake*, at the extraordinary displays of the divine glory and majesty. It was the language of Peter's humility and self-denial, not that of the devil's dialect, *What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God?* His acknowledgment was very just, and what it becomes us all to make; *I am a sinful man, O Lord. Even the best men are sinful men,*

and should be ready on all occasions to own it, and especially to own it to Jesus Christ; for to whom else, but to Him who came into the world to save sinners, should *sinful men* apply themselves? His inference was what *might have been* just, though really it was not so; If I be a *sinful man*, as indeed I am, I ought to say, *Come to me, O Lord, or let me come to thee, or I am undone, forever undone.* But, considering what reason *sinful men* have to tremble before the holy Lord God, and to dread his wrath, Peter may be well excused, if, in a sense of his own sinfulness and vileness, he cried out on a sudden, *Depart from me.* Note, Those whom Christ designs to a limit to the most intimate acquaintance with Him, He first makes sensible that they deserve to be set at the greatest distance from Him. We must all own ourselves *sinful men*, and that therefore Jesus Christ might justly depart from us; but we must therefore *fall down at his knees*, to pray to Him that He would not depart; for *woe unto us, if He leave us.*

6. The occasion which Christ took from hence to intimate to Peter, (v. 10.) and soon after to James and John, (Matt. 4: 21.) his purpose to make them his apostles, and instruments of planting his religion in the world. He said unto Simon, who was in the greatest surprise of any of them, *Fear not*; be not afraid that, after having done this honor, I shall never do thee more; no, from henceforth thou shalt catch men, and that shall be a greater instance of the Redeemer's power, and of his favor to thee, than this is; a more *astonishing miracle*, and infinitely more advantageous than this. When; by Peter's preaching, three thousand souls were, in one day, added to the church, then the type of this great draught of fishes was abundantly answered.

Lastly, The fishermen's farewell to their calling, in order to their constant attendance on Christ; (v. 11.) instead of going to seek a market for their fish, they forsook all, and followed Him, being more solicitous to serve the interests of Christ, than to advance any secular interests of their own. It is observable that they left all to follow Christ, when their calling prospered in their hands more than ever it had done, and they had had uncommon success in it. When riches increase, and we are therefore most in temptation to set our hearts on them, then to quit them for the service of Christ, this is *thankworthy*.

V. 12—16. Here is,

I. The cleansing of a leper, v. 12—14. This narrative we had, both in Matthew and Mark; it is here said to have been in a certain city, (v. 12.) it was in Capernaum; but the evangelist would not name it, perhaps because it was a reflection on the government of the city, that a leper was suffered to be in it. This man had leprosy in a high degree, which the more fitly represents our natural pollution by sin; we are full of that leprosy; from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot there is no soundness in us. Now let us learn here,

1. What we must do in the sense of our spiritual leprosy. We must see Jesus, acquaint ourselves with Him, and reckon the discoveries of Him by the Gospel, the most acceptable and welcome that could be made us. We must humble ourselves before Him, as this leper.

Acts 1:25-26. Rom. 16:2-4. Gal. 6:2. Phil. 4:3.
Matt. 2:11. John 1:32. Acts 10:25, 26. Rev. 1:17, 22:3-9.
Ex. 30:19. Judg. 13:22. 1 Sam. 6: 20. 2 Sam. 6:9. Kings 17:18. 1 Car. 13:12. Dan. 10:16, 17. Matt. 17:8.
Dan. 40:4. 42:5, 6. Is. 6:5. Matt. 8:8.
Ex. 40:35. Mark 9:6.
P. 6:14. Matt. 4:21. 20:20.
Q. 7. 2 Cor. 8:23.
Ex. 47:9, 10. Matt. 4:19. 13:47. Mark 1:17. Acts 2:4.
18:28-29. Matt. 4:20. 10:37. 19: 27. Mark 13:18-25. 10:21, 29, 30. Phil. 3:8.
Matt. 9:2-4. Mark 1:40-45.
17:17. Ex. 4:8. Lev. 13:14. Num. 12:10-12. Deut. 24:8. 2 Kings 5: 1, 27. 7:3. 2 Chr. 26:19, 20. Matt. 26:6.
17:16. Lev. 9:24. Josh. 6:14. 1 Kings 18:39. 1 Chr. 2:16.
17:13. Ps. 50:15. 91:15. Mark 5:23. Gen. 15:14. Matt. 8:8, 9. 9:23. Mark 9:22-24. Heb. 7:25.

(7.) *They beckoned unto their partners.* Had not these been called in to assist, the net must have been broken, and all the fish lost.

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(8.) *Go out from me, for I am a sinful man.* [It is well known that the ancients thought it improper and unsafe (where it could be avoided) for good men to be in the same ship with persons of an infamous character; nor would the heathens sometimes permit the very images of their deities to be carried in the vessel with such, or even with those concerning whom there was any strong suspicion.] *Elsner.*

DODDRIDGE.

It seems to have been a received maxim among the Jews, that whoever had seen a particular manifestation of God, should speedily die. Gen. 32: 30. Ex. 24: 10, 11. 33: 20. Deut. 5: 26. Judg. 6: 21, 23. 13: 22.

(9.) *Astonished.* Peter seems to have been more astonished at the draught of fishes, than at the cure of the sick at Capernaum; perhaps from a notion common among the Jews, that the prayers of holy men, with imposition of hands, might have power to heal the sick, and eject evil spirits.

BLOOMFIELD.

The word *astonished*, in the common version, is far too weak for expressing the effect which we find this miracle produced upon Peter, and which evidently had in it more of terror than *astonishment*. The manner in which Peter appears to have been affected, and the extraordinary petition he presented to a Person of whose benevolence and humanity he had been so oft a witness, clearly show that he discovered in his Master, on this occasion, something superior to human, which quite overwhelmed him with awe and fear.

CAMPBELL.

(10.) *Thou shalt catch men.* [Not only in his parables, but in his other discourses, Jesus draws his doctrines and instructions from the scenes of nature, from the objects that surround Him, from the most common occurrences of life, from the seasons of the year, from some extraordinary incidents or remarkable transactions.] *PORTERUS.*

Verses 12—15.

(Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 8: 1—4. Mark 1: 40—45.) (12.) *A certain city.* The confines of the city are intended, for the lepers were not suffered to live in towns. It is uncertain, whether Capernaum, or some other place in Galilee, be meant.

SCOTT.

him, saying, 'I will; be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him.

14 And he charged him to tell no man: but go, and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

15 But so much the more he went here a fame abroad of him: and great multitudes came together to hear, and to be healed by him of their infirmities.

[Practical Observations.]

16 And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed.

17 ¶ And it came to pass on a certain day,

a Gen. 13:9. Ps. 33:9. Ex. 36:25—27:28. Hos. 14:4. Matt. 9:29, 30. d 4:39. 8:54, 55. John 4:50—53. e Matt. 8:4. 9:30. 12:16. f 17:14. Lev. 13:2, &c. g Lev. 14:1, 10, 21, 22. h 9:5. Matt. 10:18. Mark 1:44. 6:11. i Prov. 15:33. 1 Tim. 5:23. j Matt. 4:23—25. 9:28. Matt. 1:28, 45. i 12:1. 14:25. Matt. 15:30, 31. Mark 2:12. John 6:2. k 1:12. Matt. 14:23. Mark 1:35, 36. 6:46. John 6:15.

honor of Christ, but he must not tell it to his own honor. Those whom Christ hath healed and cleansed, must know that He hath done it in such a way, as doth forever exclude boasting. We must be very thankful, and make a grateful acknowledgment of the divine grace; Go, and offer for thy cleansing. Christ did not require him to give Him a fee, but to bring the sacrifice of praise to God; so far was He from using his power to the prejudice of the law of Moses. We must keep close to our duty. The man whom Christ had made whole, He found in the temple, John 5: 14. Those that by any affliction

We must be ashamed of our pollution, and, in the sense of it, blush to lift up our faces before the holy Jesus. We must earnestly desire to be cleansed from the defilement, and cured of the disease of sin, which renders us unfit for communion with God. We must firmly believe in Christ's ability and sufficiency to cleanse us; Lord, Thou canst make me clean; no doubt is to be made of the merit and grace of Christ. We must be importunate in prayer for pardoning mercy and renewing grace; he fell on his face and besought Him; they that would be cleansed, must reckon it a favor worth wrestling for. We must refer ourselves to the good will of Christ; Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst. This is not so much the language of diffidence, or distrust, as of submission and confidence in Christ.

2. What we may expect from Christ, if we thus apply ourselves to Him. We shall find Him very condescending, and forward to take cognizance of our case, v. 13. When Christ visited this leprosy woman, unasked, unsought unto, He showed how low He could stoop, to do good. His touching of the leper was wonderful condescension; but it is much greater to us, when He is Himself touched with the feeling of our infirmities. We shall find Him very compassionate, and ready to relieve us. He is as willing to cleanse leprosy souls, as they can be to be cleansed. We shall find Him all-sufficient, and able to heal and cleanse us, though we be ever so full of this loathsome leprosy. One word, one touch from Christ, did the business; Immediately the leprosy departed from him. If Christ saith, 'I will, be thou justified, be thou sanctified,' it is done: for He has power on earth to forgive sin, and power to give the Holy Spirit, 1 Cor. 6: 11.

3. What He requires from those that are cleansed, v. 14. We must be very humble, v. 14. He charged him to tell no man. It should seem, this did not forbid him telling it to the honor of Christ, but he must not tell it to his own honor. Those whom Christ hath healed and cleansed, must know that He hath done it in such a way, as doth forever exclude boasting. We must be very thankful, and make a grateful acknowledgment of the divine grace; Go, and offer for thy cleansing. Christ did not require him to give Him a fee, but to bring the sacrifice of praise to God; so far was He from using his power to the prejudice of the law of Moses. We must keep close to our duty. The man whom Christ had made whole, He found in the temple, John 5: 14. Those that by any affliction

tion have been detained from public ordinances, when the affliction is removed, should attend on them the more diligently and more constantly.

4. Christ's public serviceableness to men, and his private communion with God; these are put together here, to give lustre to each other.

(1.) Though never any had so much pleasure in his retirements, as Christ had, yet He was much in a crowd, to do good, v. 15. Though the leper should altogether hold his peace, yet the thing could not be hid, so much the more went there a fame abroad of Him; the more He sought to conceal Himself under a veil of humility, the more notice did people take of Him; for honor is like a shadow, which flees from those that pursue it, but follows those that decline it, and draw from it. The less good men say of themselves, the more will others say of them. But Christ reckoned it a small honor to Him, that his fame went abroad; it was much more so, that hereby multitudes were brought to receive benefit by Him—both by his preaching, for they came together to hear Him; and by his miracles, they came to be healed by Him; that invited them, confirmed his doctrine, and recommended it.

(2.) Though never any did so much good in public, yet He found time for pious and devout retirements; (v. 16.) not that He needed to avoid either distraction or ostentation, but He would set us an example, who need so to order the circumstances of our devotion, as to guard against both. It is likewise our wisdom so to order our affairs, as that our public work and our secret work may not intrench upon, or interfere with, one another. Note, Secret prayer must be performed secretly; and those that have ever so much to do of the best business in this world, must keep up constant and stated times for it.

V. 17—26. Here is, I. A general account of Christ's preaching and miracles, v. 17. 1. He was teaching on a certain day, not on the sabbath-day, then he would have said so, but on a week-day; six days shalt thou labor, not only for the world, but for thy soul. Preaching and hearing the Word of God are good works, if they be done well, any day in the week. It was not in the synagogue, but in a private house; for even there, where we

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—15. When multitudes 'press to hear the Word of God,' it becomes expedient to exceed ordinary measures of diligence, in teaching them. On these rare and important occasions, every day is seasonable, and every place proper, for preaching the Gospel; and the common maxims, by which such matters are regulated at other times, are superseded by far more weighty considerations.—Whatever is employed in the service of Christ, becomes holy by its relation to Him, and may be sanctified to us, by being rendered subservient to his glory. (Notes, 1 Cor. 10: 29—33, v. 31. Col. 3: 16, 17.)—We are often called upon to renounce temporal advantages for his sake, but are seldom, even in these things, eventually losers by Him. Obedience to his Word, and dependence on his power and blessing, insure all desirable success, especially in the great concerns of religion. The minister, who has toiled long, under great discouragement, and with no apparent success, must not give up his hope, or cease from his labor, but at the word of his Lord 'let down the net,' again and again. Such delays sometimes lead to more signal success, by increasing humility, simplicity, and fervency in prayer; and thus the unsuccessful endeavors of many years may be amply recompensed by the blessing of God even on a single sermon! It would indeed be more encouraging to see some fruit of our labors, from time to time; and when we do not, we may well inquire,

whether there be nothing in our spirit, conduct or doctrine, which prevents usefulness; and whether we use all proper means of attaining it, and use them in simple dependence on the divine blessing for success: yet the effect may at length be equally great, when we long labor, diligently and patiently, as it were in the dark. Let then the 'fishers of men' persevere in their work; let them seek the salvation of souls alone, and not court applause, or fish for honors and secular advantages; let them stand prepared to relinquish every worldly object at the call of Christ, and give themselves up wholly to their ministry; let them be helpers of each other in the work, as partners, and not rivals; and let them not fear but 'from henceforth they shall catch men.'—The more fully the Lord displays his excellent glory and majesty to us, the viler shall we appear in our own eyes: yet this should not induce us to say, 'Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord;' but rather to entreat Him to come, and 'dwell in our hearts by faith,' that He may transform and cleanse them. As we are all full of the leprosy of sin, we should humbly and earnestly beseech the Lord to cleanse us: nor need we fear a repulse, for to do this, is his delight and glory. Thus, being saved from the guilt and power of our sins, we may diffuse abroad his fame, and be in some measure instrumental in bringing others to hear Him, and to be healed of their infirmities.

SCOTT.

(14.) 'Let the compassionate air, with which this cure was wrought, be considered by all spiritual physicians as a lesson of condescension and tenderness; and let the modesty, with which it was conducted, engage us to avoid every appearance of ostentation and vain-glory.'

DODDRIDGE.

Verse 16.

He withdrew.] 'He was withdrawing,' or separating Himself. He frequently went aside from the multitude, into retired places, for those exercises of devotion in which his soul delighted. (Notes, 6: 12. Prov. 13: 1, 2. Mark 1: 35—39.)

SCOTT.

And prayed.] 'The more various and important our public labors are, the more evidently do we need to draw down succor by ardent prayer, that we may be strengthened and prospered in them.'

DODDRIDGE.

'We should observe what a deep, fixed, and constant piety was displayed by Christ. Not content to nourish such a feeling in his soul, He thought fit to draw it forth in actual prayer. If any one should think that outward expressions of piety are superfluous, it is enough to answer, that our blessed Lord did not so think. He had all the fulness of devotion in his soul: nevertheless, he thought it not superfluous to utter and pronounce audible prayer to God; and not only so, but to retire and withdraw Himself from other engagements, nay, even from his most intimate and favored companions, expressly for this purpose.'

FALRY

Verse 17.

(Marg. Ref.) The power, &c.] 'The power of the Lord was present to heal them,' who came to be healed of their infirmities. (15.) and not the Pharisees and lawyers. So, (Ps 99: 8.) 'Thou

as he was teaching, that there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee, and Judea, and Jerusalem; and the power of the Lord was present to heal them.

18 And, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy; and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before him.

19 And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went upon the house-top, and let him down through the tiling, with his couch, into the midst before Jesus.

20 And when he saw their faith, he said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee.

21 And the Scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?

22 But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts?

23 Whether it is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk?

24 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (he said unto the sick

ordinarily converse with our friends, it is not improper to give and receive good instruction. 2. There He taught, He healed, as before; (v. 15.) and the power of the Lord was to heal them. It was mighty to do it, it was exerted and put forth, to heal, to heal them whom He taught; we may understand it so; to heal their souls, to cure them of their spiritual diseases, and to give them a new life, a new nature. Note, Those who receive the word of Christ in faith, will find a divine power going along with it, to heal them; for Christ came with his comforts to heal the broken-hearted, ch. 4: 18. The power of the Lord is present with the Word, present to those that pray for it, and submit to it, present to heal them. Or it may be meant, (and so it is generally taken,) of the healing of those who were diseased in body, who came to Him for cures. Whenever there was occasion, Christ was not to seek for his power, it was present to heal. 3. There were some grandees present, and, as it should seem, more than usual; Pharisees and doctors of the law. But as appears, (v. 21,) they were not healed, but cavilled at Christ, which forces us to exclude them; for they sat by as persons unconcerned, as if the word of Christ were nothing to them. They sat by as spectators, censors, and spies, to pick up something on which to ground a reproach or accusation. How many are there in the midst of our assemblies, to whom the Word preached is as a tale that is told! they are willing that we should preach before them, but not that we should preach to them. These Pharisees and scribes (or doctors of the law) came from all parts of the nation; it is likely, they appointed to meet at this time and place, to see what remarks they could make upon Christ, and what He said and did. They were in a confederacy, as those that said, Come, and let us devise devices against Jeremiah, and agree to smite him with the longue, Jer. 18: 18. Report, and we will report it, Jer. 20: 10. Observe, Christ went on with his work of preaching and healing, though He saw these Pharisees and doctors of the Jewish church sitting by, who, He knew, despised Him, and watched to insnare Him.

II. A particular account of the cure of the man sick of the palsy, which was related much as it is here by both the foregoing evangelists: let us therefore only observe in short, 1. The doctrines hereby taught and confirmed to us. (1.) That sin is the fountain of all sickness, and the forgiveness of sin is the only

of the palsy,) 'I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go unto thine house.

25 And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God.

foundation on which a recovery from sickness can comfortably be built. They presented the sick man to Christ, and He said, 'Man, thy sins are forgiven thee; (v. 20.) that is the blessing thou art most to prize and seek; for if thy sins be forgiven thee, though the sickness be continued, it is in mercy; if they be not, though the sickness be removed, it is in wrath.' The cords of our iniquity are the bands of our affliction. (2.) That Jesus Christ has power on earth to forgive sins; of which, his healing diseases was an incontestable proof. This was the thing intended to be proved, v. 24. Christ claims one of the prerogatives of the King of kings, when He undertakes to forgive sin, and it is justly expected that He should produce a good proof of it. 'Well,' saith He, 'I will put it on this issue; here is a man struck with a palsy for his sin; if I do not, with a word's speaking, cure his disease in an instant, which cannot be done by nature or art, then say that I am not entitled to the prerogative of forgiving sin, am not the Messiah, am not the Son of God, and King of Israel: but if I do, you must own that I have power to forgive sins.' Thus it was put on a fair trial, and one word of Christ determined it. He did but say, Arise, take up thy couch, and that chronic disease had an instantaneous cure; immediately he arose before them. They must all own that there could be no cheat or fallacy in it; they that brought him could attest how perfectly lame he was before; they that saw him, could attest how perfectly well he was now; inasmuch that he had strength enough to take up and carry away the bed he lay upon. How well is it for us, that this most comfortable doctrine of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ, our Redeemer and Saviour, has power to forgive sin, has such a full attestation. (3.) That Jesus Christ is God. He appears to be so, [1.] By knowing the thoughts of the scribes and Pharisees, (v. 22) which it is God's prerogative to do; though these scribes and Pharisees knew as well how to conceal their thoughts, and keep their countenances, as most men, and probably were industrious to do it at this time, for they lay in wait secretly. [2.] By doing that which their thoughts owned none could do but God only; (v. 21.) Who can forgive sins, say they, but only God? 'I will prove,' saith Christ, 'that I can forgive sins;' and what follows then, but that He is God? What horrible wickedness then were they guilty of, who charged Him with speaking the worst of blasphemies

1. 21, 30. 7:30. 11:52-54. 15:2. m Matt. 15:1. Mark 2:22. 7:1. n 8:19. 8:36. Matt. 11:5. Mark 16:10. 18:4. Acts 4:33. 19:11-12. o Matt. 9:2-8. Mark 2:3-12. John 5:8-9. Acts 9:33. p Mark 2:4. q Deut. 22:8. 2 Sam. 11:2. Jer. 19:13. Matt. 10:27. r Gen. 22:12. John 2:25. Acts 11:23. 14:9. Jun. 2:18. s 7:48. Ps 97:3. 107:17, 18. Is. 38:17. Mark 9:24. Luke 2:1. John 5:14. 2 Cor. 2:10. Col. 3:13. Jun. 5:14, 15. t 17. 7:49. Mark 2:7. u Lev. 24:16. 1 Kings 21:10-14. v Matt. 23. 26:65. John 10:53. Acts 6:11-13.

x Ex. 34:6, 7. Ps. 103:3. Is. 42:45. 44:22. Dan. 9:5, 19. Mic. 7:19. Rom. 8:33. y 1 Cor. 2:8. Ps. 139:2. Prov. 16:28. Is. 66:15. Ex. 38:10. Matt. 4:23, 24. Heb. 4:12. Rev. 2:25. z 24:38. Mark 8:17. Acts 5:3. a Matt. 9:5. Mark 2:9. b Dan. 7:13. Matt. 16:13. 25:31. 26:64. John 8:13. 27:1. 1:13. c Is. 33:11. Matt. 9:5. 28:18. John 5:22, 23. 17:2. 20:22, 23. Acts 3:6, 7. d 13. 7. 14. 8:54. John 11:43. Acts 3:6-8. 9:34, 40. 14:10. e 13. Gen. 1:3. Ps. 33:9. f 13:43. 17:15. Acts 1:9. 9:23. 10:31. 107:30-32. John 9:34.

answeredst them," Moses and Aaron. "and tookest vengeance of their inventions;" that is, the inventions of the people." *Whitby. (Note, Ps. 39: 3.)*

From Jerusalem! "If this happened, as most commentators suppose, a little before Christ's second passover, (John 5: 1.) some of these might be sent from the *sanhedrim* with a view of gaining some information concerning Jesus. To guide their resolves respecting Him at the ensuing feast, in which they persecuted Him, and sought to slay Him, John 5: 16. It is very probable, that the scribes at Jerusalem, hearing how expressly He had attacked their interpretation of the law, some days before, in his celebrated sermon on the mount, (which, so far as we can learn, was the first time He did it,) might summon their brethren in the neighboring country to meet them at Capernaum, in order to attend on the next of Christ's public discourses, wherever it might happen to be."

Them! "Not the Pharisees, but the sick of the town. So the Hebrew writers use the pronoun relative, when there is no antecedent noun, though it may be easily understood from the context." *Glass.*

The men of that place: but mention is made of the Pharisees and doctors of the law, to show that the miracle was performed in the presence of their calumniators. *Bloomfield.* *Rosenm.*

Verses 18-26. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 9: 2-8. Mark 2: 1-12.) (26.) *Strange things!* "Things beyond all expectation; or so wonderful, that we could not have thought of them." *Scott.*

(19.) 'From considering what is now the form of the houses in Barbary and the Levant. Dr. Shaw supposes that "the midst" signifies the courtyard round about which the house was built; and that the Lord was there. He thinks that, crowded as this area was, the bearers of the paralytic might get in at the gateway, (where perhaps Christ could neither be seen nor heard) and might carry him up the stairs, which commonly go up thence; and being got to the flat-roof, might take down inwards a part of the balustrade or parapet-wall, and so let down the bed with cords, by the side of the glazed and perhaps painted tiles, which might beautify the walls of the house towards this court. Many of his quotations from the ancients do, in a very agreeable manner, at once illustrate this account, and receive new light from it.'

DODDRIDGE
It is allowable to suppose that the parapet was built solid, as is common in those flat-roofed houses, and there might have been a projection of 'tilings'—surrounding the court and forming a kind of rude portico, as may be seen in many oriental dwellings. This tiling is so simple, as to be capable of being removed and replaced again in a very few minutes, at the expense only of a little mortar, with which the semi-cylindrical tiles are secured in their places. *Ed.*

'Ought we not to be as tender and zealous in all the offices of the truest friendship, as were the attendants and friends of this poor paralytic; and to imitate, so far as suits the difference of circumstances, their importunate application, and their lively faith?'

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26 And they were all amazed, and they glorified God, and were filled with fear, saying, We have seen strange things to-day.

27 ¶ And after these things he went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom; and he said unto him, 'Follow me.

28 And he was left all, rose up, and followed him.

29 And Levi made him a great feast in his own house; and there was a great company of publicans, and of others, that sat down with them.

30 But their Scribes and Pharisees murmured against his disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners?

31 And Jesus answering, said unto them, 'They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.'

32 I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

[Practical Observations.]

33 ¶ And they said unto him, 'Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?'

34 And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them?

35 But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and

then when He spake the best of blessings, *Thy sins are forgiven thee!*

2. The duties hereby taught and recommended to us. (1.) In our applications to Christ, we must be very pressing and urgent: that is an evidence of faith, and is very pleasing to Christ, and prevailing with Him; The friends of this sick man pressed through every difficulty, till they brought him to Christ, v. 18, 19. In this, Jesus Christ saw their faith, v. 20. Now here He has taught us to put the best construction on words and actions that they will bear. When the centurion and the woman of Canaan were in no care at all to bring the patients, they interceded for, into Christ's presence, but believed that He could cure them at a distance, He commended their faith. But though in these there seemed to be a different notion of the thing, and an apprehension that it was requisite the patient should be brought into his presence, yet He did not censure and condemn their weakness, but made the best of it, and even in this saw their faith. It is a comfort to us, that we serve a Master who is willing to make the best of us. (2.) When we are sick, we should be more in care to get our sins pardoned, than to get our sickness removed. Christ, in what He said to this man, taught us, when we seek to God for health, to begin with seeking to Him for pardon. (3.) The mercies which we have the comfort of, God must have the praise of. The man departed to his own house, glorifying God, v. 25. To Him belong the escapes from death, and in them, therefore, He must be glorified. (4.) The miracles Christ wrought, were amazing to them that saw them, and we ought to glorify God in them, v. 26.

V. 27—39. All this, except the last verse, we had before in Matthew and Mark; it is an account of some of the wonders of the grace of our Lord Jesus, which, to those who understand things aright, are no less cogent proofs of his being sent of God, than the miracles He wrought in nature.

I. It was a wonder of his grace, that He

then shall they fast in those days.

36 ¶ And he spake also a parable unto them, 'No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; for otherwise, then both the new and the old, and the piece that was taken out of the new, agreeth not with the old.'

37 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish.

38 But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved.

39 No man also, having drunk old wine, straightway desireth new; for he saith, 'The old is better.'

h 7:16. Matt. 9:8. 12:23. Mark 2:12. 12:41. 13:35. Gal. 1:24. 1:37. Jer. 33:9. Hos. 3:5. Matt. 28:8. Acts 5:11—13. k Matt. 9:9. 10:3. Matthew. Mark 2:14. 3:18. l 18:22. Matt. 4:19—21. 8:22. 16:24. John 1:43. 12:26. 21:19—22. m 11. 9:59—62. 1 Kings 19:19—21. Matt. 10:22—27. n John 12:2. o Matt. 9:10. Mark 2:15. 1 Cor. 5:9. 11. 10:27. p 17:21. 7:29. 30, 39. 15:1, 2. 18:11. 19:7. Is. 65:5. Matt. 21:28—32. Mark 7:3.

would call a publican from the receipt of custom, to be his disciple and follower, v. 27. It was wonderful that He would admit poor fishermen to that honor, men of the lowest rank; but much more, that He would admit publicans, men of the worst reputation; in this, Christ humbled Himself, and appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh; by this He exposed Himself, and got the invidious character of a Friend of publicans and sinners.

II. It was a wonder of his grace, that that call was made immediately effectual, v. 28. Publicans commonly had little inclination to religion, but this one for religion's sake left a good place in the custom-house, (which probably was his livelihood, and where he stood fair for better preferment,) and rose up and followed Christ. There is no heart too hard for the Spirit and grace of Christ to work upon, nor any difficulties in the way of a sinner's conversion, insuperable to his power.

III. It was a wonder of his grace, that He would not only admit a converted publican into his family, but would keep company with unconverted publicans, that He might have an opportunity of doing their souls good; He justified Himself in it, as agreeing with the great design of his coming into the world. Here is a wonder of grace indeed, that Christ undertakes to be the Physician of souls distempered by sin, and ready to die of the distemper; (v. 31.) that He has a particular regard to sick sinners as his patients, convinced, awakened sinners, that see their need of the Physician; that He came, to call sinners, the worst of sinners, to repentance, and to assure them of pardon, upon repentance, v. 32. This is glad tidings of great joy indeed.

IV. It was a wonder of his grace, that He did so patiently bear the contradiction of sinners against Himself and his disciples, v. 30. He did not express his resentments of the cavils of the scribes and Pharisees, as He justly might have done, but answered them with reason and meekness; and, took that occasion to show his

q Jer. 8:22. Matt. 9:12, 13. Mark 2:17. 14:18, 19. 15:7, 10. 18:10—14. 19:10. 24:47. Is. 55:7, 7. 57:15. Matt. 19:11. Acts 2:38. 3:19, 26. 5:31. 17:30. 20:21. 26:18—20. 1 Tim. 1:15, 16. 2 Tim. 2:25, 26. r 18:12. Is. 58:3—5. Jer. 7:6. Matt. 9:14—17. Mark 2:18—22. t 11:1. 20:47. Prov. 28:9. Is. 1:15. Matt. 8:5, 6. 23:4. Mark 12:40. Acts 9:11. Rom. 10:2, 3. u Judg. 14:10, 11. Ps. 45:14. Cant. 2:6, 7. 3:10, 11. 5:8. 6:1. Matt. 25:1—10. Rev. 19:7—9. v Ps. 45:10—16. Is. 54:5. 62:5. Zeph. 3:17. Matt. 22:2. John 3:28. 2 Cor. 11:2. Eph. 5:25—27. y 24:17. Is. 55:7, 7. Dan. 9:25. Zech. 14:3, 4. 16:4—7. 16—22, 28. 17:11—13. Acts 1:9. 3:21. z Matt. 6:17, 18. Acts 13:3, 14, 50. 1 Cor. 7:5. 2 Cor. 11:27. a Matt. 9:16, 17. Mark 2:21, 22. b Josh. 9:4, 13. Ps. 119:83. c Ez. 36:26. 2 Cor. 5:17. Gal. 2:14. —14. 4:9—11. 5:1—6. 6:13, 14. Phil. 3:5—7. Col. 2:19—23. 1 Tim. 4:8. Heb. 8:8—13. 13:9, 10. Rev. 21:5. d Jer. 6:16. Mark 7:7—13. Rom. 4:11, 12. Heb. 11:1, 2, 29.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16—32. In tracing the example of our divine Savior, we find that He interchanged public services and retired devotion; and that the sole business of his life was to glorify God by doing good to men, and to commune with his Father. Thus our several duties should in succession occupy our time, and piety and charity be connected in all our conduct. A life thus spent will best manifest our faith in Christ, and evince that He has both pardoned our sins and healed our souls. When believers thus copy their Lord's example, they will effectually confute the malicious cavils and perverse reasonings of opposers: and, being enabled by divine grace to delight in the holy service of God, which no man by nature can do, they will not only glorify Him themselves, but excite others to

do the same. Indeed, when, through 'the power of the Lord,' the avaricious are induced to forego their unlawful, lucrative employments, and the profligate to live sober, godly lives; mere spectators must sometimes be astonished, and allow that they have witnessed 'strange things,' which they did not expect, and cannot account for.—As Jesus 'came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance,' we too should be ready to go among them, as far as we have a prospect of doing them good; and especially to direct them to the only Physician of distempered souls; and if we well know our own sinfulness, and the power and grace of the divine Redeemer, we shall not disdain or despair of any.

SCOTT.

Verses 27—32.

(Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 9: 9—13. Mark 2: 13—17.) Matthew says of himself, 'He arose and followed Him'; but Luke says of him, 'He left all.' Matthew only says, 'Jesus sat at meat'; but Luke says of him, 'He made a great feast.' True saints love not to speak of their own excellencies; but it is fitting that those who see them, should 'not be silent concerning them.' Milner

SCOTT.

(28.) 'Left all.' His office and every thing connected with it. He who wishes to preach the Gospel like the disciples of Christ, must have no earthly entanglement. If he have, his whole labor will be marred by it. The concerns of his own soul, and those of the multitudes to whom he preaches, are sufficient to engross all his attention, and employ all his powers.

Dr A. CLAUKE.

(29.) And Levi made him a great feast. 'He said Harve

CHAP. V.

Jesus vindicates his disciples from the charge of breaking the Sabbath, 1-5. He shews it lawful to do good on the Sabbath; and restores a withered hand, 6-10. His enemies are filled with madness, 11. He spends the night in prayer, 12; appoints the twelve apostles, 13-16; heals diverse diseased persons, 17-19; pronounces blessings and woes, 20-26; and teaches love to enemies, meekness, liberality, mercy and candor, 27-35. His shewings, by parables, that knowledge is indispensably useful in teachers, and holiness in those who hear, 36-42. The tree is known by his fruit, 43-45. The parable of the wise and the foolish builders, 46-48.

AND it came to pass on the second

Ex 12:15, 16. Lev. 23:7, 10, 11, 15. Deut. 16:9.

Now they were as the children of the bride-chamber, when the Bridegroom is with them, when they have plenty and joy, and every day is a festival. Christ was welcomed, wherever He came, and they for his sake, and as yet they met with little or no opposition: but this will not last always; *The days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them*, v. 35. When Christ shall leave them with their hearts full of sorrow, their hands full of work, and the world full of enmity and rage against them, *then shall they fast, shall not be so well fed as they are now. We both hunger and thirst, and are naked*, 1 Cor. 4: 11. Then Providence will call them to it, they will then serve the Lord, *with fastings*, Acts 13: 2.

VII. It was a wonder of his grace, that He proportioned their exercises to their strength. He would not put new cloth upon an old garment, (v. 36.) nor new wine into old bottles; (v. 37, 38.) He would not, as soon as ever He had called them, put them on the strictness and austerities of discipleship, lest they should be tempted to fly off. When God brought Israel

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 33-39. Let all, who would prosper in the divine life, attend chiefly to the grand essentials of religion; for when externals and circumstantialia are magnified above their real importance, censoriousness, bigotry and divisions are the inevitable consequences.—Because humble Christians practise their self-denial, and perform their devotions, in secret, and without ostentation, Pharisees may sometimes be ready to conclude that they neither fast nor pray at all. But every part of our duty has its proper season and proportion, as stated in the Scriptures; and it should have the same in the conduct of our lives: the gracious presence of our Beloved makes a feast to our souls, so long as it is continued to us; but when our sins provoke his departure or his frown, we are called to mourn

nies of Taitan and Ammonius very justly separated between this feast and the calling of Matthew. And to the many convincing arguments of Mr. Jones, to prove that they ought to be separated, I will add, that to me it seems very evident they were not both on the same day, from this consideration, so many things happened before the calling of Matthew, that the day must be far advanced, and there could not have been time to prepare a great feast, and invite a number of guests, at least, till supper: and so many things happened after the feast, that we cannot suppose them to have been crowded into the little remainder of the evening after supper; on which account it is certain the feast was after the day of his calling, perhaps some months after.

(30.) *Their scribes, &c.* 'That is, the scribes of that place, viz. the Capernaumites or Galileans.'

Verses 33-38.

(Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 9: 14-17. Mark 2: 18-22.) (36-38.) *No man, &c.* Perhaps the impropriety of attempting a coalition between the religion of the Pharisees, and even that of John's disciples, when they did not become the disciples of Jesus, may be meant. True religion has been for substance the same, since the revelation of a Savior to fallen man. Even the ritual law, and the whole Mosaic dispensation, was intended to answer special purposes only for a season. (*Notes, Rom. 5: 20, 21. Gal. 3: 19-22.*) and the traditions of the elders, with the ceremonies of the law, and many uncommanded plausible austerities, formed the religion of the strictest sect of the Jews, in our Lord's days, to which many of John's disciples, (as distinct from Christ's) seem in great measure to have conformed. But Jesus came, to introduce another and better dispensation, than even that of Moses, which was 'waxing old and ready to vanish away,' (*Notes, Heb. 8: 8-13, v. 13.*) as well as to vindicate the moral law from the corrupt glosses and traditions of the Pharisees. He would not, therefore, allow his disciples to attempt a coalition between his religion and that of the Pharisees. Fasting, as far as obligatory and useful, would form a part of the new dispensation, and not be discredited by the superstition, hypocrisy, and spiritual pride, which then attended it. But, as things were at that time, it would be as absurd to retain any part of the old system, and to graft Christianity upon it, as to put new undressed cloth on an old, worn-out garment; or new fermenting wine, into old leather-bottles. Thus the Jews, 'going about to establish their own righteousness,' and to shore up the old building by props and buttresses, refused to build on the Foundation which God Himself had laid. (*Note, Rom. 10: 1-4.*) This attempt at a coalition between the old and new dispensations, or rather between the religion of the Pharisees and that of Jesus, was the grand fault of the Judaizing teachers of Christianity, against whom Paul as zealously contended, especially in his epistle to the Galatians. They wanted to mend the pharisaical religion, which was as an old, worn-out garment, with the Gospel; and to

out of Egypt, He would not bring them by the way of the Philistines, lest they should repent, when they saw war, and return into Egypt. Exod. 13: 17. So Christ would train up his followers gradually to discipline; for no man having drunk old wine, will of a sudden straightway desire new, or relish it, but will say, *The old is better*, because he has been used to it, v. 39. The disciples will be tempted to think their old way of living better, till they are by degrees trained up to this way whereunto they are called. Or, turn it the other way. Let them be accustomed a while to religious exercises, and then they will abound in them as much as you do; but we must not be too hasty with them. Calvin takes it as an admonition to the Pharisees, not to boast of their fasting, nor to despise his disciples because they did not in like manner signalize themselves; for the profession of the Pharisee was indeed pompous and gay, like new wine, that is brisk and sparkling, whereas all wise men say, *The old is better*; which, though it doth not give its color so well in the cup, yet is more warming in the stomach, and more wholesome. Christ's disciples, though they had not so much of the form of godliness, had more of the power of it.

CHAP. VI. v. 1-11. In this chapter, we have Christ's exposition of the moral law, which He came not to destroy, but to fulfil, and to fill up by his Gospel.

These two passages of story we had both in Matthew and Mark, and they were there laid

and fast; as well as pray. The Lord, however, trains up his people gradually for the trials and hardships allotted them; and, in perfect wisdom and tenderness, He proportions their services to their strength: we should therefore copy his example, in dealing with the weak in faith, the young convert, or the tempted, discouraged believer.—Those who have been used to divine consolations, and a close walk with God, have not only lost their relish for earthly joys, but will not easily be brought to attend to those novel inventions and human additions to religion, which, though ostentatious and showy, are far less valuable and satisfactory, than a life of humble faith, and devoted obedience to the commandments of our Lord and Savior.

SCOTT.

put the new wine of the Gospel into the old bottles, of the antiquated ceremonies of the Mosaic law, and the traditions of the elders. This interpretation has never before been proposed, as far as I know, and I suggest it with diffidence; having never been satisfied with the interpretation generally given.

SCOTT.

(36.) *No man putteth, &c.* 'In the exposition of an allegory, the nature of the thing spoken of is to be considered, in order that the tendency of every comparison may appear, and also the literal meaning which is concealed under the figurative expressions. Nothing is added here by way of explanation; the Pharisees had asked (v. 33.) why Christ's disciples did not fast, but lived more cheerfully than those of John. Our Savior replied in the words of this verse, "No man," &c. Nothing, then, can lead us to understand the passage but the nature of the subject. Now in common life no one voluntarily and readily acts indiscreetly, or in an unbecoming manner. Therefore, says Christ, since no one in common life acts thus indiscreetly, neither do I require my disciples to do so. The time will come (v. 35.) when they will fare hardly enough. At present, neither circumstances, time, nor place, require it; things must be accommodated to circumstances. The passage being thus considered, the meaning of the allegory becomes very evident.'

HORNE.

'By this proverb Christ would signify that men are not suddenly to be brought to a more strict code of life, but are to become accustomed to it gradually; which idea is here accommodated to the case in hand. For the austerity of the Pharisees is compared to new wine, and the gentle mildness of Christ to old wine.'

ROESEN

Verse 39.

As old wine is preferable to new, and those who have been used to the former cannot readily relish the latter; so the substantial of religion, which have been the same, from the first, are far more valuable than the peculiarities of any party, or even than the ceremonial observances of the Mosaic law; and they who have been habitually conversant with the former, will not easily be brought to pay great regard to the latter; but will deem repentance, faith, and holiness far preferable to them all. The Christian dispensation was new, compared with the Mosaic covenant; yet the religion contained in it is as old wine, it is that of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, &c. with only circumstantial variations. (*Notes, Heb. 11.*) The verse, however, is generally explained to mean, that men cannot at once change their modes and habits of life, but must gradually be inured to those kinds and degrees of self-denial, which are not immediately necessary; and therefore Jesus did not think proper to impose such austerities on his disciples at once, but gradually to train them up to self-denial, hardship, and suffering.

SCOTT.

'Is better.] 'That is, softer, milder, more agreeable to the palate. "Use forms the taste."

BLOOMFIELD.

'Christ would not discourage his disciples by over rigorous institu-

sabbath after the first, ^c that he went through the corn-fields; ^e and his disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands.

2 And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, ^d Why do ye that which is ^e not lawful to do on the sabbath-days?

3 And Jesus answering them said, 'Have ye not read so much as this, ^f what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him;

4 How he went into the house of God, and did take and eat the shew-bread, and gave also to them that were with him; ^g which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone?

5 And he said unto them, 'That the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

together; (Matt. 12: 1. Mark 2: 23. 3: 1.) because though happening at some distance of time from each other, both were designed to rectify the mistakes of the scribes and Pharisees concerning the sabbath day, on the bodily rest of which they laid greater stress, and required greater strictness, than the Lawgiver intended. Here,

1. Christ justifies his disciples in a *work of necessity* for themselves on that day, namely, *plucking the ears of corn*, when they were hungry. This story here has a date, which we had not in the other evangelists; it was on the *second Sabbath after the first*, (v. 1.) that is, as Dr. Whithy thinks pretty clear, the *first Sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread*, from which day they reckoned the *seven weeks* to the feast of pentecost. Whether this circumstance be mentioned, to intimate that this Sabbath was thought to have some peculiar honor, which aggravated the offence of the disciples, or only to intimate that, being the first Sabbath after the offering of the first fruits, it was the time of the year when the corn was near ripe, is not material. We may observe,

1. Christ's disciples ought not to be nice and curious in their diet, at any time, especially on sabbath-days, but to take up with what is easiest got, and be thankful. These disciples *plucked the ears of corn, and did eat*; (v. 1.) a little served them, and that which had no delicacy in it.

2. Many that are themselves guilty of the greatest crimes, are forward to censure others for the most innocent and inoffensive actions; v. 2. The Pharisees quarrelled with them as doing that which was *not lawful to do on the sabbath-days*, when it was their own practice to feed deliciously on sabbath-days, more than on all other days.

3. Jesus Christ will justify his disciples when they are unjustly censured, and will own and accept of them in many a thing, which men tell them it is *not lawful for them to do*. How well it is for us, that men are not to be our judges, and that Christ will be our Advocate!

4. Ceremonial appointments may be dispensed with, in cases of necessity; as was the appropriating of the shew-bread to the priests,

when David was by Providence brought into such a strait, that he must have either that or none, v. 3, 4. And if God's own appointments might he thus set aside for a greater good, much more may the traditions of men.

5. Works of necessity are particularly allowable on the sabbath-day; but we must take heed that we turn not this liberty into licentiousness, and to the prejudice of the work of the day.

6. Jesus Christ, though He allowed works of necessity on the sabbath-day, will have us to know and remember that it is his day, and therefore is to be spent in his service, and to his honor; v. 5. *The Son of man is Lord also of the Sabbath*. In the kingdom of the Redeemer, the sabbath-day is to be turned into a *Lord's day*; the property of it is, in some respects, to be altered, and it is to be observed chiefly in honor of the Redeemer, as it had been before in honor of the Creator; (Jer. 16: 14, 15.) in token of this, it shall not only have a new name, the *Lord's day*, (yet not forgetting the old, for it is a Sabbath of rest still,) but shall be transferred to a new day, the first day of the week.

II. He justifies Himself in doing *works of mercy* for others on the sabbath-day. Observe in this,

1. Christ on the sabbath-day *entered into the synagogue*. Note, 'It is our duty, as we have opportunity, to sanctify Sabbaths in religious assemblies. On the Sabbath there ought to be a *holy convocation*; and our place must not be empty without very good reason.

2. In the synagogue, on the sabbath-day, He taught. Giving and receiving instruction from Christ is very proper work for a sabbath-day, and for a *synagogue*. Christ took all opportunities to teach, not only his disciples, but ^e a multitude.

3. Christ's patient was one of his hearers: (v. 6.) whether he had any expectation to be healed, does not appear. But those that would be *cured by the grace of Christ*, must be willing to learn the doctrine of Christ.

4. There were some who came with no other design than to pick quarrels with Him, v. 7. The scribes and Pharisees would not, as became *generous adversaries*, give Him fair warning,

^b Matt. 12:1. Mark 2:23.

^c Deut. 23:25.

^d 7-9. 5:33. Matt. 12:2. 15:2. 23:

23:24. Mark 2:24. John 5:11-16.

^e 9:1-16.

^f Ex. 20:10. 31:15. 35:2. Num. 15:

30-35.

^g Matt. 12:6, 5. 19:4. 21:16, 42. 23:1.

Mark 2:25. 12:10, 28.

^h 1 Sam. 21:3-6. Matt. 12:3, 4. Mark

2:25, 26.

ⁱ Lev. 24:5-9.

^j 1 Sam. 12:7-8. Mark 2:27, 28. 9:7.

Rev. 1:10.

tions; and it is unfit that his religion should be burthened with them. He suits the duties of his people to their circumstances, and kindly proportions their work to their strength, with a tender regard to their weakness, till by degrees they may be fitted for the more difficult and humbling services. From his example, and the whole genius of his Gospel, let us learn to make all proper allowances to those about us, that we may let them, and train them up as they are able to bear it; not crushing them under any unnecessary load, nor denying them any indulgence which true friendship will permit us to grant them; lest the good ways of God should be misrepresented, disgraced and abandoned through our imprudent, though well-meaning severity: a caution to be peculiarly observed in our conduct towards young persons; and not to be forgotten with respect to those who, like the disciples here in question, are training up for the ministerial office.' Doddridge.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. v. 1. *Second Sabbath, &c.* Some render the original words, 'the second prime sabbath'; supposing that the day of Pentecost was meant, and that it fell on the sabbath-day. The three great feasts were, in many respects, observed as sabbaths; (*Marg. Ref.* a.) for the first day of unleavened bread began in the evening, after the close of the fourteenth day of the first month, about the time when the passover was eaten. (*Notes, Ex.* 12: 15-20.) But when either the first day of unleavened bread, or the day of Pentecost, or the first day of the feast of tabernacles, fell on a sabbath, it was reckoned peculiarly sacred. When the first day of unleavened bread fell thus, it was called 'the first prime sabbath'; the Pentecost falling thus, was called 'the second prime sabbath'; and the first day of the feast of tabernacles, in this case, was called 'the third prime sabbath.' This is the opinion of Grotius, Hammond, and many learned expositors. But others render the words, 'The first sabbath, after the second day of unleavened bread.' From this day seven weeks were numbered, and then the Pentecost, or the feast of weeks, was observed. Epiphanius expressly says, our Lord's disciples did this, on the sabbath following the first day of unleavened bread.' Whithy. If this interpretation be adopted, the ears of corn plucked by the disciples must have been barley; for the wheat was not ripe till some time after. And, though the offering of wave-loaves, for the first-fruits, at the feast of Pentecost, (*Note, Lev.* 23: 15-21.) shows that some of the harvest was then gathered in; yet it does not follow, but that some might remain in the fields, unreaped, at the same time. It should be observed, that in case there was no likelihood of any barley being fit to cut, at the time when the passover was celebrated, otherwise have been celebrated; a moon, or month, was intercalated, and so the beginning of the first month was fixed to the subsequent new moon; and by the passover all the other feasts were regulated. These are the most probable opinions on this subject, which is essentially of greater difficulty than importance. Scott.

Second Sabbath after the first. 'Among the different explanations given of this term, [the original Greek word,] I find nothing but conjecture, and therefore think it the safest way to render the word by one similarly formed in our language. *second prime*—on the sabbath called *second prime*. This is what all the best translators have given in Latin. In the Syriac there is no word answering to it. The common version has, in this instance, neither followed the letter, nor given us words which convey any determinate sense.' CAMPBELL.

'*The first Sabbath after the second day of unleavened bread.*'] So I venture to render the [original] word used by Luke; yet not without much hesitation; for it is so singular an expression, that I despair of seeing its sense exactly ascertained.' DODDRIDGE.

Second, first. It is worthy of remark that the sabbath, which is thus named in Luke 6: 1 is called in Matt. 12: 1, and in Mark 2: 23, simply the sabbath. What this second first sabbath is, is somewhat difficult to be explained. The majority of critics suppose it was that which immediately succeeded the second day of the passover. For, since the Jews numbered their days from the passover to the Pentecost, (*Deut.* 16: 9.) the first sabbath after the second day from the passover seems to have been properly enough termed the *second-first*. JAHN.

VERSES 2-11.

(*Marg. Ref.*—*Notes, Matt.* 12: 1-21. *Mark* 2: 23-28. 3: 1-5.) SCOTT.

(4.) *The high priest.* 'If our present reading (which Beza suspects, though older than the Syriac version) be allowed as genuine, here is a remarkable instance of a person being designated by an office which he did not bear till after the date of the event referred to: in like manner as Cyrenius (*Luke* 2: 2.) is called governor of Syria, because he was so after the enrolment. It seems indeed that Ahimelech was high priest when David took the shew-bread, &c. &c. all the story he is only called the priest; and as it is merely an arbitrary supposition that the father was sometimes called Ahithair, or the son Ahimelech, it seems impossible to defend the received reading, otherwise than, by supposing, with Grotius, that as Ahithair was a much more celebrated person than his father, our Lord mentions his name in preference to the other. He was probably present, and for any thing we certainly know, his aged father might act by his advice in the affair referred to, to which if he did, it was exceedingly proper to mention him first.' DODDRIDGE.

(5.) *Is Lord also of the Sabbath.* 'This certainly implies, that the Sabbath was an institution of great and distinguished importance; and may perhaps also refer to the signal authority which Christ, by the ministry of his apostles, should exert over it, in changing it from the seventh to the first day of the week.' SCOTT.

3 ¶ And ¹ it came to pass also on another sabbath, that ² he entered into the synagogue and taught: ³ and there was a man whose right hand was withered.

7 And the Scribes and Pharisees ¹ watched him, whether he would heal on the sabbath-day: ² that they might find an accusation against him.

8 But ¹ he knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, ² Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose, and stood forth.

9 Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; ¹ Is it lawful on the sabbath-days to do good, or to do evil; ² to save life or to destroy it?

10 And, ¹ looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, ² Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other.

11 And ¹ they were filled with madness; ² and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.

12 ¶ And it came to pass in those days, ¹ that he went out into a mountain to pray, and ² continued all night in prayer to God.

13 And ¹ when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose ² twelve, whom also he named ³ apostles:

14 ¹ Simon (whom he also named Peter) and ² Andrew his bro-

ther, if He did *heal* on the sabbath-day, they would construe it into a violation of the fourth commandment, which they ought in honor and justice to have done, because it was a case *without precedent*, (none having ever cured as He did,) and therefore could not be an *adjudged* case; but they basely *watched* him, as the lion does his prey, whether He would *heal* on the sabbath-day, that they might find an accusation against Him, and surprise Him with a prosecution.

5. That Jesus Christ was neither *ashamed* nor *afraid* to own the purposes of his grace, in the face of those who, He knew, confronted them, v. 8. *He knew their thoughts*, and what they designed, and He bid the man *rise, and stand forth*, hereby to try the patient's faith and boldness.

6. He appealed to his adversaries themselves, and to the conviction of natural conscience, whether it was the design of the fourth commandment to restrain men from doing good on the sabbath-day, which they have an opportunity for, and which cannot so well be put off to another time; v. 9. No wicked men are such *absurd and unreasonable* men as persecutors are, who study to do evil to men for doing good.

7. He healed the poor man, with a word's speaking, though He knew that his enemies would not only take offence at it, but take advantage against Him for it, v. 10. Let not we be drawn off, either from our duty or from our usefulness, by the oppression we meet with in it.

8. His adversaries were hereby enraged so much the more against Him, v. 11. Instead of being convinced by this miracle, as they ought to have been, that He was a Teacher come from God instead of being brought to love Him as a Benefactor to mankind, they were filled with *madness*, vexed that they could not frighten Him from doing good, or hinder the growth of his interest in the affections of the people. They were *mad* at Christ, *mad* at the people, *mad* at themselves. Anger is a *short madness*, malice a *long one*; *impotent* malice, especially, *disappointed* malice; such was theirs. When they could not prevent his working this miracle, they *communed* one with another what other way they might take to run him down. We may well stand amazed, that men should be so wicked as to do this, and that the Son of God should be so patient as to suffer it.

V. 12—19. In these verses we have our Lord Jesus in *secret*, in his family, and in public; and in all three acting like Himself.

I. In *secret*, we have Him *praying* to God, v. 12. This evangelist takes frequent notice of Christ's retirements, to give us an example of

secret prayer, by which we must keep up our communion with God daily, and without which it is impossible that the soul should prosper. In those days, when his enemies were filled with madness against Him, and were contriving what to do to Him, He went out to pray; *tho'* He might answer the type of David, (Ps. 109: 4.) *For my love they are my adversaries, but I give myself unto prayer.* Observe, 1. He was alone with God; *He went out into a mountain to pray*, where He might have no disturbance or interruption given Him. Whether there was any convenient place built on this mountain, for devout people to retire to for their private devotions, as some think, to me seems very uncertain. He went into a mountain, for privacy, and therefore, probably, would not go to a place frequented by others. 2. He was long alone with God; *He continued all night in prayer.* We think one half hour a great deal to spend in the duties of the closet; but Christ continued a whole night in meditation and secret prayer. We have a great deal of business at the throne of grace, and we should take a great delight in communion with God, and by both those may be kept sometimes long at prayer.

II. In his family, we have Him nominating his immediate attendants, that should be his constant auditors and witnesses, hereafter to be sent forth as apostles, his messengers to the world, to preach his Gospel, and plant his church, v. 13. After He had continued all night in prayer, one would think, *when it was day*, He would have reposed Himself, and got some sleep. No, as soon as any body was stirring, *He called unto Him his disciples*. In serving God, our great care should be, not to lose time, but to make the end of one good duty the beginning of another. Ministers are to be ordained with prayer more than ordinarily solemn. The number of the apostles was twelve; it is the third time we have met with them, and in each of the three places, the order of their names differs, to teach both ministers and Christians not to be nice in giving, much less in taking precedence; but, looking on it as a thing not worth taking notice of, let it be as it lights. He that in Mark was called *Thaddeus*, in Matthew, *Lebbeus*, whose surname was *Thaddeus*, is here called *Judas the brother*, *James*, the same that wrote the Epistle of Jude. Simon, who in Matthew and Mark was called the *Canaanite*, is here called *Simon Zelotes*, perhaps for his great zeal in religion. Concerning the twelve here named, we have reason to say, as the queen of Sheba did of Solomon's servants, *Happy are they men, and happy are these thy servants, that stand continually before Thee, and hear thy wisdom*; never were men so privileged, and yet one of them had a devil, and proved a traitor; (v. 16.) nor

k Matt. 12:9-14. Mark 3:1-6.
l 4:16, 31. 13:10. Matt. 4:23.
m 1 Kings 13:4. Zech. 11:17. John
3:5.
n 13:14. 14:1-6. Ps. 37:32, 33. 38:
12. Is. 29:17. Jer. 30:10. Mark 3:
2. John 5:10-18. 9:16-18-29.
o 11:53, 54. 29-30. Matt. 26:59, 60.
p 5:22. 1 Chi. 24:9. 29:17. Ps. 44:
21. John 2:26. 9:17. Heb. 4:13.
Rev. 2:23.
q Is. 42:4. John 9:4. Acts 20:24.

Phil. 1:28. 1 Pet. 4:1.
r 14:3. Matt. 12:12, 13. Mark 3:4.
s 9:58.
t Mark 3:5.
u Ex. 4:8, 7. 1 Kings 13:6. Ps. 107:
20. John 5:8.
v 4:28. Ps. 21:2. Ec. 9:3. Acts 5:
33. 7:54. 26:11.
y Matt. 12:14, 15. 21:45, 46. John 7:1.
z Acts 1:15, 16. 11:54. 5:33, 34.
aa Ps. 55:15-17. 109:3, 4. Dan. 6:10.

Mark 1:35. 14:34-38. Heb. 5:7
a Gen. 22:24-26. Ps. 22:2. Mat.
14:23-25. Mark 6:46-48. Col. 4:5.
b 9:1, 2. Matt. 9:36-38. 10:1-4.
c Mark 3:13-19. 6:7.
d 22:30. Matt. 19:28. Rev. 1:1.
e 21:4.
f 11:41. Eph. 2:20. 4:11. Heb. 2:4.
g 2 Pet. 3:2. Rev. 18:20.
h 5:8. John 1:40-42. 21:15-20.
i Acts 1:13. 2 Pet. 1:1.
j Matt. 1:18. John 6:8.

(7.) *Watched Him.* 'Maliciously watched Him. This is the import of the original word, (ch. 14: 1. 20: 20.) and in the parallel place, Mark 3: 1. Raphaelus has proved, by several quotations, that this is the proper meaning of the term.'

(11.) *They were filled with madness.* 'The malice of the Pharisees did not restrain the benevolence of our compassionate Savior, nor deprive the poor patient of his cure. Such let our conduct be! Let us not be overcome of evil; let not the most unjust censures, or the most malicious opposition break our spirits, so as to prevent us from doing our duty. If others are mad with persecuting rage, let us pity them; and let all their fury against the cause of God be improved as a motive to excite our most zealous and courageous endeavors for its service.'

Doddridge.
'Pride, obstinacy, and interest, combined together, are capable of any thing. When men have once framed their conscience according to their passions, madness passes for zeal, the blackest conspiracies for pious designs, and the most horrid attempts for heroic actions.'

Quesnel, in CLARKE.

Verse 12.

Our Lord spent the whole night, preceding the appointment of his apostles, alone upon a mountain, 'in prayer to God.' Some think, that the original words signify 'an oratory of God,' or small 'rudding erected for retirement and devotion; and the construction of the ori-

ginal best suits that rendering. Jesus, however, doubtless was engaged in prayer: during the whole night, whilst his disciples seem to have gone to their rest as usual. 'Christ, by choosing his twelve apostles, not without long and fervent prayer, shows what piety is needful in ecclesiastical elections, or in the choice and ordination of ministers.' Beza. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Acts 13: 1—3. 1 Tim. 5: 21, 22, 24, 25.)

Scott.

In prayer to God.] Or, as many critics would say,—in the prayer of God, i. e. very earnest, importunate prayer; or—in the oratory of God, i. e. a place for private worship, distinct from the synagogue, and more ancient: of which, (according to some—though others are of a different opinion.) there were many, both before and after the Babylonish captivity, and especially in the time of Christ. For interpreting the passage in this way, Dr. Whitby assigns as a general reason, what may be considered the idiom of the Hebrew language in relation to such phrases as *the mountains of God*, *the sacrifices of God*, &c.; according to which, it may have either of the constructions above given. The word translated, *continued all night*, may signify, to lodge in a place, for a night, but is used also to signify, to pass the night in a particular state. Kypke (in Clarke) concludes, by translating the passage thus: 'He passed the night without sleep in prayer to God.' Doddridge, Campbell, Horne, and Dr. A. Clarke.

Ed.

ther, James and John
Philip and Bartholomew,

15 Matthew and Thomas,
James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon called Zelotes,

16 And Judas the brother of James, and Judas Iscariot, which also was the traitor.

17 ¶ And he came down with them, and stood in the plain, and the company of his disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, which came to hear him, and to be healed of their diseases;

18 And they that were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed.

19 And the whole multitude sought to touch him: for there went virtue out of him, and healed them all.

[Practical Observations.]
20 ¶ And he lifted up his eyes on his dis-

was Christ deceived in him when He chose him.

III. In public, we have Him preaching and healing, the two great works between which He divided his time, v. 17. He came down with the twelve from the mountain, ready to receive those that resorted to Him; and there presently gathered about Him, not only the company of his disciples, who used to attend Him, but also a great, a mixed multitude out of all Judea and Jerusalem; though it was some scores of miles from Jerusalem to that place of Galilee where Christ now was; and they had there abundance of famous rabbins, that had great names, and bore a mighty sway, yet they came to hear Christ. They came also from the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon; though they who lived there, were generally men of business, and bordered on Canaanites, yet here were some well affected to Christ; such there were dispersed in all parts.

1. They came to hear Him; and He preached to them. Those that have not good preaching near them, had better travel far for it than be without it. It is worth while to go a great way, to hear the word of Christ, and to go out of the way of other business for it.

2. They came to be cured by Him, and He healed them. Some were troubled in body, and some in mind; some had diseases, some had devils; but both, on application to Christ, were healed, for He has power over diseases and devils, (v. 17, 18), over effects and causes. Nay, the whole multitude sought to touch Him, (v. 19), those that were in health as well as those that were sick, and they were all, one way or other,

f 5:10. Matt. 4:21. Mark 1:19, 29.
6:37. 9:2. 14:33. John 21:20—24.
Acts 12:2.
h Matt. 10:13. John 1:45, 46. 6:5. 14:8, 9. Acts 1:13.
i 5:27. Lev. Matt. 9:9.
k John 11:16. 20:24—29.
l Acts 15:13. Gal. 1:19. 2:9. Jam. 1:1.
m Matt. 10:3. Mark 2:14. 3:18. Acts

1:13.
n Matt. 10:4. Mark 3:18. Simon the Canaanite. Acts 1:13.
o Matt. 10:3. Lebbeus, Thaddeus.
Mark 3:18. Thaddeus, John 14:22. Jude 1.
p Matt. 26:14—15. 27:3—5. John 6:70, 71. Acts 1:16—20, 25.
q Matt. 4:23—25. 12:15.

r Matt. 11:21. 15:21. Mark 3:8. 7:24—31.
s 5:15. Matt. 14:34.
t Matt. 15:22. 17:15. Acts 5:16
u 9 Kings 13:21. Matt. 9:30, 31. 14:36.
v Mark 3:10. 6:56. 8:25. Acts 5:15, 16. 19:12.
x 8:45, 46. Mark 5:30. 1 Pet. 2:9. Or y Matt. 12:49, 50. Mark 3:24, 35.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—19. The Lord Jesus will vindicate his disciples against the accusations of their enemies, but He will not allow them to neglect his ordinances and commandments: yet how often do nominal Christians take occasion, from his allowance on the Sabbath of works of necessity and mercy, to spend this holy day in sloth, indulgence, worldly employments, or vain company and dissipation! (Notes, Ex. 20:8—10. Is. 53:13, 14.) This, however, neither consists with his authority and glory, as 'the Lord of the Sabbath,' nor with the real good of man, for whose advantage it was instituted. Let us then, on that day, follow our Savior to the places of public worship; or rather, let us meet Him in his house and at his table; (Matt. 18:19, 20.) and imitate Him, in devoting it to the various duties of piety and charity, to the care of our own souls, and the preservation of the lives, or the alleviation of the miseries, of our brethren around us. And if the enemies of true religion consult to injure us, let us retire and give ourselves up to fervent prayer, according to the difficulty and importance of our work and station.—Serious consideration and earnest prayer should precede the appointment of men to the sacred ministry: and all concerned in so momentous a work, should observe and copy the example of Christ, when He ordained his apostles.

Those, who have thoughts of being thus employed, should retire seriously to examine their motives, and to seek the divine direction, assistance and blessing; and all Christians should join in prayer 'to the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth laborers into his harvest,' and that there may no more be any covetous, treacherous Judas, among those who sustain that sacred character. But at how great a distance do the disciples follow their Lord! Thousands of the votaries of pleasure frequently pass whole nights in the pursuit of it: but how rare for a Christian, or a minister, even in the most important and arduous circumstances, to devote a single night to retired prayer and supplication, or even to abridge himself of any considerable measure of his sleep for that purpose!—Men regard the diseases of their bodies as greater evils than those of their souls; but the Scripture teaches us to form a contrary judgment: for could we from Jesus obtain the most perfect cure of every disease, and secure the greatest degree of health and long life; without deliverance from sin, by the efficacy of his blood, and the energy which proceeds from Him, we must be miserable to all eternity. Yet how few, in proportion, earnestly apply to Him for this inestimable benefit! (P. O. Matt. 9:1—8.)

SCOTT.

Verses 13—16.

(Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 10:1—4. Mark 3:13—19.) SCOTT. (15.) *Zelotes*. 'Some Jews gave this name to themselves, according to Josephus, because they pretended to be more than ordinarily zealous for religion, and yet practised the very worst of actions.' 'But this, (says the judicious Bp. Pearce), Josephus says of the *zealots*, at the time when Vespasian was marching towards Jerusalem. They probably were men of a different character above forty years before; which was the time when Jesus chose his twelve apostles, one of whom had the surname of the *Zealot*.' It is very probable, that this name was first given to certain persons who were more zealous for the cause of pure and undefiled religion than the rest of their neighbors; but, like many other sects and parties who have begun well, they transferred their zeal for the essentials of religion, to non-essential things, and from these to inquisitorial cruelty and murder. See on Matt. 10:4.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 17—19

(Marg. Ref.) (19.) *Virtue*. Or, *power*. The word commonly rendered *virtue*, does not occur in the gospels, or in the Acts of the Apostles; but only, Phil. 4:8. 1 Pet. 2:9. 2 Pet. 1:3, 5. SCOTT. (18.) *Unclean spirits*. 'It seems to me an excessive refinement in the learned editors of the Prussian Testament, to distinguish *unclean spirits* from other evil spirits which might possess men; supposing the word only to signify such kind of spirits as drove men to dwell among the tombs, by which they became ceremonially unclean.' See the notes on Matt. 12:43. 'It is evident, *unclean and evil*'

spirits are generally used as nearly synonymous terms, referring to the moral impurity and malignity of their natures. Compare Matt. 12:43. Luke 11:24. and Rev. 16:13, 14. DODDRIIDGE.

Vers 20.

'The question here raised by interpreters, whether this sermon be the same which we find mentioned Luke the sixth, or only like a sermon spoken at another time and place, is of some concern for the right understanding of the words; for if the sermon be the same in both gospels, and it were spoken only once by Christ, though it be set down twice by the evangelists: the words of one evangelist must be interpreted in a sense agreeable to the other, or else they cannot both be true. Whereas, if our Lord spake the words recorded by Luke, at any other time and place, than the discourse related by Matthew was delivered at, we may give different interpretations to their words; and that this was so, seems highly probable. 1. Because Luke omits as many things recorded by Matthew, as parts of this discourse, viz. from the thirteenth to the thirty-ninth verse of the fifth chapter; all the sixth chapter; and from the sixth to the sixteenth verse of the seventh chapter; that is, the greatest part of this sermon; and also added many woes. 2. Matthew sufficiently informs us, that his sermon was delivered before the healing of the leper; for 'as Christ came down from the mount, the leper came to Him;' (Matt. 8:2.) where as Luke gives us the story of the leper first, and the history of Christ's sermon after. Again, Luke reckons Matthew among those whom Christ had chosen to be of the twelve; and (17.) adds, that Christ was down with them, and preached the following sermon: whereas the words

ciples, and said 'Blessed be ye poor; for yours is the kingdom of God.'

21 Blessed are ye that hunger now; for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now; for ye shall laugh.

22 Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and

to expect any worldly preferment in my service; you must work hard, and fare hard, as poor people do; but you are blessed in your poverty, it shall be no prejudice to your happiness; nay, you are blessed for it, all your losses shall be abundantly made up to you, for yours is the kingdom of God; all the comforts and graces of his kingdom here—all the glories and joys of his kingdom hereafter; yours it shall be, nay, yours it is.' Christ's poor are rich in faith, *Jan. 2: 5.*

2. 'You hunger now; (v. 21.) you are not fed to the full as others are—your commons are so short; or you are so intent on your work, that you have no time to eat bread, you are glad of a few ears of corn, for a meal's meat; thus you hunger now in this world, but in the other world you shall be filled, shall hunger no more, nor thirst any more.'

3. 'You weep now, are often in tears, tears of repentance, tears of sympathy; you are of them that mourn in Zion. But blessed are you; your present sorrows are but preparatories for your future joy; you shall laugh. You have triumphs in reserve; you are but *sowing in tears*, shortly to *reap in joy*,' Ps. 126: 5, 6. They that now *sorrow after a godly sort*, are treasuring up comforts for themselves, or, rather, God is treasuring up comforts for them; and the day is coming, when their mouth shall be filled with laughing, and their lips with rejoicing, Job 8: 21.

4. 'You must undergo the world's ill-will; you must expect all the base treatment that a spiteful world can give you for Christ's sake; you must expect that wicked men will hate you, because your doctrine and life convict and condemn them; and those that have church-power will separate you, will force you to separate yourselves, and then excommunicate you for so doing, and lay you under the most ignominious censures, will pronounce anathemas against you, as scandalous and incorrigible offenders; they will do this with all possible gravity and solemnity, and the pomp and pageantry of appeals to heaven, to make the world believe, and alarm you yourselves too, that it is ratified in heaven thus will they endeavor to make you odious to others, and a terror to yourselves.' This is supposed to be the proper notion of, *They shall cast you out of their synagogues.* 'And they that have not this power, will not fail to show their malice, to the utmost of their power; for they will reproach you, will charge you with the blackest crimes, which you are perfectly innocent of, will fasten on you the blackest characters, which you do not deserve; they will cast out your name as evil, your name as Christians, as apostles; they will do all they can to render these names odious.' This is the application of the eighth beatitude, *Matt. 5: 10–12.*

'Such usage as this seems hard; but blessed are you when so used; so far from depriving you of your happiness, it will greatly add to it; it is an honor to you; therefore rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy, v. 23. Not only bear it, but triumph in it. 'You are hereby highly dignified in the kingdom of grace; you are treated as the prophets were before you; therefore you not only need not be ashamed of it, but may justly rejoice in it, for it will be an evidence that you walk in the same spirit, and in the same steps, are engaged in the same cause, and employed in the same service, with them.' 'You will for this be abundantly recompensed in the kingdom of glory; not only your services for Christ, but your sufferings will come into the account; Your reward is great in heaven. Venture on your sufferings, in a full belief that the glory of heaven will abundantly counterbalance all these hardships; so that, though you may be losers for Christ, you shall not be losers by Him in the end.'

II. Woes denounced against prospering sinners as miserable people, though the world envies them. These we had not in Matthew. It should seem, the best exposition of these woes, compared with the foregoing blessings, is the

94. 4:18. 16:35. 1 Sam. 2:8. Ps. 37:16. 113:7-8. Prov. 16:19. 19:1. Is. 39:19. 57:15-16. 66:2. Zeph. 3:1. Zech. 11:11. Matt. 11:5. John 7:48-49. 1 Cor. 1:26-29. 2 Cor. 6:10. 8:2-9. 1 The. 1:5. 1 Jan. 1:9. 10. 2:5-6. Heb. 2:9. 19:32. 13:28. 14:15. Matt. 5:10. Acts 14:22. 1 Cor. 3:12-23. 2 The. 1:5. Jan. 1:12. 1:5. 1:53. Ps. 42:1-2. 143:8. Is. 51:1-2. 1 Cor. 4:11. 2 Cor. 11:27. 12:10. Ps. 17:15. 63:1-5. 65:4. 107:9. Is. 45:5. 44:3. 49:10. 61:3. Jer. 17:9. 31:14-25. Matt. 2:5. John 4:10. 8:35. 7:37-38. Rev. 7:16, 17. 8:5. Ps. 66:3. 42:3. 119:136. 168:5-36. Ec. 7:2-3. Is. 30:19. 57:17. 19. 61:1-3. Jer. 9:1. 12:17. 31:13. 18:18-20. Ez. 7:16. 84. Matt. 6:4. John 1:35. 1:12-20. Rom. 9:1-3. 1 Cor. 14:6. 6:10. 7:10. 11. Jan. 1:2-4. 1 Pet. 1:5-8. Rev. 21:3-4. e. Jan. 17:1. 21:6. Ps. 28:7. 30:11. 12. 12:12. Is. 12:1-2. 65:14. f. Matt. 5:10-12. 10:22. Mark 13:9. 13:13. John 7:7. 15:18-20. 2 Cor. 11:14-26. Phil. 1:29-30. 1 The. 2:2, 14, 15. 2 Tim. 3:11, 12. 1 Pet. 3:14. 4:12-16. g. 29:3. Is. 63:5. 66:5. John 9:22. 23:34. 12:42. Acts 22:22. 24:5.

'mentioned by Matthew was preached long before his calling to be one of Christ's disciples. Lastly, Matthew's sermon was preached on the mount by our Lord, calling his disciples up to Him; whereas Luke informs us, that our Lord came down with his disciples from a mount, and stood in the plain, and from thence preached what he recorded, 'Whitby on Matt. 5: 1. 'Here being but four of the eight beatitudes mentioned, (Matt. 5: 1–13.) and not one of these being delivered in the same words which are there used; as it is certain this must be another sermon than that on the mount, and spoken to other auditors; so it is only probable, not necessary, that they should bear the same name.' 'Whitby's ninth, tenth, and forty-fifth verses are not found in the sermon on the mount, but for substance in other parts of Matthew's gospel. (Notes, 39, 40, 43–45.) Some however think, that the circumstance of a plain being here mentioned, and a mountain by Matthew, is not of much weight; 'our Lord, say they, might come down from the mountain with his disciples, and finding a large multitude assembled in the plain, He might re-ascend the mountain so far, as to be placed advantageously for being heard by the people, and his disciples might go and seat themselves around Him. Both the evangelists agree that a mountain was near; both agree, that Christ had been healing considerable numbers, just before He delivered this discourse. Luke says, He had been praying all night in the mountain; we may naturally suppose, in the higher and more retired part of it; that He then came down, and healed the numerous afflicted persons; and that seeing the multitudes, He proceeded to teach them. And after both sermons, we find Him entering into Capernaum, and healing the centurion's servant.' Thus different persons view the subject very differently; but the circumstance of Matthew's gospel recording the sermon on the mount, not only before his own appointment to the apostolic office, but before he relates how he was called from the receipt of custom to follow Christ, seems of great weight; and several passages appear to require so different an interpretation from that which has been given of what are thought parallel passages in Matthew, that I scarcely know how to expound them, without adopting Dr. Whitby's conclusion; though I would by no means be confident in so controverted a point. It seems probable, that the sermon recorded by Luke, being delivered at another time, and to another audience, than the sermon on the mount, our Lord saw good to inculcate the same general and important truths, with such variations, as his perfect knowledge of his hearers required.

Blessed, &c.] (Note, Matt. 5: 3.) 'Christ teaches, against all the philosophers, especially the Epicureans, that the chief felicity of man is laid up no where on earth, but in heaven; and that persecution for righteousness' sake, is the way by which we must attain to it.' Beza. All the true disciples of Christ are 'poor in spirit: most of them are the poor of this world;' and many become poor by forsaking all for the sake and Gospel, or parting with all from zeal for his glory; but though He knows their poverty, he declares 'that they are rich,' 'having nothing, and yet possessing all things;' 'poor, yet making many rich' (2 Cor. 6: 3–10, v. 10.) Poverty indeed has advantages in respect of religion; but the blessing here pronounced, belongs to the poor persons, except those who are Christ's true disciples, and

'heirs of the kingdom, which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' (Note, Jan. 2: 5–7.) Voluntary poverty, without any call to it, is no where commanded; and it has generally been a self-righteous rival to true Christianity, and cannot here be intended. (Marg. Ref. 3, a.) It was peculiarly proper, that a special blessing should be pronounced on poor disciples, who have many trials to endure; but the rich, if 'poor in spirit' and crucified to the world, are not excluded from it. (Jan. 1: 9–11.)

(20.) 'Hardly any thing that I have observed in the common harmonies surprises me more, than that so many of them make this discourse to be the very sermon on the mount, recorded at large by Matthew in his fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters. This was delivered by Christ, sitting on a mountain; (Matt. 5: 1.) this, (as it seems from v. 17.) standing in a plain; and, which weighs yet much more with me, there is such a difference in the expression, when the parallel passages come to be compared, that it seems evident, the evangelists have not related it exactly, if they meant to give us the same.'

VERSES 21–23.

(Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 5: 4, 6, 10–12.) It is probable, that many present were kept at a great distance from their necessary food, by attention on our Lord's instructions: and thus their natural hunger might be the effect of their 'hungering after righteousness,' which would insure their being satisfied, in due time, with divine consolations and a holy felicity. Many might also be weeping for sin, or through affliction; but being Christ's disciples, they must be accounted happy, for they would surely rejoice in due time. (Notes, Ps. 128: 5, 6. 2 Cor. 6: 3–10. 7: 9–11.) 'Blessed are they, who patiently suffer poverty, hunger, grief, and persecution for the sake of Christ; that they may obtain that kingdom, and that reward in heaven, He hath promised to his faithful servants.' Whitby. (Notes, Is. 51: 7 & 66: 5, 6. 2 The. 1: 3–10. Jan. 5: 9–11. 1 Pet. 4: 12–16.)

SCOTT.

(22.) They shall separate you.] 'Meaning, they will excommunicate you, or separate you from their communion; Luke, having spoken of their separating or excommunicating them, continues the same idea, in saying that they would cast out their name likewise, as a thing evil in itself. By your name, is meant their name as his disciples. As such, they were sometimes called Nazarenes, and sometimes Christians; and both these names were matter of reproach in the mouths of their enemies. So James (2: 7.) says to the converts, Do they not blaspheme that worthy name by which ye are called? So when St. Paul (in Acts 24: 5) is called a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes, the character of a pestilent fellow, and that of a mover of sedition is joined to it; and in Acts 28: 22, the Jews say to Paul, As concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against, and this is implied in 1 Pet. 4: 14, when he says, If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, i. e. as Christians; agreeably to what follows in v. 16, if any man suffer as a Christian, &c. In after-times, we find Pliny consulting the emperor Trajan, whether or no he should punish the NAME itself, (of Christians) though no evil should be found in it. See Pearce.'

Dr. A. CLARK.

cast out your name as evil, ^b for the Son of man's sake.

23 ⁱ Rejoice ye in that day, and ^k leap for joy, for, behold, ^j your reward is great in heaven: ^m for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets,

24 But ⁿ woe unto you that are rich! ^o for ye have received your consolation.

25 Woe unto ^p you that are full! ^q for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you ^r that laugh now! ^s for ye shall mourn and weep.

26 Woe unto you ^t when all men shall speak well of you! ^u for ^v so did their fathers to the false prophets.

[Practical Considerations.]

21 17. Matt. 10:18, 22, 39. Acts 9:13. 1 Cor. 4:10, 11.
Acts 5:41. Rom. 5:3. 2 Cor. 12:10.
Gal. 1:24. Jam. 5:16. Is. 35:6. Acts 8:4. 14:10.
28 Matt. 5:12. 6:1, 2. 2 The. 1:

parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus had the blessedness of those that are poor, and hunger, and weep now, for in Abraham's bosom all the promises made to them who did so, were made good to him; but the rich man had the woes that follow here, as he had the character of those on whom those woes are entailed.

1. There is a woe to them that are rich, that is, that trust in riches, and instead of serving God with their wealth, serve their lusts with it; woe to them, for they have received their consolation, that which they placed their happiness in, and were willing to take up with for a portion, v. 24. They in their life-time received their good things, in their account the best things, and all the good things they are ever likely to receive from God. ^a You that are rich, are in temptation to set your hearts on a smiling world, and to say, *Soul, take thine ease, in the embraces of it, This is my rest forever, here will I dwell, and then woe unto you.* It is the folly of carnal worldlings, that they make the things of this world their consolation, which were intended only for their convenience; and to them the consolations of God are small, and of no account. It is their misery, that they are put off with these things as their consolation; let them know it, to their terror, when they are parted from them, there is an end of all their comfort, a final end of it, and nothing remains to them but everlasting misery and torment.

5-7. 2 Tim. 2:12. 4:7, 8. Heb. 11:6, 26. 1 Pet. 4:13. Rev. 2:7, 10, 11, 17, 26. 3:5, 12. 21:7.
m 1 Kings 16:4. 19:2, 10, 14. 21:20.
22:8, 27. 2 Kings 6:31. 2 Chr. 36:16. Neh. 9:28. Jer. 2:30. Matt. 21:35, 36. 23:31-37. Eccl. 7:52. 1. 12:14, 15. 13:15. Heb. 11:36, 37.
n 12:15-21. 18:23-25. Job 21:7-15. Ps. 49:6, 7, 16-19. 73:3-12. Prov.

13:2. Jer. 5:4-6. Am. 4:1-3. 6:1-6. 1 Tim. 6:17. Jam. 2:6. 5:1-6. Rev. 18:8-9.
o 16:19-25. Matt. 6:2, 5, 16.
p Deut. 6:11, 12. 1 Sam. 2:5. Prov. 30:9. Phil. 4:12, 13. Rev. 3:17.
q 18:21. 9:20. 6:51:3.
r 8:53. 16:14, 15. Ps. 22:6-7. Prov. 14:13. Eccl. 2:2. 7:6. Jam. 4:9.
s 12:20. 13:28. Job 20:5-7. 21:11-

13. Ps. 49:19. Is. 21:3, 4. 24:7-12. Dan. 5:4-6. Am. 8:10. Nah. 1:10. Matt. 22:11-13. 1 The. 5:63. Rev. 18:7-11.
t Mic. 2:11. John 7:7. 15:19. Rom. 16:18. 2 The. 2:8-12. Jam. 4:4. 2 Pet. 2:18, 19. 1 John 4:5, 6. Rev. 13:3, 4.
u 1 Kings 22:6-8, 13, 14, 24-28. Is. 30:10. Jer. 5:31. 2 Pet. 2:1-3.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS.

V. 20-26. We may easily discover that there is but little faith among professed Christians; while we observe how eagerly they seek happiness, in those things on which Jesus has pronounced a woe; and how carefully they shun those circumstances, in which He declares that true happiness may be found. Yet poverty, affliction and contempt, when connected with humility, godly sorrow and faith, conduce more even to present comfort, than all the riches, splendor, luxury, and carnal earth of ungodly men. (1 Tim. 6: 6-10.) The former tends to weaken all those evil propensities, which the latter more and more inflames: and a peaceful conscience, a submissive will, a contented mind, communion with God, well-regulated affections, and the hope of heaven, will render a Christian more happy in a cottage or a dungeon, than a prince can be in a palace, with a guilty conscience, a proud heart, a stubborn will, furious passions, and the fear of death and all its terrifying consequences. (Notes, Ps. 37. Matt. 5: 4, 5, 7, 8. P. O. 1-12.) To the poor, despised believer, the kingdom of heaven exclusively belongs: there he will meet his reward, and there his best desires will be eternally satisfied in the blessed society

of prophets and apostles, and of the incarnate Son of God, who passed the same way to his glory. On the other hand, when a few fleeting years are gone, the rich, luxurious sinner will 'lift up his eyes in hell,' at the utmost distance from all consolation; and his unsatisfied desires will there forever torment him; the giddy mirth of the dissipated will be turned into bitter weeping; and the laughter of the scorner will terminate in doleful wailings and lamentations. May these reflections be made effectual, by the Spirit of God, to rectify our judgments, to direct our choice, and to teach us to prefer the reproach of Christ, to the pleasure of sin, or the applause of an ungodly world. (Heb. 11: 24-26.)—No one ought to be disquieted, when he hears worldly men, who teach smooth doctrines and 'prophesy deceits,' applauded on every side: even if it be with invidious, slanderous, and malicious reflections on those, who are less complaisant to the fashions and customs of a wicked world. It is unspeakably better to have the blessing of God, amidst man's contumely and execration, than to be abhorred by Him while 'all men speak well of us.'

SCOTT.

Verses 24-26.

Perhaps some persons, who were rich and lived in plenty and luxury, had come to make remarks on our Lord's preaching, and to deride what they heard; and these might here primarily be addressed. (16: 14, 15.) But in general, He intended to show his disciples the danger of riches, worldly indulgences, and all those ruinous advantages which men so eagerly pursue; and of that pride and self-sufficiency which are commonly increased by outward prosperity. (Marg. Ref. n-s.—Notes, 12: 15-21. 16: 22-23.—Matt. 19: 23-26. 1 Tim. 6: 6-10. 9: 10. Jam. 1: 9-11.) As it could not be expected, that his disciples, who decidedly adhered to his holy doctrine and commandments, would be generally commended in this evil world, He likewise pronounced a woe on 'those, of whom all men speak well.' (2 Tim 3: 10-12.) This might especially be intended of teachers. 'He that will be pleasing to all, must speak things grateful to all; now that cannot be good which is grateful to bad men. Thus the false prophets, whom the Jews commended, spoke to them "smooth things." (Is. 30: 10.) 'they "prophesied lies," "because the people loved to have it so;" they strengthened the hands of evil doers.' (Jer. 23: 14.) and "taunted with untimely mortal." (Ez. 13: 10, 11.)' Whitby. Marg. Ref. u.—Notes, 1 Kings 22: 13, 14. Is. 30: 8-11. Jer. 5: 26, 31. Ez. 14: 10-16. John 7: 3-10. Rom. 16: 17-20. 2 Pet. 2: 1-3.)

(24.) Woe unto you, &c. 'Campbell rightly prefers, with Wakefield and others, *alas for you, &c.* "The form of expression in both languages, in these verses, so much coincides with what we are rarely accustomed to hear, except in passionate imprecations, that it is no wonder they should be, in some measure, misunderstood by the majority of readers. That such words were often directed against those who were not only bad men, but the avowed enemies of our Lord, is a circumstance which ascribes this appearance of imprecation, and renders it difficult for us to conceive otherwise of the expressions. Some have called them authoritative denunciations of judgments; but our Lord is not here acting in the character of judge, pronouncing sentence on the guilty, or doom-

ing them to punishment. But He speaks here purely in the character of prophet, or teacher, divinely enlightened as to the consequence of men's actions, and whose zeal for their good obliged Him to give them warning. As the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them, He came not to curse, but to bless us; by turning away every one of us from his iniquities. The words which proceeded out of his mouth were, in every sense, justly denominated *full of grace*. His example was perfectly conformable to his instructions; and I will venture to affirm, that the more narrowly we examine his discourses, the more we shall be convinced, that nothing He ever uttered against any living being (if candidly interpreted) will be found to bear any, the least, affinity to imprecation." Campbell. 'This enlightened and, I think, just view of the subject, is confirmed by the language of Euthymius. Wetstein compares Dionysius Hal. Bulky still more appositely cites Lucian. He also cites T. A Kempis, de Imit. Christi.'

BLOOMFIELD.

'It is most evident, that such expressions as these in Scripture are to be taken with some limitation, otherwise they would be contrary to fact in some instances. But there is, generally speaking, cause to denounce a woe to you who are rich.'

DONDERD.

(26.) *Alas for you, when all men shall speak well of you.* This was meant for the apostles and first teachers. Riesenmueller truly observes, that though it is possible that a good man may be praised by many, yet, that a teacher of religion should be praised by all, even the wicked and the superstitious, must by no means be expected. Grotius has appositely cited a narration respecting Phocion, recorded by Plutarch, that when in his orations he had particularly pleased the multitude, he used to ask his friends whether any thing wrong had escaped him in his address. For, according to the old adage, 'a complaisant temper makes friends, truth excites odium.'

BLOOMFIELD.

'False prophets.' 'Not those, exclusively, who uttered false predictions; but those corrupt teachers, also, who accommodated their sentiments and doctrines to the wishes and passions of their auditors.'

HAWLETT.

27 ¶ But I say ^aunto you which hear, ^bLove your enemies, ^cdo good to them which hate you;

28 ^aBless them that curse you, and pray for them which ^bdespitefully use you.

29 And ^aunto him that ^bsmiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other; ^cand him that taketh away thy cloak, forbid not to take thy coat also.

30 Give ^ato every man that asketh of thee; ^band of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again.

31 And ^aas ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.

32 For ^aif ye love them which love you, ^bwhat thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them.

33 And ^aif ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same.

34 And ^aif ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

well off; that is, who make it their great and only care to gain the praise and applause of men, who value themselves on that more than on the favor of God; (v. 26.) ^aunto you: it seems to intimate that you were not faithful to your trust, and to the souls of men, if you preached so as that nobody would be disgusted; for your business is to tell people of their faults, and if you do that as you ought, you will get that ill-will which never speaks well. The false prophets, indeed, that flattered your fathers in their wicked ways, that prophesied smooth things to them, were caressed and spoken well of; and if you be in like manner cried up, you will be justly suspected to deal deceitfully as they did. We should desire to have the approbation of those that are wise and good, and not be indifferent to what people say of us; but as we should despise the reproaches, so we should also despise the praises, of the fools in Israel.

V. 27—36. These verses agree with Matt. 5:38 to the end of that chapter; I say unto you that hear, (v. 27.) to all you that hear, not to disciples only; ^bHe that has an ear, let him hear. Those that diligently hearken to Christ, shall find He has something to say to them well worth their hearing. Now the lessons Christ here teacheth us, are,

I. That we must render to all their due, and be honest and just in all our dealings, v. 31. What we would expect, in reason, to be done to us, either in justice or charity, by others, if they were in our condition, and we in theirs, that, as the matter stands, we must do to them. We must put our souls into their souls' stead, and then pity and succor them, as we would desire and justly expect to be ourselves pitied and succored.

II. That we must be free in giving to them that need; (v. 36.) to every one that is a proper object of charity, that wants necessities, which we have wherewithal to supply out of our superfluities; 'Those that are not able to help themselves, that have not relations in a capacity to help them.' Christ would have his disciples ready to distribute, and willing to communicate, to their power, in ordinary cases, and beyond their power in extraordinary.

III. That we must be generous in forgiving them that have any way injured us.

1. We must not be extreme in demanding our right; ^aHim that taketh away thy cloak, forcibly or fraudulently, forbid him not by any violent means to take thy coat also, v. 29. Let him have that too, rather than fight for it. And (v. 30.) of him that taketh thy goods, (so Dr. Hammond thinks it should be read,) that bor-

rows them, or that takes them up from thee on trust, of such do not exact them; if Providence have made such insolvent, do not take the advantage of the law against them, but rather lose it than take them by the throat, Matt. 18:28. If a man run away in thy debt, and take away thy goods with him, do not perplex thyself, nor be incensed against him.

2. We must not be rigorous in revenging wrong; ^aUnto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, instead of bringing an action against him, or sending for a writ for him, or bringing him before a justice, offer also the other; that is, pass it by, though thereby thou should be in danger of bringing on thyself another like indignity; which is commonly pretended in excuse of taking the advantage of the law in such a case. If any one smite thee on the cheek, rather than give another blow to him, be ready to receive another from him; that is, leave it to God to plead thy cause, and do thou sit down silent under the affront. When we do thus, God will smile our enemies, as far as they are his, upon the cheek bone, so as to break the teeth of the ungodly; (Ps. 3:7.) for He hath said, Vengeance is mine, and He will make it appear that it is so, when we leave it to Him to take vengeance.

3. Nay, we must do good to them that do evil to us. This is that which our Savior, in these verses, chiefly designs to teach us, as a law peculiar to his religion, and a branch of the perfection of it.

We must be kind to those from whom we have received injuries; not only love our enemies, but do good to them, be as ready to do any good office to them as to any other person, if their case call for it, and it be in our power to do it. We must study to make it appear by positive facts, if there be an opportunity, that we bear them no malice, nor seek revenge. Do they despitefully use us, in word or deed? Do they endeavor to make us contemptible or odious? Let us bless them, and pray for them, speak well of them, the best we can, wish well to them, especially to their souls, and be intercessors with God for them. This is repeated, v. 35. To recommend this difficult duty, it is represented as a generous thing, and an attainment few arrive at. To love those that love us, has nothing uncommon in it, nothing peculiar to Christ's disciples; there is nothing self-denying in that, it is but following nature, even in its corrupt state, and puts no force at all upon it; (v. 32.) it is no thanks to us, to love those that say and do just as we would have them. And, (v. 33.) if you do good to them that do

8:8, 15:18. Mark 4:24.
31. Ps. 23:34. Ex. 23:44. Job 31:29—
31. Ps. 74. Prov. 24:17. 25:21, 22.
1:24—25. 1:25. 5:15.
2:12. 10:38. Gal. 6:10. 3:John 11.
Rom. 12:14. 1 Cor. 4:12. Jam. 3.
10. 1 Pet. 3:9.
2:15. 36:5. Acts 14:5.
e Matt. 5:39.
d 22:64. 2 Chr. 19:23. Is. 50:6. Lam.
3:30. Mic. 5:1. Matt. 26:57. John
12:1. Acts 23:2. 1 Cor. 4:11. 2
Cor. 1:20.
e 2 Sa. n 19:30. Matt. 5:40, 41. 1 Cor.

6:7. Heb. 10:34.
f 88. 11:41. 12:33. 18:23. Deut.
15:7. 17:17. Ps. 41. 119:29. Prov.
9:37, 38. 11:24, 25. 21:26. 22:9. Ec.
11:1, 2. Is. 58:7—10. Ex. 18:16.

a Acts 20:35. 2 Cor. 9:9. 9:6—14.
b Eph. 4:32. 26:37. Neh. 5:1—19. Matt.
g 6:12. 18:27—30. 1 Pet. 3:9.
h Matt. 7:12. 22:39. Gal. 5:14. Jam.
2:8—16.
i Matt. 5:46, 47.
j 1 Pet. 3:9.
k 18:5. 14:12—14. Deut. 15:8—11.
l Matt. 5:42.

Verses 27—36.

(Marg. Ref.—Notes. Matt. 5:23—48. 7:12. Rom. 12:17—21.

1 Pet. 2:18—25. 3:8—12.)

(30.) Ask again.] (Deut. 15:2, 3. Neh. 5:7.) Sept. 'Do not exact even what has been taken away by fraud or violence, if it would distress the person concerned to repay thee: rather lose it, if consistent with other duties, than demand it by a legal process.' (Marg. Ref. e.—1 Cor. 6:1—6.) (32, 34.) What thank, &c.] 1 Pet. 2:20, 21. 'What grace is it to you?' 'What evidence have you that you are partakers of the grace of God? What reason can you give for your hope, that your persons and services are accepted? Mere nature can produce mutual affection between men of similar character, and a reciprocal intercourse of good offices; notwithstanding that they are in a state of enmity against God, and under the dominion of selfish passions; for they either gratify a natural instinctive inclination in this way, or they seek their own ease, interest, pleasure, or reputation, by such attachments and friendly actions, without regard to the glory, will, or favor of God. (35.) Hoping for nothing again.] (Notes, Deut. 15:4—16.) Or, expecting nothing from man in return; but trusting that God will make up your loss, if you do it in dependence on Him and in obedience to his command. Ye shall be the children, &c.] See on 1:32.

(28.) Bless.] 'Our Lord recommended something like the maxim of Solomon, "A soft answer turneth away wrath." Prov. 15:1. He exhorted his disciples not to suffer the violence of the wicked to make them forget the sanctity of their principles, or to compromise their character.'

(30.) 'The plain sense of the passage (however liable it may seem to misconception and abuse) is that given by Kuinoel: "Be disposed to grant an unreasonable request, and if any one shall wrongfully deprive thee of thy property, do not too severely require it back, whether by law or otherwise. Rather suffer it to be taken away, than think of revenge or private enmity." See on Matt. 5:39. seq. 42. The ori-

ginal Greek, translated ask in the latter clause of the verse, means to require, ask back, and severely demand one's right.' BLOOMFIELD.

Dr. A. Clarke thinks it probable, that this passage 'refers to the way in which the tax-gatherers and Roman soldiers used to spoil the people.'

Ed.
'From the 27th to the 30th verse, our blessed Lord gives directions how to treat our enemies. 1. Wish them well. 2. Do them good. 3. Speak as well of them as possible. 4. Be an instrument of procuring them good from others: use your influence in their behalf. 5. Suffer patiently from their contempt and ill treatment. 6. Give up your goods, rather than lose your meekness and charity towards them. The retaliation of those who hearken not to their own passion, but to Christ, consists in doing more good than they receive evil. Ever since our blessed Savior suffered the Jews to take away his life, it is by his patience that we must regulate our own.' Quessel, in Dr. A. CLARKE.

Every man.] 'Jew, Gentile or Samaritan.' HEWLETT.
(34.) Of whom ye hope to receive.] 'Or, whom ye expect to return it. "To make our neighbor purchase, in any way, the assistance which we give him, is to profit by his misery; and by laying him under obligations, which we expect him in some way or other to discharge, we increase his wretchedness under the pretence of relieving him."'

Dr. A. CLARKE.
'The word translated receive is appropriated to express the receiving back of money. These words have a reference to a kind of benefit among the Greeks—excellently illustrated by Casaubon on Theophrastus. If any one, for instance, had lost a considerable part of his property by shipwreck, fire or any other calamity, it was not unusual for his friends to supply him with money, not to be paid back by any certain day, but when convenient. This, however, they scarcely would do, except to those who they had some hope might, (by a more prosperous turn of fortune,) some time or other, not only repay the money but return the favor.'

35 **Eut** * Love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great: and ye shall be the children of the Highest: * for he is kind unto the unthankful, and to the evil.

36 **Be ye therefore** *merciful, as your Father also is merciful.

[Practical Observations.]

37 ¶ **Judge not**, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: *forgive, and ye shall be forgiven:

38 **Give**, *and it shall be given unto you;

27-31. Lev. 25:35-37. Ps. 37:26, 112:5. Prov. 19:17. 22:9. Rom. 5: 8-10. 2 Cor. 8:9.

n. Matt. 5:44-45. John 13:25, 15:8. 1 John 3:10-14. 4:7-11.

o. Ps. 145:9. Acts 14:17. p. Matt. 5:48. Eccl. 4:31, 32. 5:1, 2. 1 Pet. 1:15, 16.

q. Is. 65:5. Matt. 7:1. Rom. 2:1, 2. 14:3, 4, 10-16. 1 Cor. 4:3-5. Jam. 4:11, 12.

r. 13:4. Matt. 5:7. 6:14, 15. 18:35. Mark 11:25, 26. 1 Cor. 13:4-7. Eph. 4:32. Col. 3:13.

s. 50. Deut. 15:1-6. Ezra 7:27, 28. Job 31:16-20. 42:11, 12. Prov. 3:9, 10. 10:22. 19:17. 22:9. Eccl. 11:1, 2. 1 Cor. 8:14, 15. 9:3-8. Phil. 4:17-19.

good to you, and return their kindnesses, it is from a common principle of custom, honor, and gratitude: and therefore *that thank have you?* What credit are you to the name of Christ? For sinners also, that know nothing of Christ, do even the same. But it becomes you to do something more, which sinners will not do, and which no principle of theirs can pretend to reach; you must *render good for evil*: not that any thanks are due to us, but then we are to our God for a name and a praise: and He will have the thanks.

We must be kind to those from whom we expect no manner of advantage, v. 35. It is meant of the rich lending to the poor a little money for their necessity, to buy daily bread, or to keep them out of prison; in such a case, we must *lend*, with a resolution not to demand interest for what we lend, as we may most justly from those that borrow money, to make purchases withal, or to trade with; but that is not all, we must *lend*, though we have reason to suspect that what we *lend* we *lose*; lend to those who are so poor, that it is not probable they will be able to pay us again. This precept will be best illustrated by that law of Moses, (Deut. 15: 7-10.) which obliges them to lend to a *poor brother* as much as he *needed*, though the year of release was at hand.

Here are two motives to this generous charity.

1. It will redound to our profit, v. 35. What is given, or laid out, or lent and lost on earth, from a true principle of charity, will be made up to us in the other world, unspeakably to our advantage. 'You shall not only be repaid, but rewarded, greatly rewarded; it will be said to you, *Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom.*'

2. It will redound to our honor; for herein

we shall resemble God in his goodness, which is the greatest glory; 'Ye shall be the children of the Highest; shall be owned by Him as his children, being like Him. It is the glory of God, that He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil; bestows the gifts of common providence even on the worst of men, who are every day provoking Him, and rebelling against Him, and using those very gifts to his dishonour. Hence He infers, (v. 36.) *Be merciful, as your Father is merciful*; this explains Matt. 5:48. *Be perfect as your Father is perfect.* Imitate your Father in those things that are his brightest perfections. Those that are merciful, as God is merciful, even to the evil and the unthankful, are perfect, as God is perfect; so He is pleased graciously to accept it, though infinitely falling short. Charity is called the *bond of perfectness*, Col. 3:14. This should strongly engage us to be merciful, even to such as have been injurious to us; not only that God is so to others, but that He is so to us, though we have been, and are, evil and unthankful; it is of his mercies that we are not consumed.

V. 37-49. All these sayings we had before in Matthew; some of them, ch. 7. others in other places; they were sayings that Christ often used. Grotius thinks we need not be critical here in seeking for the coherence: they are golden sentences, like Solomon's proverbs, or parables. Let us observe here,

1. We ought to be very candid in our censures of others, because we need grains of allowance ourselves, v. 37. Exercise toward others the charity which *thinks no evil*, which *bears all things, believes and hopes all things*; and then others will exercise that charity toward you. They that are merciful to other people's names, shall find others merciful to theirs.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 27-36. We should be careful not to leaven, with moroseness or resentment, our profession or preaching of the truth of God: and the bolder and more decided we are in his cause, the more pliant and passive we ought to be in our own. (Rom. 15: 1-3.) We should in many things recede quietly from our due, and meekly submit to injuries and provocations: at the same time we ought to persevere in 'doing to others, as we would they should do to us,' and in unwearied acts of kindness to the most perverse and ungrateful of our enemies. Such a conduct will evince us to be 'the children of the Highest,' and insure from Him a large and gracious recompense: it also

will prove the superior excellency of our doctrines above all other systems, and the efficacy of the sanctifying grace on which we profess to depend. Whereas, if Christians love those alone who love them, and do good to such as do good to them, in what are their religion and principles discriminated from those of heathens, who do the same? Let us then 'do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again;' and let us aim to be merciful to the miserable and the guilty, even according to the mercy of our heavenly Father to us, poor, perishing sinners. (P. O. Matt. 5: 33-48. Rom. 12: 17-21.)

SCOTT.

(35.) *Love your enemies.* [This is the most sublime precept ever delivered to man: a false religion durst not give a precept of this nature, because, without supernatural influx, it will be forever impracticable. In these words of our blessed Lord, we see the tenderness, sincerity, extent, disinterestedness, pattern, and issue of the love of God dwelling in man: a religion, which has for its foundation the union of God and man in the same person, and the death of this august Being for his enemies: which consists on earth in a reconciliation of the Creator with his creatures, and which is to subsist in heaven only in the union of the members with the Head: could such a religion as this ever tolerate hatred in the soul of man, even to his most inveterate foe?]

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Hoping for nothing again. [Several commentators follow the Syriac and Arabic versions, which express the sense thus: 'Do not put off any one's hope, by being too rigid to the borrower;' but many more equally eminent vindicate the common version.]

Ed.

'Lend cheerfully, without fearing the loss of what shall be bestowed. It often happens that, even contrary to appearances, the loan is thankfully returned by the borrower; but should it not be, remember, (and let this silence all your doubts,) that God chargeth Himself with what you give from love to Him, and love to your neighbor. He is the poor man's surety.'

CAMPBELL.

Children of the Highest. [Rather, "dear and acceptable to God," or you will be like unto God. So a rabbinical writer, cited by Schoettgen.]

BLOOMFIELD.

(36.) *Be ye, &c. as your Father, &c.* [Let us not presume to call God our Father, if we do not labor to resemble Him: nor dare to challenge the peculiar honor and privileges of Christ's disciples, if we do not distinguish ourselves from others by the charity of our tempers, and the usefulness of our lives, as well as by the articles of our faith, and the forms of our worship.]

Verses 37, 38.

(Notes Matt. 7: 1, 2. Rom. 14: 2-4.) Those who are kind and liberal to others from evangelical motives, and according to the rules of God's Word, commonly meet with much unexpected favor and kindness from individuals of their brethren, and often from strangers; which tend to counterbalance the enmity, ingratitude, and contempt of the world at large; and as the Lord has all hearts in his hands, this may confidently be expected by those, who lay themselves out in doing good for his sake. On the contrary, they who are harsh, unmerciful, unforgiving, or negligent, in their conduct to others, may expect similar treatment both from God and man. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 5: 7, 2, 2; 4, 15. 18: 21-35. Jam. 2: 8-13.)

SCOTT

(37.) *Judge not.* [How great is the goodness of God in being so willing to put our own judgment into our hands as to engage Him to enter into judgment with us; provided we do not usurp the right which belongs solely to Him, in reference to others.] Dr. A. CLARKE.

Forgive, &c. [Forgive others their offences; and if you do it from a truly religious principle, you shall also be forgiven, &c. This sense must be supposed, to make it consistent with those passages in which *love to God and faith in Christ*, as well as other branches of the Christian temper, are insisted upon as so absolutely necessary, that without them the greatest lenity and indulgence to our fellow-creatures cannot give us a claim to the promises of pardon and salvation.]

DODDRIDGE.

'The mercy and compassion which God recommends, extend to the forgiving of all the injuries we have received, or can receive. To imitate in this the mercy of God, is not a mere counsel; since it is proposed as a necessary mean, in order to receive mercy. What man has to forgive in man is almost nothing; man's debt to God is infinite. And who acts in this matter as if he wished to receive mercy at the hands of God? The spirit of revenge is equally destitute of faith as a reason.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'Though the forgiveness of injuries is doubtless included in the precept, it ought not to be limited to this meaning. The original word translated *forgive*, implies equally discharging from captivity, from prison, from debt.

CAMPBELL.

(38.) [There is here a reference both to dry measures and to measures of liquids. The whole appears to have been a proverbial expression among the Jews, to denote, metaphorically, abundant and extravagant liberality. 'There were,' says Buxtorf, 'among the Jews, measures of various sorts, overflowing, abraded, heaped up, pressed shaken, covered,' &c. With us, the bushel is heaped up, but not pressed down or shaken together, and then abraded, or the chaff is cut off with a lath.]

BLOOMFIELD.

Give, and it shall be given. [“Christian charity will make no difficulty in giving that, which eternal truth promises to restore. Let us give, neither out of mere human generosity, nor out of vanity, nor from interest, but for the sake of God, if we would have Him give to us as we count. There is no such thing as true, unmixed generosity, but in God only; because there is none but He who receives no advantage from his gifts, and because He engages Himself to pay these debts of his creatures with an excessive interest. So great is the goodness of God, that when He might have absolutely commanded us to give to our neighbor, He vouchsafes to invite us to this duty by the prospect of a reward, and to impute that to us as a desert, which He has a right to exact of

good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.

39 And he spake a parable unto them, ^a Can the blind lead the blind? ^b shall they not both fall into the ditch?

40 The ^adisciple is not above his master: but every one ^a that is perfect shall be as his master.

41 And ^a why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, ^b but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

42 Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? ^a Thou hypocrite, ^a cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy Brother's eye.

43 For ^a a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

2. If we are of a *giving* and a *forgiving* spirit, we shall ourselves reap the benefit of it. They that forgive others, others will forgive. They that forgive others' trespasses against them, God will forgive them their trespasses against Him. And He will be no less mindful of the liberal that devise liberal things, v. 38. God, in his providence, will recompense it to you; it is *lent* to Him, and He is *not unwrighteous to forget it*, (Heb. 6: 10.) but will *pay it again*. Men shall return it into your own bosom; for God often makes use of men as instruments, not only of his *avenging*, but of his *rewarding* justice. If we in a right manner give to others, when they need, God will incline the hearts of others to give to us, when we need, and to give liberally. They *that sow plentifully, shall reap plentifully*. Whom God recompenses, He *abundantly* recompenses.

3. We must expect to be dealt with ourselves as we deal with others, v. 38. Those that deal *hardly* with others, must acknowledge, as Adoni-bezek did, (Judg. 1: 7.) that God is righteous, if others deal *hardly* with them; but they that deal *kindly* with others, have reason to hope that, when they have occasion, God will raise them up friends who will deal kindly with them. Providence does not always go by this rule, because the full and exact retributions are reserved for another world; yet, ordinarily, it observes a proportion sufficient to deter us from all acts of rigor, and to encourage us in all acts of beneficence.

4. Those who put themselves under the guidance of the ignorant and erroneous, are likely to perish with them, v. 39. Can the Pharisees who are blinded with pride, prejudice, and bigotry, lead the blind people into the right way? Those that are led by the common opinion, course, and custom of this world, are themselves blind, and are led by the blind, and will perish with the world that sits in darkness. Those that ignorantly, and at a venture, follow the multitude to do evil, follow the blind in the broad way that leads the many to destruction.

5. Christ's followers can expect no better treatment in the world than He had, v. 40. Let them not promise themselves more honor or pleasure; nor aim at worldly pomp and grandeur which He always declined; nor affect that power in secular things, which He would not assume; but every one that would show himself perfect, an established disciple, let Him be as his Master, dead to the world, and every thing in it; let him live a life of labor and self-denial, and make himself a servant of all; let him stoop, and toil, and do all the good he can, and then he will be a complete disciple.

6. Those who take on them to rebuke and reform others, are concerned to look to it, that they be themselves blameless, and harmless,

and without rebuke, v. 41, 42. Those with a very ill grace censure the faults of others who are not aware of their own faults. Those are altogether unfit to help to reform others whose reforming charity doth not begin at home. Those therefore who would be servicable to the souls of others, must first make it appear that they are solicitous about their own souls. To help to pull the mote out of our brother's eye, is a good work, but we must qualify ourselves for it by beginning with ourselves; and our reforming of our own lives may, by the influence of example, contribute to others' reforming theirs.

7. We may expect that men's words and actions will be as they are, as are their hearts and their principles.

(1.) The heart is the tree, and the words and actions are fruit, according to the nature of the tree, v. 43, 44. If a man be really a *good man*, have a principle of grace in his heart, and the prevailing bent and bias of the soul be toward God and heaven; though he may not do you all the good he should, yet he will not in any material instance do you hurt. If he cannot reform ill manners, he will not corrupt good manners. If the fruit that a man brings forth be corrupt, if his devotion tend to debase the mind and conversation, if his conversation be vicious, if he be a drunkard or fornicator, a swearer or liar, if he be in any instance unjust or uncharitable, his fruit is corrupt, and you may be sure that he is not a good tree. On the other hand a corrupt tree doth not bring forth good fruit though it may bring forth green leaves, v. 44. You may, if you please, stick figs upon thorns, and hang a bunch of grapes upon a bramble, but they neither are, nor can be, the natural product of the trees; so neither can you expect any good conduct from those who have justly a bad character. If the fruit be good, you may conclude that the tree is so; if the conversation be holy, heavenly, and regular, though you cannot infallibly know the heart, yet you may charitably hope that that is upright with God; for every tree is known by its own fruit. But the vile person will speak villany; (Isa. 32: 6.) and the experience of the moderns herein agrees with the proverb of the ancients, that wickedness proceedeth from the wicked, 1 Sam. 24: 13.

(2.) The heart is the treasure, the words and actions the produce from that treasure, v. 45. This we had, Matt. 12: 34, 35. The reigning love of God and Christ in the heart denominates a man a *good man*; it is a *good treasure in the heart*, which enriches a man for the benefit of others; out of such a *good treasure* a man may bring forth that which is good; but where the love of the world and the flesh reign, the heart is an *evil treasure* in the heart, out of which an

u. 79:12.
a Deut. 19:16-21. Judg. 1:7. Esth. 7:10. 9:28. Ps. 18:23, 26. 41:1, 2. Matt. 7:2. Mark 4:24. Jam. 2:13. Rev. 5:5, 6.
b Is. 9:16. 56:10. Matt. 15:14, 23. 16:26. Rom. 2:19. 1 Tim. 6:3-5. 2 Tim. 3:13.
c Jer. 15:12. 8:12. 14:15, 16. Mic. 3:7. Zeph. 1:16-17. Matt. 23:33. d Matt. 10:24, 25. John 13:16. 15:20. Or, shall be perfected as his master. Matt. 23:15.
e Matt. 7:3-5. Rom. 2:1, 21-24.

b 2 Sam. 12:5-7. 99:10, 20, 21. 1 Kings 2:32. 1 Chr. 21:6. Ps. 36:2. Jer. 17:9. Ez. 18:23. John 8:7, 40-44. Jam. 1:24.
c 13:15. Matt. 23:13-15. Acts 8:21.

13:10.
d 22:32. Ps. 50:16-21. 51:9-13. Matt. 23:7, 5. Acts 2:38. 9:9-20. 3 Cor. 5:18. 1 Thes. 2:10-12. Phil. 10:11.

e Matt. 6:23, 23. 2 Tim. 2:21. 2 Pet. 1:9. Rev. 3:17, 18.
f Ps. 92:12-14. Is. 5:4. 61:3. Jer. 2:21. Matt. 3:10. 7:16-20. 12:33.

us by the title of his sovereignty over our persons and estates." Men live in such a state of social union as renders mutual help necessary; and as self-interest, pride, and other corrupt passions, mingle themselves ordinarily in their commerce, they cannot fail of offending one another. In civil society, men must, in order to taste a little tranquillity, resolve to bear something from their neighbors; they must suffer, pardon, and give up many things; without doing which, they must live in such a state of continual agitation, as will render life itself insupportable. Without this giving and forgiving spirit, there will be nothing in civil society, and even in Christian congregations, but divisions, evil surmisings, injurious discourses, outrages, anger, vengeance, and, in a word, a total dissolution of the mystical body of Christ. Thus our interest in both worlds calls loudly upon us to give and to forgive."

Dr. A. CLARKE. Into your bosom. ^a Into your lap. Here is an evident reference to the mantles which the Jews wore, into which a considerable quantity of corn might be received. Compare Ruth 3: 15. 2 Kings 4: 39. Neh 5: 13. Prov. 16: 33.

"Almost all the ancient nations, and particularly those of the East, wore long, wide, and loose garments; and when about to carry any thing away that their hands could not contain, they used a fold in the osom of their robe, nearly in the same way that women in this country use their aprons. The word *'bosom'*, or *'lap'*," frequently occurs in the sense in the best and purest Greek writers." HARMER.

Verses 38-41.

"Skillful instructors destroy themselves and others: for as the scholar is, so will the disciple be." BEAN. It cannot be expected that the scholar will excel his teacher; but the complete disciple will be as

his teacher, not wiser or better. If, therefore, men follow blind guides, in their religious inquiries, they must continue in ignorance, or be lulled into error: so that it is of the greatest importance for us to take care on what teachers we attend; lest our greatest diligence, and highest attainment, should leave us short of the saving knowledge of God and of ourselves. Some, however, explain the latter verse to mean, that the genuine disciple of Christ would be like Him, and be prepared to endure the cross for his sake; yet the former is the more obvious interpretation, and more suited to the context. (Marg. Ref.-Matt. 15: 12-14.) (40.) Perfect. [See on Matt. 21: 16. SCOTT.]

(40.) Doddridge paraphrases thus: 'There is little reason to hope that, under their [men's] instruction, you should be wiser and better than they: for it is, you know, a common proverb, that the scholar is not above his teacher; but all that can be reasonably expected is, that every one who is a finished [scholar] should come up to him, who teaches him; and it is this that he will principally aim at, to be as his master. Yet, on the other hand, I would not have you be forward in blaming them, [your teachers,] or any other, while you neglect a due regulation of your own temper and conduct; for why dost thou look at the little mote,' &c. and at v. 43. 'Till thou shalt thus reform thyself, there is not much to be expected from thine endeavor to reform others for as there is no good tree,' &c.

Verses 41, 42

(Marg. Ref.-Notes, Matt. 7: 3-5.)

Verses 43-45.

(Marg. and Marg. Ref.-Notes, Matt. 7: 15-20. 13: 35-37. 24: 12. 25: 19-30. Jam. 3: 7-13.)

SCOTT

Sta. 10

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44 For every tree is known by his own fruit: ⁵for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they ^{*}grapes.

45 A ⁶good man out of the good ⁷treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; ⁸and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: ⁹for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh.

46 ¶ And ¹⁰why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?

47 Whosoever ¹¹cometh to me, ¹²and heareth my sayings, ¹³and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like.

48 He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, ¹⁴and laid the foundation on a ¹⁵rock: and when ¹⁶the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock.

49 But ¹⁷he that heareth and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; ¹⁸against which

evil man is continually bringing forth that which is evil; and by what is brought forth, you may know what is in the heart, as you may know what is in the vessel, water or wine, by what is drawn out from it, John 2: 8. *Of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks*; what the mouth ordinarily speaks, speaks with relish and delight, generally agrees with what is innermost and uppermost in the heart; *He that speaks of the earth, is earthly*, John 3: 31. Not but that a good man may possibly drop a bad word, and a wicked man make use of a good word to serve a bad turn; but, for the most part, the heart is as the words are, *pain or serious*; it therefore concerns us to get our hearts filled, not only with *good*, but with *abundance* of it.

8. It is not enough to *hear* the sayings of Christ, but we must *do* them; not enough to profess relation to Him, as his servants, but we must make conscience of obeying Him.

It is putting an *affront upon Him*, to call Him *Lord*, *Lord*, as if we were wholly at his command, and had devoted ourselves to his service, if we do not make conscience of conforming to his will, and serving the interests of his kingdom. We do but mock Christ, as they that in scorn said, *Hail, King of the Jews*, if we call Him ever so often, *Lord, Lord*, and yet walk in the way of our own hearts, and in the sight of our own eyes. Why do we call Him *Lord, Lord*, in prayer, (compare Matt. 7: 21, 22,) if we do not obey his commands. He that *turns away his ear from hearing the law, his prayer shall be an abomination*.

It is putting a *cheat* on ourselves, if we think that a bare profession of religion will save us, that *hearing* the sayings of Christ will bring us to heaven, without *doing* them. This He illustrates by a similitude, (p. 47—49.) which shows,

the stream did beat vehemently, ^{*}and immediately it fell; and ¹⁹the ruin of that house was great.

Gal. 5: 18—23. Tit. 2: 11—13. Jam. 2: 19. Jude 12. Gr. 5: 20. h Ps. 37: 30, 31. 40: 8—10. 71: 15—19. Prov. 10: 20, 21. 12: 18. 15: 23. 22. 17: 18. John 7: 53. Eph. 4: 29. 5: 3. 4: 13. Col. 4: 6. i 2 Cor. 4: 5, 7. Eph. 3: 8. Col. 3: 16. Heb. 8: 10. k Ps. 122—4. 41: 6, 7. 52: 2—4. 59:

7: 12. 64: 3—8. 140: 5. Jer. 9: 2—5. Acts 5: 3, 4. 8: 19—23. Rom. 3: 13, 14. Jam. 3: 8. Jude 15. l Matt. 12: 34—37. m 13: 25—27. Mal. 1: 6. Matt. 7: 21—23. 25: 11, 24, 44. John 13: 17. n 14: 26. 16: 53. Matt. 11: 28. John 5: 40. 6: 35, 37, 44, 45. 1 Pet. 2: 4. o Matt. 7: 24, 25. 17: 5. John 8: 52. 9: 27, 28. 10: 27. p 8: 13, 14. 12: 28. Matt. 11: 29, 30. 12: 13. John 13: 17. 14: 15, 21—24. 15: 9—14. Rom. 2: 7—10. Heb. 5: 9. Jam. 1: 22—25. 4: 17. 2 Pet. 1: 10. 1 John 2: 29, 37. Rev. 22: 14. q Prov. 10: 25. 15: 28: 16. 1 Cor. 3: 10—12. Eph. 2: 20. 2 Tim. 2: 19. r Deut. 32: 15, 18, 31. 1 Sam. 2: 2. 2

Sam. 22: 32, 47. 23: 3. Ps. 55: 1. Is. 26: 4. 1 Pet. 2: 4—6. s 2 Sam. 22: 5. Ps. 32: 5. 33: 3, 125: 1, 2. Is. 59: 19. Nah. 1: 8. John 19: 33. Acts 14: 22. Rom. 8: 35—38. Cor. 3: 13—16. 15: 55—58. 2 Pet. 3: 10—14. 1 John 2: 28. Rev. 6: 11—17. 20: 11—15. t 46. 8: 5—7. 19: 14, 27. Jer. 44: 16, 17. Ez. 33: 31. Matt. 21: 29. 23: 3. John 15: 2. Jam. 1: 22—24. 4: 17—18. 2 Pet. 1: 5—9. 1 John 2: 3, 4. u Matt. 13: 20—22. 24: 10. Acts 40: 29. 26: 11. 1 Thes. 5: 5. x Matt. 12: 45—45. Mark 4: 17. 1 John 2: 19. y 10: 12—16. 11: 24—26. 12: 47. Heb. 10: 26—29. 2 Pet. 2: 20—22.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 37—49. To avoid giving needless offence, we should carefully abstain from all rash and rigorous decisions about men's motives, state and character. Our great business is to judge ourselves; and not to judge another's servants, who must stand or fall to their own Master. (Notes, Rom. 14: 2—4. 10: 12.) We should never be backward to forgive, as we hope to be forgiven by God for Christ's sake: and we may rest satisfied that we shall not be losers in the event, by the most liberal and abundant kindness to others, according to our measure of ability and opportunity: for it shall assuredly be 'measured to us, by the same measure with which we mete to others,' whether that be large or scanty.—These extensive precepts, as well as the evangelical principles connected with them, are overlooked or explained away by 'blind guides,' of whom every one ought to beware; for they are falling into the ditch together with their followers, in great multitudes, continually,

on every side of us. And as 'the disciple is not above his Master,' let us be indeed the disciples of Christ alone, that we may grow up into conformity to Him, till at length we become 'perfect even as He is perfect.' Let us also seek to subdue our own evil tempers, and break off our sins, before we set up for censors or reformers of others; lest Jesus rebuke our officiousness, and put us to shame. In vain do we call Christ 'Lord, Lord,' or even call on Him to rescue us from condemnation, if we do not the things which He says. May we then wisely come to Him, hear his words, and 'do them,' that we may with diligence 'dig deep,' to lay the foundation of our hope on a Rock. Thus, when unbelievers of every name shall be driven away, with all their presumptuous confidences, into everlasting ruin, we shall have 'a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' (P. O. Matt. 7: 13—29.)

SCOTT.

Verses 46—49.

(Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 7: 21—27.) How large a proportion of professed Christians, of all parties and creeds, fall under condemnation, when judged by this most solemn and unpeppery interesting passage! 'Weighed in this balance, they are found wanting.' They 'call Christ Lord, Lord, and do not the things which He says.' They hear, and do not. Nay, immense numbers, of jarring sentiments in other respects, agree in this, to make the mercy of God published in the Gospel, a plea for neglecting strict obedience; and an encouragement, not to repent, but to continue in impotence, provided they be not grossly immoral! If, say they, 'we are to be judged by the law, we should be condemned, no doubt; but God is merciful, Christ came to save sinners, we are Christians, and under the new covenant; and there is no need to be so strict, or to disquiet ourselves about the event.' (Jam. 2: 8—13.) This countless multitude, who exclaim vehemently against the supposed antinomian tendency of the doctrines of grace, and of the antinomian principles of some that profess to believe them, are themselves practical antinomians. They sin on, because God is merciful, and habitually neglect self-denying obedience, because Jesus came to 'save us from our sins' (Rom. 4: 1, 2.) This will most awfully appear 'at the day of judgment; and the question, with which the passage begins, will suffice to stop the mouths of millions, and to leave them silent in darkness and despair.' (Rom. 3: 19, 20.)

(46.) To maintain the consistency of this verse with the preceding, Doddridge thus paraphrases: 'Yet, remember, it is not merely by men's words that their character will finally be judged; especially, that it will not be determined by a few pious and devotional forms of speech: for why do ye call Me, Lord, Lord, if, in your practice, ye are regardless of my will, and do not the things which I say?' &c.

Ed.

(48.) 'The moral here inculcated is, that the study of piety should not be superficial, but a principle well founded and deeply rooted in the heart, so as to resist the assaults of passion, temptation, &c.' GROSVENOR.

(49.) 'May these beautiful, striking, repeated admonitions, which our Savior gives us of the vanity of every profession which does not influence practice, be attended with reverence and fear! We are *building for eternity*; may we never grudge the time and labor of a most serious inquiry into the great, fundamental principles of religion. May we discover the sure foundation, and raise upon it a structure which shall stand fair and glorious, when hypocrites are swept away in the everlasting ruin.'

JUDITH DUM.

CHAP. VII.

Jesus commends the faith, and heals the servant of a centurion, 1-10. He raises a widow's son at Nain, 11-17. He sends back the messengers of John the Baptist, with an account of his miracles, 18-23; bears testimony to John, 24-30; and exposes the perverseness of the people respecting both John and himself, 31-37. He is entertained by a Pharisee, 38. A woman of prodigious bad character washes and anoints his feet, 37-39. He justifies to the Pharisee his conduct towards her by a parable; and shows that she loved him, and that her many sins were pardoned, 40-50.

NOW when he had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, he entered into Capernaum.

2 And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die.

3 And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto him the elders of the Jews, beseeching him that he would come and heal his servant.

4 And when they came to Jesus, they besought him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom he should do this:

5 For he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue.

6 Then Jesus went with them. And when he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying unto him, Lord, trouble not thyself; for I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof:

7 Wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed.

8 For I also am a man set under authority

CHAP. VII. v. 1-10. This story differs from the account we had of the same event, Matt. 8: 5, &c. There, the centurion came to Christ, but here, he sent to Him, first some of the elders of the Jews, (v. 3.) and afterward some other friends, v. 6. But the centurion might be said to do what he did by his proxies; as a man takes possession by his attorney. But it is probable that the centurion himself came at last, when Christ said to him, (Matt. 8: 13.) *As thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee.*

This miracle is here said to have been wrought by our Lord Jesus, when He had ended all his sayings in the audience of the people, v. 1. What Christ said, He said publicly; whoever would, might come, and hear Him; *In secret have I said nothing*, John 18: 20. Now to give an undeniable proof of the authority of his preaching word, He here gives an incontestable proof of the power and efficacy of his healing word. He that had such a commanding empire in the kingdom of nature, as that He could command away diseases, no doubt has such a sovereignty in the kingdom of grace, as to enjoin duties displeasing to flesh and blood, and bind, under the highest penalties, to the observance of them. This miracle was wrought in Capernaum, where most of Christ's mighty works were done, Matt. 11: 23. Now observe,

1. The centurion's sick servant was dear to his master, v. 2. It was the praise of the servant, that he had recommended himself to his master's esteem and love. Servants should study to endear themselves to their masters. It was likewise the praise of the master, that, when he had a good servant, he knew how to value him. Many masters think it favor enough to the best of servants, not to rate them, and beat them, and be cruel to them, whereas they ought to be kind to them, and tender of them, and solicitous for their welfare and comfort.

2. The master, when he heard of Jesus, was for making application to Him, v. 3. Masters ought to take particular care of their servants when they are sick, and not to neglect them. This centurion begged that Christ would come, and heal his servant. We may now, by faithful and fervent prayer, apply ourselves to Christ in heaven, and ought to do so, when sickness is in our families; for Christ is still the great Physician.

3. Out of respect to Christ, he sent some of the elders of the Jews to represent the case, and solicit for him, because he being an uncircumcised Gentile, and Christ a prophet, he thought Christ would not care to converse with him: thus he acknowledged the Jews to be the favorites of heaven,—not sending ordinary Jews neither, but elders, persons in authority, that by

the dignity of the messengers he might honor Him to whom they were sent;—Balak and princes to Balaam.

4. The elders were hearty intercessors; they besought Him instantly, (v. 4.) were very urgent with Him, pleading for the centurion, that which he would never have pleaded for himself! That he was worthy. If any Gentile was qualified to receive such a favor, surely he was. The centurion said, *I am not so much as worthy of a visit*; (Matt. 8: 8.) but the elders thought him worthy of the cure; thus honor shall uphold the humble in spirit. Let another man praise thee, and not thy own mouth. But what they insisted on in particular, was, that, though a Gentile, he was a hearty well-wisher to the Jewish nation and religion, v. 5.

Probably, he had read the Old Testament, whence it was easy to advance to a very high esteem of the Jewish nation, as favored by Heaven above all people. Note, Even conquerors, and those in power, ought to keep up an affection for the conquered, and those they have power over. By building a new synagogue, he testified his veneration for the God of Israel, his belief of his being the one only living and true God, and his desire, like that of Darius, to have an interest in the prayers of God's Israel, Ezra 6: 10. Note, Building places of meeting for religious worship, is a very good work, is an instance of love to God and his people; and those who do good works of that kind, are worthy of double honor.

5. Jesus Christ was very ready to show kindness to the centurion, v. 6. Is He the Savior of the Jews only? Is He not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, Rom. 3: 29. The centurion did not think himself worthy to visit Christ; (v. 7.) yet Christ thought him worthy to be visited by Him: for, those that humble themselves shall be exalted.

6. The centurion, when he heard that Christ was doing him the honor to come to his house, gave further proofs both of his humility and of his faith. Thus the graces of the saints are quickened by Christ's approaches toward them; he sends friends, to meet Him, expressing his sense of his unworthiness, and his confidence in Christ. He knew how to honor a prophet of God, though He was despised and rejected of men. 'I know there is no occasion, Thou canst cure my servant without coming under my roof, by that almighty power from which no thought can be withholden.' So far was he from Naa-man's fancy, that He should come to him, and stand, and strike his hand over the patient, and so recover him, 2 Kings 5: 11. He illustrates his faith by a comparison taken from his own profession, and is confident that Christ can as easily command away the distemper, as he can command any of his soldiers to go on an

a Matt. 7:28, 29.
b Matt. 8:5-13.
c 23:47. Matt. 27:54. Acts 10:1, 2.
d Gen. 24:2-14. 27:35-49. 35:9; 39:4-6. 2 Kings 5:2, 3. Job 31:25.
e Acts 10:7. Col. 3:22-5. 41.
f 8:42. John 4:46-47. 11:23.
g 8:41. 9:28. Matt. 8:5. John 4:47.

Philom. 10.
g 6:7. 20:35. Matt. 10:11, 13, 37, 38.
Rev. 34.
h 1 Kings 3:1. 2 Chr. 2:11, 12. Gal. 5:6.
i 1 Chr. 3:14. 5:1-3.
j 1 Chr. 29:3, &c. Ezra 7:27, 28. 1 John 3:18, 19.
k Matt. 20:28. Mark 5:24. Acts 10:38. 1:49.

m 4. 5:8. 15:19-21. Gen. 30:14. Prov. 29:23. Matt. 3:11. 15:26, 27. Jam. 4:10.
n 4:58. 5:13. Ex. 15:26. Deut. 33:39. 1 Sam. 2:6. Ps. 33:9. 107:26.
o Acts 22:25. 23:17, 23, 26. 24:23, 25.

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. v. 1-10. (Notes, and P. O. Matt. 8: 5-13.) 'Thus is Christ said to have "preached peace" to the Ephesians, which personally He did not try by his apostles. Notwithstanding, Luke, willing to add one evidence more of the centurion's humility, from the reason of his not aving personally unto Christ, chooses rather to set it down exactly as it was, in each circumstance, than only in brief as "Matthew had done." Hammond—"The centurion's liberal affection for the worshippers of the true God, shown in building them a synagogue at his own expense, is also added by Luke, as what had peculiarly tended to soften the prejudices of the Jews, and to conciliate their favor towards him." And he himself has built the synagogue for us.' The favor shown an officer in the army, by which the conquerors held the nation in subjection; and the earnestness, with which the elders pleaded the cause of an uncircumcised Gentile, is not the least wonderful circumstance in the narrative. It attests in the strongest manner the excellency of his character, and shows the power of persevering goodness, and kind endeavor, to overcome the prejudices of those who witness them, and share the benefit. (5.) *Hath built us a synagogue.* He hath built the synagogue for us; probably there was only one at Capernaum.

(3.) 'It is pleasant to think of this good centurion, who, amidst all the temptations of a military life, retained the principles, not only of liberality and humanity, but of piety too, and, probably amidst the rail-

lery of his irreligious and idolatrous brethren, had the courage to frequent and even to build a synagogue. Surely his devotion did not enervate, but rather invigorate and establish his valor; nor did he find himself less dutifully regarded by the soldiers under his command, for this parental tenderness to his afflicted servant, which brought him thus humbly to petition Christ in his favor. Such may our officers be! and we may hope that the hosts of heaven will with pleasure cover their heads in the day of battle, and obedient troops be formed, by their example and their care, to the discipline of virtue as well as of war.'

Do. BRIDGE.

(5.) 'We see the force of real goodness to conquer the most inveterate prejudices; the elders of the Jews at Capernaum turn petitioners for a Gentile, for a Roman centurion; so may we disarm the virulence of a party spirit, and conciliate the friendship of those who otherwise might have their eyes upon us for evil.'

(6.) *Neither thought I myself worthy.* 'He that thus humbleth himself shall be exalted,' (Luke 14: 14.) nor do we ever stand in the praise of Christ, than when we see ourselves undeserving even of his notice.'

(7.) 'Behold an instance of faith in a stranger to the commonwealth of Israel, by which their unbelief was condemned! O that the virtues of heathens may not another day rise up to our condemnation, notwithstanding a higher profession, and much other advantage!'

rity, having under me soldiers; and I say unto *one, *Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this and he doeth it.

9 When Jesus heard these things, *he marvelled at him, and turned him about, and said unto the people that followed him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, *not in Israel.

10 And they that were sent, returning to the house, *found the servant whole that had been sick.

11 ¶ And it came to pass the day after, that *he went into a city called Nain: and many of his disciples went with him, and much people.

12 Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, *the only son of his mother, and she was *a widow: *and much people of the city was with her.

13 And when the Lord saw her, *he had compassion on her, and said unto her, *Weep not.

14 And he came and touched the *bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he

errand, v. 8. Christ has a sovereign power over all the creatures and all their actions, and can change the course of nature as He pleases, can rectify its disorders, and repair its decays in human bodies, for *all power is given to Him*.

7. Our Lord Jesus was well pleased with the centurion's faith, and the more surprised at it, because he was a Gentile; and the centurion's faith having thus honored Christ, see how Christ honored that; (v. 9.) as one amazed, He said, *I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*. Note, Christ will have those that follow Him, to observe and take notice of the great examples of faith, that are sometimes set before them, especially when any such are found among those that do not follow Christ so closely as they do, in profession; that we may be shamed, by the strength of their faith, out of the weaknesses and waverings of ours.

8. The cure was *presently and perfectly* wrought; (v. 10.) *They that were sent, knew they had their errand, and therefore went back, and found the servant well, and under no remains at all of his distemper*. Christ will take cognizance of the distressed case of poor servants, and be ready to relieve them, for there is *no respect of persons with Him*. Nor are the Gentiles excluded from the benefit of his grace; nay, this was a specimen of that much greater faith which would be found among the Gentiles, when the Gospel would be published, than among the Jews.

V. 11—13. We have here the story of a widow's son at Nain, which Matthew and Mark make no mention of; only in the general, Matthew records it, in Christ's answer to the disciples of John, that *the dead were raised up*, Matt. 11: 5.

Observe,

I. Where, and when, this miracle was wrought. It was the *next day after* He had cured the centurion's servant, v. 11. Christ was doing good *every day*, and never had cause to complain that he had *lost a day*. It was done at the gate of a small city, or town, called *Nain*, not far from Capernaum; probably, the same with a city called *Nais*, which Jerome speaks of.

II. Who were the witnesses of it; it is as well attested as can be, for it was done in the sight of two crowds of people, v. 11, 12. Thus

Gr. *this man*.

u Acts 10: 41. Col 3: 22. 1 Tim. 6: 12.

o Matt 8: 10. 15: 28.

r Ps 147: 19. Matt. 9: 38. Rom. 3: 1—3.

s Matt 8: 13. 15: 28. Mark 9: 23. John 4: 50—53.

t Acts 10: 38.

u 2: 42. Gen. 22: 12, 2 Sam. 14: 7.

v 1 Kings 17: 19, 12: 18, 2 Kings 4: 16, 20. Zech. 12: 10.

x Job 29: 18. Acts 9: 39, 41 1 Tim. 5: 4: 5. Jam. 1: 27.

y 3: 32. John 11: 19.

there were a sufficient number to attest the truth of this miracle, for it was a greater proof of Christ's divine authority than his healing of diseases, for by no power of nature, or any means, can the dead be raised.

III. How it was wrought by our Lord Jesus.

1. The person raised to life was a *young man*. That he was really dead, was universally agreed; there could be no collusion in the case, for Christ was *entering into the town*, and had not seen him till now that He met him upon the bier. He was *carried out of the city, for the Jews' burying-places were without their cities, and at some distance from them*. This young man was *the only son of his mother, and she a widow*. She depended on him to be the staff of her old age, but he proves a broken reed; every man at his best estate is so. How numerous, how various, how very calamitous, are the afflictions of the afflicted in this world. What a vale of tears is it! What a Bochim, a place of weepers! We may well think now *deep the sorrow of this poor mother was for her only son*; it is used, to express the greatest grief; (Zech. 12: 10.) it was the deeper in that she was a *widow*; broken with breach upon breach, and a full end made of her comforts. *Much people of the city was with her, by condoling with her loss, to comfort her*.

2. Christ showed both his *pity and his power*, in raising him to life, that He might give a specimen of both, which shine so bright in man's redemption.

(1.) See how *tender his compassions* are toward the afflicted; v. 13. Here was no application made to Him for her, not so much as that He would speak some words of comfort to her, but *purely from the goodness of his nature*, He was troubled for her. The case was piteous, and He looked on it with pity; He *said unto her, Weep not*. Note, Christ has a concern for mourners, for the miserable, and often prevents them with the blessings of his goodness. He undertook the work of our redemption and salvation, *in his love and in his pity*, Isa. 63: 9. What a pleasing idea does this give us of his compassion, and of the multitude of his *tender mercies*, which may be very comfortable to us when at any time we are in sorrow! Let poor widows comfort themselves

z Judg. 16: 16. Ps. 56: 15. 103: 13.

Is 55: 9. Jer. 31: 20. Lam. 3: 23, 33.

Mark 8: 2. John 11: 33—35. Heb. 2: 17. 4: 15.

a 8: 52. Jer. 31: 15, 16. John 20: 13, 15.

b 1 Cor. 10. 1 Thes. 4: 13.

c Or, coffin.

(10.) *Whole*. 1. *Restored to perfect health and vigor*. This the word used in the original seems to import; nor did it suit the honor and goodness of Christ to leave the cure incomplete. DODDRIDGE.

Verses 11—17.

It does not appear that our Lord ever went to Nain, except on this occasion. It is supposed to have been distant about twelve or thirteen miles from Capernaum; and He seems to have taken this journey, on purpose to perform the compassionate miracle here recorded. (Marg. Ref. t—c.) The evangelist has left us to conceive of the emotions of her heart on this occasion, to which no words could possibly do justice; but he informs us, that an awe and fear of the divine power of Jesus fell on the spectators; and that they "glorified God" for his mercy, and thanked Him for having "visited his people," and raised up such a Prophet among them. (Marg. Ref. d—h.—Notes, Mark 5: 35—43. v. 41—43. John 11: 46. Acts 9: 36—43.) But though the rumor of this extraordinary miracle spread even to Judea, and through all the adjacent regions, yet we do not find that any one expected a similar miracle in the case of Jairus' daughter. (Note, Mark 5: 22—34.) What can exceed the beautiful simplicity of these verses? In particular, that simple, yet touching enumeration, which occurs in the twelfth verse, is a pure classical beauty. Common writers either overlook such circumstances, and fail to arrange them in the delicate order which gives them their effect; or they dwell so much on them, as to excite weariness and disgust. A similar instance occurs in the contrast towards the close of this chapter. (44—46.) Few minds are so acute in their perceptions, as thus to catch every circumstance which properly enters into a parallel, or a contrast, and to exclude all fanciful agreements and oppositions; and few who catch them can thus exhibit them without parade. This clearness of conception, united with such simple and unembarrassed communication, is, I conceive, true classical excellence. Luke particularly abounds in these instances. Those petulant critics, who spurn him away from a comparison with Xenophon, can support their sentence only by maintaining that his Greek is not Attic. The walk to Emmaus may challenge a comparison with any work of any master. Luke leaves the mind full of pictures, produced, not by height of coloring, but by exquisite and entirely natural description. Thus it is especially with the first two chapters of this Gospel, and the first chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

These paint themselves, on the fancy and memory, on every 'persual.' SCOTT.

(11.) *Nain*.] 'A small city of Galilee, in the tribe of Issachar. According to Eusebius, it was two miles from Mount Tabar, southward.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'The brook Kishon ran between Tabar and Nain.'

(12.) *Carried out*.] 'The Jews always buried their dead without the city, except those of the family of David. No burying-places should be tolerated within cities or towns; much less in or about churches and chapels. This custom is excessively injurious. Schoettgen says, "Others were accustomed to bury their dead without the city: We Christians, not only bury them within our cities, but receive them into our churches; hence many nearly lose their lives through the noxious effluvia." Both the Jews and other people,' says Rosenmueller, 'had their burying-places without the city; and this the health of the public requires, which is greatly injured by the effluvia from the graves.' From long observation I can attest that churches and chapels situated in grave-yards, and those especially, within whose walls the dead are interred, are perfectly unwholesome; and many, by attending such places, are shortening their passage to the house appointed for the living. The gas which is disengaged from putrid flesh, and particularly from a human body, is not only unfriendly to, but destructive of animal life. Superstition first introduced a practice, which self-interest and covetousness continue to maintain.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

'Among the Jews, a child under a month old was carried out in the bosom of a person; if a full month, in a little coffin which they carried in their arms; one of a twelve month old was carried in a little coffin on the shoulder; and one of three years old on a bier, or bed; for litter, without any other covering than a cloth, *Adam*.') In this manner was this corpse carried out. According to the age of persons was the company that attended them to the grave. An infant, not a month old, was buried by one woman and two men. If a month old, by men and women; and whoever was carried out on a bier or bed, many mourned for him. Persons well known were accompanied by great numbers. It was looked upon as an act of kindness and mercy, to follow a corpse to the grave; and it was forbidden to do any work at the time a dead man was buried, even one of the common people.' GILL.

said, 'Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.'

15 And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. 'And he delivered him to his mother.'

16 And there came a fear on all: and they glorified God, saying, That a great prophet is risen up among us; and, That God hath visited his people.

17 And this rumor of him went forth throughout all Judea, and throughout all the region round about.

[Practical Observations.]

18 ¶ And the disci-

8:54, 55. 1 Kings 17:21. Job 14:12.
14. Ps. 33:9. Is. 26:10. Ez. 37:3.
10. John 5:21, 25, 28, 29. 11:25, 43.
44. Acts 9:40, 41. Rom. 4:17. Eph. 5:14.
c 1 Kings 17:23, 24. 2 Kings 4:34—37.
d 5:26, 28. 8:57. Jer. 33:9. Matt. 28:8.
e 8:30. Acts 5:11—13.
f 9:39. 9:19. 24:19. John 1:21, 25. 6:14. 7:40, 41. 9:17. Luke 3:22, 23.
g 7:37.
h 1:68. 19:44. Ez. 4:31. Ps. 65:9.
i 10:63, 5.
k 4:14. Matt. 4:24. 9:81. Mark 1:28. 9:14.
l See on Matt. 11:2—6. John 3:26.

in their sorrows with this, that Christ *pities them*. Christ said, *Weep not*; and He could give her a reason for it, which no one else could: 'Weep not for a dead son, for he shall presently become a *living one*.' This was a reason peculiar to her case; yet there is a reason common to all that sleep in Jesus, which is of equal force against inordinate and excessive grief for their death—that they shall rise again, shall rise in glory; and therefore we must not sorrow, as those that have no hope, 1 Thess. 4:13. Let Rachel, that *weeps for her children, refrain her eyes from tears*, for there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that *thy children shall come again to their own border*, Jer. 31:17. And let our *passion* at such a time be checked and calmed by the consideration of Christ's compassion.

(2.) See how *triumphant his commands* are, over even death itself; (v. 14.) *He came and touched the bier*, or coffin, hereby intimating to the bearers, that they should not proceed; He had something to say to the dead young man: *Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom*; (Job 33:24.) *they that bare him stood still*, and, probably, let down the bier, and opened the coffin; and then with solemnity, as one that had authority, and to whom belonged the issues from death, He said, *Young man, I say unto thee, Arise*. It was no absurdity for Christ to bid him *arise*, when a power went along with that word, to *put life* into him. The gospel-call to all people, to young people particularly, is, 'Arise, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light and life.' Christ's dominion over death was evidenced by the immediate effect of his word; (v. 15.) *He that was dead, sat up*. Have we grace from Christ? Let us show it. Another evi-

dence of life was, that he *began to speak*; whenever Christ gives us spiritual life, *He opens the lips* in prayer and praise. And, lastly, He would not oblige this young man to go along with Him, as his disciple, much less as a trophy or show to get honor by, but *delivered him to his mother*, to attend her as became dutiful son; for Christ's miracles were miracles of mercy; and a great act of mercy this was to this widow; now she was *comforted*, according to the time in which she had been afflicted, and much more, for she could now look on this son as a partial favorite of heaven, with more pleas. than if he had not died.

IV. What influence it had on the people; (v. 16.) it frightened them all, to see a dead man start up alive out of his coffin in the open street at the command of a man; they were all struck with wonder at it, and *glorified God*. The Lord and his goodness, as well as the Lord and his greatness, are to be feared. The inference they drew from it was, 'A great Prophet is risen up among us, the great Prophet that we have been long looking for; doubtless, He is one divinely inspired, who can thus breathe life into the dead; and in Him God hath visited his people, to redeem them, as was expected,' Luke 1:68. This would be *life from the dead*, indeed, to all them that waited for the Consolation of Israel. When dead souls are thus raised to spiritual life, by a divine power going along with the Gospel, we must glorify God, and lock on it as a gracious visit to his people. The report of this miracle was carried, 1. In general, all the country over; (v. 17.) *through all Judea*, which lay a great way off, and all Galilee, which was the region round about; yet few believed in Him, and gave up themselves to Him. Many

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—17. The grace of God is communicated to some of every rank in the community; and, where it prevails, it influences men to a conscientious and affectionate performance of the various duties of their several relations in domestic life. When masters and servants behave properly, in their respective situations, from the fear of God, they become dear to each other. (Note, Gen. 35:8. P. O. 1—15.)—Those who love the Lord will love his people also, and will be disposed to employ their wealth or influence in promoting his worship; and such as are most worthy, in the opinion of competent judges, will most honor Christ, and be most sensible of their own unworthiness.—When we have received benefits which we are unable to return, justice, as well as gratitude, requires us to beseech the Lord very earnestly in behalf of our benefactors, especially when they are under trials and afflictions; and we are most likely to obtain the greatest favors from Him, when we are most sensible that we do not deserve the least. To Him all things are alike easy, and He never fails to answer the expectation of that faith, which honors his power and love.—Our blessed Redeemer's heart is susceptible of pity, on account of all the distresses to which we are exposed. The weeping widow, and bereaved parent, are the peculiar objects of his

compassionate regard; and, though He no longer restores their deceased relatives, yet the power which formerly effected this, can now repair every breach, dry up every tear, and cause every bleeding heart to rejoice. While many, therefore, glory in a worthless sensibility, or weep over imaginary woe with an unmeaning sympathy, and leave real misery to pine in neglect, let the Christian joyfully copy the compassion of his Lord, and endeavor to soothe the aching heart, to relieve the indigent, and to comfort the afflicted. In this way, he will most reasonably hope for comfort, under the troubles of life, and in the hour of death, from the stroke of which no period of age, or vigor of health, can secure him; and thus he may also look forward with joyful expectation to the time, when the Redeemer's powerful voice shall call forth all that are in the graves, either to 'the resurrection of life, or to the resurrection of damnation.' (Notes, John 5:25—27. 11:20—27.)—All the displays of the glorious power and majesty of the Lord, should make us fear coming short of his salvation; and all his kindness to us, or to others, should excite us to glorify Him, especially for 'visiting his people' and raising up a great Redeemer among them.

SCOTT.

(15.) 'He went from Capernaum to Nain, still on the same blessed errand, to do good to the bodies and the souls of men. Oh that our lives might be such a circle of virtues and graces! Of Him may we also learn the most engaging manner of conferring benefits; that lovely mixture of freedom and tenderness, which heightens the sweetness, and doubles the value of every favor! But, O gracious Redeemer, how impotent is our pity when compared with thine! with thine, which could call back lamented children from the grave, and turn the sorrows of a weeping parent into a torrent of joy! We are sometimes ready fondly to say, "O that Thou hadst been near when the darlings of our hearts were snatched away from us, and we left in the dust!" But Thou indeed wast near; for Thou hast the keys of death and the unseen world! And this we know, that if our beloved children are sleeping in Thee, thy voice shall at length awaken them; and Thou wilt deliver them to us, to die no more; and wilt thyself graciously take part in that mutual and lasting joy, which Thou shalt give to us and to them.'

Verses 18—35.

(Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 11:1—19. (18.) John.] 'John, from the prison, sends his unbelieving disciples to Christ Himself, to be confirmed; that, hearing and seeing Him, they might by Him be instructed, from whom they had otherwise fled, out of a preposterous emulation.' Beza. (21.) *In that same, &c.* What a view this verse gives us of the number and variety of our Lord's miracles! The word rendered 'gave,' seems to express how highly gratifying the gift of sight was to those who had been blind, and in what a gracious and kind manner our Lord bestowed it, as taking pleasure in imparting so welcome a gift. (23.) *Blessed!* He adds this, to correct the preposterous emulation of John's disciples, who envied the honor of Jesus, as eclipsing that of John; but again, lest any should suppose that He meant to censure John himself, He subjoins a commendation of his

office, which He places in the middle between the prophets and his own coming. (28.) The predictions of the prophets are compared with John's pointing out Christ to the people; and that again with the exhibition given of Him in the Gospel. At the same time it is shown, that as much as the second discovery excelled the first, so much did 'the third excel the second. Beza. (29, 30.) And all, &c.' It is not evident, whether these verses are a continuation of Christ's discourse, or the evangelist's remark on the effects produced by it; our translation favors the latter supposition, yet the most approved expositors incline to the former. If they were the words of Christ, they called the attention of his hearers to the effects produced by John's ministry. The common people, and even the publicans, and others of bad moral character, had been induced by it 'to justify God'; for they acknowledged the justice of the punishment, which was denounced against them for their sins; and their need of repentance, forgiveness, and a change of heart and life; and, professing these things, they had received his baptism, and had regarded, in some measure, his testimony to Jesus as the promised Messiah. But the Pharisees and scribes generally rejected his ministry, and were not baptized by him; and thus they rendered 'the counsel of God,' in sending him to prepare the way of Christ, of none effect, as far as they were concerned; and they despised the warnings and denunciation which John addressed to them. (Marg. and Marg. Ref. i.—Note, Matt. 21:28—32.) Hence the people might infer that their pride and hypocrisy were more adverse to spiritual religion, than the ignorance or profligacy of others, or even of the publicans; that they might be expected to be the inveterate enemies to Jesus, whose forerunner John was; and that all must be cautioned not to follow such blind guides. If, however, we understand the passage, as the words of the evangelist, it implies, that the common people, and even the publicans, approved of Christ's honorable testimony to John, and expressed themselves to be well satisfied with the

pies of John shewed him of all these things.

19 And John calling unto him ^{two} of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying, 'Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?'

20 When the men were come unto him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto thee, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?'

21 And in that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and ^{plagues}, and of evil spirits: and unto many that were blind he gave sight.

22 Then Jesus answering, said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard: ^{how} that the blind see, ^{the} lame walk, ^{the} lepers are cleansed, ^{the} deaf hear, ^{the} dead are raised, ^{and} to the poor the gospel is preached.

23 And 'blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

k 10:1, Josh. 21. Mark 6:7. Acts 10:7, 8. Rev. 11:3.
l Gen. 3:15. 22:18. 49:10. Deut. 18: 18. Ps. 110:4. Is. 42:1. Jer. 6:7. 11:1. 40:11. 59:20. 21. Jer. 23:5. Dan. 9:24-26. Mic. 5:2. Hag. 2:7. Zech. 9:9. Mal. 3:1-3. John 4:21.
m 1 Kings 5:27. Ps. 90:7-9. Mark 3:10. 5:20-24. 1 Cor. 11:30-32. Heb. 1:9. Jam. 5:14-15.
n 18:35-40. John 6:15. Ps. 146: 8. Is. 29:18, 19. 32:3-4. 35:5-6. 42:6, 7, 16. 61:1-3. Jer. 31:8. Matt. 9:28-30. 21:4. John 9:30-33. Acts 26:18.
o Matt. 15:30, 31. Acts 3:2-8. 8:7. 14:3-10.
p 5:1 on 5:19-15. 17: 2-19. q Is. 43:8. Mark 7:29-37. r See on 14:15. 8:53-55.
s 4:18. Zeph. 3:12. Jam. 2:5. t 1:4. Is. 8:14, 15. Matt. 11:6. 13: 57, 58. John 6:40-46. Rom. 9:32. 1 Cor. 1:22, 23. 2:14. 1 Pet. 2:7, 8.

have the rumor of Christ's Gospel in their ears, that have not the *savor* and *relish* of it in their souls. 2. In particular, it was carefully brought to John Baptist, who was now in prison; v. 18. *His disciples came*, and gave him an account of all things, that he might know that though he was bound, yet the *Word of the Lord* was not bound; God's work was going on, though he was laid aside.

V. 19-35. All this discourse concerning John Baptist, occasioned by his sending to ask whether He was the Messiah, or no, we had, much as it is here related, Matt. 11: 2-19.

I. We have here John Baptist's message to Christ, and the return He made to it. Observe,

1. The great question is, whether Jesus be He that should come to redeem and save sinners, or whether we are to look for another, v. 19, 20. We are sure that God has promised a Savior, an anointed Savior, and that what He has promised He will perform in its season; but is this Jesus that promised Messiah? If so, we will receive Him, and look for no other; but if not, we will continue our expectations, and, though He tarry, wait for Him.

2. John Baptist himself, or at least his disciples, wanted to be confirmed in this matter; for Christ had not yet publicly declared Himself to be indeed the Christ, nay, He would not have his disciples, who knew Him to be so, to speak of it, till the proofs of his being so were completed in his resurrection. The great men of the Jewish church had not owned Him, nor had He gained any interest that was like to set Him on the throne of his father David. Nothing of that power and grandeur was to be seen about Him, in which it was expected the Messiah would appear. Therefore it is not strange that they should ask, *Art Thou the Messiah?* not doubting but that if He were not, He would direct them what *other* to look for.

3. Christ left it to his own works to tell who, and what He was, and to prove it. While John's messengers were with Him, He wrought many miraculous cures, v. 21. He multiplied the cures, that there might be no ground left to suspect a fraud. And then, (v. 22.) He bid them go tell John what they had seen. And he and they might easily argue, or even the common people, (John 7: 31.) *When Christ cometh, will He do more miracles than these, which this man has done?* These cures which they saw Him work, were not only confirmations of his commission, but explications of it. The Messiah must come to cure a diseased world, to give light and sight to them that sit in darkness, and to restrain and conquer evil spirits; you see that Jesus does this, and therefore must conclude, 'This is He, and look for no other.' To his miracles in the kingdom of nature He adds this in the kingdom of grace, (v. 22.) *To the poor the Gospel is preached*; which they knew was to be done by the Messiah, for He was anointed to *preach the Gospel to the meek*, (Isa.

61: 1.) and to *save the souls of the poor and needy*, Ps. 72: 13. Judge, therefore, whether you can look for any other that will more fully answer the characters of the Messiah, and the great intentions of his coming.

4. He gave them an intimation of the danger people were in of being prejudiced against Him, notwithstanding these evident proofs of his being the Messiah, v. 23. We are here in a state of trial and probation; and it is agreeable to such a state, that, as there are sufficient arguments, to confirm the truth to those that are honest and impartial in searching after it, and have their minds prepared to receive it, so there should be also objections, to cloud the truth to those that are careless, worldly, and sensual; Christ's education at Nazareth, his residence at Galilee, the meanness of his family and relations, his poverty, and the despicableness of his followers—these and the like were stumbling-blocks to many, which all the miracles He wrought could not help them over. He is *blessed*, for he is wise, humble, and well disposed, that is not overcome by these prejudices. It is a sign that God has blessed him, for it is by his grace that he is helped over these stumbling stones; and he shall be blessed indeed, blessed in Christ.

II. We have here the high encomium Christ gave of John Baptist, after his messengers were departed, (v. 24.) to make the people sensible of the advantages they had enjoyed in John's ministry, and were deprived of by his imprisonment. Let them now consider, who that was, about whom there had been so much talk, and such a great and general amazement. 'Come,' saith Christ, 'I will tell you.'

He was a man of unshaken *self-consistency*: a man of steadiness and constancy; not a reed shaken with the wind, first one way, then another; not fickle as a reed, but firm as a rock.

He was a man of unparalleled *self-denial*; a great example of mortification and contempt of the world; not a man clothed in soft raiment, nor one that lived delicately; (v. 25.) but, on the contrary, lived in a wilderness, and was clad and fed accordingly, one that brought under the body, and kept it in subjection.

He was a prophet, had his commission and instructions immediately from God, and not of man, or by man. He was by birth a priest but that is never taken notice of; for his glory, as a prophet, eclipsed the honor of his priesthood; nay, he was more, he was much more than a prophet, (v. 26.) than any of the prophets of the Old Testament, for they spake of Christ as at a distance, he spake of Him as at the door.

He was the harbinger and forerunner of the Messiah, and was so prophesied of in the Old Testament; v. 27. (Mal. 3: 1.) *Behold I send my messenger before thy face*. Before He sent the Master Himself, He sent a messenger, to give notice of his coming, and prepare people to receive Him. Had the Messiah been to appear

dom, justice, and goodness of God, displayed in that dispensation; to which they were the more inclined, as they had been baptized of John. But the Pharisees and scribes, who in general had refused his baptism, were displeased with our Lord's testimony to him, as it implied a severe censure on their conduct; (Note, Matt. 21: 23-27.) and thus they persisted in their opposition to the counsel of God, to their own great loss and danger; proving themselves to be none of 'wisdom's children,' by all of whom her appointments are justified and approved (25.)—In rejecting John's baptism, they are said to 'reject the counsel of God towards them;' that is, his gracious design of calling them by him to that repentance, which could alone exempt them from the wrath to come; and by that refusal declared they approved not of God's counsel, as just and righteous, in calling such unamiable persons as they were, and such zealots for the law, to repentance, that so they might escape the ruin threatened by John. For thus Eleazar, one of them, speaks, after the destruction of the Jews, that though all the rest of the Jews perished, we alone expected to be preserved, as we were not sinned against God, nor been guilty of any fault, and who were teachers to others. Christ tells us, that they 'were confident in themselves, that they were righteous;' and represents them by the 'elder son,' saying, 'I never transgressed at any time thy commandment.' (15: 29.) They therefore judged it an incongruous thing, to call such righteous persons to repentance; and threaten them with ruin who were so dear to God. But the publicans and common people were conscious to themselves of sins, sufficient to expose them to divine judgments; and therefore they approved of this counsel God sent to them by his messenger; and declared him righteous, both in calling them to repentance, and threatening his judgments if they did 'neglect it.' *Wholly*.—It is probable, that many of the scribes and Pharisees who came to John, hearing his exhortations and warnings,

declined his baptism, or at least that the rest of the body stood aloof from him. (Note, Matt. 3: 7-10.)

(19.) And John, &c. sent unto Jesus, &c. 'It has been thought by some that John, in thus sending to Jesus, was seeking satisfaction on his own account, whether Jesus was the Messiah; and that our Lord meant to caution him against doubting it, when He said, *Happy is he that is not offended in Me*. But, considering what clear evidence John had before received by a miraculous sign from heaven, and what express and repeated testimonies he himself had borne to Jesus, I cannot imagine this to have been the case, but must think it to be in behalf of his disciples that he sought further satisfaction.' DODDRIDGE. (21.) *Infirmities and plagues*. 'Luke mentions here diseases, or ill habits of body, sores or lamenesses, and evil spirits; from whence we may conclude, that evil spirits are reckoned by him (who speaks of distempers more accurately than the other evangelists) as things different from any disorders of the body, included in the two former words.' Ep. PEARCE.

(22.) Tell John, &c. 'Nothing could be more apposite, natural and convincing, than such an answer as this, which took its rise from what Christ was then doing, and rested on the most apparent testimony of God Himself in astonishing miracles, to which they knew their master made no pretences; (see John 10: 41.) miracles of so beneficent a nature, that no austerities of a retired life were by any means comparable to them, and miracles receiving an additional lustre from their being foretold by a prophet many ages before, and even by Isaiah, the prophet by whom John himself was so particularly described.' DODDRIDGE. (23.) And blessed is he, &c. 'This was intended as an awful admonition to the disciples of John, and contains a strong intimation, that their final happiness would be determined by the regards they should pay to Him.'

24 ¶ And when the messengers of John were departed, he began to speak unto the people concerning John, "What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind?"

25 But what went ye out for to see? "A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in king's courts."

26 But what went ye out for to see? "A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet."

27 This is he of whom it is written, "Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee."

28 For I say unto you, "Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

29 And all the people that heard him, and the pharisees, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John.

30 But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him.

31 ¶ And the Lord said, "Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like?"

32 They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept."

33 For John the Baptist came neither eat-

ing as a temporal Prince, under which character the carnal Jews expected Him, his messenger would have appeared, either in the pomp of a general, or the gaiety of a herald at arms; but it was a previous indication, plain enough, of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, that the messenger He sent before Him to prepare his way, did it by preaching repentance, and reformation of men's hearts and lives; certainly that kingdom was not of this world, which was thus ushered in.

He was, on this account, so great, that really there was not a greater prophet than he. Prophets were more honorable than kings and princes, and John was the greatest of all the prophets; the country was not sensible what a valuable, what an invaluable man it had in it, when John Baptist went about preaching and baptizing. And yet the least gospel-minister, that has obtained mercy of the Lord, to be skillful and faithful in his work; or the meanest of the apostles, and first preachers of the Gospel, being employed under a more excellent dispensation, are in a more honorable office than John Baptist. Those, therefore, who live under the gospel-dispensation, have so much the more to answer for.

III. We have here the just censure of the men of that generation, who were not wrought upon by the ministry either of John Baptist or of Jesus Christ Himself.

1. Christ here shows what contempt was put on John Baptist, while he was preaching and baptizing. (1.) Those who showed him any respect, were but ordinary people; who in the eye of the gay, were rather a disgrace than a credit to him; (v. 29.) the people indeed, the vulgar herd, of whom it was said, *This people who knows not the law, are cursed*; (John 7:49.) and the publicans, men of ill fame, as being generally men of bad morals, or taken to be so, these became his disciples; and these, though glorious monuments of divine grace, yet did not magnify John in the eye of the world; but by their repentance and reformation they justified God, in appointing such a one as John Baptist to be the forerunner of the Messiah; they hereby made it to appear that it was the best method that could be taken, for it was not in vain to them, whatever it was to others. (2.) The great men of their church and nation, that would have done him some credit in the eye of the world, did him all the dishonor they could; they heard him indeed, but they were not baptized of him; v. 30. God, sending that messenger among them, designed their salvation, and had they closed with the counsel of God, they had been made forever; but they would not comply with it, and it was to their ruin; they came short of the benefit intended them, and by refusing that discipline which was to fit them for the kingdom of the Messiah, shut themselves out of it; nay, they not only excluded themselves, but hindered others, and stood in their way.

2. He here shows the strange perverseness of the men of that generation, in their avails and prejudices both against John and Christ.

(1.) They made but a jesting matter of the

ing bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, "He hath a devil."

34 The Son of man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold, a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners!

u See on Matt. 11:7, 8.
x 1:80. 32. Matt. 3:1-5. Mark 1:4, 5. John 1:23.
y Gen. 49:4. 2 Cor. 1:17-20. Eph. 4:14. Jam. 1:5-8. 2 Pet. 2:17. 3:17.
z 2 Kings 1:8. Is. 59:17. Matt. 3:4. 1 Pet. 3:24.
a 1 Kings 10:5. Ezech. 4:2. 5:1. 8:15. Matt. 6:29.
b 1:76. 20:8.
c 16:16. See on Matt. 11:9-14. John 3:26, c. 5:35.
d 1:16, 17, 76. Is. 49:3. Mal. 3:1. 4:1. John 1:23.
e 1:14, 15. 8:16.
f 9:48. 10:23, 34. Matt. 11:11. 13:16. 17. Eph. 3:8, 9. Col. 1:25-27. Heb.

methods God took to do them good, v. 31. "What can I think of, absurd enough to represent them by? They are like children; (v. 32.) as full of play as they can hold; as if God were but in jest with them, in all the methods He takes to do them good; they turn it all off with a banter, and are no more affected with it than with a piece of pagantry." This is the ruin of multitudes, they can never persuade themselves to be serious in the concerns of their souls; old men sitting in the sanhedrim, were but as children sitting in the market-place, and no more affected with the things that belong to their everlasting peace, than people are with children's play. O the amazing stupidity and vanity of the blind and ungodly world! The Lord awakes them out of their security.

(2.) They still found something or other to carp at.

[1.] John Baptist was a reserved, austere man, lived much in solitude, and ought to have been admired for being such a humble, sober, self-denying man, and hearkened to as a man of thought and contemplation; but this, which was his praise, was turned to his reproach; ye say, "He has a devil;" he is a melancholy man, he is possessed.

[2.] Our Lord Jesus was of a more free and open conversation; (v. 34.) He would go and dine with Pharisees, though He knew they did not care for Him; and with publicans, though He knew they were no credit to Him: in hopes of doing them good, He conversed with them familiarly. By this it appears that the ministers of Christ may be of very different temper and dispositions, very different ways of preaching and living, and yet all good and useful; diversity of gifts, but each given to profit withal; therefore none must make themselves a standard to all others, nor judge hardly of those that do not do just as they do. John Baptist bore witness to Christ, and Christ applauded John Baptist, though they were the reverse of each other in their way of living. But the common enemies of them both reproached them both. The very same men that had represented John as crazed in his intellects, because he came neither eating nor drinking, represented our Lord Jesus as corrupt in his morals, because He came eating and drinking, v. 34. Ill-will never speaks well. See the malice of wicked people, and how they put the worst construction on every thing they meet with in the Gospel, and in the preachers and professors of it; and hereby they think to diminish them, but really destroy themselves.

Lastly, He shows that, notwithstanding this, God will be glorified in the salvation of a chosen remnant; v. 35. There are those who are given to wisdom, as her children, and they shall be brought, by the grace of God, to submit to wisdom's conduct and government, and thereby to justify wisdom's ways in bringing them to that submission; for to them they are effectual, and thereby appear well chosen. Wisdom's children are herein unanimous, one and all, they have all a complacency in the methods of grace which divine wisdom takes, and think never the worse of them for their being ridiculed by some.

11:39, 40. 1 Pet. 1:10-12.
g 35. Judg. 17. Ps. 51:4. Rom. 2:4, 6. 10:3. Rev. 17:3. 16:5.
h 3:32. Matt. 21:31.
i Or, frustrated. 1:34. Jer. 8:28. Rom. 10:21. 2 Cor. 6:1. Gal. 2:21.
j Acts 20:27. Eph. 1:11.
k Lam. 2:18. Matt. 11:16. Mark 4:20. 1 Prov. 17:16. Is. 28:9-13. 29:11, 12. Jer. 5:3-5. See on Matt. 11:16-19. Mark 3:25.
l 1:15. Jer. 19:8-10. Matt. 3:4. Mark 1:4.
m Matt. 10:25. John 8:48, 52. 10:26.
n Acts 2:13.
p 2:29. 11:37. Jas. 1. John 12:2. q 15:2. 19:7. Matt. 9:11.

(28.) Not a greater, &c. "He was greater than any of the ancient prophets, on account of his wonderful conception and birth; his excellent knowledge of gospel-mysteries; (see especially John 3:27. et seq.) his express testimony to the Messiah, and his remarkable success in making way for Him; John was also himself the subject of ancient prophecies, and long expected by the church!" POORBOOK.

(29.) "I take these to be the words of Christ, continuing his dis-

course: whereas our translation seems rather to intimate, that they are the reflection of Luke on the sentiments of those who were now hearing Christ."

In this, Campbell and others concur.

(31.) And the Lord said. "Almost every MS. of authority and importance, with most of the versions, omit these words. There is the fullest proof, that they never made a part of Luke's text."

35 But 'wisdom is justified of all her children.

[Practical Observations.]

36 ¶ And one of the Pharisees desired him that he would eat with him. 'And he went into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat.

37 And, behold, a woman in the city,

99. Prov. 8:32-35. Hos. 14:3.
Matt. 11:19. 1 Cor. 2:14, 5.
34 11:37. 14:1.

V. 36-50. When and where this took place, does not appear; this evangelist does not observe order of time, so much as the other evangelists do; but it comes in here, on occasion of Christ's being reproached as a *Friend of publicans and sinners*, to show that it was only for their good, that He conversed with them; and that those whom He admitted near Him, were reformed, or in a hopeful way to be so. Who this woman was, that here testified so great an affection to Christ, does not appear; it is commonly said to be Mary Magdalene, but I find no ground in Scripture for it; she is described (ch. 8: 2. and Mark 16: 9.) to be one of whom Christ had cast seven devils; but that is not mentioned here; and therefore it is probable that it was not she.

Now observe here,

I. The civil entertainment which a Pharisee gave to Christ, and his gracious acceptance of that entertainment, v. 36. It appears this Pharisee did not believe in Christ, for he will not own Him to be a *Prophet*, (v. 39.) and yet our Lord Jesus accepted his invitation, that they might see He took the same liberty with Pharisees that He did with publicans, in hopes of *doing them good*. And those may venture further into the society of such as are prejudiced against Christ, and his religion, who have wisdom and grace sufficient to instruct and argue with them, than others may.

II. The great respect which a poor penitent sinner showed Him, when He was at meat in the Pharisee's house. It was a woman in the city, that was a sinner, a Gentile, a harlot, I doubt, known to be so, and infamous; she knew

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 18-35. Ministers ought to be peculiarly earnest in 'preaching the glad tidings of salvation to the poor,' and in seeking a blessing on their doctrine; that all may see its salutary effects, in the sober, righteous and godly lives of those who favor it.—Every individual should inquire into his own motives in going to hear the Word of God, and ask himself whether he derives any benefit from it; for the true minister is a messenger sent by the Lord Jesus, to prepare the way be-

fore Him, and to bring sinners to receive and obey Him. While numbers are offended with the Gospel, and, from perverse prejudices of diverse kinds, 'reject the counsel of God against themselves,' may we study to approve ourselves to be 'the children of wisdom,' by attending to the instructions of the sacred oracles, and adorning those mysteries and dispensations, which proud infidels and Pharisees deride and blaspheme. (P. O. Matt. 11: 1-24.)

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(35.) *Of all her children.* 'Rather, by all her children; i. e. all who are truly wise and religious, must needs approve of this beautiful variety in the conduct of Providence.' Donnan.

'Or, "the children of wisdom," by a natural metaphor, may signify "the many good effects which result from her;" all the graces and virtues of a truly good Christian may be considered as her progeny. Two MSS. and some versions have "works," instead of "children." If this interpretation should not be thought admissible, we may understand by the children of wisdom, "her disciples;" in the same manner as the "sons of the prophets" (1 Kings 20: 35. 2 Kings 2: 3, 5.) mean those who studied, or who had been brought up in their schools.'

HEWLETT.

Verse 36. This man seems to have been considerably impressed with what he had seen and heard; but his prejudices were strong, and he was yet in suspense whether Jesus was, or was not, a prophet. It is probable, therefore, that he invited Him to his house, in order the more narrowly to observe and scrutinize all his words and actions; and he seems to have had others about him in the same state of mind. (49. Notes, 11: 37, 38. 14: 1-6.) Our Lord, however, was always ready to show a friendly and considerate disposition, and to embrace every occasion of doing good; He therefore accepted the invitation, and having entered his house, he immediately sat down to meat; or, reclined on the couch, according to the custom of the Jews at that time. For the Pharisee, as it appears, considering Jesus as a poor man, and having no proper sense of his real excellency and dignity, did not show Him any of the customary tokens of respect or affection. (44-46.)

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Verses 37-39.

There is no scriptural proof that this was Mary Magdalene. Mary Magdalene, or Mary of Magdala, is spoken of, rather as one, who had been remarkably *afflicted*, than *peculiarly wicked*. (Note, Mark 16: 9-11.) This woman, however, having heard our Lord's instructions with great attention, had been led to deep conviction and unfeigned repentance; and, being thus prepared to receive the truth, she seems to have believed Him to be the promised Messiah, a spiritual Redeemer, the Savior of sinners. She therefore longed to hear more of his convincing and encouraging instructions, and also to express love and gratitude to Him; and, in the fulness of her heart, she followed Him into the Pharisee's house, having taken with her an alabaster-box of valuable ointment, which probably she had been accustomed before to use for far other purposes. Coming thus behind Him as He reclined at meat, his presence and conversation so affected her, with a remembrance of her former sins, and with a sense of his grace and mercy, that she wept abundantly; and, as his feet were bare, (his sandals having been put off,) she *rained tears* plentifully upon them, wiping them at the same time with her neglected, dishevelled hair; and kissing them, in the most humble, respectful, and affectionate manner, she anointed them with the ointment. But the Pharisee, instead of reflecting in these tokens of her repentance, confined his thoughts entirely to her former scandalous character, and began to form a disadvantageous opinion of Jesus, because He allowed such a woman to approach Him. (Notes, 15: 1, 2. 18: 9-14. Je. 65: 3-7. Matt. 9: 10-13.) It is most surprising that many persons, (among whom have been several remarkable for learning and diligent investigation,) should have supposed that Luke here records the same event, which the other evangelists relate, concerning Mary, the sister of Lazarus. (Notes, Matt. 26: 6-13. Mark 14: 3-9. John 12: 1-8.) 'This woman was "a woman" of that city; "Nain" or Capernaum, the only cities here mentioned; whereas Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was of the village of Bethany. After the colation, which is not styled a supper, our Lord "went through every city and village, preaching the kingdom of God;" (8: 1.) whereas, after He raised Lazarus, "Jesus walked no more openly." (John 11: 54.) And lastly, Mary's unction was made for Christ's interment, and but six days before his last passover, when He continued in Bethany and Jerusalem. (Mark 11: 11.) Whittby. 'Thus was in one of the Pharisees' houses, not in Simon the leper's, nor to Bethany. The Pharisee objected against Christ for this; but not Judas, or one of the disciples; and the objection was not the unnecessary expense, as there, but that Christ would let a sinner be so kind to Him, if He knew it; or if He did not, that He was no prophet. And then the difference between Christ and Simon, is far distant from that in the

'other gospels, of anointing Him for his burial; which also contains 'another circumstance in it, that that of Mary's was immediately before his death, Judas going out immediately to betray Him.' Hammond. To this it may be added, that it is hardly conceivable, a supper should have been made for Jesus, after Lazarus was raised from the dead, at which Lazarus was a guest, and Martha waited, and which was evidently done in honor of Christ; while the person who entertained the company doubted of his being a prophet, because the sister of Lazarus his guest, and of Martha who waited, was permitted to touch Him. And it is equally inconceivable that the Jews should throng to the house of 'Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother,' if the character of Mary had been so infamous, that it was enough to induce suspicion against One, who was so eminent for his miracles and doctrine, that He permitted her to touch Him. There is every reason to think, that Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, was, like her brother and sister, in all respects, a person of approved character, even among such as did not receive Jesus as the Messiah; and though the circumstances of the alabaster-box, the anointing of our Lord's feet, and wiping them with her hair, and 'the leper' being called Simon, as well as 'the Pharisee,' seem at first glance to give some plausibility to the opinion; yet the more carefully the connection of the narrative, the time, the place, the discourse, the woman's motive, the commendation bestowed on each, and indeed the whole account, is considered, the more complete must be the reader's conviction, that two entirely different persons and two distinct transactions are intended. The apostle records, that Mary anointed Christ's 'feet; but Luke never intimates, that this woman anointed 'his head,' as two evangelists do of Mary. This was more suited to the respectful and affectionate freedom of one long honored with the Savior's friendship, than with the weeping, trembling diffidence of a new convert, whose life had been notoriously scandalous. (37.) *A sinner.*' (34, 39. 5: 8. 13: 2. 15: 10. 18: 13.—See on Matt. 9: 10.) The word commonly marks a person of immoral character, and is seldom used for a truly penitent, believing, and justified person, except by the person himself in humble confession.

SCOTT.

(37.) *A woman.* 'The same, as affirmed by many, with Mary Magdalene. (Luke 8: 2.) and Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, John 11. Yet the best modern critics maintain that these were three different persons; Deyling having, as is generally acknowledged, proved, satisfactorily, from the Gospel history, wherever Mary Magdalene is mentioned, that she and Mary, the sister of Martha and Lazarus, were two entirely distinct and different persons; and that the woman here mentioned (who had been a sinner) was entirely distinct and different from both; inasmuch as she differs from the sister of Lazarus in name, country, manners and situation in life; and from Mary Magdalene, in that the one was of Nain, (in Issachar, see note, verse 11.) but the other a harlot from Magdala, a city in the half-tribe of Manasseh, beyond Jordan. The history seems to differ from that recorded in Matt. 26: 6. Mark 14: 3. and John 12: 1; but, not to mention other things, what Luke relates here (in verses 37-50.) is by no means suitable to Mary, the sister of Lazarus, who was well known to Christ, and who had not come accidentally, but had been invited, (John 12: 2. *made Him a supper*.) And that Mary Magdalene was not the woman here spoken of, is evident from Luke 8: 2.'

ROSENEM. and WOLF. in ROSENEM.

'A mere heathen, who dwelt in this city, (probably Capernaum) who through the ministry of Christ had been before this converted to God, and came now to give this public testimony of her gratitude to her gracious Deliverer from the darkness and guilt of sin. For this sense of the original word, namely, that it signifies *heathen* or *Gentile*, see Matt. 9: 10, 11, 13, 11: 19, and 26: 45. 'The Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners, i. e. is delivered into the hands of the heathen, viz. the Romans.' It is likely, the grand subject of the self-righteous Pharisee's complaint was, her being a *heathen*. As those who were touched by such, contracted legal defilement, he could not believe that Christ was a conscientious observer of the law; seen: He permitted her to touch Him, *knowing* who she was; or if He did not know that she was a *heathen*, it was a proof that He was no prophet, (v. 39.) and consequently had not the discernment of spirits, which prophets were supposed to possess.'

Dr A. CLARKE

which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster-box of ointment,

38 And stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

39 Now when the Pharisee, which had bidden him, saw it, he spake within himself, saying, ^bThis man, if he were a prophet, would have known who, and what manner of woman, ^cthis is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner.

40 And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, ^dMaster, say on.

41 There was a certain creditor which had two debtors; ^ethe one owed five hundred pence, ^fand the other fifty.

42 And ^gwhen they had nothing to pay, ^hhe frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?

(38.) *Stood at his feet behind Him.* 'In taking their meals, the Eastern people recline on one side, the loins and knees being bent to make the more room. The feet of each person were turned outwards behind him. This is the meaning of standing behind at his feet.'

To wash his feet. 'As the Jews wore nothing like our shoes, (their being a mere sole bound about the foot and ankle with thongs. See cut. Matt. 10: 10.) their feet being so much exposed, had frequent need of washing, and this they ordinarily did before taking their meals.'

Kissed his feet. 'With affectionate tenderness, or kissed them again and again, which is the true force of the original word. The kiss was used in ancient times as the emblem of love, religious reverence, subjection and supplication. It has the meaning of supplication, in the way of adoration, accompanied with subjection, in 1 Kings 19: 18, *whose mouths have not kissed Baal*, and in Job 31: 27, *My mouth hath not kissed my hand*; I have paid no sort of adoration to false gods; and in Ps. 2: 12, *Kiss the Son, lest He be angry*,—close in with embrace affectionately the offers of mercy made unto you through Christ Jesus, *lest He (the Lord) be angry with you, and be wroth*; which commandment this woman seems to have obeyed both in the literal and spiritual sense. *Kissing the feet* was practised among the heathens to express subjection of spirit, and earnest supplication. Kissing the feet is a further proof that this person had been educated a heathen.'

It was also used as a mark of the deepest reverence and most profound humility. So Wetstein cites, among many others, Xenophon. 'Then they affectionately kissed Cyrus' hands and feet, shedding many tears, and at the same time showing signs of joy.' And Seneca: 'Cæsar gave wine to Pompey Pennus, whom he had pardoned, and then, on his returning thanks, presented his left foot for him to kiss.' Hence the custom of kissing the pope's feet. The evangelist indicates (Wetstein) that a greater honor was due to Christ than to the king of Persia; and therefore that He is not a mere man who gave his foot to be kissed, well knowing (as Christ must have done) that by the Greeks and Romans this honor was considered as equal to that which is paid to the Deity.'

'I took a lancet out of my pocket-book, put it into his hands, and told him, (as Persian) it was for himself. He looked at me, and at it, with his mouth open, as if he hardly comprehended the possibility of my parting with such a jewel. But when I repeated the words, it was

that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, and, having been converted from her wicked course of life by his preaching, she came to acknowledge her obligations to Him, having no opportunity of doing it any other way, than by washing his feet, and anointing them with some sweet ointment that she brought with her for that purpose. The way of sitting at table then was such, that their feet were partly behind them; and this woman did the part of a maid-servant, whose office it was to wash the feet of the guests, (1 Sam. 25: 41.) and to prepare the ointments.

Now in what this good woman did, we may observe,

1. Her deep humiliation for sin; she stood behind Him weeping. Her face is now foul with weeping. We have reason to think she had before sorrowed for sin; but now, coming into the presence of Christ, the wound bled afresh and her sorrow renewed. Note, It well becomes penitents, in all their approaches to Christ, to renew their godly sorrow and shame for sin, when He is pacified, Ezek. 16: 63.

2. Her strong affection to the Lord Jesus; this was what our Lord Jesus took special notice of, that she loved much; v. 42, 47. She washed his feet, in token of her ready submission to the meanest office in which she might do Him honor. Nay, she washed them with her tears, tears of joy; she was in a transport, to find herself so near her Savior, whom her soul loved. She kissed his feet, as one unworthy of the kisses of his mouth, which the spouse coveted, Cant. 1: 2. It was a kiss of adoration as well as affection; She wiped them with her hair, as one entirely devoted to his honor; and she anointed his feet with the ointment; owning Him hereby to be the Messiah, the Anointed; she anointed his feet, in token of her consent to God's design in anointing his head with the oil of gladness. Note, All true penitents have a dear love to the Lord Jesus.

III. The offence which the Pharisee took at Christ, for admitting the respect which this poor penitent paid Him; v. 39. He spake within

a 38. 5:90. 18:13. 19:7. Matt. 21: 31. John 9:24, 31. Rom. 5:8. 1 Tim. 1:15. 1 Pet. 4:18.
u Matt. 26:7. Mark 14:3. John 12: 12-8.
v 42:1. 22:62. Judg. 24:5. Ezra 10: 1. Ps. 6:18-8. 38:18. 51:17. 126: 5, 6. Is. 61:3. Jer. 31:9, 18-20. Joel 2:12. Zech. 12:10. Matt. 5:4. 2 Cor. 7:10, 11. Jam. 4:9.
y 41. Gen. 18:4. John 13:4, 5. 24:46. Ec. 9:8. Matt. 1:2. Is. 67:9.

a 38. 12:17. 16:3. 18:4. 2 Kings 5:10. Prov. 23:7. Mark 2:6, 7. 7:21. 12:40. 17:12-40, 41, 47-52.
c 37. 14:22-30. 16:1-11. Is. 63: 6. Matt. 9:1, 13. 20:16. 21:28-31. 22:31. 6:8. John 16:19-30.
e 15:18. 20:20, 21. Ec. 33:31. Mal. 1:8. Matt. 7:22. 26:49. John 3:2. 13:13.
f 11:4. 13:4. marg. Is. 50:1. Matt. 6:12. 18:23-25.
g 47. Rom. 5:20. 1 Tim. 1:15, 16.

b Matt. 18:28. marg. 43:25. 44:32. Jer. 31:33, 34. Is. 12:42. Num. 27:3. Jer. 3:11. John 15:28-24. Rom. 3:23. 1 John 1: 2. 14:22-30. 16:1-11. Is. 63: 6. Matt. 9:1, 13. 20:16. 21:28-31. 22:31. 6:8. John 16:19-30.
h Matt. 18:28. marg. 43:25. 44:32. Jer. 31:33, 34. Is. 12:42. Num. 27:3. Jer. 3:11. John 15:28-24. Rom. 3:23. 1 John 1: 2. 14:22-30. 16:1-11. Is. 63: 6. Matt. 9:1, 13. 20:16. 21:28-31. 22:31. 6:8. John 16:19-30.

you, he threw himself on the ground, kissed my knees and my feet, and wept with a joy that stifled his expression of thanks.'

With the hairs of her head. 'When Hannibal drew near to Rome, the Roman ladies, as was their custom on such occasions, went to the temples to supplicate the gods, washing the floors of them with their hair.'

Polypius, in BURDER

Verses 40-43. Whilst Simon imagined he had obtained a decisive proof that Jesus was not a prophet, our Lord answered to his inmost thoughts in such a manner as sufficiently evinced that He was far more than a prophet. (Notes, John 2: 23-25. 21: 15-17. 1 Cor 14: 20-25. v. 22-25. Heb. 4: 12, 13. Rev. 2: 20-23. v. 23.) Had He directly attacked the Pharisee upon the subject of his wicked and unreasonable pride, and unfeeling disdain of the poor weeping penitent, (as we should have been apt to do), he would probably have been only hardened and irritated by it; but the manner, in which Jesus addressed him, was admirably suited to convince, without affronting him. (Notes, Matt. 18: 23-35.) The longer men live in sin, the more advantages they abuse, and the more mischief they do, the greater is their actual guilt; yet pride, and ignorance of God, of the evil of sin, and of themselves, impose on many to think their debt small, when it is indeed very large. But the convictions, which spring from divine illumination, always lead men to consider themselves as great sinners; and when they attain to a comfortable sense of forgiveness, by the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus, their love and gratitude are proportioned to the degree of their humiliation. (Notes, 2 Cor. 5: 13-15. Eph. 3: 8.) (40.) Master, &c.] O teacher, speak. Considering the state of Simon's mind, this address seems not only hypocritical, but sarcastical.

(41.) A certain creditor.] 'It is plain, that, in this parable, our Lord means by creditor, God, and by the two debtors, Simon and the woman who was present. Simon, who had the light of the law, and whose, by his profession, was a Pharisee, was obliged to abstain from outward iniquity, might be considered as the debtor who owed only fifty pence. The woman, whom I have supposed to be a heathen, not having these advantages, having no rule to regulate her actions, and no curb on her evil propensities, may be considered as the debtor who owed five hundred pence. The circumstance, that both were alike insolvent, or that the religious Pharisee could no more pay his debt, than the heathen woman her five hundred, shows how, except that both were freely forgiven, both must finally perish.'

Dr A. CLARKE.

43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, "Thou hast rightly judged.

[Practical Observations.]

44 And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, "Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house: thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head.

45 Thou gavest me no kiss; but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet.

46 Mine head with oil thou didst not anoint; but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.

47 Wherefore, I say unto thee, her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little.

48 And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven.

49 And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?"

50 And he said to the woman, "Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

Now, in his answer,

1. He, by a parable, forces Simon to acknowledge, that the greater sinner this woman had been, the greater love she ought to show to Jesus Christ when her sins were pardoned; v. 41—43. From which, besides the answer to the Pharisee, we may learn the duty between debtor and creditor. The debtor, if he have any thing to pay, ought to make satisfaction to his creditor. No man can reckon that his own, or have any comfortable enjoyment of it, but that which is so when all his debts are paid. But if God in his providence hath disabled the debtor to pay his debt, the creditor ought not to be severe with him, nor to go to the utmost rigor of the law with him, but freely to forgive him. The law, stretched into rigor, becomes unjust. Let the unmerciful creditor read that parable, (Matt. 18: 23, &c.) and tremble; for they shall have judgment without mercy, that show no mercy. Yet, the debtor that has found his creditors merciful, ought to be very grateful to them; and if he cannot otherwise recompense them, ought to love them. Some insolvent debtors, instead of being grateful, are spiteful, and cannot give their creditors a good word, only because they complain; whereas losers may have leave to speak. But this parable speaks of God as the Creditor, (or rather of the Lord Jesus Himself, for He it is that forgives, and is beloved by the debtor,) and sinners are the debtors.

Now, sin is a debt, and sinners are debtors to God Almighty. As creatures, we owe a debt, a debt of obedience to the precept of the law, and for non-payment of that, as sinners, we become liable to the penalty. God has an action against us for the injury we have done Him, and the omission of our duty to Him.

Some are deeper in debt to God, by reason of sin, than others are, v. 41. The Pharisee was the less debtor, yet he a debtor too, which was more than he thought himself, but rather that God was his debtor, Luke 13: 10, 11. This woman, that had been a scandalous, notorious sinner, was the greater debtor. Some sinners are in themselves greater debtors than others; and some are so by reason of divers aggravating circumstances; having sinned most openly and scandalously, against greater light and knowledge, more convictions and warnings, and more mercies and means.

And, whether our debt be more or less, it is more than we are able to pay; They had nothing

m 47, 1 Cor. 15: 9, 10, 2 Cor. 5: 14, 15.
1 Tim. 1: 13—16.
n 10: 28, Mark 12: 24.
o 37—39.
p Gen. 19: 28, Judg. 19: 21, 1 Sam. 25: 41, 1 Tim. 5: 10, Jam. 2: 8.
q Gen. 29: 11, 33: 4, 2 Sam. 16: 5, 19: 53, Matt. 26: 48, Rom. 16: 18, 1.

Cor. 16: 20, 1 Thes. 5: 26.
r Ruth 3: 2, 2 Sam. 14: 2, Ps. 23: 10, 14: 15, Ec. 9: 8, Dan. 10: 3, Am. 6: 8, Mic. 6: 15, Matt. 6: 17.
s 42, 5: 20, 21, Ex. 34: 6, 7.
t Is. 1: 18, 55: 7, Ec. 16: 63, 36: 29—32, Mic. 7: 19, Acts 3: 61, Rom. 9: 20, 1 Cor. 6: 9—11, 1 Tim. 1: 14.

1 John 1: 7, u 43, Matt. 10: 37, John 21: 15—17, 2 Cor. 5: 14, Gal. 5: 6, Eph. 6: 24, Phil. 1: 13, 1 John 3: 14, 4: 19, 5: 3, x 5: 20, 21, Matt. 6: 2, Mark 2: 7, y 8: 48, 18: 42, Matt. 9: 22, Mark 5: 34, 10: 52, Eph. 2: 8—10, Jam. 2: 14—26, z 1: 5, 5: 7, Rom. 5: 6, 11, 2.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 36—43. Those who seek to do good to souls, must meekly bear with the perverseness of opposers, and avoid all affected moroseness; the better to gain access to sinners, and obtain a hearing from them.—None can perceive the preciousness of Christ, or the glory of the Gospel, except the broken-hearted. But while these cannot sufficiently express their self-abbhorrence, or their admiration of his grace, the self-sufficient will even think the worse of the Gospel for giving encouragement to them! and men of this character often feel a deeper enmity against Christ, and his disciples, than they

choose to avow. But did they know the real state of mankind and of their own souls, they must perceive the folly and wickedness of their objections; for 'all,' without exception, 'have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.' (Notes, Rom. 3: 21—25, v. 21—23. Gal. 3: 10—14, 19—22.)—Who can perform one service, which is free from every defect or alloy of sin? Without free forgiveness, we can none of us escape the wrath to come; and this, our gracious Savior has procured by his atoning blood, that He might freely bestow it on every one who believes in Him.

SCOTT.

Verses 44—50.

(Marg. Ref.—Gen. 29: 13. Notes, Gen. 18: 3—8, v. 4. Ps. 2: 10—12, v. 12.) Many expositors would render verse 47, 'Therefore she loved much,' though they allow this use of the Greek participle to be very uncommon. But there seems no occasion for the alteration; and, in fact, no indisputable instance of its being used in this sense has ever been produced. Her love was not the cause of her forgiveness, which is ascribed to her faith, (50.) but it was an evidence of it; for it proved the sincerity of her repentance and faith in Christ, from which her forgiveness might with certainty be inferred. (Notes, Matt. 10: 37—39, John 21: 15—17, 1 Cor. 16: 22—24, v. 22, 2 Cor. 5: 13—15, Eph. 6: 21—24, v. 24, 1 Pet. 1: 8, 7.) Indeed, if her love to Christ had arisen from the assurance that her sins were forgiven, there would have been no occasion for Him repeatedly to assure her that they were; but He pointed out the effects of her fervent love, both to comfort her drooping heart, and to silence her rigorous judges. The word, rendered 'wherefore,' signifies, on account of which, or for the sake of which, A, and seems at least to induce as much difficulty as that translation 'for.'—Thus our Lord intimated, that the Pharisees, forming such an erroneous estimate of their own character, could not properly value salvation by grace, or love the gracious Savior of lost sinners; and

were it possible, that, in this state of mind, they should be pardoned, they could only 'love a little,' and give Him the formal, cool reception, that Simon had done: instead of showing, by every action, the fervent love and gratitude of this deeply-humbled penitent. It is plain, that our Lord addressed Simon, according to his own thoughts of himself, and not according to the real state of the case, when He seemed to allow that he 'loved a little.' This was frequently his manner; (Note, 15: 25—32.) and there was something in it very conciliating, though plain and faithful. He certainly did not treat all Pharisees alike, or pursue every one, whose heart was not right before God, with all that severity, which He expressed against those, who combined with their self-righteousness the most detestable hypocrisy and enormous wickedness. Some preachers and authors have perhaps too much overlooked this. (Notes, Matt. 9: 2—8, Mark 2: 3—12.) (50) Thy faith hath saved thee. Here these words must relate to eternal salvation. (Note, Acts 4: 5—12, v. 12.)

(44.) Thou givest Me no water. 'In this respect, Simon was sadly deficient in civil respect, whether this proceeded from forgetfulness or contempt. The custom of giving water to wash the guests' feet was very ancient. See instances in Gen. 18: 4, 21: 32, v. 19, 21: 1 Sam. 25: 41. In Hindoostan it is the custom, that when

CHAP. VIII.

Our Lord preaches, attended by his apostles, and by some women who ministered to him. 1-3. The parable of the sower, with its interpretation, 4-15; and that of the lighted candle, 16-18. Christ's obedient disciples are his most beloved relations, 19-21. He calms a violent tempest, 22-25; and casts out the legion, 26-29. He heals the woman who had an issue of blood, and raises Jarius's daughter, 30-56.

AND it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching, and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him,

a 4:43, 44. Matt. 4:23. 9:35. 11:1. Mark 3:39. Acts 10:38.
b 2:10, 11. 4:18. 1:1-3. Matt. 10:19. Acts 13:32. Rom. 10:15.
c 4:1-15. Matt. 10:2-4. Mark 3:16-19.

How well was she paid for her pains and cost, when she was dismissed with this word from Christ, *Thy sins are forgiven*, and what an effectual prevention would this be of her return to sin again! Though some present quarrelled with Christ, in their own minds, for presuming to forgive sin, and pronounce sinners absolved, (v. 49.) as those had done, (Matt. 9:3.) yet He stood to what He had said; for as He had there proved that He had power to forgive sin, by curing the man sick of the palsy, and therefore would not here take notice of the cavil, so He would now show that He had pleasure in forgiving sin, and it was his delight: He loves to speak pardon and peace to penitents; (v. 50.) He said to the woman, *Thy faith hath saved thee*. This would confirm and double her comfort in the forgiveness of her sin, that she

much; for it is plain, by the tenor of Christ's discourse, that her loving much was not the cause, but the effect of her pardon, and of her comfortable sense of it; for we love God because He first loved us: He did not forgive us because we first loved Him. 'But to whom little is forgiven, as is to thee, the same loved little, as thou dost.' Hereby He intimates to the Pharisee, that his love to Christ was so little, that He had reason to question whether he loved Him at all in sincerity; and, consequently, whether indeed his sins, though comparatively little, were forgiven him. Instead of grudging greater sinners the mercy they find with Christ, on their repentance, we should be stirred up by their example to examine ourselves, whether we be indeed forgiven, and do love Christ.

4. He silenced her fears, who, probably, was discouraged by the Pharisee's offence, and yet would not so far yield to the discouragement as to fly off. Christ said unto her, *Thy sins are forgiven*, v. 48. Note, The more we express our sorrow for sin, and our love to Christ, the clearer evidence we have of the forgiveness of our sins; for it is by the experience of a work of grace wrought in us, that we obtain the assurance of an act of grace, wrought for us.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 44-50. He who is convinced of his own great sinfulness, and expects pardon and salvation, as 'the gift of God in Jesus Christ,' will in proportion become humble, patient, contented, teachable and obedient. Thus it often happens, that 'the chief of sinners,' having been brought to repentance, and made joyful by a free forgiveness and salvation, become more zealous and active in obedience than other believers: 'they love much, because much hath been forgiven them;' and they labor much, because they love much. In the case of others, deep humiliation will always be connected with a proportionable love and willing obedience, when it is accompanied with a good hope that all their sins are pardoned. The scanty, formal services, therefore, of too many prove, either that they have no proper sense of their guilt, and no just views of the preciousness of Christ, and the redeemed sinner's obligations to Him; or that they 'love little,' because they suppose that 'little has been forgiven them.' But when a real and vigorous love to Christ, springing from sorrow for sin, and the hope of forgiveness through Him, is expressed by such methods as a man's situation admits of, we may from it safely infer, that his 'sins, though many, are forgiven;' and thus give him great encouragement, without in the least palliating his guilt: and

was justified by her faith. All these expressions of sorrow for sin, and love to Christ, were the effects and products of faith; and therefore as faith, of all graces, doth most honor God, so Christ doth, of all graces, put most honor on faith. Note, They who know that their faith hath saved them, may go in peace, may go on their way rejoicing.

CHAP. VIII. v. 1-3. Most of this chapter is a repetition of divers passages of Christ's preaching and miracles, which we had before in Matthew and Mark; they are all of such weight, that they are worth repeating, and therefore they are repeated, that out of the mouth not only of two, but of three witnesses, every word may be established.

We are here told,

I. What Christ made the constant business of his life—it was preaching; in that work He was indefatigable, and went about doing good; (v. 1.) afterward—in the proper time or method. Christ took his work before Him, and went about it regularly; He observed a series, or order of business, so as that the end of one good work was the beginning of another. Now observe here,

1. Where He preached; He went about. He did not confine Himself to one place. He went about through every city, that none might plead ignorance. Hereby He set an example to his disciples; they must traverse the nations of the earth, as He did the cities of Israel. Nor did He confine Himself to the cities, but went into the villages, among the plain country-people, to preach to the inhabitants of the villages, Judg. 5: 11.

2. What He preached; the glad tidings of

when the witnessing Spirit makes it evident to the believer's conscience, that he does indeed love Christ, he may know more certainly that 'his sins are forgiven,' than if an angel from heaven had told him so. Let who will object and murmur, Christ will assert his authority of thus forgiving sin, and of bidding the weeping penitent 'depart in peace,' as partaking of salvation through faith in his name.—But may not we with shame confess, that while we hope that our many and great offences are freely pardoned, we yet comparatively love but little? If this be the case, we should seek for more heart-affecting views of our own vileness, and of Christ's preciousness: we should 'give diligence to make our calling and election sure,' and strive to get deeper impressions of our obligations to Jesus, and expectations from Him: that we may stand at a greater distance from the proud spirit of the Pharisee; that we may more simply trust and rejoice in the Savior alone; and so be prepared to obey Him more zealously, and more cordially to recommend Him to our fellow-sinners on every side, and be made more meet for the society and songs of heaven. (Notes, and P. O. Rev. 5: 8-14. 7: 9-17.)

SCOTT.

superior enters the house of an inferior, the latter washes his feet, and gives him water to rinse his mouth before he eats.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(45.) I came in.] 'The evangelist so expressly tells us that she heard of Christ's being at dinner with the Pharisees where she came in, (v. 37.) that I make no doubt of following those copies which read, she came in, rather than those which our translation follows.'

DODDRIE.

(46.) My head with oil thou didst not anoint.] This anointing was as common among the Jews, as washing the face with water is among us. See Ruth 3: 3. 2 Sam. 12: 20. 14: 2. 2 Kings 4: 2. and Ps. 23: 5. where the author alludes to the Jewish manner of receiving and entertaining a guest. Thou preparest a table for me; anointest my head with oil; givest me an overflowing cup. See Matt. 5: 17.

(47.) For she loved much.] 'Or, therefore she loved much. In the common translation, her forgiveness is represented to be the consequence of her loving much, which is causing the tree to produce the root, and not the root the tree.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'This parable of the debtors, (as Campbell observes,) clearly represents the gratuitous forgiveness as the cause of the love, not the love as the cause of the forgiveness. And this on the other hand, in v. 50. is ascribed to her faith. "This love, or gratitude, (says Markland,) could not be the cause, but was the effect, or consequence of her forgiveness; the cause was her faith. The papists indeed, (observes Wolf,) have, from this passage strenuously contended for love, as the meritorious cause of the remission of sins." But this is plainly contrary to the scope of the passage. I entirely assent to Doddridge, that however strenuously Clarus opposes this mode of interpretation, and notwithstanding the immense pains which Grotius has taken to find a sense in that which our translation follows, the connection evidently requires, that we should render the Greek particle used here, therefore, rather than for, or because. In this indeed, almost all the critics agree.'

BLOOMFIELD.

(50.) Go in peace.] 'Though peace of conscience be the inseparable consequence of the pardon of sin, yet here it seems to be used as a benediction or farewell; as if He had said, May goodness and mercy continue to follow thee! In this sense it is certainly used, Judg. 18: 6. 1 Sam. 1: 17. 20: 42. 29: 7. 2 Sam. 15: 9. Jam. 2: 16.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'It was an affectionate form of dismissing those to whom a favor had been granted, especially (as we find) after healing; still more, of those who, as here, had received forgiveness of sins.'

BLOOMFIELD.

'There is an apparent propriety in the phrase here, considering what had happened to discompose the tender spirit of this humble penitent.'

DODDRIE.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. v. 1-3. (Marg. R^c—(2.) Mary, called Magdalene, &c.) Notes, 7: 37-39. Mark 16: 1-11. (3.) Joanna, &c.) Some have conjectured that 'Chiuza, Herod's steward;' was the nobleman, or courtier, whose son Jesus had healed. (Notes, John 4: 43-54.) Doubtless, it was by his consent that his wife accompanied Jesus, when journeying to preach the Gospel. As our Lord chose to be 'poor for our sakes,' and did not work miracles for his own support, these pious women, who had been under the greatest obligations to Him, in respect both to their souls and bodies, being also in good circumstances, were glad to communicate, from their substance, to the maintenance of Him and his disciples, as well as personally to attend Him; and He was pleased to stoop thus low, for an example to his servants and disciples in similar circumstances. It does not appear that any men shared this honor 'of ministering to Christ of their substance.'

SCOTT.

(1.) And the twelve were with Him. 'That they might be farther instructed for their work, and that their having been thus publicly seen in his train might promote their reception, when they afterwards came to any of these places by themselves.'

DODDRIE.

2 And ^d certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, ^e out of whom went seven devils.

3 And ^f Joanna, the wife of Chuza, ^g Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him ^h of their substance.

4 ¶ And ⁱ when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:

5 A ^k sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some ^l fell by the way-side; and it was trodden down, ^m and the fowls of the air devoured it.

6 And some fell upon ⁿ a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture.

7 And some fell among ^o thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it.

8 And ^p other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit ^q an hundred-fold.

d 23:27, Matt. 27:55, 56, Mark 15: 40, 41, 16:1, John 19:25, Acts 1:14, e Mark 16:9, f 24:10,

g 9:7-9, John 4:46-53, Gr. Acts 1:11, Phil. 4:22,

h 13: Cor. 29:14, 13: 32:18, Matt. 21: 25-40, 29:11, Acts 9:36-39, 2 Cor. 8:9, 1 Tim. 5:10,

i Matt. 13:2, Mark 4:1-6, j 11: Matt. 13:24, 18, 19, 24-26, 37, Mark 4:24-26, 15, 26-29,

k 12: Heb. 2:1, Jam. 1:23, 24, m Gen. 15:11,

n 13: Jer. 5:3, Ez. 11:19, 35:26, Am. 6:12, Matt. 13:5, 6, 20, 21, Mark 4:5, 6, 16, 17, Rom. 2:4, 5, Heb. 3:7, 8, 15,

o 14: 21:24, Gen. 3:18, Jer. 4:3, Matt. 13:7, 22, Mark 4:7, 18, 19, Heb. 6:7, 8,

p 15: Matt. 13:23, Mark 4:8, 20, 21, 22, 23, 33-35, Eph. 2:10, Col. 1:10,

q Gen. 29:12,

the kingdom of God, that it was now to be set up among them: these Jesus Christ came to bring; to tell the children of men that God was willing to take all those *under his protection*, that were willing to return to their allegiance; it was *glad tidings* to the world, that there was hope of its being reformed and reconciled.

3. Who were his attendants; the *twelve* were; not to preach if He were present, but to learn from Him what and how to preach hereafter, and, if occasion were, to be sent to places where He could not go. Happy were these his servants that heard his wisdom.

II. Whence He had the necessary supports of life; He lived on the kindness of his friends; there were *certain women* who frequently attended his ministry, that ministered to Him of their substance, v. 2, 3. Some of them are named; but there were many others, who were zealously affected to the doctrine of Christ, and thought themselves bound in justice to encourage it, having themselves found benefit, and in charity, hoping that many others might find benefit by it too.

They were such, for the most part, as had been Christ's patients, and were the monuments of his power and mercy; they had been healed by Him of evil spirits and infirmities. Some of them had been troubled in mind, had been melancholy, others of them afflicted in body, and He had been to them a powerful Healer. He is the Physician both of body and soul, and those who have been healed by Him, ought to study what they shall render to Him. We are bound in interest to attend Him, and in gratitude to serve Him and his Gospel.

One of them was Mary Magdalene, out of whom had been cast seven devils; a certain number for an uncertain. Some think she was one that had been very wicked, and then we may suppose her to be the woman that was a sinner, mentioned just before, ch. 7. Dr. Lightfoot, finding in some of the Talmudists' writings that Mary Magdalene signified Mary the plaiter of hair, thinks it applicable to her, she having been noted in the days of her iniquity and infamy, for that plaiting of hair, which is opposed to modest apparel, 1 Tim. 2:9. But though she had been an immodest woman, on her repentance and reformation she found mercy, and became a zealous disciple of Christ. Note, The greatest of sinners must not despair of pardon; and the worse any have been before their conversion, the more they should study to do for Christ after. Or rather, she was one that had been very melancholy, and then, probably, it was Mary the sister of Lazarus, who was a woman of a sorrowful spirit; who might have been originally of Magdala, but removed to Bethany. This Mary Magdalene was attending on Christ's cross and his sepulchre, and if she was not Mary the sister of Lazarus, either that particular friend and favorite of Christ's did not attend then, or the evangelists did not take notice of her, neither of which we can suppose; thus Dr. Lightfoot argues. Yet there is this to be objected against

it, that Mary Magdalene is reckoned among the women that followed Jesus from Galilee (Matt. 27:55, 56.) whereas Mary the sister of Lazarus had her residence in Bethany.

Another of them was Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward. She had been a wife, (so some,) but was now a widow, and left in good circumstances; if she was now his wife, we have reason to think that her husband, though preferred in Herod's court, had received the Gospel, and was very willing that his wife should be both a hearer of Christ, and a contributor to Him.

There were many of them that ministered to Christ of their substance. It was an instance of the meanness of that condition to which our Savior humbled Himself, that He needed it, and his great humility and condescension, that He accepted it. Though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, and lived on alms. Let none say that they scorn to be beholden to the charity of their neighbors, when Providence has brought them into straits; but let them ask, and be thankful for it as a favor. Christ would rather be beholden to his known friends for a maintenance for Himself and his disciples, than be burdensome to strangers in the cities and villages whither He came to preach. Note, It is the duty of those who are taught in the Word, to communicate to them who teach them in all good things; and those who are herein liberal and cheerful, honor the Lord with their substance, and bring a blessing upon it.

V. 4-21. The former paragraph began with an account of Christ's industry in preaching; (v. 1.) this begins with an account of the people's industry in hearing, v. 4. There were those that would not stay till He came to them, nor think that they had heard enough when He left them, but met Him when He was coming toward them, and followed Him when He was going from them. Yet most had not zeal enough to bring them to Him, and therefore such is his wonderful condescension, that He will go to them; for He is found of those that sought Him not, Isa. 65: 1.

Here was, it seems, a vast concourse; (v. 4.) and He was as ready and willing to teach as they were to be taught. Now in these verses, we have,

I. Necessary and excellent rules and cautions for hearing the Word, in the parable of the sower, and the explanation and application of it, all which we had twice before more largely. When Christ had put forth this parable, I. The disciples were inquisitive concerning the meaning of it, v. 9. Note, We should covet earnestly to know the true intent, and full extent, of the word we hear, that we may be neither mistaken nor defective in our knowledge. 2. Christ made them sensible of what great advantage it was to them, that they had opportunity of acquainting themselves with the mystery and meaning of his word, which others had not; v. 10. Note, Those who would receive instruction from Christ, must know and consider what a privilege it is to be instructed

(2.) Out of whom came seven devils. 'Tis is supposed by Gregory to have been only a proverbial expression, to signify that she was a person of a very bad character, whom Jesus reclaimed; and M. L'Enfant advances the same interpretation, as agreeable to the Jewish style; but, as so much is spoken of dispossessions in the proper sense of the word by Luke, it is most natural to suppose this to be referred to here.

The number seven may here express the superlative degree.

(3.) Steward. 'Tis though the original word signifies sometimes the inspector or overseer of a province, and sometimes a tutor of children, yet here it seems to signify the overseer of Herod's domestic affairs; the steward of his household. Steward of the household was an officer in the king's palace by s. 24 of Henry VIII. The person is now entitled lord steward of the king's household, and the office is, I believe, more honorable and of more importance than when it was first created.

Ministered unto Him. 'Many of the best MSS. and versions have, (a them,) i. e. our Lord and the twelve apostles. This is unquestionably the true reading. Christ receives these assistances and ministrations, says Quenel, to honor poverty by subjecting Himself to it, to humble Himself in receiving from his creatures; that He may teach the ministers of the Gospel to depend on the providence of their heavenly Father; to make way for the gratitude of those He had healed; and that He might not be burdensome to the poor to whom He went to preach.' Dr. A. Clarke. May we not suppose also, that He intends

by it a lesson of that universal charity required of us in his Gospel? Gal. 6: 10.

Verses 4-15. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 13: 3-23; Mark 4: 1-20.) (5.) It was trodden, &c. 'This seems to signify a great contempt of the divine seed.' Whithy. (12.) Believe, &c. The inseparable connection of faith with salvation, and of unbelief with damnation, is here strongly marked, and is considered as well known to the enemy of our souls. (2 Cor. 4: 3, 4.) (14.) Perfection. Whatever is by any means destroyed, before it arrives at its full growth, and before it is fit for use, is not brought to perfection; and all in religion, which comes short of fruitfulness in good works, according to the time and opportunities vouchsafed, is like the corn that withers before it be ripe. (23: 39-43.) (15.) Honest, &c. (Notes, Jer. 17: 9, 10. Ez. 17: 17-20. John 3: 3-8. Rom. 7: 18-21. 'From these words it is manifest that some good disposition of heart is requisite, to render the word truly and durably fruitful.' Whithy. This no man has by nature, but by grace only. 'God worketh in us to will and to do.' (Notes, John 1: 10-12. Acts 17: 10-15, v. 11, 12. Phil. 2: 12, 13. Jam. 1: 15-17.) 'O God, from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed.' &c. Col. Even. Liturgy. (18.) Should believe and be saved. 'Last believing, i. e. and be saved.' (15.) With patience. (21: 19. Rom. 7: 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100.)

And when he had said these things he cried, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.'

9 And his disciples asked him, saying, 'What might this parable be?'

10 And he said, 'Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God; but to others in parables, "that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand."

11 Now the parable is this; 'The seed is the word of God.'

12 Those 'by the way-side are they that hear; 'then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.'

13 They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, 'receive the word with joy; 'and these have no root, 'which or a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.'

14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, 'and are choked with cares, and riches, and pleasures of this life, 'and bring no fruit to perfection.'

15 But that on the good ground are they, which, 'in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, 'keep it, and 'bring forth fruit with patience.'

16 ¶ No man, 'when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a

by Him, when others are left untaught. Happy are we, and forever indebted to free grace, if the same thing thus 'as a parable to others, is a plain truth to us, by which we are enlightened and governed, and into the mould of which we are delivered.'

Now from the parable itself, and the explanation of it, observe,

1. The heart of man is as soil to the seed of God's Word; it is capable of receiving it, and bringing forth the fruits of it; but unless that seed be sown in it, it will bring forth nothing valuable; our care therefore must be to bring the seed and the soil together. To what purpose have we the seed in the Scripture, if it be not sown? and to what purpose the soil in our own hearts, if it be not sown with that seed?

2. The success of the seed-time is very much according to the nature and temper of the soil, and as that is, or is not, disposed to receive the seed. The Word of God is to us, as we are, a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death.

3. The devil is a subtle, spiteful enemy, that makes it his business to hinder our profiting by the word of God. He takes the word out of the hearts of careless hearers, (p. 12.) lest they should believe and be saved; that is added here, to teach us, 1. That we cannot be saved unless we believe. The word of the Gospel will not be a saving word to us, unless it be mixed with faith. 2. That therefore the devil does all he can to keep us from believing, to make us not heed the word when we read and hear it; or, if we heed it for the present, to make us forget it again, and let it slip; (Heb. 2: 1.) or, if we remember it, to create prejudices in our minds against it, or direct our minds from it to something else; all, lest we should believe and be saved, lest we should believe and rejoice, while he believes and trembles.

4. Where the word of God is heard carelessly, there is commonly a contempt put upon it too. It is added here in the parable, that the seed which fell by the way-side, was trodden down, p. 5. They that willfully shut their ears against the word, do in effect trample it under their feet; they despise the commandment of the Lord.

5. Those on whom the word makes some impressions, but not deep and durable ones, will show their hypocrisy in a time of trial; as the seed sown upon the rock, where it gains no root, p. 13. These will 'for a while believe, a little

while; their profession promises something, but in time of temptation they fall away from their good beginnings; whether the temptation arise from the smiles, or from the frowns, of the world, they are easily overcome by it.

6. The pleasures of this life are as dangerous and mischievous thorns to choke the good seed of the Word, as any other. That is added here, (p. 14.) which was not in the other evangelists. Those that are not entangled in the cares of this life, nor inveigled with the deceitfulness of riches, but boast that they are dead to them, may yet be kept from heaven by an affected indolence, and the love of ease and pleasure. The delights of sense may ruin the soul, even lawful delights, indulged, and too much delighted in.

7. It is not enough that the fruit be brought forth, but it must be brought to perfection, it must be fully ripened; if it be not, it is as if there was no fruit at all brought forth; for that which in Matthew and Mark is said to be unfruitful, is the same that here is said to bring forth none to perfection. Perseverance is necessary to the perfection of a work.

8. The good ground, which brings forth good fruit, is an honest and good heart, well disposed to receive instruction and commandment; (p. 19.) a heart free from sinful pollutions, and firmly fixed for God and duty, an upright heart, a tender heart, and a heart that trembles at the word, is an honest and good heart; which, having heard the word, understands it, (so in Matthew,) receives it, (so in Mark,) and keeps it, (so here,) as the soil not only receives, but keeps the seed; and the stomach not only receives, but keeps, the food or physic.

9. Where the word is well kept, there is fruit brought forth with patience; that also is added here; there must be both bearing patience, and waiting patience; patience, to suffer the tribulation and persecution which may arise because of the word; patience, to continue to the end in well-doing.

10. In consideration of all this, we ought to take heed how we hear; (p. 18.) take heed of those things that will hinder our profiting by the word we hear, watch over our hearts in hearing, and take heed lest they betray us; take heed lest we hear carelessly and slightly, lest, on any account, we entertain prejudices against the word we hear; and take heed to the frame of our spirits after we have heard the word, lest we lose what we have gained.

r Prov. 1:20-23, 8:1. Matt. 11:15.
15:9. Rev. 27:11.
s Hos. 6:3. Matt. 13:10, 13:36. 15:15.
Mark 4:10, 24. 7:17, 18. John 15:15.
t 10:21-24. Ps. 25:14. Matt. 11:25.
u 10:11, 12. 16:17. Mark 4:11, 12.
v Rom. 16:25, 26. 1 Cor. 2:10, 11, 12.
w 11. Eph. 3:3-9. Col. 1:26-28. 2i
2. 1 Tim. 3:16. 1 Pet. 1:10-12.
x 18. Deut. 29:4. 16, 29. 30:14. 34:14.
y 18. Jer. 5:21. Matt. 13:14-17.
John 12:40. Acts 28:26, 27. Rom. 11:7-10.
z Is. 9:20. Matt. 13:19. Mark 4:14.
1 Cor. 3:5, 7-9, 12. Jam. 1:21. 1
Pet. 1:23-25.
y 5. Prov. 1:24-26, 29. Matt. 13:19.

Mark 4:15. Jam. 1:23, 24.
z 2 Thes. 2:9-14. Rev. 12:9.
a Ps. 106:12-14. Is. 58:2. Ez. 33:32.
Matt. 13:20, 21. Mark 4:17, 17. 6:20.
John 5:35. Gal. 4:15-20.
b John 19:28. Rev. 12:12. Eph. 3:17. Col. 2:7. Jude 12.
c 22:31, 32. Hos. 6:4. John 2:23-25.
8:30-32. 12:42, 43. 15:2, 6.
8:13-33. 2 Cor. 13:12. 15:2. Col. 1:23.
1 Thes. 3:5. 1 Tim. 1:19. 2 Tim. 2:18, 19. Heb. 10:39. Jam. 2:26. 2 Pet. 2:20, 22. 1 John 2:19.
d 7. 16:13. 17:26-30. 18:24, 25. 21:34. Mark 6:24, 25. 13:32. Matt. 4:10. 19. 1 Tim. 6:17, 17. 2 Tim. 4:10. 1 John 2:15, 16.

e 13:6-9. John 15:6.
f 6:45. Deut. 30:6. Ps. 51:10. Jer. 31:33. 32:31. Ez. 36:26, 27. Rom. 7:18. Eph. 2:3. 1 Cor. 1:3-19. 1 Pet. 2:12.
g 1:1-3. Job 23:11, 12. Ps. 1:1-3. 119:117-129. Prov. 3:1. Rev. 16. John 14:15, 21-24. 15:10. 1 Cor. 7:19. Heb. 2:1. Jam. 1:22-25. 1 John 2:3.
h Matt. 24:13. Rom. 2:7. 6:22. 7:4. Gal. 5:22-26. Phil. 1:11. 3:13-16. Col. 1:6, 10. Heb. 6:14, 12. 10:38. Jam. 5:7, 8.
i 11:33. Matt. 5:15, 16. Mark 12:1, 2. Acts 26:18. Phil. 2:15, 16. Rev. 11:20. 21: 11, 14.

(10.) To others in parables.' A learned writer has endeavored to prove that Christ's use of parables was not in displeasure, but in tender condescension to their aversion to truths delivered in a less pleasing manner; but this is in effect supposing both Mark (4: 12), and Luke (8: 10) to have reported what our Lord says in a sense directly contrary to what He intended; for they say in so many words, it was that the multitude might not perceive nor understand; and it also makes Matthew 13: 12. both foreign and opposite to the purpose for which it was spoken. We must, therefore, submit to the difficulties which attended this natural interpretation; which are much lessened by considering that this happened after Christ had upbraided and threatened the neighboring places, (from whence doubtless the greatest part of the 'in Jude came') which was some time before this sermon. See Matt 11: 24-24. And it is not improbable, that the scribes and Pharisees, who had so vilely blasphemed Him this very morning, (Matt. 12: 24) might with an ill purpose have gathered a company of their associates and creatures about Christ to ensnare Him, which, if it were the case, will fully account for such a reserve. It signifies little to plead on the other side, that these parables are plain. Their being so to us, is no proof they were so to these hearers; and since the apostles themselves did not understand even that of the sower, it is no wonder if the rest were unintelligible to the careless and captious hearer.'

Unto you it is given, &c.] 'As a reward of your diligence, and desire to be informed, these things shall be explained unto you; but the rest shall be left in darkness, and shall have their voluntary ignorance punished with judicial ignorance.'

Dean STANHOPE.

(14.) Choked with cares.] 'So expressed, perhaps, to intimate the uneasy situation of the mind, while clogged and straitened with such intricate cares as these, and rendered as it were, unfit to receive the word, native air, and to delight itself with celestial and eternal objects. Choking arises from any thing which straitens the gullet, or windpipe, or so obstructs the passage of food or air. And thus young plants, or corn, may properly be said to be choked by thorns, which do not leave them room to grow; and the Word, which would exert its vital power and principle, is represented as choked, when thus pressed with secular cares prevailing in the mind.'

(15.) With patience.] 'Patience, in the ordinary acceptance, is a virtue merely passive, and consists in suffering evil with equanimity. The Greek word here implies much more; and though the sense now mentioned is not excluded, it generally denotes an active quality, to wit, constancy in purpose and practice. It corresponds exactly to what is with us called perseverance.'

VERSES 16-18.

(Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 5: 14-16. Mark 4: 21-25. (18.) It seemeth to have.) Either to himself or others. (Marg.) This is here added, which is not found in the parallel Scriptures. (Notes, Matt. 13. 12. 25: 34-30, p. 29.) Whatever of natural genius, learning, wealth, authority, influence, religious knowledge, spiritual gifts, or even power of working miracles any man had; if he had not saving and sanctifying grace, he only seems to have it, and it will soon be torn from him. 'Heavenly good things are lost by parsimony, and increase by liberality.' Beza.

SCOTT.

vesse, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light.

17 For ^{nothing} is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither *any thing* hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

18 Take heed therefore how ye hear: ^{for} whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, ^{from} him shall be taken even that which he ^{seemeth} to have.

19 ¶ Then ^{came} to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come to him for the press.

20 And it was told him by certain, which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee.

21 And he answered and said unto them, ^{My} mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

22 ¶ Now it came to pass on a certain day, that he went into a ship with his disciples; and he said unto them, ^{Let} us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth.

23 But as they sailed, ^{he} fell asleep: and ^{came} down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy.

24 And they came to him, and awoke him, saying, Master, master, we perish. Then ^{he} arose and rebuked the wind, and the raging of the water; and they ceased, and there was a calm.

II. Needful instructions given to those that are appointed to preach the Word, and to those also that have heard it.

1. Those that have received the gift, must minister the same. Ministers that have the dispensing of the Gospel committed to them, people that have profited by the word, and are thereby qualified to profit others, must look upon themselves as *lighted candles*: ministers must in solemn authoritative preaching, and people in brotherly familiar discourse, diffuse their light; a candle must not be covered, v. 16. Ministers and Christians are to be lights in the world, *holding forth the word of life*; their light must shine before men, they must not only be good, but do good.

2. We must expect that what is now done in secret, and from unseen springs, will shortly be manifested and made known, v. 17. What is committed to you in secret, should be made manifest by you; for your Master did not give you talents to be buried, but to be traded with. Let that which is now hid, be made known; for if it be not manifested by you, it will be manifested against you, will be produced in evidence of your treachery.

3. The gifts we have, will either be continued to us, or taken from us, according as we do, or do not, make use of them for the glory of God, and the edification of our brethren; (v. 19.) he that hath gifts, and doeth good with them, shall have more; he that buries his talent, shall lose it. From him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath, so it is in Mark; that which he seemeth to have, so it is in Luke. Note, The grace that is lost, was but seeming grace, was never true. Men do but seem to have what they do not use, and shows of religion will be lost and forfeited; they went out from us, because they were not of us, 1 John 2:19. Let us see to it that we have grace in sincerity, the root of the matter in us; that is a good part, which shall never be taken away from those that have it.

III. Great encouragement given to those that prove themselves faithful hearers of the word, by being doers of the work, in a particular instance of Christ's respect to his disciples, in preferring them even before his nearest relations; (v. 19—21.) which we had twice before. Observe, 1. What crowding there was after Christ; there was no coming near for the throng of people that attended Him. 2. Some of his nearest kindred were least solicitous to hear Him preach. Instead of getting within, desiring to hear Him, they stood without, desiring to see Him; designing nothing but to interrupt Him, and oblige Him to break off. 3. Jesus Christ would rather be busy at his work, than conversing with his friends. He would not leave his preaching, to speak with his mother and his brethren, for it was his meat and drink to be so employed. 4. Christ is pleased to own those as his nearest and dearest relations, that hear the word of God, and do it; they are to Him more than his mother and brethren.

k 12:2, 3. Matt. 10:26, 27. 1 Cor. 4:5.
l 9:44. Matt. 12:45—50. Prov. 22:3.
m 4:23, 24. 13:14. Acts 10:39.
n 17:11. Heb. 2:1. Jam. 1:19—22. 1 Pet. 2:12.
o 19:28. Matt. 13:12. 25:29. Mark 4:25. John 15:22.
p 22:20, 21. 16:2—4. 19:25. Matt. 7:1.
q 22:23. 1 Cor. 13:1—3.
r Or, *thinketh that he knows*. Prov. 14:12. Rom. 12:5. 1 Cor. 3:18. 8:2.

14:37. Phil. 3:8. Jam. 1:35.
15:37. 12:45—50. Prov. 22:3.
q Matt. 13:55, 56. Mark 6:3. John 7:1.
r 3—6. Acts 1:14. 1 Cor. 9:5. Gal. 1:19.
s 11:27. 28.
t John 15:14, 15. 20:17. 2 Cor. 5:16.
u 6:18. Heb. 2:11—13.
v 15 Matt. 7:21—23. 17:5. John 6:38.
w 28:29. 13:17. Jam. 1:22. 1 John 2:1.
x 3:22, 23. 3 John 11.

y Matt. 8:13, 23—27. Mark 4:35—41.
z John 6:18. 12:41. 13:31—35.
a Matt. 14:22. Mark 5:21. 6:45. 8:13.
b Lu. 44:23. Is. 51:9. Heb. 4:3.
c Ps. 93:3, 4. 107:23—30. 24:3—4.
d 16:23. Lu. 5:41. Acts 27:14—16.
e Ps. 69:1, 2. 116:3, 4. 142:4, 5. Lam. 3:54—56. Jon. 2:2—6. Matt. 14:30.
f Ps. 65:7. 104:8—9. 107:25—29. Is. 50:2. Jer. 5:32. Nah. 1:4.

(18.) *Take heed therefore how ye hear.* 'Take heed that you attend to my words; for they must be listened to studiously and with diligence since they are symbolical and sublime, and not spoken at random, or by chance.'

'Every advantage bestowed on us by Providence, and religious instruction especially, is a trust, of which we must hereafter give account. We should therefore hear the words of eternal life with attention, impartiality, and seriousness of heart, mixed with faith; not a mere historical persuasion of the truth of the Gospel, though with this we are to begin; but a deep sense of the need of God's mercy promised in it; a thankful acceptance of the terms on which that mercy is offered; and an humble reliance on a crucified Savior for pardon, grace, and strength.'

SEEMETH TO HAVE. 'Matthew and Mark have, "which he hath." The best critics therefore agree in thinking that there is here a redundancy of the Greek word translated "seemeth," examples of which

are given by Kypke, Munth, Kuinoel, and others. But in most of the passages which they cite, we may, on close examination, find some meaning in this word; and I am inclined to think, that Luke here intended to express something more than is found in Matthew and Mark; though it turns upon a distinction perhaps too refined for common apprehension.'

Verses 19—21. (Marg. Ref.—11:27. 28. Matt. 12:46—50. Mark 3:31—35.) 'This might be intended as an awful intimation of some of his near relations, to take heed how they indulged that rebellion, which so long after prevailed in their minds.' Doddridge. (John 7:8—10.)

(20.) *To see that he.* 'The antecedent is not forth; consequent, "to see," for to "converse with;" examples of which are produced by Wolf, Wetstein, and Kypke. So Theodoret says, "It is not Atticism,"' BLOOMFIELD.

25 And he said unto them, ^aWhere is your faith? And they ^bbeing afraid, wondered, saying one to another, What manner of man is this? for he commandeth even the winds and water, and they obey him.

[Practical Observations.]

26 ¶ And they arrived at ^cthe country of the Gadarenes, which is over against Galilee.

27 And when he went forth to land, there ^dmet him out of the city a certain man which had devils a long time, ^eand wore no clothes, neither abode in ^fany house, ^gbut in the tombs.

28 When he saw Jesus, ^hhe cried out, and fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, ⁱWhat have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God most high? ^jI beseech thee torment me not.

29 (For he had ^kcommanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had ^lcaught him, and he was kept bound with chains, and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and

are discouraged, if second causes frown on them; a little thing disheartens them; and where is their faith then? (2.) They give Him the glory of his power; *They, being afraid, wondered.* Those that had feared the storm, now that the danger was over, with good reason feared Him that had stilled it; and said, *What manner of man is this?* They might as well have said, *Who is a God like unto Thee?* For it is God's prerogative, to still the noise of the sea, the noise of the waves, Ps. 65: 7.

II. His power over the devil, the prince of the power of the air. Presently after the winds were stilled, they were brought to their desired haven; (v. 26, 27.) and soon, as they went ashore, He met with that which was his business over.

We may learn a great deal from this story concerning this world of infernal, malignant spirits, which, though not working now ordinarily, in the same way as here, yet we are all concerned, at all times, to stand on our guard against.

1. They are very numerous. They that had taken possession of this one man, called themselves *Legion*; (v. 30.) he had had devils a long time, v. 27. But perhaps those that had been long in possession of him, on some foresight of our Savior's coming, finding they could not prevent it by the storm, sent for recruits, intending a decisive battle, and hoping now to be too hard for Him that had cast out so many unclean spirits, and either were, or at least would be thought to be, a legion of them, and now, at least, to be a victorious legion.

2. They have an inveterate enmity to man, and all his conveniences and comforts. This man, being under their influence, wore no clothes, neither abode in any house, v. 27. Nay, and because man has a natural dread of the habitations of the dead, they forced this man to abide in the tombs, to make him so much the more a terror to himself, and to all about him, so that his soul had as much cause as ever any man's

was driven of the devil into the wilderness.)

30 And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, ^mLegion: be-

had, to be weary of his life, and to choose *slighting and death* rather.

3. They are very strong, fierce, and unruly, and hate and scorn to be restrained, v. 29. Note, Those that are ungovernable by any other, thereby show that they are under Satan's government; and this is the language of those that are so, even concerning God and Christ their best friends, *Let us break their bands in sunder.* He was driven of the devil; those that are under Christ's government, are sweetly lea with the cords of a man, and the bands of love; those that are under the devil's government, are furiously driven.

4. They are much enraged against our Lord Jesus, and have a great dread and horror of Him. When the man whom they had possession of, and who spake as they would have him *saw Jesus, he roared out* as one in an agony, and fell down before Him, to deprecate his wrath, and owned Him to be the Son of God, most high, that was infinitely above him, and too hard for him; but protested against having any league or confederacy with Him; (which might sufficiently have silenced the blasphemous cavils of the scribes and Pharisees;) *What have I to do with Thee?* The devils have neither inclination to serve Christ, nor expectation to receive benefit by Him, but dread his power and wrath. They do not say, *I beseech Thee, save me, but only, Torment me not.* See whose language they speak, that have only a dread of hell as a place of torment, but no desire of heaven as a place of holiness and love.

5. They are perfectly at the command, and under the power, of our Lord Jesus, and they knew it, v. 31. O what a comfort is this to the Lord's people, that all the powers of darkness are under the check and control of the Lord Jesus! He has them all in a chain. He can send them into the deep, to their own place, the place of their torment, when He pleaseth.

6. They delight in doing mischief. When

cause many devils were entered into him.

a 12:28. Matt. 6:30. 8:26. 14:31. 17:20. Mark 4:41. John 11:40.
b Gen. 1:10. Josh. 10:12-14. Job 38:10. Prov. 8:29. 30:4.
c Matt. 8:28, &c. Gergesenes. Mark 5:1.
d Mark 5:2-5. e 1 Sam. 19:24.

f Num. 19:16. 1a. 65:4.
g 4:33-36. Matt. 8:28. Mark 1:24-27. 5:8-8. Acts 16:18-18.
h 37:38.
i 1a. 27:1. 2 Pet. 2:4. 1 John 3:9.
Rev. 20:1-3.
k Mark 5:1. Acts 19:12-16.
l 19:38. 42. Mark 5:3-5. 9:20-26.
m 2 Tim. 2:25, 26.
n Matt. 26:53. Mark 9:9.
o 2. Matt. 8:28. Mark 16:9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-25. The ministers of Christ should copy his assiduity and earnestness in preaching, and submit to any hardship or degradation in outward circumstances, which may conduce to the success of the Gospel; and those who have profited by their labors, ought to use their substance in supporting his indigent servants and disciples, as occasion may require, and according to their ability. In this way, as well as in many others, they may bring forth fruit with patience, and evince that the grace of God has indeed made their hearts honest and good, and disposed them to receive the good seed of His Word, preparatory to a glorious harvest. Indeed we should aim, by every method, to discriminate our character and conduct from those of careless hearers, of superficial and temporary professors, and of such as are choked with the cares, riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection. (P. O. Matt. 13: 1-23.) It is not enough for us, 'not to hold the truth in unrighteousness;' we should 'hold forth the word

of life,' and shine in our several circles, as a lighted candle in the room, for the benefit of all around. (Phil. 2: 14-18.) Thus professing and recommending the truths of the Gospel, we shall receive more and more from our gracious God; while many 'who seem to have' knowledge, abilities and possessions, not having had grace to make a proper use of them, will shortly be deprived of all; and their poverty, folly and worthlessness, which were before kept secret, made known to the whole world. Happy are they, 'who hear the word of God, and keep it!' Every storm which arises, every peril that dismay them, will tend to excite their fervent prayers; and their Lord will awake for their help and deliverance. Yet, at times, even true believers seem to have mislaid their faith, they have so many anxious fears about the event, even when in the path of duty, concerning which alone we ought to be solicitous. (P. O. Matt. 8: 23-27. 12: 38-50. Mark 4: 1-25.) SCOTT.

Verses 26-39.

(Matt. 8: 28-34. Mark 5: 1-20.) (31.) The deep.] 'The abyss, the prison, in which many of those fallen spirits are detained; and to which some, who may, like those, have been permitted for a while to range at large, are sometimes, by divine justice and power, remanded.' Doddridge. (Marg. Ref. p.) 'The first request of the devil to Christ was, "I beseech Thee, torment me not." "Art Thou come to torment me before my time?" (Matt. 8: 29.) expressing the devil's fear that he should presently be cast into the chains of hell, and confined to those torments, which he thought belonged not to him till the day of judgment; and the next was, in plain words, not to send him into hell.' Hammond. (Marg. Ref. i. o.) (32.) He suffered them.] But why did Christ grant this to them? Partly to show Himself the sovereign Lord of all; partly to punish the Gadarenes for their manifest contempt of the divine law; and finally to show the folly of ungodly men, in preferring their filthy swine to their own salvation.' Beza.

(26.) They arrived at.] 'They sailed unto.' (36.) Healed.] 'Was delivered,' or 'saved.' The man was rescued by superior power from the legion of evil spirits; and was merely healed of a disease. (39.) Published.] 'Preaching' or 'proclaiming as a herald the whole city.' Gadara was one of the cities of Decapolis, part of

which lay on the one side, and part on the other side, of the sea of Tiberias. Gadara suffered great extremities from the Romans under the command of Vespasian.

(27.) Man of the city.] 'The import here evidently is, "a man belonging to the city," not a "man coming from the city."'

(28.) 'Jesus, Thou Son of God, the most High.' 'The words, Jesus and God, are both omitted here by several MSS. They were contained in a summary way to acknowledge his power, but it is probable they did not pronounce names of such dreadful import to themselves. In the parallel passage, (Mar. 8: 29.) Griesbach omits the word Jesus, on the authority of several MSS. of the greatest antiquity and respectability; besides some *versio*, is, and several of the fathers.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.
(30.) Legion.] 'There is no need of concluding that the number of evil spirits was exactly the same with that of a Roman legion, which was now upward of six thousand. It was a phrase that was often made use of to express a great number. It is observable that Luke here adds, that many demons were entered into him, so that it is evident he thought it not a mere fancy, but a real possession.'

JODDIDGE.

31 And ^a they besought him that he would not command them to go out into ^b the deep.

32 And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought him that he would suffer them to enter into them. And ^c he suffered them.

33 Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked.

34 When they that fed them saw what was done, ^d they fled, and went and told it in the city, and in the country.

35 Then they went out to see what was done; and came to Jesus, ^e and found the man, out of whom the devils were departed, ^f sitting at the feet of Jesus, ^g clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

36 They also which saw ^h it told them by what means he that was possessed of the devils was healed.

37 Then the whole multitude of the country of the Gadarenes round about, ⁱ besought him to depart from them: for they were taken with great fear. ^j And he went up into the ship, and returned back again.

38 Now the man, out of whom the devils were departed, ^k besought him that he might go with him:

they found they must quit their hold of this poor man, they begged they might take possession of a herd of swine, v. 32. When the devil at first brought man into a miserable state, he brought a curse likewise on the whole creation, and that became subject to enmity. And here, as an instance of that extensive enmity of his, when he could not destroy the man, he would destroy the swine. If he cannot hurt men in their bodies, he will hurt them in their goods, which sometimes proves a great temptation to them, to draw them from Christ, as here. Christ suffered them to enter into the swine, to convince the country what mischief the devil could do in it, if He should suffer him, v. 32, 33. It is a miracle of mercy, if those whom Satan possesses, are not brought to destruction and perdition. This, and other instances, show that that roaring lion and red dragon seeks what and whom he may devour.

7. When the devil's power is broken in any soul, that soul recovers itself, and returns into a right frame; which supposes that those whom Satan gets possession of, are put out of the possession of themselves, v. 35. While he was under the devil's power, he was ready to fly in the face of Jesus; but now he sits at his feet, which is a sign that he is come to his right mind. If God have possession of us, He preserves us to the government and enjoyment of ourselves; but if Satan have possession of us, he robs us of both. Let his power therefore in our souls be overturned, and let Him come, whose right our hearts are, and let us give them Him; for we are never more our own, than when we are his.

Let us see now what was the effect of this miracle, of casting the legion of devils out of this man.

(1.) What effect it had on the people of that country, who had lost their swine by it. The swine-herds went, and sold it both in city and country, (v. 34.) perhaps with a design to incense the people against Christ; they told by what means he that was possessed of the devils, was healed, (v. 36.) that it was by sending the devils into the swine, as if Christ could not have delivered the man out of their hands, but by delivering the swine into them. The people came out, to see what was done, and to inquire into it; and they were afraid, (v. 35.) were taken with great fear, (v. 37.) were surprised and amazed, and knew not what to say; but they

but Jesus sent him away, ^a saying,

39 Return to thine own house, and shew how great things God hath done unto thee. And he went his way, ^b and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done to him.

40 ¶ And it came to

thought more of the destruction of the swine than of the deliverance of their poor afflicted neighbor, and of the country from the terror of his frenzy; therefore the whole multitude besought Christ to depart from them, for fear He should bring some other judgment on them, whereas indeed none need be afraid of Christ, that are willing to forsake their sins, and give up themselves to Him. But Christ took them at their word, v. 37. Those lose their Savior, and their hopes in Him, that love their swine better.

(2.) What effect it had on the poor man who had recovered himself by it. He desired Christ's company as much as others dreaded it; he besought Christ that he might be with Him, as others were, that had been healed by Him of evil spirits and infirmities; (v. 2.) that Christ might be to him a Protector and Teacher, and that he might be to Christ for a name and a praise. He was loath to stay among those rude and brutish Gadarenes. *O gather not my soul with these sinners!* But Christ would not take him along with Him, but sent him home, to publish, among those that knew him, the great things that God had done for him, that so he might be a blessing to his country, as he had been a burden to it. We must sometimes deny ourselves the satisfaction even of spiritual benefits and comforts, to gain an opportunity of being serviceable to the souls of others. Perhaps Christ knew that, when the resentment of the loss of their swine was a little over, they would be better disposed to consider the miracle, and therefore left the man among them to be a standing monument, and a monitor to them of it.

V. 40—56. Christ was driven away by the Gadarenes: but the Galileans, as He returned, gladly received Him, v. 40. If some will not accept Christ's favors, others will. If the Gadarenes be not gathered, yet there are many, among whom Christ shall be glorious. When Christ returned, He found fresh work to do in the place whence He came. They that will lay out themselves to do good, shall never want occasion for it. The wanting you have always with you.

We have here two miracles interwoven, as they were in Matthew and Mark—the raising of Jairus' daughter to life, and the cure of the woman that had an issue of blood, as He was going in a crowd to Jairus' house.

pass, that when Jesus returned, ^a the people gladly received him; for they were all ^b waiting for him.

o 22. Job 1:11. 25. Phil. 2:10, 11.
p Matt. 23:41. Rev. 9:2. 19:20. 20: 2, 3, 14, 15.
q Lev. 11:7. Is. 65:4. 66:3. Matt. 8:30—33. Mark 5:11—13.
r Job 1:10. Ps. 62:11. John 19:11. 1 John 4:4.
s 1 Kings 22:22. Job 1:2. 2:6. Rev. 20:7.
t 1 John 9:4. 1 Pet. 5:8. Rev. 9:11.
u Matt. 8:33. 28:11. Mark 5:14.
x Is. 49:24, 25. 53:12. Heb. 2:14, 15.

1 John 3:8.
2 246. 10:38. Mark 5:15. Acts 22:8.
3 27. 15:17.
4 25. 5:8. Deut. 5:25. 1 Sam. 6:20.
5 2 Sam. 6:8, 9. 1 Kings 17:18. Job 24:15. Matt. 8:34. Mark 5:17. Acts 16:39.
6 9:5, 36. 10:10, 11, 16.
7 28:37. Ps. 27:4. 27:7. Mal. 5:18. Phil. 1:22.
8 Ex. 12:35—37. 13:8, 9, 14. 16. Ps. 71:17, 18. 78:3—6. 107:21, 31, 32. 111:2—4. 145:8—12. Is. 63:17. Jer. 51:19, 20. Acts 9:13, 16. Gal. 1:23, 24. 1 Tim. 1:13—16.
9 17:15—18. Deut. 10:21. Ps. 66:16. 126:2, 3. Dan. 4:1—3, 34—37. Mark 1:45. John 4:29.
10 Matt. 9:1. Mark 5:21.
11 G. 5:1. 19:47. 38:48. Mark 6:20. Jh 27. John 5:33.
12 Prov. 8:24. Acts 10:33.

Verses 40—56

(Marg. Ref.—Notes, Mark 9: 13—26. Mark 5: 21—43.) (42.) One only daughter.] This affecting circumstance is not mentioned by the other evangelists. (7: 11—17.) (43.) Neither could be healed, &c.] The extreme distress to which several of those, who were healed by our Lord, had been previously reduced, and the length of time during which they had suffered, are frequently noted by the sacred writers both to illustrate his tender compassion of our miseries, and our desperate condition as sinners, without his most gracious and powerful interposition. (Marg. Ref.) (54.) All out, &c.] All the multitude; all but the apostles and the parents of the damsel. (55.) He spirit, &c.] This expression, thus used of one before dead, strongly implies, that at death the immortal soul exists separately, but returns and is reunited to the body, when raised from the dead. (Note, 1 Kings 17: 21, 22.) Commanded, &c.] The life of the damsel, though restored by miracle, was to be preserved in the usual manner. This showed, that she was recovered to health also; and that she wanted food, which during her extreme illness had not been the case. SCOT.

(40.) Gladly received.] This is the proper import of the Greek word; therefore our translators needed not to have put *gladly* in italics, as though it were not expressed in the text. Raphaelus gives several proofs of this.

Dr. A. CLARK.

(31.) That He would send them out of the country.] 'It seems from Dan. 10: 13, 20. that different evil genii preside over distinct regions.'

DODDRIDGE.

Into the deep.] 'Or abyss, i. e. the Tartarus or jail of the demons. So 2 Pet. 2: 4. Apoc. 20: 1. So also Euripides, "the chasms of the abyss of Tartarus."'

BLOOMFIELD.

(32.) He suffered them.] 'The evils against this miracle are equally malicious and weak. Our Lord's permitting the evil spirits to enter into the swine was not properly sending them into those beasts; or if He had done it, the punishment to the owners would have been just; or had it been less apparently so, his extraordinary character as a prophet, and the proofs he gave of a divine co-operation, would have set him above our censure in an action, the full reasons of which we might not perfectly have known. But this solution is not necessary; for this action evidently appears both wise and gracious; inasmuch as it unanswerably demonstrated at once the malice of Satan and the extent of Christ's power over him. No miracles are more suspicious than pretended dispossessions, as there is so much room for collusion in them; but it was self-evident that a herd of swine could not be confederates in any fraud. Their death, therefore, in this instructive and convincing manner) was ten thousand times a greater blessing to mankind, than if they had been slain for food, as was intended.'

DODDRIDGE.

41 And, behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was ^a ruler of the synagogue; and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought him that he would come into his house :

42 For he had ^a one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying. But as he went, the people thronged him.

43 And a woman ^a having an issue of blood ^a twelve years, which ^a had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any,

44 Came behind him, and touched the border of his garment: and immediately her issue of blood stancheth.

45 And Jesus said, Who touched me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with him said, Master, the multitude throng thee, and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?

46 And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched me: ^a for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me.

47 And when the woman saw that she was not hid, ^a she came trembling, and falling down before him, ^a she declared unto him before all the people, for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

Here is a public address made to Christ, by ^a ruler of the synagogue, whose name was *Jairus*, on the behalf of a little daughter of his, that was very ill, and, in the apprehension of all about her, lay a dying. This address was very humble and reverent; *Jairus*, though a ruler, fell down at Jesus' feet, as owning Him to be a Ruler above him. It was very importunate; he besought Him that He would come into his house; not having the faith, at least not having the thought, of the centurion, who desired Christ only to speak the healing word at a distance. But Christ complied with his request, and went with him; strong faith shall be applauded, and yet weak faith not rejected. In the houses where sickness and death are, it is very desirable to have the presence of Christ. When Christ was going, the people thronged Him; some out of curiosity to see Him, others out of an affection to Him. Let us not complain of a crowd, and a throng, and a hurry, as long as we are in the way of our duty, and doing good; but otherwise it is what every wise man will keep himself out of as much as he can.

II. A secret application made to Christ by a woman ill of a bloody issue, which had been the consumption both of her body, and of her purse too, v. 43. The nature of her disease was such, that she did not care to make a public complaint

48 And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: ^a thy faith hath made thee whole; ^a go in peace.

49 While ^a he yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; ^a trouble not the Master.

50 But when Jesus heard it, he answered him, saying, Fear not: ^a believe only, and she shall be made whole.

51 And when he came into the house, ^a he suffered no man to go in, ^a save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden.

52 And ^a all wept, and bewailed her; but he said, Weep not;

of it; therefore she took this opportunity of coming to Christ in a crowd; and the more people were present, the more likely she thought it was that she should be concealed. Her faith was very strong; she doubted not but that ^a the touch of the hem of his garment she should derive from Him healing virtue, looking on Him to be such a full Fountain of mercies that she should steal a cure, and He not miss it. Thus many a poor soul is healed, and helped, and saved, by Christ, that is lost in a crowd, and that nobody takes notice of. The woman found an immediate change for the better, and that her disease was cured, v. 44. As believers have comfortable communion with Christ, so they have comfortable communications from Him—secretly meat to eat, that the world knows not of, and joy that a stranger does not intermeddle with.

III. A discovery of this secret cure, to the glory both of the Physician and the patient

Christ takes notice that there is a cure wrought, v. 46. Those that have been healed by virtue derived from Christ, must own it, for He knows it. He speaks of it here, not in a way of complaint, as if He were hereby either weakened or wronged, but in a way of complacency; it was his delight, that virtue was gone out of Him to do any good, and He did not

she is not dead, but sleepeth.

53 And they ^a laughed him to scorn, ^a knowing that she was dead.

54 And ^a he put them all out, and ^a took her by the hand, and called, saying, ^a Maid, arise.

55 And ^a her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: ^a and he commanded to give her meat.

56 And her parents were astonished: but ^a he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.

i Matt. 9:18–25, Mark 5:22, k 13:14, Acts 13:15, 18:17, l 5:8, 17:16, Rev. 5:8, m Matt. 8:7, 9, Mark 5:23, John 4: 48–49, 11:21, Acts 9:38, n 7:12, Gen. 44:20–22, Job 1:18, 19, Zeck. 12:10, o Job 42:3, Ps. 90:3–8, 103:15, 16, Ec. 6:12, Ex. 24:16, 25, Rom. 5:14, p 4:5, Mark 5:21.

q Lev. 15:5, 6c, Matt. 9:20–22, Mark 5:25, r 27, 13:11, 16, Mark 9:21, John 5: 5:8, 8:1, 21, Acts 3:2, 4:22, 14:4–10, s Ps. 108:12, Is. 2:22, 55:1–3, Mark 5:20, 9:18, 22, t 7:38, u Deut. 22:12, Mark 5:27, 28, 6:56, Acts 5:15, 19:12, v 13:13, Ex. 15:26, Mal. 4:2, y 9:13, Mark 5:30–32, z 6:19, 1 Pet. 2:9, Marg., a 1 Sam. 16:3, Ps. 23:1, Hos. 13:1, Hab. 3:16, Matt. 23:8, Mark 5:33, Acts 16:29, 1 Cor. 2:3, 2 Cor. 7:15, Phil. 2:12, Heb. 12:28, b 17:15, 16, Ps. 68:16, c Matt. 9:22, 12:22, 2 Cor. 6:18, d 7:30, 17:19, 18:42, Matt. 8:12, Mark 5:34, Acts 14:9, Heb. 4:2, e Ex. 4:18, 1 Sam. 1:17, 2 Kings 3: 19, f 4:42, Matt. 9:23–26, Mark 5:35, g 7:36, 11:7, Ps. 7:12, Mark 5:35, h 4:8, Is. 50:10, 31:8, 53:8, 9:23, 11:2–20, John 11:53, 40, R. m. 4: 17, 20, i 1 Kings 17:19–23, 2 Kings 4:4–6, 3:1–36, Is. 42:2, Matt. 6:5, 8, Acts 9:40, k 14:1, 9:28, Mark 5:37–40, 14:33, l Gen. 23:2, 27:24, 35, 2 Num. 18:33, Jer. 51:17–21, Ez. 34:17, Zeck. 12:10, m Mark 5:38, 39, John 11:41, 11–13, n 14:16, Job 14:1, 17:2, Is. 53:3, o Mark 15:43, 45, John 11:39, 19:53–35, p 5:1, Mark 5:40, q Jer. 31:32, Mt. 9:25, Mark 1:31, r 5:41, 8:23, 9:37, s 7:14, 15, John 5:21, 28, 29, 11:43, Acts 9:40, Rom. 4:17, t 1 Kings 17:21–22, John 11:4, u 24:41–43, Mark 5:25, John 11:4, v 5:14, Matt. 8:4, 9:30, Mark 5:42, 43.

(45.) Who touched Me? Not that He was ignorant who had touched Him, but that He might not be Himself the divulger of the miracle and that the woman, hearing the question, and drawing near, might testify the singular benefit she had received, and that, in consequence of her declaration, she might presently hear from his lips, that her faith had saved her; and that, by this mean, others might be excited to come and be healed of their disorders.

Epiphanius, by BULKLEY.

(46.) Virtue. Divine or miraculous power. This divine emanation did not proceed always from Christ, as necessarily as odors do from plants, for then all who touched Him must have been equally partakers of it. Of the many that touched Him, this woman, and none else, received this divine virtue; and why? Because she came in faith. Faith alone, attracts and receives the energetic influence of God at all times. There would be more miracles at least of spiritual healing, were there more faith among those who are called believers.

(47.) Trembling. She might dread our Lord's displeasure, perhaps, for having touched Him when she was under a legal impurity from her disease, as knowing that it was forbidden her to touch any one at that time; because whatever she touched became immediately unclean. Levit. 15:19, 25.

LAMY. In this story we observe a mixture of weakness and faith. She could not reasonably think to steal a cure, without the knowledge of him by whom it was wrought; or imagine a charm in the garment that Christ wore, could produce so glorious an effect, independent on his agency and will. Yet she acted as if she had thought thus; and a compassionate Redeemer commended her faith and excused her infirmity. Such candor should we exercise towards those in whom we find any thing amiss; and not despising the day of small things, but

ready to encourage and support the weak, and to commend whatever good we may discover in them.

VERSES 51–55.

We have here a second instance of the power of Christ over death. In how majestic, and yet in how gentle a manner, does He address Himself to this admirable work! *Daughter, I say unto thee, arise.* And immediately she heard and obeyed. Thus shall He, with equal ease, call forth myriads of his saints, who now seem perished in the dust; and it may be said with regard to them also, in reference to that day, they are not dead, but sleep. The maiden of whom we have read, arose only to a dying life, which needed the support of food, and was in no respect more noble or more secure than that of other mortals: but we look for a better resurrection, in which all the infirmities of the body shall be left behind in the grave; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, Rev. 21:4. In expectation of this, let us restrain immoderate sorrow when our pious friends are taken away; let us not make too much ado on the occasion, nor allow ourselves to be thrown into the tumult of a passion, even when our children are stretched on the bed of death; but believing in Christ and governing ourselves by his precepts and maxims, let us in humble resignation, and submissive, though mournful silence, wait the issues of his providence and grace.

DODDRIIDGE.

(56.) He charged them that they should tell no man. This command does not apply to all ages, but only to that particular time when Herod was lying in wait to take away Christ's life. For though our Lord was not so ignorant of things, as to suffer his firmness and constancy to be overcome by the desire of life, yet He wished to finish his allotted career, and therefore avoided the snares laid to destroy Him before the appointed time.

STRIGEL, by KÖCHER.

CHAP. IX.

1. v. 1. "He sends forth the twelve apostles, 1-9. Herod desires to see Him, 7-9. The apostles return; Jesus re-enters with them, but the multitudes follow Him, 10, 11. He feeds them by miracle, 12-17. The different opinions concerning Him, and Peter's confession, 18-21. He foretells his death, and warns his disciples to prepare for self-denial and sufferings, 22-27. His transfiguration, 28-36. He heals a demoniac, 37-42; again foretells his death, 43-45; checks the ambitious disputes of his disciples, 46-48; will not allow them to forbid any, who 'cast out devils in his name,' 49, 50; reproves the fiery zeal of James and John against the Samaritans, who would not receive them, 51-56; and answers some, who were not disposed to follow Him unreservedly and immediately, 57-62.

THEN ^a he called his twelve disciples together, and ^b gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases.

2 And he sent them ^c to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick.

3 And he said unto them, "Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have ^d two coats apiece.

6:13-16. Matt. 10:2-5. Mark 3:14-19. 6:7-13. 10:19. Matt. 10:1. 16:19. Mark 6:7. 16:17, 18. John 14:12. Acts 13:316. 4:30. 9:34. 10:11. 16:16. Matt. 3:2. 10:7. 13:12. 24:14. Mark 1:14, 15. 16:15. Heb. 2:3, 4. 4:104. 24:36. Ps. 37:3. Matt. 10:9. 10. Mark 6:8, 9. 2 Tim. 2:4. 9:11. 5:29. 12:28.

gave to the mourners. He means, as to her peculiar case, that she was not dead for good and all, but that she should now shortly be raised to life, so that it would be to her friends, as if she had been but a few hours asleep. But it is applicable to all that die in the Lord; therefore we should not sorrow for them, as those that have no hope, because death is but a sleep to them, not only as it is a rest from all the toils of the days of time, but as there will be a resurrection, a waking and rising again to all the glories of the days of eternity. This was a comfortable word. Yet they wickedly ridiculed it, and laughed Him to scorn for it; here was a pearl cast before swine. They were ignorant of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, who bantered it as an absurd thing to

grudge it to the meaneast, they were as welcome to it as to the light and heat of the sun; nor had He the less virtue in Him for the going out of virtue from Him, for He is an overflowing Fountain.

The poor patient owns her case, and the benefit she had received, v. 47. Note, The consideration of this, that we cannot be hid from Christ, should engage us to pour out our hearts before Him, and to show before Him our sin, and all our trouble. She came trembling, and yet her faith saved her, v. 48. Note, There may be trembling, where yet there is saving faith. She declared before all the people, for what cause she had touched Him, because she believed that a touch would cure her, and it did so. Christ's patients should communicate their experiences to one another.

The great Physician confirms her cure, and sends her away with the comfort of it, v. 48. Jacob got the blessing from Isaac clandestinely, and by a wife; but when the fraud was discovered, Isaac ratified it designedly; it was obtained surreptitiously and under-hand, but it was secured and seconded above-board: so was the cure here. He is blessed, and she shall be blessed; so here, she is healed, and she shall be healed.

IV. An encouragement to Jairus, not to distrust the power of Christ, v. 49, 50. Note, Our faith in Christ, as well as our zeal for Him, should be bold and daring. They that are willing to do any thing for Him, may depend on his doing great things for them, above what they may either ask or think. When the patient is dead, there is no room for prayer, or the use of means; but here, though the child is dead, yet believe, and all shall be well. To call in the physician after death, is absurd; but not to call in Christ.

V. The preparatives for the raising of her to life again. 1. The choice Christ made of witnesses that should see the miracle wrought. A crowd followed Him, but He took none with Him but Peter, and James, and John; these three, with the parents, being a competent number to attest the truth of it. 2. The check He

bid them not weep; for she is not dead, but asleep. He means, as to her peculiar case, that she was not dead for good and all, but that she should now shortly be raised to life, so that it would be to her friends, as if she had been but a few hours asleep. But it is applicable to all that die in the Lord; therefore we should not sorrow for them, as those that have no hope, because death is but a sleep to them, not only as it is a rest from all the toils of the days of time, but as there will be a resurrection, a waking and rising again to all the glories of the days of eternity. This was a comfortable word. Yet they wickedly ridiculed it, and laughed Him to scorn for it; here was a pearl cast before swine. They were ignorant of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, who bantered it as an absurd thing to

call death a sleep; yet this good came out of that evil, that hereby the truth of the miracle was evinced, for they knew that she was dead, they were certain of it, and therefore nothing less than a divine power could restore her to life. We find not any answer that He made them; yet He soon explained Himself. But He put them all out; (v. 54.) they were unworthy to be the witnesses of this work of wonder; they who in the midst of their mourning were so merrily disposed, as to laugh at Him for what He said, would, it may be, have found something to laugh at in what He did, and therefore are justly shut out.

VI. Her return to life, v. 55. Thus the hand of Christ's grace goes along with the calls of his word, to make them effectual. Here that is expressed, which was only implied in the other evangelists, that her spirit came again; her soul returned again, to animate her body. This plainly proves, that the soul exists and acts in a state of separation from the body and therefore is immortal; that death does not extinguish this candle of the Lord, but takes it out of a dark lantern. It is not, as Grotius well observes, the temperament of the body, or any thing that dies with it; but something that subsists by itself, which, after death, is somewhere else than where the body is. Where the soul of this child was in this interval, we are not told; it was in the hand of the Father of spirits, to whom all souls at death return. When her spirit came again, she arose, and made it appear that she was alive, by her motion, as she did also by her appetite, for Christ commanded to give her meat. As babes new born, so those that are newly raised, desire spiritual food, that they may grow thereby. In the last verse, we need not wonder to find her parents astonished; but if that implies that they only were so, and not the other by-standers, who had laughed Christ to scorn, we may well wonder at their stupidity, which perhaps was the reason why Christ would not have it proclaimed, as well as to give an instance of his humility.

CHAP. IX. v. 1-9. We have here, I. The method Christ took to spread his Gospel. He had travelled about Himself, preaching and healing; but now He sent abroad his twelve disciples, who by this time were pretty well instructed in the nature of the present dispensation, and able to instruct others, and to preach the kingdom of God, as it was now about to be set up by the Messiah; to bring people acquainted with the spiritual nature and tendency of it, and to persuade them to come

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 26-56. Our own observation and experience may convince us, that the effects of sin, and of Satan's malice, fill the earth with misery: but let us advert to the varied displays of the Redeemer's power to counteract this fatal tendency. If He have delivered our souls from the power of the devil, and brought us 'to sit at his feet, in our right mind,' to hear his word, and to desire to be with Him, He will preserve us from falling again under the dominion of sin; He will remove or sanctify our bodily sicknesses, and give us the comfort of his forgiving love; He will support us under domestic afflictions, and do us good by them; He will deliver us from the fear of death, and at length make us 'more than conquerors' even over this 'king of terrors.' Let us then declare what

great things our God and Savior has done for us; let us commit all our concerns into his hands, and apply to Him for help in all our difficulties; and let us endeavor to imitate his compassion and unwearied activity in doing good.—But, woe be to them who desire Jesus 'to depart from them,' through fear of worldly loss, or from love to sin! He will not stay with those who thus slight Him, and perhaps may return to them no more; for others are glad to receive Him; and none but Jesus can save them from the wrath of God, or the power of Satan; or give them effectual help in the time of trouble, 'in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment.' (P. O. Matt. 8:28-34. 9:18-26. Mark 5:1-43.)

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. v. 1-6. (Marg. Ref. 10:1-12. Matt. 10:1-15. Mark 6:7-13.) The apostles had both the power of working miracles, and authority over evil spirits, immediately given them by Christ Himself; in which was originally inherent, as One with the Father, as 'God manifest in the flesh,' as well as given to Him as our Mediator. (Matt. 28:18.) The miracles of mercy, wrought by them, proved their doctrine to be the word of God, and illustrated its benign and salutary tendency; and their holy doctrine, calling men to repent of sin and turn to God, and welcome the Savior promised in the Scriptures, demonstrated that their miracles were wrought by the power of God, whose Word they established. (Deut. 13:1-5. Matt. 12:25-30.) (4.) Thence, &c.] Remain in the same house, if convenient, till ye depart from that city.

(5.) Power and authority.] The reader will please to observe, 1. That Luke mentions both demons and diseases; therefore he was either mistaken, or demons and diseases are not the same. 2. The treatment of these two was not the same: the demons were to be cast out, the diseases to be healed.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

(3.) Staves.] 'Staves were always used by travellers in those rocky countries, both to support them in slippery places, and defend them against assaults. So necessary in these countries was a staff, that it was a usual thing for persons, when they undertook long journeys, to take a spare staff with them, for fear one should fail. When Christ, therefore, sent forth his apostles, He ordered them not to take staves, but only one staff, without making provision of a spare one.'

HORNE.

Two coats apiece.] The Jews usually wore two garments. The outer one was the talith, on which was the zuzith, i. e. the borders, skirts, or fringes sewed on the talith. This was named by them also the kolbon of thread. The under garment was a kind of tunic of woolen, named the chalcik. Comparing the text with the same expression in Luke 3:11. 'he that hath two coats, let him give one,' &c. it may seem probable that the "two coats" are the chalcik and the talith worn at once; and that the poorer ranks in the hot climate of Judea were wont to go occasionally in the chalcik alone. Hence the Father does not scruple to enjoin him who weareth both to give his talith to the poor.

LIEB. FOX.

4 And [†] whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart.

5 And [†] whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, [†] shake off the very dust from your feet for [†] a testimony against them.

6 And they departed and went through the towns, [†] preaching the gospel, and healing every where.

7 ¶ Now [†] Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by him: and [†] he was perplexed, because that it was said of some, that John was risen from the dead;

8 And [†] of some, that Elias had appeared; and of others, that one of the old prophets was risen again.

9 And Herod said, [†] John have I beheaded: but who is this, of whom I hear such things? [†] And he desired to see him.

10 ¶ And [†] the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And [†] he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place, belonging to the city called [†] Bethsaida.

11 And the people, [†] when they knew [†] it, followed him; [†] and he received them, and spake unto them [†] of the kingdom of God, and healed them that had need of healing.

† 10:5-8, Matt. 10:11, Mark 6:10, Acts 18:15.

† 48, 10:10-12, 16, Matt. 10:16, 18, Mark 6:11, 9:37, Acts 13:51, 14:15.

† 53-55, Neh. 5:13.

† 5:14, Matt. 10:18.

† 1, 2, Mark 6:12, 13, 16:20, Acts 4:30, 5:15.

† 10:11, 12, Ps. 73:19, Matt. 14:1-12, Mark 6:14-23.

† 29:25, Is. 22:5, Mi. 7:4.

† 2, 9, Matt. 17:10, Mark 6:15, 8:28, John 12:1.

† 13:31, 32, 25:8.

† 10:17, 22:3, 1:10, 11, Mark 6:30, Heb. 13:17.

† Matt. 14:13, Mark 2:7, 6:31, 32.

† Matt. 11:21, Mark 6:43, John 1:44.

† Matt. 14:14, Mark 6:33, 34.

† Is. 61:1, John 4:34, Rom. 15:3, 2 Tim. 4:2.

† 6:1, 10, Matt. 21:31, 43.

into the interests and measures of it. For the confirming of their doctrine, which it was new and surprising, and very different from what they had been taught by the scribes and Pharisees, and because so much depended on men's receiving or not receiving it, He empowered them to confirm it by miracles, v. 1, 2. Christ designed a total rout and ruin to the kingdom of darkness, and therefore gave them power over all devils. He authorized and appointed them likewise to cure diseases, and to heal the sick, which would make them welcome wherever they came, and not only convince people's judgments, but gain their affections.

This was their commission. Now observe, 1. What Christ directed them to do, in prosecution of this commission, at this time, when they were not to go far or be out long.

They must not be solicitous to recommend themselves to people's esteem by their outward appearance; they must go as they were, not change their clothes, nor so much as put on a pair of new shoes.

They must depend on Providence, and the kindness of their friends, to furnish them with what was convenient for them. They must not take with them either bread or money, and yet believe they should not want. Christ would not have his disciples shy of receiving the kindnesses of their friends, but rather to expect them. Yet Paul saw cause not to go by this rule, when he labored with his hands rather than be burdensome.

They must not change their lodgings, as suspecting that those who entertained them were weary of them; the ark is a guest that always pays well for its entertainment; (v. 4.) [†] Whosoever house ye enter into, there abide, that people may know where to find you; that your friends may know you are not backward to serve them, and your enemies may know you are not ashamed or afraid to face them; there abide, till you depart out of that city; stay with those you are used to.

They must put on authority, and speak warning to those who refused them, as well as comfort to those that received them, v. 5. [†] If there be any place that will not entertain you, if the magistrates deny you admission, and threaten to treat you as vagrants, leave them, do not force yourselves upon them, nor run yourselves into danger among them, but at the same time bind them over to the judgment of God for it; so that when they perish at last in their infidelity, their blood may be upon their own heads. [†] Shake off the dust of your feet, as much as to say, you abandon their city, and will have no more to do with them.

2. What they did, in prosecution of this commission; (v. 6.) They departed from their Master's presence; yet, having still his spiritual presence with them, and thus borne up in their work, they went through the towns, some or other of them, all the towns within the circuit appointed them; [†] preaching the Gospel, and healing every where; doing good like their Master, both to souls and bodies.

III. We have here Herod's perplexity and vexation at this. The deriving of Christ's power to those who were sent forth in his name, and acted by authority from Him, was an amazing and convincing proof of his being the Messiah, above any thing else; that He could not only work miracles Himself, but empower others to work miracles too; such mean, illiterate men as the apostles were, who had nothing else to recommend them, or to raise any expectations from them, but that they had been with Jesus, Acts 4:13. When the country sees

such as those healing the sick in the name of Jesus, it gives an alarm. Now observe,

1. The various speculations it raised among the people, who, though they thought not rightly, yet could not but think honorably, of our Lord Jesus, and that He was an extraordinary person, one come from the other world; that either John Baptist, lately persecuted and slain for the cause of God, or one of the old prophets, persecuted and slain long since in that cause was risen again, to be recompensed for their sufferings by this honor put on them; or that Elias, who was taken alive to heaven in a fiery chariot, had appeared as an express from heaven, v. 7, 8.

2. The great perplexity it created in the mind of Herod; his guilty conscience flew in his face, and he was ready to conclude with them that John was risen from the dead. He thought he had got clear of him, but, it seems, he is mistaken; either John is come to life again, or here is another in his spirit and power, for God will never leave Himself without witness. [†] What shall I do now? saith Herod. [†] John have I beheaded, but who is this? Is He carrying on John's work, or is He come to avenge John's death? John baptized, but He doth not; John did no miracle, but He doth; and therefore appears more formidable than John. Note, Those who oppose God, will find themselves more and more embarrassed. However, he desired to see Him, whether He resembled John or no; but he might soon have been put out of his pain, if he would have but informed himself of that which thousands knew, that Jesus preached, and wrought miracles, a great while before John was beheaded, and therefore could not be John raised from the dead. He desired to see Him; and why did he not go and see Him? Probably because he thought it below him, either to go to Him, or to send for Him; he had enough of John Baptist, and cared not for having to do with any more such reprovers of sin. He desired to see Him, but we do not find that ever he did, till he saw Him at his bar, and then he and his men of war set Him at naught, Luke 23:11. Had he prosecuted his convictions now, and gone to see Him, who knows but a happy change might have been wrought in him? But, delaying it now, his heart was hardened, and when he did see Him, he was as much prejudiced against Him as any other.

V. 10-17. We have here, I. The account which the twelve gave their Master of the success of their ministry. [†] They were not long out; but when they returned, they told him all that they had done, that, if they had done any thing amiss, they might mend it next time.

II. Their retirement, for a little breathing; He took them, and went aside privately into a desert place, that they might have some relaxation from business, and not be always on the stretch. Note, He that hath appointed our man-servant and maid-servant to rest, would have his servants to rest too. Those in the most public stations, and that are most publicly useful, must sometimes go aside privately, both for the repose of their bodies, to recruit them, and for the furnishing of their minds by meditation for further public work.

III. The resort of the people to Him, and the kind reception He gave them. They followed Him, though in a desert place; for that is no desert where Christ is. And though they hereby disturbed the repose He designed here for Himself and his disciples yet He welcomed them, v. 11. Note, Pious zeal may excuse a

Verses 7-9.

(Marg. Ref.—3:19, 20, Matt. 14:1-12, Mark 6:14-29.) Herod was perplexed and uneasy, at the report of Christ's miracles; and concurred in the opinion of those, who said that 'John was risen from the dead'; yet he desired to see Him, in order to ascertain the truth of this opinion, or in hopes to disprove a report which gave him much alarm. (13:31-33, 23:6-12.)

(S.) [†] Elias had appeared. [†] There was (says Rosenmueller) at that time an opinion, that, before the coming of the Messiah, one of the ancient prophets should return to life. They thought, therefore, that Jesus was one of those prophets, whose office it was to announce the advent of the Messiah as near at hand. T. This opinion a prophecy

respecting the other Elias, who was to appear, had given occasion, which they so interpreted as to suppose that not only another Elias, but also another prophet, would come; inasmuch that the attention of the whole nation was fixed on that subject.

Verses 11-13. Observe five effects of Divine grace. 1. People are drawn to follow Him. 2. He kindly receives them. 3. He instructs them in the things of God. 4. He heals all their diseases. 5. He feeds their bodies and their souls. [†] Quesset, Reader! Jesus is the same to the present moment. Follow Him, and He will receive, instruct, heal, feed and save thy soul unto eternal life.

12 And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto him, ^aSend the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: ^bfor we are here in a desert place.

13 But he said unto them, ^bGive ye them to eat. And they said, ^cWe have no more but five loaves and two fishes: except we should go and buy meat for all this people.

14 For they were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, ^dMake them sit down by fifties in a company.

15 And they did so, and made them all sit down.

16 Then he took the five loaves and the two fishes, ^eand looking up to heaven, ^fhe blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude.

17 And they did eat, and were all filled: ^gand there was taken up of fragments that remained to them, twelve baskets.

18 ¶ And it came to pass, ^has he was alone praying, his disciples were with him; and he asked them, saying, ⁱWhom say the people that I am?

^y Matt. 14:15. Mark 6:35, 36. John 6:5.

^z Matt. 15:23, 32.

^a Ps. 78:19, 20.

^b 2 Kings 4:42, 43. Matt. 14:16, 17.

^c Mark 6:37, 38. John 6:5-9.

^d Num. 11:21-23. Prov. 11:24, 25.

^e 1 Mark 6:39, 40, 8, 5.

^f Ps. 121:1, 2. Matt. 14:19. Mark 7:34.

^g 2 Tim. 24:39. Matt. 15:38. John 6:11, 23. Acts 27:35. Rom. 14:5, 1 Cor. 10:30, 11:24. 1 Tim. 14:5.

^h Ps. 37:16. Prov. 13:25. Matt. 14:21. 15:37, 38. Mark 6:42-44. Matt. 8:8.

ⁱ 2 Kings 4:44. Matt. 16:9, 10. Mark 8:19, 20. John 6:11-13. Phil. 4:18, 19.

^j 11:1. 22:39-41. Matt. 26:36.

^k Matt. 16:13, 14. Mark 8:27-30.

little rudeness; ^ldid with Christ, and should with us. Though they came unseasonably, yet Christ gave them what they came for. He spake unto them of the kingdom of God, of its laws by which they must be bound, and of its privileges with which they might be blessed. He healed them that had need of healing, and, in a sense of their need, made their application to Him. Though the disease was ever so inveterate, and incurable by the physicians, though the patients were ever so poor and mean, yet He healed them. There is healing in Christ for all that need it, whether for soul or body. Sometimes He sees that we need the sickness, for the good of our souls, more than the healing, for the ease of our bodies, and then we must be willing for a season, because there is need, to be in heaviness; but when He sees that we need healing, we shall have it. Death is his servant, to heal the saints of all diseases. He heals spiritual maladies by his graces, by his comforts, and has for each what their case calls for: relief for every exigence.

IV. The plentiful provision Christ made for the multitude that attended Him; with five loaves of bread and two fishes, He fed five thousand men. This narrative we had twice before, and shall meet with it again; it is the only miracle of our Savior's that is recorded by all the four evangelists.

Let us only observe out of it,

1. Those who diligently attend on Christ in the way of duty, and therein deny, or expose themselves, or are made to forget themselves, and their outward conveniences, by their zeal for God's house, are taken under his particular care, and may depend on *Jehovah-jireh—The Lord will provide*. He will not see those that fear Him, and serve Him faithfully, want any good thing.

2. Our Lord Jesus was of a free and generous spirit. His disciples said, *Send them away, that they may get victuals*; but Christ said, *No, give ye them to eat*; let what we have go as far as it will reach, and they are welcome to it. Thus He has taught both ministers and Christians to use hospitality without grudging, 1 Pet. 4:9. Those that have but a little, let them do what they can with that little, and that is the way to make it more. There is that scatters, and yet increases.

3. Jesus Christ has not only physic, but food, for all those that by faith apply themselves to Him: He not only cures the diseases of the soul, but relieves the necessity of it, and satisfies the desires of it. Christ has provided not only to save the soul from perishing by its diseases, but to nourish it unto life eternal, and strengthen it for all spiritual exercises.

4. All the gifts of Christ are to be received by the church in a regular, orderly manner; *Make them sit down by fifties in a company*. The number of each company is taken notice of here, (p. 14.) which Christ appointed for the better distribution of the meat, and the easier computation of the number of the guests.

5. When we are receiving our creature-comforts, we must look up to heaven; Christ did so, to teach us to do so. We must acknowledge that we receive them from God, and that we are unworthy to receive them; that we owe them all, and all the comfort we have in them, to the mediation of Christ, by whom the curse is removed, and the covenant of peace settled; that we depend on God's blessing upon them, to make them serviceable to us, and desire that blessing.

Verse 16.

He blessed them. [That is, the loaves and fishes. He pronounced a blessing over them. For it was customary with the Hebrews, at every meal, previously to pronounce a prayer which commenced with the words, *'Blessed be God'*; thus praising God, and returning thanks for the food and drink.]

Verses 19-27.

Matt. 16:13-23. Mark 8:27-33. 9:1. (20.) *Whom say ye, &c.* [Though the world fluctuates amidst various errors, the truth must not on that account be despised: but rather the knowledge of it should be the more diligently sought, and the profession of it made with the greatest constancy.] *Beza.* (23.) *Deny himself.* [Self-denial, among other things, requires us to renounce all those advantages, and risk all those sufferings, which arise from the favor or enmity of men. 'Although the yearning bowels of a tender mother, and the gray hairs of

6. The blessing of Christ will make a little to go a great way, and the little that the righteous man has, is better than the riches of many wicked, a dinner of herbs better than a stalled ox.]

7. Those whom Christ feeds, He fills; to whom He gives, He gives enough; as there is in Him enough for all, so there is enough for each. He replenishes every hungry soul, abundantly satisfies it with the goodness of his house. Here were fragments taken up, to assure us that in our Father's house there is bread enough, and to spare. We are not straitened, or stinted, in Him.]

V. 19-27. In these verses, we have one circumstance taken notice of, which we had not in the other evangelists—that Christ was alone praying, and his disciples with Him, when He entered into this discourse, v. 18. Though He had much public work to do, yet He found some time to be alone in private, for converse with Himself, and with his Father, and with his disciples; and when alone, He was praying. It is good for us to improve our solitude for devotion. When Christ was alone praying, his disciples were with Him; so that this was a family-prayer. Housekeepers ought to pray with their households, parents with their children, masters with their servants, teachers and tutors with their scholars and pupils. Christ prayed with them before He examined them, that they might be directed and encouraged to answer Him, by his prayers for them. Those we give instructions to, we should put up prayers for, and with. He discourses with them,

I. Concerning Himself; and inquires,

1. What the people said of Him. Christ knew better than they, but would have his disciples made sensible, by the mistakes of others concerning Him, how happy they were, that were led into the knowledge of the truth concerning Him. We should take notice of the ignorance and errors of others, that we may be the more thankful to Him who has manifested Himself to us, and not unto the world, and may pity them, and do what we can to help them, and to teach them better.

They tell Him what conjectures concerning Him they had heard in their converse with the common people. Ministers would know better how to suit their instructions to the case of ordinary people, if they did but converse more frequently and familiarly with them. The more conversant the physician is with his patient, the better he knows what to do for him. Some said that He was John Baptist, who was beheaded but the other day; others Elias, or one of the old prophets; any thing but what He was.

2. What they said of Him. 'We know that Thou art the Christ of God, the Anointed of God, the Messiah promised.' It is matter of unspeakable comfort to us, that our Lord Jesus is God's Anointed; for his being anointed signifies his being both appointed to, and qualified for his work.

Now one would have expected that Christ should have charged his disciples, to publish this truth to every one they met with; no, He straitly charged them to tell no man that thing as yet, because there is a time for all things. After his resurrection, which completed the proof of it, Peter made the temple ring with that, that God has made this same Jesus both Lord and Christ; (Acts 2:36.) but as yet the evidence was not ready to be summed up, and therefore it must be concealed; while it was so,

'an indulgent father, should be pleaded as motives to induce me to break the least command of the holy Jesus; though the authority of civil, natural, or ecclesiastical superiors should tempt me to do what Christ forbids; though authority should allure me with proffers of the highest honors or rewards, or endeavor to affright me with the severest menaces; yet if all these considerations should prevail with me to gratify myself and than, by doing that which my own conscience, and God's Word, assures me will be displeasing to my Savior, or opposite to his commands; it is evident that I regard myself, or them, more than I do my Savior, and therefore am unworthy of Him, and cannot be sincerely his disciple.' *Whitby*. This learned writer proceeds in the same energetic manner, to show particularly, how self-denial requires the same decision and firmness against solicitation, allurements, and upbraiding complaints, from wives, children, and other relations, where obedience to Christ is concerned; as well as to deny

19 They answering said, 'John the Baptist: but some say, Elias: and others say, That one of the old prophets is risen again.

20 He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, 'O The Christ of God.

21 And he straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing;

22 Saying, 'The Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day.

23 And he said to them, all, 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me.

24 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it.

25 For what is a man advantaged, if he

we may conclude that the believing of it was not necessary to salvation.

II. Concerning his own sufferings and death. Now that his disciples were well established in the belief of his being the Christ, and able to bear it, He speaks of them expressly, and with great assurance, v. 22. It comes in as a reason why they must not yet preach that He was the Christ, because the wonders that would attend his death and resurrection, would be the most convincing proof of his being the Christ of God. It was by his exaltation to the right hand of the Father, that He was fully declared to be the Christ, and by the sending of the Spirit thereupon; (Acts 2: 33.) and therefore wait till that is done.

III. Concerning their sufferings for Him. So far must they be from thinking how to prevent his sufferings, that they must rather prepare for their own.

We must accustom ourselves to all instances of self-denial and patience, v. 23. This is the best preparative for martyrdom. We must live a life of self-denial, mortification, and contempt of the world; we must not indulge our ease and appetite, for then it will be hard to bear toil, and weariness, and want, for Christ. We are

gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?

26 For whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

27 But I tell you of a truth, There be

some standing here, which shall not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God.

[Practical Observations.]

1 See on 7, 8.—Mal. 4. 5. John 1:21, 25.
m Matt. 6:15. John 7:40. 9:17.
n Matt. 5:47. 16:15. 22:42. Heb. 11:35.
o 22:67. Matt. 16:17. 26:63. Mark 8:29. 14:61. John 14:14. 49. 42:69. 7:41. 11:27. 20:31. Acts 8:57. 9:22. 17:32. 1 John 5:1. 2 John 1:7. 3 John 1:7. 4 John 1:31. 34. 21:26. Gen. 3:15. Ps. 22:69. Is. 53: Dan. 9:26. Zech. 13:7. Matt. 16:21. 17:12. Mark 8:31. 9:31. 10:33. 14:26. Acts 4:26. 28. 13:27. 29. 1 Cor. 15:4. 1 Pet. 1:11. r 14:26. 27. Matt. 10:38. 39. 16:22. 25.

Mark 9:34—38. John 12:25, 26. # Tim. 3:12.
* Tit. 2:12.
† 1 Cor. 15:30, 31.
u 17:38. Acts 20:23, 24. Heb. 11:35. Rev. 2:10. 12:11.
x 4:5. 7: 12:19. 21. 16:24, 25. Ps. 49:6. Matt. 16:26. Mark 9:43—46. Acts 1:18, 25. 2 Pet. 2:15—17. Rev. 18:7, 8.
y Matt. 13:48, 50. 1 Cor. 9:27.
z 12:8, 9. Ps. 22:6—8. Is. 53:3. Matt. 10:28, 33. 57:26. 8:38. John 5:44. 12:43. Rom. 1:15. 2 Cor. 12:10.
a Gal. 6:14. 7 Tim. 1:12. Heb. 11:26. 13:13. 1 Pet. 4:14—16. Rev. 5:5. 12:23, 27. Matt. 7:23. 23:34. Rev. 5:6.
b Dan. 7:10. Matt. 16:27. 24:30, 31. 25:31. 26:64. 2 Thes. 1:8—10. Jude 14. Rev. 17. 20:41.
c Mark 9:1. John 14:2. 16:7.
d John 21:22, 23.
e 22:6. John 8:51, 52. Heb. 2:9. f 22:18. Mark 14:23.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—27. The Lord Jesus is the Fountain of power and authority, to whom all creatures must in one way or other be subjected; and if He accompany his Word with efficacy, to deliver sinners from Satan's bondage, his ministers need not fear but He will procure them needful sustenance: and more they ought not to desire. They should always show a kind attention to the temporal comforts of mankind, while they seek their eternal salvation; and if they can, by ordinary means, do any thing to relieve the distresses and heal the diseases of those among whom they labor, it may help to promote the success of their ministry. But when truth and love, in this manner, go hand in hand, and the message of God is yet rejected and despised, it will leave men most inexcusable, and every circumstance will turn to a testimony against them. (P. O. Matt. 10: 1—15.)—The increase of faithful ministers, and the success of the Gospel, frequently cause great disquietude to those, who set themselves to oppose the cause of God; and they, who have shed innocent blood, will often have their guilt brought to remembrance, with renewed and increased terror and dismay, as long as they live; yea, except they truly repent, to all eternity. (Gen. 42: 21, 22.)—While the blessed Jesus consults the benefit and comfort of his disciples, and readily receives all who come to Him, healing their souls, and feeding them all with the 'Bread of life;' let us learn to communicate liberally to the necessities of our brethren, and even if poor

ourselves, to share our mean and scanty morsel with those who are in more urgent and immediate want. By the blessing of God, a little will in this use of it go far, and we shall never by so doing be impoverished.—After our Lord's example also, ministers, parents, and heads of families should pray with, as well as for, those who are intrusted to their care; and their retired conversation should be attended by social devotions, which will often render it as profitable as public ordinances.—Those who are established in one important doctrine of the Gospel, will be prepared to understand others connected with it; and those truths which relate to the person, the sufferings, and the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, form the very substance or centre of true religion. In meditating on his crucifixion, and the glory which ensued, we shall best learn 'to deny ourselves and to bear our cross daily;' we shall thus be induced to renounce the friendship and venture the enmity of the world: we shall, in this glass, see the folly and madness of seeking the largest temporal advantages, with the hazard of losing ourselves and being cast away; and we shall get the victory over that foolish and wicked shame, which causes so very many to forsake and disobey Christ, against the convictions of our own consciences; though He has expressly declared, that 'He will be ashamed' of all such, 'when He shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.' (P. O. Matt. 14: 6—21. 16: 21—28.)

SCOTT.

The cravings of our own pride, ambition, love of money, pleasure, ease; by willingly enduring reproach, contempt, poverty, imprisonment, or tortures, nay, death itself, when these things cannot be shunned, except by denying, disobeying, or dishonouring our Redeemer. (4: 25—27. Matt. 10: 34—39.) Daily, 'Great is the emphasis of this word, which indeed implies that as day succeeds day, so would one cross follow another.' Beza. (25.) Lose himself, &c. This must mean final perdition. Marg. Ref. x, y. 'His own soul.' (Matt. 16: 26. Mark 8: 36.) 'In his own glory, &c.' This, as distinguished from 'the glory of the Father,' denotes the glory of Christ, as Mediator, exercising all divine perfections through the medium of his human nature, in accomplishing and perfecting the grand purposes of his incarnation. (Matt. 25: 31—33. John 5: 20—29. 1 Cor. 15: 20—23. 2 Thes. 1: 5—10. Rev. 20: 11—15.) (19.) One of the old prophets. 'Some prophet of the ancients,' v. 8. (Matt. 5: 21, 27, 33. Acts 15: 7, 21. 21: 16. 2 Pet. 2: 5.)

(21.) This thing. 'Viz. That He was Jesus the Messiah, and that He actually professed and owned the title. He would not have them tell any one this thing, because He knew it was like to be interpreted in a very unjust and unnatural manner, which might have rendered

Him and his followers obnoxious to the Romans, who would unreasonably look on such a profession as a claim to regal power, and utterly inconsistent with the rights of Caesar.'

(22.) Raised the third day. See on Luke 1: 59. 2: 21. Et. (25.) Or be cast away? Or receive spiritual damage. I have added the word spiritual, which I conceive to be necessarily implied. Because, if a man received only temporal damage in some respect or other, yet gaining the whole world must amply compensate him. But if he should receive spiritual damage—hurt to his soul in the smallest degree, the possession of the universe could not indemnify him. Earthly goods may repair earthly losses, but they cannot repair any breach that may be made in the peace or holiness of the soul.

Dr. A. CLARKE

(26.) In his own glory, and in his Father's. 'How these are distinguished, it is not easy to say. I think it sufficient to say, that besides the glory which the human nature of Christ habitually wears in heaven, some additional splendor shall now be given Him by the Father, when sent with his commission on an occasion so august as the universal judgment.'

DODDRIE

(27.) Some standing here, &c. 'Raphelius and Albert, with some

28 ¶ And it came to pass, ^a about an eight days after these ^a sayings, ^b he took Peter, and John, and James, and went up ^c into a mountain to pray.

29 And, as he prayed, ^d the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistering.

30 And, behold, there talked with him two men, ^e which were Moses and ^f Elias;

31 Who ^g appeared in glory, and ^h spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

32 But Peter, and they that were with him, ⁱ were heavy with sleep: and when they were awake, ^j they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him.

33 And it came to pass, as they departed from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, ^k it is good for us to be here: ^l and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias: not knowing what he said.

g Matt. 17:1. Mark 9:2. Or, things.

h 8:1. Matt. 26:37-39. Mark 14:33.

i 18: 6:12. 2 Cor. 19:31.

j 18: 6:12. Ps. 109:4. Mark 1:35.

k Ex. 34:9-35. 1s. 33:17. 53:2.

l Matt. 17:2. Mark 11:23. John 1:14.

Act 6:15. Phil. 3:7, 8. 2 Pet. 1:15-18. Rev. 1:13-16. 20:11.

24:27-44. Matt. 17:34. Mark 9:9.

5: 5. John 1:17. Rom. 3:21-23. 9:1.

Cor. 3:7-11. Heb. 3:3-6.

m 19: 1:17. Jam. 5:17, 18.

n 2 Cor. 3:18. Phil. 3:21. Col. 3:4.

o 1 Pet. 5:10.

p 22: 13:32-34. John 1:29. 1 Cor. 1:23, 24. 1 Pet. 1:11, 12. Rev. 5:6-12. 7:14.

q 22:45-48. Dan. 8:18. 10:9. Matt. 26:40-43.

r Ex. 33:18-23. 1s. 60:1-3, 19. John 1:14. 17:24. 2 Pet. 1:16. 1 John 3:2.

Rev. 22:4, 5.

s Ps. 46:7. 27:4. 63:2-5. John 14:8, 9. 2 Cor. 1:6.

t Matt. 17:4. Mark 9:5, 6.

world, and nations were brought to God triumph over the Gentile nations in their conversion, and over the Jewish nation in its destruction.

pleasure, in the world, by denying Christ, yet when, by so doing, we lose ourselves to all eternity, and are cast away at last, what good will our worldly gain do us? *The soul is the man; and it is well or ill with us, according as it is well or ill with our souls.* If they perish forever, it is certain that *we* are undone; the body cannot be happy, if the soul be miserable in the other world; but the soul may be happy, though the body be greatly afflicted and oppressed in this world. If a man be himself cast away, by the righteous sentence of Christ, whose cause and interest he has treacherously deserted; if it be adjudged a forfeiture of all his blessedness, and the forfeiture be taken, where is his gain? What is his hope?

We must therefore never be ashamed of Christ and his Gospel, nor of any disgrace or reproach that we may undergo for our faithful adherence to Him and it, v. 26. As Christ had, so his cause has, a state of *humiliation and exaltation*. They, and they only, that are willing to suffer with it, when it suffers, shall reign with it, when it reigns; those that cannot find in their hearts to share with it in its *disgrace*, shall certainly have no share with it in its triumphs. Observe here, how Christ, to support Himself and his followers under present disgraces, speaks *magnificently* of the lustre of his second coming, in prospect of which He *endured the cross, despising the shame*: 1. He shall come in *his own glory*. This was not mentioned in Matthew and Mark. He shall come in the glory of the Mediator, *all that glory* which the Father restored to Him, which He had with God before the worlds were, which He had deposited and put in pledge, as it were, for the accomplishing of his undertaking, and demanded up again, when He had gone through it: *Now, O Father, glorify Thou Me*, John 17:4, 5. He shall come in *all that glory* which the Father conferred on Him, when He set Him at his own right hand, and gave Him to be *Head over all things to the church*; in all the glory that is due to Him, as the Asserter of the glory of God, and the Author of the glory of all the saints. This is *his own glory*. 2. He shall come in *his Father's glory*. The Father will judge the world by Him, having committed all judgment to Him; and therefore will publicly own Him in the judgment, as the *Brightness of his glory, and the express Image of his person*. 3. He shall come in the *glory of the holy angels*. They shall all attend Him, and minister to Him, and add every thing they can to the lustre of his appearance. What a figure will the blessed Jesus make in that day! Did we believe it, we should never be ashamed of Him or his words now.

Lastly, To encourage them in suffering for Him, He assures them that the *kingdom of God* would now *shortly be set up*, notwithstanding the great opposition that was made to it, v. 27. 'Though the second coming of the Son of man is at a great distance, the kingdom of God shall come in its power in the present age, while some here present are alive.' They saw the *kingdom of God*, when the Spirit was poured out, when the Gospel was preached to all the world, and nations were brought to Christ by it; they saw the kingdom of God triumph over the Gentile nations in their conversion, and over the Jewish nation in its destruction.

V. 28-36. We have here the narrative of Christ's transfiguration, which was designed for a specimen of that glory of his, in which He will come to judge the world, and consequently an encouragement to his disciples, to suffer for Him, and never to be ashamed of Him. We had the account before, in Matthew and Mark, and it is well worthy to be repeated and reconsidered, for the *confirmation of our faith* in the Lord Jesus, and for the *encouraging of our hopes and expectations* concerning the glory reserved for all believers in the future state.

I. In one circumstance of the narrative, Luke seems to differ from the other two evangelists. They say it was *six days* after the foregoing sayings, Luke saith that it was *about eight days* after, that is, it was that day sevennight; six whole days intervening, and it was the eighth day. Some think it was *in the night*, because the disciples were sleepy, as in his agony, and in the *night* his appearance in splendor would be the more illustrious; if in the night, the computation of the time would be the more doubtful and uncertain; probably, in the night, between the seventh and eighth day, and so about eight days.

II. Divers circumstances are added and explained, which are very material.

We are here told that Christ was thus honored when He was praying; (v. 28, 29.) when Christ humbled Himself to pray, He was thus exalted. He knew before, that this was designed for Him at this time, and therefore seeks it by prayer. Christ Himself must ask the favors that were purposed for Him, and promised to Him; *Ask of Me, and I will give thee*, Ps. 2:8. And thus He intended to honor the duty of prayer, and to recommend it to us. It is a transfiguring, transforming duty; if our hearts be elevated and enlarged in it; so as in it to behold the *glory of the Lord*, we shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, 2 Cor. 3:18. By prayer, we fetch in the wisdom, grace, and joy, which make the face to shine.

Luke does not use the word *transfigured*, (which Matthew and Mark used), perhaps because it had been used so much in the Pagan theology, but makes use of a phrase equivalent, *The fashion of his countenance was another thing from what it had been*; his face shone far beyond what Moses' did, when He came down from the mount; and his raiment was white and glistering; or bright like lightning; so that He seemed to be arrayed all with light, to cover Himself with light as with a garment.

It was said in Matthew and Mark, that Moses and Elias appeared to them, here it is said they appeared in glory; to teach us, that saints departed are in glory, in a glorious state; they shine in glory; He being in glory, they appeared with Him in glory, as all the saints shall shortly do.

We are here told what was the subject of the discourse between Christ and them; *They spake of his decease, which He should accomplish at Jerusalem—his exodus, his departure*; that is, his death. The death of Christ is here called his exit, his going out, his leaving of the world. Moses and Elias spake of it to Him under that notion, to reconcile Him to it, and to make the foresight of it the more easy to his human nature. The death of the saints is their *exodus*, their departure out of the Egypt of this world,

other critics, would render this text. *Some here present shall not die till they see the Son of man going into his kingdom, that is, ascending to heaven*, which the apostles did. See Acts 1:9. But it increases the difficulty to suppose both these uncommon senses of the words in question to occur together; nor will Luke 23:42. be allowed as an exact parallel. I choose therefore to adhere to our received version, which may include a reference to *giving the Spirit and praying for the kingdom of God*, but chiefly refers to that providential appearance of Christ for the destruction of Jerusalem, so often called the coming of the Son of man, (Matt. 24:3, 27, 30, 37.) and the day in which He shall be revealed. Luke 17:24, 26, 30. This sense is the more natural here, especially as our Lord's manner of speaking intimates that most of the company should be dead before the event referred to: yet his ascension happened in a few months after this.

VERSES 28-36.

Marg. Ref.—Matt. 17:1-9. Mark 9:2-10. 'Lest the disciples should be offended at his humiliation in the flesh, Christ teaches them that it was voluntary, without showing them for a space his celestial glory and majesty.' Beza. (31.) His decease. (John 13:1-1690)

5.) The subject of the conversation on the holy mount, mentioned only by this evangelist, shows that the atonement made by the death of Christ, was the great object to which Moses and the prophets, rightly understood, directed mankind. They, as well as John the Baptist and the apostles, in fact say, 'Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.' (Marg. Ref. o.) (34.) Feared, &c. (They,) (the disciples) 'feared, when those men,' Moses and Elijah, 'entered the cloud.' Campbell.—The cloud overshadowed the disciples also; and at that time Moses and Elijah disappeared. (35.) Hear Him.) This is the first and great command of God to sinners by the Gospel, without obedience to which all else is vain. (John 6:25, 29. 1 John 3:18-24.) Scott.

(31.) Decease.) 'Though the original word here does sometimes signify a military expedition, yet it is plainly used for death, or a departure out of the world, (2 Peter 1:15. and Wisd. 3:2.) which suits much better with the construction, at Jerusalem.' Doddridge. 'Some have put a different meaning on the words; but it was, doubtless, our Lord's death which was the subject of discourse.'

CAMPBELL.

34 While he thus spake, there came a cloud, and overshadowed them; and they feared as they entered into the cloud.

35 And there came a voice out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my beloved Son; hear him.'

36 And when the voice was past, Jesus was found alone. And they kept it close, and told no man in those days any of those things which they had seen.

37 ¶ And it came to pass, that on the next day, when they were come down from the hill, much people met him.

38 And, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech thee, look upon my son; for he is mine only child:

39 And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him.

40 And I besought thy disciples to cast him out; and he crieth out.

41 And Jesus answering, said, 'O faith-

their release out of a house of bondage. Some think the ascension of Christ is included here, for the departure of Israel out of Egypt was a departure in triumph, so was his when He went from earth to heaven. This departure of his He must accomplish, for thus it was determined in the counsel of God, and could not be altered. He must accomplish it at Jerusalem, though his residence was mostly in Galilee; for his most spiteful enemies were at Jerusalem, and there the sanhedrim sat, that took upon them to judge of prophets. Moses and Elias spake of this, to intimate that the sufferings of Christ, and his entrance into his glory, were what Moses and the prophets had spoken of; see Luke 24: 26, 27. 1 Pet. 1: 11. Our Lord Jesus, even in his transfiguration, was willing to discourse of his death and sufferings; to teach us, that meditations on death, are in a special manner seasonable when at any time we are advanced, lest we should be lifted up above measure. In our greatest glories on earth, let us remember that here we have no continuing city.

We are here told, which we were not before, that the disciples were heavy with sleep; (v. 22.) when the vision first began, Peter and James and John were drowsy; either it was late, or they were weary, or had been disturbed in their rest the night before; or perhaps a charming, composing air, or some sweet and melodious sounds, which disposed them to soft and gentle slumbers, were a preface to the vision; or perhaps it was owing to a sinful carelessness; when Christ was at prayer with them, they did not regard his prayer as they should have done, and to punish them for that, were left to sleep on now, when He began to be transfigured, and so slept an opportunity of seeing how that work of wonder was wrought. These three were now asleep, when Christ was in his glory, as afterwards they were, when He was in his agony; see the weakness and frailty of human nature, even in the best, and what need they have of the grace of God. Nothing could be more affecting to these disciples, one would think, than the glories and the agonies of their Master; and yet neither the one nor the other would serve to keep them awake. What need have we to pray to God for quickening grace, to make us not only alive, but lively? Yet that they might be competent witnesses of this sign from heaven, to those that demanded one, after a while they recovered themselves, and became perfectly awake; and then they took an exact view of all those glories, so that they were able to give a particular account, as we find one of them doth, of all that passed when they were with Christ in the holy mount, 2 Pet. 1: 17.

It is here observed, it was when Moses and Elias were now about to depart, that Peter said, Lord, it is good to be here, let us make three tabernacles. Thus we are often not sensible of the worth of our mercies, till we are about to lose them; nor do we covet and court their continuance, till they are on the departure. Peter said this, not knowing what he said. Those know not what they say, that talk of making tabernacles on earth for glorified saints in heaven, who have better mansions in the temple there, and long to return to them.

It is here added concerning the cloud that overshadowed them, that they feared as they entered into the cloud. This cloud was a token of God's more peculiar presence; it was in a cloud that God of old took possession of the tabernacle and temple, and when the cloud covered the tabernacle, Moses was not able to enter, (Exod. 40: 34, 35.) and when it filled the temple, the priests could not stand to minister by reason of it; (2 Chron. 5: 14.) such a cloud was this, and then no wonder that the disciples were afraid to enter into it. But never let any be afraid to enter into a cloud with Jesus Christ, for He will be sure to bring them safe through it.

The voice which came from heaven, is here, and in Mark, related not so fully as in Matthew; This is my beloved Son, hear Him: though these words, in whom I am well pleased, which we have both in Matthew and Peter, are not expressed, they are implied in that, This is my beloved Son; for, whom He loves, and, in whom He is well pleased, come all to one; we are accepted in the Beloved.

Lastly, The apostles are here said to have kept this vision private; they told no man in those days, reserving the discovery of it for another opportunity, when the evidences of Christ's being the Son of God were completed in the pouring out of the Spirit, and that doctrine was to be published to all the world. As there is a time to speak, so there is a time to keep silence. Every thing is beautiful and useful in its season.

V. 37-42. This passage of story in Matthew and Mark follows immediately on that of Christ's transfiguration, and his discourse with his disciples after it; but here it is said to be on the next day; which confirms the conjecture, that Christ was transfigured in the night, and, it should seem, though they did not make tabernacles, as Peter proposed, yet they found some shelter to repose themselves in all night, for it was not till next day, that they came down from the hill; and then He found things in some disorder among his disciples, though not so bad as Moses did when he came down from the mount. When wise and good men are in their beloved retirements, they would do well to consider whether they are not wanted in their public stations.

In this narrative, observe,

1. How forward the people were to receive Christ at his return to them; as it was foretold of Him, that to Him should the gathering of the people be.

2. How importunate the father of the lunatic child was with Christ for help for him; (v. 38.) I beseech Thee, look upon my son; a very modest request; one compassionate look from Christ is enough. Let us bring ourselves and our children to Christ, to be looked upon. His plea is, he is mine only child. They that have many children, may balance their affliction in one with their comfort in the rest; yet if it be an only child, that is a grief, the affliction in that may be balanced with the love of God in giving his only-begotten Son for us.

3. How deplorable the case of the child was, v. 39. He was under the power of an evil spirit, that took him; and diseases of that nature are

(34.) 'I cannot think it probable that this only means that the cloud cast a shadow which fell upon them, but rather that it spread over the mountain; and probably it was the darkest part with which the spotles were enveloped, while the excellent glory, (2 Pet. 1: 17.) seemed much higher, and the rays of it were much tempered by that part of the cloudy veil between it and them. And thus we know that the Shechinah had appeared in former ages, particularly when it took possession of the tabernacle of Moses, (Ex. 40: 34, 35.) and the temple of Solomon, 1 Kings 8: 10, 11.'

Verses 37-44.

(Marg. Ref. a-n.—Matt. 17: 14-21. Mark 9: 14-29.) (38.) Mine only child. Luke alone particularly notices this circumstance, in a single word, yet in a manner suited to touch the heart, and awaken the most tender sympathy in the reader. (7: 11-17.) (39.) Lo, &c. 'And, behold, a spirit seizeth him, and suddenly the youth crieth out, and the spirit teareth him till he foameth, and bruising him, hardly departeth from him.' In this rendering, (which is literal, except as the proper nominative to each verb is added instead of the relative,) what the evil spirit, and what in consequence the youth did, are distinguished; and this is of considerable importance, in order to show more clearly that it was a real possession. (43.) The mighty power, &c. Or, 'the majesty of God,' which was displayed by Jesus in this miracle, accordi g to what He says, 'He, that hath seen Je-

hath seen the Father.' (44.) Sink deep, &c. Or, 'Place these things in your ears.' Let them still sound in your ears, and let no subsequent events cause you to forget them; for a very different scene will soon open.—We have no reason to promise ourselves tranquillity; seeing they, who at one time extol Christ, not long after crucify Him.' Beza. (Marg. Ref. o, p.)

(38.) The symptoms of this boy's disorder are analogous to those of epilepsy. Hewlett. 'An epileptic fit suddenly affects a person, how ever employed, and precipitates him, deprived both of sensation and intellect, to the earth: for he does not seem to fall, but rather to be thrown down with some degree of violence, so that he is often bruised or wounded. In this situation he grinds his teeth, and foams at the mouth; the head is jerked from side to side, and frequently beaten against the ground; the arms and legs, the neck and back, stir become rigid, or are convulsed in various directions; the abdomen and hypochondria are swelled, and tense. After some time, the convulsive motions cease, and the patient appears almost lifeless; and at length, he returns to himself, complaining of head-ache, labour, giddiness, and confused vision.'

(39.) 'That the boy was epileptic, Kinneol thinks evident, from the description of the disorder. He is, indeed, called lunatic by Matthew, but by that name the Greeks often designated epileptic patients. Rosenm. [See note Matt. 17: 15.]

BLOOMFIELD.

1811

less and perverse generation! how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither.

42 And as he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father.

43 And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, he said unto his disciples,

44 Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of man shall be delivered into the hands of men.

45 But they understood not this saying, and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask him of that saying.

Practical Observations.

g Deut. 32:5, Matt. 3:7, 12:39, 45, 16:4, 22:35, Acts 2:40.
h Ex. 10:23, 15:28, Num. 14:11, 37.
i Jer. 4:14, Matt. 17:17, Luke 14:3.
j Acts 13:18 Rom. 2:4, Heb. 3:9-11.
k 2 Kiv. 5:8, Matt. 11:28, Mark 10:14, 14:9, 15:7, 25.
l 19, Mark 1:26, 9:20, 26, 27, Rev. 12:12.
m 7:15 1 Kings 17:23, 2 Kings 4:36, 37, Acts 9:41.
n 4:36, 5:9, 26:8, 25, Mark 6:51, Acts 8:10-13.
o 1:66, 2:19, 51, 1a, 32, 9:10, John 16:1, 1 Thees. 3:3, 4, Heb. 2:1, 12:2-5.
p 22, 18:31, 24:9, 7, 44, Matt. 16:21.

more frightful than such as arise merely from natural causes: when the fit seized him, without any warning given, he suddenly cried out, and many a time his shrieks had pierced the heart of his tender father. This malicious spirit tare him, and bruised him, and departed not from him, but with great difficulty, and a deadly gripe at parting. O the afflictions of the afflicted in this world! And what mischief doth Satan do, where he gets possession! But happy they that have access to Christ!

4. How defective the disciples were in their faith. Though Christ had given them power over unclean spirits, yet they could not cast out this evil spirit, v. 40. Either they distrusted the power they were to fetch in strength from, or the commission given to them, or they did not exert themselves in prayer as they ought; for this Christ reproved them. *O faithless and perverse generation.* Dr. [S.] Clarke understands this as spoken to his disciples; 'Will ye be yet so faithless and full of distrust, that ye cannot execute the commission I have given you?'

5. How effectual the cure was, which Christ wrought on this child, v. 42. Christ can do that for us, which his disciples cannot; Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, then when he raged most. One word from Christ healed the child; and it is here added, He delivered him again to his father. Note, When our children are recovered from sickness, we must receive them as life from the dead, and as when we first received them. It is comfortable to receive them from the hand of Christ again; 'Here, take this child, and be thankful; take it and bring it up for Me; take it, and do not set thy heart too much upon it.' With such cautions as these, parents should receive their children from Christ's hands, and then with comfort put them again into his hands.

V. 43-50. We may observe here,

I. The impression Christ's miracles made on all that beheld them, v. 43. Their wonder was universal; they wondered every one: the causes of it were universal; they wondered at all things which Jesus did; all his actions had something uncommon and surprising in them.

II. The notice Christ gave to his disciples of his approaching sufferings; (v. 24.) wicked men, men of the worst character shall be permitted to abuse Him at their pleasure. That is here implied, which is expressed by the other evangelists; *They shall kill Him.* But that which is peculiar here is, I. The connection of this with what goes next before, of the admiration of the people at beholding Christ's miracles, v. 43.

17:22, 20:18, 19, 21:38, 39, 26:2.
Mark 9:31, 9:31, John 2:19-22.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 23-45. To form some faint conception of the Redeemer's glory, now in heaven, and at his future appearance to judge the world, let us contemplate Him on the mount, when 'the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening,' like the lightning. With this scene before our eyes, we may meditate with advantage on 'his decease which He accomplished at Jerusalem;' and thence follow Him with our thoughts to his present exaltation in heaven, where He is surrounded by his saints, who there appear with Him in glory, and expatiate in his praises. This may reconcile us to our present trials, and prepare us for the stroke of death; that we may go to behold and share that glory, one glimpse of which has sometimes made those favored with it to say, 'It is good for us to be here.' But we must now walk by faith, and

hear obediently the words of the beloved Son of God; treasuring up every comfortable experience of his love, and every discovery of his majesty and excellency, to be our support in 'the days of darkness.' Thus we may maintain a successful conflict with the enemies of our souls; and in the exercise of a vigorous faith, hope to be instrumental in rescuing some of our fellow sinners from their destructive influence. But if we would be useful to others, we must seek to have our own minds delivered from every prejudice; and when we find ourselves unable to understand the words of Christ, we should not fear or neglect to ask Him, and to consult his more experienced servants, concerning them. (P. O. Matt. 17:1-13. Mark 9:1-13.)

SCOTT.

(41.) "How long shall I be with you," to the disciples, who are the "faithless generation;" "shall I suffer you," to the scribes, the "perverse generation," (Mark 9:19.) who were disputing with the disciples. This would never have been understood, had it not been the place in Mark; a thing not unusual in the Scriptures.

MARKLAND.

(43.) *The mighty power.* 'This majesty of God. They plainly saw that it was a case, in which any power inferior to God's could not avail; and were deeply struck with God's majesty manifested in the conduct of the blessed Jesus.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

(44.) *Let these sayings sink down into your ears.* 'Or, put these words into your ears. To other words you may lend occasional attention—but to what concerns my sufferings and death, you must ever listen. Let them constantly occupy a place in your most serious meditations and reflections.'

IN.

Verse 45.

'They understood the words; but knew not how to reconcile them with their own traditions, that their Messiah should live forever, or

The disciples had a fond conceit of his temporal kingdom, and that He should reign; and they with Him, in secular pomp and power; and now they thought his mighty power would easily effect the thing, and his interest in the people, gained by his miracles, contribute to it; therefore Christ, who knew what was in their hearts, takes this occasion to tell them again, that so far from having men delivered into his hands, He must be delivered into the hands of men; so far from living in honor, He must die in disgrace; and that all his miracles, and his interest by them gained in the people, would not be able to prevent it. 2. The solemn preface with which it is introduced; 'Let these sayings sink down into your ears; take special notice of what I say, and mix faith with it; let not the notions you have of the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, stop your ears against it, nor make you unwilling to believe it. Admit what I say, and submit to it.' Let it sink down into your hearts; so the Syriac and Arabic. The word of Christ does us no good unless we let it sink down into our heads and hearts. 3. The unaccountable stupidity of the disciples, with reference to this prediction of Christ's sufferings. It was said in Mark, *They understood not that saying*; it was plain enough, but they would not understand it in the literal sense, because it agreed not with their notions; and they could not understand it in any other, and were afraid to ask Him, lest they should be undeceived, and awaked out of their pleasing dream; but it is here added, that it was hid from them, that they perceived it not. We cannot think that it was in mercy hid from them, lest they should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow at the prospect of it; but that it was a paradox, because they made it so to themselves.

III. The rebuke Christ gave his disciples for their disputing among themselves which should be greatest, v. 46-48. This passage we had before. But observe here,

1. Ambition of honor, and strife for superiority and precedence, are sins that most easily beset the disciples of our Lord Jesus, for which they deserve to be severely rebuked; they flow from corruptions, which they are highly concerned to subdue and mortify, v. 46. They that expect to be great in this world, commonly aim high, and nothing will serve them short of being greatest; this exposes them to a great deal of temptation and trouble, which they are safe from, that are content to be little, to be least, to be less than the least.

2. Jesus Christ is perfectly acquainted with

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

19:11, Acts 2:23, 3:13-15, 4:27, 28.
q 46, 18:34, Matt. 16:22, Mark 8:

16-18, 32, 33, 9:10, 32, John 12:16,
24, 14:25, 16:17, 18, 2 Cor. 3:14-16.

'with the great things they expected from Him; and therefore in after-ages, they (the unbelieving Jews) invented the distinction of Messiah Ben Joseph, who was to die, and Messiah Ben David, who was to triumph, and live forever.' *Whitby.* (Mark 8:17-21, 9:30-32, 10:32-34, 2 Cor. 3:12-16.)

SCOTT.

It was hid from them that they perceived it not. 'It was veiled to them that they might not apprehend it. The words are susceptible of either interpretation: yet the common signification of the original word rendered that, is, to the end that, though it frequently denotes no more than so that; it seems, as it stands here, to express something intentional. There is no impropriety in supposing that predictions were intentionally expressed so as not to be perfectly understood at the time; but so as to make an impression, which would secure their being remembered till the accomplishment should dispel every doubt.' *Campbell.* Certainly the translation here given is more literal than our version.

SCOTT.

(46.) *There arose a reasoning.* 'Or, more literally, a dispute—one inquired, and another answered, and so on.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

46 ¶ Then there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest.

47 And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child and set him by him,

48 And said unto them, "Whoever shall receive this child in my name, receiveth me: and whoever shall receive me, receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great."

49 And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbade him because he followed not with us.

50 And Jesus said unto him, "Forbid him not; for he that is not against us is for us."

51 ¶ And it came to pass, when the time was come that he

the thoughts and intents of our hearts; (v. 47.) they are words to Him, *whispers* are loud cries. It is a good reason why we should keep up a strict government of our thoughts, because Christ takes a strict cognizance of them.

3. Christ will have his disciples aim at that honor which is to be obtained by a quiet and condescending humility, not at that which is to be obtained by a restless and aspiring ambition, v. 47. He always expressed a tenderness for little children, and He proposed this child to them for an example. Let them be in *temper* like it, *humble and quiet, and easy to itself*; let them not affect worldly pomp, or grandeur, or high titles, but be as dead to them as this child; let them bear no more malice to their rivals and competitors than this child did. Let them be willing to be the least, if that would contribute any thing to their usefulness, to stoop to the meanest office whereby they might do good. Let them assure themselves that this would recommend them to the esteem of their brethren, and likewise to the favor of Christ, who would take the kindnesses done to them as done to Himself; *Whoever shall receive one such child, a preacher of the Gospel that is of such a disposition as this, he placeth his respect aright, and receiveth Me; and whoever receiveth Me in such a minister, receiveth Him that sent Me*: and what greater honor can any man attain to in this world than to be received by men as a messenger of God and Christ, and to have God and Christ, own themselves received and welcomed in him? This honor have all the humble disciples of Jesus Christ, and thus they shall be truly great, that are least among men.

IV. The rebuke Christ gave his disciples for discouraging one, who, though not of their communion, nor one of the twelve, nor of the seventy, nor of those that ever associated with them, yet on occasional hearing of Christ, believed in Him, and made use of his name with faith and prayer, for the casting out of devils. Now, this man they would not let pray and preach, though to the honor of Christ, and the good of souls, because he did not follow Christ with them, but separated from their church, and was not or-

derained as they were, nor gave them the right hand of fellowship. Now if ever any society of Christians in the world had reason to silence those that were not of their communion, the twelve disciples at this time had; and yet Christ chid them for what they did, and warned them not to do the like again, nor any that profess to be the successors of the apostles, v. 50 "You do well, to do as you do, but it doth not therefore follow, that he doeth ill, to do as he doeth, and that you do well to put him under an interdict, for he that is not against us is for us and therefore ought to be countenanced by us." We need not lose any of our friends, while we have so few, and so many enemies. Those may be found faithful followers of Christ, and, as such, may be accepted of Him, though they do not follow with us. See Mark 9:38, 39. O what a great deal of mischief to the church, even from those that boast of relation to Christ, and pretend to *envy for his sake*, would be prevented, if this passage of story were but duly considered!

V. 51—56. This passage of history we have not in the other evangelists, and it seems to come in here for the sake of its affinity with that next before, for in this also Christ rebuked his disciples, because they envied for his sake; for a spirit of bigotry and persecution is directly contrary to the spirit of Christ and Christianity.

Observe here, I. The readiness and resolution of our Lord Jesus, in prosecuting his great undertaking for our redemption and salvation. Of this we have an instance, v. 51. There was a time fixed for the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus, and He knew when it was, yet so far was He from keeping out of the way, that then He appeared most publicly of all, and was most busy, knowing that his time was short. When He saw his death and sufferings approaching, He looked upon it as the time when He should be received up into glory, (1 Tim. 3:16.) even into the highest heavens, to be enthroned there. All good Christians may frame to themselves, the same notion of death, and call it their being received up, to be with Christ where He is; and when

11:7—11, 22:24—27, Matt. 18:1, 20:20—22, 23:3, Mark 9:37—37, Rom. 12:3, 14, Gal. 5:20, 21, 25, 26, Phil. 2:3, 14, 3 John 9.
v. 5:32, 7:39, 9:3, Pa. 19:9, 23:2, Jer. 17:10, John 2:25, 16:30, 21:17, Heb. 4:14, Rev. 22:3.
c. Matt. 18:2—4, 19:13—15, Mark 10:14, 15, 1 Cor. 14:20, 1 Pet. 2:12, 2, 3, 10, 14, 40—42, 12:5, 15:10, 14, 25:40, 45, Mark 9:37, John 12:44, 45, 13:20, 14:21, 1 Thes. 4:8, v. 7:18, 22:30, Prov. 18:12, Matt.

19:28, 23:11, 12, 1 Pet. 5:3, 4, 6, Rev. 2:23, 14:14, 15:2, 17:15—18, 19:11, 21:27—29, Mark 9:38—40, 10:13, 14, Acts 4:18, 19, 5:28, 1 Thes. 2:16, 9 John 9, 10.

v. Josh. 9:4, Prov. 3:5, 6, Matt. 13:3, 18:28, 20:28, Phil. 1:5—18, 11:23, Matt. 12:30, Mark 9:41, 1 Cor. 12:3, b. 24:51, 2 Kings 2:1—3, 11, Mark 16:

19, John 6:92, 13:1, 16:5, 28, 17:11, Acts 12:9, Eph. 1:22, 4:8—11, 1 Tim. 3:16, Heb. 6:20, 12:1, 1 Pet. 3:22.

Verses 46—48.

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 18:1—6. Mark 9:33—37, 41, 42.) 'Their words spoken among themselves, could not escape Him, who knew their thoughts, or reasonings.' (48.) *The same shall be great.* Or, 'greatest,' as some understand it; but indeed 'the least' true Christian 'shall be great,' above all the great ones of the earth, and equal to the angels in heaven. (20:36.)

Verses 49, 50.

(Marg. Ref.—Mark 33—40.) *Forbid, &c.* 'In extraordinary cases, we should not rashly either condemn, or approve.' *Beza.* This is an observation of no little importance; for on the one hand, precipitate and harsh condemnations of extraordinary appearances of a revival in religion, when it afterwards appears, that God was eminently prospering his Gospel, by those who followed not with these rash censurers, are very common; and so on the other, is an indiscriminate sanctioning of all that is done or observed on these occasions, as *divine*; when the event shows, that human infirmity and depravity, and Satan's artifice, in various ways, concurred to disgrace, if possible, and stop the good work of the Holy Spirit. To wait, to examine and observe, and impartially to distinguish between what is *scriptural*, and what is *unscriptural*, in these extraordinary events; and not to give an opinion, till the whole be maturely weighed, so as to leave but little danger, either of condemning the work of God, or of sanctioning the delusions of the devil, is a chief point of heavenly wisdom.

In. (49.) *Casting out, &c.* 'Probably this was a case of nothing resembling that of the sons of Sceva; (Acts 19:13—16,) and God might see reason now to grant that efficacy to their adjurations, which He afterwards denied, when the evidences of the Gospel were proposed so much more distinctly and fully, after the descent of the Spirit.'

Doctrines.

(50.) *He that is not against us, is for us, &c.* 'Our Lord had formerly said, (Matt. 12:30.) *He that is not with Me, is against Me*; thereby giving his hearers a just and necessary admonition, that, on the whole, the war between Him and Satan admitted of no neutrality, and that those who were indifferent to Him would finally be treated as his enemies. But here, in another view, He very consistently uses a different and seemingly opposite proverb, directing his followers to judge of men's characters in the most candid manner, and charitably to hope that they who did not oppose his cause, wished well to it. I cannot, with Mr. Baxter, think an express declaration of regard to Christ to have been necessary in the former case than now; but it is most obvious, that Christ requires us to be more rigorous in judging ourselves, than He allows us to be in judging each other.'

The evangelist seems, in the conclusion of this chapter, to have recorded several detached incidents of similar import, which occurred at different times; it is not therefore needful to conclude, that the remainder of his gospel relates to events which took place during Christ's last journey from Galilee to Jerusalem, or subsequent to it. The expression here is very remarkable: 'When the time was come that He should be received up,' (Mark 16:19.) John 6:61, 61:16, 25—30, 17:4, 5,) which related to his ascension to his glory heaven. 'He steadfastly set his face to go up to Jerusalem.' (Marg. Ref. b.—Notes. Acts 20:22—24, 21:7—14.) 54.) *Wilt Thou, &c.* The Samaritans were indeed highly blamable; but their conduct was the effect rather of national prejudices and bigotry, than of determined enmity to the Word and worship of God; and though they refused to entertain Christ and his disciples, they did not attempt to persecute or murder them, according to the conduct of idolatrous Abaziah towards the prophet Elijah; so that there was no occasion for so terrible a judgment, either to vindicate the honor of God, or to secure his servants from their enemies. When the inhabitants of Nazareth behaved far worse to Jesus than these Samaritans did, the disciples had not thought of calling for miraculous judgment; (4:23—30,) but the Nazarenes, and others who slighted or injured Jesus, were *Jews*, and therefore the disciples were more disposed to bear it from them, than from the despised and detested Samaritans. They, whom the fire from heaven consumed at the word of Elijah, fell sacrifices to the justice of God, and their death greatly conduced to the benefit of Israel; whereas had these Samaritans been destroyed, they would have been sacrificed to the disciples' prejudices and resentment, and the consequences would have been injurious to both Jews and Samaritans. What our Lord said, against calling for fire from heaven upon the Samaritans, is still more forcibly conclusive against every kind and degree of persecution. The Samaritans were really schismatics and heretics, and they openly rejected Christ Himself. Whatever, therefore, has been urged, concerning the tendency of penalties and severities, to reclaim heretics and schismatics, or to prevent others from joining them, and to preserve the unity of the church, or the honor of its ministers; indeed, every topic, which persecutors, whether popish or protestant, have urged, or can urge, on this subject, is shown by our Lord's answer to be perfectly nugatory; and they who plead for the necessity of severe authority to promote religion, know not what manner of spirit they are of.' It is also to be considered, that it is *our* duty to appeal to God, and wait his decision, whether He will miraculously interpose, which was all that the apostles required; and another, and a widely different thing, indeed, to take the cause out of his hands, and to execute

show^d be received up, ²he stedfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem, 52 And ³sent messengers before his face: ⁴and they went and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him.

53 And ⁵they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem.

54 And when his disciples, James and John, saw this, they said, Lord, ⁶wilt thou that we command^d fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did?

55 But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, ⁷Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.

56 For ⁸the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. ⁹And

the time of their being received up is at hand, lest them lift up their heads, knowing that *their redemption draws nigh*.

On this prospect of the joy set before Him, He *steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem*, the place where He was to suffer and die. He was *fully determined* to go, and to go, not as commonly He did, but through Samaria, directly to Jerusalem, because there now his business lay. He went cheerfully and courageously, though He knew the things which should befall Him there. He did not fail, nor was discouraged, but set his face as a flint, knowing that He should be not only justified, but glorified, Isa. 50: 7. How should this shame us out of our backwardness to do and suffer for Christ!

II. The rudeness of the Samaritans in a certain village, who would not receive Him, nor suffer Him to take refreshment among them. He sent messengers, some of his disciples, to take up lodgings; for He would not come, to give offence, or if they took any courage at the number of his followers. He would have been a generous Guest, and preached the Gospel to them, as He had done some time ago to another city of the Samaritans, John 4: 41. He would have been the greatest Blessing that ever came to their village, and yet they forbid Him entrance. Such treatment his Gospel and ministers have often met with. Now the reason was, because his face was as though He would go to Jerusalem; they observed He was directing his course that way. The great controversy between the Jews and the Samaritans was about the place of worship—whether Jerusalem or mount Gerizim near Sychar; see John 4: 20. And so hot was the controversy between them, that the Jews would have no dealings with the Samaritans, nor they with them, John 4: 9. Yet we may suppose they did not deny other Jews lodgings among them, for then Christ would not have attempted it; and it would have been a great way about for some of the Galileans to go to Jerusalem, any other way than through Samaria. But they were particularly incensed against Christ, who was a celebrated Teacher, for owning and adhering to the temple at Jerusalem, when the priests of that temple were such bitter enemies to Him, which, they hoped, would have driven Him to come and worship at their temple, and bring that into reputation; but when they saw that He would go forward to Jerusalem, notwithstanding this, they would not show Him the common civility, which, probably, they used formerly to show Him in his journey thither.

III. The resentment of James and John at this affront, v. 54. When these two heard this message, they were all in a flame presently, and nothing will serve them but Sodom's doom on this village; 'Lord,' say they, 'give us leave to command fire to come down from heaven, not to frighten them only, but to consume them.' Here indeed they showed, 1. A great confidence in the power they had received from Jesus; though this, had not been particularly mentioned in their commission, yet they could, with a word's speaking, fetch fire from heaven. Wilt Thou that we speak the word, and the thing will be done. 2. A great zeal for the honor of their Master; they took it very ill, and they could not think of it without indignation, that their Master, who did good wherever He came, should be thus slighted. 3. A submission, notwithstanding

standing, to their Master's good-will and pleasure; they will not offer to do such a thing, unless Christ give leave; wilt Thou that we do it? 4. A regard to the examples of the prophets that were before them; it is doing as Elias did; (2 Kings 1: 10, 12,) so apt are we to misapply the examples of good men, and to think to justify ourselves by them in the irregular liberties we give ourselves, when the case is not parallel.

But though there was something right in what they said, yet there was much more amiss. This was not the first time, by a great many, that our Lord Jesus had been in the like manner affronted, witness the Nazarenes thrusting Him out of their city, and the Gadarenes desiring Him to depart out of their coast; and yet He never called for any judgment on them, but patiently put up with the injury. These were Samaritans, from whom better was not to be expected, and perhaps they had heard that Christ had forbidden his disciples to enter into any of the cities of the Samaritans, (Matt. 10: 6,) and therefore it was not so bad in them as in others, who knew more of Christ, and had received so many favors from Him. Perhaps some few only knew any thing of the matter, while many, if they had heard of Christ's being so near them, would have gone to meet Him, and welcomed Him; and must the whole town be laid in ashes for the wickedness of a few? Will they have the righteous destroyed with the wicked? Their Master had never yet on any occasion called for fire from heaven, nay, He had refused to give the Pharisees any sign from heaven when they demanded it: (Matt. 16: 1, 2,) and why should they think to introduce it? The example of Elias did not reach the case. Elijah was sent to display the terrors of the law, and to give proof of that; and to witness as a hold reprove against the idolatries and wickednesses of the court of Ahab, and it was agreeable enough to him to have his commission thus proved; but it is a dispensation of grace that is now to be introduced, to which such a terrible display of divine justice will not be at all agreeable. Archbishop Tillotson suggests, that their being now near Samaria, where Elijah called for fire from heaven, might help to put them in mind of it; but though the place was the same, the times were altered.

IV. The reproof He gave to James and John for their fiery, furious zeal; (v. 55.) as many as He loves, He rebukes and chastens, particularly for what they do, that is irregular and unbecoming them, under color of zeal for Him.

1. He shows them in particular their mistake, v. 55. 'Ye are not aware what an evil spirit and disposition ye are of; how much there is of pride and passion, and personal revenge, under this pretence of zeal for your Master.' Note, There may be much corruption lurking, nay stirring in the hearts of good people, and they themselves not be sensible of it. 'Ye do not consider what a good spirit, directly contrary to this, ye should be of.' Have you not been taught to love your enemies, to bless them that curse you—to call for grace, and not fire upon them?

vengeance on opposers, by the arm of man, and according to his sentence, without any possibility of certainly knowing, whether God does or does not approve what we are doing; one thing to call for fire from heaven and another to kindle fires on earth, to consume men branded as heretics. (2 Cor. 13: 7—10.)

(51.) 'Grotius,' says Bloomfield, 'here takes occasion to remark, that in this circumstance, as well as many others, is narrated by Luke without any regard to the order of time, the cause of which he conjectures to be as follows: When Luke had narrated two remarkable admissions of Christ, the one exhorting to avoid ambition, the other to eradicate envy, he thought it a suitable place for adding a third against revenge; and that it might be the better understood, he added the circumstances which led to the mention of it. So also the subsequent histories of the three men called by Christ must not be supposed to relate to one and the same time, but were thrown into one place, on account of the similitude of the subject, so that it might be readily and clearly understood what impediments would exist to the calling and profession of the Gospel. Having treated of which, Luke resumes the thread of the history at the calling of the apostles, (with which he had commenced the chapter,) and then subjoins the calling of other persons.'

Recor. 11: 49. 'I scruple not at all, with the most ancient versions, and the reality of critics, to follow the usual interpretation, which refers the ascension to Christ's ascension.'

DONDERDORP.

(54.) Wilt Thou that we command fire, &c.] 'Vengeance be long to the Lord. What we suffer for his sake, should be left to Himself to reprove or punish. The insult is offered to Him, not to us.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

(55.) 'The sons of Zebedee would be imitating what Elias did among the Samaritans. In name Boanerges, their dreams, it seems, are of lightnings and thunder, for death and destruction. But ye have seen, O sons of Zebedee, your Master anxious for the lives of men from the very bottom of his heart, and the lowers of his compassion, healing the sick, liberating demoniacs, raising the dead—and you are breathing slaughter and flames, and desire the destruction of the whole town, as Sodom was destroyed. Ye have not known, ye have not borne in mind, what spirit becomes the apostles of the Messiah.'

LIGHTFOOT.

Spirit.] 'The word here used denotes mind, affection, sentiments, feelings. Almost all the ancient commentators take the words without an interrogation, "Ye know not by what state of mind ye are affected, and whither it would hurry you; it is a zeal not accompanied with knowledge, and therefore unworthy of my disciples." Many recent interpreters, however, as Rosenmueller, Schleusner, and Kuinoel, take the sentence interrogatively, thus, "Know ye not with what temper of mind ye ought, as my disciples, to be actuated? for I came," &c. This, however, seems somewhat harsh; and, upon the whole, I prefer the former interpretation.'

BLOOMFIELD.

they went to another village.

[Practical Observations.]
57 ¶ And it came to pass, that as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

58 And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

59 And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

60 Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

61 And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell which are at home at my house.

62 And Jesus said unto him, No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Ex. 19:8. Matt. 8:19, 20. John 13: 27.
p. 14:26-33. 15:22, 23. Josh. 24:18-22. John 6:90-66.
c. Ps. 34:2. 2 Cor. 8:9. Jam. 2:5.
t. Matt. 4:19-22. 9:9. 16:24.
u. Hie. 1:2. Matt. 5:23. 8:21, 22.
i. 15:32. Eph. 2:1, 5. 1 Tim. 5:6. Rev. 3:1.
v. John 15:15-17. 1 Cor. 9:16. 2 Cor. 5:16-18. 7 Tim. 2:3, 4. 4:2, 5.
s. 14:18-20, 26. Deut. 33:9. 1 Kings 19:20. Ec. 9:10. Matt. 10:37, 38.
w. Hie. 1:2. Ps. 78:9. Acts 15:37, 38.
x. 2 Tim. 4:10. Heb. 10:38. Jam. 1:3-8. Pet. 2:20-22.

Ye are not now under the dispensation of bondage, terror, and death, but of love, liberty, and grace—a dispensation ushered in with a proclamation of *peace on earth, and good-will toward men*, to which you ought to accommodate yourselves, and not by such imprecations as these oppose yourselves.

2. He shows them the general design and tendency of his religion, v. 56. He designed to propagate his holy religion by love and sweetness, and every thing that is inviting and endearing, not by fire and sword, and blood and slaughter; by miracles of healing, not by plagues, and miracles of destruction, as Israel was brought out of Egypt. Christ came to *slay all enmities*, not to foster them. Those are certainly destitute of the spirit of the Gospel, that are for anathematizing and rooting out by violence and persecution all that are not of their mind and way, that cannot in conscience say as they say, and do as they do. Christ came not only to save men's *souls*, but to save their *lives* too; witness his many miracles of healing; by which, and a thousand other instances of beneficence, it appears that He would have his disciples to do good to all, to the utmost of their power, but hurt to none; to draw men into his church with the *cords of a man, and the bands of love*, but not think to drive men into it with a *rod of violence, or the scourge of the tongue*.

V. His retreat from this village. Christ would not only not punish them for their rudeness, but would not insist on his right of travelling the road; but quietly and peaceably went to another village, where they were not so stingy and bigoted, and there refreshed Himself, and went on his way. Note, When opposition is strong, it is wisdom to get out of the way of it, rather than to contend with it. If some be very rude, instead of revenging it, we should try whether others will not be more civil.

V. 57-62. We have here an account of three several persons that offered themselves to follow Christ, and the answers that Christ gave to each of them. The two former we had an account of, Matt. 19: 21.

I. Here is one that is extremely forward to follow Christ immediately, but seems to have been too rash, hasty, and inconsiderate, and not to have sitten down, and counted the cost.

1. He makes Christ a very large promise; (v. 57.) *Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest*. This must be the resolution of all that will be found Christ's disciples indeed; they follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes, (Rev. 14: 4.) though it be through fire and water, to prisons and deaths.

2. Christ gives him a necessary caution, not to promise himself great things in the world, nor following Him, but, on the contrary, to count upon poverty and meanness; for the Son of man has not where to lay his head.

We may look upon this, (1.) As setting forth the very low condition that our Lord Jesus was in, in this world. See what a *depth of poverty* our Lord Jesus submitted to for us, to increase the worth and merit of his satisfaction, and to purchase for us a larger allowance of grace, *that we through his poverty might be rich*, 2 Cor. 8: 9. He here calls Himself the *Son of man*, a Son of Adam, Partaker of flesh and blood. He glories in his condescension, not only to the meanness of our nature, but to the meanest condition in that nature, to testify his love to us, and to teach us a holy contempt of the world, and of the great things in it, and a continual regard to another world. Christ was thus poor, to sanctify and sweeten poverty to his people, the apostles had no certain dwelling-place, (1 Cor. 4: 11.) which they might the better bear, when they knew their Master had not; see 2 Sam. 11: 11. We may well be content to fare as Christ did. (2.) As proposing this to the consideration of those who intend to be his disciples. If we mean to follow Christ, we must lay aside the thoughts of great things in the world, and not reckon upon making any thing more than heaven by our religion, as we must resolve not to take up with any thing less. Let us not go about to compound the profession of Christianity with secular advantages; Christ has put them asunder, let us not think of joining them together; on the contrary, we must expect to enter into the kingdom of heaven through many tribulations, must deny ourselves, and take up our cross. Christ tells this man what he must count upon if he followed Him, to lie cold and uneasy, to fare hard, and live in contempt; if he could not submit to that, let him not pretend to follow Christ. This word sent him back, for aught that appears; but it will be no discouragement to any that know what there is in Christ and heaven to set in the scale against this.

II. Here is another, that seems resolved to follow Christ, but he begs a day, v. 59. To this man Christ first gave the call; He said to him, *Follow Me*. He that proposed the thing of himself, fled off when he heard of the difficulties that attended it; but this man to whom Christ gave a call, though he hesitated at first, yet, as it should seem, afterward yielded; so true was that of Christ, *You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you*, John 15: 16. It is not o

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V 46-56. Alas! our reasonings and discussions (instead of being directed to mutual edification) are too often mere disputes, 'which of us should be the greatest.' This may be, and in general is, very speciously disguised; but applause, popularity and precedence are vastly too much aimed at, by professed Christians, and even by ministers; and a little child is Jesus' constant emblem, by which to teach us simplicity and humility: indeed, if we be his disciples, we need not be ambitious of further honor; for the least of the whole company of Believers, though insignificant among his brethren as an infant, and as much disregarded by them in all their concerns, is and shall be great, as a child and friend of God, an heir of heaven, and a future companion and compeer to the angels before the throne. 'Such honor have all his saints; and as every one, who, in any place or form, successfully preaches 'repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ,' is instrumental in bringing the slaves of Satan to partake of these glorious and everlasting privileges; surely we should be slow to forbid him, lest Christ rebuke us for our officiousness.—While we endure hardship in the work of the Lord, let us also look well to our own spirits. It is easy for us to say, 'Come, see my zeal for the Lord,' and obvious for us to think, that we are

remarkably faithful in his cause; when, in fact, we are inflamed with resentment, impatient of contradiction, seeking our own honor, and doing great harm instead of good. (Jam. 1: 19-21. P. O. 19: 27. P. O. 3: 13-18.)—Fire and faggot can only prove the diabolical malice and cruelty of those who use them; and if the truth itself were supported by such means, it would reasonably become suspected of being from beneath. Yet many, who seem upon the whole to be upright, are led to indulge the same spirit in another way; and their sarcasms and calumnies against those who differ from them, with other bitter fruits of pride and resentment, too plainly show, that 'they know not what manner of spirit they are of.' Many controversial books, many religious conversations, nay, many sermons, demonstrate to the impartial judge, that very much indeed is wrong in the temper of the parties concerned; though they are not at all aware of it. (Ex. 20: 16.) It behoves us therefore to beg of the Lord, that He would convince us of our sin, and rather rebuke and chasten us, than leave us to indulge unchristian tempers; and thus to act contrary both to his precepts, his example, the end of his coming into the world, and the tendency of his holy religion. (P. O. Matt. 18: 1-6. Mark 9: 30-50.)

SCOTT.

Verses 57-62.
(Marg. Ref.—Notes Matt. 8: 18-22.) Some of these incidents seem to have occurred early in our Lord's ministry; but the last we have not before met with. The desire of this person to go home, and bid farewell to his friends, and to settle his temporal concerns, before he attached himself to Christ as his constant follower, was no doubt the effect of a wavering and undetermined state of mind; Jesus therefore answered his request, by applying to his case a proverbial expression, which seems to have been frequently used. The proverb applies to the subjects, as well as to the ministers of 'the kingdom of God'; but

the latter seem especially intended. (14: 28-33. 1 Kings 19: 19-21. Acts 13: 13-15. Jam. 1: 5-8.) (61.) *bid farewell, &c.* 'Not simply to bid farewell; but having given orders what thou wouldst have done, to dismiss any one, and bid him farewell.' Leigh

SCOTT.

(57.) *And it came to pass as they went in the way, &c.* 'I cannot but conclude Luke's meaning must be at large, one day as Christ and his disciples were walking, and not as they went on in that journey, in which the Samaritans had refused him a lodging.'

DODDRIKSE,

CHAP. X.

Jesus sent out seventy disciples, to work miracles and preach; and pronounced a woe against Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, 1-16. The seventy return with joy at their success; and Christ instructs them in what they should rejoice, 17-20. He forces the Father for revealing his Gospel; to the temple, who is declares his own personal and mediatorial authority and glory, 21-22; and the happiness of his disciples, 22-24. A lawyer inquires what he must do to inherit eternal life; and Jesus refers him to the law of God, 25-28; and shows him, by the example of a good Samaritan, who is his neighbor, 28-37. He commends Mary's attention to his doctrine, and reproves Martha, who was 'troubled about much serving,' 38-42.

AFTER these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face, into every city and place, whether he himself would come.

a Matt. 10:1.
b Num. 11:16, 24-26.
c Acts 13:2-4. Rev. 11:3-10.
d 1 Nih. 7:2. 3:4-6. 9:52.

the dead to bury their dead, or none but those who are themselves aged and dying, who are as good as dead, and fit for no other service, yet thou hast other work to do; go thou, and preach the kingdom of God.' Not that Christ would have his followers or his ministers to be unnatural; our religion teaches us to be kind and good in every relation, to show piety at home, and to requite our parents. But we must not make these offices an excuse from our duty to God. If the nearest and dearest relation we have in the world, stand in our way to keep us from Christ, it is necessary that we have a zeal that will make us forget father and mother, as Levi did, Deut. 33: 9. This disciple was called to be a minister, and therefore must not entangle himself with the affairs of this world, 2 Tim. 2: 4. And it is a rule, That whenever Christ calls to any duty, we must not consult with flesh and blood, Gal. 1: 15, 16. No excuses must be admitted against a present obedience to the call of Christ.

III. Here is another that is willing to follow Christ, but must have a little time to talk with his friends about it.

Observe, 1. His request for a dispensation, v. 61. He said, 'Lord, I will follow Thee; I design no other, I am determined to do it; but let me first go bid them farewell that are at home.' This seemed reasonable; it was what Elijah desired when Elijah called him, Let me kiss my father and my mother; and it was allowed him: but the ministry of the gospel is preferable, and the service of it more urgent than that of the prophets; and therefore here it would not be allowed. Suffer me—Let me go, and set in order my household affairs, and give direction concerning them; so some understand it. Now that which was amiss in this, is, that he looked upon his following of Christ as a melancholy, troublesome, dangerous thing; and seemed to

him: not willeth, and of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy, that giveth the call, and maketh it effectual, as to this man here. Observe,

1. The excuse he made. 'I have an aged father at home, who cannot live long, and will need me while he does live; let me go, and attend to him, until he is dead, and I have performed my last office of love to him, and then I will do any thing.' We may here see three temptations, by which we are in danger of being kept from following Christ; which therefore we should guard against. We are tempted to rest in a discipleship at large, in which we may be at a loose end, and not to come close, and give up ourselves to be strict and constant. We are tempted to defer the doing of that which we know to be our duty, and to put it off to some other time. When we have got clear of such a care and difficulty, when we have despatched such a business, raised an estate to such a pitch, then we will begin to think of being religious; and so we are cozened of all our time, by being cozened of the present time. We are tempted to think, that our duty to our relations will excuse us from our duty to Christ—a plausible excuse indeed; but the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof must be sought and minded in the first place.

2. Christ's answer to it, v. 60. 'Suppose (which is not likely) that there were none but thee, or none but those who are themselves aged and dying, who are as good as dead, and fit for no other service, yet thou hast other work to do; go thou, and preach the kingdom of God.' Not that Christ would have his followers or his ministers to be unnatural; our religion teaches us to be kind and good in every relation, to show piety at home, and to requite our parents. But we must not make these offices an excuse from our duty to God. If the nearest and dearest relation we have in the world, stand in our way to keep us from Christ, it is necessary that we have a zeal that will make us forget father and mother, as Levi did, Deut. 33: 9. This disciple was called to be a minister, and therefore must not entangle himself with the affairs of this world, 2 Tim. 2: 4. And it is a rule, That whenever Christ calls to any duty, we must not consult with flesh and blood, Gal. 1: 15, 16. No excuses must be admitted against a present obedience to the call of Christ.

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have his worldly concerns more upon his heart than he ought to have, hankering after his relations and family-concerns; so that he was willing to enter into a temptation from his purpose of following Christ. To go bid them farewell that were at home at his house, would be to expose himself to the strongest solicitations imaginable to alter his resolution, for they would all be against it, and would beg and pray that he would not leave them; now it was presumption in him to thrust himself into such a temptation. Those that resolve to walk with their Maker, and follow their Redeemer, must resolve that they will not so much as parley with their tempter.

2. The rebuke which Christ gave him for this request, v. 62. 'No man, having put his hand to the plough, and designing to make good work of his ploughing, will look back, or behind him, for then he makes balks, and the ground he ploughs is not fit to be sown; so thou, if thou hast designed to follow Me, and to reap the advantages of those that do so, if thou lookest back to a worldly life again, and hankerest after that, if thou lookest back, as Lot's wife did to Sodom, (which seems to be alluded to here,) thou art not fit for the kingdom of God: neither a soil fit to receive the good seed of the kingdom of God, if thou art thus ploughed by the halves, and not gone through with; nor a sower fit to scatter the good seed of the kingdom, if thou canst hold the plough no better.' Ploughing is in order to sowing. As those are not fit to be sown, whose fallow ground is not first broken up, so those are not fit to be employed in sowing, who know not how to break up the fallow ground, but, when they have laid their hand to the plough, on every occasion look back, and think of quitting it. Note, Those who begin with the work of God, must resolve to go on with it, or they will make nothing of it. Looking back inclines to drawing back, and drawing back is to perdition. Those are not fit for heaven, who, having set their faces heavenward, face about. But he, and he only, that endures to the end, shall be saved.

CHAP. X. v. 1-16. We have here the sending forth of seventy disciples, two and two, into divers parts of the country, to preach the Gospel, and to work miracles in those places which Christ Himself designed to visit, to make way for his entertainment. This is not taken notice of by the other evangelists; but the instructions here given them are much the same with those given to the twelve. Observe,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 57-62. In following Christ, we should count our cost: worldly riches and pleasures cannot reasonably be expected in his service, who, when on earth, 'had not where to lay his head;' and in that cause for which He shed his blood, we should be ready to renounce all secular interests, and to forego even relative comforts and endearments, that we may preach or promote the kingdom of God.—No man is fit for the ministry of the Gospel, whose eye and heart are fixed on worldly objects: for then he will either leave his work, or neglect it, or do it in an improper manner. This should be seriously laid to heart by all who intend to engage in that important service, as

well as by those who are already employed in it. Many lay hold of this sacred function, while their affections are fixed on the riches, honors and pleasures of the world; nay, while they are scheming to render their ministry itself subservient to the gratification of avarice, ambition, or sensuality! But no one would employ a man to plough his lands, who neglected his work, or performed it in so heedless and unskilful a manner, as these men do their sacred services: as therefore they are not fit for the work of the kingdom of God on earth, they will assuredly not be found meet for the inheritance of the kingdom of God in heaven. (P. O. Matt. 8: 14-22.) SCOTT.

(57.) A certain man.] 'He was a scribe, Matt. 8: 19-22. It is probable this took place when Christ was at Capernaum.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

(61.) Go and bid them farewell, &c.] 'Permit me first to settle the affairs of my family, and take my leave, &c. In this latitude, I doubt not, the phrase in the original is to be taken here. Intending to give up his possessions, he probably designed to order how they should be distributed among his friends. So Heinicus.' DODDRIDGE.

(62.) No man, &c.] 'Our Lord may use the phrase as a kind of proverbial expression for a careless, irascible person, who must be peculiarly unfit for the Christian ministry. How happy had it been for his church, had this lively admiration been regarded, without which it is impossible to divide, or rather direct, the word of truth aright, 2 Tim. 2: 15.' ID.

Plough.] 'The culture of the soil was at first very simple, being performed by no other instruments than sharp sticks. By these, the ground was loosened, until spades and shovels, and not long after, ploughs, were invented. All these implements were known in the time of Moses, Deut. 23: 13. Gen. 45: 6. Job 1: 14. The first plough was doubtless nothing more than a stout limb of a tree, from which projected another shortened and pointed limb; while at the further end of the lower branch was fastened a transverse yoke, to which the oxen were harnessed. A laet, a handle was added, by which the plough might be

guided. It was necessary for the ploughman constantly and firmly to hold the handle of the plough, and, that no spot might remain untouched, to lean forward and fix his eyes steadily upon it.' JARN.

NOTES.

CHAP. X. v. 1-12. (3: 1-6.) The seventy disciples seem to have been intended as assistants to the apostles both at the present, and after our Lord's ascension. Many of the first preachers of the Gospel, no doubt, were of this company; but the traditions on this subject are little to be depended on. Some expositors conjecture that the evangelist himself was one of them; but this seems altogether unfounded. (Preface to this Gospel.) As an intimation of the still greater things, which would afterwards be wrought among them, he began by repeating an exhortation, which has been already explained. (Marg. Ref. e-1.—Matt. 9: 36-38.) He also ordered them 'to salute no man by the way;' that is, as their time was short and precious, and their work important, they must be altogether intent upon it; and not loiter or trifle, out of needless attention to ceremony or personal regards. (2 Kings 4: 29-31.) (6.) The son of peace.] (Eph. 2: 2. 1 Pet. 1: 14.) One who was disposed to welcome the message of peace, with which the seventy disciples were sent.

(1.) Other seventy.] 'Rather, seventy others—it seems to refer to the apostles previously chosen.' CAMPBELL.

2 Therefore said he unto them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few. I pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest."

3 Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

4 Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

5 And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to th's house.

6 And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

7 And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.

8 And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you;

9 And heal the sick that are therein; and say unto them, The

^e Matt. 9:37, 38. John 4:35-38. 1 Cor. 3:6-9.

^f Matt. 20:1. Mark 13:34. 1 Cor. 15:2. 2 Cor. 6:1. Phil. 2:25, 30. Col. 1:29. 4:12. 1 Thes. 2:9, 5:12. 1 Tim. 4:10, 15:16. 5:17, 18. 2 Tim. 2:4, 4:5. Phil. 1:1.

^g 1 Kings 18:22. 22:5-8. Is. 56:9-12. Ec. 34:2-6. Zech. 11:5, 17. Matt. 9:38. Acts 16:9, 10. Phil. 2:9. Rev. 11:2, 3.

^h 2 Thes. 3:1.

ⁱ 9:1. Num. 11:27, 29. Ps. 68:11. Jer. 3:15. Mark 16:15, 20. Acts 8:4. 11:13, 13:24. 20:28. 22:21. 26:11-18. 1 Cor. 12:28. Eph. 4:7-12. 1 Tim. 1:12-14. Heb. 3:8. Rev. 2:1.

^k Ps. 22:12-16. 91. Ez. 23-5. Matt. 10:16, 22. John 15:20. 16:2. Acts 9:2, 16.

^l Zeph. 3:3. Matt. 7:15. John 10:12. Acts 29.

^m 9:3. 22:35. Matt. 10:9, 10. Mark 6:8, 9.

ⁿ 9:59, 60. Gen. 34:33, 56. 1 Sam. 21:5. 2 Kings 4:24, 38.

^o 19:9. 1 Sam. 25:5. Is. 57:19. Matt. 10:12, 13. Acts 10:36. 2 Cor. 5:18-20. Eph. 2:17.

^p 1 Sam. 25:17. Eph. 2:2, 3. 5:6. 1 Pet. 1:14. Gr. 9:35, 13. 2 Cor. 2:15, 16.

^q 9:9. Matt. 10:11. Mark 6:10. Acts 18:15, 34, 40.

^r Deut. 12:18, 19. Matt. 10:11. 1 Cor. 9:1-15. Gal. 6:6. Phil. 4:17, 13. 1 Tim. 5:17, 18. 2 Tim. 2:6, 3. John 5-8.

^s 10:9, 48. Matt. 10:40. John 13:20. 1 Cor. 10:27.

^t 9:32. Matt. 10:8. Mark 6:13. Acts 28:7-10.

^u 11:17, 20, 21. Dan. 2:44. Matt. 8:2, 11, 10:7. Mark 4:30. John 3:2, 5. Acts 28:28, 31.

I. Their number, seventy. As in the choice of twelve apostles, Christ had an eye to the twelve patriarchs, the twelve tribes, and the twelve princes of those tribes, so here He seems to have an eye to the seventy elders of Israel. So many went up with Moses and Aaron to the mount, and saw the glory of the God of Israel; (Exod. 24:1, 9,) and so many were afterward chosen to assist Moses in the government, in order to which the spirit of prophecy came unto them, Num. 11:24, 25. The twelve wells of water, and the seventy palm-trees that were at Elim, were a figure of the twelve apostles, and the seventy disciples, Exod. 15:27. They were seventy elders of the Jews, that were employed by Ptolemy, king of Egypt, in turning the Old Testament into Greek, whose translation is thence called the Septuagint. The great sanhedrim consisted of this number.

Now, these seventy, though they did not attend Christ so closely and constantly as the twelve did, yet were the constant hearers of his doctrine, and witnesses of his miracles, and believed in Him. They were those whom Peter speaks of as the men which accompanied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, and were part of the one hundred and twenty there spoken of, Acts 1:15, 21. Many of those that were the companions of the apostles, whom we read of in the Acts and the Epistles, we may suppose, were of these seventy disciples.

II. Their work and business: He sent them two and two, that they might strengthen and encourage one another. If one fall, the other will help to raise him up. He sent them, not to all the cities of Israel, as He did the twelve, but only to every city and place whither He Himself would come, (v. 1.) as his harbingers; and we must suppose, though it be not recorded, that Christ did soon after come to all those places whither He now sent them, though He could stay but a little while in a place. Two things they were ordered to do, the same that Christ did wherever He came; 1. They must heal the sick, (v. 9.) heal them in the name of Jesus, which would make people long to see Jesus, and ready to entertain Him. 2. They must publish the approach of the kingdom of God, its approach to them. 'Now is the day of your visitation, know and understand it.' It is good to be made sensible of our advantages and opportunities, that we may improve them. When the kingdom of God comes nigh us, it concerns us to go forth to meet it.

III. The instructions He gives them.

1. As to prayer, v. 2.

(1.) They must be duly affected with the necessities of the souls of men. They must look about, and see how great the harvest was, what abundance of people there were, that had at this time their expectations raised of the coming of the Messiah, and of his kingdom. There was corn ready to shed, and be lost, for want of hands to gather it in. Note. Ministers should apply themselves to their work, under a deep concern for precious souls, looking upon as the riches of this world, which ought to be secured for Christ. They must likewise be concerned that the laborers were so few. The Jewish teachers were indeed many, but not laborers; they did not gather in souls to God's kingdom, but to their own interest and party. Note. Those that are good ministers themselves, wish that there were more good ministers, for there is work for more. It is common for tradesmen not to care how few there are of their own trade; but Christ would have the laborers in his vineyard reckon it a matter of complaint when the laborers are few.

(2.) They must earnestly desire to receive their mission from God; that He would send them forth as laborers into his harvest, who is

the Lord of the harvest, and that He would send others forth; for if God send them forth, they may hope He will go along with them and give them success. Let them therefore say, as the prophet, (Isa. 6:8.) Here am I, send me. It is desirable to receive our commission from God, and then we may go on boldly.

2. The expectation of trouble and persecution; v. 3. 'Your enemies will be as wolves bloody and cruel, and ready to pull you to pieces; in their threatenings and revilings, they will be as howling wolves to terrify you; in their persecutions of you, they will be as ravening wolves to tear you. But you must be as lambs, peaceable and patient, though made an easy prey of.' It would have been very hard thus to be sent forth as sheep among wolves, if He had not endured them with his spirit and courage.

3. Provisions. As to these, they must depend on God and their friends to provide what was convenient for them; 'Carry neither a purse for money, nor a scrip or knapsack for clothes or victuals, nor new shoes; (as before to the twelve, ch. 9:3.) and salute no man by the way.' This command Elisha gave his servant, when he sent him to see the Shunammite's dead child, 2 Kings 4:29. Not that Christ would have his ministers rude, morose, and unmannered; but they must go as men in haste, and not hinder or retard themselves with needless ceremonies or compliments. They must go as men of business, business that relates to another world, which they must be intent upon, and therefore must not entangle themselves with conversation about secular affairs.—You are a minister of the Word; attend to your office. They must go as serious men, and men in sorrow; it was the custom of mourners, in the first seven days of their mourning, not to salute any, Job 2:13. Christ was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and it was fit that by this and other signs his messengers should resemble Him, and show themselves affected with the calamities of mankind.

4. The good-will they must show to all, and their trust in God, who knows the heart, for success, v. 5, 6.

(1.) The charge given them was, Whatsoever house they entered into, they must say, Peace be to this house. Here, they are supposed to enter into private houses; not being admitted into the synagogues. And as their public preaching was driven into houses, so thither they carried it. Like their Master, wherever they visited, they preached from house to house, Acts 5:42. 20:20. Christ's church was at first very much a church in the house. They are instructed to say, 'Peace be to this house, to all under this roof, to this family, and to all that belong to it.' Peace be to you, was the common form of salutation among the Jews; but they must not use it in formality, but with solemnity; 'Salute no man by the way in compliment, but those into whose house ye enter, say to them, Peace be to you, with seriousness and in reality; for this is intended to be more than a compliment.' Christ's ministers go into all the world, to preach peace by Jesus Christ, and to invite men to come and take the benefit of it. We are to pray for peace to all. We must earnestly desire the salvation of those we preach to, and offer up those desires to God in prayer; and it may be well to let them know that we do thus pray for them, and bless them in the name of the Lord.

(2.) The success was different, according to the different disposition of those they preached and prayed for. According as the inhabitants are sons of peace or not, accordingly our peace will, or will not, rest upon the house.—The quality of the receiver determines the nature of the reception. [1.] 'You will meet with some

(4.) Salute no man by the way. The originals were very exact in the observances of outward decorum; and we may collect from several passages in the Old and New Testaments, that their salutations and expressions of regard were extremely tedious and tiresome.

HORNE.

'Serious and taciturn as the natives of the East usually are, they grow talkative when they meet an acquaintance, and salute him. A mountain traveller relates the reciprocal salutations with those who return

in the caravans. The questioning and salutation begins, and continues with the repetition of the same phrases: "How do you do? God be praised that you are come in peace! God give you peace! How fares it with you?" The higher the rank of the person returning, the longer does the salutation last.'

BURDER.

(6.) Son of peace. In Jewish style, a man who has any good or bad quality, is called the son of it, ch. 7:35. Matt. 11:19. Eph. 5:3. John 17:12. 2 Sam. 12:5.

Dr. A. CLARKE

kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

10 But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same and say,

11 Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding, be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

12 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.

13 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes.

14 But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment, than for you.

15 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shalt be thrust down to hell.

16 He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me; and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me.

[Practical Observations.]

g 6:5. Matt. 10:14. Acts 13:51. 16:8.
h 9. Deut. 30:11—14. Acts 13:36, 40,
46. Rom. 10:8, 11. Heb. 13:
f 1. Lam. 4:5. Ex. 16:48—50. Matt. 10:
11, 12, 14. Mark 6:11.
e Matt. 11:20—22.
d Ex. 3:6, 7. Acts 28:25—28. Rom. 9:
29—33. 11:5—11. 1 Tim. 4:2.
c 1a. 23. Ex. 25:28.
b 9:10—17. Mark 8:22—26.
g John 4:25. Is. 61:3. Dan. 9:3. Jon.
3:5, 6.
1 12:47, 48. Am. 3:2. John 3:19. 15:
2—25. Rom. 2:1, 27.
7:1, 2. Matt. 4:13.

that are the sons of peace, that, by the operations of the divine grace, pursuant to the designations of the divine counsel, are ready to admit the word of the Gospel in the light and love of it, and have their hearts made as soft wax to receive the impressions of it. Those are qualified to receive the comforts of the Gospel, in whom there is a good work of grace wrought. And as to those, your peace shall find them out, and rest upon them, your prayers for them shall be heard, the promises of the Gospel shall be confirmed to them, the privileges of it conferred on them, and the fruit of both shall remain and continue with them; a good part that shall not be taken away. [2.] You will meet with others that are no ways disposed to hear or heed your message; whole houses that have not one son of peace in them. Now it is certain that our peace shall not come on them, they have no part nor lot in the matter; the blessing that rests on the sons of peace, shall never come on the sons of Belial, nor can any expect the blessings of the covenant, that will not come under the bonds of it. But it shall return to us again; that is, we shall have the comfort of having done our duty to God, and discharged our trust. Our prayers, like David's, shall return into our own bosom; (Ps. 35: 13.) and we shall have commission to go on in the work. Our peace shall return to us again, not only to be enjoyed by ourselves, but to be communicated to others, to the next we meet with, them that are sons of peace.

5. The reception of the kindnesses of those that did entertain them, and bid them welcome; (v. 7, 8.) 'Those that receive the Gospel, will receive you that preach it, and give you entertainment; you must not think to raise estates, but you may depend on a subsistence. And be not shy; suspect not your welcome, be not afraid of being troublesome, but eat and drink heartily such things as they give; for whatever kindness they show you, it is but a small return for the kindness you do them in bringing the glad tidings of peace; you will deserve it, for the laborer is worthy of his hire, the laborer in the work of the ministry is so, if he be indeed a laborer; and it is not an act of charity, but of justice, in them who are taught in the Word, to communicate to them that teach them.' Be not nice and curious in your diet; eat and drink such things as they give, (v. 7.) such things as are set before you, v. 8. Be thankful for plain food, and do not find fault, though it be not dressed according to art. It ill becomes Christ's disciples to be desirous of dainties. Probably, Christ here refers to the traditions of the elders about their meat, which were so many, that those who observed them, were extremely critical; you could hardly set a dish of meat before them, but there was some scruple or other concerning it; but Christ would not have them to regard those things; but eat what was given them, asking no question for conscience' sake.

k Gen. 11:3. Deut. 19:28. Is. 14:13, 14.
Jer. 34:40. Ex. 28:12—14. Ob. 4.
Matt. 11:23.
1 13:28. Is. 5:14. 14:15. Ez. 26:20.

6. The denunciation of the judgments of God against those who rejected them and their message; 'If you enter into a city, and they do not receive you, if there be none there disposed to hearken to your doctrine, leave them, v. 10. If they will not give you welcome into their houses, do you give them warning in their streets.' He orders them to do as (ch. 9: 5.) He had ordered the apostles to do; 'Say to them, not with rage, or scorn, or resentment, but with compassion to their poor, perishing souls, and a holy dread of the ruin which they are bringing on themselves, Even the dust of your city which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you, v. 11. From them we do not receive any kindnesses, be not beholden to them; it cost that prophet of the Lord dear, who accepted a meal's meat with a prophet in Bethel, 1 Kings 13:21, 22.' It shall be a witness for Christ's messengers, that they had been there according to their Master's order; tender and refusal were a discharge of their trust. But it shall be a witness against the recusants, that they would not give Christ's messengers any entertainment, no, not so much as water to wash their feet with, but they were forced to wipe off the dust. 'But tell them plainly, and bid them be sure of it, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. Here is a fair offer made you; if you have not the benefit of it, it is your own fault. The gospel is brought to your doors; if you shut your doors against it, your blood is on your own head. Now that the kingdom of God is come nigh to you, if you will not come up to it, and come into it, your sin will be inexcusable, and your condemnation intolerable.' Note, The fairer offers we have of grace and life by Christ, the more we shall have to answer for another day, if we slight these offers, v. 12. The Sodomites indeed rejected the warning given them by Lot; but rejecting the Gospel is a more heinous crime, and will be punished accordingly in that day; He means the day of judgment, (v. 14.) but calls it, by way of emphasis, that day, because it is the last and great day, the day when we must account for all the days of time, and have our state determined for the days of eternity.

On this occasion, the evangelist repeats,

(1.) The particular doom of those cities wherein most of Christ's mighty works were done, which we had, Matt. 11:20, &c. Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, all bordering on the sea of Galilee, where Christ was most conversant. [1.] They enjoyed greater privileges; Christ's mighty works were done in them, all gracious works, works of mercy. They were hereby exalted to heaven, not only dignified and honored, but put in a fair way of being happy—brought as near heaven as external means could bring them. [2.] God's design in favoring them thus, was to bring them to repentance and reformation of life; to sit in sackcloth and ashes, both in humiliation for the sins they had committed, and in humility, and

22:19, 20, 27. Matt. 10:28. 2 Pet. 2:4. n Ex. 16:7, 8. Num. 14:21, 11. 6:11.
m 9:45. Matt. 10:40. 18:5. Mark 9:
37. John 12:44, 48. 13:20. 1 Thea.
48.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—16. The ministry of the Gospel is intended to prepare men to receive Christ, as a Prince and a Savior; and He will surely come, in the power of his Spirit, to all places whither He sends his faithful servants.—The increase of laborers, in this blessed work, should excite us 'to pray the Lord of the harvest, to send forth' more and more: for they are very few hitherto, compared with the harvest of souls which shall in due time be gathered in all over the earth. (P. O. Matt. 9: 27—33.)—At Christ's command, we should go forth to preach his Gospel, depending on his power, and copying his example. While we sindinterestedly seek the peace and salvation of those

to whom we are sent, we may conscientiously 'eat and drink such things as are set before us;' for the faithful minister is as justly entitled to a moderate subsistence, as the laborer is to his wages. (Notes, 1 Cor. 9: 6—18.)—If our message be obstinately rejected, we ought, in the most decided manner, to bear testimony against the opposers of it, and withdraw from them: for it is still true of all the faithful preachers of the Gospel, that 'he who heareth them, heareth Christ; and he who despiseth them, despiseth Christ, and ... the Father who sent Him.' (P. O. Matt. 10: 7—33. 11: 16—24.)

SCOTT.

Veruses 13—15.

Matt. 11: 20—24.) A more tolerable doom, at the day of judgment, is widely different from eternal salvation: yet the former is all that is favorable, which our Lord speaks concerning the Gentiles. (Rom. 2: 2—16)

Verse 16.

Marg. Ref.—Matt. 10: 40—42. John 12: 44—50. 1 Thea. 4: 6—8.) T. reject an ambassador, or to treat him with contempt, is an affront to the prince who commissioned and sent him, and whom he represents (2 Sam. 10: 3, 4. 2 Cor. 5: 18—21.) The apostles and

seventy disciples were ambassadors and representatives of Christ: and they who rejected or despised them, in fact rejected and despised Him. Christ Himself was the Apostle of his Father, his Ambassador to men, and 'the Effulgency of his glory;' so that to reject or despise Him, was to reject and despise the Father that sent Him. The miraculous powers, exercised by these primitive messengers of Christ, rendered their case peculiar: but, in every age, Jesus 'is despised and rejected of men,' by contempt poured on his faithful and exemplary ministers; and, in despising Him, men show their contempt; if God, and all eternity against Him.

17 ¶ And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name.

18 And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.

19 Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall hurt you.

20 Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven.

21 In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

p 1-9. B1. Rom. 16:20.
u John 19:31. 16:11. Heb. 2:14. 1 John 10:10. Rev. 9:1. 12:7. 8. 20:2.
p 9. 9:13. Is. 11:1. Ex. 2:8. Mark 16:18. Acts 28:5. Rom. 16:20.
u 21:17. 18. Rom. 3:31-39. Heb. 13:5. Rev. 11:5.
p Matt. 7:22-23. 10:1. 26:24. 27:5. 1 Cor. 13:2-3.
u Ex. 32:32. Ps. 69:28. Is. 4:3. Dan. 10:10. Phil. 4:3. Heb. 12:18. Rev. 3:5. 13:8. 20:12. 15. 21:27.
p 15:9-19. Is. 53:11. 6:45. Zeph. 3:17.
y Matt. 11:25-23. John 11:41, 42. 17:24-28.
p Ps. 24:1. Is. 66:1.
u Job 5:12-14. Is. 29:14. 1 Cor. 1:19-26. 2:6-8. 3:18-20. 2 Cor. 4:3-4. Col. 2:2-3.
b Ps. 8:2. 25:14. Is. 29:18-19. 35:8. Matt. 13:11-16. 16:17. 21:16. Mark 10:11. 1 Cor. 1:27-29. 2:6, 7. 1 Pet. 2:11.
c Eph. 5:11.

they speak of it with an air of exultation; *Even the devils*, those potent enemies, are subject to us. Note, The saints have no greater joy or satisfaction in any of their triumphs, than in those over Satan. If devils are subject to us, what can stand before us?

II. What acceptance they found with Him, and how He entertained this account.

1. He confirmed what they said, as agreeing with his own observation; (v. 18.) 'My heart and eye went along with you; I took notice of the success you had, and I saw Satan fall as lightning from heaven.' Note, Satan and his kingdom fell before the preaching of the Gospel. They triumphed in casting devils out of the bodies of people; but Christ, in the fall of the devil from his interest he has in the souls of men; which is called his power in high

places, Eph. 6: 12. He foresees this to be but an earnest of the destroying of Satan's kingdom in the world, by the extirpating of idolatry, and the turning of the nations to the faith of Christ. Satan falls from heaven when he falls from the throne in men's hearts, Acts 26: 18. And Christ foresaw that the preaching of the Gospel, which would fly like lightning through the world, would, wherever it went, pull down Satan's kingdom. Now is the prince of this world cast out. Some have given another sense of this, as looking back to the fall of the angels, and designed for a caution to these disciples, lest their success should puff them up with pride; 'I saw angels turned into devils by pride; (that was the sin for which Satan was cast down from heaven, where he had been an angel of light; I saw it, and give you an intimation of it, lest you, being lifted up with pride, should fall into that condemnation of the devil, who fell by pride;' 1 Tim. 3: 6.

(2.) The general rule which Christ would go by, as to those to whom He sent his ministers; He will reckon Himself treated according as they treat his ministers, v. 16. What is done to the ambassador, is done, as it were, to the prince that sends him, v. 16. Note, Those who condemn the Christian religion, do in effect put a slight on natural religion, which it is perfective of. And they who despise the faithful ministers of Christ, who, though they do not hate and persecute them, yet think meanly of them, look scornfully at them, and turn their backs on their ministry, will be reckoned with as despisers of God and Christ.

V. 17-24. Christ sent forth the seventy disciples as He was going up to Jerusalem, to the feast of tabernacles, when He went up, not openly, but as it were in secret, (John 7: 10.) and Dr. Lightfoot thinks it was before his return from that feast, that they, or at least some of them, returned to Him. Now here we are told,

I. What account they gave Him of the success of their expedition, v. 17. The healing of the sick only was mentioned in their commission; (v. 19.) yet, no doubt, the casting out of devils was included, and in this they had wonderful success. 1. They give Christ the glory of this; *It is through thy name*. Note, All our victories over Satan are obtained by power derived from Jesus Christ, and He must have all the praise; if the work be done in his name, the honor is due to his name. 2. They entertain themselves with the comfort of it,

they speak of it with an air of exultation; *Even the devils*, those potent enemies, are subject to us. Note, The saints have no greater joy or satisfaction in any of their triumphs, than in those over Satan. If devils are subject to us, what can stand before us?

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2. He repeated, ratified, and enlarged their commission, v. 19. Note, To him that hath, and useth well what he hath, more shall be given. They had employed their power vigorously against Satan, and now Christ intrusts them with greater power. (1.) *An offensive power*, power to tread on serpents and scorpions, devils, malignant spirits, the old serpent; 'You shall bruise their heads in my name, (Gen. 3: 15.) and set your feet on their necks—' you shall tread on these lions and adders, and trample them under foot; (Ps. 91: 13.) and the kingdom of the Messiah shall be every where set up upon the ruins of the devil's kingdom; as the devils have now been subject to you, so they shall still be.' (2.) *A defensive power*; 'Nothing shall by any means hurt you; not serpents or scorpions; you shall be unhurt by the most venomous creatures,' as Paul was, (Acts 28: 5.) and as is promised, Mark 16: 18. 'If wicked men be as serpents to you, and you dwell among those scorpions, (as Ezek. 2: 6.) you may despise their rage; it needs not disturb you, for they have no power against you but what is given them from above; they may hiss, but they cannot hurt. You may play on the hole of the asp, for death itself shall not hurt or destroy,' Isa. 11: 8, 19. 25: 8.

3. He directed them to turn their joy into the right channel, v. 20. 'Do not rejoice in the subjection of the spirits to you, only as your honor, and the confirmation of your mission, but rather rejoice because you are chosen of God to eternal life, and are the children of God through faith.' Christ, who knew the counsels of God, could tell them, that their names were written in heaven, for they are written in the Lamb's book of life. All believers are, through grace, entitled to the inheritance of sons, and have received the adoption of sons, and the Spirit of adoption, which is the earnest of that inheritance; and so are enrolled among his family; now this is matter of joy, greater joy than casting out devils. Note, Power to become the children of God, is to be valued more than a power to work miracles: for we read of those who did in Christ's name cast out devils, as Judas did, and yet will be disowned by Christ in the great day; but they whose names are written in heaven, shall never perish; they are Christ's sheep, to whom He will give eternal life. Saving graces are more to be rejoiced in than spiritual gifts; holy love is a more excellent way, than speaking with tongues.

Verses 17-20.

It does not appear, that our Lord expressly promised the seventy disciples the power of casting out unclean spirits. When, therefore, they returned to Him, (doubtless at a time and place appointed for them,) they told Him with a joyful surprise, that not only diseases, but even devils, had been 'subject to them through his name.' It cannot be supposed that Christ meant, (v. 20.) by special revelation, to inform all these seventy persons, that they were registered in heaven, as heirs of eternal life; and in general, none can know this of themselves, except by true evidences, which prove them to be 'born of the Spirit,' and truly converted. 'Here Woltzenius says, Christ cast out devils by a virtue residing in Himself; his disciples only in the name and by the power of the Lord. Seeing then this power accompanied them into all parts of the world, it is necessary that Christ's presence should be with them every where; now such a presence is a certain indication of the Deity. (1 Kings 8: 27. Ps. 139: 7. Jer. 23: 24. Am 9: 3.) Satan being spoiled of his dominions, may be said to "fall from heaven,"

'by a phrase familiar both to sacred and profane writers. So of "the fall of the king of Babylon, the prophet says, "How art thou fallen," from heaven, O Lucifer!" (Is. 14: 12.) Of the fall of the colleague of Antonius, Cicero says, "Thou hast pulled him down from heaven." And when Pompey was overthrown, he is said by him, to have fallen "from the stars." Whitty.

(17.) Returned.] Bishop Pearce thinks they returned while our Lord was on his slow journey to Jerusalem, and that they had been absent only a few days. Dr. A. CLARK.
(20.) Are written.] 'Future life is here, (as often elsewhere, brought forward under the image of an earthly polity, since the names of citizens are inscribed in a book from which are occasionally expunged the names of those who are thought unworthy, and who thereby lose the right of citizenship. The image which attributes a book, &c. to God, is frequent in the Old Testament, and in the rabbinical writings nor is it rare in the New Testament.' BLOOMFIELD.

22 * All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

23 And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

24 For I tell you, That many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

[Practical Observations.]

* Many ancient copies add, And turning to his disciples he said.
Matt. 11:27. 28:18. John 3:35. 5: 32-37. 13:3. 17:10. 1 Cor. 13: 24. Eph. 1:21, 22. Phil. 2:9-11. Heb. 2:18. 6:44-45. 10:15. 17:5. 26. 2 Cor. 4:5. 1 John 5:20. 2 John 9. f. Matt. 13:16, 17. g. John 8:56. Heb. 11:13, 39. 1 Pet. 1:10, 11.

wise and prudent, the Gentile to God that the apostles were not fetched from their schools. They would have mingled their notions with the doctrine of Christ, which would have corrupted it, as afterward it proved. For Christianity was much corrupted by the Platonists, the Peripatetics, and the judaizing teachers. If rabbins and philosophers had been made apostles, the success of the Gospel would have been ascribed to their learning and wit, and the force of their reasonings and eloquence; therefore they were passed by for the same reason that Gideon's army was reduced, Judges 7: 4. Paul, indeed, was bred a scholar; but he became a babe when he became an apostle, and made neither show nor use of any other knowledge than that of Christ and Him crucified, 1 Cor. 2: 2, 4. [4.] That God herein acted by way of sovereignty; Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight. If God gives his grace and the knowledge of his Son to some that are less likely, and doth not give it to others, whom we should think better able to deliver it with advantage; this must satisfy, so it pleases God, whose thoughts are infinitely above ours.

(2.) For what was secret between the Father and the Son, v. 22. [1.] The vast confidence that the Father puts in the Son; All things are delivered to me of my Father; all wisdom and knowledge; all power and authority; all the

4. H: offered up a solemn thanksgiving to his Father, for employing such mean people as his disciples were, in such high and honorable services; (v. 21, 22.) this we had before, (Matt. 11: 25-27.) only here it is prefixed, that in that hour, viz. that in which He saw Satan fall, and heard of the good success of his ministers, in that hour Jesus rejoiced. Note, Nothing rejoices the heart of the Lord Jesus so much as the progress of the Gospel, by the conversion of souls to Christ. Christ's joy was a solid, substantial joy, an inward joy, He rejoiced in spirit; but, like deep waters, it made no noise; it was joy, that a stranger did not intermeddle with; before He applied Himself to thank his Father, He stirred up Himself to rejoice; for holy joy is the root and spring of thankful praise. Two things He gives thanks for:

(1.) For what was revealed by the Father through the Son; v. 21. In all our adorations of God, we must have an eye to Him, both as the Maker of heaven and earth, and as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him our Father. Now that which He gives thanks for is, [1.] That the counsels of God concerning man's reconciliation to Himself, were revealed to some of the children of men, who might be fit also to teach others. [2.] That they were revealed to babes, to men of mean parts and capacities, whose extraction and education had nothing in it promising, who were but children in understanding, till God, by his Spirit, elevated their faculties, and furnished them with this knowledge, and an ability to communicate it. We have reason to thank God, not so much for the honor He has hereby put on the babes, as for the honor He has hereby done Himself, in perfecting strength out of weakness. [3.] That, at the same time when He revealed them unto the babes, He hid them from the philosophers, the Jewish rabbins. Thanks be to God that the apostles were not fetched from their schools. They would have mingled their notions with the doctrine of Christ, which would have corrupted it, as afterward it proved. For Christianity was much corrupted by the Platonists, the Peripatetics, and the judaizing teachers. If rabbins and philosophers had been made apostles, the success of the Gospel would have been ascribed to their learning and wit, and the force of their reasonings and eloquence; therefore they were passed by for the same reason that Gideon's army was reduced, Judges 7: 4. Paul, indeed, was bred a scholar; but he became a babe when he became an apostle, and made neither show nor use of any other knowledge than that of Christ and Him crucified, 1 Cor. 2: 2, 4. [4.] That God herein acted by way of sovereignty; Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight. If God gives his grace and the knowledge of his Son to some that are less likely, and doth not give it to others, whom we should think better able to deliver it with advantage; this must satisfy, so it pleases God, whose thoughts are infinitely above ours.

(2.) For what was secret between the Father and the Son, v. 22. [1.] The vast confidence that the Father puts in the Son; All things are delivered to me of my Father; all wisdom and knowledge; all power and authority; all the

grace and comfort, all is delivered into the hand of the Lord Jesus; in Him all fulness must dwell, and from Him be derived; He is the great Trustee who manages all the concerns of God's kingdom. [2.] The good understanding that there is between the Father and the Son, and their mutual consciousness, such as no creature can be admitted to; No man knows who the Son is, nor what his mind is, but the Father, who possessed Him in the beginning of his ways, before his works of old; (Prov. 8: 22.) nor who the Father is, and what his counsels are, but the Son, who lay in his bosom from eternity, was by Him as one brought up with Him, and was daily his delight, (Prov. 8: 30.) and He to whom the Son, by the Spirit, will reveal Him. The Gospel is the revelation of Jesus Christ, and to Him we owe all the discoveries made us of the will of God for our salvation; He here speaks of it as that which was a great pleasure to Himself, and for being intrusted with which He was very thankful to his Father.

5. He told his disciples how well it was for them, that they had these things revealed to them, v. 23, 24. Having addressed Himself to his Father, He turned Him to his disciples, designing to make them sensible how much it was for their happiness, as well as for the glory and honor of God, that they knew the mysteries of the kingdom, and were employed to lead others into the knowledge of them; considering, (1.) What a step it is toward something better, though the bare knowledge of these things is not saving, yet it puts us in the way of salvation; Blessed are the eyes which see the things which ye see. God therein blesseth them, and if it be not their own fault, it will be an eternal blessedness to them. (2.) What a step it is above those that went before them, even the greatest saints, and those that were most the favorites of heaven; Many prophets and righteous men; (so it is, Matt. 13: 17. Many prophets and kings, so it is here) have desired to see and hear those things which you are daily and immediately conversant with, and have not seen and heard them. The honor and happiness of the New-Testament saints far exceed those even of the prophets and kings of the Old Testament, though they also were highly favored. The general ideas which the Old-Testament saints had, according to the intimations given them, of the graces and glories of the Messiah's kingdom, made them wish their lot had been reserved for those blessed days, and that they might see the substance of those things which they had faint shadows of. And the consideration of the great advantages we have, above what they had, should awaken

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17-24. Pious and zealous ministers, when evidently made useful, disregard their toil and hardship, and return from preaching the Word, to meet their gracious Lord in retirement, with joy and gratitude.—We may be sure that He will always rather exceed his promise, than fall short of it, to all who go forth depending on his help, and observing his directions; and we may, in hope, labor and pray for the pulling down of Satan's kingdom, all over the earth, through the preaching of the Gospel, and by the power of our exalted Redeemer. (Note, 2 Cor. 10: 1-6.) Nor can any adversary, by any means, hurt those, whom Jesus employs, protects, and prospers.—We should be thankful for gifts and usefulness, but chiefly seek the assurance of our names being written in heaven; for it would be far better to be the most obscure believer, than to have all knowledge, eloquence, and even success in preaching the Gospel, and at length to prove 'a cast-away.' Let us then beware especially of spiritual pride: by this sin, Satan 'fell like lightning from heaven,' and from a bright arch-angel, be-

came a hateful and miserable fiend: (1 Tim. 3: 6.) pride has been the forerunner of destruction to many, who 'have prophesied, wrought miracles, and cast out devils in the name of Christ;' and of many, who for a time have preached with great popularity, and apparent success: and it has tarnished the lustre and terminated the usefulness of others, concerning whose final state better hopes may be entertained. (2 Cor. 12: 1-6, P. O. 1-10.)—The Lord Jesus 'rejoiced in Spirit,' that it pleased the Father to hide his 'mysteries from the wise and prudent, and to reveal them unto babes;' and He has at all times 'resisted the proud, and given his grace unto the humble.' The more simply dependent we therefore are on the teaching, help, and blessing of the Son of God, the more we shall know both of the Father and of the Son; (Notes, John 17: 1-3. 1 John 2: 20-25.) the more blessed we shall be in seeing the glory, and hearing the words, of the divine Savior; and the more useful we shall be made in promoting his cause. (P. O. Matt. 11: 25-30.)

SCOTT.

Verses 21, 22.

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 11: 25-27.) (22.) No man knoweth who the Son is, &c. 'This seems not to respect what He was to do or suffer, but his nature, excellence, and dignity; as the words following, "who the Father is," respect his nature, his divine excellence and dignity exhibited to us, in the person of Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 4: 6.) Whittby, "Whosoever seeks the Father without the Son, wandereth 'out of the way.' Besa.

SCOTT.

(22.) 'Such passages as these, I think, should abate much of the prying curiosity of man, which endeavors to scrutinize the depths of divine truth. Whatever may be the precise meaning of the words, "No man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father," they must, I think, at least be conceived to convey some deep, mysterious truth. How far

they may or may not relate to the great atonement, and sacrifice of Christ, who dare say? Those parts of the great covenant of grace, which relate to God Almighty are, no doubt, incomprehensible to us. Those parts which relate to us—which regulate our faith, and practice, are sufficiently plain. God has, in short, given us sufficient evidence to believe in the Gospel; and on that evidence we must exercise our faith in believing some truths, which we cannot understand.'

GILPIN

Verses 23, 24.

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 13: 16, 17.) David was a prophet, as well as king of Israel; Moses was king in Jeshurun, (Deut. 34: 4, 5, and Solomon was one of the inspired writers. (See 24: 44-49. Ps. 111: 13-16, 39, 40. 1 Pet. 1: 10-12.)

SCOTT.

25 ¶ And, behold, ^a a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

26 He said unto him, ^a What is written in the law? how readest thou?

27 And he answering said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; ^a and thy neighbor as thyself.'

28 And he said unto him, 'Thou hast answered right: ^a this do, and thou shalt live.'

29 But he, ^a willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, ^a And who is my neighbor?

[Practical Observations.]

h 7:30. 11:45-46. Matt. 22:35.
i 1v 18. Matt. 19:16. Acts 16:30, 31.
l 8: 8, 20. Rom. 3:19. 4:14-16. 10: 5.
Gal. 3:12, 13, 21, 22.
m Deut. 6:5. 10:12. 30:6. Matt. 22: 37-40. Mark 12:30, 31, 33, 34. Heb. 8:10.
n Lev. 19:18. Matt. 19:19. Rom. 13: 9. Gal. 5:13, 14. Jam. 2:8. 1 John 3:19.
o 7:36. Mark 12:34.
p Lev. 19:85. Neh. 9:29. Ez. 20:11, 13. Matt. 19:17. Rom. 3:19, 20. 10:4, 5. Gal. 3:12, 13.
q 10:45, 18:9-11. Lev. 19:34. R m. 10:3.
r 36. Matt. 5:43, 44.

course to our Bibles, and walk in the way there showed us. It is a great mercy that we have the law *written*; and having it *written*, it is our duty to read it, and treasure it up, so that, when there is occasion, we may be able to tell *what is written in the law, and how we read*. To this we must appeal,

our diligence to improve them; for if it do not, it will aggravate our condemnation.

V. 25-37. We have here, Christ's discourse with a lawyer about some points of conscience, which we are all concerned to be rightly informed in, and are so here, from Christ, though the questions were proposed with no good intention.

I. We are concerned to know what that good is, which we should do in *this life*, in order to attain *eternal life*. A question to this purport was proposed to our Savior by a *certain lawyer*, or scribe, v. 25. If Christ had any thing peculiar to prescribe, by this question he would get it from Him, and perhaps expose Him for it; if not, he would expose his doctrine as needless, since it would give no other direction for obtaining happiness, than they had already received; or, perhaps, he had no malicious design against Christ, only he was willing to talk with Him, as people go to church, to hear what the minister will say. This was a good question, *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* But it lost all its goodness, when proposed with an ill design. Note, It is not enough to speak of the things of God, and to inquire about them, but we must do it with a suitable concern. If we speak of *eternal life*, and the way to it, in a careless manner, merely as a matter of discourse, or of dispute, we but take the name of God in vain.

Now, this question being started, observe, 1. How Christ turned Him to the divine law, and bid him follow its direction. Though He knew the thoughts and intents of his heart, He doth not answer him according to the folly of that, but according to the wisdom and goodness of the question. ^a He answered Him with a question, v. 26. He came to catechize Christ, and to know Him; but Christ will catechize him, and make him know himself. He talks to him as one conversant in the law; let him practise according to his knowledge, and he should not come short of *eternal life*. Note, It will be of great use to us, in our way to heaven, to consider *what is written in the law, and what we read there*. We must have recourse to our Bibles, and walk in the way there showed us. It is a great mercy that we have the law *written*; and having it *written*, it is our duty to read it, and treasure it up, so that, when there is occasion, we may be able to tell *what is written in the law, and how we read*. To this we must appeal,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 25-29. Good questions may be proposed from very base motives; yet we ought seriously to inquire, 'What shall we do to inherit eternal life?' And nothing should be counted difficult or perilous, where such a prize is at stake; especially as it is connected with the awful alternative of everlasting punishment. In answer to this inquiry, the blessed Savior will direct us to the *written Word*, and demand of us, 'How readest thou?' Yet the holy law itself cannot answer the question, How a *sinner* may inherit eternal life. It is, however, proper for those 'who desire to be under the law, to hear the law'; and when its extensive, spiritual, and reasonable requirements are fully and scripturally stated, we may safely assure any inquirer, that if he do this, he shall live. Indeed, the most perfect obedience for the time to come would not discharge any part of the debt, which we have already contracted: yet we know, that no man will ever perform this condition, or be able to claim eternal life, even on this ground; nay, no one will ever love God and his neighbor with any measure of pure, spiritual love, who is not made partaker of regenerating grace; which invariably produces humiliation for sin, and simplicity of dependence on the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus. But the proud heart of man strives earnestly against these mortifying convictions; and every ray of light that breaks in upon the conscience, excites men to other and further endeavors 'to justify themselves,' even as the approach of danger stirs us up to provide for our own defence. (Rom. 10: 1-4.) As the nature and effects of the love of God are most out of the way of carnal men, they elude conviction on that account; provided they can flatter themselves that they have not been injurious to their neighbors. Leaving out therefore 'the first and great commandment,' as if it were actually repealed; or supposing that

by this we must try doctrines, and end disputes; this must be our oracle, and touchstone rule, guide.

2. What a good account he gave of the law. He did not, like a Pharisee, refer himself to the tradition of the elders, but, like a good testimony, he fastened on the two first and greatest commandments of the law, as those which he thought must be most strictly observed, in order to *eternal life*, and which included all the rest, v. 27. (1.) We must love God with all our hearts, must look on Him as the best of beings, in Himself most amiable, and infinitely perfect and excellent; as One to whom we lie under the greatest obligations, both in gratitude and interest. We must prize Him, and value ourselves by our relation to Him; must please ourselves in Him, and devote ourselves to Him. Our love to Him must be sincere and fervent; it must be superlative, a love strong as death; but an intelligent love, such as we can give a good account of. It must be an *entire* love; He must have our whole souls, and be served with all that is within us. We must love nothing beside Him, but what we love for Him, and in subordination to Him. (2.) We must love our neighbors as ourselves, which we shall easily do, if we, as we ought, love God better than ourselves. We must wish well to all, and ill to none; do all the good we can, and no hurt; we must fix it as a rule to ourselves, to do to others as we would they should do to us; this is to love our neighbor as ourselves.

3. Christ's approbation of what he said, v. 28. Though he came to tempt Him, yet what he said that was good, Christ commended. *Thou hast answered right*. Christ Himself fastened on those as the two great commandments of the law; (Matt. 22: 37.) both sides agreed in this. Those who do well, shall have praise of the same, and so should those that speak well; but the hardest part yet remains 'This do, and thou shalt live; thou shalt inherit eternal life.'

4. His care to avoid the conviction now read to fasten on him. When Christ said, *This do and thou shalt live*, he began to be aware that Christ intended to draw from him an acknowledgment that he had not done this, and therefore an inquiry what he should do, to get his sins pardoned; an acknowledgment also that

they satisfy its requirements by 'a form of godliness,' they endeavor 'to justify themselves' in respect of 'the second, which is like unto it'; and learned scribes, ancient and modern, come in to their aid, with a variety of corrupt glosses, perplexing criticisms, and frivolous distinctions, before which the meaning and spirit of the precept seem to evaporate. Thus the most flagrant injustice, treachery, oppression and inhumanity, are openly vindicated, as consistent with the law of God! Nay, the Scripture is ransacked, and quoted for precedents and arguments, in favor of the most horrid cruelties, which rapacious avarice, malignity, bigotry, or ambition can perpetrate! Some difference of climate, or color, or religious tenets, is pleaded; as if this bounded the divine command, and excused us for not loving a vast majority of the human species as our neighbors! Or some judicial regulation, made to prevent the fatal effects of that hardness of heart, which no law can change; or some practices, evidently originating from human selfishness, are adduced, as if they actually repealed the laws of 'loving our neighbor as ourselves,' and 'of doing to others, as we would they should do unto us.' Thus men 'render the commandments of God of none effect, by their traditions' and corrupt reasonings; and human learning, nay, what is called theology, often rivets those prejudices, which are equally subversive of the law of love, and of the Gospel of free grace. We must, however, endeavor by every means to counteract the effects of such destructive errors: and in order to this, apt illustrations, and appeals to the heart and conscience, may be more useful than abstract reasonings; and though we must not countenance any corrupt prejudices, yet, on many occasions, it is advisable to oppose them *indirectly*, and to study by what avenue we may best find access to the heart. SCOTT.

Verses 25-29

(25.) *What shall I do, &c.* (See Matt. 19: 16. Mark 10: 17. 12: 33-34. Acts 16: 30, 31.) (26.) *What is written, &c.* (Lev. 19: 18. Deut. 6: 4, 5.) (27.) *Thou hast answered right.* [It was implied, that if he had failed, or should fail, of perfect obedience, he could not possibly obtain life in *this way*, but must be condemned by the law as a transgressor. (See Ex. 20: 11. Matt. 42: 34-40

Rom. 3: 19, 20. Gal. 3: 10-14.) (29.) *Willing to justify himself.* [Thus he, though a lawyer, 'was alive without the law'; (Rom. 7: 9-12.) and the wisdom of our Lord's discourse with him, as exactly suited to his case, is still further illustrated. (Prov. 26: 4, 5.) (27.) *Thou shalt, &c.* This is not exactly either in the words of the Septuagint, or according to the Hebrew text; but 'completely gives the meaning of both

SCOTT.

30 And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead.

31 And *by chance there came down a certain 'priest that way; and when he saw him, *he passed by on the other side.

32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and *looked on him, and passed by on the other side.

33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was; and when he saw him, *he had compassion on him,

r Ps. 38:4-5. Jer 51:52. Lam. 2:12. Ez. 30:24.
s Ruth 2:3. marg. 2 Sam. 1:5. Ec. 9:11.
t Jer. 5:31. Hos. 5:1. 6:9. Mal. 1:10.
u Job 6:14-21. Ps. 38:10, 11. 69:20.
v Ps. 104:4. Prov. 11:24. 24:12. Jam. 2:13-16. 1 J. 3:16-18.
w Ps. 109:25. Acts 18:17. 2 Tim. 3:2.
y 9:53-55. 17:16-18. Prov. 27:10.
z Jer. 38:7-13. 39:16-18. John 4:8-8.
7:13. Ex. 5:6. 1 Kings 8:50. Matt. 18:33.

own nation and religion. Now observe,

(1.) The parable itself.

[1.] How the Jew was *abused* by his *enemies*. The man was travelling peaceably on his lawful occasions, in the great road that led from Jerusalem to Jericho, v. 30. The mentioning of those places intimates that it was matter of fact, and not a parable; probably it happened lately, just as here related. The occurrences of Providence would yield us many good instructions, if we would carefully observe and improve them, and would be equivalent to parables framed on purpose for instruction, and be more affecting. This poor man *fell among thieves*. Whether they were Arabian plunderers, or some profligate wretches of his own nation, or some of the Roman soldiers, doth not appear; but they were very *barbarous*; they not only took his money, but stripped him of his clothes, and that he might not be able to

he could not do this perfectly, for the future, by any strength of his own, and therefore an inquiry how he might get strength to enable him to do it; but he was *willing to justify himself*, and therefore saith, in effect, as another did, (Matt. 19: 20.) *All these things have I kept from my youth up*. Note, Many ask good questions with a design rather to *justify*, than to *inform themselves*; rather proudly to show what is good in them, than humbly to see what is bad.

II. We are concerned to know who is our neighbor; whom we are obliged to love. This is another of this lawyer's queries, started only that he might *drop the former*, lest Christ should force him to *condemn himself*, when he was resolved to *justify himself*. As to loving God, he was willing to say no more of it; but as to his neighbor, he was sure he had come up to the rule; for he had always been kind and respectful to all about him. Now observe,

1. The corrupt notion of the Jewish teachers in this matter. Lightfoot quotes their own words to this purport, 'Where he saith, *Thou shalt love thy neighbor, he excepts all Gentiles*, for they are not our neighbors, but those only that are of our own nation and religion.' They would not put an Israelite to death for killing a Gentile, for he was not *his neighbor*: indeed they say, that they ought not to kill a Gentile whom they were not at war with; but that if they saw a Gentile in *danger of death*, they were under no obligation to help *save his life*. Such wicked inferences did they draw from that holy covenant of peculiarity by which God had distinguished them, and by abusing it thus, they had forfeited it; God justly took the forfeiture, and transferred covenant-favors to the Gentile world, to whom they brutishly denied common favors.

2. How Christ corrected this, and showed by a parable, that whomsoever we have need to receive kindness from, and find ready to show it us, we cannot but look upon as *our neighbor*; and therefore ought to look upon all those as such, who need our kindness, and to show them kindness accordingly, though they be not of our

pursue them, or only to gratify a cruel disposition, (for otherwise, *what profit was there in his blood?*) they wounded him, and left him half dead, ready to die of his wounds. We may here conceive a just indignation at *highwaymen*, and at the same time we cannot but think with compassion on those that fall into the hands of such wicked and unreasonable men, and be ready, when it is in our power, to help them. What reason have we to thank God for our preservation from perils by robbers?

[2.] How he was *slighted* by those who should have been his friends, who were not only men of his own nation and religion, but men of a public character and station; nay, men of professed sanctity, whose offices obliged them to tenderness and compassion, (Heb. 5: 2.) who ought to have taught others their duty in such a case as this, which was to *deliver them that were drawn unto death*; yet they would not themselves do it. Lightfoot tells us that many of the courses of the priests had their residence in Jericho, and from thence came up to Jerusalem, when it was their turn to officiate there, and so back again, which occasioned abundance of *passing and repassing* of priests that way, and Levites, their attendants; they came *thither*, and saw the poor wounded man; probably they heard his groans, and they could not but perceive that, if he were not helped, he must quickly perish; but when they saw his case, they got as far off him as ever they could, as if they would have had a pretence to say, *Behold, we knew it not*. It is sad when those who should be examples of charity, are prodigies of cruelty, and when those who should, by displaying the mercies of God, open the bowels of compassion in others, shut up their own.

[3.] How he was *succored and relieved* by a *stranger*, a certain Samaritan, of that nation, which, of all others, the Jews most despised and detested, and would have no dealings with; this man had some humanity in him, v. 33. The priest had his heart hardened against one of *his own people*, but the Samaritan had his opened towards one of *another people*; when he saw him, he had compassion on him, he never took into consideration what country he was of; though a Jew, he was a man, a man in misery, and he has learned to honor all men; he knows not how soon this poor man's case may be his own, and therefore pities him, as he himself would desire and expect to be pitied in the like case. That so great love should be found in a Samaritan, was perhaps thought as great, as that faith which Christ admired in a Roman, and in a woman of Canaan; but really it was not so, for pity is the work of a man, but faith is the work of divine grace.

Verses 30—37.

This has generally been called a *parable*; but it is related as a *fact*, and probably was so. (35.) *Two pence*. Or, *denarii*. The circumstance, that the Samaritan could spare only so small a sum, seems an intimation that he was not affluent. The direct scope of this parable, or narrative, is evidently fixed by the context; it is a beautiful illustration of the law of 'loving our neighbor as ourselves,' without regard to nation, party, or any other distinction. The Samaritan alone has acted according to the commandment; and the whole was admirably suited to lead the lawyer to understand the subject. Our Lord therefore called on him to imitate the Samaritan's conduct; and this conclusion was calculated, by showing him the extent and spirituality of the law, to convince him that he could not, in this way, 'inherit eternal life,' as well as to direct his subsequent conduct. (Marg. Ref.)

(1.) Some commentators explain this *supposed* parable almost exclusively of the love of Christ to sinners; but this can be only an instructive accommodation. Man is not only in a *pitiable* state, as if contrary to his will and without his fault, he had fallen under the power of Satan; but he is also a *condemned criminal*, exposed to the righteous vengeance of God, from which Christ alone can deliver him. The Priest and the Levite could have helped the man if they would, and were very *wicked* in omitting to do it; but the law of God is 'holy, just, and good,' though it leaves the sinner to perish. (Rom. 7: 7-12.) At the same time, Christ has far outdone the good Samaritan; He came into the world on purpose to save sinners; their rebellions had been committed against Him, and they were deserving of his righteous indignation and holy abhorrence; He not only ventured some danger, and incurred some trouble and expense, to rescue them from *deserved destruction*; but He impoverished and abused Himself, and endured the most excruciating tortures, and the most ignominious death, for that end; and He not only brings them a temporary relief, but perfects their everlasting salvation. (P. O. Gen. 22: 13-24. Rom. 5: 8-10.) In short, the blessed Jesus has perfectly fulfilled the law of 'loving our neighbor as ourselves,' in such circumstances as no other person could be placed in. His conduct, therefore, is the best interpretation of the commandment, and the best example for our imitation. Several other

accommodations have been made of the subject; but they are far more amusing than instructive; and it may seriously be apprehended, that, by them men's thoughts have been very much drawn off from the grand practical inference, 'Go, and do thou likewise.' (Marg. Ref. 11.—John 13: 12-17. 1 Pet. 2: 18-25.) (31.) *By chance*. That is, *without intention*. But that which is *accidental*, or *by chance*, as man is concerned, forms a part of the plan and purpose of God. (Rom. 2: 3.)

(30.) *Went down*] 'Jerusalem was on a high level, and Jericho in a valley upon the Jordan.' BLOOMFIELD.

And fell among thieves] 'The scene of this parable is with great propriety placed in that dangerous [and much frequented] road between Jerusalem and Jericho, [which was one hundred and forty stadia from Jerusalem, next in rank to it as to wealth and population;] for, from the testimony of Josephus, it appears that not only Judea was at that time overrun with robbers and ruffians, who committed the greatest excesses, but that this road in particular was deplorably harassed by banditti; it was favorable to their villainies, as it lay through wild and dreary solitudes. [The very aspect of the scenery, in a portion of it, the bold, projecting crags of rocks, the dark shadows in which every thing lay buried below, the towering height of the cliffs above, and the forbidding desolation which every where reigned around, seem to tempt to robbery and murder, says Buckingham, and occasion a dread of it in those who pass that way.] On account of the frequent robberies and murders committed here, it was, as Jerome tells us, called "the bloody way." LIGHTFOOT, &c.

(31.) *Passed by*, &c.] 'Contrary to the spirit of the Mosaic law: comp. Ex. 23: 4, 5.' BLOOMFIELD.

(33.) 'It is admirably well judged to represent the distress or the side of the Jew, and the mercy on the side of the Samaritan; for self-interest would make them see how amiable such conduct was, and lay them open to our Lord's inference, v. 37. Had it been put the other way, prejudices might more easily have interposed before the heart could have been struck with these tender circumstances.' DOUGLASS.

34 And ^a went to him, and ^b bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast and brought him to ^c an inn, and took care of him.

35 And on the morrow, when he departed, he took out ^d two pence, and gave them to ^e the host, and said unto him, Take care of him: and ^f whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again I will repay thee.

36 Which now of these three, ^g thinkest thou, ^h was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves?

37 And he said, ⁱ He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, ^j Go, and do thou likewise.

[Practical Observations.]

38 ¶ Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into ^k a certain village: and a certain woman, named Martha, ^l received him into her house.

^a 54. Ex. 23:4-5. Prov. 24:17, 18. 25:21, 22. Matt. 5:43-45. Rom. 12: 20, 21. 1 Thes. 5:15.
^b 1a, 15, 6. Mark 14:8.
^c 27. Gen. 42:27. Ex. 4:24.
^d Matt. 20:2. marg.
^e Rom. 16:23.
^f 14:13, 14.
^g 7:42. Matt. 17:25. 21:28-31. 22: 7.
^h 9.
ⁱ Matt. 20:28. 2 Cor. 9:9. Eph. 3:19. 5:2. Heb. 9:15. Rev. 1:5.
^j 6:32-36. John 13:15-17. 1 Pet. 2: 21. 1 John 3:16-18, 23, 24. 4:10, 11.
^k 1 John 1:14-3. 12:1-3.
^l 8:23. Acts 16:15. 2 John 10.

The compassion of this Samaritan was not an idle compassion; he did not think it enough to say, 'Be healed, he helped' (Jam. 2: 16.) but when he *drew out his soul*, he reached forth his hand also to this poor, needy creature, Isa. 58: 7, 10. Prov. 31: 20. See how friendly this good Samaritan was. He went to the poor man, inquired, no doubt, how he came into this deplorable condition, and consoled with him. He performed the surgeon's part, for want of a better, and did all he could to ease the pain, and prevent the peril, of his wounds. He set him on his own beast, and went on foot himself, and brought him to an inn. A great mercy it is to have inns on the road. Some think the priest and Levite pretended they could not stay to help the poor man, because they were in haste, to go and attend the temple-service at Jerusalem. We suppose this Samaritan went on business; but he understood that both his own business and God's sacrifice too, must give place to such an act of mercy as this. He took care of him in the inn, got him to bed, had food for him that was proper, and due attendance, and it may be, prayed with him. Nay, as if he had been his own child, or one he was obliged to look after, when he left him next morning, he left money with the landlord, to be laid out for his use, and passed his word for what he should spend more. Two pence of their money was about fifteen pence of ours, which, according to the rate of things then, would go a great way; however, here it was an earnest of content, to the full of all demands. All this was kind and generous, and as much as one could have expected from a friend or a brother; and yet here it is done by a stranger and foreigner.

Now this parable is applicable to another purpose than that for which it was intended, and doth excellently set forth the kindness and love of God our Savior towards sinful, miserable man. We were like this poor, distressed traveller. Satan, our enemy, had robbed us, stripped us, wounded us; such is the mischief that sin hath done us; we are by nature more than half dead, twice dead, in trespasses and sins; utterly unable to help ourselves, for we were without strength. The law of Moses, like the priest and Levite, the ministers of the law, looks upon us, but gives us no relief, having neither pity nor power to help us; but the blessed Jesus, who, by way of reproach, was called a Samaritan, He has compassion on us. He binds up our bleeding wounds, (Ps. 147: 3. Isa. 61: 1.) pours in, not oil and wine, but that which is infinitely more precious, his own blood; He takes care of us, and bids us put all the expenses of our cure on his account; and all this,

though He was none of us, till He was pleased by his voluntary condescension to make Himself so, but infinitely above us. This manifests the riches of his love, and obliges us all to say, 'How much are we indebted, and what shall we render?'

(2.) The application of the parable.

[1.] The truth contained in it is extracted from the lawyer's own mouth, v. 36, 37. The lawyer would not answer, as he ought to have done; 'Doubtless, the Samaritan was; but, He that shewed mercy on him; doubtless, he was a good neighbor to him, and I cannot but say that it was a good work thus to save an honest Jew from perishing.'

[2.] The duty inferred from it is pressed home upon the lawyer's own conscience; *Go, and do thou likewise.* The duty of relations is mutual and reciprocal; the titles of friends, brethren, neighbors, are, as Grotius here speaks, *equally binding on both sides*: If a Samaritan do well, that helps a distressed Jew, certainly a Jew does not well, if he do not in like manner help a distressed Samaritan: *kind offices are to be reciprocated.* And therefore go thou, and do as the Samaritan did, whenever occasion offers: show mercy to those that need thy help, and do it freely, and with concern and compassion, though they be not of thy own nation and thy own profession, or of thine own opinion and communion in religion. Let thy charity be thus extensive, before thou boastest of having conformed thyself to that great commandment, of *loving thy neighbor.* This lawyer valued himself much on his learning, and his knowledge of the laws, and in that he thought to have puzzled Christ Himself; but Christ sends him to school to a Samaritan, to learn his duty; 'Go, and do like him.' Note, It is the duty of every one of us, in our places, and according to our ability, to succor, help, and relieve all that are in distress and necessity, and of lawyers particularly; and herein we must study to excel many, that are proud of their being priests and Levites.

V. 38-42. We may observe here,

I. The entertainment Martha gave Christ and his disciples at her house, v. 38. Observe,

1. Christ's coming to the village where Martha lived, v. 38. This village was *Bethany*, nigh to Jerusalem, whither Christ was now going up. Note, Our Lord Jesus went about doing good, (Acts 10: 38.) scattering his benign beams and influences, as the true Light of the world. Wherever He went, his disciples went along with Him. And He honored the country villages, and not the great and populous cities only; for, as He chose privacy, so He countenanced poverty.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 30-37. It is most lamentable to observe, to what a degree selfishness pervades all ranks and orders of men; and how many excuses they devise, that they may avoid incurring trouble or expense, in relieving the miseries of others. Alas! that many professors and ministers of the Gospel are as evidently selfish and unfeeling as any other men! and thus they give up their holy faith and sacred function to the contempt and invectives of infidels, who substitute a proud semblance of benevolence, in place of repentance and faith. The true Christian, however, has the law of love written in his heart: the Spirit of Christ dwells in him, and his image is renewed on his soul: misery will therefore uniformly excite compassion in his breast, wherever it is seen, though in a stranger, an enemy, or of an opposite sect or party. Thus the Son of God looked down with compassion, and came to our relief; thus He is ever ready to pity and help the poor sinner; and He requires his ministers and people to show them their love to Him, by their attention to the weak and discouraged of his flock; (John 21: 15-17.) assuring them of an abundant recompense at his return to judge the world. After this interesting and endearing example of inexpressible love, to which we owe all our hopes

and comforts, every true believer must and will pity and endeavor to relieve the oppressed, and to comfort the wretched; he will become the good Samaritan to the poor and afflicted, the ignorant and ungodly, of every name and nation, who come in his way: yea, he will go out of his way to meet with and relieve them, as he has ability and opportunity. And when he considers that Jesus loved him, and bled for him, when an enemy and a rebel; and, having shown him mercy, that He has commanded him 'to go and do likewise,' he will love, and do good to, even his enemies, and to the vilest of mankind, for Christ's sake. With this view of Christianity before our eyes, have we reason to expect that any, who profess it, will defraud, oppress, enslave, or persecute any of the human race? If there be an appearance of such practices in some who seem to be Christians, we must either allow that they are not what they profess to be, or that they 'know not what manner of spirit they are of.' And can we but wonder, that professed Christians should discourage, oppose, or forbid us, to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles, and to the Jews, 'that they may be saved?' (Notes, Rom. 1: 13-16. 10: 12-17. 1 Thes. 2: 13-16.)

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(34.) Oil and wine.] 'That both were in common use, as medicines, among the ancient surgeons, is manifest from the citations here quoted by Wetsstein. That oil and wine were sometimes used separately, is clear from Columella.'

The oil was taken for the purpose of anointing the limbs; since, in the hot countries of the East, it is found particularly comfortable and refreshing; (perhaps also to use with food, as we use butter.) The antiquity of the custom is shown by the case of Jacob, who, though tra-

velling only with his staff, yet took oil with him, since he anointed the stone he used for a pillow.'

[37.] Go and do thou likewise.] 'Had not what is here related (v. 30-37.) been a real matter of fact, and not a parable, the captious lawyer might have objected that no such case had ever existed; and that any inference drawn from it was only begging the question; but as he was, in all probability, in possession of the fact himself, he was forced to acknowledge the propriety of our Lord's inference and advice.'

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99 And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word.

40 But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

41 And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things.

42 But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

m. 246. 8:35. Deut. 33:3. Prov. 8:34. Acts 22:3.
n. 12:29. John 6:27.
p. Matt. 14:15. 16:22. Mark 3:21.
q. 9:35. John 4:1-4.
r. 8:14. 1 Cor. 7:32-35. Phil. 4:6.
s. Ec. 6:11. Matt. 6:25-34.
t. 18:22. Ps. 27:4. 70:5. Ec. 12:13. John 17:3. Gal. 5:8. Col. 2:10, &c.
u. 1 John 5:11, 12.
v. Deut. 30:19. Josh. 24:15, 22. Ps. 115. 119:30. 137:3.
w. Ps. 16:5, 6. 14:45.
x. 8:18. 12:20, 33. 16:25, 35. John 4:14. 5:24. 10:27, 28. Rom. 8:35-39. Col. 3:5, 4. 1 Pet. 1:4, 5.

his word, and her submission to Christ's feet, or be made his footstool; but if we sit with Him at his feet now, we shall sit with Him on his throne shortly.

III. The care of Martha about her domestic affairs, v. 40. That was the reason why she was not where Mary was—sitting at Christ's feet, to hear his word. She was providing for the entertainment of Christ and those that came with Him. Observe here,

1. Something commendable, which must not be overlooked, (1.) Here was a commendable respect to our Lord Jesus; we have reason to think that it was not for ostentation, but purely to testify her good will to Him, that she made this entertainment. Note, Those who truly love Christ, will think that well bestowed, that is laid out for his honor. (2.) Here was a commendable care of her household affairs. It appears by the respect showed to this family among the Jews, (John 11:19,) that they were persons of some quality and distinction; and yet Martha herself did not think it a disparagement to her, to lay her hand even to the service of the family, when there was occasion for it. Note, It is the duty of those who have the charge of families, to look well to the ways of their household. The affectation of state and the love of ease make many families neglected.

2. Here was something culpable; which we must take notice of too. (1.) She was for much serving; her heart was upon it, to have a very sumptuous and splendid entertainment; great plenty, great variety, and great exactness, according to the fashion of the place. She was in care, concerning much attendance. Note, It does not become the disciples of Christ to affect much serving, to affect varieties, dainties, and superfluities, in eating and drinking. What need was there of much serving, when much less will serve? (2.) She was cumbered about it; she was just distracted with it. Note,

Verse 41.

'Our Lord's words are a kind and tender expostulation, tending to vindicate the conduct of Mary. The most that can be said is, Martha was well employed, but Mary, on this occasion, better.'

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Verse 42.

This term *needful* has reference to some proposed end; many things are *needful* to the gratification of men's passions; but the end proposed is, in itself, neither *needful* nor *useful*; many things are *needful* to the continuance of our lives on earth, but that may not be *needful*, or profitable for us. So that the favor of God is the only thing which is absolutely *needful* to our final happiness; the salvation of Christ is absolutely *needful* for us sinners, in order to the enjoyment of the favor of God; and a humble, believing, obedient attention to the Gospel is absolutely *needful*, in order to our obtaining an interest in the salvation of Christ. Where this 'one thing *needful*' is properly attended to, all other matters will be used, or pursued in subsequence to it; and whatever may seem to be neglected or lost, by this choice and conduct, present comfort and eternal felicity will be secured. Our Lord therefore said, that 'Mary had chosen that good part, which should not be taken from her.' (16:1-8, 19-23. Matt. 13:12.) Christ would by no

2. His reception at Martha's house, v. 38. Note, Our Lord Jesus, when on earth, was so poor, that He was necessitated to be beholden to his friends for a subsistence. Some were his particular friends, whom He loved more than his other friends, and them He visited most frequently. He loved this family, (John 11:5,) and often invited Himself to them. Christ's visits are the token of his love, John 14:23. 'It is called Martha's house, for, probably, she was a widow, and the housekeeper. Though it was chargeable to entertain Christ, for He did not come alone, but brought his disciples with Him, yet she would not regard the expense of it. (How can we spend what we have better than in Christ's service!) Nay, though at this time it was grown dangerous to entertain Him, especially so near Jerusalem, yet she cared not what hazard she ran for his name's sake, and bid Him welcome. Though Christ is every where spoken against, yet there is a remnant to whom He is dear, and who are dear to Him.'

II. Mary's attendance on the word of Christ, v. 20. She heard his word. It seems, our Lord Jesus, as soon as He came into Martha's house, even before entertainment was got for Him, addressed himself to his great work of preaching the Gospel: He presently took the chair with solemnity, for Mary sat to hear Him, which intimates that it was a continued discourse. Note, A good sermon is never the worse for being preached in a house; and the visits of our friends should be so managed, as to make them turn to a spiritual advantage. Mary, having this prize put into her hands, set herself to improve it, not knowing when she should have such another. Since Christ is forward to speak, we should be swift to hear. She sat to hear, which denotes a close attention; her mind was composed, and she resolved to abide by it; not to catch a word now and then, but to receive all that Christ delivered: She sat at his feet, as scholars at the feet of their tutors, signifying her readiness to receive to the guidance of it. We must either sit at Christ's feet, or be made his footstool; but if we sit with Him at his feet now, we shall sit with Him on his throne shortly.

Whatever cares the providence of God casts upon us, we must not be cumbered with them, nor be disquieted and perplexed by them. Care is good, and duty; but *cumber* is sin, and folly. (3.) She was then cumbered about much serving, when she should have been with her sister, sitting at Christ's feet, to hear his word. Note, Worldly business is then a snare to us, when it hinders us from serving God, and getting good to our souls.

IV. The complaint Martha made to Christ against her sister Mary, for not assisting her, on this occasion, in the business of the house, v. 40.

1. It may be considered as a discovery of her worldliness: it was the language of her inordinate care and cumber. She speaks as one in a mighty passion with her sister, else she would not have troubled Christ with the matter. Note, The inordinacy of worldly cares and pursuits is often the occasion of disturbance in families, and of strife and contention among relations. Moreover, those that are eager upon the world themselves, are apt to blame and censure those that are not so too; and while they justify themselves in their worldliness, and judge of others by their serviceableness to them in their worldly pursuits, they are ready to condemn those that addict themselves to the exercises of religion, as if they neglected the main chance, as they call it. Martha, being angry at her sister, appealed to Christ, and would have Him to say that she did well to be angry. It should seem as if Christ had sometimes expressed himself tenderly concerned for her ease and comfort, and would not have her go through so much toil and trouble, and she expected that He should now bid her sister take her share in it. When Martha was caring, she must have Mary, and Christ, and all, to care too, or else she is not pleased. Note, Those are not always in the right, that are most forward to appeal to God; we must therefore take heed, lest we at any time expect that Christ should espouse our unjust and groundless quarrels. The cares which He casts on us, we may cheerfully cast on Him, but not those which we foolishly draw on ourselves. He will be the patron of the poor and injured, but not of the turbulent and injurious.

2. It may be considered as a discouragement of Mary's piety and devotion. Her sister should have commended her for it; but, instead of that, she condemns her as wanting in her duty. Note, It is no strange thing for those that are zealous in religion, to meet, not only with opposition from enemies, but with blame and censure from their friends. David's fasting, and his dancing before the ark, were turned to his reproach.

V. Christ's reproof to Martha for her inordinate care, v. 41. She appealed to Him, and He gives judgment against her, v. 41, 42.

1. He reproved her, though her Guest, her fault was her over-solicitude to entertain Him, and she expected He should justify her in it, yet He publicly checked her for it. Note, As many as Christ loves, He rebukes and chastens. Even those that are dear to Christ, if any thing be amiss in them, shall be sure to hear of it. Nevertheless, I have something against thee.

means consent to her being deprived of the present satisfaction of flattery to his discourse, in order to assist in providing a needful plenty and variety, for the refreshment of the bodies, or the indulgence of the appetites, of the company. Though Martha was on this occasion faulty, yet she was a true believer, and did not in her general conduct neglect the one thing needful; we may therefore suppose that this reasonable and affectionate reproof had its proper effect; and that her conduct, when Jesus afterwards came to her house, was regulated by more spiritual and rational considerations. (John 11:1-46. 12:1-8.) 'Not one dish only to eat of, as Theophylact and many of the fathers descant here, but the better part, which Mary made it her chief care to labor after.' Whithy.

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One thing is needful. 'Or, there is one thing absolutely necessary. This is one of the gravest and most important anathemas that ever was uttered; and one can scarce pardon the frigid impertinence of Theophylact and Basil, who explain it as if he only meant, *no dish of meat is enough*.' [Yet so Wakefield.] DONDON.
'Which shall not be taken from her.' 'The food with which the body is nourished may be snatched away, but of spiritual instruction no one can be deprived.' Wetstein, in Hieronymus.

CHAP. XI.

Jesus teaches his disciples to pray, and encourages earnestness and importunity by two illustrations, 1-13. He casts out a devil, and exposes the absurdity and malice of those who ascribed the miracle to the power of Beelzebub, 14-26. He shows the blessedness of true piety and all external privileges; and warns the impenitent Jews, 27-36. Dining with a Pharisee, He exposes the ignorance, hypocrisy, and wickedness of the Scribes and Pharisees, 37-52; who eagerly endeavor to ensnare and accuse Him, 53, 54.

AND it came to pass, *a* that as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.

a. 6:12, 9:18, 22:39-45. Heb. 5:7, b Ps. 104:17. 19:14. Rom. 8:26, 27. Jam. 4:2, 3. Jude 20.

rebukes of Providence. If they fret for no just cause, it is just with Him to order something to fret at.

4. That which aggravated the sin and folly of her care was, that *but one thing is needful*. It is a *low* construction which some put on this, that, whereas Martha was in care to provide many dishes of meat, there was occasion but for one: one would be enough. If we take it so, it furnishes us with a rule of *temperance*, not to affect varieties and dainties, but to be content to sit down to one dish of meat, to *half of one*, Prov. 23:1-3. It is a *forced* constructor which some of the ancients put upon it. *But oneness is needful*, in opposition to distractions. There is need of *one heart*, to attend on the Word, not divided and hurried to and fro, as Martha's was at this time. *The one thing needful* is certainly meant of that which Mary made her choice—*sitting at Christ's feet*, to hear his word. Martha was troubled about many things, when she should have applied herself to one; godliness unites the heart, which the world had divided. *The many things* she was troubled about, were *needless*, while the *one thing* she neglected, was *needful*. Her care and work were good in their proper season and place; but now she had something else to do, which was unspeakably more needful, and therefore should be done first, and most minded. She expected Christ to have blamed Mary for not doing as she did, but He blamed her for not doing as Mary did; and we are sure the *judgment of Christ is according to truth*.

VI. Christ's approbation and commendation of Mary for her serious piety; *Mary hath chosen the good part*.

1. She had justly given the preference to that which best deserved it; *For one thing is needful*; this one thing that she has done, to give up herself to the guidance of Christ, and *receive the law* from his mouth. Note, Serious godliness is a *needful* thing, the *one thing needful*; for nothing without this will do us any real good in this world, and nothing but this will go with us into another world.

2. She had herein wisely done well for herself; Christ *justified Mary* against her sister's clamors. However we may be censured and condemned by men for our piety and zeal, our Lord Jesus will take our part; *But Thou shalt*

2. When He reproved her, He called her by name, *Martha*; reproofs are then most likely to do good, when they are particular, as Nathan's to David. He repeated her name; He speaks as one in earnest, and deeply concerned for her welfare. Those that are entangled in the cares of this life, are not easily disentangled. To them we must call again and again, *O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord*.

3. That which He reproved her for, was, her being *careful and troubled about many things*. He liked not that she should think to please Him with a rich and splendid entertainment, and with perplexing herself to prepare it for Him; whereas He would teach us, as not to be *sensual* in using such things, so not to be *selfish* in being willing that others should be troubled, no matter who or how many, so we may be gratified. Christ reproves her, both for the *intenseness* of her care, and for the *extensiveness* of it. 'Poor Martha, thou hast many things to fret at, and that puts thee out of humor, whereas less ad would serve.' Note, Inordinate care and trouble about many things in this world are a common fault among Christ's disciples; they are very displeasing to Christ, and that for which they often come under the

answer, *Lord, for me*. Let not us then condemn the pious zeal of any, lest we set Christ against us; and let us never be discouraged if we be censured for our pious zeal, for we have Christ for us. Note, Sooner or later, Mary's choice will be justified, and all those who make that choice, and abide by it. But this was not all: He applauded her for her wisdom; *She hath chosen the good part*; to be with Christ, to take her part with Him; she chose the better business, and the better happiness, and took the better way of honoring Christ, and of pleasing Him. Note, (1.) *A part with Christ is a good part*; it is a part for the soul and eternity, the part Christ gives to his favorites. (John 13: 8.) who are partakers of Christ, (Heb. 3: 14.) and partakers with Christ, Rom. 8: 17. (2.) It is a part that shall never be taken away from those that have it. A portion in this life will certainly be taken away from us, at the furthest, when we shall be taken away from it; but *nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ*, and our part in that love. Men and devils cannot take it away from us, and God and Christ will not. (3.) It is the wisdom and duty of every one of us to choose this *good part*, the service of God for our business, and the favor of God for our happiness, and an interest in Christ, in order to both. In particular cases we must choose that which has a tendency to religion, and reckon that best for us, which is best for our souls. Mary was at her choice, whether she would partake with Martha in her care, and get the reputation of a fine housekeeper, or sit at the feet of Christ, and approve herself a *zealous disciple*; and by her choice in this particular, Christ judges of her general choice. (4.) Those who choose this *good part*, shall not only have what they choose, but shall have their choice commended in the great day.

CHAP. XI. v. 1-13. Prayer is one of the great laws of natural religion. That man is a brute,—a monster, that never prays; that never gives glory to his Maker, nor feels his favor, nor owns his dependence on Him. One great design therefore of Christianity is, to assist us in prayer; to enforce the duty on us, to instruct us in it, and encourage us to expect advantage by it. Now here,

1. We find Christ himself *praying in a certain place*, probably where He used to pray, v. 1. As God, He *prayed*; to us, as Man, He *prayed*. This evangelist, more than any other, has taken particular notice of Christ's *praying* often; thus when He was baptized, (ch. 3: 21.) He was *praying*; He *withdrew into the wilderness, and prayed*; (ch. 5: 16.) He *went out into a moun-*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 33-42. Let us follow Christ, especially in his persevering love to sinners; let us welcome Him into our hearts, and his disciples and ministers into our houses; and let the latter especially be careful to improve the hours of social intercourse in edifying discourse. Alas! what time is wasted, and what expenses are incurred, even in the entertainment of the ministers and professors of the Gospel, to feast the guests, and to gratify the vanity of those who furnish the repast; while a scanty surplus remains for the poor, and a small proportion of the opportunity, for religious improvement! (14: 12-14.) Nay, sometimes the persons concerned thus lose their temper also; and are even induced to violate the Sabbath, and to constrain their servants to neglect the public ordinances of God, and perhaps to do the same themselves! If the gracious Savior were personally present on such occasions, and saw his professed disciples thus 'careful and troubled about many things,' would He not rebuke them far more sharply than He did Martha? Indeed the delinquents will attempt to vindicate their conduct; but He will decide the matter against them, and not admit their plea that these are *little things*, much less consider such cares and incumbrances as *needful*.—But it is

not in this way alone, that we are apt to be 'careful and troubled about many things.' Numbers are wholly given up to a variety of worldly pursuits and anxieties, to the entire neglect of their souls; and there are none of us, who do not at some times expose ourselves to the rebuke of Christ, for our disproportionate solicitude and eagerness about mere trifles, when compared with our attention to the great concerns of eternity. Let us then mind, more diligently and entirely, 'the one thing needful.' 'None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good;' to hear, believe and obey his Gospel, and to have Him for our 'Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption,' comprises all that is necessary for this world and the next; and without this, all the rest will leave us forever miserable. This good part is, by the Gospel, proposed to our choice: happy then are they, who give it a decided preference to all earthly objects; for it 'shall not be taken from them,' through the countless ages of eternity; and to those who choose and seek it in the first place, all things else which can conduce to their present comfort, or their everlasting felicity, shall assuredly be added. (Notes, Matt. 6: 25-34.)

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NOTES.

CHAP. XI. v. 1-4. Probably, John had added to his general instructions some comprehensive directory, or form of prayer; which both served to distinguish his disciples from those of the Pharisees, and to impress on their minds the important truths which he had inculcated, concerning the Messiah and the spiritual blessings of his kingdom, and thus to regulate their judgment and devotions at the same time. This disciple therefore desired Jesus to instruct him and the other disciples in prayer, by some similar method; for we cannot suppose but

that He had in general taught them both what to pray for, and in what manner to pray, by his doctrine and daily example. In answer to his request, our Lord again delivered that prayer, which has been fully considered. (Matt. 6: 7-13.) The variations are immaterial, except the omission of the concluding doxology. The clause, 'When ye pray, say,' at least warrants the frequent use of the very words here prescribed, which certainly imply every thing that we can ask for ourselves or others, in respect of this life, and of that which is to come. (Marg. Ref.) (2.) *Thy will be done, &c.* To pray, that 'the will

2 And he said unto them, 'When ye pray, say, "Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth."

3 'Give us \circ day by day our daily bread.

4 And \circ forgive us our sins; \circ for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And \circ lead us not into temptation; \circ but deliver us from evil.

5 And he said unto them, 'Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves;

6 For a friend of mine \circ in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him?'

tain to pray, and continued all night in prayer: He was alone praying; (ch. 9: 18.) soon after, He went up into a mountain to pray, and as He prayed, He was transfigured; (ch. 9: 28, 29.) and here He was praying in a certain place. Thus, like a genuine Son of David, He gave Himself unto prayer, Ps. 109: 4. It is most probable the disciples were now joining with Him.

II. His disciples applied themselves to Him for direction in prayer; *Lord, teach us to pray.* Note, The gifts and graces of others should excite us to covet earnestly the same. Their zeal should provoke us to a holy imitation and emulation. Observe, They came to Him with this request, *when He ceased:* they would not disturb Him. Every thing is beautiful in its season. *One of his disciples,* in the name of the rest, said, *Lord, teach us.* Note, Though Christ is *apt to teach,* yet He will for this be inquired of, and his disciples must attend Him for instruction.

Their request was, '*Lord, teach us to pray;* give us a rule or model; put words into our mouths.' Note, It becomes Christ's disciples to apply to Him for instruction in prayer. *Lord, teach us to pray,* is itself a good prayer, and a very useful one, for Jesus Christ only can teach us, by his Word and Spirit, *how to pray.* 'Lord, teach me what it is to pray; Lord, excite and quicken me to the duty; Lord, direct me what to pray for; Lord, give me praying graces, that I may serve God acceptably in prayer; Lord, teach me to pray in proper words; give me a mouth and wisdom in prayer, that I may speak as I ought; teach me what I shall say.'

Their plea was, '*As John also taught his disciples.*' He took care to instruct his disciples, and we would be taught as they were, for we have a better Master.' Lightfoot's notion of this is, That, whereas the Jews' prayers were generally adorations, and praises of God, and doxologies, John taught his disciples such prayers as were more filled with petitions and requests; for it is said of them that they made prayers, Luke 5: 33. The word signifies such prayers as are properly petitionary. 'Now, Lord, teach us such, to be added to those benedictions of the name of God, which we have been accustomed to from our childhood.' According to this sense, Christ here taught them a prayer of petitions, omitting the doxology and the Amen, usually said in the giving of thanks, 1 Cor. 14: 16. But the disciples need not have urged John Baptist's example; Christ was more ready and able to teach than he.

III. Christ gave them direction; much the same that He had given them before in his sermon on the mount, Matt. 6: 9, &c. They and fuller instructions, but He did not, as yet, them from on high, they would find all their requests couched in these few words, and be able, in words of their own, to expatiate and enlarge upon them. In Matthew, He had directed them to pray after this manner; here,

When ye pray, say; which intimates that the Lord's prayer was intended to be used both as a form of prayer and a directory.

1. There are some differences between the Lord's prayer in Matthew and in Luke, by which it appears that it was not the design of Christ that we should be tied up to these very words, for then there would have been no variation. Here is one difference in the translation only, viz. in the third petition; *as in heaven, so in earth;* whereas, in the original, the words are the very same, and in the same order as in Matthew. But there is a difference in the fourth petition; in Matthew we pray, 'Give us daily bread this day; here, 'Give it us day by day.' Day by day is, 'Give us each day the bread which our bodies require, as they call for it: not, 'Give us this day bread for many days to come;' but, as the Israelites had manna, 'Let us have bread to-day for to-day, and to-morrow for to-morrow; for thus we may be kept in a continual dependence on God, as children on their parents, and may have our mercies fresh from his hand daily, and may find ourselves under fresh obligations to do the work of every day in the day, according as the duty of the day requires.'

Here is likewise some difference in the fifth petition. In Matthew it is, *Forgive us our debts,* as we forgive: here it is, *Forgive us our sins;* which proves that our sins are our debts; for we forgive, not that our forgiving of those that have offended us, can merit pardon from God, or be an inducement to Him to forgive us; (He forgives for his own name's sake, and his Son's sake;) but this is a very necessary qualification for forgiveness; and if God have wrought it in us, we may plead that work of his grace, for the enforcing of our petitions for the pardon of our sins; 'Lord, forgive us, for Thou hast Thyself inclined us to forgive others.' Here is another addition here; we plead not only in general, 'We forgive our debtors, but in particular, 'We profess to forgive every one that is indebted to us, without exception. We so forgive our debtors, as not to bear malice or ill-will to any, but true love to all, without any exception whatsoever.'

Here also the doxology in the close is wholly omitted, and the Amen; for Christ would leave them at liberty to use that, or any other doxology fetched out of David's psalms; or rather, He left a vacuum here, to be filled up by a doxology more peculiar to the Christian institutes, ascribing glory to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

2. Yet it is, for substance, the same; and we shall therefore here only gather up some general lessons from it.

(1.) That in prayer we ought to come to God as children to a Father, a common Father to us and all mankind, but in a peculiar manner a Father to all the disciples of Jesus Christ. Let us therefore in our requests, both for others and for ourselves, come to Him with a humble

e Ec. 5:2. Hos. 14:2. Matt. 6:5-8. Is. 63:16. Matt. 6:9. Rom. 1:7. 8:15. 1 Cor. 12:2. 2 Cor. 12:12. Gal. 1:4. Eph. 1:2. Phil. 1:2. 4:20. Col. 1:2. 1 Thes. 1:1,3. 3:11-13. 2 Thes. 1:1,2. 2:15. e Chr. 20:5. Ps. 114. Ec. 5:2. Dan. 2:23. Matt. 5:16. 10:32. Lev. 10:3. 22:32. 1 Kings 8:43. 2 Kings 19:19. Ps. 57:11. 72:18,19. 105:4. Ez. 38:33. Hab. 2:14. Rev. 15:4. e 10:9-11. Is. 2:3-5. Dan. 2:44. *19:27. Rev. 11:15. 19:5. 20:4. e Ps. 103:20. Is. 62:3. Matt. 9:10. e Ex. 16:15-22. Prov. 3:18. Is. 33:16. Matt. 6:11,34. John 6:27-33. e Pr. for the debt. e 1 Kings 8:34-36. Ps. 25:11,18. 32:1-5. 51:1-3. 130:3-4. Is. 43:25. 26. Dan. 9:19. Hos. 14:2. Matt. 6:12. 1 John 1:9. e Matt. 6:14,15. 18:35. Eph. 4:31. 2 Cor. 2:13. Jam. 2:13. m 8:13. 22:46. Matt. 6:13. 26:41. 1 Cor. 10:13. 9 Cor. 13:7,8. Rev. 2:10. 3:10. e Gen. 49:16. Ps. 121:7. John 17:15. e Thes. 3:3. 2 Tim. 4:18. e 18:1-8. e Or, out of his way.

* thought to have had further than a fit to give them any; when the Spirit should be poured out upon them from on high, they would find all their requests couched in these few words, and be able, in words of their own, to expatiate and enlarge upon them. In Matthew, He had directed them to pray after this manner; here,

of God may be done, as in heaven, so on earth,' is widely different from saying, in submission to Providence, in some special instance, 'The will of the Lord be done;' (22: 42. Acts 21: 14.) for the former takes in obedience to the will of God, as a Lawgiver, and as a Savior, as well as submission to his providential appointments. (Matt. 6: 10. 7: 21-23) (4.) *Indebted, &c.* 'It is carefully to be observed, that sins (are not strictly and properly compared to debts; seeing, by sinning we do not so properly contract a debt as a guilt, and obnoxiousness to punishment; which two things will admit these differences: (1.) That, if another will pay my debt, the creditor cannot justly refuse his paying it for me, or complain that he is not satisfied when the whole debt is paid; but let another be never so willing to suffer for my offence, he can make no satisfaction for it, unless the judge be willing to admit him to suffer in my stead. Hence, (2.) the creditor does no act of grace, by admitting the solution of another; and if that other pay the whole, he can require no conditions for my discharge. But the ruler, against whose laws I have personally offended, does me an act of grace, in admitting another to suffer in my stead; and so may do this only upon some reasonable conditions.' Whitby. SCOTT.

(1-5.) 'The prayer related here by Luke was probably given at a different time from that mentioned by Matthew, ch. 6: 5-15. That a Matthew seems to have been given after the second passover, and this in Luke after the third, between the feast of Tabernacles and the Dedication. So Bishop Newcome in his Greek Harmony of the Gospels. The many various readings in this prayer seem to have proceeded principally from the desire of rendering this similar to that in Matthew. Attempts of this nature have given birth to multitudes of various readings in the MSS. of the New Testament. The doxology in Matthew is not found in any copy of Luke's Gospel.' Dr. A. CLARKE. [496]

(1.) *As John also taught his disciples.* 'Many learned men suppose that the Jewish masters used to give their followers some short form of prayer, as a peculiar badge of their relation to them. This John the Baptist had probably done, though we know not now what it was. In this view, only, can we suppose the disciples could now ask Jesus to teach them to pray; for it is not to be thought, that in the three preceding years of his ministry, he had not often given them instructions both as to the matter and manner of prayer. In this sense, Mr. Joseph Wade and Dr. Lightfoot understand the request and answer before us; and I have never met with any thing upon it which has given me more satisfaction.'

'Dr. Guysa has excellently shown, in his note on Matt. 6: 13, that this prayer in its original sense was peculiarly suited to the dispensation then present, as introductory to the Messiah's kingdom, and has given a just and expressive paraphrase of it in that particular view. But there is not a clause in it which will not bear a more extensive sense, and express what ought to be our daily temper, and the breathings of our hearts before God. No doubt, thousands of Christians have daily refreshment and edification in the use of it.' DODDRIDGE.

(4) *Deliver us from evil,* 'is certainly a very inadequate rendering of the original, which is, literally, *Deliver us from the wicked one.*' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 5. *Midnight.* In those hot countries, it is common, where it can be done safely, to travel in the night. *Lend me three loaves.* 'It was usual with the Jews to borrow bread of one another; and certain rules are laid down, when and upon what condition this is to be done.' GILL.

7 And he from within shall answer and say, * Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee.

8 I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend; yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth.

9 And * I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

10 For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

11 If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent?

12 Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?

13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give

boldness, confiding in his power and goodness.

(2.) That in our petitions to God for ourselves, we should take in with us all the children of men, as God's creatures and our fellow-creatures; this prayer being so worded as to be accommodated to such a noble principle of catholic charity, and of Christian, sanctified humanity.

(3.) That in order to confirm the habit of heavenly-mindedness in us, which ought to act and govern us in the whole course of our conversation, we should, in all our devotions, with an eye of faith, look heaven-ward, and view the God we pray to as our Father in heaven, that we may make the upper world more familiar to us, and may ourselves become better prepared for the future state.

(4.) That in prayer, as well as in the tenor of our lives, we must seek first the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, by ascribing honor to his name, his holy name, and power to his government, both that of his providence in the world, and that of his grace in the church. O that both the one and the other may be more manifested, and we and others more manifestly brought into subjection to both!

(5.) That the principles and practices of the upper, the unseen world, (which therefore by faith only we are apprized of), are the great original, to which we should desire the principles and practices of this lower world, both in others and in ourselves, may be more conformed. Those words, *As in heaven, so on earth*, refer to all the first three petitions.

(6.) That those who faithfully and sincerely mind the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, may humbly hope that all other things, so far as to Infinite Wisdom seems good, shall be added to them, and they may in faith pray for them. If our first chief desire and care be, that God's name may be sanctified, his kingdom come, and his will be done, we may then come boldly to the throne of grace for our daily bread, which will then be sanctified to us, when we are sanctified to God, and God is sanctified by us.

(7.) That in our prayers for temporal blessings, we must moderate our desires, and confine them to a competency. The expression here used, of *day by day*, is the very same with, *our daily bread*; and therefore some think that we must look for another signification of the word rendered *daily*, and that it means our necessary bread; that bread that is suited to the cravings of our nature; the fruit that is brought out of the earth for our bodies that are made of the earth, and are earthly, Ps. 104: 14.

(8.) That sins are debts we are daily contracting, and therefore should every day pray for the forgiveness of them. Every day adds to the score of our guilt, and it is a miracle of mercy, that we have so much encouragement given us to come every day to the throne of grace, to pray for the pardon of our sins of daily infirmity. God multiplies to pardon beyond seventy times seven.

(9.) That we have no reason to expect, nor can with any confidence pray, that God would forgive our sins against Him, if we do not sincerely, and from a truly Christian principle of charity, forgive those that have at any time affronted us, or been injurious to us. Though the words of our mouth be even this prayer to God, if the meditation of our heart at the same time be, as often it is, malice and revenge to our brethren, we are not accepted, nor can we expect an answer of peace.

(10.) That temptations to sin should be as much dreaded and deprecated by us, as ruin by sin; and it should be as much our care and prayer to get the power of sin broken in us, as to get the guilt of sin removed from us; and though temptation may be a charming, flattering thing, we must be as earnest with God, that we may not be led into that, as that we may not be led by that to sin, and by sin to ruin.

Lastly, That God is to be depended on, and sought to, for deliverance from all evil; and we should pray, not only that we may not be left to

ourselves to run into evil, but that we may not be left to Satan, to bring evil upon us. I might understand it of being delivered from the evil one, that is, the devil. The disciples were employed to cast out devils, and therefore were concerned to pray that they might be guarded against the particular spite he would always be sure to have against them.

IV. He encourages importunity, fervency, and constancy, in prayer; by showing.

1. That importunity will go far in our dealings with men, v. 5-8. He speaks this parable with the same intent that He speaks that, (ch. 18: 1.) *That men ought always to pray, and not to faint.* Not that God can be wrought upon by importunity; we cannot be troublesome to Him, nor by being so, change his counsels. We prevail with men by importunity, because they are displeased with it, but with God, because He is pleased with it. Now this similitude may be of use,

(1.) To direct us in prayer. We must come to God with boldness and confidence for what we need, as a man does to the house of his neighbor, or friend, who, he knows, loves him, and is inclined to be kind to him. We must come in bread, for that which is needful, and which we cannot be without. We must come for others as well as for ourselves. This man did not come for bread for himself, but for his friend. The Lord accepted Job, when he prayed for his friends, Job 42: 10. We cannot come on a more pleasing errand than when we come for grace to enable us to do good. We may come with the more boldness in a strait, if it be providential, and not the result of our own folly and carelessness. This man would not have wanted bread, if his friend had not come in unexpectedly. The care which Providence casts on us, we may with cheerfulness cast back on Providence. We ought to continue instant in prayer, and watch in the same with all perseverance.

(2.) To encourage us in prayer. If importunity could prevail thus with a man who was angry at it, much more with God, who is infinitely more kind and ready to do good to us than we are to one another, and is not angry at our importunity, but accepts it, especially when it is for spiritual mercies. If He does not answer our prayers presently, yet He will in due time, if we continue to pray.

2. That God has promised to give us what we ask of Him; (v. 9, 10.) either the thing itself, or that which is equivalent; the thorn in the flesh removed, or grace sufficient. We had this before, Matt. 7: 7, 8. *I say unto you.* We have it from Christ's own mouth, who knows his Father's mind, and in whom all promises are yea and amen. We must not only ask, but seek, in the use of means; and in asking and seeking, we must continue pressing, still knocking at the same door, and we shall at length prevail, not only by our prayers in concert, but by our particular prayers; *Every one that asketh, receiveth*, even the meanest saint that asketh in faith. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, Ps. 34: 6. When we ask of God those things Christ has here directed us to ask, that his name may be sanctified, that his kingdom may come, and his will be done, in these requests we must be importunate, must never hold our peace day or night; we must not keep silence, nor give God any rest, until He establish, until He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth, Isa. 62: 6, 7.

V. He gives us both instruction and encouragement in prayer, from the consideration of our relation to God as a Father. Here is,

1. An appeal to the affection of earthly fathers; v. 11, 12.

2. An application of this to the blessings of our heavenly Father; v. 13. He shall give good things; so it is in Matthew. Observe,

(1.) The direction what to pray for; we must

Verse 7.

In *bed*.] The meaning is, in the same sleeping-room, We learn from Sir J. Chardin, and other travellers, that it is usual in the East for a whole family to sleep in the same room, each laying his mattress on the floor.

Verse 12.

Egg—scorpion.] The body of a scorpion is like an egg, especially if it be a white scorpion; and such are reckoned to be the first species of them, by Nicander, Elian, Avicenna, and others; nor does a scorpion differ much in size from an egg in Judea if it be true that, as

the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

[Practical Observations.]

14 ¶ And he was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered.

15 But some of them said, 'He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils.'

16 And others, tempting him, sought of him a sign from heaven.

17 But he, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, 'Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house, falleth.'

18 If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because I say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub.

19 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges.

¶ Matt. 9:32, 33. 12:22, 23. Mark 7: 22-27.

b. Matt. 9:34. 12:24-30. Mark 3:22-30. John 7:20. 8:43, 52. 10:20.

c. Gr. Beelzeboul, as 18, 19.

d. Matt. 12:28, 29. 16:1-4. Mark 8: 11, 12. John 8:30. 1 Cor. 1:22.

e. Matt. 9:4. 12:25. Mark 3:23-26. John 2:25. Rev. 2:23.

f. 2 Cor. 10:16-18. 13:16, 17. 1s. 9: 21, 22. 19:2, 3.

g. Matt. 12:26.

h. 15. Matt. 12:31-34. Jam. 3:5-8.

i. 8:49. Matt. 12:27, 28.

j. 81, 32. 19:22. Job 15:6. Matt. 12: 41, 42. Rom. 3:19.

ask for the Holy Spirit, not only as necessary in order to our praying well, but as inclusive of all the good things we are to pray for; the Spirit is the Worker of spiritual life, and the Earnest of eternal life. Note, The gift of the Holy Ghost is a gift we are every one of us concerned earnestly and constantly to pray for.

(2.) The encouragement to hope that we shall speed in this prayer; Your heavenly Father will give. It is in his power to give the Spirit; but that is not all, it is in his promise, Acts 2: 33-35. And it is here inferred from parents' readiness to supply their children's needs, and gratify their desires, when they are natural and proper. If the child ask for a serpent, or a scorpion, the father in kindness denies him, but not if he ask for what is needful, and will be nourishing. When God's children ask for the Spirit, they do, in effect, ask for bread, for the Spirit is the Staff of life; nay, He is the Author of the soul's life. If our earthly parents, though evil, be yet so kind, if they, though weak, be yet so knowing, that they not only give, but give with discretion, give what is best, in the best manner and time, much more shall your heavenly Father, who infinitely excels the fathers of our flesh both in wisdom and goodness, give you his Holy Spirit. If earthly parents be willing to lay out for the education of their children, to whom they design to leave their estates, much more will your heavenly Father give the spirit of sons to all those whom He has predestinated to the inheritance of sons.

V. 14-26. The substance of these verses we had, Matt. 12: 22, &c. They contain a general proof of Christ's divine mission, by way of a particular proof of his power over Satan. He is here casting out a devil that made the poor possessed man dumb; in Matthew, we are told that he was blind and dumb. When the devil was forced out by the word of Christ, the dumb spake immediately, to show forth his praise. Now,

I. Some were affected with this miracle. The people wondered; they admired the power of God, and especially that it should be exerted by the hand of One who made so small a figure; that One who did the work of the Messiah, should have so little of that pomp of the Messiah, which they expected.

II. Others were offended at it, and to justify their infidelity, suggested that it was by virtue of a league with Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, that He did this, v. 15. They would have it thought, that there was a correspondence settled between Christ and the devil, that the devil should have the advantage in the main, but that, in particular instances, he should yield Christ the advantage, and retire by consent. Some to corroborate this suggestion, and con-

firm the evidence of Christ's miraculous power, challenged Him (v. 16,) to confirm his doctrine by some appearance in the clouds, such as was upon mount Sinai when the law was given; as if a sign from heaven, not disprovable by any sagacity of theirs, could not have been given as well by a compact and collusion with the prince of the power of the air, as the casting out of a devil. Note, Obstinate infidelity will never be at a loss for something to say in its own excuse, though ever so frivolous and absurd.

Now Christ here returns a full and direct answer to this cavil; in which He shows,

1. That it can by no means be imagined that such a subtle prince as Satan is, should ever give in to measures, having such a tendency to the undermining of his own kingdom, v. 17, 18. What they objected, they kept to themselves, afraid to speak it, lest it should be answered and baffled; but Jesus knew their thoughts, even when they industriously thought to conceal them; and He said, 'You yourselves cannot but see the groundlessness, and, consequently, the pitifulness, of this charge; for it is an allowed maxim, confirmed by every day's experience, that no interest can stand, that is divided against itself; not the more public interest of a kingdom; nor the private interest of a house or family. Satan would herein act against himself; not only by the miracle which turned him out of possession of the bodies of people, but much more in the doctrine for the explication and confirmation of which the miracle was wrought, and which had a direct tendency to the ruin of Satan's interest in the minds of men, by mortifying sin, and turning men to the service of God.'

2. That it was a very partial, ill-natured thing for them to impute that in Him to a compact with Satan, which yet they applauded and admired in others of their own nation, v. 19. 'Some of your own kindred, as Jews, nay, and some of your own followers, as Pharisees, have undertaken, in the name of the God of Israel, to cast out devils, and they were never charged with such a hellish combination as I am charged with.' Note, It is gross hypocrisy to condemn that in those who reprove us, which yet we allow in those that flatter us.

3. That, in opposing the conviction of this miracle, they were enemies to themselves, for they thrust from them the kingdom of God, v. 20. 'The kingdom of the Messiah offers itself and all its advantages to you, and if you receive it not, it is at your peril.' In Matthew it is, by the Spirit of God, here, by the finger of God; which may intimate perhaps how easily Christ did and could conquer Satan. He need not make bare his everlasting arm; that roaring lion, when He pleases, is crushed like a moth,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-13. It is a most valuable effect of preventing grace, to be made so sensible of our indigence, and our dependence on God, as heartily to pray; and so aware of our ignorance, and of the difficulty of praying aright, as to seek instruction in this most important concern. When we are thus led to beseech the Lord Jesus to teach us to pray, we use a very proper introduction to all our subsequent devotions. He will lead us into an acquaintance with our own wants, and the promises of God, and excite in our hearts correspondent desires and affections; and thus He will teach us to pray in humility, reverence, faith, expectation and earnest importunity. (P. O. Matt. 6: 9-18.) The teaching of Christ will also encourage and enlarge our hopes. Assured that we are praying for such things as are good for us, we shall persevere, and be importunate, though we seem to meet with a repulse; being satisfied, that 'every one that asketh receiveth.' We shall therefore return again and again to the throne of grace, even when we

have been baffled by temptation, or proved by delays; and renew and increase our earnestness in asking, seeking, and knocking; especially that we may obtain the Holy Spirit, to enlighten, sanctify, strengthen, and comfort our hearts; and to put us in full possession of the salvation of Christ. (Note, John 4: 10-15.) All these blessings our heavenly Father is far more ready to bestow, on 'every one who asketh for them,' than any indulgent father can be to give food to his hungry child; and, in this way, we need no more fear being fatally deluded, or finally overcome by our enemy, than a beloved child needs fear, lest his father should give him a scorpion instead of an egg; nay, this would be far more likely, because men without exception are evil by nature, and that depravity often triumphs over even natural affection; but 'God is Love,' and 'delighteth in mercy.' (Note, 1s. 40: 14-16.)

SCOTT.

asserted by the monks in Messem, there are large scorpions about Jerusalem and throughout all Syria.

Verse 13.

Bochart, in BURDER.

The Holy Spirit.] By this it is intimated, that this gift to us sinners, since the work of redemption was completed, is the sum or earnest of all good things; for by his influences, we are brought to know God and ourselves, to repent, to believe in and love Christ, to hope, to rejoice, and obey; and so are made comfortable and useful in this world, and meet for happiness in the next. (Marg. Ref. 1.—Notes, John 16: -15.) The gift of the Holy Spirit is two-fold: his immediate inspiration made men prophets; his regenerating and sanctifying influences render men saints, or holy persons. No sober man can suppose that every one, who prays for the Holy Spirit, will be made a prophet, or

enabled to work miracles. His renewing, enlightening; sanctifying, and comforting influences are, no doubt, exclusively intended. (John 4: 10-15. 7: 37-39.)

Verses 14-26.

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 12: 22-30, 43-45. 16: 1-4. 2 Pet. 2: 20-22.) 'The Spirit of God,' Matt. 12: 28.—(21.) A strong man, &c. The circumstances of the 'strong man being armed,' (namely, with the sinner's ignorance, error, prejudices, pride, and lusts,) the confidence which he places in this armor, and the peace in which he retains his possession, till overcome by one 'stronger than he,' are also alluded to in the parable; and the contrast between 'the strong one,' and one 'stronger than he,' is marked emphatically. (1 John 4: 4-6.)

SCOTT.

(14.) 'It is evident from several passages in these verses, that it is

20 But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

21 When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace:

22 But when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.

23 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.

24 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest: and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out.

25 And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished.

26 Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits, more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.

27 ¶ And it came to pass, as he spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto him, Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the paps which thou hast sucked.

q Ex. 8:19. Matt. 12:28.
r 10:9,11. Dan. 2:44. Acts 20:25.
s 28:35-29. 2 Thea. 1:5.
t See on Matt. 12:29. Mark 3:27.
u Gen. 3:15. Ia. 27:1. 49:24,25. 53:12. 63:1-4. Col. 2:15. 1 John 3:8, 4:4. Rev. 20:1-3.
v 9:50. Matt. 12:30. Rev. 3:15,16.
w Matt. 12:43-45.
x Job 1:7. 2:2. 1 Pet. 5:8.
y Jude 6,37-40. Ps. 63:1. Is. 35:1, 2:7. 41:17-19. 44:3. Ez. 47:8-11. Euph. 3:2.
z Rev. 4:16. Is. 48:22. 57:20,21.
aa Mark 5:10. 9:23.
ab 2 Chr. 24:17-22. Ps. 36:3. 81:11. 12. 126:5. Matt. 12:44,45. 2 Thea. 2:9-12. 2 Pet. 2:10-19. Jude 9-13.
ac Matt. 23:15.
ad Zeph. 1:8. Matt. 12:45. John 5:14. Hol. 6:4-9. 10:26-31. 2 Pet. 2:20-22.
ae 1 John 5:16. Jude 12,13.
af 1:29,42,48.

5. That there was a vast difference between the devil's going out by compulsion, and his being cast out by compulsion. Into those out of whom Christ cast him, he never entered again, for so was Christ's charge; (Mark 7:25.) whereas, if he had gone out whenever he saw fit, he would have made a re-entry,

with a touch of a finger. Perhaps here is an allusion to the acknowledgment of Pharaoh's magicians; (Exod. 8:19.) This is the finger of God. Now if the kingdom of God be herein come to you, and you will be found, by those cavils and blasphemies, fighting against it, it will come upon you as a victorious force before which you cannot stand.

4. That his casting out devils was really the destroying of them and their power, for it confirmed a doctrine which had a direct tendency to the ruining of his kingdom, v. 21, 22. Perhaps there had been some who had cast out the inferior devils, by compact with Beelzebub their chief; but that was without any real damage or prejudice to Satan and his kingdom; what he lost one way, he gained another. But when Christ cast out devils, He did it so as to ruin Satan's power, and blast his great design, which no one devil ever did to another, or ever will. Now this is applicable to Christ's victories over Satan, both in the world and in the hearts of particular persons, by that power which went along with the preaching of his Gospel, and doth still. And so we may observe here,

(1.) The miserable condition of an unconverted sinner. In his heart, the devil has his palace; there he resides, and there he rules; he works in the children of disobedience: and all the powers and faculties of the soul, being employed by him in the service of sin, are his goods. The devil, as a strong man armed, keeps this palace, and all the prejudices with which he hardens men's hearts against truth and holiness, are the strong holds he erects for that purpose; this palace is his garrison. While he thus keeps it, there is a kind of peace in the unconverted soul. The sinner has a good opinion of himself, is very secure and merry, has no doubt concerning the goodness of his state, nor any dread of the judgment to come; he flatters himself in his own eyes, and cries peace to himself. Before Christ appeared, all was quiet, because all went one way: but the preaching of the Gospel disturbed the peace of the devil's palace.

(2.) The wonderful change made in conversion, which is Christ's victory over this usurper.

Observe the manner of this victory. He comes upon him by surprise, when his goods are in peace, and the devil thinks it is all his own forever, and overcomes him. Observe the evidences of this victory. First, He takes from him all his armor wherein he trusted. The devil is a confident adversary, he trusts to his armor, as Pharaoh to his rivers; (Ezek. 29:3.) but Christ disarms him. When the power of sin and corruption in the soul is broken, when the mistakes are rectified, the eyes opened, the heart humbled and changed, and made serious and spiritual, then Satan's armor is taken away. Secondly, He divides the spoils; He takes possession of them for Himself; all the endowments of mind or body, the estate, power, interest, are now converted to Christ's service, and employed for Him; yet that is not all, He makes a distribution of them among his followers, and, having conquered Satan, gives to all believers the benefit of that victory.

Now from hence He infers, that, seeing the whole drift of his doctrine and miracles was to break the power of the devil, that great enemy of mankind, it was the duty of all to join with Him, and to follow his guidance, receive his Gospel, and come heartily into the interests of it, otherwise they would justly be reckoned as siding with the enemy; v. 23. Those therefore who rejected the doctrine of Christ, and slighted his miracles, were looked upon as adversaries to Him, and in the devil's interest.

"a multitude" generally were well disposed towards our Savior and his doctrines; the great opposition He met with being from those chiefly to whom wealth, power, and authority had furnished occasions of pleasure, pride, and a stupid inconsiderateness. This was the case then; and it is exactly the same now, mankind being the same in all ages.

Markland, in Bloomfield.

for that is the way of the unclean spirit, when he voluntarily and with design goes out of a man, v. 24-26. The prince of the devils may give leave, nay, may give order to his forces retreat, or make a feint, to draw the poor deluded soul into an ambush; but Christ, as He gives a total, so He gives a final defeat to the enemy.

In this part of the argument, He has a further reach, which is, to represent the state of those who have had fair offers made them, among whom, and in whom, God has begun to break the devil's power, and overthrow his kingdom but they reject his counsel against themselves and relapse into a state of subjection to Satan. Here we have,

(1.) The condition of a formal hypocrite, his bright side, and his dark side; his heart still remains the devil's house, he calls it his own, and he retains his interest in it; and yet, the unclean spirit has gone out. He was not driven out by the power of converting grace, but he went out, withdrew for a time, so that the man seemed not to be under the power of Satan as formerly. Satan is gone, or has turned himself into an angel of light. The house is swept from common pollutions, by a forced confession of sin, as Pharaoh's; a feigned contrition for it, as Ahab's; and a partial reformation, as Herod's. There are those that have escaped the pollutions of the world, and yet are still under the power of the god of this world, 2 Pet. 2:20. The house is swept, but it is not washed; and Christ hath said, If I wash thee not, thou hast not part with Me. It is swept from open, loose dirt, but it is not searched and ransacked for secret filthiness, Matt. 23:25. It is swept, but the leprosy is in the wall, and will be till something more be done. The house is garnished, not furnished with any true grace, but garnished with the pictures of all graces. Simon Magus was garnished with faith; Balaam with good desires; Herod with a respect for John; the Pharisees with many external performances. It is garnished, but it is like a polisher covered with silver dross, not real, not lasting. It is garnished, but the property is not altered; it was never surrendered to Christ, nor inhabited by the Spirit. Let us therefore take heed of resting in that which a man may have, and yet come short.

(2.) Here is the condition of a final apostate, into whom the devil returns after he had gone out, v. 26. He takes seven other spirits more wicked than himself; a certain number for an uncertain, as seven devils are said to be cast out of Mary Magdalene: seven wicked spirits are opposed to the seven spirits of God; (Rev. 3:1.) these are said to be more wicked than himself. It seems, even devils are not all alike wicked. These enter in, are welcomed and dwell there, where they work, there they rule; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Note, Hypocrisy is the high road to apostasy. If the heart remains in the interest of sin and Satan, the shows and shadows will come to nothing; where secret haunts of sin are kept up under the cloak of a visible profession, conscience is debauched; God is provoked to withdraw his restraining grace, and the close hypocrite commonly proves an open apostate. The last state of such is worse than the first, in respect both of sin and punishment. Apostates are usually the worst of men, and their sins, of all others, the most aggravated. God often sets marks of his displeasure on them in this world, and in the other world they will receive the greater damnation. Let us therefore hear, and fear, and hold fast our integrity.

V. 27, 28. We had not this passage in the other evangelists, nor can we tack it, as Hammond doth, to that of Christ's mother and brethren desiring to speak with Him, (for this evangelist also had related that some time ago, ch. 8:19.) but it contains an interruption much

Verses 27, 28.

The answer of our Lord here, was exactly to the same effect with one on another occasion, which has already been considered. (Morg Ref.—Matt. 12:46-50.) The blessedness of my father art thou not from this, that she conceived Me, and brought Me for I into the world but in order to that, it is necessary for her, as well as others to be 'and obey my word. So Theophylact.' Why is.

28 But he said, ^e Yea, rather blessed are they that hear the word of God and keep it.

29 ¶ And ^h when the people were gathered thick together, he began to say, ⁱ This is an evil generation; ^k they seek a sign, and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the prophet.

30 For ^l as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation.

31 The ^m queen of the south shall ⁿ rise up in the judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, ^o a greater than Solomon is here.

32 The ^p men of Nineveh shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, ^q a greater than Jonas is here.

33 No man, ^r when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under ^s a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in ^t may see the light.

34 The ^u light of the body is the eye: therefore, when thine eye is ^v single, thy whole body also is full of light; ^w but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness.

g 6:47, 48. 8:21. Ps. 113. 11:1. 11:1-6. 12:81. 18:17, 18. Matt. 7:21-25. 12:48-50. John 13:17. Jam. 1:21-25. 1 John 3:21-24. Rev. 22:14. h 12:1. 14:25, 28.

like that, and, like that, occasion is taken from it for an instruction.

1. The applause which an affectionate, honest, well-meaning woman gave to our Lord Jesus, on hearing his excellent discourses. While the scribes and Pharisees despised and blasphemed them, this good woman (and probably she was a person of some quality) admired them, and the wisdom and power with which He spake, v. 27. She was so pleased to hear how He had confounded the Pharisees, and cleared Himself from their vile insinuations, that she could not forbear crying out, ⁱ *Blessed is the womb that bare Thee.* What an admirable, excellent Man! Surely never was there a greater or better: happy the woman that hath Him for her Son. ^j This was *well said*, as it expressed her high esteem of Christ, and that for the sake of his doctrine; and it was not amiss that it reflected honor on the virgin Mary, his mother, for it agreed with what she herself had said, (ch. 1: 45.) *All generations shall call me blessed*; so even of this generation, had as it was. Note, To all that believe the Word of Christ, his Person is precious, and He is an honor, 1 Pet. 2: 7. Yet we must be careful, lest, as this good woman, we too much magnify the honor of his natural kindred, and so *know Him after the flesh*, whereas we must now henceforth *know Him so no more*.

2. The occasion Christ took from thence to pronounce them more happy, who are his faithful and obedient followers. He does not deny what this woman said, nor refuse her respect, but from this He leads her to that which was of higher consideration, and more concerned her; v. 28. This is intended partly as a *check* to her, for doting so much on his bodily presence, and his human nature, partly as an *encouragement* to her to hope that she might be as happy as his own mother, whose happiness she was ready to envy, if she would *hear the Word of God, and keep it*. Note, It is a great privilege to hear the Word of God, yet those only are truly blessed, that is, blessed of the Lord, that *keep it*; keep it in memory, and keep it to as their way and rule of life.

V. 29-36. Christ's discourse in these verses shows two things:

1. What is the *sign* we may expect from God, for the confirmation of our faith, viz. the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Here is,

1. A reproof to the people for demanding other signs than what had already been given in great plenty, v. 29. Christ knew what brought such a multitude together; they came *seeking a sign*, not so much to have their consciences informed by the doctrine of Christ, as to have their curiosity gratified by his miracles; and it is an *evil generation* which nothing will awaken and convince, no, not the most sensible demonstrations of divine power and goodness.

2. A promise that yet there should be one *sign* more given them, different from any that

i 50. 9:41. Is. 57:3, 4. Matt. 37. 23:34-36. Mark 8:38. John 8:44. k Matt. 12:38, 39. 16:1-4. Mark 8: 11, 12. John 2:18. 9:30. 1 Cor. 12:2. 12:44-46. 1 John 1:17. 2 Tim. 3:2, 6. Luke 10:40. m 1 Kings 10:1, 2. 2 Chr. 9:1. Matt. 22:42.

Verbs 29-32.

Marg. Ref.—Matt. 12: 33-42. Scott. (29, 30.) (Matt. 12: 33-42. 16: 1-4. Mark 8: 11, 12.) In all these passages, as well as here in Luke, Jesus rejects the demand of Him to work some miracles, and pronounces those who desired the miracles, an evil generation. A very natural paraphrase of these texts is this: "How can these persons demand further proof of the divinity of my mission, since they have already shown, by their conduct when they beheld my former miracles, (Matt. 9: 34. 12: 24.) that they are not to be convinced by miracles, and therefore not by the new ones which they demand? Their wishes shall not be gratified. So unreasonable are their demands, that no sign shall be given them." STORR and FLATT.

Verbs 33-36.

This was an answer to another cavil, connected with the preceding objection. (16.) The substance of it has been already commented upon; but the allusion to the light and the eye, seems here to be applied in a different manner than elsewhere. (Matt. 5: 14-16. 6: 22, 23. Mark 4: 21, 22.) Our Lord intimated by it, that he should proceed to diffuse the light of his truth, notwithstanding the perverse opposition of the Pharisees; nor would they be able to cover or extinguish it. Yet they, and others of similar character, would remain in darkness, through the prejudices of their wicked hearts; even as men,

had yet *seen* given them, even the *sign of Jonas the prophet*, which in Matthew is explained, as meaning the *resurrection of Christ*. As Jonas, being cast into the sea, and lying there three days, and then coming up alive, and preaching repentance to the Ninevites, was a sign to them, upon which they turned from their evil way, so shall the death and resurrection of Christ, and the preaching of his Gospel immediately after to the Gentile world, be the last warning to the Jewish nation; if they be provoked to a *holy jealousy* by that, well and good; but if that do not work upon them, let them look for nothing but utter ruin, v. 30.

3. A warning to them to improve this Sign, for it was at their peril if they did not.

(1.) *The queen of Sheba would rise up in judgment against them, and condemn their unbelief*, v. 31. She was a stranger to Israel, and yet so readily gave credit to the report of the glories of a king of Israel, that, notwithstanding the prejudices we are apt to conceive against foreigners, she came from the uttermost parts of the earth, not only to satisfy her curiosity, but to inform her mind, especially in the knowledge of the true God and his worship; and behold, *a greater than Solomon, or more than a Solomon is here*; that is, saith Hammond, more of wisdom and more heavenly, divine doctrine than ever was in all Solomon's words or writings; and yet these wretched Jews will give no manner of regard to what Christ saith to them, though He be in the midst of them.

(2.) The Ninevites would rise up in judgment against them, and condemn their impenitency, v. 32. *They repented at the preaching of Jonas*; but here is preaching which far exceeds that of Jonas, is more powerful and awakening, and threatens a much sorer ruin than that of Nineveh, and yet none are startled by it, to turn from their evil way, as the Ninevites did.

II. He shows what *sign* God expects from us, for the evidencing of our faith; and that is, the serious practice of that religion we profess to believe, and a readiness to entertain all divine truths, when brought to us in their proper evidence. Now observe,

1. They had the *light*, with all the advantage they could desire. For God, having *lighted the candle of the Gospel*, did not put it in a *secret place, or under a bushel*; Christ did not preach in corners. The apostles were ordered to preach the Gospel to every creature; and both Christ and his ministers, wisdom and her maidens, cry in the *chief places of concourse*, v. 33. It is a great privilege to have the light of the Gospel, that by it all may see where they are, whither they are going, and what is the true, sure and only way to happiness.

2. Having the *light*, their concern was, to *have the sight*. Be the object ever so clear, if the *organ* be not right, we are never the better, v. 34. *The light of the body is the eye*, which receives the light. So the light of the soul is

t Ps. 119:18. Matt. 6:22, 23. Mark 9: 18. Acts 26:18. Eph. 1:17, 18. u Acts 2:46. 2 Cor. 1:12. 11:3. Eph. 6:5. Col. 3:22. x Gen. 15:11. 2 Kings 6:15-20. Ps. 81:12. Is. 60: 1. Jer. 39:10. 49:19, 20. 44:18. Jer. 5:21. Mark 4:12. Acts 13:11. Rom. 11:8-10. 2 Cor. 4:4. 2 Thes. 2:9-12.

whose eyes are diseased, see nothing, or nothing as it really is, in the clearest light. It therefore concerned every hearer to be particularly careful, that the supposed light, which he followed, was not darkness; or his first principles and practical judgment erroneous. (*Marg. Ref.*)—Verse 35, may be thus understood: 'If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole' (*of thy conduct, or path*), 'shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.'—'A mind thus enlightened, and free from all those distempers which darken and make blind the soul, will direct 'all our faculties and inclinations, and all the actions of the life, as to a light doth the body, when it walks in a dark night.' Waiter.

SCOTT. (33.) 'Our Lord intimates, that if He worked a miracle among such an obstinate people, He should act as a man who lighted a candle, and then covered it with a bushel.'

(34.) *The light of the body is the eye.* 'As a window is called a light, because it letteth light into the room. *Single*.' Clear without blemish; if the crystal humor and pupil were colored, the eye could not see any other color; therefore hath the wisdom of God, (who dwelt in all his works,) made that, (like a clear glass window, to let in light to the house,) without any color in it, that so we might have a *right apprehension* of things sensible; and so proportionably of things intellectual.' ASSEMBLY'S ANN

35 Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness.

36 If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light.

[Practical Observations.]

37 ¶ And as he spake, a certain Pharisee besought him to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat.

38 And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed before dinner.

39 And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the plat-

Prov. 16:25, 28:12, 1a, 5:20, 21. Jer. 8:9, 9, John 7:48, 49, 9:39-41. Rom. 1:22, 2:18-22, 1 Cor. 1:18-21, 3:18-20, Jam. 3:13-17, 2 Pet. 1:9, 2:18, 19, Rev. 3:17, 18. P. 1:13-17, 1:18, Prov. 1:5, 2:1-11, 4:18-19, 20:27, 1a, 42:16, Hos. 6:3, Matt. 13:11, 12, 22, Mark 4:24, 25, Eph. 4:14, 15, 1a, 3:16, 2 Tim. 3:15-17, 1a, Heb. 5:14, 1a, 12:25, 2 Pet. 3:18.

1 Gr. a candle by its bright shining. 2 7:36, 14:1, 1 Cor. 9:19-23. 3 Matt. 15:2-3, Mark 7:9-13, John 3:25. 4 Matt. 23:25-26, Gal. 1:14, 2 Tim. 3:5, Tit. 1:15, 16.

V. 14-36. The goodness of God, in all its varied displays, tends to draw forth man's ingratitude and enmity, so far as he is left to himself. Even when divine Love was incarnate for the salvation of sinners, his persevering kindness, and pre-eminent excellency, excited the utmost envy and malignity in those persons, whose hypocrisy He exposed, whose selfishness He shamed, and with whose credit, interest or authority, his doctrine interfered: nay, they ascribed even his most beneficent miracles to diabolical agency! But the tendency of his Gospel to humble piety, purity, equity, truth and love, did then, and does still, confute such blasphemous slanders; and it is even now in a measure accompanied with 'the finger of God,' to change the willing slaves of Satan into the devoted worshippers and servants of JEHOVAH. As the conversion of a sinner breaks that false peace, which existed in his heart and conscience, whilst the devil reigned there, and two conflicting parties are formed within the soul, of which grace is superior and will obtain the complete victory; (Note, Gal. 5:16-18.) so the strange indifference of men to the concerns of religion is disturbed, wherever the Gospel is successfully preached; and two parties are formed, the one for Christ and his cause, and the other in opposition to them; but the former will certainly prevail at length. (Notes, 12:49-53. Matt. 10:34-36. P. O. Acts 14:1-10.) In this contest, none are allowed to stand neuter: the Lord Jesus calls on every one to join Him in destroying the kingdom of Satan. Yet we must not hastily conclude, that all who appear to be for Him, will 'continue to the end.' Alas! the unclean spirit for a time goes out of many,

the understanding and judgment, and its power of discerning between good and evil, truth and falsehood. Now, according as this is, so to us is the light of divine revelation, and our benefit by it; a savor of life unto life, or of death unto death.

If this eye of the soul be single, if it see things as they are, and judge of them impartially, if it aim at truth only, and seek it for its own sake, the whole body, that is, the whole soul, is full of light, it receives and entertains the Gospel; which denotes the same thing with that of the good ground, receiving the Word, and understanding it. If our understanding admit the Gospel in its full light, it fills the soul, and has enough to fill it. And if the soul be thus filled with the light of the Gospel, having no part dark; if all its powers and faculties be subjected to the government and influence of the Gospel, and none left unsanctified, then the whole soul shall be full of light, full of holiness and comfort; it was darkness itself, but is now light in the Lord, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light, v. 36. Note, The Gospel will come into the souls of those who will receive it; and where it comes, it will bring light with it. But,

If the eye of the soul be evil, if the judgment be bribed and biased by the corrupt and vicious dispositions of the mind; if the understanding be prejudiced against divine truths, and resolved not to admit them, though brought with ever so convincing an evidence, it is no wonder that the whole body, the whole soul is full of darkness, v. 34. How can they have instruction, information, direction or comfort from the Gospel, that wilfully shut their eyes against it; and what hope is there of such, what remedy for them? The inference from hence therefore is, (v. 35.) Take heed that the eye of the mind be not blinded by partiality and prejudice, and sinful aims. Be sincere in your inquiries after truth, and ready to receive it in the light, and love, and power of it; and not as the men of this generation whom Christ preached to, who never sincerely desired to know God's will, or designed to do it, and therefore no wonder that they

walked on in darkness, wandered endlessly, and perished eternally.

V. 37-54. Christ here saith many of those things to a Pharisee and his guests, in a private conversation at table, which He afterward said in a public discourse in the temple, Matt. 23. He would not give those reproofs to any sort of sinners in general, which He durst not apply to them in particular; for He was, and is, the faithful Witness. Here is,

I. Christ's going to dine with a Pharisee, v. 37. We are willing to hope that the Pharisee was so well pleased with his discourse, that he was willing to show Him respect, and desirous to have more of his company, and therefore gave Him this invitation; and yet we have cause to suspect that it was with an ill design, to break off his discourse with the people, and to have an opportunity of insnaring Him, and getting something out of Him which might serve for matter of accusation or reproach, v. 53, 54. But, whatever his mind was, Christ knew it; if he meant ill, he shall know Christ doth not fear him; if well, he shall know Christ is willing to do him good; so he went in and sat down to meat. Note, Christ's disciples must learn of Him to be conversable, and not morose. Though we have need to be cautious what company we keep, yet we need not be rigid, nor must we therefore go out of the world.

II. The offence the Pharisee took at Christ, for not washing before dinner, v. 38. He wondered that a Man of his sanctity, a Prophet, a Man of so much devotion, and such a strict conversation, would sit down to meat, and not first wash his hands, especially being newly come out of a mixed company, and there being in the Pharisee's dining-room, no doubt, all accommodations ready for it, and the Pharisee himself and all his guests washing, so that He could not but be singular, if He did not wash. And what harm had it been, if He had washed? Was it not strictly commanded by the canons of their church? It was so, and therefore Christ would not do it, because He would witness against their assuming a power to impose that as a matter of religion, which God commanded them

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

who never admit the Savior to take possession of their hearts: and so the enemy returns, and 'the last state of those men becomes worse than the first.' Let such a dreadful event, (may every one say,) 'Good Lord, deliver us!' (P. O. Matt. 12:22-50.)—In order to this, we should endeavor to 'hear the Word of God, and keep it.' Without this, we cannot be blessed: for all notions, forms and outward privileges, which fail of rectifying men's dispositions and regulating their conduct, will lead to their deeper condemnation. Thus multitudes who hear the Gospel, stand out in unbelief against every demonstration of the truth, and continue in sin against the convictions of their own consciences: while many come from distant places through love to the Word of God, and bestow great pains, under immense disadvantages, to become wise unto salvation; and others profit by far inferior means and instruments, who 'will rise up in judgment against them and condemn them.'—But were Christ Himself the constant Preacher to any company, and did He daily work his miracles of love among them; unless his grace also humbled their hearts, and subdued their carnal prejudices, they would not be profited. Instead, therefore, of requiring more evidence and fuller instruction, than the Lord is pleased to afford us, we should 'pray without ceasing,' that our understandings may be opened, and our hearts prepared, to profit by the light which we enjoy; and above all things, we ought to take heed that the 'light which is in us be not darkness;' for if our leading principles be fallacies, and our affections carnal, our judgment and practice must become more egregiously wrong by all our reasonings and assiduity. Scott.

(36.) 'The doctrine that is contrary to the Gospel may say, Ignorance is the mother of devotion; but Christ shows that there can be no devotion without heavenly light. Ignorance is the mother of superstition, but with this the heavenly light has nothing to do.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 37, 38.

As Jesus was speaking on some other occasion, (for harmonists seem, with probability, to place the following incident in another connection.)

Pharisee, with apparent respect and earnestness, pressed him to dine with him, and he was pleased to accept of the invitation; yet it is probable, that the Pharisee had purposely collected together many of his brethren to meet Jesus, with a design to insnare Him, of which He was fully aware. This may account for the remarkable sharpness of his reproofs and warnings. (Notes, 7:36, 14:1-6.) The Pharisee, however expressed his surprise, that Jesus had not first washed ac-

cording to their traditions; (Marg. Ref. b.—Matt. 15: 1, 2. Mark 7: 3-8.) and this gave him the opportunity of exposing and condemning their hypocrisy and superstition. (Note, Matt. 23: 23, 24.) (38.) Had not washed. 'I had not been baptized.'—If the verb means exclusively to immerse, certainly all the company, except Jesus and his disciples, had openly been immersed, and were daily immersed, before dinner: so that it was a matter of astonishment, that our Lord should not be thus immersed. Scott.

(37.) To dine.] The Jews made but two meals in the day. The word here used refers to the first eating, which may be called their breakfast, or dinner, because, it was both, and was but a slight meal. The hour for this on the Sabbath, says Josephus, was noon: i. e. the sixth hour. Their chief meal was their supper, after the heat of the day was over; and the same was the principal meal among the Greeks and Romans. Bp. Pearce, in CLARKE.

ter; ¹ but your inward part is full of ² ravening and wickedness.

40 Ye ¹ fools! ² did not he that made that which is without, make that which is within also?

41 But ¹ rather give alms ² of such things as ye have, and, behold, ³ all things are clean unto you.

42 But ¹ woe unto you, Pharisees! ² for ye tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, ³ and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, ⁴ and not to leave the other undone.

43 Woe unto you, Pharisees! ¹ for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets.

44 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ¹ for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them.

45 Then answered one of the lawyers, and said unto him, Master, thus saying ¹ thou reproachest us also.

15:15. Gen. 6:5. 2 Chr. 25:2. 31: 20, 21. Prov. 26:25. 30:12. Jer. 4: 1. Matt. 12:33-35. 15:19. John

not. The ceremonial law consisted in *divers washings*, but this was none of them, and therefore Christ would not practise it.

III. Christ's reproof, on this occasion, to the Pharisees.

1. He reproves them for placing religion so much in those things which are only external, while those which respect the soul, and fall under the eye of God, were not attended to, v. 39, 40. 'Ye Pharisees make clean the outside only, ye wash your hands with water, but not your hearts from wickedness; these are full of covetousness and malice.' The frame and temper of the mind, in every religious service, are the inside of the cup and platter; the impurity of that infects the services, and therefore to keep ourselves free from scandalous enormities, and yet to live under the dominion of spiritual wickedness, is as great an affront to God, as it would be for a servant to give the cup into his master's hand, clean wiped from all dust on the outside, but within full of cobwebs and spiders. *Ravening and wickedness*, that is, *reigning worldliness and reigning spitefulness*, for which men think they can find some cover, are the dangerous, damning sins of many, who have made the outside of the cup clean from the more gross and scandalous sins of whoredom and drunkenness. 'Ye fools, did not He that made that which is without, make that which is within also?' He who made laws, and appointed divers ceremonial washings for that which is without, did not He, even in those laws, further intend something within, and by other laws show how little He regarded the purifying of the flesh, and the putting away of the filth of that, if the heart be not made clean? Or, it may have regard to God, not only as a *Lawgiver*, but, (which the words seem rather to import,) as a Creator. Did not God, who made us these bodies, make us these souls also? Now if He made both, He justly expects we should take care of both, and therefore not only wash the body, but the spirit, — get the leprosy in the heart cleansed.

To this He subjoins a rule for making our creature-comforts clean to us, v. 41. Here is a

12:4. 13:2. Acts 5:3. 8:21-23. Jam. 4:8. e. Pa. 22:15. Ec. 22:25, 27. Zeph. 3:4. Matt. 7:15. 12:20. 24:35. Pa. 14:1. 75:4, 5. 94: 8, 9. Prov. 1:22. 8:5. Jer. 5:21. Matt. 23:17, 28. 1 Cor. 15:38. f. Gen. 1:26, 27. 27. Num. 16:22. Ps. 53:15. 94:10. Zech. 12:1. Heb. 12:9. h. 12:33. 14:12-14. 16:9. 18:32. 19: 8. Dent. 15:8-10. Job 31:16-30. Pa. 41:1. 112:9. Prov. 14:31. 19:

17. Ec. 11:1, 2. Is. 58:7-11. Dan. 4:27. Matt. 5:42. 6:1-4. 25:34-40. 26:11. Acts 9:36-39. 10:31, 32. 11:13. 24:17. 2 Cor. 8:7-9, 12. 9:8. — 15. Eph. 4:3. Heb. 6:10. 13:16. Jam. 1:27. 2:14-16. 1 John 3:16, 17. * Or, as ye are able. † Acts 10:15. Rom. 14:14-18. 1 Tim. 4:4, 5. Tit. 1:15. k. Matt. 23:13-15, 23. 18:12. m. Dent. 10:12, 13. 1 Sam. 15:22. n. Prov. 21:3. Is. 1:10-17. 58:2-6. Jer. 7:2-10, 21, 22. Mic. 6:3, Mal.

1:8. 2:17. John 5:42. Tit. 2:11, 12. 1 John 4:20, 21. n. Lev. 27:30-33. 2 Cor. 3:15-19. Rom. 15:27, 33. Ec. 7:18. Mal. 3:8-10. o. 14:7-11. 20:46. Prov. 16:18. Matt. 23:6, 7. Mark 12:38, 39. Rom. 12:10. Phil. 2:3. Jam. 2:23-4. 3 John 9. p. Num. 19:16. Ps. 5:6. Hos. 9:8. q. 1 Kings 22:24. Jer. 6:10. 20:8. Am. 7:10-13. John 7:48, 49. 9:40, 41.

Verses 39, 40.

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 12: 33-37. 23: 25-28.) As God, who created the soul, and perfectly knows it, abhors all sin, and requires especially inward purity; nothing can be more irrational and foolish than to suppose, that any external observance can please Him, while avarice, pride and ambition, revenge, and other malignant passions, or sensual lusts, possess the heart.

Verse 41.

'Notes, Is. 53: 3-12. Dan. 4: 27. Matt. 5: 7. 25: 34-40.' Pilate washed his hands, as a token that he was pure from the blood of Jesus, when he gave Him up to be crucified; and the Pharisees washed their hands, as a profession of holiness and piety, while their hearts were full of rapacity and iniquity. (Note, Matt. 27: 24, 25.) But the observance in both cases was vain and inefficacious; and the conduct of Zachæus, who, having made large restitution to all whom he had wronged, gave half of his remaining goods to the poor, was a far better proof of love to God and man, as well as of sincere repentance and faith; and a far better method of seeking the sanctified and comfortable use of outward things. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, 3: 10-14. 19: 1-10.) Some think our Lord meant, that, as the possessions of many among the Pharisees had been in great measure acquired by oppression and injustice; and as it would have been impracticable, in all cases, to make restitution to the injured persons they must dispose of all their ill-gotten and idolized property in alms, before they could expect that God would accept their services, and bless their provisions; and the original expression, with the connection, and the character of the persons addressed, give considerable probability to this interpretation. Liberality to the poor, however, according to a man's ability, from proper principles, does more towards rendering outward possessions or enjoyments sanctified, than any ceremonial washings can do. Where this is duly attended to, from scriptural motives, and men deduct from their own indulgence to give a portion to their poor neighbors, 'Behold, all things are clean unto them.' Of such things as ye have. 'As ye are able.' SCOTT.

'Even as to vessels, the genuine way of cleansing them, in a moral and spiritual sense, is by making them the instruments of conveying relief to the distressed and needy.'

'Such things as ye have.' Meaning, either what was within the dishes spoken of before; or what was within their houses, or power; what they had at hand. When a part of every thing you have is

sincerely consecrated to God, then all that remains will be clean unto you.'

DR. A. CLARKE.

'In proportion to your substance.' So Grotius understands it. The learned Bos has 'I think, abundantly proved, the original words will very justly admit this sense, and are thus used by some of the best Greek classics. No other seems to agree so well with the connection.'

DODDRIEGE.

Verse 42.

Rue.] 'A small shrubby plant, common in gardens. It has a strong, unpleasant smell, and a bitersish penetrating taste.' HARRIS.

Verse 44.

Graves which appear not.] 'How is it possible to make these words the same in sense with those of Matt. 23: 27?—Luke's graves that appear not, with Matthew's *unseen sepulchres*, which appear beautiful outward? And yet great pains

have been taken to this purpose by learned men, not considering that our Savior made use of both similitudes; but Matthew related one, and Luke another.'

'The sepulchres or burying-places of the common class of people were mere excavations in the earth, such as are commonly made at the present day in the East. Persons who sustained a higher rank, owned subterranean recesses, *crypts*, or caverns, which were, in some instances, the work of nature, and in some, were merely artificial excavations of the earth, and in others, were cut out from rocks. Gen. 23: 2. Josh. 10: 27. Is. 22: 16. 2 Kings 13: 21. Job 11: 38. 19: 41. Matt. 27: 52, 60. Numerous sepulchres of this kind still remain in Syria, in Palestine, and in Egypt.'

Verse 45.

The lawyers seem to have been a superior order of the scribes, who were most celebrated as learned men, or most followed as teachers, and gave lectures on the law. This man considered himself and his brethren as superior to all censure or reproof; he wondered, therefore, and



46 And he said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lead men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers.

47 Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the prophets, and your fathers killed them.

48 Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres.

49 Therefore also said the Wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute;

50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;

51 From the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple; verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation.

52 Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered.

53 And as he said these things unto them, the Scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him

ing over the wickedness of their hearts and lives with specious pretences; (v. 44.) 'Ye are as grasses overgrown with grass, which therefore appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them, and so contract the ceremonial pollution which by the law arose from the touch of a grave.' These Pharisees were within full of abominations, as a grave of putrefaction, full of covetousness, envy and malice; and yet they concealed it so artfully with a profession of devotion, that they who conversed with them, and followed their doctrine, were defiled with sin, infected with their corruptions and ill morals, and yet suspected no danger by them: The contagion insinuated itself, and was insensibly caught, and those that caught it, thought themselves never the worse.

IV. His testimony also against the lawyers or scribes, who made it their business to expound the law according to the tradition of the elders, as the Pharisees did to observe the law according to that tradition.

1. There was one of that profession, who represented what He said against the Pharisees, v. 45. Note, It is common for unhumiliated sinners to call and count reproofs reproaches. It is the wisdom of those who desire to have their sin mortified, to make a good use of reproaches that come from ill will, and to turn them into reproofs; if we can thus hear of our faults, and amend them, it is well: but it is the folly of those who are wedded to their sins, and resolved not to part with them, to make an ill use of faithful and friendly admonitions, which come from love, and to have their passions provoked by them, as if they were intended for reproaches, and therefore fly in the face of their reprovers, and justify themselves in rejecting the reproof. Thus the prophet complained, (Jer. 6: 10.) *The word of the Lord is to them a reproach, they have no delight in it.* This lawyer espoused the Pharisee's cause, and so made himself partaker of his sins.

2. Our Lord thereupon took them to task, v. 46, 52. They blessed themselves in the reputation they had among the people, who thought them happy men, because they studied the law, and were always conversant with that, and had the honor of instructing the people in the knowledge of that; but Christ denounced woes against them, for He sees not as man sees. This was just upon him for taking the Pharisees' part, and quarrelling with Christ because He reproved them. Note, Those who quarrel with the reproofs of others, and suspect them to be reproaches to them, do but get woes of their own by so doing.

(1.) The lawyers are reproved, for making the law to speak of many things;

54 Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him.

r. Is. 10:1. Matt. 23:2-4. Gal. 6:13.

services of religion more burdensome to others, but more easy to themselves, than God had made them, v. 46. 'Ye will not burden yourselves with, nor be yourselves bound by those restraints with which you hamper others.' They would seem, by the hedges they pretended to make about the law, to be very strict for the observance of the law, but in their practices they make nothing, not only of those hedges, but of the law itself: thus the confessors of the Romish church are said to do with their penitents. 'Ye will not lighten them to those ye have power over; ye will not touch them, that is, either to repeal, or to dispense with them, when ye find them burdensome and grievous to the people.' They would come in with both hands, to dispense with a command of God, but not with a finger, to mitigate the rigor of any tradition of the elders.

(2.) They are reproved, for pretending a veneration for the memory of the prophets whom their fathers killed, when yet they hated and persecuted those in their own day, who were sent on the same errand, to call them to repentance, and direct them to Christ, v. 47-49.

[1.] These hypocrites, among other pretences of piety, built the sepulchres of the prophets; that is, erected monuments over their graves, in their honor, probably with large inscriptions containing high encomiums of them. They were not so superstitious as to enshrine their relics, or to think devotions more acceptable to God for being paid at the tombs of the martyrs; they did not burn incense, or pray to them, or plead their merits with God; they did not add that iniquity to their hypocrisy; but, as if they owned themselves the children of the prophets, their heirs and executors, they repaired and beautified the monuments sacred to their pious memory.

[2.] Notwithstanding this, they had an inveterate enmity to those in their own day, that came to them in the spirit and power of those prophets; and, though they had not yet had an opportunity of carrying it far, yet they would soon do it, for the Wisdom of God said, that is, Christ Himself would so order it, and did now foretell it, that they would slay and persecute the prophets and apostles that should be sent them. The Wisdom of God would thus make trial of them, and discover their odious hypocrisy, by sending them prophets, to reprove them for their sins; and warn them of the judgments of God. Those prophets should prove themselves apostles, or messengers sent from heaven, by signs, and wonders, and gifts of the Holy Ghost. Or, 'I will send them prophets under the style and title of apostles, who yet

Jesus should join the scribes with the Pharisees, in the preceding woe, and charged Him with reproaching so honorable a body.

One of the lawyers. [1.] One of the doctors of the law; which I choose rather than lawyer, because the word lawyer naturally suggests to us a modern idea of an office which did not exist among the Jews at this time, and has strangely misled some interpreters. These Jewish lawyers (as our translators call them) were the most considerable species of scribes, who applied themselves peculiarly to study and explain the law. Probably some of them were Pharisees; but it was no ways essential to their office that they should be so.

DODDRIDGE.

verses 46-48.

'Marg. Ref.—Matt. 23: 1-4, v. 29-33. (48.) Truly, &c.] As in your conduct you imitate your fathers, truly ye bear witness to them, rather than against them; and in effect approve the works of your fathers; for one would imagine that you erected these monuments, not so much in honor of the prophets, as of the persecutors by whom they were so wickedly destroyed.

(47.) Ye build, &c.] We are not to understand this, as though any part of the guilt lay in the building or adorning the tombs of the prophets, considered in itself; but in their falseness, in giving this testimony of respect to the prophets, whilst they were actuated by the spirit, and following the example of their persecutors and murderers, inasmuch that they appeared to erect these sepulchres, not to do honor to God's prophets, but to serve as eternal monuments of the success of their progenitors in destroying them.

CAMPBELL.

s. Matt. 23:29-33. Acts 7:51, 52. 1
Thes. 2:15, 16.
t. Josh. 24:22 Job 15:6. Ps. 64:8.
u. 2 Chr. 36:16. Matt. 21:35-38. Heb.
11:36-38. Jam. 5:10.
v. Prov. 12, &c. 8:1-12. 9:1-3. 1
Cor. 1:30. Col. 2:3.
y. 24:47. Matt. 23:34. Acts 1:8. Eph.
4:11.
z. 21:16, 17. Matt. 22:18. John 16:2.
Acts 7:57-60. 21:3. 9:12. 19:12.
22:4, 5, 29. 28:25. Cor. 11:24, 25.
a. Gen. 8:5, 6. Num. 35:38. 2 Kings
24:4. Ps. 9:12. Is. 56:21. Rev. 19:

80-24.
b. Jer. 7:29.
c. Gen. 4:8-11. Heb. 11:4. 12:24. 1
John 3:12.
d. 2 Chr. 34:21, 22. Zech. 1:1. Matt.
23:35.
e. 19:39, 40. Matt. 23:13. John 7:47-
52. 8:24-34. Acts 4:17, 18. 5:41.
f. Jer. 23:13. Is. 9:12.
g. 20:20, 27. Jer. 18:18. 20:19
h. Ps. 37:35, 36. 56:5, 6. Matt. 22: 5,
18, 35. Mark 12:13.

Verses 49-51.

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 23: 34-39. Eph. 4: 7-13.) (49.) Wisdom.] Some expositors understand 'the Wisdom of God,' of Christ Himself; and as the words which follow are not found in the Old Testament, we may suppose that He meant, as the Word and Wisdom of God, immediately to reveal to the hearers his wise counsel and purposes respecting them. In the parallel passage of St. Matthew, which was spoken at the close of his ministry, our Lord evidently spoke in his own person.

SCOTT.

Verse 52.

(Marg. Ref.—19: 23-40, v. 40. Matt. 23: 13.) The scribes are said to have been distinguished by the symbolical figure of a key; intimating that their proper office was to open and explain the Scripture, and to admit men into the knowledge of God, and of his truth and will. (Notes. Is. 22: 20-25. Matt. 16: 19. Rev. 3: 7.) 'For a long season, they, who ought to have been the door-keepers of the church, have been the chief persons in driving away the people from the knowledge of God.' Beza.

The key of knowledge. 'If a key was delivered to them as a badge of their office, there may be a beautiful allusion to that circumstance as if He should have said, You take the key, not to use, but to secrete it.'

DODDRIDGE.

Verses 53, 54.

It is no wonder, that these sharp reproofs extremely enraged the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees; especially as Jesus was going to

CHAP. XII.

Jesus warns his disciples against hypocrisy; and the fear of man in confessing Him. He shews the danger of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and teaches dependence on Him, 1-12. He refuses to act as judge in temporal things; and warns his disciples against covetousness, by the parable of a rich man, suddenly torn by death from all his purposes and expected enjoyments, 13-21. He cautions them against anxious cares, and exhorts them to seek spiritual blessings, 22-34, and to be ready for the coming of the Lord, 35-40. He instructs and warns his ministers, by the parable of a faithful, and of a wicked steward, 41-48. He predicts the divisions which his Gospel would occasion, 49-53; reproves those who knew not the signs of the times, 54-56; and counsels the people to seek reconciliation to God without delay, 57-59.

IN the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, inasmuch that they trode one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples, 'first of all, ^a Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, ^b which is hypocrisy.

a 54:15, 6:17, Acts 21:20. Gr. b 2 Kings 7:17 c 1 Cor. 16:2 Jam. 3:17. d Matt. 16:6-12. Mark 8:15. 1 Cor. 5:7, 8. e 56: 11-14, Joh. 20:5, 27:8, 38:13. Is. 38:14. Jam. 3:17. 1 Pet. 2:1.

Gospel, and doing all they could to obstruct its progress and success, v. 52. They had not, according to the duty of their place, faithfully expounded to the people those Scriptures of the Old Testament, which pointed at the Messiah, for had they been led, by the lawyers, into the right understanding of these, they would readily have embraced Him and his doctrine: but, instead of that, they had perverted those texts, and cast a mist before the eyes of the people, by their corrupt glosses on them, and this is called *taking away the key of knowledge*, and in Matthew, *shutting up the kingdom of God against men*, Matt. 23: 13. Note, Those who take away the key of knowledge, shut up the kingdom of heaven. They themselves did not embrace the Gos-

shall produce as good an authority as any of the old prophets did; and those they shall not only contradict and oppose, but *slay and persecute.*^c Christ foresaw this, and yet did not otherwise, than as became the *Wisdom of God* in sending them, for He knew how to bring glory to Himself in the issue, by the recompenses reserved both for the persecutors and the persecuted in the future state.

[3.] Therefore God will justly put another construction on their building of the tombs of the prophets, than what they would be thought to intend, and it shall be interpreted their *allowing of the deeds of their fathers*, v. 45. If these lawyers will carry the matter further, and will build their sepulchres, it is such *over-doing* as gives cause to suspect it is meant as a cover for some design against prophecy itself, like the kiss of a traitor; as *he that blesseth his friend with a loud voice, rising early in the morning, it shall be counted a curse to him*. Prov. 27: 14.

[4.] They must expect no other than to be reckoned with, as the *fillers up of the measure of persecution*, v. 50, 51. They keep up the trade as it were in succession, and therefore are responsible for the *debts of the company*, even those it has been *contracting* all along from the blood of Abel, when the world began, to that of Zacharias, and so forward to the end of the Jewish state; it shall all be *required of this generation*, this last generation of the Jews, whose sin in persecuting Christ's apostles would exceed any of the sins of that kind their fathers were guilty of, and so would bring *wrath upon them to the uttermost*, 1 Thess. 2: 15: 16. Their destruction by the Romans was so terrible, that it might well be reckoned the completing of God's vengeance on that persecuting nation.

[5.] They are reproved for opposing the Gospel, and doing all they could to obstruct its progress and success, v. 52. They had not, according to the duty of their place, faithfully expounded to the people those Scriptures of the Old Testament, which pointed at the Messiah, for had they been led, by the lawyers, into the right understanding of these, they would readily have embraced Him and his doctrine: but, instead of that, they had perverted those texts, and cast a mist before the eyes of the people, by their corrupt glosses on them, and this is called *taking away the key of knowledge*, and in Matthew, *shutting up the kingdom of God against men*, Matt. 23: 13. Note, Those who take away the key of knowledge, shut up the kingdom of heaven. They themselves did not embrace the Gos-

pel, though by their acquaintance with the Old Testament they could not but know that: the time was fulfilled, and the kingdom of God was at hand; they saw the prophecies accomplished in that kingdom our Lord Jesus was about to set up, and yet would not themselves enter into it. Nay, them that, without any assistance of theirs, were entering in, they did all they could to hinder and discourage, by threatening to cast them out of the synagogue, and otherwise terrifying them.

Lastly, In the close of the chapter, we are told how spitefully and maliciously the scribes and Pharisees contrived to draw Him into a snare, v. 53, 54. They could not hear those cutting reproofs which they must own to be just; but since what He had said against them in particular, would not bear an action, and they could ground upon it no criminal accusation: therefore, as if because his reproofs were warm, they hoped to stir Him up to some intemperate heat and passion, so as to put Him off his guard; they began to be very fierce upon Him, and to provoke Him to speak of many things, to propose dangerous questions to Him, laying wait for something which might serve the design they had, of making Him either odious to the people, or obnoxious to the government, or both. Thus they sought occasion against Him, like David's enemies that every day wrested his words, Ps. 56: 5. *Evil men dig up mischief.* Note, Faithful reprovers of sin must expect to have many enemies, and have need to set a watch before the door of their lips, because of their observers that watch for their halting. The prophet complains of those in his time, who make a man an offender for a word, and lay a snare for him that reproveth in the gate, Isa. 29: 21. That we may bear trials of this kind with patience, and get through them with prudence, let us consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself.

CHAP. XII. v. 1-12. In this chapter, we have divers excellent discourses of our Savior's on various occasions; many of which are to the same purport with what we had in Matthew on other like occasions; for we may suppose that our Lord Jesus preached the same doctrines,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 37-54. The case of these Pharisees and lawyers is a awful, but instructive example. Their ambitious desire of pre-eminence, applause and authority, and their proud and worldly prejudices, led them to place religion in minute but specious observances: this seduced them from the spiritual truth, will, and worship of God, and entangled them more and more in superstition and delusion. Thus they were exposed to the sharp rebukes of Christ, and engaged in opposition to Him: and, with all their sanctimonious gravity and austerity, they became his persecutors and murderers, and fell under his most tremendous indignation, till 'vengeance came upon them to the uttermost.' Alas! they have had many successors, who have proved themselves to be their children, even as they were proved to be 'the children of those who slew the prophets.' Proud men deem the Word of God to be a reproach to them: many would allow the preacher to be severe upon the crimes of others, provided he would be gentle to theirs; and, among learned men, numbers seem to think, that their characters even sanctify their crimes; so that it is often thought intolerable insolence, for a minister to expose their most flagrant enormities. But the reproach comes from their own consciences; and we must by no means connive at their vices, which are dishonorable to God and ruinous to men, in proportion to the eminence or sacredness of their characters: and when re-

nowned or authorized teachers perplex the truth, and set the people against it, they become murderers of men's souls, and ought most carefully to be avoided, and decidedly protested against. 'Woe unto them! for they take away the key of knowledge; they enter not in themselves, and those who are entering in they hinder:' and they are the more dangerous for being 'as graves that appear not, of which the men who walk over them are not aware.' But such truths must excite opposition, and many will vehemently urge those who openly declare them, to speak or do something which may give them a handle against them. Persons, therefore, who engage in contests of this kind, should be of a blameless conversation, and endued with heavenly wisdom; they should also have a clear call, and a great command of their own temper and spirit: so that few are qualified for these services. But we should all look well to our own hearts, that they may be cleansed and new created; and, while we insist on the great things of the law and of the Gospel, we must be careful not to neglect even the smallest matter, which God has appointed.—Finally, the more careful we are 'to give aims of such things as we have,' and to deduct from every article of expense for that purpose, the more comfortable pure and holy will all our possessions and enjoyments be. (P. O. Matt. 23: 13-39.) SCOTT.

Pharisee, when He thus spake to them. (54.) *Laying wait.* Several of the original words are taken from hunting; which is an apt emblem of the violence, and rudeness, and artful devices, with which the company sought to entangle Jesus in their nets and toils. (Marg. Ref.)

(53.) *To speak of many things.* 'Literally, to extemporize; in order that they might catch up something hastily and inconsiderately uttered.'

NOTES.

CHAP. XII. v. 1-7. (1.) *Gathered together.* The people must have come from very distant places, and our Lord seems to have left the Pharisee's house, and to have spoken the subsequent instructions to his disciples, in the hearing of the multitude, yet in the presence of the company with whom He had before dined. (1.) *Hypocrisy.* (11.) 44. Matt. 16: 5-12. 23: 12-25.) The folly of hypocrisy is clearly seen, when it is considered that it shall be discovered before the Judge [504,

Himself, and the whole assembled world: so that no one word, whispered in confidence most secretly, can escape detection. (3: 17. Mat. 10: 24-28. Mark 4: 21, 22. 1 Cor. 4: 2-5. 2 Cor. 5: 2-12.) The solemn warning to 'fear Him, who after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell,' is here addressed immediately to the friends of Christ; for even believers have often been rendered victorious over the dread of man's cruelty, by fear of falling under the wrath of almighty God. The word, here translated *hell*, always means the place of final and eternal punishment. (Note, Matt. 5: 21, 22.) (6.) *Furlings.* 'A Roman coin, the tenth part of a denarius, in value about three farthings.' Doddridge. (Matt. 10: 29.) SCOTT.

(1.) *An innumerable multitude.* 'It would be more exactly rendered, many myriads: but lest every English reader should not know that a myriad is ten thousand, I render it, many thousands: not necessary to take the word in its strictest sense.' [504, 1000.]

2 For 'there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known.

3 Therefore 'whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness, shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets, shall be proclaimed upon the house-tops.

4 And I say unto you, 'my friends, 'Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do.

5 But I will 'forewarn you whom ye shall fear: "Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath 'power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him.

6 Are not ° five sparrows sold for two farthings? and not one of them is forgotten before God.

7 But ° even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: 'ye are of more value than many sparrows.

8 Also I say unto you, 'Whosoever shall confess me before men, him shall the Son of man also ° confess before the angels of God.

9 But 'he that denieth me before men, ° shall be denied before the angels of God.

and pressed the same duties, at several times, in several companies, and that one of the evangelists took them as He delivered them at one time, and another at another time; and we need thus to have precept upon precept, line upon line.

We find here,

I. A vast auditory assembled to hear Christ preach, v. 1. The scribes and Pharisees sought to accuse Him, but the people still admired Him. It was while He was in the Pharisee's house, the people got together for an afternoon-sermon, and He would not disappoint them. Though, in the morning, (ch. 11: 29.) He had severely reproved them, yet they renewed their attendance on Him; so much better could they bear their reproofs than the Pharisees theirs. The more the Pharisees strove to drive the people from Christ, the more flocking there was to Him. It is good to see people thus forward to hear the Word, and venture on inconvenience and danger, rather than miss an opportunity for their souls.

II. The instructions He gave his followers, in the hearing of this auditory.

1. He began with a caution against hypocrisy. This He said to his disciples first of all; either to the twelve, or to the seventy; whom, being his more peculiar charge, He therefore particularly warned as his beloved sons; for, making more profession of religion than others, hypocrisy in that, was the sin they were most in danger of. They were to preach to others; and hypocrisy would be worse in them than in others. Besides, there was a Judas among them, that was a hypocrite, which Christ knew, and would hereby startle him, or leave him inexcusable. Christ's disciples were, for aught we know, the best men then in the world, yet they needed to be cautioned against hypocrisy. Christ said this to them, in the hearing of this great multitude, rather than privately, to add the greater weight to the caution, and to let the world know, that He would not countenance hypocrisy, no, not in his own disciples.

Now observe,

(1.) The description of the sin He warns them against. It is *leaven*, is *spreading* as *leaven*, insinuates itself into the whole man, and all that he does; *swelling*, and *souring* as *leaven*, for it puffs men up with pride, imbitters them with malice, and makes their service unacceptable to God. It is the leaven of the Pharisees; the sin they are most of them found in. 'Take heed of imitating them; be not you of their spirit; do not you disseminate in Christianity, as they do in Judaism; make not your religion a cloak of maliciousness, as they do theirs.'

(2.) A good reason against it, v. 2, 3. 'It is to no purpose to disseminate, for sooner or later, truth will come out; and a lying tongue is but for a moment. If you speak in darkness that which is unbecoming, and inconsistent with your public professions, it shall be heard in the light; some way or other it shall be discovered, a bird of the air shall carry the voice, (Eccl. 10: 20.) and your folly will be made manifest.' The iniquity that is concealed with a show of piety, will be discovered, perhaps in this world, as that of Judas, and Simon Magus, at furthest, in the great day, when the secrets of all hearts shall be made manifest. Eccl. 12: 14. Rom. 2: 16.

2. To this He added a charge, to be faithful to the trust reposed in them, and not betray it, through cowardice or base fear. Some make v. 2, 3. to be a caution to them not to conceal those things which they had been instructed in, and were employed to publish to the world. 'Whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, tell them the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, whoever is offended; for if you please men, you are not Christ's servants, nor can you please Him.' Gal. 1: 10.

But this was not the worst of it; it was likely to be a suffering cause, though never a sinking one, let them therefore arm themselves with courage; and divers arguments are furnished here, to steel them with a holy resolution in their work. Consider,

(1.) 'The power of your enemies is a limited power, v. 4. Christ's disciples are his friends, and He gives them this friendly advice, 'Do not disquiet yourselves with tormenting fears of the power and rage of men.' Those whom Christ owns for his friends, need not be afraid of any enemies. 'Be not afraid, no, let it not be in the power, not only of scoffers, but even of murderers, to drive you from your work; for you that have learned to triumph over death, may say, even of them, Let them do their worst, the immortal soul lives, and enjoys itself and its God, and sets them all at defiance.' Note, Those can do Christ's disciples no real harm, and therefore ought not to be dreaded, who can but kill the body; for they only send that to its rest, and the soul to its joy, the sooner.

(2.) God is to be feared more than the most powerful men; (v. 5.) that you may fear man less, fear God more. Moses conquers his fear of the wrath of the king, by having an eye to Him that is invisible. By owning Christ, you may incur the wrath of men, which can reach no further than to cut you to death; (and without God's permission they cannot do that;) but by denying Christ, you will incur the wrath of God, which has power irresistible to send you to hell. Now of two evils the least is to be chosen, and the greatest to be dreaded; therefore, I say unto you, fear Him.' 'It is true,' said that blessed martyr, bishop Hooper, 'life is sweet, and death bitter; but eternal life is more sweet, and eternal death more bitter.'

(3.) The lives of good Christians and good ministers are the particular care of Divine Providence, v. 6, 7. To encourage us in times of difficulty and danger, we must have recourse to our first principles, and build on them; now a firm belief in God's universal providence would be satisfying to us, when at any time we are in peril, and would encourage us to trust to God in the way of duty. Providence takes cognizance of the meanest creatures, even of the sparrows. 'Though they are of such small account, yet not one of them is forgotten of God, but is provided for, and notice is taken of his death. Now, therefore, ye may be sure ye are not forgotten, though imprisoned, though banished, though forgotten by your friends; much more precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of saints than the death of sparrows.' Providence takes cognizance of the meanest interest of the disciples of Christ; (v. 7.) 'Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered; much more your sighs and tears, and the drops of your blood, which ye shed for Christ's name's sake. An account is kept of all your losses, that they may be, and without doubt they shall be, recompensed unspeakably to your advantage.'

(4.) You will be owned or disowned by Christ in the great day, according as you now own or disown Him, v. 8, 9. This we have, [1.] To engage us to confess Christ before men, whatever we may lose or suffer for our constancy to Him, and how dear soever it may cost us. Jesus Christ will confess, not only that He suffered for us, and that we are to have the benefit of his sufferings, but that we suffered for Him, and that his kingdom and interest on earth were advanced by our sufferings; and what greater honor can be done them? [2.] To deter us from denying Christ, and a cowardly deserting of his truths and ways. Christ will not know us, will not own us, will not show us any favor, which will turn to our everlasting terror and contempt. By the stress here

f 8:17. Ec. 12:14. Matt. 10:26. Mark 4:22. Rom. 2:16. 1 Cor. 4:5. 2 Cor. 5:10. Rev. 20:11, 12.
g Job 34:14, 15. Ec. 10:12, 13, 20. Matt. 13:35. Luke 14:15.
h Matt. 10:27.
i Cant. 5:11, 16. Is. 41:8. John 15:14. Ps. Jan. 2:23.
j Is. 51:7, 8, 12, 13. Jer. 1:9, 17. 26:14, 15. Ps. 2:6. Dan. 3:16, 17. Acts 1:15. 9:24. Phil. 1:23. 1 Pet. 3:14. Rev. 10.
k Mark 13:32. 1 Thea. 4:6.
l Prov. 14:26. Jer. 5:22. 10:7. Rev. 14:7. 15:1.
m Ps. 9:17. Matt. 10:28. 25:41, 46. 2 Pet. 2:4. Rev. 20:14.
n Matt. 10:29. marg.
o Ps. 50:12. Ps. 104:11. 113:5, 6. 145: 15, 16. 147:9.
p 21:18. 1 Sam. 14:45. 2 Sam. 14:11. Matt. 10:50. Acts 27:34.
q Job 31:1. Ps. 8:8. Is. 43:3, 4. Matt. 6:26. 10:31.
r 1 Sam. 2:30. Ps. 119:46. Matt. 10: 28:23. Rom. 10:9, 10. Rev. 2:13. 3:6, 7.
s Matt. 25:31-34. Jude 24, 25.
t 9:26. Matt. 10:33. Mark 8:38. Acts 8:13, 14. 2 Tim. 2:12. Rev. 3:6. 13:8, 9. Matt. 7:28. 25:12, 41. 1 John 2:23, 28.

Verases 8-10.

Recognising the Holy Spirit is more criminal than denying Christ; many who denied Christ have repented and found mercy; but none who blasphemed the Holy Spirit. (Note, Matt. 26: 69-75.) The unity of Christ, and that of the Holy Spirit, is strongly implied in these words, (8, 9.) Angels. 'Before my Father.' (Matt. 10: 32, 33.) *etia*, when our Lord 'shall appear in his own glory, and the glory of

his Father, and of the holy angels,' to judge the world. (9: 18-27, v. 26.)

(8, 9.) 'Nothing can be more majestic than this view which Christ gives of Himself. To be renounced by Him, is spoken of as a circumstance which would expose a man to the contempt of the whole angelic world, and leave him no remaining shelter of hope.'

DOUBTING.

15051

10 And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven.

11 And when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say:

12 For the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say.

[Practical Observations.]

13 ¶ And one of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

14 And he said unto him, Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?

15 And he said unto

laid on their being *confessed or denied before the angels of God*, it should seem to be a considerable part of the happiness of glorified saints, that they will not only stand *right*, but stand *high*, in the esteem of the *holy angels*; they will love, honor, and own them, if they be Christ's servants; they are their fellow-servants, and they will take them for their companions. On the contrary, a considerable part of the misery of damned sinners will be, that the holy angels abandon them, and witness, not only their disgrace, as here, but their misery; for they shall be *tormented in the presence of the holy angels*, (Rev. 14: 10.) who will give them no relief.

(5.) The errand they were shortly to be sent out upon, was of the highest importance to the children of men, to whom they were sent, v. 10. Let them be bold in preaching the Gospel, for a sorer and heavier doom would attend those that rejected them, (after the Spirit was poured out on them, which was to be the last method of conviction,) than those that now rejected Christ Himself, and opposed Him. 'Though they shall stumble at the meanness of his appearance, and speak *slightly and spitefully* of Him, it is capable of some excuse; *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*, But unto him that *blasphemes the Holy Ghost*, that blasphemes the Christian doctrine, and maliciously opposes it, after the pouring out of the Spirit, and his attestation of Christ's being glorified, (Acts 2: 33, 35, 32.) the privilege of the forgiveness of sins shall be denied, he shall have no benefit by Christ and his Gospel; you may shake off the dust of your feet against those that do so, and give them over as incurable; they have forfeited that *repentance* and that *remission* which Christ was *exalted to give*, and which you are *commissioned to preach*. The sin, no doubt, was the more daring, and consequently, the case the more desperate, during the continuance of the extraordinary gifts and operations of the Spirit in the church, which were intended for a sign to them who believed not, 1 Cor. 14: 22. Those, who, though they were not convinced by them at first, yet admired them, there were hopes of, but those who *blasphemed* them were given over.

(6.) Whatever trials they should be called to,

they should be sufficiently furnished for, and honorably brought through them, v. 11, 12. The faithful martyr for Christ has not only sufferings to undergo, but a *testimony to bear*, a good confession to witness, and he is concerned to do that well, so that the cause of Christ may not suffer, though he suffer for it; and if this be his care, let him cast it on God. 'When they bring you before church rulers, or the Jewish courts, or before Gentile rulers, rulers in the state, to be examined about your doctrine, what it is, and what the proof of it; do not study by what art or rhetoric to modify your judges, or by what tricks in law to bring yourselves off; if it be the will of God that you should come off, and your time is not yet come, He will bring it about effectually. Let your aim be to serve your Master; but do not perplex yourselves about it, for the Holy Ghost, as a Spirit of wisdom, shall teach you what you ought to say, and how to say it, for the honor of God and his cause.'

V. 13-21. We have, in these verses,

I. The application made to Christ, very unseasonably, by one of his hearers, desiring Him to interpose between him and his brother, in a matter that concerned the estate of the family; (v. 9.) 'Speak—speak as a prophet, speak as a king, speak with authority.'

1. Some think his brother did him wrong, and that he appeals to Christ to right him, because he knew the law was costly. His brother was such a one as the Jews called *Benhameseen*—a son of violence, that took not only his own part of the estate, but his brother's too, and forcibly detained it from him. Such brethren there are in the world, who have no sense at all either of natural equity, or natural affection, who make a prey of those whom they ought to patronize and protect. They who are so wronged, have a God to go to, who will execute judgment and justice for those that are oppressed.

2. Others think that he had a mind to do his brother wrong, and would have Christ to assist him; that, whereas the law gave the elder brother a double portion of the estate, and the father himself could not dispose of what he had but by that rule, (Deut. 21: 16, 17.) he would have Christ to alter that law, and to oblige his brother, who perhaps was a follower of Christ

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-12. Increasing popularity must not induce ministers to be less plain and faithful. All who attend in any degree to religion, need repeated and earnest warnings, 'first of all to beware of hypocrisy;' but they who are most deeply infected with it, will be most ready to take offence. Indeed the plainest warnings seldom have a salutary effect on those, who are confirmed in hypocrisy; but they tend to prevent others from venturing on it; and those who are under concern about their souls, but not established in the faith, are in various ways tempted to it. Yet, while it assumes many specious appearances, and promises great advantages, it is a most foolish, as well as hateful sin: it can only hide for a moment, what must at length be made known to all; and it confers a temporary reputation, but leads to 'everlasting shame and contempt.' Let us then continually think of that day, when our most secret actions, words, thoughts and motives will be proclaimed before men and angels; that we may be far more careful to approve our inmost purposes, and our most retired conduct, to a heart-searching God, than to obtain the good opinion of our fellow-servants.—But if we are the 'friends' of Christ, we

must also be open and avowed in our religion, and on our guard against the fear of men. If we are true believers, we are perfectly safe from every effect of man's enmity, which can prove eventually hurtful; and we may boldly confess Christ before men, in joyful hope of being acknowledged by Him before the angels of God; while they who have denied Him for fear of reproach or persecution, will be rejected, and left under the condemnation to everlasting misery.—But let no trembling penitent, who in an unguarded hour has spoken 'a word against the Son of man,' doubt of obtaining forgiveness; for this is far different from that determined enmity, which dictates the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit, and which shall never be forgiven, because it will never be repented of. And let no one, who is suffering for Christ's sake, or called upon to speak in his name amidst his enemies, fear lest He should not by his 'Holy Spirit' teach him in the same hour, what he ought to say; for 'they who trust in Him shall never be confounded.' (P. O. Matt. 10: 16-33. 12: 31-37. Notes, Heb. 6: 4-8. 10: 26-34.)

SCOTT.

Verse 11.

Magistrates and powers. [The two original words signify *rulers and magistrates*.] True Tit. 3: 1. So the Latin *potestas*, and the Italian *podestà*, literally power, signify a *magistrate*. BLOOMFIELD. 'Take ye no thought, &c.' It is not without reason that Christ so often touches on this topic. The apostles, being poor and illiterate men, would naturally have been thrown into confusion when they appeared as criminals in the presence of persons in the highest stations of life, and their solicitude would be in some measure, proportionate to their piety, if they apprehended the Gospel, which was dearer to them than their own lives, might suffer by the hurry and disorder of their thoughts, when they were thus called publicly to defend it.

DODDRIIDGE.

Verses 13, 14.

(13.) *Master, divide.* His 'kingdom was not of this world' (John 18: 33-36.) He appeared as a Teacher and a Savior; but not as a civil magistrate. 'Christ would not, for three causes, be a judge to divide inheritances. First, for that He would not cherish the carnal opinion, which the Jews had of the Messiah. Secondly, for that He would distinguish the civil government from the ecclesiastical. Thirdly,

'to teach us to beware of them, which abuse the show of the Gospel, and also the name of ministers, to their own private advantage. *Esa.*—It is probable, that Christ refused to take this office upon him; chiefly, because He had but little time remaining, which He could better spend in dividing to them the Word of life, and promoting their 'eternal interest.' Whitby. This reason is at least very forcible, in all similar cases, with ministers of the Gospel; if they duly consider the shortness and uncertainty of life, the state of the world, the worth of souls, and the immense importance and arduousness of their work. (Acts 6: 2-8. P. O. 1: 7. 1 Cor. 6: 1-6.)

SCOTT.

(14.) *A judge or a divider.* 'The original translated judge, seems equivalent to arbitrator, or referee. The word translated divider, denotes a divider of an inheritance among the heirs.'

Grotius, in BLOOMFIELD. 'We learn from Seneca, that it was the law in his time, for the elder brother to divide the inheritance, and the younger to take his choice of the portion. See Grotius.'

BLOOMFIELD.

'Most prudently did our Lord decline the invidious office of an arbitrator in civil affairs; and wisdom will require his ministers generally to avoid it likewise.'

DODDRIIDGE.

them, *Take heed, and beware of covetousness*: 'for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth

16 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, 'The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully

e. 8:14. 16:14. 21:34. Josh. 7:21. Job 24:25. Ps. 19:3. 62:10. 119:38. 51. Prov. 23:4, 5. 28:1. Jer. 8:13. 20:17. 18. Mic. 2:2. Hab. 2:9. Mark 7:22. 1 Cor. 5:10. 11. 6:10. Eph. 5:2-5. Col. 3:5. 1 Tim. 6:9. 2 Pet. 2:14. 1 Pe. 37:16. Prov. 15:16. 16:16. Ec. 4:2-5. 5:10-16. 5:28. 6:25, 36. 1 Tim. 6:9-18. Gen. 36:12-14. 41:47-49. Job 12:6. Ps. 73:3-12. Hos. 2:8. Matt. 5:45. Acts 14:17.

This shows us the nature and constitution of Christ's kingdom; it is spiritual, and not of this world. 1. It does not interfere with civil powers, nor take the authority of princes out of their hands. Christianity leaves the matter as it found it, as to civil power. 2. It does not intermeddle with civil rights; it obliges all to do justly, but dominion is not to be founded in grace. 3. It does not encourage our expectations of worldly advantages by our religion. If this man will be a disciple of Christ, and expects that, in consideration of that, Christ should give him his brother's estate, he is mistaken; the rewards of Christ's disciples are of another nature. 4. It does not encourage our contests with our brethren, and our being rigorous and high in our demands, but rather, for peace's sake, to recede from our right. 5. It does not allow ministers to entangle themselves in the affairs of this life, (2 Tim. 2:4.) to leave the Word of God, to serve tables. There are those whose business it is, let it be left to them.

III. The necessary caution Christ took occasion from hence to give. Though He came not to be a *Divider* of men's estates, He came to be a Director of their consciences about them, and would have all take heed of harboring that corrupt principle which they saw to be in others the root of so much evil. Here is,

1. The caution itself, v. 15. 'Observe yourselves, keep a jealous eye on your own hearts, lest covetous principles steal into them; and, preserve yourselves, keep a strict hand upon your own hearts, lest covetous principles rule and give law in them.' Covetousness is a sin which we have need constantly to watch against, and therefore frequently to be warned against.

2. The reason of it, or an argument to enforce this caution; 'For a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth; that is, 'Our happiness and comfort do not depend on our having a great deal of wealth.' The life of the soul, undoubtedly, doth not depend on it, and the soul is the man. The things of the world will not suit the nature of a soul, nor supply its needs, nor satisfy its desires, nor last so long as it will last. Nay,

Verses 15-21.

Our Lord took occasion, from this intrusion, to warn his hearers against covetousness, and all approaches to it; as neither the duration, comfort, credit, usefulness, or happy event of a man's life, consists in the abundance of his possessions. (Marg. Ref. e, f.—Note, 1 Tim. 3: 6-10. v. 8-10.) (16.) *The ground brought forth plentifully.* The 'rich man' is not said to have obtained his wealth by fraud or oppression, or to have been a penurious miser. (16: 19-21.) He had an estate; and, by skillful and diligent culture, it yielded him large crops, so that his affluence increased rapidly; till at length he had abundance, and thought himself ready to enjoy it. (Marg. Ref. g, k-n.) The character here drawn, is exactly that of a prudent worldly man, who rises from inferior circumstances to a great and useful, by assiduous industry and good management; and then retires from business, to spend the latter part of his life according to his own inclinations. But there was no grateful regard to God, 'who gave him power to get wealth,' no consideration of his accountability to God for the use of it. (Notes, 18: 1-13.) There was no proper sense of the instability of human affairs, the uncertainty of life, the vanity of earthly pleasure, the worth of his soul, or the importance of eternity; no thought of happiness to be found in communion with God, in peace of conscience, and the hope of glory! But the man spake 'within himself, if "eating, drinking, and marrying, be increased," that I may be a lord of a rational creature; and as if it might be enjoyed here forever. Neither did he express any regard to his neighbor; his wealth was *his own*, and he would hoard it for himself, and spend it on himself; for and he inquired how many in various ways needed relief, he might have found a far better way to dispose of his superfluity, and have enjoyed a far superior satisfaction, than what he proposed to himself.—'What shall I do?' Give it to the poor, that shouldst thou do.' Basil. (Marg. Ref. h, l, 33.) The whole was the language of a selfish, ungodly man, and was intended to expose men of his character, even when not chargeable with gross immorality. However, therefore, this man might deem himself wise and happy, or be envied, respected, or commended by his neighbors, he was, in the judgment of God, a fool; and as such God addressed him. He had foolishly reckoned in many years to come, when he had not a single day to live! He had

even the life of the body, and the happiness of that; do not consist in an abundance of these things: for many live and get through the world very comfortably, who have but a little of the wealth of it; (a dinner of herbs with holy love is better than a *feast of fat things*;) and on the other hand, many possess abundance who live very miserably, and have no comfort of it; but bereave their souls of good; (Ecl. 4 8.) as Ahab and Haman.

3. The illustration of this by a parable; the sum of which is to show the folly of carnal worldlings while they live, and their misery when they die,—which is intended not only for a check to the man who came to Christ with an address about his estate, while he was in no care about his soul, and another world, but for the enforcing of that necessary caution to us all, to take heed of covetousness. The parable gives us the life and death of a rich man, and leaves us to judge whether he was a happy man.

(1.) Here is an account of his wealth, v. 16. He had a whole country to himself, a lordship of his own. His wealth lay much in fruits of the earth, for the king himself is served of the field, Eccl. 5: 9. Note, The fruitfulness of the earth is a great blessing, but one which God often gives to wicked men, to whom it is a snare, that we may not think to judge of his love or hatred by what is before us.

(2.) Here are the workings of his heart, in the midst of this abundance, v. 17. Note, God knows and observes whatever we think within ourselves, and we are accountable to Him for it. He is both a Discerner and Judge of the thoughts and intents of the heart. We mistake if we imagine that thoughts are *hid*, and free.

Let us here observe,

[1.] What his cares and concerns were. When he saw an extraordinary crop on his ground, instead of *thanking God* for it, or rejoicing in the opportunity it would give him of doing the more good, he afflicts himself with the thought where he shall store it. He speaks as one at a loss, and full of perplexity. *What shall I do now?* The poorest beggar in the country, that did not know where to have a meal's meat, could not have said a more anxious word. Disquieting care is the common fruit of an abundance of this world, and the common fault of those that have abundance. The more men have, the more perplexity they have with it, and the more solicitous they are to keep what they have, and to add to it, how to spare, and how to spend; so that even the abundance of the rich will not suffer them to

provided a large superfluity for a future continuance on earth, which was never to be granted him; but he had made no provision for the world to come, into which he was immediately to pass, and in which he was to exist to eternity! For, on that very night his soul was required of him, and he must give an account of his ungodliness, selfishness, and covetousness; 'and then whose would those things be, which he had provided,' to the neglect of his soul, and to his everlasting ruin? He could not tell into whose hands his wealth would pass; nor would it be any comfort to him, even for his children or friends to possess it, when he was torn from all which he loved and idolized, and plunged into the pit of destruction; and perhaps they were preparing by it for the same dreadful end. (Marg. and Marg. Ref. o-q.—16: 22-31. Ps. 39: 6. Matt. 16: 24-28. P. O. 21-28.) To this parable our Lord added, that 'so is every one, who layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich towards God.' All lay up treasure for themselves, who seek wealth either for its own sake, or for the influence and consequence it bestows, or to spend in the pride of life and luxurious indulgence; or in order to aggrandize their families; but who are not rich in faith, in wisdom, and grace, in good works, and a heavenly treasure. (22-34. v. 33. 34. Jam. 1: 9-11. 2: 5-7.) Every man of this character is in God's account 'a fool'; his life is vanity and vexation; his success an empty bubble, or a destructive delusion, and his end most miserable. *A man's life, &c.* [Not in the abounding to any one, is his life, of those things which he possesses.] Even when any man acquires abundance, his life is not preserved, and made comfortable or useful, or the true life of his soul promoted by his possessions. These blessings must be conveyed to the rich man, in the same way, and from the same sources, as to the poor man, if he at all enjoys them. (17.) *He thought.* 'He reasoned with himself.' *Shall be required.* [See on 6: 30. 'Shall they require of thee.' The angels, commissioned by God for that purpose.] Scott

(15.) *For a man's life.]* 'Life is here used, agreeably to the Hebrew idiom, for "happiness," or "the enjoyment of life." The corresponding word in Hebrew signifies not only animal existence, but also the enjoyment of every temporal blessing, which renders it desirable.' Hawt

17 And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

18 And he said, 'This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

19 And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

20 But God said unto him, 'Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?

b 22-29. 10-25. 16-3. Acts 2-37. 16-30.
c 31. 311. 11-41. 14-13, 14. 16-9. 18-22. 19-17. Ec. 11-2. Is. 58-7. Matt. 5-42. Rom. 12-13. 2 Cor. 9: 6-15. 1 Tim. 6:17, 18. 1 John 3: 16, 17.
d 21. 16-4, 6. Ps. 17-14. Jam. 3:15. 1 Deut. 6:1, 12. 8:12-14. Job 31:24, 25. Ps. 49:5-13. 52:5-7. 62:10. Prov. 18:11. 2:5. Is. 5:8. Hos. 12:8. Hab. 1:16. Matt. 6:19-21. 1 Tim. 6:17. Jam. 5:1-3.
e Job 14:1. Prov. 27:1. Jam. 4:13-15. n 16-19. 21-34. Job 31:11-13. Ec. 11-9. Is. 5:11, 12. 22:13, 14. Am. 6: 8-6. 1 Cor. 15:32. Phil. 3:19. 1 Tim. 5: 8. 2 Tim. 3:4. Jam. 5:3. 1 Pet. 4:4. Rev. 18:7.
f 16-22, 3. Ex. 16:9, 10. 1 Sam. 25: 35-39. 2 Sam. 13:28, 29. 1 Kings 16:33. Job 20:20-23. Ps. 73:19, 20. 73:30, 31. Dan. 5:1-6:26-30. Nah. 1:10. Matt. 24:45-51. 1 Thes. 5:3.
g 11-40. Jer. 17:11.
h Or, do they require thy soul.
i Euth. 5:11. 8:1, 2. Job 27:16, 17. Ps. 39:6. 49:17-19. 52:5-7. Prov. 11:4. 28:9. Ec. 2:22, 5:14-16. Dan. 3:29. 1 Tim. 6:7.

of it. 1st. It was folly for him to put off his comfort in his abundance, till he had compassed his projects concerning it. Grotius here quotes the story of Pyrrhus, who was projecting to make himself master of Sicily, Africa, and other places in the prosecution of his victories; Well, saith his friend, Cyneas, and what must we do then? Then, saith he, *we will live*. But, saith Cyneas, *we may live now, if we please*. 2dly. It was folly to be confident that his goods were laid up for many years, when, in an hour's time, his bigger barns might be burnt to the ground, and all that was laid up in them.

A few years may make a great change: *moth and rust may corrupt, or thieves break through and steal*. 3dly. It was folly to count on certain ease, when he had laid up abundance, since there are many things that may make people uneasy in the midst of their greatest abundance. One dead fly may spoil a whole pot of precious ointment; and one thorn a whole bed of down.

Pain and sickness of body, disagreeableness of relations, and especially a guilty conscience, may rob a man of his ease, who has ever so much of the wealth of this world. 4thly. It was folly to think of making no other use of his plenty than to eat and drink, and to be merry: without any thought of doing good to others, and being put thereby into a better capacity of serving God and his generation; as if we lived to eat, and did not eat to live, and the happiness of man consisted in nothing else, but in having all the gratifications of sense wound up to the height of pleasurableableness. 5thly. It was the greatest folly of all to say all this to his soul. If he had said, *Body, take thine ease, for thou hast goods laid up for many years*, there had been sense in it; but the soul, considered as an immortal spirit, separable from the body, was no way interested in a barn full of corn, or a bag full of gold. If he had had the soul of a swine, he might have blessed it with the satisfaction of eating and drinking; but what is this to the soul of a man, that has exigencies and desires which these things will be no way suited to? It is the great absurdity which the children of this world are guilty of, that they portion their souls in the wealth of the world, and the pleasures of sense.

3.) Here is God's sentence on all this; and we are sure that his judgment is according to truth; by his judgment, we must stand or fall, not by our own, 1 Cor. 4: 3, 4. His neighbors blessed him, (Ps. 10: 3.) as doing well for him-

self, for thinking what they shall do with what they have, and how they shall dispose of it. The rich man seems to speak it with a sigh, *What shall I do?* And if you ask, Why, what is the matter? Truly he has abundance of wealth, and wants a place to put it in, that is all.

[2.] What his projects and purposes were, which were the result of his cares, and were indeed absurd and foolish like them, v. 18. Now here, 1st. It was folly for him to call the fruits of the ground his fruits, and his goods. He seems to lay a pleasing emphasis on that; whereas what we have, is but lent us, the property is still in God; we are but stewards of our Lord's goods. It is my corn, (saith God,) and my wine, Hos. 2: 8, 9. 2dly. It was folly to hoard up what he had, and then to think it well bestowed; There will I bestow it all; as if none must be bestowed on the poor, none on his family, none on the Levite and the stranger, the fatherless and the widow, but all in the great barn. 3dly. It was folly for him to let his mind rise with his condition; when his ground brought forth more plentifully than usual, then to talk of bigger barns, as if the next year must needs be as fruitful as this, and much more abundant, whereas the barn might be as much too big the next year, as it was too little this. Years of famine commonly follow years of plenty, as they did in Egypt; and therefore he had better have stacked some of his corn this once. 4thly. It was folly to think to ease his care by building new barns, for the building of them would but increase his care; those know that, who know any thing of the spirit of building. The way that God prescribes for the cure of inordinate care, is certainly successful, but the way of the world does but increase it. And besides, when he had done this, there were other cares that would still attend him; the greater the barns, still the greater the cares, Eccl. 5: 10. 5thly. It was folly for him to contrive and resolve all this absolutely and without reserve. This I will do, I will pull down my barns, and I will build greater, yea, that I will; without so much as that necessary proviso, *If the Lord will, I shall live*, Jam. 4: 13, 14. Peremptory projects are foolish projects; for our times are in God's hand, and not in our own, and we do not so much as know what shall be on the morrow.

[3.] What his pleasing hopes and expectations were, when he made good those projects, v. 19. Here also appears his folly, as much in the enjoyment of his wealth, as in the pursuit

self; (Ps. 49: 18.) but God said, he did ill for himself, v. 20. God said to him, that is, decreed this concerning him, and let him know it, either by his conscience or by some awakening providence, or rather by both together. This was said when he was in the fulness of his sufficiency, (Job 20: 22.) when his eyes were held waking on his bed, with his cares and contrivances about enlarging his barns, not by adding a bay or two, which might answer the end, but by pulling them down, and building greater, to please his fancy. When he was forecasting this, and had brought it to an issue, and then lulled himself asleep again with a pleasing dream of many years' enjoyment of his present improvements, then God said this to him. Thus Belshazzar was struck with terror by the handwriting on the wall, in the midst of his jollity. Now observe what God said, [1.] The character He gave him, *Thou fool, thou Nabal*, alluding to the story of Nabal, whose heart was struck dead as a stone, when he was regaling himself in his abundance of his provision for his sheep-shearers. Note, Carnal worldlings are fools, and the day is coming when God will call them by their own name, and they will call themselves so. [2.] The sentence He passed on him, a sentence of death; *They shall require thy soul*, so the words are. He thought he had goods that should be his, many years, but he must part from them this night; he thought he should enjoy them himself, but he must leave them to be known not his. Note, The death of carnal worldlings is miserable in itself, and terrible to them.

1st. It is a force, an arrest, it is the requiring of the soul. What hast thou to do with a soul, who canst use it no better? Thy soul shall be required; that intimates that he is loath to part with it. A good man cheerfully resigns his soul at death; but a worldly man has it torn from him with violence, it is a terror to him to think of leaving this world. *They shall require thy soul*; God shall require it, he shall require an account of it; 'Man, woman, what hast thou done with thy soul? Give an account of that stewardship.' *They shall*, that is, evil angels, as the messengers of God's justice. As good angels receive gracious souls to carry them to joy, so evil angels receive wicked souls to carry them to torment; they shall require it, as a guilty soul to be punished. The devil requires the soul as his own, for it did, in effect, give itself to him.

2dly. It is a surprise, an unexpected force. It is in the night, and terrors in the night are most terrible. The time of death is day-time to a good man, it is his morning; but it is night to a worldly, a dark night, he lies down in sorrow. It is this night, this present night, now thou must die and go to judgment; thou art entertaining thyself with the fancy of many a merry day, and merry night, and merry feast; but in the midst of all, here is an end of all, Isa. 21: 2.

3dly. It is the leaving of all those things behind, which they have provided. All which they have placed their happiness in, and built their hope on, they must leave behind. *Their pomp shall not descend after them*, (Ps. 49: 17,) but they shall go as naked out of the world as they came into it, and they shall have no benefit at all by what they have hoarded up, either in death, in judgment, or in their everlasting state.

4thly. It is leaving them to they know not who. 'Then whose shall those things be? Not thine, to be sure, and thou knowest not what they will prove, for whom thou didst design them, thy children and relations, whether they will be wise or fools, (Eccl. 2: 18, 19.) whether such as will bless thy memory or curse it, be a credit to thy family or a blemish, do good or hurt with what thou leavest them, keep it or spend it; nay, thou knowest not but those or whom thou dost design it, may be prevented from the enjoyment of it, and it may be turned to somebody else thou little thinkest of; nay, though thou knowest to whom thou leavest it,

21 So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

[Practical Observations.]

22 ¶ And he said unto his disciples. Therefore I say unto you, 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

23 The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have store-house nor barn; and God feedeth them. How much more are ye better than the fowls?

25 And which of you, with taking thought, can add to his stature one cubit?

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least,

r 33. 6:24 Hos. 10:1. Matt. 6:19, 20. Rom. 2:5. 1 Tim. 6:19. Jam. 5:1-3.
18:11. 2 Cor. 6:10. 1 Tim. 6:18. Jam. 2:5. Rev. 2:9.
29. Matt. 6:25 &c. 1 Cor. 7:32. Phil. 4:6. Heb. 13:5.
1 Cor. 19:17. Job 12:24. 24:5. Prov. 13:38. Act. 27:18, 19, 38.
27. 1 Kings 17:4-6. Job 38:41. Ps. 104:27. 147:8. Matt. 6:25.
7:30-32. Job 35:11. Matt. 10:31.
19:3. Matt. 5:36. 6:27.

V. 13-21. Alas! most men are too much immersed in thoughts and contrivances about the world, to value spiritual blessings; and many, even while hearing the Gospel, are so distracted in their thoughts about their inheritances, that they would be ready to interrupt the preachers, if they could, by their counsel or influence, promote their own secular interest! But, as Christ would not attend to these inferior concerns, his ministers should avoid similar interruptions, and leave it to others to be 'judges and dividers' over the people.—Every opportunity, however, should be embraced of warning men to 'take heed and beware of covetousness;' by which almost all men are, one way or other, in some degree seduced. Every reflecting man's experience and observation may convince him of the inefficiency of riches, to promote even the comfort or continuance of this life: yet after all which the Lord has said on this subject, how few are there among professed Christians, who do not desire to be rich, and to make their children rich! (P. O. Matt. 19:23-30.) And many are apt to point out to them similar characters within this in the parable, as models for their imitation, and as proper persons with whom to form connections!

Verses 22-34.

(Marg. Ref. —1.—Matt. 6:24-34.) Probably our Lord frequently repeated the following instructions, and He here assigns the reason; namely, because of the folly and fatal consequences of covetousness; and the excessive proneness of the human heart to it, in one form or another. Some variation from the passage referred to may be noted. 'If I were not able to do that which is least,' &c. (26.) Whence we may infer, that the preceding question (25) was proverbial, and was used to show the inefficiency of being careful about those things, which are not at all in our power. If a man were ever so solicitous about it, he 'could not add a cubit to his stature;' why then should men be anxious about other matters, of far greater importance to their comfort and happiness, but which are unconnected with their present duty? For these also would be ordered by the same unerring hand of God, as He saw best, without their being able in the least to alter his appointments. Rich Zaccheus, probably, would have given a large sum to have 'added a cubit to his stature.' (19:3.) 'All these things shall be added, &c.' (21.) 'It is a foolish thing, not to look for small things at his hands, who freely giveth us the greatest things.' Bez. 4:4. 54:11. 2. Rom. 8:32-34.) Instead of burdening them

what his end will be. Note, it is the unspcak- able folly of most men, to mind and pursue the wealth of this world more than of the other, that which is for the body only, and for time, more than that which is for the soul and eternity.

V. 22-40. Our Lord Jesus is here inculcating some useful, useful lessons which he had before taught his disciples, and had occasion afterward to press upon them; for they need to have precept upon precept, and line upon line: 'Therefore—because there are so many that are ruined by covetousness, and an inordinate affection to the wealth of this world, I say unto you, my disciples, take heed of it.' Thou, O man of God, flee these things, as well as thou, O man of the world, 1 Tim. 6:11.

I. He charges them not to afflict themselves with disquieting, perplexing cares about the necessary supports of life; v. 22. In the foregoing parable he had given us warning against that branch of covetousness which rich people are most in danger of; and that is, a sensual complacency in the abundance of this world's goods. Now, therefore, he warns us against another branch of covetousness, which they are most in temptation to, who have but a little of this world, which was the case of the disciples; and that is, an anxious solicitude about the necessary supports of life. 'Take no thought for your life, either for its preservation, if it be in danger, or for the provision to be made for it, either of food or clothing. This is the caution he had largely insisted on, Matt. 6:25, &c. And the arguments here used are much the same, designed for our encouragement to cast all our care upon God, which is the right way to ease ourselves of it. Consider then,

1. God, who has done the greater for us, may be depended on to do the less. He has, without any care or forecast of our own, given us life and a body, and therefore we may cheerfully leave it to Him to provide meat for the support of that life, and raiment for the defence of that body.

2. God, who provides for the inferior creatures, may be depended on to provide for good Christians. 'Trust God for meat, for He feeds the ravens,' v. 24. Consider how much better ye are than the fowls, than the ravens. Trust God for clothing, for He clothes the lilies, v. 27. And if God has clothed the lilies, such

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

Yet it is, as it were, said to one of them after another, 'This night thy soul is required of thee,' perhaps when they are saying within themselves, 'Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.' And what does it then avail, to have the public informed, how many tens or hundreds of thousands they have left behind them, or how rich their heirs are made by their decease? (Note, Job 14:16-22.)—Indeed it often happens, that after men have spent their lives, without regard to God, to their neighbors, or their own souls, in order to enrich their families, they are even disappointed in this vain ambition, their riches are strangely dissipated, and their children reduced to dependence or poverty: for 'man walketh in a vain shew, he disquieteth himself in vain; he heareth up riches, and cannot tell who shall gather them.' As therefore 'every one, who layeth up treasure for himself,' is thus foolish, guilty and miserable; let us seek the true riches, that we may be approved by God Himself as wise men, and made honorable and happy in his presence, and in the eternal enjoyment of his favor. SCOTT.

selves in endeavors to accumulate wealth, Christ's disciples ought, when properly called to it, to part with their possessions, and distribute to their needy brethren. When this is done in faith and love, it insures to them a treasure, of which God Himself is the Guardian. Probably, this instruction influenced the primitive converts, after the day of Pentecost, to sell their estates for the support of their poor brethren. (Marg. Ref. k—p.—15-21. 19:1-10. v. 8. Matt. 19:16-22, v. 21. Acts 4:32-35. Jam. 5:1-6.)

(24.) Consider the ravens. 'Or, crows. Philo and Elian remark, that the young crows are driven away from the nest as soon as they are able to fly, and are afterwards supported, we scarce know how, by a remarkable providence of God. Philo also observes that crows are naturally very forgetful, and often fail to return to their nests; yet by the wise and merciful providence of God, they instinctively heap together in their nests whatever may create worms, from which their abandoned young are nourished and preserved.' BOCHART. (25.) Add to his stature one cubit. 'Prolong his life one hour.' The original word, here rendered stature, signifies both stature and age or life.—For examples of the latter acceptance, see Job 8:21, 23. Eccl. 11:11.

'why take ye thought for the rest?

27 Consider ^b the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, ^c That Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, ^a which is to-day in the field, and, to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, ^d O ye of little faith?

29 And ^e seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither ^f be ye of doubtful mind.

30 For ^g all these things do the nations of the world seek after; and ^h your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 But ⁱ rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

32 Fear not, ^j little flock; for ^k 'it is your Father's good pleasure to give you' ^l the kingdom.

33 ^m Sell that ye have, and give alms; ⁿ provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth.

a 29. Ps. 39:5. Ec. 7:13. 1 Pet. 5:7.
b 24. Matt. 6:28-30. Jam. 1:10, 11.
c 1 Kings 10:1-13. 2 Chr. 9:1-12.
d 14. Job 7:1. 1 Pet. 1:24.
e 8:23. Matt. 6:28. 11:31. 16:8. 17:17, 20.
f 22. 10:7, 8. 22:35. Matt. 6:31.
g Or, *live not in careful suspense*.
h Matt. 5:47. 6:32. Eph. 4:17. 1 Thes. 4:5. 1 Pet. 4:2-4.
i 32. Matt. 6:1, 32. 10:20. 18:14. John 20:17.
j 10:12. 1 Kings 3:11-13. Ps. 34:9. 10:7, 33. 19:25. 84:11. Is. 35:15, 16. Matt. 6:33. John 6:27. Rom. 8:31. 1 Tim. 4:8. Heb. 13:5.
k Cant. 1:7, 8. Is. 40:11. 41:14. marg. 63:8. Matt. 7:15. 18:12-14. 20:16. John 10:28-30.
l 10:21. Matt. 11:25-27. Eph. 1:5-9. Paul 2:13. 2 Thes. 1:11.
m Or 6:19. 1 Pet. 5:23. 2 Cor. 9:2, 5. 13:2. 13:11.
n 12:24. Matt. 19:21. Acts 2:45. 4:34, 36. 2 Cor. 8:2.
o 16:1. Hag. 1:8. Matt. 6:19-21. John 12:6. 1 Tim. 6:17-19. Jam. 5:1-3.

fading, perishing things, *shall He not much more clothe you with such clothing as is fit for you?* When God fed Israel with *manna* in the wilderness, He also took care for their clothing; for though He did not furnish them with new clothes, yet (which all came to one) He provided that those they had should not *wax old upon them*, Deut. 8: 4. Thus will He clothe his spiritual Israel; but then let not them be of *little faith*. Note, Inordinate cares are owing to weakness of faith; for a powerful, practical belief of the all-sufficiency of God, in covenant-relation to us as a Father, and especially his precious promises, relating both to this life and that to come, would be mighty, through God, to the pulling down of the strong holds of these disquieting, perplexing imaginations.

3. Our cares are fruitless, vain, and insignificant, and therefore it is folly to indulge them; they will not gain us our wishes, and therefore ought not to hinder our repose, v. 25. 'If it be not in your power to alter your *statures*, why should you perplex yourselves about other things, which are as much out of your power, and about which it is as necessary that we refer ourselves to the providence of God?' Note, As in our *stature*, so in our *state*, it is our wisdom to take *it as it is*, and make the best of it; for fretting and vexing, carping and caring, will not mend it.

An inordinate, solicitous pursuit of the things of this world, even necessary things, very ill becomes the disciples of Christ; v. 29, 30. 'Whatever others do, do not ye afflict yourselves with perplexing cares, nor weary yourselves with constant toils; do not ye hurry hither and thither with inquiries *what ye shall eat or drink*, as David's enemies, that *wandered up and down for meat*, (Ps. 59: 15.) or as the eagle that *seeks the prey afar off*, Job 39: 29. Let not the disciples of Christ thus seek their food, but ask it of God day by day; let them not be of *doubtful mind*; be not as *meteors in the air*, that are blown hither and thither with every wind; do not, like them, *rise and fall*, but maintain a consistency with yourselves, be even and steady, and have your hearts fixed; *live not in careful suspense*; let not your minds be continually perplexed between hope and fear, ever on the rack.' Let not the children of God make themselves uneasy; for,

(1.) This is to make themselves like the children of this world, v. 30. 'They that take care for the body only, and not for the soul, for this world only, and not for the other, look no farther than what they shall *eat and drink*; and, having no all-sufficient God to seek to, and confide in, they burden themselves with anxious cares about those things; but it ill becomes you to do so. You, who are called out of the world, ought not to be thus conformed to the world, and to *walk in the way of this people*,' Isa. 8: 11, 12. When inordinate cares prevail over us, we should think, 'What am I, a Christian or a heathen? And if a Christian, shall I rank myself with Gentiles, and join with them in their pursuits?'

(2.) It is needless for them to disquiet themselves with care about the necessary supports of life, for they have a Father in heaven, who doth and will take care for them. 'He is your Father, who made you subject to these necessities, and therefore will suit his compassions to them; your Father, who maintains you, educates you, and designs an inheritance for you, and therefore will take care that you *want no good thing*.'

(3.) They have better things to mind and pursue; (v. 31.) 'But rather seek ye the kingdom

of God, and mind that, ye, my disciples, who are to preach the kingdom of God; let your hearts be on your work, and your great care how to do that well, and that will effectually divert your thoughts from inordinate care about the things of the world. And let all that have souls to save, *seek the kingdom of God*, in which only they can be safe. Seek admission into it, seek advancement in it, seek the kingdom of grace, to be subjects in that, the kingdom of glory, to be princes in that, and then *all these things shall be added to you*; mind the affairs of your souls with diligence and care, and then trust God with all your other affairs.'

(4.) They have better things to expect and hope for; v. 32. To banish inordinate cares, our fears must be suppressed; when we frighten ourselves with an apprehension of evil to come, we put ourselves on the stretch of care how to avoid it, when, after all, perhaps it is but the creature of our own imagination; and therefore, *fear not*. This comfortable word we had not in Matthew. Note, Christ's flock in this world is a *little flock*; his sheep few and feeble. The church is a vineyard, a garden, a small spot compared with the wilderness of this world; as Israel, (1 Kings 20: 27.) who were like two little flocks of kids, when the *Syrians filled the country*. Though it be a little flock, yet it is the will of Christ that they should not be afraid. 'Fear not, little flock, but see yourselves safe under the protection and conduct of the great and good Shepherd, and lie easy.' God has a kingdom in store for all that belong to Christ's little flock; a crown of glory, (1 Pet. 5: 4.) a throne of power, (Rev. 3: 21.) unsearchable riches, far exceeding the peculiar treasures of kings and provinces. The sheep on the right hand are called to come and inherit the kingdom, it is theirs forever; a kingdom for each. The kingdom is given according to the good pleasure of the Father; not of debt, but of grace, free grace, sovereign grace, even so, Father, because it seemed good unto Thee. The kingdom is his; and may He not do what He will with his own? The believing hopes and prospects of the kingdom should silence and suppress the fears of Christ's little flock in this world. 'Fear no trouble, for though it should come, it shall not come between you and the kingdom; that is sure, it is near.' (That evil is not worth trembling at, which cannot separate us from the love of God.)

'Fear not the want of any thing that is good for you, for if it be your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, you need not question but He will bear your charges thither.'

II. He charged them to make sure work for their souls, by laying up their treasure in heaven, v. 33, 34. Those who have done this, may be very easy, as to all the events of time.

1. 'Sit loose to this world, and to all your possessions in it. Sell that ye have, and give alms,' that is, 'rather than want wherewith to relieve those that are truly *neccitous*, sell that which you have *superfluous*, all that you can spare from the support of yourselves and families, and give it to the poor. Sell that ye have, if ye find it a hindrance, or incumbrance, in the service of Christ. Do not think yourselves undone, if, by being fined, imprisoned, or banished, for the testimony of Jesus, you be forced to sell your estates, though they be the inheritance of your fathers. Do not sell to hoard up the money, or because you can make more of it by usury, but sell, and give alms; what is given in alms, in a right manner, is put out to the best interest, on the best security.'

2. 'Set your hearts upon the other world, and

(30.) 'It is the essence of *heathenism* to live only for this life; and it is the property of *Christianity* to lead men to live here in reference to another and a better life. *Remember! how art thou living?*'

(32.) *Little flock*, 'Campbell has well rendered, "My little flock," the article in the original has here the force of a possessive pronoun, and in the article, says L. Brug, is contained the chief momentary of consolation. I have only to observe, that as a double diminutive is used in the original Greek, perhaps it may be more accurately rendered, "My poor little flock." For, (as Campbell has well observed, it is an expression of *endearment*, at the same time that it suggests the actual smallness of the number. BROOMFIELD.

'*God pleasure to give you, &c.*' 'It is most edifying and delight

ful to observe, how God is represented in Scripture as enjoying his own presence, as it were, with a peculiar relish, in the view of those glories which He has prepared for his people. Hence those emphatical phrases, of *wisdom rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth*, or in the prospect and idea of them, before they were actually made; (Prov. 8: 31.) of *God's knowing the thoughts He thinks towards his people*; (Jer. 29: 11.) and of his *rejoicing over them with joy, and silently resting in his love to them*. Zeph. 3: 17. The tenderness and energy of innumerable scriptures depend on this remark; and many of those relating to election, predestination, &c. which have been as dry rods of controversy, when considered in this view, laid out into a thousand fair leaves and fragrant blossoms of hope and joy.'

DODDGE

34 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

35 ¶ Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning;

36 And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately.

37 Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, That he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.

38 And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find

your expectations from that world. Provide yourselves bags that wax not old, that wax not empty, not of gold, but of grace in the heart, and good works in the life; these are the bags that will last.¹ Grace will go with us into another world, for it is woven in the soul, and our good works will follow us, for God is not unrighteous to forget them. These will be a treasure in heaven, that will not be exhausted; we may spend on it to eternity, and it will not be at all the less; a treasure that we are in no danger of being robbed of; laid up in heaven, out of the reach of enemies; a treasure that will no more spoil with keeping, than wax with spending; the moth doth not corrupt it. Now by this it appears that we have laid up our treasure in heaven, if our hearts be there while we are here, (v. 34.) if we think much of heaven, and keep our eye on it, if we quicken ourselves with the hopes of it, and keep ourselves in awe with the fear of falling short of it. But if your hearts be set upon the earth and the things of it, it is to be feared that you have your treasure and portion in it, and are undone when you leave it.

III. He charges them to get ready, and to keep in readiness for Christ's coming; when all those who have laid up their treasure in heaven, shall enter on the enjoyment of it, v. 35, &c.

1. Christ is our Master, and we are his servants, not only working servants, but waiting servants; if any man serve Me, let him follow Me. We must be as men that wait for their Lord. Christ's servants are now in a state of expectation, looking for their Master's glorious appearing, and doing every thing with an eye to that, and in order to that.

2. Christ our Master, though now gone from us, will return again. He will come to take cognizance of his servants, and that being a critical day, they shall either stay with Him, or be turned out of doors, according as they are found in that day.

3. The time of our Master's return is uncertain; it will be in the night, when many have done looking for Him; in the second watch, just before midnight, or in the third watch, next after midnight, v. 38. His coming to us, at our death, is uncertain, and to many it will be a great sur-

prise; v. 40. This bespeaks not only the uncertainty of the time of his coming, but the prevailing security of the greatest part of men, who are unthinking, and altogether regardless of the notices given them, so that, whenever He comes, it is in an hour that they think not.

4. He expects and requires from his servants, that, whenever He comes, they be in a frame fit to receive Him, or, rather, to be received by Him; (v. 36.) that they be found as his servants, in the posture that becomes them, with their loins girded about; alluding to the servants that are ready to do what their master bids them, having their long garments tucked up, (which otherwise would hang about them, and hinder them,) and their lights burning, with which to light their master into the house, and to his chamber.

5. Those servants will be happy who are found ready, and in a good frame, when their Lord comes, (v. 37.) who, after having waited long, continue waiting, until their Lord comes, and are then found awake, and aware of his first approach; then will be the time of their preferment. Here is such an instance of honor done them, as is scarcely to be found among men; He shall make them sit down to meat, and serve them; for the bridegroom to wait on his bride at table is not uncommon, but to wait on his servants is not the manner of men; yet Jesus Christ was among his disciples as one that served: (John 13: 4, 5.) it signified the joy with which they shall be received into the other world by the Lord Jesus, who is gone before, to prepare for them, and has told them that his Father will honor them, Job 12: 26.

6. We are therefore kept uncertain concerning the precise time of his coming, that we may be always ready; for a man may well be ready for an attack, if he know beforehand the time it will be made, v. 39. But we know not at what hour the alarm will be given us, and therefore are concerned to watch at all times. Or, this may intimate the miserable case of those who are careless and unbelieving in this great matter. If the good man of the house had had notice of his danger of being robbed such a night, he would have sitten up, and saved his house; but we have notice of the day of the Lord's coming, as a thief in the night, to the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 22—34. If we are the disciples of Christ, and have learned to serve Him in our secular employments, and in the use of our possessions, we should peculiarly watch against distracting cares and apprehensions. He who created our bodies, and sustains our lives, will give us useful food and raiment; and if we have acquired a relish for spiritual pleasures, and know the value of 'the beauty of holiness,' we shall not crave the luxuries and elegances of life. Yet we often need rebuking for 'being of little faith,' and therefore 'of a doubtful mind.' But it becomes Christians to seek nobler blessings, than the nations of the earth who know not God; and if we seek first the privileges and the righteousness of his kingdom, and desire its peace and prosperity, all other things will surely be added unto us. Indeed, the flock which the good Shepherd has purchased, and collected into his fold, and taught to rely on his powerful and watchful care, to hear his voice, to love his ordinances, and copy his example, is a little small, when compared with the vast

multitudes around them, who resemble filthy swine, ravening wolves, subtle foxes, or venomous serpents; but they need not fear wanting any good thing; for it is their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom, and He will withhold no good things from them. (Notes, Matt. 11: 25—27. Eph. 1: 9—12. 1 Thes. 5: 4—11.) Let us then first examine, whether we be long to this 'little flock,' and have those dispositions which characterize it: let us also keep close under our Shepherd's care: and let us be thankful, that it was not the Lord's good pleasure to give us worldly treasures, and to leave us destitute of his grace. While others are grasping after more and more of earthly, perishing vanities, Christians should excite one another to abound in love and good works, by willingly expending what they have, in relieving the necessitous, and promoting the cause of godliness; and this will gradually both enlarge their capacities of enjoyment, and insure to them a gracious and most glorious recompense. (Matt. 6. P. O. 19—34.)

SCOTT.

VERSES 35—46.

(Matt. 24: 42—51.) Our Lord here addressed his disciples in respect of diligent attention to their proper work; as He before had done about moderation, indifference, and confidence in God, as to their subsistence. It was the custom of servants, in those days, to gird up their long loose garments by a girdle round their loins, that they might attend to their work with less encumbrance. Thus the disciples were reminded to be prepared for active service, by a vigilant frame of mind; and by laying aside every needless worldly engagement, and avoiding improper indulgences; as well as strengthened for it by the habitual exercise of faith, hope, and love. (Marg. Ref. q.—1 Pet. 1: 13—16.) And as servants, during the night, when they were waiting for their master's return home, or engaged in any work, kept their lights burning; so the disciples were directed to keep the instructions of Christ before them, to make an open profession of his truth, and to hold out the light of a good conversation. (Marg. Ref. r.—Matt. 5: 13—16. Phil. 2: 14—18.) Weddings were then generally celebrated at night, and the return of the guests might be uncertain; the servants, therefore, when waiting for their master, must watch, that they might open to him without delay; and by this simile our Lord might allude to his own ascension to heaven, his coming to call his people to Him by death, and his return to judge the world; for which the disciples were continually to hold themselves in readiness. (Marg. Ref. s.—Matt. 25: 1—13. Mark 13: 33—37.) To induce them to this, He further speaks of the blessedness of those servants whom He should find watching; and the dan-

ger of being found unprepared or misemployed. (37.) The Lord will gird Himself, &c.) 'That is, the Redeemer, 'the Lord of glory,' and 'the Lord of all,' will graciously condescend to employ all his power and authority, in advancing their honor and felicity; in proportion as they have simply devoted all their ability to promote his glory, and do his will. (Marg. Ref. x—b.) (41.) To us or to all.) All were included, according to the different situations and services to which they were called. (Marg. Ref. c.—21: 34—36. Mark 13: 33—37.) (46.) Unbelievers.) 'Hypocrites,' in Matthew. Hypocrites are concealed infidels, and they will have their portion among avowed infidels.

(37.) And serve them.) 'Whitby agrees with Grotius, in comparing it to the Roman Saturnalia, the Cretan Hermæa, and the Babylonian Saccæ—feasts, where the servants sat at table. Others think there is an allusion to the forms of manumission among the Romans, one of which was that the manumitted servant should sit at table with his late master. But Kuinoel has justly objected, that, at the Saturnalia, all servants, whether good or bad, were waited upon by the master; but here the subject is the reward assigned to faithful and diligent servants. The condition of servants or slaves, among the Hebrews, was by no means hard, or their treatment unkind; nay, at solemn festivals, continues Heuman, their masters assigned them a portion of the banquet, that they might be partakers of their own good cheer.'

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them so, blessed are those servants.

39 And ^athis know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through.

40 Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.

41 Then Peter said unto him, ^cLord, speak-est thou this parable unto us, or even to all?

42 And the Lord said, ^dWho then is that faithful and wise ^esteward, whom his lord shall make ^fruler over his household, ^gto give them their portion of meat ^hin due season?

43 Blessed is that servant, ⁱwhom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

44 Of a truth I say unto you, ^kThat he will make him ruler over all that he hath.

45 But ^land if that servant say in his heart, My lord delay-eth his coming; and shall begin ^mto beat the men-servants and maidens, ⁿand to eat and drink, and to be drunken;

46 The ^olord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will ^pcut him in sunder, ^qand will appoint him his portion with ^rthe unbelievers.

47 And that servant which ^sknew his lord's will, and prepared not ^thimself, neither did ac-

confusion and ruin of all. Secure sinners, and yet do not thus watch. If men will take such care of their houses, O let us be thus wise for our souls.

V. 41—53. Here is,

I. Peter's question. Peter was now, as often-spokenman for the disciples. We have reason to bless God that there are some such forward men, that have a gift of utterance; let such take heed of being proud. Now Peter desires Christ to explain Himself. He calls his discourse a *parable*, because it was not only figurative, but weighty, solid, and instructive. ¹Lord, said Peter, ²was it intended for us or for all? To this, Christ gives a direct answer, (Mark 13: 37.) *What I say unto you, I say unto all.* Yet here He seems to show that the apostles were primarily concerned in it. Note, We are all concerned to take to ourselves what Christ in his Word designs for us, and to inquire accordingly concerning it; *Speakest Thou this to us?* To me?—Speak it, Lord; speak it to my heart.

II. Christ's reply, directed to Peter and the rest of the disciples; which is peculiarly adapted to ministers, who are the *stewards* in Christ's house. Now our Lord Jesus here tells them,

1. Their duty as *stewards*, and the trust committed to them. (1.) They are made *rulers of God's household*, under Christ, whose own the house is: ministers derive authority from Christ to preach the Gospel, and to administer the ordinances of Christ, and apply the seals of the covenant of grace. (2.) Their business is to give God's children and servants *their portion of meat*, that which is proper for, and allotted to, them; convictions and comfort to those to whom they respectively belong. *To every one his own.* This is *rightly to divide the Word of truth*, 2 Tim. 2: 15. (3.) To give it *in due season*, at the time, and in the way, most suitable to the temper and condition of those who are to be fed: a word *in season* to him *that is weary*. (4.) Herein they must approve themselves *faithful and wise*; *faithful* to their Master, by whom this great trust is reposed in them; and *faithful* to their fellow-servants, for whose benefit they are put in trust; and wise to improve an opportunity of doing honor to their Master, and service in the family. Ministers must be both *skillful and faithful*.

2. What would be their happiness, if they approve themselves faithful and wise; (v. 43.) *doing*, and not idle, nor indulgent of ease; but *doing*, yea, *so doing* as they should be, giving each his *portion of meat*, by public preaching, and personal application; and *found* so doing, when their Lord comes: they that thus approve themselves, shall be preferred to a larger and higher service; (v. 44.) as Joseph in Pharaoh's court. Note, Ministers that obtain mercy of the Lord to be faithful, shall obtain further mercy to be abundantly rewarded for their faithfulness, in the day of the Lord.

cording to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes.

a Matt. 24:43, 44. 1 Thes. 5:2, 3. 2 Pet. 3:10. Rev. 3:3. Rom. 13:15. b 2 Tim. 3:14—15. Matt. 24:44, 45. 25:13. Mark 13:33—36. Rom. 13:14. 1 Thes. 5:8. 2 Pet. 3:12—14. Rev. 19:7. c Mark 13:37. 14:37, 38. 1 Pet. 4:7. E.B. d 19:15—19. Matt. 24:45, 46. 25:20—23. 1 Cor. 4:1, 2. Tit. 1:7.

e 16:1—12. Matt. 20:8. 1 Pet. 4:10. f 1 Tim. 3:15. 5:17. Heb. 3:5. 13: 7:17. g Jer. 53:4. Ex. 34:3. Matt. 13:52. J Jer. 31:15—17. Acts 20:28. 1 Pet. 5:1—4. h Prov. 15:23. Is. 50:4. 2 Tim. 4:2. i 1 Pet. 1:17. j 1 Cor. 12:26. Dan. 12:3, 4. k 1 Tim. 1:19. 22:29, 30. Dan. 12:3, 4. l Ex. 12:22, 27, 28. Matt. 24:48—50. 2 Pet. 2:3, 4. m Is. 65:5. Jer. 29:2. Ex. 34:3, 4. 2 Cor. 11:20. 3 John 9:10. Rev. 13:7

3. What a dreadful reckoning there would be, if they were treacherous and unfaithful, v. 45, 46. We had all this before, in Matthew and therefore shall here only observe, (1.) Our looking on Christ's second coming as a thing at a distance, is the cause of all those irregularities which render the thought of it terrible to us; *He saith in his heart, My Lord delays his coming.* Christ's patience is very often misinterpreted, his delay to the discouragement of his people, and the encouragement of his enemies. (2.) The persecutors of God's people are commonly abandoned to security and sensuality; as the king and Haman, who sat down to drink when the city Shushan was perplexed. Thus they drank to drown the clamors of their own consciences, and baffle them, which otherwise would fly in their faces. (3.) Death and judgment will be very terrible to all wicked people, but especially to wicked ministers: it will be a surprise to them, at an hour when they are not aware, it will be the determining of them to endless misery; they shall be cut in sunder, and have their portion assigned them with the unbelievers.

4. What an aggravation it would be of their sin and punishment, that they knew their duty, and did not do it, v. 47, 48. Here seems to be an allusion to the law, which made a distinction between sins committed through ignorance and presumptuous sins, (Lev. 5: 15. Num. 15: 29, 30.) as also to another law concerning the number of stripes given to a malefactor, to be according to the nature of the crime, Deut. 25: 2. Now, (1.) Ignorance of our duty is an extenuation of sin. He that *knew not his Lord's will*, through carelessness and neglect, and his not having such opportunities as some others had of coming to the knowledge of it, and did things *worthy of stripes*, he shall be *beaten*, because he might have known his duty better, but with *few stripes*; his ignorance excuses in part, but not in whole. Thus, *through ignorance* the Jews put Christ to death, (Acts 3: 17. 1 Cor. 2: 8.) and Christ pleaded that ignorance in their excuse; *They know not what they do.* (2.) The knowledge of our duty is an aggravation of our sin; *That servant that knew his lord's will*, and yet did his own will, shall be *beaten with many stripes*. God will justly inflict more on him, for abusing the means of knowledge He afforded him, which others would have made a better use of; and because it argues a great degree of wilfulness and contempt, to sin against knowledge, of how much sorer punishment then shall they be thought worthy, beside the many stripes that their own consciences will give them! Son, remember. Here is a good reason for this added, *To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required*, especially when it is committed as a trust he is to account for. Those that have greater capacities of mind than others, more

—10:15—17. 16:8. 17:5, 6. 19:24. n Is. 56:10—12. Ex. 34:8. Rom. 15: 18. Phil. 3:18, 19. 2 Pet. 2:15, 16. Jude 12, 13. Rev. 18:7, 8. o 18:20, 40. Rev. 16:15. p Job 20:28. Ps. 11:5. Matt. 7:22, 23. 13:41, 42, 49, 50. q Matt. 24:51. r 10:12—15. Num. 15:30, 31. Matt. 11:22—24. John 9:41. 12:48. 15:24 —24. 16:11. 17:19. 2 Cor. 2: 15, 16. Jam. 5:17. s Deut. 25:2, 3.

(42.) *Steward.*] See note Matt. 24: 45.

(46.) *Cut him in sunder.*] *Dichotomy*, or *cutting asunder*, was a method of putting criminals to death which prevailed among the Chaldeans and Persians, and consisted in having the left hand and right foot, or right hand and left foot, or both feet and hands cut off at the joints, Dan. 2: 5. Matt. 24: 51.

Unbelievers.] *O* rather, *the unfaithful*; not in *fidels*, but persons who had the light and knowledge of God's Word, but made an improper use of their privileges.

Veres 47, 48.

This may be considered as a general rule of the Lord's dealing with all his rational creatures. No man is left in such absolute ignorance, except by his own fault, as not to do many things which he knows to be wrong, and to neglect many things which he knows to be right; therefore all are inexcusable, and liable to condemnation and punishment, if they continue impenitent. But, in proportion to the degree in which they have the means of instruction, and are actually acquainted with the will of God, their disobedience becomes more aggravated, more direct and deliberate rebellion, and their punishment will be proportionably more severe. (Rom. 2: 12—16.) Thus likewise will the Lord dispense correction to his offending children, in proportion a they

have sinned against light and conviction, or the contrary. (Marg. Ref.—16: 1—13. 19: 11—27. Matt. 13: 12. 25: 14—30. Mark 4: 23—25. Jam. 4: 13—17.) This being one grand difference betwixt the pastors of the church, and other Christians, they must expect a severer punishment, as sinning against greater evidence, and knowledge of their duty: for "to whom much is given, of them will much be required." *Whitby.*

The antithesis in this passage has prodigious moral depth. The negligence, against the light of *conscience*, shall be severely punished, while an offence, in itself comparatively heinous, if committed ignorantly, and without light, shall be mildly dealt with. This merciful discrimination, however, is full of terror; for, whatever may be the case respecting past, forsaken, and repented sins of ignorance, no man is entitled to take comfort to himself from this passage, respecting his present or future course of life: the very thought of doing so, proves that the person entertaining that thought has sufficient knowledge to place him beyond its favorable operation.

It was allowable for a master to inflict any number of stripes on his servant.

Bp. Jebb, in BLOOMFIELD LIGHTFOOT.

48 But he that 'knew not, and did commit 'things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.' For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

[Practical Observations.]

49 ¶ I am 'come to send fire on the earth,' and what will I if it be already kindled?

50 But 'I have a baptism to be baptized with: and how am I 'straitened till it be accomplished!'

51 Suppose 'ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division;

52 For from henceforth 'there shall be in one house divided, three against two, and two against three.

t Lev. 5:17. Rom. 2:12-16. 1 Tim.

knowledge and learning, more acquaintance and converse with the Scriptures, to them *much is given*, and their account will be accordingly.

III. A further discourse concerning his own sufferings, which he expected, and concerning the sufferings of his followers, which He would have them also expect; in general, (v. 49.) *I am come to send fire on the earth.* By this, some understand the preaching of the Gospel, and the pouring out of the Spirit; but by what follows, it seems rather to be understood of the fire of persecution; Christ is not the Author of it, as it is the sin of the incendiaries, the persecutors; but He permits it, nay, He commissions it, as a refining fire for the trial of the persecuted. This fire was already kindled, in the enmity of the carnal Jews to Christ and his followers. 'What will I that it may presently be kindled? What thou dost, do quickly. If it be already kindled, what will I? Shall I wait the quenching of it? No, for it must fasten on myself, and upon all, and glory will redound to God from it.'

1. He must Himself suffer many things, and pass through this fire that was already kindled, v. 50. Afflictions are compared both to *fire* and *water*, Ps. 66: 12. 69: 1, 2. Christ's sufferings were both; he calls them a *baptism*, (Matt. 20: 22,) for He was watered or sprinkled with them, as Israel was baptized in the cloud, and dipped into them, as Israel was baptized in the sea, 1 Cor. 10: 2. He must be sprinkled with his own blood, and with the blood of his enemies, Isa. 63: 3. See here, (1.) Christ's foresight of his sufferings; He knew what He was to undergo, and the necessity of undergoing it; He calls

u 13.

u 16, 21-12. Gen. 39:8, &c. Matt. 25:14-28. 1 Cor. 9:17, 18. 1 Tim. 1:11. 6:20. Tit. 1:3. Jam. 3:1. Gr. x 51, 52. Isa. 11:4. Joel 2:30, 31. Mat. 32, 33. 441. Matt. 3:10-12.

y 11:53, 54. 18:31-39. 19:39, 40. John 9:4. 11:8-10. 12:17-19. z Matt. 20:17-22. Mark 10:32-38. a Ps. 41:8. John 4:34. 7:5-8, 10. 10: 39-41. 12:27, 28. 18:11. 19:30. Acts 20:22.

* Or, *strained.*

b 48. Zech. 11:7, 8, 10, 11, 14. Matt. 10:34-35. 24:7-14. c Ps. 41:8. Mic. 7:5, 6. John 7:41-43. 9:16. 10:19-21. 15:19-21. 16:2. Acts 13:43-46. 14:1-4. 28:24.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 35-48. While we cast all our care upon God, in respect of events and consequences, we cannot be too attentive to our duty. We are the servants of Christ, whose coming to remove us by death, or to judge the world, may be very soon, or very sudden: but if 'our loins be girded and our lights burning,' we shall have no more reason to dread the summons, than a child has to be alarmed at the arrival of a messenger, who is sent to convey him home to his tender parents: nay, words can never express the delight, with which our gracious Lord will welcome and bless his faithful servants. If then we are habitually watching and ready, what does it signify to us personally, whether He 'come at the second or the third watch?' For blessed are those servants, who... are found so doing.' But as robbers assault the house, when the family has least expectation of them, so death generally surprises a man when he is least thinking of it. We should, therefore, never remit our watch, to pursue vain diversions, worldly interests, or sensual indulgences, lest our Lord should come at that very time. (Note, Rom. 13: 11-14.) This indeed applies to every man, but more especially to the ministers of the Gospel, who are 'the stewards of God's mysteries,' and rulers of his household. Happy then is that faithful and wise servant who delights in his work, and gives himself continually to it; for 'his Lord,

when He cometh, will make him ruler over all that He hath;' and how paltry are all other preferences, when compared with 'this crown of glory that fadeth not away!' (Note, 1 Pet. 5: 1-4.) But woe to infidels, and ungodly men, who appear in the garb of ministers! They say in their hearts, 'My Lord delayeth his coming,' and so are emboldened to persecute, oppress and fleece their brethren, and to indulge in riot and licentiousness: but they will soon be surprised in the midst of their successful impiety, and torn away, to have their portion with the unbelievers. Those who were thus ungodly, not only with the Bible in their hands, but with the Gospel in their mouths, and who knew their Lord's will accurately, and could instruct others in it, yet never prepared themselves, or set about obeying it, will be punished in the most tremendous manner. Indeed the condemnation of heathens, and others who have had but few advantages for knowing the will of God, will be very light, compared with that of wicked professors of Christianity, and of ungodly ministers: 'For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required.' May the Lord then give us grace, to improve our many advantages to the glory of his name! (Note and P. O. Is. 56: 9-12. P. O. Matt. 24: 36-51.)

SCOTT.

Verses 49-53.

The introduction of the Gospel would, in some respects, resemble the kindling of a fire, which should occasion very destructive and wide-spread desolations. Not that this is the tendency of Christianity; but it would be the effect of the opposition raised against it, and of the perversions many would make of it. Hence would arise furious persecutions, bitter contentions, and multiplied divisions, usurpations, and oppressions; and these things, with the resistance made to them, producing fierce and bloody wars, would diffuse manifold calamities and evils all over the earth. (Marg. Ref. c. d.—Mic. 7: 5-7. Matt. 10: 34-36.) Infidels have confidently alleged these consequences of the promulgation of Christianity, as so many objections to its divine original; wilfully forgetting that 'thus it was written, and thus it must be.' But the prediction of these effects, which no philosophizing or speculative observer would ever have expected from so benign a religion, forms an additional demonstration that it is from God; and every man, who is experimentally acquainted with the human heart, will readily account for them, without charging the least blame on the Gospel: nay, he will see, that they are occasioned by its excellency, and must follow from it, so long as men continue proud, carnal, selfish, and alienated from God. To this, our Lord added, 'And what will I, if it be already kindled?'—What would I, br. that it were kindled.' Campbell. (Marg. Ref. x, y.) It may, however, refer to the malignant opposition of the scribes and Pharisees, and the divisions and contentions which our Lord's ministry had already excited; yet, though the fire was indeed already kindled, did He regret that He had been so open in his instructions, and sharp in his reproofs? Did they suppose

that He was disappointed or disconcerted? Did they imagine it at He meant to desist? This was, by no means, the case; on the contrary, He earnestly desired that this fire should be more completely kindled, by the full and extensive publication of his Gospel. But before that could take place, 'He had a baptism to be baptized with,' far different from that 'of water and of the Holy Spirit,' by which He had been admitted to the exercise of his prophetic office; for He must endure the most extreme sufferings, shed his blood on the cross, and pour out his soul unto death, before He could enter on his office within the veil, as the High Priest of his church, and be put in full possession of the mediatorial throne. (Marg. and Marg. Ref. z, a.—Notes, Matt. 20: 20-23.) 'But how was He straitened, till this was accomplished? It did not consist with the plan laid down for the performance of this work, to preach the Gospel more openly or extensively, till this baptism was completed; in the mean time He was exceedingly straitened and limited, in the exercise of his ardent love and zeal; and even tormented for that awful and important crisis, which should make way for his exaltation, and the publication of his Gospel to all nations, that God might be glorified in the salvation of an innumerable multitude of precious souls. (Is. 53: 11, 12. John 16: 16-22. Heb. 12: 2, 3.)

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(50.) *How am I straitened!* 'The word seems to import an *ardor of mind*, with which a person is so borne on towards the object of his affection and pursuit, that the necessary impediments which lie in his way are uneasy to him. Compare 2 Cor. 5: 14.'

DODDRIEDGE.

53 The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

54 ¶ And he said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is.

55 And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass.

56 Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?

57 Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?

58 When *thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison.

59 I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last *mite.

ther in holy love, and, if all would receive it, this would be the effect of it; but there being multitudes that not only will not receive it, but oppose it, and have their corruptions exasperated by it, and are enraged at those that do receive it, it proves, though not the cause, yet the occasion of division. While the strong man armed kept his palace, in the Gentile world, his goods were at peace; all was quiet, for all went one way, the sects of philosophers agreed well enough, so did the worshippers of different deities; but when the Gospel was preached, and many were enlightened by it, and turned from the power of Satan to God, then there was a disturbance, a noise and a shaking, Ezek. 37: 7. Some distinguished themselves by embracing the Gospel, and others were angry that they did so. Yea, and among them that received the Gospel, there would be different sentiments in lesser things, which would occasion division; and Christ permits it for holy ends, (1 Cor. 11: 19), that Christians may learn and practise mutual forbearance, Rom. 14: 1, 2.

(2.) That this division will reach into private families, and the preaching of the Gospel occasion discord among the nearest relations; v. 53. If, for instance, the father turns Christian, and the son does not; the former will be zealous by arguments and endearments, to turn the latter too; (1 Cor. 7: 16.) as soon as ever Paul was converted, he disputed: (Acts 9: 29.) the one that continues in unbelief will be provoked, and will hate and persecute the one that by his faith and obedience witnesses against, and condemns, his unbelief and disobedience. A spirit of bigotry and persecution will break through the strongest bonds of relation and mutual affection; see Matt. 10: 35, 34: 7. Even mothers and daughters fall out about religion; and those that believe not, are so violent and outrageous, that they are ready to deliver up into the hands of the bloody persecutors those that believe, though otherwise very near and dear to them. We find in the Acts, that, wherever the Gospel came, persecution was stirred up; it was every where spoken against, and there was no small stir about that way. Therefore let not the disciples of Christ, promise themselves peace on earth, for they are sent forth as sheep in the midst of wolves.

V. 54—59. Having given his disciples their lesson in the foregoing verses, Christ here turns to the people, and gives them theirs, v. 54. In general, He would have them be as wise in the affairs of their souls, as they are in their outward affairs. Two things He specifies,

I. Let them learn to discern the way of God toward them, that they may prepare accordingly. They could, by observing the winds and clouds, foresee when there would be rain, and when there would be hot weather; (v. 54, 55.) and they accordingly either housed their hay and corn, or threw it abroad, and equipped themselves for a journey, according as they foresaw the weather would be. Even in the change of the weather, God gives us warning what is coming, and art has improved those notices of nature, in weather-glasses. These preparations here spoken of, were made by repeated observations on the chain of causes; see the benefit of experience; by taking notice, we may come to give notice; whose is wise, will observe and learn. See now,

1. The particulars of the presages: 'Ye see a cloud arising out of the west;' (the Hebrew would say, out of the sea;) 'perhaps it is at first no bigger than a man's hand,' (1 Kings 18: 44.) but ye say, This is a shower in the

womb of it, and it proves so. When ye observe the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat,' (for the hot countries of Africa lay not far south of Judea,) 'and it usually comes to pass.'

2. The inferences from them, (v. 56.) 'Ye hypocrites, who pretend to be wise, but really are not so, who pretend to expect the Messiah and his kingdom,' (for so the generality of the Jews did, and yet are no way disposed to receive and entertain it, how is it that ye do not discern that, according to the indications given in the Old Testament prophecies, now is the time for the Messiah to appear, and that, according to the marks given of Him, I am He? Why are ye not aware that ye have now an opportunity which ye will not have long, and which ye may never have again, of securing to yourselves an interest in the kingdom of God, and the privileges of that kingdom? Now is the accepted time, now or never. It is the folly and misery of man, that he knows not his time, Eccl. 9: 12. This was the ruin of the men of that generation, that they knew not the day of their visitation, Luke 19: 44. But a wise man's heart discerns time and judgment; such was the wisdom of the men of Issachar, who had understanding of the times, 1 Chron. 12: 32. He adds, (v. 57.) 'Yea, and why, even of yourselves, though ye had not these loud alarms given you, judge ye not what is right? Ye are not only stupid and regardless in matters that are purely of divine revelation, but ye are so even in the dictates of the very light and law of nature.' Christianity has reason and natural conscience on its side; and if men would allow themselves the liberty of judging what is right, they would soon find that all Christ's precepts concerning all things are right, and that there is nothing more equitable in itself, nor better becoming us, than to submit to them, and be ruled by them.

II. Let them hasten to make their peace with God, before it be too late, v. 55, 59. This we had on another occasion, Matt. 5: 26.

1. We reckon it our wisdom, in our temporal affairs, to compound with those with whom we cannot contend, to agree with our adversary on the best terms we can, before the equity be foreclosed, and we be left to the rigor of the law. Wise men will not let their quarrels go to an extremity, but accommodate them in time.

2. Let us do thus in the affairs of our souls; we have by sin made God our adversary, have provoked his displeasure against us, and He has both right and might on his side; so that it is to no purpose to think of carrying on the controversy with Him either at bar or in battle. Christ, to whom all judgment is committed, is the Magistrate before whom we are hastening to appear: if we stand a trial before Him, and insist on our own justification, the cause will certainly go against us; the Judge will deliver us to the officer, the ministers of his justice, and we shall be cast into the prison of hell; the debt will be exacted to the utmost; and though we cannot make a full satisfaction for it, it will be continually demanded, till the last mite be paid, which will not be to all eternity. Christ's sufferings were short, yet in value fully satisfactory. In the sufferings of damned sinners, what is wanting in value, must be made up in an endless duration. Now, in consideration of this, let us give diligence to be delivered out of the hands of God, as an adversary, into his hands as a Father, and this as we are in the way, which has the chief stress laid on it here. While we are alive, we are in the way; and

Verses 54—57.

(Marg. Ref. e—h.—Notes, Matt. 16: 1—4. Mark 8: 10—13.) When the people saw a cloud rise from the Mediterranean sea, they had learned by constant observation to expect copious showers; and a south wind from off the sultry deserts was deemed a sure prognostic of heat. In such matters they were sagacious; but the exact accomplishment of types and prophecies, in the doctrine, miracles, and character of Christ, and in the time and circumstances of his appearance, did not suffice to convince them that He was their promised Messiah! In this, their hypocritical scribes and teachers were most faulty; and, being blinded by their carnal prejudices, they used their whole influence to mislead the people. Yet, as the case was so very evident, why did not the people see with their own eyes, and judge for themselves what was

right, or decide impartially and justly between Him and his malicious opponents? (Marg. Ref. i.—Acts 2: 37—40.)

Verses 58, 59.

This passage, as here connected, implied a warning to the Jews, and their priests, scribes, and rulers, to cease from their opposition to Christ, and to welcome Him as their Prince and Savior, before it were too late; otherwise terrible and durable miseries would soon come upon them; but it also inculcated those instructions to individuals, which have been already considered. (Marg. Ref.—Prov. 6: 1—5. 25: 8—17. Matt. 5: 25, 26.) Be delivered. (Acts 13: 12. Heb. 2: 15. Mat. 6: 24.) It seems to imply deliverance from an enemy, by pacifying Him and being reconciled.

10

CHAP. XIII.

Some proofs, that calamities are no show of peculiar guilt; and exhorts his hearers to repent, if they would escape impending ruin, 1-5. The parable of a barren fig-tree, which should be cut down, 6-9. Jesus heals a woman who had been long bowed down, and silences the objection of the hypocritical ruler of the synagogue, 10-17. He compares the kingdom of God to a grain of mustard-seed, 18, 19, and to leaven, 20, 21. Being asked whether few should be saved, He warns the people to 'strive to enter in at the strait gate,' before it was finally shut, 22-30. He will not be diverted from his course, by the threatenings of Herod, 31-33. He predicts, and America over, the approaching desolations of Jerusalem, 34, 35.

THERE were present at that season some that told him of the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices.

2 And Jesus answering said unto them, 'Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?'

3 I tell you, Nay: but, ^a except ye repent, ^e ye shall all likewise perish.

^a Acts 3:27.
^b Lam. 2:20. Eccl. 9:5-7. 1 Pet. 4:17, 18.
^c Job 22:5-16. John 9:2. Acts 28:4.
^d 5. 24-27. Matt. 3:2, 10-12. Acts 13:40-41. 3:19.
^e 18:42-44. 21:22-24. 23:28-30. Matt. 12:45. 22:7. 23:33-38. 24:21-29.

regarded man. The altar, which used to be a sanctuary and place of shelter, is now become a snare and a trap, a place of danger and slaughter.

2. Why it was related at this season to our Lord Jesus. (1.) Perhaps merely as a matter of news, and as a thing which they lamented, and believed He would too, for the Galileans were their countrymen. Note, Sad providences ought to be observed by us, and communicated to others, that they and we may be suitably affected with, and make a good use of them. (2.) Perhaps as a confirmation of what Christ had said in the close of the foregoing chapter, concerning the necessity of making our peace with God in time, before we be delivered to the officer, that is, to death, and so cast into prison, when it will be too late to make agreements. Note, It will be of good use to us both to explain the Word of God, and to enforce it upon ourselves, to observe the providences of God. (3.) Perhaps they would stir Him up, being Himself of Galilee, and a Prophet, and one that had a great interest in that country, to find out a way to revenge the death of these Galileans on Herod. If they had any thoughts of this kind, they were quite out; for Christ was now going up to Jerusalem, to be delivered into the hands of Pilate, and to have his blood, not mingled with his sacrifice, but itself made a sacrifice. (4.)

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 49-59. We ought not to be disconcerted at the undesirable effects, occasioned by the preaching of the Gospel; but to be bold and zealous in promoting the truth, without shrinking, from fear of consequences to ourselves or others: for, though afflictions must be endured, divisions excited, and 'a man's foes be those of his own household,' yet sinners will be converted, and God will be glorified.—But if men were as wise for their souls, as most of them are in their temporal concerns, though false teachers might attempt to prejudice or mislead them, yet they would 'even of themselves discern what was

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. v. 1-3. (23: 1-5. Matt. 22: 15-22.) (2.) Were sinners, &c.] (Notes, John 9: 1-3. Acts 29: 3-6.) This is generally supposed to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem, and the slaughter of the Jews by the Romans, for making insurrections against the government; and especially to the havoc made among them, in the courts of the temple, while they were offering their sacrifices: inasmuch that the altar was sprinkled with their blood, and a multitude of dead bodies lay round about it. (Marg. Ref.—Ex. 5: 7-7. 1 Pet. 4: 17-19.) This shows, that those who brought sacrifices were admitted into the inner court. (Lev. 1: 5-9. 2 Chr. 23: 3-10, v. 6.) 'Perhaps this story of the Galileans might now be mentioned unto Christ, w^h the design of leading Him into a snare, whether He would justify, or condemn, the persons that were slain.' Doddridge.

Scott.

now is our time, by repentance and faith through Christ, (who is the Mediator as well as the Magistrate,) to get the quarrel made up, while it may be done, before it be too late. Thus was God in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, beseeching us to be reconciled. Let us take hold on the arm of the Lord stretched out in this gracious offer, that we may make peace, and we shall make peace; (Isa. 27: 4, 5.) for we cannot walk together till we be agreed.

CHAP. XIII. V. 1-5. We have here,

I. Tidings brought to Christ of the death of some Galileans lately, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices, v. 1. Let us consider,

1. What this tragical story was: it is briefly related here, and is not met with in any of the historians of those times. Josephus indeed mentions Pilate's killing of some Samaritans, who, under the conduct of a factious leader, were going in a tumultuous manner to mount Gerizim, where the Samaritans' temple was; but we can by no means allow that story to be the same with this. Some think these Galileans were of the faction of Judas Gaulonita, called Judas of Galilee, (Acts 5: 37.) who disowned Cæsar's authority, and refused to pay tribute to him: or perhaps these, being Galileans, were only suspected by Pilate to be of that faction, and barbarously murdered, because those who were in with that pretender, were out of his reach. The Galileans being Herod's subjects, it is probable that this outrage committed on them by Pilate, occasioned the quarrel between Herod and Pilate, which we read of, ch. 23: 12. We are not told what number they were, perhaps but a few; (and therefore, the story is overlooked by Josephus;) but the circumstance remarked is, that Pilate mingled their blood with their sacrifices in the court of the temple. Lightfoot thinks it probable they were themselves killing their sacrifices, and that Pilate's officers came on them by surprise, just at that time. Neither the holiness of the place, or work, would protect them from the fury of an unjust judge, that neither feared God, nor

Perhaps it was told Christ, to deter Him from going up to Jerusalem, to worship, (v. 22.) lest Pilate should serve Him as he had those Galileans, and should suggest against Him, as, probably, he had against them, that they came to sacrifice as Absalom, with a seditious design, under color of sacrificing, to raise rebellion. (5.) Christ's answer intimates that they told Him this with a spiteful *intuendo*, that, though Pilate was unjust in killing them, yet that without doubt, they were secretly bad men, else God would not have permitted Pilate thus barbarously to cut them off. It was very invidious; rather than allow them to be martyrs, though they died sacrificing, and perhaps suffered for their devotion, they will, without any color of proof, suppose them malefactors; and it may be for no other reason than because they were not of their party and denomination, differed from them, or had difference with them; their fate, which was capable not only of a favorable, but an honorable construction, shall be called a just judgment of God upon them, though they know not for what.

II. Christ's reply to this report: in which, 1. He seconded it with another story, which, like it, gave an instance of people's being taken away by sudden death, v. 4. Lightfoot's conjecture is, that this tower adjoined to the pool of Siloam, the same with the pool of Bethesda, and that it belonged to those porches by the pool, in which the impotent folk lay, (John 5: 3.) and that those killed, were some of them, or of those who in this pool used to purify themselves for the temple-service, for it was near the temple. Whoever they were, it was a sad story; yet such melancholy accidents we often hear of: for as the birds are caught in a snare, so are the sons of men snared in an evil time, when it falls suddenly upon them, Eccl. 9: 12. Towers, that were built for safety, often prove men's destruction.

2. He cautioned his hearers not to make an ill use of these and such like events, nor from thence to censure great sufferers, as if they were therefore to be accounted great sinners, v. 2, 3. Perhaps they that told Him the story of the Galileans, were Jews, and glad of any thing that furnished matter of reflection on the Galileans, and therefore Christ retorted on them the story of the men of Jerusalem, that came to an untimely end; for with what measure of that kind we mete, it shall be measured to us again. Whether it make for us or against us, we must abide by this rule, that we cannot judge of men's sins by their sufferings in this world; for many are thrown into the furnace as gold, to be purified, not as dross and chaff, to be consumed. We must therefore not be harsh in our censures of those that are afflicted more than their neighbors, as Job's friends were in their censures of Him, lest we add sorrow to the sorrowful; nay, lest we condemn the generation of the righteous, Ps. 73: 14. If we will be judging, we have enough to do to judge our-

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(1.) Galileans.] 'A new sect, made by a secession from that of the Pharisees, in the twelfth year of Christ, about the time that Archelaus was sent away from his government.'

JAHN.

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(3.) Likewise perish.] 'One faction of the zealots made themselves masters of the inner court of the temple, the other of the outer; whence they annoyed the former with their military engines, from which the darts were shot with such force, that they reached the altar, and even the temple itself, and struck both the priests and the sacrificers: so that many who had come hither from the extremities of the earth, did themselves fall before their sacrifices, and sprinkled with their own blood that holy altar. Then were the bodies of aliens mixed with those of the Jews, and the bodies of the priests with those of the profane; and the blood, flowing from all kinds of carcases, stood in pools within the sacred precincts of the temple.'

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4 Or those eighteen upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were *sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem?

5 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.

6 ¶ He spake also this parable: A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard: and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none.

7 Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?

f Neh. 3:15. John 9:7, 11.
g 1 Kings 20:30. Job 1:19.
h Jer. 49:19. 7:41, 42. 14:4. Matt. 6:12. 15:24.
i Ps. 118:29-13. Ez. 18:30.
j Pa. 80:8-13. Is. 52-4. Jer. 2:21.
k Matt. 21:19, 20. Mark 11:13-14.
l 20:10-14. Matt. 21:34-40.
m 1 Lev. 19:23. 25:21. Rom. 2:4, 5.
n 3:9. Dan. 4:14. Matt. 3:10. 7:19. John 15:2, 8.
o Ex. 32:10. Matt. 3:9.

died by the fall of the tower of Siloam. But certainly it looks further; except we repent, we shall perish eternally, as they perish out of this world. The same Jesus that bid us *repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand*, bid us *repent*, for otherwise we shall perish; so that He hath set before us life and death, good and evil, and put us to our choice. (5) The perishing of those who have been most harsh and severe in judging others, will be particularly aggravated.

V. 6-9. This parable is intended to enforce the warning immediately going before, v. 3.

1. It primarily refers to the nation and people of the Jews. God chose them for his own, made them a people near to Him, gave them advantages for knowing and serving Him above any other people, and expected answerable returns of duty and obedience; but they disappointed his expectations, and were a reproach, instead of a credit, to their profession; upon this, He justly determined to abandon them, deprive them of their privileges, and cut them off; but, upon Christ's, as of old, on Moses' intercession, He graciously gave them further time and further mercy; tried them, as it were, another year, by sending his apostles among them, to call them to repentance, and, upon that, in Christ's name to offer them pardon: some were wrought upon to *repent*, and bring forth fruit, and with them all was well; but the body of the nation continued impenitent and unfruitful, and on them came ruin without remedy: about forty years after, they were cut down, and cast into the fire, Matt. 3:10.

II. Yet it has, without doubt, a further reference, and is designed for the awakening of all that enjoy the means of grace, and the privileges of the visible church, to see to it, that the temper of their minds and the tenor of their

lives be answerable to their professions and opportunities, for that is the *fruit* required. Now observe here,

1. The advantages which this fig-tree had: it was planted in a vineyard, in better soil, and where it had more care and pains bestowed on it, than other fig-trees had, that commonly grew, not in vineyards, but by the way-side, Matt. 21:19. This fig-tree belonged to a certain man, who was at expense upon it. Note, The church of God is his vineyard, distinguished from the common, and fenced about, Isa. 5:1, 2. We are fig-trees planted in this vineyard by our baptism; and this is our distinguishing privilege and happiness. He has not dealt so with other nations.

2. The owner's expectations from it; He came and sought fruit thereon, and had reason to expect it. He did not send, but came Himself, intimating his desire to find fruit. Christ came into this world, came to his own, to the Jews, seeking fruit. Note, The God of heaven requires and expects fruit from those that have a place in his vineyard. He has his eye on those that enjoy the Gospel, to see whether they live up to it; He seeks evidences of their getting good by the means of grace they enjoy. Leaves will not serve; crying, Lord, Lord; blossoms will not serve; beginning well and promising fair; there must be fruit. Our thoughts, words, and actions must be according to the gospel-light and love.

3. The disappointment of his expectation; He found none, at all, not one fig. Note, It is sad to think how many enjoy the privileges of the Gospel, and yet do nothing at all to honor God, nor to answer the end of his intrusting them with those privileges; and it is a disappointment to Him, and a grief to the Spirit of his grace. (1) He here complains of it to the dresser of the vineyard: I come, seeking fruit, but am disappointed; I find none, looking for grapes, but behold, wild grapes; He is grieved with such a generation. (2) He aggravates it, with two considerations: [1.] That He had waited long, and yet was disappointed: applying it to the Jews, He came before, and, after the captivity, and in the preaching of John Baptist and Christ Himself; or it may allude to the three years of Christ's public ministry, which were now expiring. In general, it teaches us, that the patience of God is stretched out to long-suffering, with many that enjoy the Gospel, and do not bring forth the fruits of it; and this patience is wretchedly abused, which provokes God to so much the greater severity. How many times three years has God come to many of us, seeking fruit, but has found none, or next to none, or worse than none! [2.] That this fig tree did not only not bring forth fruit, but cumbered the ground, took up the room of a fruitful tree, and was injurious to all about it. Note, Those who do no good, commonly do hurt by the influence of their bad example; they grieve and discourage the good, they harden and encourage the bad. And the mischief is the greater, and the ground the more cumbered, if it be a high, large, spreading tree, and if it be an old tree of long standing.

4. The doom passed; Cut it down. He

Verses 4-5.

(Marg. Ref. f. g.)—This is commonly supposed to refer to the destruction of the Jews in great multitudes, by the casting down of the walls and towers of Jerusalem, when the city was taken; but the sudden and dreadful slaughter of the Jews at that time, seems in general intended; as the immediate hand of God was gone forth against them. It is observable, that our Lord determines nothing concerning the character and state of the persons in question; they were sinners, but not greater sinners than many others. (Nim. 27:1-4.) No doubt he also intends, to warn all men, in every age, that final and eternal ruin would certainly overtake all the impenitent, to whatever nation, society, or party they belonged.

(1) *Siloam*.—The fountain *Siloam*, or *Siloe*, which was the only one whose waters gladdened the city, flowed at the bottom of mount Moriah, to the south-east. SCOTT.
'Some have thought it to be the same with the pool of Bethesda. See 2 Kings 20:20. Neh. 3:15. Is. 8:6, and John 5:2. 9:7.'

Verses 6-9.

(Is. 5:1-7. Matt. 21:17-20, 33-44.) In three years' time the young trees were expected to bear; (Lev. 19:23-25.) but the owner of this tree is represented, as coming three subsequent years to seek fruit; and not finding any. It might therefore be concluded to be a barren tree, not fit to occupy the room, or appropriate the nourishment and culture, which might be more profitably employed. Some expositors speak, as if Christ Himself was represented by 'the dresser of the vineyard'; and indeed the long-suffering of God with sinners is the effect of his mediation; yet He seems rather to be the owner of the vineyard, who sentences the barren trees to be cut down. Besides, his intercession is never finally in vain. (Note, John 17:6-10, v. 9.) and the language used may describe the fervent prayers and zealous labors of faithful ministers, who earnestly desire to prevent the ruin of the people. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Jer. 14:10-22. 15:1. Ez. 14:13-21. Matt. 3:7-10.) (9) *If it bear fruit*.—It is an elliptical form of speaking; and implies, that if it then bare fruit, it would be preserved; but not otherwise. There is nothing for 'well' in the Greek. SCOTT.

(7) *Three years*.—Kuinöl takes this to denote a long time; a certain for an uncertain number. But fig-trees that bear at all, will by that time produce fruit, before which time they were not to be pruned. Hence, the three years must not be dated from its being planted, but from its having become fruit-bearing. BLOOMFIELD.

Cumbereth.—'Rather makes sterile' D.

8 And he answering said unto him, 'Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it:'

9 And if it bear fruit, well; and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down.

[Practical Observations.]

10 ¶ And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath:

e Ex. 32:11-13, 30-32. 34:9. Num. 14:11-20. Josh. 7:7-9. Jer. 14:7-9. 13, 18, 20. 15:1. 18:20. Joel 2:17. Rom. 10:1. 11:14. 1 Cor. 9:14, 15. Ps. 69:22-28. Dan. 9:5-8. 1 Thes. 2:15. Rev. 15:3, 4. q 4:15, 16, 44.

'Lord, not now. Lord, do not remove the Dresser, do not withhold the dews, do not pluck up the tree.' Note, [1.] It is desirable to have a barren tree reprieved. Some have yet *grace to repent*, yet mercy gives them *space to repent*, as to the old world one hundred and twenty years were allowed them to make their peace with God. [2.] We owe it to Christ, the great Intercessor, that barren trees are not cut down immediately; but for this interposal, the whole world has been cut down upon the sin of Adam; He said, *Lord, let it alone*; and He upholds all things. [3.] We are encouraged to pray for the merciful reprieve of barren fig-trees. Thus must we stand in the gap, to turn away wrath. [4.] Reprieves of mercy are but for a time; *let it alone this year also*, a short time, but sufficient to make trial. Though God has borne long, we may hope He will bear yet a little longer, but not always. [5.] The prayers of others may obtain *reprieves* for us, but not *pardons*; there must be our own faith, and repentance, and prayers, else no pardon.

(2.) How He promises to improve this reprieve, if it be obtained, v. 8. The Dresser seems to say, 'Lord, *may* be I have been wanting on my part; but let it alone this year, and I will do more than I have towards its fruitfulness.' Thus in all our prayers we must request God's grace, with a humble resolution to do our duty, else we mock God, and show that we do not rightly value the mercies we pray for. In particular, when we pray to God for grace for ourselves or others, we must follow our prayers with diligence in the use of the means of grace. The Dresser of the vineyard engages to do his part, and therein teaches ministers to do theirs. He will *dig about the tree*, and will *dung it*. Unfruitful Christians must be *awakened* by the terrors of the law, and then encouraged by the promises of the Gospel: the one prepares for the other, and all little enough.

(3.) On what footing He leaves the matter: 'Let us try it, and what we can do with it, one year more, v. 9. It is possible, nay, there is hope, it may yet be fruitful,' in that hope the Owner will have patience with it, and the Dresser take pains with it, and if it should have the desired success, both will be pleased it was not cut down. The word *well* is not in the original, but the expression is abrupt; *If it bear fruit*; supply it how you please, so as to express how wonderfully well pleased both the Owner and Dresser will be; but it cannot be better expressed than by *well*. Note, Unfruitful professors of religion, if, after long unfruitfulness, they will repent, and bring forth fruit, shall find *all is well*. God will be pleased, for He will be praised; ministers' hands will be strengthened, and such penitents will be their joy now, and their crown shortly. Nay, there will be joy in heaven for it: the ground will be no longer cumbered, but bettered, the vineyard beautified, and the good trees in it made better. It is *well* for the tree itself; it shall not only not be cut down, but *receive blessings from God*; (Heb. 6: 7.) shall be

purged, and shall bring forth more fruit, for the Father is its Husbandman; (John 15: 2.) and it shall at last be transplanted from the vineyard on earth to the paradise above.

But He adds, *If not, then, after that, Thou shalt cut it down*. Observe here, though God bear long, He will not bear always, with unfruitful professors; his patience will have an end, and, if abused, will give way to wrath without end. Barren trees will certainly be cut down at last, and cast into the fire. The longer God has waited, and the more cost He has been at upon them, the greater will their destruction be: to be cut down *after that*, after all these expectations from it, these debates concerning it, this concern for it, will sadly aggravate the condemnation. Cutting down, though work that shall be done, is work God doth not take pleasure in: for observe here, the Owner said to the Dresser, 'Do Thou cut it down, for it cumbereth the ground.' 'Nay,' said the Dresser, 'if it must be done at last, *Thou shalt cut it down*, let not my hand be upon it.' Those that now intercede for barren trees, and take pains with them, if they persist in their unfruitfulness, will be even content to see them cut down, and will not have one word more to say for them. Their best friends will acquiesce in, nay, will approve and applaud the righteous judgment of God, in the day of its manifestation, Rev. 15: 3, 4.

V. 10-17. Here is,

I. A miraculous cure. Our Lord Jesus spent his Sabbaths in the synagogues, v. 10. We should make conscience of doing so, as we have opportunity, and not think we can spend the Sabbath as well at home in reading a good book, for religious assemblies are a divine institution, we must bear our testimony to, though but of two or three. And when in the synagogues on the Sabbath-day, *He was teaching there*—it denotes a continuing act; *He still taught the people knowledge*. He was in his element when teaching. Now, to confirm and recommend the doctrine He preached, He wrought a miracle.

1. The object of charity was, a woman in the synagogue, that had an infirmity, (v. 11.) which an evil spirit, by divine permission, had brought upon her; such, that she was *bowed together* by strong convulsions; and, having been long thus, and the disease being incurable, she could not stand erect, which is reckoned man's honor above the beasts. Observe, Though she was much deformed, and made to look mean, and, as is supposed, motion was very painful to her, yet she went to the *synagogue on the Sabbath day*. Note, Even bodily infirmities, unless very grievous indeed, should not keep us from public worship on Sabbath-days; for God can help us, beyond our expectation.

2. The offer of this cure to one that sought it not, bespeaks the preventing mercy and grace of Christ, v. 12. It does not appear that she made any application to Him, or had any expectation from Him; but before she called He

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V. 1-9. As no place or employment can secure us from the stroke of death, we should always be preparing for it; and instead of considering the sudden or extraordinary deaths of our neighbors or countrymen, as proofs that they were 'sinners above other men,' we should endeavor to improve them as warnings to ourselves; for when dire calamities are reported, it may be said to sinners of every age and nation, 'Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.' Nay, whatever we read in the Scriptures, of the misery of the wicked in hell, is intended to speak the same important warning to each of us.—Those who hear the Gospel, and associate with the people of God, and yet continue impenitent and unconverted, are the barren fig-trees in the Lord's vineyard; and it behoves every one of us to inquire, how long we have been favored with the means of grace, and borne with by the long-suffering of God;

and to examine, whether we be now bearing fruit to his glory, and the good of men, or be still mere 'cumberers of the ground.' Such inquiries are peculiarly proper to be made at the beginning of a new year, or the return of any other periodical season. And when any are restored from sickness, and spared a little longer, in answer to the prayers of ministers or Christian friends, surely they should take their admonitions in good part, and seek to profit by their endeavors; remembering how short their respite may be, and how soon they may be cut down, if not at length rendered fruitful.—But alas! many of these despise and revile such as pray and labor for their salvation, and watch for their souls as those who must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief!'

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(3.) *Dig about it.* [Weinstein has many classical citations, from which it appears that three things were necessary to the cultivation of the fig-tree—digging, dunging, and watering; and especially the first. We are told that fig-trees exhaust the soil.] BLOOMFIELD.

(9.) *If it bear fruit, &c.* In hypothetical sentences, like this, the latter member is often omitted, even by the best Greek writers, when either the tone of voice, countenance, motions, or gestures of him who employed such expressions, indicate what is wanting, and what must be understood. Kuinoel, in BLOOMFIELD

Verses 10-17.

The calamity, under which this woman had so long labored, would in general have been considered as a very remarkable disease, arising from some known or unknown natural cause; but it was at that time justly ascribed to an evil spirit; so that in fact 'Satan had bent her eighteen years.' (Matt. 8: 28, 29. Mark 9: 18-24.) (13.) *Glorious God!* (Ps. 14: 1-7. Marg. Ref.—14: 1-6. Matt. 12: 13. Mark 3: 1-5. John 5: 10-18. 7: 19-24. 9: 13-16.

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11 And behold, there was a woman, which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself.

12 And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

13 And he laid his hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God.

14 And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the sabbath-day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the sabbath-day.

15 The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite, doth not each one of you on the sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering?

16 And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath-day?

17 And when he had said these things, all his adversaries were

answered. She came to Him, to be taught, and to get good for her soul, and then Christ relieved her bodily infirmity. Note, Those whose first and chief care is for their souls, do best befriend the true interests of their bodies likewise, for other things shall be added to them. Christ in his Gospel calls and invites those to come to Him for healing, that labor under spiritual infirmities, and if He calls us, He will undoubtedly help us when we come to Him.

3. The cure, effectually and immediately wrought, bespeaks his almighty power, v. 13. Let not those despair, whose disease is inveterate, who have been long in affliction, God can at length relieve them; therefore, though He tarry, wait for Him. She was under the power of an evil spirit, but Christ has a power superior. He could lift her up, and enable her to lift up herself. She that had been crooked, was immediately made straight, and the Scripture was fulfilled (Ps. 146: 8.) The Lord raiseth them that are bowed down.

This cure represents the work of Christ's grace on the souls of people. (1.) In the conversion of sinners. Unsansified hearts are under this spirit of infirmity, they are distorted, the faculties of the soul are quite out of place and order; they are bowed down toward things below. They can in no wise lift up themselves to God and heaven: the bent of the soul, in its natural state, is the quite contrary way. Those crooked souls seek not to Christ, but He calls them to Him, lays the hand of his power and grace on them, speaks a healing word, by which He looses them from their infirmity; makes the soul straight, reduces it to order, raises it above worldly regards, and directs its affections and aims heavenward. Though man cannot make that straight, which God has made crooked, (Ecc. 7: 13.) yet the grace of God can make that straight, which the sin of man has made crooked. (2.) In the consolation of good people. Many of God's children are long under a spirit of infirmity, a spirit of bondage; through prevailing grief and fear, their souls are cast down and disquieted within them, they are troubled, they are bowed down greatly, they go mourning all the day long, Ps. 38: 6. But Christ, by his spirit of adoption, looses them from this infirmity in due time, and raises them up.

4. The present effect of this cure, on the soul of the patient as well as on her body; she glorified God, gave Him the praise of her cure, to whom all praise is due. When crooked souls are made straight, they will show it by glorifying God.

II. The offence taken at this by the ruler of the synagogue, v. 14. One would think the miracle should have convinced him; but what light can so shine, as that a spirit of bigotry and enmity to Christ and his Gospel will not shut men's eyes against it? Never was such honor done to the synagogue he was ruler of, as Christ had now done it, and yet he had indignation at it. He had not indeed the impudence to quarrel with Christ, but he reflected on Christ in what he said to the people. How light he made of Christ's miracles, as if they were things of course, and no more than what quacks and mountebanks did every day: 'You may come and be healed, any day of the week.' Christ's cures were become, in his eyes, cheap and common things. See also how he stretches the law beyond its intention, or any just construction that could be put upon it, in making either healing, or being healed with a touch of the hand, or a word's speaking, to be that work which is forbidden on the sabbath-day. This was evi-

dently the work of God; and why God tried us out from working that day, did He tie Himself out? The same word in Hebrew signifies both godly and merciful, to intimate that works of mercy and charity are in a manner works of piety, (1 Tim. 5: 4.) and therefore very proper on sabbath-days.

III. Christ's justification of Himself in what He had done, v. 15. Thou hypocrite. Christ, who knows men's hearts, may call those hypocrites, whom it would be presumption for us to call so, who must judge charitably, and can judge but according to the outward appearance. Christ knew the ruler had a real enmity to Him and his Gospel, which he did but cloak with a pretended zeal for the sabbath-day; and that when He bid the people come on the six days, and be healed, he really would not have them be healed any day. Christ could have told him this, but he vouchsafes to reason the case with him; and,

1. He appeals to the common practice among the Jews, which was never disallowed, that of watering their cattle on the sabbath-day. Not to allow it would be barbarous; for a merciful man regards the life of his beast, his own beast that serves him. Letting the cattle rest on the sabbath-day, as the law directed, would be worse than working them, if they must be made to fast on that day, as the Ninevites' cattle on their fast day, Jon. 3: 7.

2. He applies this to the present case; v. 16. 'Must an ox or an ass, out of compassion to them, have so much time and pains bestowed on them every Sabbath, as to be loosed from the stall, led away perhaps a great way to the water, and then back again; and shall not this woman, only with a touch of the hand and a word's speaking, be loosed from a much greater grievance than that which the cattle undergo, when they are kept a day without water? For consider, 'She is a daughter of Abraham, whom you all pride yourselves in a relation to; she is your sister. She is a daughter of Abraham, and therefore entitled to the Messiah's blessings, to the bread which belongs to the children. She is one whom Satan has bound, and therefore it was not only an act of charity to the poor woman, but of piety to God, to break the power of the devil, and baffle him. She has been in this deplorable condition, lo, these eighteen years, and therefore now that there is an opportunity of delivering her, it ought not to be deferred a day longer, as you would have it, for any of you would have thought eighteen years' affliction full long enough.'

IV. The different effect this had on those that heard Him. He had sufficiently made it out, not only that it was lawful, but that it was highly fit and proper, to heal this poor woman on the sabbath-day, and thus publicly in the synagogue, that they might all be witnesses of the miracle. And now observe,

1. What a confusion this was to the malice of his persecutors; (v. 17.) they were put to silence, and vexed that they were so; it was not shame that worked repentance, but indignation rather. Note, Sooner or later, all the adversaries of Christ, and his doctrine and miracles, will be made ashamed.

2. What a confirmation this was to the faith of his friends, v. 17. The shame of his foes was the joy of his followers; the one fretted at, and the other triumphed in the increase of his interest. The things Christ did, were glorious things; and, though now clouded, perhaps will appear so, and we ought to rejoice in them. Every thing that is the honor of Christ, is the comfort of Christians.

r 16. R. 2. Job 2:7. Matt. 9:32, 33.
e 3:27, 43. Mark 9:21. John 5:5, 6.
9:19-21. Acts 2:2, 4, 22. 14:8-10.
f 3:8. 33:6. 42:5. marg. 14:8-10.
u 6:8-10. Ps. 107:26. Is. 65:1.
Matt. 8:16.
v 4:6.
d 4:40. Mark 6:5. 8:28. 16:18. Acts 9:17.
e 17:20-22. 18:43. Ps. 103:1-5.
116:16, 17.
g 8:11. Acts 13:15. 18:8, 17.
f 6:11. John 5:15, 16. Rom. 10:2.
e Ex 20:9. 23:12. Lev. 23:3. Ez. 34:12.
d 6:7. 14:3-6. Matt. 12:10-12.
Mark 3:2-6. John 9:14-16.
e 6:12. Job 34:30. Is. 29:20. Matt. 15:14. Acts 8:20-23. 13:9, 10.
f 14:5. John 7:21-24.
g 3:8. 16:24. 19:5. Acts 13:36. Rom. 4:12-16.
h 11. John 8:44. 2 Tim. 3:26.
i 12. Mark 2:27.
k 14:5. 20:40. Ps. 40:14. 103:29.
132:19. 2 Tim. 3:9.

(11.) Having a spirit of infirmity. [That is, laboring under, not merely (as Heinsius, Rosenmueller, and others, maintain) an infirmity, or disorder, but one inflicted by an evil spirit. That the Hebrews, especially the rabbins and Talmudists, attributed presiding spirits and genii to almost every thing, especially water, food, air, war, pestilence, conception, generation, matrimony, ardent desire, felicity, calamity, dreams, health, sickness, death, &c., has been shown by Wagenseil's Nota. And that much the same opinion was entertained by the Greek philosophers, as, Thales, Pythagoras, Plato, Plotinus, Chalcidius, Max. Syr. Alichous, Apuleius &c., others, appears both from Diog. Laert. and the writings of the above-mentioned philosophers. That diseases

were especially inflicted by demons, is recorded by Josephus, and the Jewish interpreters on Ps. 91: 6. The cases of Saul and Job will readily occur to any one. This, too, was the opinion of Pythag. and Homer. Od. But in the more violent disorders did they especially recognize demoniacal potency. So Galen somewhere remarks, that apoplexy was called "a demon" and that many attributed something of the kind to epilepsy, is observed by Hippocrates de morbo sacro. Harb. & Moldenhauer observe, that the evangelist speaks of the opinions of his countrymen. Triller thinks this disorder was letanum emprosthotonum, which, in hot countries, is sometimes chronic.]

ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

18 ¶ Then said he, 'Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it?

19 It is like a grain of mustard-seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it.

20 And again he said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?

21 It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

[Practical Observations.]

22 ¶ And he went through the cities and villages teaching, and journeying towards Jerusalem.

23 Then said one unto him, Lord, there are few that shall be saved? And he said unto them,

1. 19:37-40.48. John 12:17,18. Acts 3:9-11. 4:21. 13:31. Lam. 2:13. m 17:21. Mr. 4:26,30. n Matt. 13:31,32. 17:20. Mark 4:31,32. p Cant. 4:12,16. 5:1. 6:2. 8:13. Is. 58:11. 61:1. Jer. 31:12. q Ps. 72:16,17. Is. 25:3. 9:7. 49:20. 52:2. 51:2,3. 53:1,10-12. 54:1-3. 60:15-22. Ez. 17:22-24. 47:1-12. Dan. 9:24,33,44,45. Mic. 4:1,2. Zech. 2:11. 8:20-23. 14:7-9. Acts 2:41. 4:4. 15:14-18. 21:20. Gr. Rom. 15:19. 16:11,15. Ez. 31:6. Dan. 4:12,21. 11:33. marg. r Job 17:9. Ps. 92:13,14. Prov. 4:18. Hos. 6:3. John 4:14. 15:2. 1 Cor. 5:6. Phil. 1:8,9-11. 1 Thes. 5:22. 2 Jo. 1:21. s 4:43,44. Matt. 9:35. Mark 6:6. Acts 10:38. t 8:51. Mark 10:32-34. u Matt. 7:14. 19:25. 20:16. 22:14. v 12:13-15. 21:7,8. Matt. 24:3-5. Mark 13:1,5. John 21:21,22. Acts 1:7,8.

V. 10-21. We must indeed not rest in means and ordinances, but should thankfully attend on them, especially on God's holy day; and even if we come thither with pain and trouble, we shall not have cause to repent. We are not concerned or competent to determine, what influence Satan has in occasioning or increasing our bodily diseases: but we know, that he has bound our souls with the chain of our own sinful propensities, so that we are not able in any wise to lift up or liberate ourselves: and this has been the case with numbers for many years, while their evil habits have continually been strengthening, and rendering their case more hopeless. But if Jesus speak the word, and put forth his healing power, even these will immediately be loosed, and their crooked judgments and dispositions rectified; and they will, without delay, be able and willing to glorify God by word and deed. This deliverance is most frequently wrought on the Lord's day: and whatever

V. 18-22. Here is, 1. The Gospel's progress foretold in two parables, which we had before, Matt. 13: 31, 33. The kingdom of the Messiah is the kingdom of God, but as yet people were generally under mistakes about it. Now, when we would describe a thing to those that are strangers to it, we do it by similitudes; so here Christ undertakes to show what the kingdom of God is like; (v. 18.) 'Whereunto shall I liken it?' v. 20. It will be quite another thing from what you expect, and will operate, and gain its point, in quite another manner.'

'You expect it will appear great, and arrive at its perfection suddenly; but you are mistaken, it is like a grain of mustard-seed, a little thing, makes but a little figure, and promises but little; yet, when sown in soil proper to receive it, it waxes a great tree,' v. 19. Many perhaps were prejudiced against the Gospel, and loath to come in to the obedience of it, because its beginning was so small; they were ready to say of Christ, Can this man save us? and of his Gospel, Is this likely ever to come to any thing? Now Christ would remove this prejudice, by assuring them that though its beginning was small, its latter end should greatly increase; so that many should come, come on the wing, should fly like a cloud, to lodge in the branches of it with more safety and satisfaction, than in the branches of Nebuchadnezzar's tree, Dan. 4: 21.

'You expect it will make its way by external means, by subduing nations and vanquishing armies; but it shall work like leaven, silently and insensibly, without force or violence,' v. 21. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump, so the doctrine of Christ will strangely diffuse its relish into the world of mankind: in this it triumphs, that the savor of the knowledge of it is unaccountably made manifest in every place, beyond what one could have expected, 2 Cor. 2: 14. But you must give it time, wait the issue of the preaching of the Gospel to the world, and you will find it does wonders, and alters the property of the souls of men. By degrees the whole will be leavened, even as many as are, like the meal to the leaven, prepared to receive the savor of it.'

2. Christ's progress toward Jerusalem recorded, v. 22. Here we find Christ itinerant in his preaching; journeying toward Jerusalem, to the feast of dedication. It was in the winter, when travelling was uncomfortable, yet He would be about his Father's business; and therefore, whatever cities or villages He could make in his way, He gave them a sermon or two. Wherever Providence brings us, we should endeavor to be doing all the good we can.

V. 23-30. We have here,

1. A question put to our Lord Jesus; by whom we are not told, whether a friend or foe; for He gave both a great liberty of questioning Him, and returned answers to the thoughts and intents of the heart. The question was, Are

there few that are saved? v. 23. 'If the saved be few? Master, I have heard thou shouldst say so; Is it true?'

1. Perhaps it was a captious question; he put it to Him, to ensnare Him, and lessen his reputation. If He should say that many would be saved, they would reproach Him as too loose; if few, as precise and strait-laced. The Jewish doctors said, All Israel should have a place in the world to come; and would He dare to contradict that? Those that have imbibed a corrupt notion, are ready to make it the standard by which to measure all men's judgments; and in nothing do men more betray their ignorance, presumption, and partiality, than in judging of the salvation of others.

2 Perhaps it was a curious question, a nice speculation, he had lately been disputing upon with his companions, and they all agreed to refer it to Christ. Note, Many are more inquisitive respecting who shall be saved, and who not, than respecting what they shall do to be saved. It is commonly asked, 'May such and such be saved?' But it is well that we may be saved without knowing that.

3. Perhaps it was an admiring question; he had taken notice how strict the law of Christ was, and how bad the world was, and comparing these together, cries out, 'How few are there that will be saved?' Note, We have reason to wonder, that of the many to whom the word of salvation is sent, there are so few to whom it is indeed a saving word.

4. Perhaps it was an inquiring question; 'If there be few that be saved, what then? What influence should this have upon me?' Note, It concerns us all seriously to improve the great truth of the fewness of those that are saved.

II. Christ's answer to this question, which directs us what use to make of this truth. He did not give a direct answer, for He came to guide men's consciences, not to gratify their curiosity. Ask not, 'How many shall be saved?' But be they more or fewer, 'Shall I be one of them?' Not, 'What shall become of such and such, and what shall this man do?' But, 'What shall I do, and what will become of me?' Now in Christ's answer observe,

1. A quickening exhortation and direction, (v. 24.) not to him only that asked the question, but to all, to us, it is in the plural number; Strive ye. Note, All that will be saved, must enter in at the strait gate, must undergo a change of the whole man, such as, amounts to no less than being born again, and must submit to a strict discipline. Those that would enter in, must strive to enter. It is a hard matter to get to heaven; and a point not to be gained without a great deal of care and pains, of difficulty and diligence. We must strive with God in prayer, wrestle as Jacob, strive against sin and Satan; we must strive in every duty of religion, strive with our own hearts, 'Strive as those that run for a prize, exert ourselves to the utmost— Be in an agony.'

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labor tends to put men in the way of receiving this blessing, or of being instrumental in its being communicated, must peculiarly accord to the pious and beneficent intention of that sacred season of rest.—But they, who hate the Gospel and its blessed effects, always find some objection to make against every instance of the power of divine grace: and when this is accompanied by a professed exactness in externals, the hypocrisy of it may often be shown, by observing that they do things of the same kind for their own secular interest, which they blame others for doing to promote the salvation of souls. Let enemies, however, be never so numerous or malicious, God's kingdom will continue to increase in the world, till it fills the whole earth; and in every renewed soul, till it has perfectly communicated its heavenly savor and nature to all its faculties, dispositions and affections.

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Verses 18-21.

(Mrg. Ref.—Matt. 13: 31-33. Mark 4: 30-34.) The grain of mustard-seed is represented as sown in a good soil, and a select spot; a garden, and not a field.

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Verses 22-30.

It is probable, that our Lord was now on his last journey from Galilee towards Jerusalem, in which He took a large circuit, and spent considerable time; so that He no more visited the northern part of the

land, till after his resurrection. (Mrg. Ref. u, x.) (23.) Are there few that be saved? Or, Are the saved few? Perhaps the ~~ans~~ inferred this from his doctrine, and was prejudiced against Him on that account; or he deemed this inconsistent with the preceding parables. The whole context shows, that no temporal preservation, but deliverance 'from the wrath to come,' and inheriting eternal life, were meant; as the subsequent mention of the strait gate fully proves. (Mrg. Ref. b, c.—Matt. 7: 13, 14.) 'The strait gate' is the passage, from 'the

24 ^aStrive to enter in at the strait gate; ^bfor many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.

25 When ^aonce the Master of the house is risen up, and hath ^bshut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are;

26 Then shall ye begin to say, 'We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets.

27 But he shall say, 'I tell you, I know you not whence ye are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity.

28 There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, ^awhen ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and ^byou yourselves thrust out.

29 And ^athey shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and

2. Divers awakening considerations, to enforce this exhortation. O that we may be all awakened and quickened by them! They will serve to answer the question, *Are there few that shall be saved?*

(1.) Think how many take some pains for salvation, and yet perish because they do not take enough. Note, The reason is, because they rest in a *lazy seeking* of what will not be attained without a *laborious striving*. Their convictions are weak, they do not consider what they know and believe, and, consequently, their desires are cold, their endeavors feeble, and there is no strength or steadiness in their resolutions; thus they lose the prize, because they do not press forward. Christ avers this on his own word, *I say unto you; and we may take his word, for He knows both the counsels of God and the hearts of men.*

(2.) Think of the *distinguishing* day that is coming, and the *decisions* of that day. The Master of the house will rise up, and shut to the door, v. 25. Christ is the Master of the house, who will take cognizance of all that frequent his house. Now He seems as if He left things at large; but the day is coming when He will rise up, and shut to the door. What door? [1.] A door of distinction. Now, the door is open between carnal and spiritual professors, and they meet promiscuously in the same external performances. But when the Master of the house is risen up, the door will be shut between them, that those who are in the outer court, may be kept out, and left to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles, (Rev. 11: 2.) and that those who are within the veil, may be kept within. The door is shut, to separate between the precious and the vile, that sinners may no longer stand in the congregation of the righteous. Then you shall return, and discern betwixt them, and he that is filthy, shall be filthy still, and he that is holy, shall be holy still. [2.] A door of denial and exclusion. The door of mercy and grace has long stood open to them, but they would not be beholden to the favor of that door, they hoped to climb up some other way, and to get to heaven by their own merits; therefore when the Master of the house is risen up, He will justly shut that door. Thus, when Noah was safe in the ark, God shut the door to exclude all those that depended on shelters of their own in the approaching flood.

(3.) Think how many, who were very confident that they should be saved, will have their confidence deceive them, and be rejected in the day of trial.

[1.] What an assurance they had of admission, and how far their hope carried them, even to heaven's gate; there they stand and knock, knock as if they belonged to the house, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us, for we think we have a right to enter; take us in among the saved ones, for we joined ourselves to them.' Note, Many are ruined by an ill-grounded hope of heaven, which they never distrust or call in question, and therefore conclude their state is good. Thus these call Christ Lord, as if they were his servants; nay, in token of their importunity, they do, he it, Lord, Lord; they are desirous now to enter in by that door which they formerly made light of, and they would now gladly come in among those serious

Christians, whom they once secretly despised.

[2.] What grounds they had for their confidence, v. 26. 1st. They had been Christ's guests, and had shared in his favors. Judas ate bread with Christ, and dipped with Him in the dish. Hypocrites, under the disguise of their external profession, receive the Lord's supper, and in it partake of the children's bread, as if they were children. 2dly. They had been Christ's hearers, and had received instruction from Him,—a distinguishing favor, which few had, and surely it might be taken as a pledge of distinguishing favor now; 'wouldst thou teach us, and not save us?'

[3.] How their confidence will fail them, and all their pleas be rejected as frivolous. Christ doth not deny the truth of what they pleaded; they had eaten and drunk in his presence, and He had taught in their streets; but they had despised his instruction, and lifted up the heel against Him. Therefore, 1st. He disowns them; 'I know you not; you do not belong to my family. The Lord knows them that are his, but them that are not, He does not know, He has nothing to do with them; 'I know you not whence ye are. Ye are not of Me, not from above, nor branches of my house, of my vine.' 2dly. He discards them; 'Depart from Me.' It is the hell of hell to depart from Christ; the principal part of the misery of the damned. 3dly. He gives them such a character as is the reason of this doom; 'Ye are workers of iniquity. This is their ruin, that, under a pretence of piety, they kept up secret haunts of sin, and did the devil's drudgery in Christ's lively.

[4.] How terrible their punishment will be,—the utmost degree of grief and indignation; and that which causes and contributes to it, is a sight of the happiness of the saved, v. 28. Observe here, [1.] Old-Testament saints are in the kingdom of God; those had benefit by the Messiah, who died before his coming; for they saw his day. [2.] New-Testament sinners will be thrust out of the kingdom of God. It intimates that they will be thrusting in, and will presume on admission, but in vain; they shall be thrust out with shame, as having no part or lot in the matter. [3.] The sight of the saints' glory will be a great aggravation of sinners' misery; they shall thus far see the kingdom of God, that they shall see the prophets in it, whom they hated and despised, and themselves, who thought themselves sure of it, thrust out. This is that at which they will gnash their teeth, Ps. 112: 10.

(4.) Think who are they that shall be saved, notwithstanding; v. 29, 30.

By what Christ had said, it appeared that but few should be saved, of those whom we think most likely, and who bid fairest for it. Yet do not say then that the Gospel is preached in vain, for though Israel be not gathered, Christ will be glorious. Many from all parts of the Gentile world, shall come and be admitted into the kingdom of grace in his world, and of glory in the other. Plainly thus, when we come to heaven, we shall meet a great many there, whom we little thought to meet there, and miss a great many thence, whom we verily expected to find there.

Those who sit down in the kingdom of God,

21:36. Gen. 32:25, 26. Matt. 11:12. John 8:27. 1 Cor. 9:24—27. Phil. 2:12, 13. Col. 1:29. Heb. 4:11. 2 Pet. 1:10.
t. Matt. 7:13, 14.
c. Prov. 1:24—28. 14:6. 21:25. Ec. 10:15. Is. 1:15. 58:2—4. Ez. 33:31. Mark 6:15—20. John 7:54. 8:21. Rom. 9:31—33. 10:3.
d. Ps. 32:6. Is. 55:6. 2 Cor. 6:2. Heb. 3:7, 8. 12:17.
e. Gen. 7:16. Matt. 25:10.
f. 6:46. Matt. 7:21, 22. 25:11, 12.
g. Is. 58:2. 2 Tim. 3:5. Tit. 1:16.
h. Ps. 1:8. Matt. 7:23. 25:12. 1 Cor. 8:3. Gal. 4:8. 2 Tim. 2:18.
i. Ps. 5:6. 6:8. 28:3. 119:115. 125:5. 9:12. Matt. 25:41.
k. Is. 112:10. Matt. 8:12. 13:42, 50. Ps. 21:3. 24:51. 25:50.
l. 16:23. Matt. 8:11.
m. Is. 14:15. 23:42, 43. 2 Thes. 1:5. 2 Pet. 1:11.
n. 10:15. Rev. 21:8. 22:15.
o. Gen. 28:14. Is. 43:5. 49:6. 54:2, 3. 66:13—20. Mal. 1:11. Mark 13:27. Acts 26:28. Epil. 3:6—8. Col. 1:6, 23.

broad way to destruction' into 'the narrow way to life'; that is, a sinner's conversion and reconciliation to God, by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Many difficulties must occur in thus 'passing from death unto life': the gate is beset with enemies; and much must be left behind, broken off, broken through, overcome, and attained, in getting in at it; yet without this there can be no salvation. They, therefore, who would be saved, must 'strive to enter in at the strait gate': they must struggle with all their force, and employ all their attention and circumference, as those did who wrestled in the public games, (Marg. Ref. a.) 'Force your way in at the strait gate.' Campbell. To excite them to this, Christ, the Savior and Judge of men, solemnly assured them, that 'many will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' Some seek admission into the favor of God and eternal happiness, without conversion, or faith in the divine Savior; others seek the blessing in a slothful manner, or in the use of such means as God has never appointed; others, with reserves for their worldly interest, reputation, or sinful pleasures, or for avoiding reproach and persecution. In these and similar ways, many come short of salvation; notwithstanding convictions, temporary seriousness and earnestness, and partial reformation. But, it is by procrastination especially, that men at last 'will seek to enter in, and not be able.'

While life endures, the Master of the house, the Lord Jesus, sits, as it were, at mercy's gate, over which it is written, 'Knock, and it shall be opened to you.' But at length He rises up, and, by cutting off a sinner in his unconverted state, He 'shuts the door' against him, and bars it forever. (Marg. Ref. d, e.—Gen. 7: 16. Matt. 7: 7—11.) Many, therefore, even of those who then heard Christ, would first 'begin to knock' at the gate, and to seek salvation from Him, when it was too late; and whatever presumptuous confidence they had before entertained, or whatever plea they might have to urge, these would in no wise prevail for admission, (16: 24—26. Matt. 3: 7—10; 21—23, 11: 20—24. 25: 41—46.) (23—30.) (Prov. 1: 20—33. Is. 55: 6, 7. Matt. 8: 10—12. 19: 29—30.) In this address our Lord evidently declared to the people, that their admission into life and happiness, or exclusion from them, entirely and absolutely depended on Him alone (24.) Strive. (John 18: 36. 1 Cor. 9: 25. Col. 2: 1. 29. 4: 12. Tim. 6: 12. 2 Tim. 4: 7. Phil. 1: 30. Col. 2: 1. 1 Thes. 2: 2. 22: 44.) The word every where conveys the idea of sharp conflict, with great exertion, and self-denial, and persevering endurance.

(25.) 'Taught in our streets.' It was customary with the Jewish doctors to teach in the streets.

from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God.

30 And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.

[Practical Observations.]

31 ¶ The same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto him, 'Get thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill thee.'

32 And he said unto them, Go ye and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures, to-day, and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected.'

33 Nevertheless, I must walk to-day and to-morrow, and the day following: for I cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem.

34 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her

are such as had taken pains to get thither, for they came from far; they had passed through different climates, had broken through many difficulties and discouragements; which shows that they who would enter into that kingdom, must strive to enter into it.

Many who stood fair for heaven, came short, and others who seemed cast behind, and thrown quite out of the way, won the prize; therefore it concerns us to strive to enter. Let us be provoked, as Paul desired the Jews might be, to a holy emulation, by the zeal and forwardness of the Gentiles, Rom. 11:14. Shall I be outstripped by my juniors? Shall I, who started first, and stood nearest, miss of heaven, when others, less likely, enter into it? If it be got by striving, why should not I strive?

V. 31—35. Here is,

I. A suggestion to Christ of his danger from Herod, now that He was in Galilee, within Herod's jurisdiction, v. 31. Some think that these Pharisees framed this lie, to drive Him out of Galilee, where He had a great and growing interest, and into Judea, where they knew there were those that really sought his life. But Christ's answer being directed to Herod himself, it should seem that the Pharisees had ground for what they said, and that Herod was enraged against Him and designed Him a mischief, for the honorable testimony he had borne to John Baptist, and to the doctrine of repentance which John preached. Herod was willing

wings, and ye would not!

35 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, 'Ye shall not see me, until the time come when ye shall say, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 22—30. When we reflect how very few of the immense multitudes of the human species appear to be in the way of salvation, as that is marked out in the Word of God, the very proposal of the question, considered in all its awful importance, causes the soul to recoil appalled from the reflection. Nor will it avail us how few, or how many shall be saved, if we be not of that number; and if we be, we shall at length approve of the appointments of God, in this and in every other respect. Neither will the awful truth, that few comparatively have hitherto been saved, prevent our being of the happy number, if we seek salvation as our grand object, according to the oracles of God. Every unconverted sinner should then 'strive to enter in at the strait gate,' by earnest prayer, by resisting temptations, by avoiding all occasions of committing sin, or silencing his conscience, and hardening his heart, and by attending diligently on all the means of grace: and every one of us should continue thus to labor and wrestle, that we may make our 'calling and election sure,' especially let all men beware of a proud, a slothful, a hypocritical, a partial seeking; and above all, of procrastination. How dreadful will be the disappointment of those, who hoped and intended, at some future time, to enter the strait gate; but who deferred the grand concern, till it became too late, and the door was forever shut against them! In vain will they call Christ, Lord, Lord, and entreat Him to open to them; in vain will they plead, that they heard and entertained his

to get rid of Christ out of his dominions; and when he durst not put Him to death, he hoped to frighten Him away by sending Him this threatening message.

II. His disregard of the rage of Herod and the Pharisees, v. 32. In calling Herod a fox, He gives him his true character; for he was subtle as a fox, noted for his craft, and treachery, and baseness, and preying (as they say of a fox) furthest from his own den. And though it be a black and ugly character, yet it did not ill become Christ to give it him, nor was it in Him a violation of that law, *Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people*. For Christ was a Prophet, and prophets always had a liberty of speech in reproving princes and great men. Nay, Christ was more than a prophet, He was a King, He was King of kings, and the greatest of men were accountable to Him, and therefore it became Him to call this proud king by his own name; but it is not to be drawn into an example by us. 'Go, and tell that fox, yea, and this fox too,' (for so it is in the original,) 'that Pharisee, whoever he is that whispers this in my ear, let him know that I do not fear him nor regard his menaces. For,'

1. 'I know that I must die shortly; I expect it and count upon it, the third day; that is, very shortly; my hour is at hand.' Note, it will help us very much above the fear of death, and of them that have the power of death, to make death familiar to us, to expect it, think of it,

p Matt. 3:9, 10. 8:11, 12. 19:30. 20: 16. 21:25—31. Mark 10:31. q Neh. 6:9—14. Ps. 111:2. Am. 7: 12, 13. r 3:19, 20. 9:7—9. 23:2—11. Ez. 13: 4. Mic. 3:1. Zeph. 3:3. Mark 6:26—28. s 9:7. Mark 6:14. John 10:32. 11: 8—10. t John 17:4, 5. 19:30. Gr. Heb. 2: 10. 5:9. u John 4:34. 9:4. 11:54. 12:35. Acts 10:38. x 9:58. Matt. 20:18. Acts 13:27. y 19:41, 42. Matt. 23:37—39. z 2 Chr. 24:21, 22. 36:15, 18. Neh. 9: 26. Jer. 2:30. 26:23. Lam. 4:13. Matt. 21:35, 36. 22:6. Acts 7:52, 59. 8:1. Rev. 11:8. a Deut. 5:29. 32:29. Ps. 81:10, 13.

ministers, and frequented his table: he will utterly disregard their pleas, and refuse all pity to their anguish; while He shall sentence them 'to depart from Him, as workers of iniquity,' whom He never acknowledged to be in the number of his redeemed people: and even the felicity of those, with whom they formerly associated, as well as that of others whom they disdained, will add poignancy to their misery and despair. As there were such persons among our Lord's hearers, and a Judas even among his own apostles, we ought surely to address our congregations in a similar manner; and to enforce our warnings and exhortations by such alarming topics, addressed to them directly, in the second person; and not merely to speak of such characters in a general way, which may be understood to imply our opinion, that none of them are found in our audience. But especially we ought to examine ourselves, and not to take things for granted by an unwarranted confidence, where such infinite interests are at stake. None, however, ought to yield to despondency, either with respect to himself or others; for, 'behold, there are last who shall be first, and first who shall be last,' and, though few of our immediate relations or neighbors should appear to be in the way of salvation, yet there will be others brought from every part of the earth, and the multitude of the saved will in all be found immensely large. (P. O. Matt. 7: 13—29. 8: 5—13.) Scott.

Verses 31—33.

(32.) That fox! That subtle, insinuating, and mischievous man, Marg. R. f. r.—Ez. 13: 1—4. (33.) It cannot be, &c.] As John the Baptist and others had been slain elsewhere, it is evident that this sentence must not be taken strictly; it was a general rule, and Jesus, the Messiah, would not be an exception to it. This message was in fact a defiance sent to Herod; but his wickedness in slaying John the Baptist, contrary to the conviction of his own conscience, being added to all his other crimes, rendered it improper for our Lord to show him any regard. (23: 6—12.) 'I know that subtle tyrant, who hath shed the blood of my forerunner, is hunting after my death also; but tell him from me, that my times are set in the eternal counsel of God; and when my prefixed time is accomplished, for my labors and sufferings, I shall, in spite of all the opposition of earth and hell, be perfected, and enjoy my full glory.' Ep. Hall. The word signifies, I am consecrated to my priestly office, by doing a sacrifice for the sins of the world! Why? The offering of this sacrifice, however, was itself a most essential part of our Lord's priestly office; and introductory to the rest, which having finished on earth, He ascended to

heaven,' to appear in the presence of God 'for us.' (Heb. 5: 7—10. 9: 11—14. 24—26.) (31.) Herod will, &c.] (Matt. 14: 5.) Rather, Herod willeth, or wills, to kill thee. Will, thus used, is merely an auxiliary; and the clause, as here rendered, properly means, that Herod would put Jesus to death: but this is far from the real import, which is, 'Herod purposes to kill thee.' Herod intended to kill Jesus: but in fact he did not kill Him; but Pilate, who purposed so much, thing, crucified Him.

(32.) Fox! Indeed was he an old fox, since he had now administered the government thirty years, and personated many parts:—that of a servant to Tiberius, a master to the Galileans, a friend to Sejanus, Artabanus, his brothers Archelaus, Philip, the other Herod, all the wishes and interests of each of whom were diametrically opposite to those of the other, and to the wishes and interests of Herod himself.

Weststein, in BLOOMFIELD.

A fox, among the Jews, appears to have been the emblem of a wicked ruler, who united cunning with cruelty, and was always plotting how he might aggrandize himself, by spoiling the people.

Schoettgen, in CLARKE.

CHAP. XIV.

MEALS, on the Sabbath, heals a man who had the dropsy and justifies Himself in so doing, 6-8. By parabases He teaches humility, 9-11; and hospitality to the poor, 12-14. The problem of the great supper, 15-24. The necessity of self-denial, and renouncing the world, in order to be the disciples of Christ, incited and illustrated by similes, 25-33. The worthlessness of all which has lost its savor, 34, 35.

AND it came to pass, as he went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the sabbath-day, that they watched him.

2 And, behold, there was a certain man before him which had the dropsy.

3 And Jesus answering, spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day?

4 And they held their peace. And he took him, and healed him, and let him go;

5 7:34-35. 11:37. 1 Cor. 9:19-22. John 3:1. Acts 5:34. 6:7. 11:53, 54. 20:20. Ps. 37:32. 41:4. 62:4. 64:5, 6. Prov. 23:7. Is. 29:21. Jer. 20:10. Mark 3:27. 4:11, 45. 6:8. 13:14-16. Matt. 12:10. Mark 3:4. John 7:23. f Matt. 21:23-27. 22:46.

6 Matt. 23: 37-39. Perhaps this was not said now in Galilee, but the evangelist, not designing to bring it in in its proper place, inserts it here, on occasion of Christ's mentioning his being put to death at Jerusalem.

Note, 1. The wickedness of persons and places that, more eminently than others, profess religion and relation to God, is in a particular manner provoking and grieving to the Lord Jesus. How pathetically does He speak of the sin and ruin of that holy city! *O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!*

2. Those that enjoy great plenty of the means of grace, if not profited by, are often prejudiced against them. They that would not hearken to the prophets, nor welcome those God sent to them, killed and stoned them. If men's corruptions are not conquered, they are provoked.

3. Jesus Christ hath showed Himself willing, freely willing, to receive and entertain poor souls that come to Him, and put themselves under his protection; *How often would I have gathered thy children together*, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings; with such care and tenderness!

4. Sinners are not protected and provided for by the Lord Jesus, because they will not; *I would, I often would, and ye would not*. Christ's willingness aggravates sinners' unwillingness, and leaves their blood on their own heads.

5. The house that Christ leaves, is left desolate. The temple, though richly adorned, though hugely frequented, is yet desolate, if Christ have deserted it; He leaves it to them, they had made an idol of it, and let them take it to themselves, and make the best of it, Christ will trouble it no more.

6. Christ justly withdraws from those that drive Him from them. They would not be gathered by Him, and therefore, saith He, *Ye shall not see*

and converse with it, and see it at the door. 'If Herod should kill Me, He will not surprise Me.'

2. 'I know that death will be not only no prejudice to Me, but that it will be my preferment; therefore tell him, I do not fear him; when I die, I shall be perfected, I shall then have finished the hardest part of my undertaking, I shall have completed my business.'—*I shall be consecrated*. When Christ died, He is said to have sanctified Himself; He consecrated Himself to his priestly office with his own blood.

3. 'I know that neither he nor any one else can kill Me, till I have done my work. Go, and tell him that I value not his impotent rage. I will cast out devils, and do cures, to-day, and to-morrow; that is, 'now and for some little time to come, in spite of him and all his threats. I must walk, I must go on in my intended journey, and it is not in his power to hinder Me.' Note, It is good for us to look on the time we have before us as but a little, that we may thereby be quickened to do the work of the day in its day. And it is a comfort to us, in reference to the power and malice of our enemies, that they can have no power to take us off, as long as God has any work for us to do. The witnesses were not slain till they had finished their testimony.

4. 'I know that Herod can do Me no harm, not only because my time is not yet come, but because the place appointed for my death is Jerusalem, which is not within his jurisdiction. It cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem,' that is, 'any where but at Jerusalem.' As a true prophet was put to death, he was prosecuted as a false prophet; none undertook to try prophets, and to judge concerning them, but the great Sanhedrin, which always sat at Jerusalem.

III. His lamentation for, and denunciation of wrath against Jerusalem, v. 34, 35. This we had, Matt. 23: 37-39. Perhaps this was not said now in Galilee, but the evangelist, not designing to bring it in in its proper place, inserts it here, on occasion of Christ's mentioning his being put to death at Jerusalem.

Note, 1. The wickedness of persons and places that, more eminently than others, profess religion and relation to God, is in a particular manner provoking and grieving to the Lord Jesus. How pathetically does He speak of the sin and ruin of that holy city! *O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!*

2. Those that enjoy great plenty of the means of grace, if not profited by, are often prejudiced against them. They that would not hearken to the prophets, nor welcome those God sent to them, killed and stoned them. If men's corruptions are not conquered, they are provoked.

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6. Christ justly withdraws from those that drive Him from them. They would not be gathered by Him, and therefore, saith He, *Ye shall not see*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 31-35. It does not in general behove us to speak disrespectfully of any who are invested with authority: yet apostates, persecutors, and crafty dissemblers may, on some occasions, be spoken of in their true characters, that men may beware of them; and we must not flatter the wicked, or fear any man, when performing our bounden duty. We too should 'go about doing good,' while our appointed span of life endures; and, in that case, when life expires we shall be perfected in holiness and felicity.—But how black a mark of human depravity was the extraordinary circumstance, of Jerusalem's being the slaughter-house of God's prophets, and the very place where his beloved Son was crucified! Alas! the visible

church has generally been the grand scene of persecution; (Note, Rev. 17: 6.) and those whom the Savior has, with persevering tenderness, invited to take shelter under the shadow of his almighty wings, have not only contemptuously refused his kindness, but have hated and persecuted those who brought the invitation! (Note, Matt. 22: 1-10.) Thus men bring upon themselves swift destruction from the presence of the Lord, as well as the forfeiture of all their privileges: but let us shun this fatal rock, and learn thankfully to welcome and to profit by all those, 'who come in the name of the Lord' Jesus, to invite us to partake of his great salvation. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. v. 1. 'An expression similar to the Hebrew, Gen. 43: 25, 32, 34. That it was not unusual with the Jews to have entertainments, and enjoy themselves with hilarity, on the Sabbath, is proved from numerous rabbinical passages produced by Lightfoot and West.

Verse 2.

There was a certain man before Him.] 'Had conveyed himself thither, in hope of a cure. I do not think, as some suppose,) that he [522]

Me, you shall not hear Me, any more,' as Moses said to Pharaoh, when he forbid him his presence, Exod. 10: 28, 29.

7. The judgment of the great day will effectually convince unbelievers that would not now be convinced; 'Then you will say, *Blessed is He that cometh*, that is, 'you will be glad to be among those that say so, and will not see Me to be the Messiah till then, when it is too late.'

CHAP. XIV. v. 1-6. In this passage, we find,

I. That the Son of man came, eating and drinking, conversing familiarly with all sorts of people; not declining the society of publicans, nor of Pharisees, but accepting the friendly invitations of both; that, if possible, He might do good to both. Here He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees, a ruler, it may be, and a magistrate, to eat bread on the sabbath-day, v. 1. See how favorable God is to us, that He allows us time, even on 'His own day, for bodily refreshments; how careful we should be not to abuse that liberty, or turn it into licentiousness. Christ went only to eat bread, to take such refreshment as was necessary on the sabbath-day. Our sabbath-meals must, with a particular care, be guarded against all manner of excess. On sabbath-days we must do, as Moses and Jethro did, eat bread before God, (Exod. 18: 12.) and, as is said of the primitive Christians, on the Lord's day, must eat and drink as those that must pray again before we go to rest, that we may not be unfit for that.

II. That He went about, doing good. Wherever He came, He sought opportunities to do good, and not only improved those that fell in his way; here was a certain man before Him, which had the dropsy, v. 2. We do not find that he offered himself, or that his friends offered him to be Christ's patient, but Christ prevented him with the blessings of his goodness, and before he called, He answered him. Note, It is a happy thing to be where Christ is, to be present before Him, though we are not presented to Him. This man had the dropsy, it is probable, in a high degree, and probably, he was some relation of the Pharisee's that now lodged in his house.

III. That He endured the contradiction of sinners against Himself; (v. 1.) They watched Him. The Pharisee that invited Him, it should seem, did it with an evil design; if it were so, Christ knew it, and yet went, for He knew how to order his steps with the most subtilty of his observers. Those that are watched, had need to be wary. It was, as Dr. Hammond observes, contrary to all laws of hospitality, to seek advantage against one invited to be your guest, for such a one you have taken under your protection. These lawyers and Pharisees, like the fowler that lies in wait to snare the birds, held their peace, and acted very silently. When Christ asked them whether they thought it lawful to heal on the sabbath-day, (and herein He is said to answer them, for it was an answer

was one of the family; because it is said that Christ dismissed him, or let him go, when he was cured, v. 4.)

Verse 4.

And He took him.] 'Some have imagined that Christ led him aside to avoid contention; but the words do not express this; and, as our Lord speaks of the cure both immediately before and after it, there can be no room to imagine He intended to conceal it. Probably the circumstance of taking him by the hand, is mentioned, as an evidence of his condescension.'

5 And answered them, saying, 'Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the sabbath-day?

6 And they could not answer him again to these things.

7 ¶ And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them,

8 When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him;

9 And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room.

10 But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee.

11 For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased: and he that

g 13:15. Ex. 23:4-5. Deut. 23:4. Matt. 12:11, 12.
h 13:17. 20:26, 40. 21:15. Acts 6:10.
i Jude. 14:12. Prov. 31:1. Ec. 17:2. Matt. 13:34.
j 13:35. 30:46. Matt. 23:6. Mark 12:38, 39. Acts 8:18, 19. Phil. 2:3. 3 John 9.
k 13:41. 13:42. Prov. 3:35. 11:2. 16:18. Ex. 28:24-10. Deut. 4:30-34.
l 1 Sam. 15:17. Prov. 15:33. 25:8-7. n 16:14. Rev. 3:9.
o 15:1. 15:14. Job 22:29. 40:10-12. Ps. 13:7. 138:5. Prov. 15:33. 18:12. 29:23. Is. 2:11, 17. 57:15. Matt. 23:12. Jam. 4:6. Pet. 5:5.

Him, He had not his heart hot within him, nor was his spirit stirred. We must not only not allow any corrupt communication at our tables, such as that of the hypocritical mockers at feasts, but we must go beyond common, harmless talk, and take occasion from God's goodness to speak to his praise, and learn to spiritualize common things. The lips of the righteous should then feed many.

Verses 7-11.

The scribes and Pharisees seem not to have attended even to that semblance of humility, under which numbers veil their pride and ambition, that they may more successfully gratify them; but they openly contended for precedence; probably on the score of their reputation for wisdom, learning, or piety, or on account of their rank and authority; and they chose out for themselves the chief seats, thus claiming the highest respect as justly due to them. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, 20:45-47. Matt. 23:5-7.) This disgraceful competition, however, though it rose from the same source, was merely a shadow of that spiritual pride and ambition, which has excluded numbers from the kingdom of Christ, produced the most lamentable effects in the visible church, and done immense injury even to many true Christians and ministers. Our Lord, therefore, in a mild, yet firm and decisive manner reproved the vain-glory of the guests, by a parable addressed, as it were, to each of them, the substance of which was taken from their own Scriptures. (Note, Prov. 25:6, 7.) Thus the Christian should deem it honor enough for him, poor, sinful, and rebellious creature, to be admitted among the redeemed in the lowest form, and not contented for eminent stations, authority, or reputation; for such ambition only

to their thoughts, and thoughts are words to Jesus Christ,) they would say neither Yea nor Nay, for their design was to inform against Him, not to be informed by Him. They would not say, *It was lawful to heal*, for then they would preclude themselves from imputing it to Him as a crime: and yet the thing was so self-evident, they could not for shame say it was not lawful. Note, Good men have often been persecuted for doing that which even their persecutors, would they but give their consciences leave to speak out, could not but own to be lawful and good.

IV. That Christ would not be hindered from doing good by the opposition and contradiction of sinners; v. 4. He took him, and healed him, and let him go. Perhaps He took him aside into another room, because He would neither proclaim Himself, such was his humility, nor provoke his adversaries, such was his wisdom, his meekness of wisdom. Note, Though we must not be driven from duty by the malice of our enemies, yet we should order the circumstances of it so as to make it the least offensive. Or, He took him, that is, laid hands on him—embraced him, to cure him. The cure of a dropsy, as much as of any disease, one would think, should be gradual; yet Christ cured even that disease, perfectly cured it in a moment. He then let him go, lest the Pharisees should fall on him for being healed, though he was purely passive: for what absurdities would not such men be guilty of?

V. That our Lord did nothing but what He could justify, to the conviction and confusion of those that quarrelled with Him, v. 5, 6. He still answered their thoughts and made them hold their peace for shame, who before held their peace for subtilty, by an appeal to their own practice, as He had been used to do on such occasions, that He might show them how, in condemning Him, they condemned themselves, v. 5. Observe, It is not so much out of compassion to the poor creature, that they do it, but a concern for their own interest. It is their own ox, or ass, that is worth money; to save this, they will dispense with the law of the Sabbath. Now this evinced their hypocrisy, and that it was not from any real regard to the Sabbath, that they found fault with Christ for healing on the sabbath-day; but really they were angry at the miraculous good works He wrought, the proof He thereby gave of his divine mission, and the interest He thereby gained among the people. Many can easily dispense with that, for their own interest, which they cannot dispense with for God's glory and the good of their brethren. This question silenced them, v. 6. Christ will be justified when He speaks, and every mouth stopped before Him.

V. 14.—Our Lord here sets us an example of profitable, edifying discourse at our tables, when in company with our friends; nay, with strangers, with enemies that watch us. Though the wicked were before Him, He did not keep silence from good, (as David did, Ps. 39:1, 2,) for, notwithstanding the provocation given

Our Lord Jesus was among persons of quality, yet, as One that had not respect of persons, I. He takes occasion to reprove the guests for striving to sit uppermost, and thence gives us a lesson of humility.

1. He observed how these lawyers and Pharisees affected the highest seats, toward the head-end of the table, v. 7. He had charged that sort of men with this in general, ch. 11:43. Here He brings home the charge to particular persons; for Christ will give every man his own. He marked how every man, as he came in, got as near the best seat as he could. Note, Even in the common actions of life, Christ's eye is upon us, and He marks what we do, not only in our religious assemblies, but at our tables, and makes remarks upon it.

2. He observed how those who were thus aspiring, often exposed themselves, and came off with a slur; whereas those who were modest, and seated themselves in the lowest seats, often gained respect by it, v. 8-11. (1.) Those who, when they come in, assume the highest seats, may perhaps be degraded. Note, Instead of being proud that so many give place to us, we should be humbled, that we must give place to so many; and that so many are more honorable than we. The master of the feast will marshal his guests. Pride will have shame, and at last a fall. (2.) Those who, when they come in, content themselves with the lowest seats, are likely to be preferred. 'The master of the feast will be so just to thee, as not to keep thee at the lower end of the table, because thou wast so modest as to seat thyself there.' Note, The way to rise high, is, to begin low; and this recommends a man to those about Him. 'They will see thee to be an honorable man, beyond what at first they thought; and honor appears the brighter for shining out of obscurity.' They will likewise see thee to be a humble man, which is the greatest honor of all. Our Savior here refers to that advice of Solomon, (Prov. 25:6, 7.) Stand not in the place of great men, for better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither, than that thou shouldst be put lower.' And Lightfoot quotes a parable out of one of the rabbins, somewhat like this, 'Three men were bidden to a feast; one sat highest, For, said he, I am a prince; the other next, For, said he, I am a wise man; the other lowest, For, said he, I am a humble man. The king seated the humble man highest, and put the prince lowest.'

3. He applies this generally, and would have us all learn not to mind high things, but to content ourselves with mean things, because pride and ambition are disgraceful, but humility and self-denial really honorable. We see it in other instances, that a man's pride will bring him low, but honor shall uphold the humble in spirit, and before honor is humility.

II. He takes occasion to reprove the master of the feast, for inviting so many rich people, who had wherewithal to dine very well at home, when he should rather have invited the poor, or which was all one, have sent portions to them for whom nothing is prepared, and who could not afford themselves a good meal's meat. See Neh. 8:10. Our Savior here teaches us, that the using of what we have, in works of charity, is better, and will turn to a better

tends to disgrace. (Notes, 22:24-27. Acts 8:18-24.) But he ought, in unaffected humility, to take the lowest station, or the meanest service, preferring others to himself; (Notes, Rom. 12:9-13, v. 10. Phil. 2:1-4, v. 4.) and in due time he will, in this manner, obtain 'the honor which cometh from God'; and he will have the approbation of angels and men at the day of judgment. For it is a universal rule of the Lord's dealings with every individual, in respect of the various incidents and actions of their lives, that 'He abases those who exalt themselves,' and advances 'those who abase themselves,' as conscious of their actual and comparative worthlessness, and as willing to be little, despised, neglected, and subjected to others. (Notes, 18:9-14, v. 14. Matt. 18:1-6. 20:24-28. 23:11, 12. Jam. 4:4-6. 1 Pet. 5:5-7.)

(7.) Chose, &c.] 'When custom and law have regulated and settled places in public assemblies, a man who is obliged to attend, may take the place which belongs to him, without injury to himself or to others: when nothing of this nature is settled, the law of humility and the love of order are the only judges of what is proper. To take the highest place, when it is not our due, or obstinately to refuse it, when justly offered, is vanity.'

Dr. A. CLARKE

humbleth himself shall be exalted.

[Practical Observations.]

12 ¶ Then said he also to him that bade him, ¶ When thou makest a dinner or a supper call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee.

13 But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind:

14 And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

15 ¶ And when one

p. 153. Prov. 14:20. 22:16. Jam. 2: 1-6.
e. 9:32-38. Zech. 7:5-7. Matt. 5:46.
6:1-4, 16-18.
24. 11:31. Deut. 14:29. 16:11, 14.
26:12, 13. 2 Sam. 6:19. 2 Chr. 30: 24. Neh. 8:10, 12. Job 29:13, 15, 16.
31:15-20. Prov. 3:9, 10. 14:31. 31: 7, 16. 58:7, 10. Matt. 14:14-21. 15: 32-39. 20:12. Acta 2:44, 45. 4:34, 35.
9:39. Rom. 12:13-16. 1 Tim. 3:2.
5:10. Tit. 1:8. 1 Pet. 4:9. 1 Pet. 4:9.
Prov. 19:17. Matt. 6:4. 10:41, 42.
25:34-40. Phil. 4:18, 19.
29:35, 37. Dan. 12:2, 3. John 5:29.
A. C. 21:15.

account, than using it in works of generosity, and in magnificent house-keeping.

1. 'Covet not to treat the rich; (p. 12.) invite not thy friends, and brethren, and neighbors that are rich.' This does not prohibit the entertaining of such; there may be occasion for it, for the cultivation of friendship among relations and neighbors. But, (1.) 'Do not make a common custom of it; spend as little as thou canst that way, that thou mayst not disabuse thyself to lay out in a much better way, in almsgiving. Thou wilt find it very expensive and troublesome; one feast for the rich will make a great many meals for the poor.' Solomon saith, *He that giveth to the rich, shall surely come to want*, Prov. 22: 16. 'Give' (saith Pliny, Epist.) 'to thy friends, but let it be to thy poor friends, not to those that need thee not.' (2.) 'Be not proud of it.' Many make feasts, only to *make a show*, as Ahasuerus did; (Esth. 1:3, 4.) and it is no reputation to them, they think, if they have not persons of quality to dine with them, and thus rob their families, to please their fancies. (3.) 'Aim not at being paid again in your own coin.' This is that which our Savior blames in making such entertainments; 'You commonly do it in hopes that you will be invited by them, and so a recompense will be made you; you will be gratified with such dainties and varieties as you treat your friends with, and this will feed your sensuality and luxury, and you will be no real gainer at last.'

2. 'Be forward to relieve the poor; (p. 13, 14.) When thou makest a feast, instead of furnishing thyself with what is rare and nice, get thy table spread with a competency of plain and wholesome meat, which will not be so costly, and invite the poor and maimed, such as have nothing to live upon, nor are able to work for their living. These are objects of charity, they want necessities; furnish them, and they will recompense thee with their prayers; they will

commend thy provisions, which the rich, if they be, will despise. They will go away, and thank God for thee, when the rich will go away, and reproach thee. Say not that thou art a loser because they cannot recompense thee, thou art so much out of pocket; no, it is so much set out to the best interest, on the best security, for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.' There will be a resurrection, a future state of the just; a state of happiness reserved for them in the other world: and we may be sure that the charitable will then be remembered, for alms are righteousness. They may not be rewarded in this world, but they shall in no wise lose their reward. The longest voyages make the richest returns, and they will be no losers, but unspeakable gainers, by having their recompense adjourned till the resurrection.

V. 15-24. Here is another discourse of our Savior, in which he spiritualizes the feast He was invited to; which is another way of keeping up good discourse in the midst of common actions.

I. The occasion of the discourse was given by one of the guests, who, when Christ was giving rules about feasting, said to him, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God*, (p. 15.) which, some tell us, was a saying commonly used among the rabbins. Note, Even those that are not of ability to carry on good discourse themselves, ought to put in a word now and then, to countenance it, and help it forward. What this man said, was a plain and acknowledged truth, and quoted very appositely now they were sitting at meat; for it is good for us, when receiving the gifts of God's providence, to pass through them to the consideration of the gifts of his grace, those better things. This thought will be very reasonable when we are partaking of bodily refreshments; *Blessed are they that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God*, (1.) In the kingdom of grace, in the kingdom of the Messiah, which was expected

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11-11. We must not even allow the hospitality of those who appear friendly, to interrupt us in our duty, or induce us to be unfaithful; though the contrary conduct will probably, on some occasions, draw on us the censure of rudeness or ingratitude.—It requires reiterated and particular instruction, to bring men to understand the proper connection of piety and mercy, in the observance of the Sabbath; and the wisdom that is from above is requisite to teach us such meek yet firm perseverance in well-doing, amidst malicious and watchful opposers, as may stop their mouths, even when their hearts are not changed.—Ministers ought to copy Christ, in embracing every opportunity of introducing instructive discourse, in all companies to which they are admitted; and in taking occasion to make useful remarks, whenever any fair opening is given for them.—No disposition of the depraved heart of man is more odious and foolish, or more universal, than pride. Yet the

vain ambition of honor, which is not a man's due, exposes him to contempt; whilst modesty commonly engages respect and attention. It is indeed far more honorable for a man to begin low, and to be advanced by the verdict of others, than to assume a rank and advance pretensions, from which he is likely to be degraded with shame and contempt. But when we are made thoroughly acquainted with our own hearts, we shall proportionably be disinclined to aspire at chief places, and shall be contented and thankful for the most obscure; nay, made willing to see others honored, and ourselves neglected and slighted in the comparison. This is in reality a far better way of being made useful and honorable, in the Lord's due time, than to aspire after high-sounding titles, or places of authority, popularity and precedence; which cannot be coveted, without forgetting what poor, guilty, polluted, weak, and foolish creatures we are.

SCOTT.

(11.) *He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.* [Not necessarily so among all sorts of men. Among ordinary people, humility is not so much regarded, and a man may humble himself long enough before they will exalt him; that will put him down lower, and keep him down, when he is so. Thus it is very often among vulgar people, upon whom the pearl of humility is but ill bestowed. But among those of better quality, and of more refined education, and who have a juster and more rectified sense of things, it is far otherwise. There the jewel is understood, and valued according to its worth. There the humble finds his due respect, and the lower he depresses himself, the more will he be exalted; and with reason, for humility, besides the excellency of its temper, and the greatness of the virtue, shows a good understanding, and a right judgment of a man's self, and so entitles him to respect; which men are also more willing to pay to the humble man, because he is so little just to himself.]

Norris, in BLOOMFIELD.

Verses 12-14.

The Pharisee had probably prepared an expensive entertainment for the company; though this was on the sabbath-day, and must have been attended with some labor; for perhaps the Pharisees were as ostentatious in their feasts, as in their fasts. Our Lord therefore saw it proper to point out the criminality of the practice; and He counselled his host, when He made a dinner or a supper, not to invite his 'friends, or relations, or rich neighbors,' but on the contrary to invite the poor, and those who, by divers bodily infirmities, were incapable of procuring the necessities or comforts of life. It is not to be supposed that Jesus meant, absolutely and universally, to prohibit men from entertaining their wealthy friends, relations, and neighbors; and poor relations are as proper to be invited as other poor persons; yet they, who are most applauded for their useless generosity in this respect, are seldom very eminent for real charity, not always for strict morality; and our Lord shows his disciples a more excellent way. The profusion occasioned by feasting the rich, serves to gratify a man's pity and pride, and the sensual appetites of his friends, who in return are tempted to run into similar extravagance, of which the con-

sequences are often very fatal, and it renders a man incapable of relieving the poor, in any adequate degree. Such expenses cannot be incurred from love to God, or regard to his authority, favor, or glory; therefore no recompense can be expected from Him: and human applause, or a similar banquet in return, is the only reward of them. (Marg. Ref. p. q. 6: 27-36. Prov. 22: 16. Matt. 6: 1-4.) But when a man, from proper motives, expends his wealth in relieving the distressed and indigent, he derives the greatest satisfaction imaginable from this use of it, and his gracious Lord will abundantly reward it in another world. It certainly is not meant, that God will 'recompense, at the resurrection of the just,' a proud and unbelieving liberality to the poor; but our Lord spoke for the instruction of his disciples in every age; and the less they spend in 'conformity to the world,' by luxurious feasting of the rich, the more they will have to employ in feeding the poor, and in all those fruits of faith and love, which are by Christ Jesus to the praise and glory of God. (Marg. Ref. r-t.) How clearly does it appear, that a future state of retribution was a prominent article of the general or popular creed, among the Jews at this time!

SCOTT.

(12.) *A dinner or a supper.* 'The inhabitants of the East generally, and as well the Greeks and Romans also, took a slight dinner chiefly of fruits, milk, cheese, &c. about ten or eleven o'clock of our time; and then, on account of the burning heat of noon, deferred their principal meal till about six or seven in the afternoon.'

JAHN.

(13.) *Feast.* 'Jesus alludes here to the festival of the second sort of first fruits, at which Moses enacted that servants and widows, orphans and Levites should be made free partakers, Deut. 16: 11-13. 12: 12-18.'

IN.

(14.) *Resurrection of the just.* 'So John 5: 29. The Jews ascribed a resurrection of the dead to the Messiah. Hence our Pharisee, on hearing from Jesus these words, exclaims, "Blessed, &c."'

BLOOMFIELD.

Verses 15-24.

The person, who made the remark which gave occasion to this para-

of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, "Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God."

16 Then said he unto him, "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many:"

17 And sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, "Come; for all things are now ready."

18 And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, "I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused."

19 And another said, "I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused."

20 And another said, "I have married a wife; and therefore I cannot come."

21 So that servant

12:27, 13:29, 22:30, Matt. 8:11, 25:10, Luke 6:27, &c. Rev. 19:9.
1 Prov. 9:12, 13:35, Jer. 31:12-14, Zech. 10:7, Matt. 22:2-14.
2 Cant. 5:1, Isa. 55:1-7, Mark 16:15, 16, Rev. 3:20, 22:17.
3 24-8, 91-3, 101-8, Prov. 9:3, Matt. 31:6, 101-8, Acts 2:38, 39, 121-26, 13:26, 38, 39.
4 Matt. 11:27-29, 22:3-4, John 7:37, 8:20, 5:18-21, 10:1-10, 12:1-12, Jer. 54:5, 8:10, 16:17, Matt. 22:5-6, John 11:1, 5:40, Acts 13:45-46, 18:5, 25:25-27.
5 6:14, 17:25-31, 18:24, Matt. 9:38, 39, 1 Tim. 6:9, 10, 2 Tim. 4:10, Heb. 12:16, Luke 2:15, 16.
6 26-28, 13:29, 30, 1 Cor. 7:23-31.

now shortly to be set up. Christ promised his disciples that they should eat and drink with Him in his kingdom. They that partake of the Lord's supper, eat bread in the kingdom of God. (2.) In the kingdom of glory, at the resurrection. The happiness of heaven is an everlasting feast; blessed are they that shall sit down at that table, whence they shall rise no more.

II. The parable our Lord put forth on this occasion, v. 16, &c. Christ joins with the good man in what he said; "It is very true, Blessed are they that shall partake of the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom. But who are they that shall enjoy that privilege? You Jews, who think to have the monopoly of it, will generally reject it, and the Gentiles will be the greatest sharers in it." This He shows by a parable; for, if He had spoken it plainly, the Pharisees would not have borne it.

Now in this parable we may observe,

1. The free grace and mercy of God, shining in the Gospel of Christ; it appears, (1.) In the rich provision He has made for poor souls, v. 16. There is that in Christ and the grace of the Gospel, which, when the soul feels its need, will be as food and a feast to it. It is called a supper, because in those countries supper-time was the chief feasting-time, when the business of the day was over. The manifestation of gospel-grace to the world was the evening of the world's day; and the fruition of the fullness of that grace in heaven is reserved for the evening of our day. (2.) In the gracious invitation given us to come and partake of this provision. Here is, [1.] A general invitation given; He bade many. Christ invited the whole nation and people of the Jews to partake of the benefits of His Gospel. There is provision enough for as many as come; it was prophesied of as a feast for all people, Isa. 25: 6. [2.] A particular memorandum given, when the supper-time was at hand; the servant was sent round to put them in mind of it, v. 17. When the Spirit was poured out, and the gospel-church planted, those who before were invited, were more closely pressed to come in presently. This call is now given us; "All things are now ready, now is the accepted time; it is now, and has not been long, it is now, and will not be long; a season of grace soon over; therefore come now, and delay not; accept the invitation; believe yourselves welcome; eat, O friends, drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

2. The cold entertainment the grace of the Gospel meets, v. 18. One would have expected they should all with one consent have come to a good supper, when so kindly invited to it; yet,

on the contrary, they all found some pretence or other to snuff off their attendance. This bespeaks the general neglect of the Jewish nation to accept Christ's offers of grace, and the contempt they put on the invitation. It speaks also the backwardness of most people to close with the gospel-call. They cannot for shame avow their refusal, but they all straightway (as some supply,) or unanimously, (as others,) desire to be excused; they can give an answer extempore, and with one voice.

(1.) Here were two that were purchasers, in such haste to go and see their purchases, that they could not find time to go to this supper: one had purchased land, which was represented to him to be a good bargain, and he must needs go and see whether it was so or no; his heart was so much on the enlarging of his estate, that he could neither be civil to his friend nor kind to himself. Note, Those that have their hearts full of the world, have their ears deaf to the gospel-invitation. But what a frivolous excuse! He might have deferred going to see his piece of ground till the next day, and have found it in the same place and plight it was now in, if he had so pleased. Another had purchased stock for his land; five yoke of oxen for the plough, and must just now go and try whether they be fit for his purpose. The former intimates inordinate complacency in the world, this inordinate care and concern about it; both which keep people from Christ, and intimate a preference given to the body above the soul, to the things of time above those of eternity. Note, It is very criminal, when called to any duty, to make excuses for neglect of it: it is a sign that there are convictions that it is duty, but no inclination to it. The things here, that were the matter of the excuses, were, little things, and inconsiderable in themselves; yet even such, when the heart is too much set on them, prove fatal hindrances in religion. It is hard so to manage our worldly affairs, that they may not divert us from spiritual pursuits; and this ought to be our great care.

(2.) Here was one that was newly married, and could not leave his wife to go out to supper, no, not for once, v. 20. He pretends that he cannot, when the truth is, he will not. Thus many pretend inability for the duties of religion, when really they have an aversion to them. It is true, he that was married, was excused by the law from going to war for the first year, (Deut. 24: 5.) but would that excuse him from going up to the feasts of the Lord, which all the males were yearly to attend? Much less will it excuse him from the gospel-feast, of which

ble, seems to have alluded to the satisfactions to be enjoyed in the days of the Messiah, under the figure of "eating bread in the kingdom of God;" though the thought might occur to him, from what our Lord had spoken of "the resurrection of the just," "Eating bread" was a common expression for any kind of meal, however plentiful or even luxurious; and it is probable, that the man entertained low and carnal expectations concerning the kingdom of God. (Marg. Ref. u.) Our Lord, therefore, to show him how little the blessings to be conferred by the Messiah, would prove suited to the taste of the Jews in general, and how generally they would refuse them, thus describing their present and future conduct respecting his Gospel, spoke the parable here recorded. (Marg. Ref. v.) Prov. 9: 1-5, Isa. 25: 1-5, 55: 1-7, 3 Matt. 22: 1-14. The 'great supper' represented the plentiful provision made for the souls of men in the redemption of Christ; the previous invitation denotes the promises and prophecies of his salvation, to the Jews of old, the ministry of John the Baptist, and that of Christ Himself and his apostles. The servants being sent to call those who had been bidden, when 'all things were ready,' may signify the preaching of the apostles and evangelists after Christ's ascension. The invited persons all 'with one consent' desiring to be excused, though on different pretences, may represent the general rejection of the Gospel by the Jewish nation, especially by their rulers, teachers, and Pharisees; the servants being then sent forth into the streets and lanes of the city, to call in the poor, lame, and blind, may intimate the success of the Gospel among the publicans, and common people of the Jews; and among those, who were dispersed in other countries, and the proselyted Gentiles; and when the servants were sent out to 'the highways and hedges,' to fetch in the poor strangers and travellers, the calling of the Gentiles seems to have been principally intended, with whom the church has since been chiefly replenished: while the Jews, who were first invited, are, through their unbelief, excluded from it. (Marg. Ref. b-l. n.) The whole parable, however, may be applied to the preaching of the Gospel, and the reception which it meets with in every age. The excuses, here stated, were all taken from things lawful in themselves; yet from the manner in which they were attended to, they became the occasion of the greatest contempt being shown to the feast and to Him who made it. The man, who pleaded

'that he had married a wife, and therefore could not come,' is supposed by some, to have meant that his own marriage-feast was fixed for the same time; but as the marriage was past, the feast also may be supposed to have been over. It shows, however, that a carnal mind gives every thing the preference to Christ and his salvation, instead of using all in entire subserviency to them. Indeed all these excuses, thus pointed out, are intended to teach us, that contempt of spiritual blessings, and inordinate attachment to worldly objects, are the real causes of men's negligence and procrastination in religious matters; and the circumstances of those who 'desired to be excused,' when compared with the poverty of such as were the guests at last, especially of those who, pride and self-sufficiency are incompatible with the faith of the Gospel. The servants were ordered 'to compel' those 'from the highways and hedges to come in.' It would be absurd to understand this of compulsive force, which would be a strange way of bringing men to a banquet, though great numbers have thus explained it! and this proves that scriptural arguments for persecution are not to be found. It shows also that the objections against the doctrine of 'special grace,' as if inconsistent with free agency, are wholly groundless; unless the inward blessing of God, on proper means, producing willingness where it did not before exist, inclining the heart and so preventing us that we may have a good will, be more inconsistent with free agency, than urgent and pressing invitations to a feast are. (Notes. Ps. 10: 5, Phil. 2: 12, 13.) It might, however, be supposed that poor travellers, or beggars, would not readily be convinced that the feast was intended for them; and therefore repeated, pressing invitations would be peculiarly proper; and thus our Lord would have his ministers use most earnest and affectionate invitations, persuasions, and exhortations, and whatever can convince the understanding, or affect the heart, or give encouragement; especially when they address those who, by the greatness of their guilt, may be tempted to despair of mercy. (Marg. Ref. m.)

(15.) Eat bread. 'Shall feast. To eat bread is a well-known Hebrew idiom for to share in a repast, whether it be at a common meal, or at a sumptuous feast. The word bread is not understood as suggesting either the scantiness or the meanness of the fare.'

came and snewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.'

22 And the servant said, Lord, 'it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.'

25 And the Lord said unto the servant, 'Go out into the highways, and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.'

24 For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

[Practical Observations.]

e 9:10, 1 Sam. 25:12, Matt. 15:12.

18:31, Heb. 13:17.

f 24, Pe. 2:12, Matt. 22:7, 8, Heb.

2:3, 12:25, 26, Rev. 15:1, Ec. 19:15.

g 24:47, Prov. 1:30—35, 8:2—4, 9:

3:4, Jer. 5:1, Zech. 11:7, 11, Matt.

21:23—31, John 4:39—42, 7:47—49.

h 23:9, Acts 8:4—6, Jam. 2:5.

i 13, 7:22, 23, Matt. 11:5, 28.

j Acts 1—5.

k John 14:2, Eph. 3:8, Col. 2:9, 1

Tim. 2:5, 6, 1 John 2:24, Rev. 7:

4—9.

l Pe. 98:3, Is. 11:10, 19:24, 27, 13:

19, 5:6, 65:19, 20, Zech. 14:8, 9.

m Mal. 1:11, Matt. 21:43, 22:10.

n 25:19, 20, Acts 9:15, 10:44—48, 11:

18—21, 13:47, 48, 18:8, 22:21, 22,

26:18—20, 28:28, Rom. 10:18, 15:

8—12, Eph. 4:11—21, Col. 1:23.

o 24:29, Gen. 19:3, Acts 16:15,

Rom. 11:19, 14, 1 Cor. 9:19—23, 2

Cor. 5:11, 21, 6:1, Col. 1:28, 2

Tim. 4:2.

p Prov. 1:24—32, Matt. 22:8, 23:38,

39, John 3:19, 36, 8:21, 24, Acts

13:46, Heb. 12:25, 26.

the other were but types. Note, Our affection to our relations often proves a hindrance to us in our duty to God. He might have gone and taken his wife with him, they would both have been welcome.

3. The account brought to the master of the feast, of the affront put on him by his friends whom he had invited, who now showed how little they valued him, (v. 21.) for though they had timely notice, a good while before, that they might order their affairs accordingly, yet were they engaged to some other business. Note, Ministers must give account of their success: none at the throne of grace; if they see of the travail of their soul, they must go to God with their thanks; if they labor in vain, with their complaints: hereafter at the judgment-seat of Christ; as witnesses against those who persist and perish in unbelief, to prove they were fairly invited; and for those who accepted the call, Behold, I and the children thou hast given me. The apostle urges this as a reason why people should give ear to the word of God sent them by his ministers; for they watch for your souls as those that must give account, Heb. 13:17.

4. The master's just resentment of this affront, v. 21. Note, The ingratitude of those that slight Gospel offers, and the contempt they put upon the God of heaven thereby, are a very great provocation to Him, and justly. Abused mercy turns into the greatest wrath. Their doom (v. 24.) was like the doom of ungrateful Israel, when they despised the pleasant land: God swore in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest. Note, Grace despised is grace forfeited, like Esau's birthright. They that will not have Christ when they may, shall not when they would. Even those bidden, if they slight the invitation, shall be forbidden; when the door is shut, the foolish virgins will be denied entrance.

5. The care taken to furnish the table with guests, as well as meat. 'Go,' (saith he to the servants,) 'go first into the streets and lanes of the city, and invite to the merchants, or the tradesmen; they will desire to be excused; but invite those that will be glad to come, bring in hither the poor and the maimed, the halt and the blind; pick up the common beggars.' The servants object not, that such guests will be a disparagement to the master and his house: for they knew his mind, and soon gather an abundance of such, v. 22. Many Jews are brought in, not scribes and Pharisees, such as Christ was now at dinner with, who thought them-

selves most likely to be guests at the Messiah's table, but publicans and sinners, these are the poor and the maimed. But yet there is room for more guests, and provision enough for them all. 'Go, then, secondly, into the highways and hedges; go out into the country, and pick up the vagrants, or those that are returning now in the evening from their work in the field, and compel them to come in, not by force of arms but of arguments; be earnest with them: convince them that the invitation is sincere, and not a banter; they will be shy and moment, and will hardly believe they shall be welcome; therefore be importunate with them, and do not leave them till you have prevailed with them.' This refers to the calling of the Gentiles, to whom the apostles were to turn, when the Jews refused the offers, and with them the church was filled.

Now observe here, (1.) The provision made for precious souls in the Gospel of Christ, shall appear not to have been made in vain; for if some reject it, yet others will thankfully accept it. Christ comforts Himself with this, that, though Israel be not gathered, yet He shall be glorious, as a Light to the Gentiles, Isa. 54:5, 6. God will have a church in the world, though there are those that are uncircumcised; for the unbelief of man shall not make the promise of God of no effect. (2.) Those that are very poor and low in the world, shall be as welcome to Christ as the rich and great; nay, and many times the Gospel has greatest success among those that labor under worldly disadvantages, as the poor, and bodily infirmities, as the maimed, the halt, and the blind. Christ here plainly refers to what He had said just before, v. 13. For Christ's condescensions and compassions toward the poor, should engage ours. (3.) Many times the Gospel has the greatest success among those least likely to become the subject of it. Publicans and harlots went into the kingdom of God before scribes and Pharisees; so that the last shall be first, and the first last. Let us not be confident concerning those who are forward, nor despair of such as are least promising. (4.) Christ's ministers must be both very expeditious and very importunate, in inviting to the gospel-feast; 'Go out quickly, (v. 21.) lose no time, because all things are now ready. Call them to come to-day, while it is called to-day. And compel them to come in, by accosting them kindly, and drawing them with the cords of a man, and the bands of love.' Nothing can be more absurd than fetching an

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 12—24. Would any unbiassed observer of mankind have supposed, that Christ had laid down such a rule for the conduct of all his disciples, as we here meet with? (Note, 12—14.) Whilst so many prefer the vain commendation or customs of the world, or an interchange of festive indulgence, to the approbation of Christ; let us observe his precept of feasting 'the poor, the maimed, the lame, and the blind,' from love to Him, and to them for his sake; and remember, that it is peculiarly blessed to do good to those who cannot recompense us, and to labor in those services for which we receive nothing from man, (6: 27—36, v. 35.)—Let us also consider the example of Christ, as a comment on this precept: He too has 'made a great supper,' by dying on the cross for our sins, that He might rescue us from eternal destruction, and feast us with holy consolations, and substantial, enduring felicity. Was this rich provision made for the wise and the righteous? By no means; but for sinners, rebels, and enemies to God; for the 'poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind.' Indeed, many are invited; yea, many are ready to say, 'Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God!' But the poor in spirit, the broken-hearted sinner, alone will relish this spiritual feast: (Matt. 5: 3.) and while the servants, from age to age, are employed to invite guests, and to assure 'them that all things are ready,' instead of thankfully accepting the invitation, even they, who do not proceed to greater instances of contempt and enmity, begin with one consent to make excuse, and desire leave to continue in sin, at least for some time longer. They have no desire after this feast, or due regard to Him who prepared it;

and so are not fearful of being excluded. Not only do men destroy their souls, for great secular advantages, or by gross outward sins; but they so misplace even lawful things, and act so carnally even in the ordinary affairs of life, that they perish by such matters, as might have been attended to with far superior advantage, had they sought first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.—'Alas! that men should be so sensibly alive to their little temporal interests, and yet so careless where eternal happiness or misery are at stake! But 'the god of this world blinds their minds,' and renders them insensible to the awful consequences of their procrastination, till the Lord gives sentence against them; 'that,' after the repeated invitations which they have rejected, 'they shall never taste of his supper.'—These things grieve the hearts of faithful ministers, who go and complain to their Lord, of the folly and perverseness of their hearers; but, though He is angry with obstinate unbelievers, He will not suffer the feast to be provided in vain. Oh! that He would inspire many ministers with that zeal and love, which would animate them to 'compel sinners to come in,' and to be earnest, affectionate and solemn, in calling the vilest of transgressors to repentance, and faith in Christ! But alas! some, mistaking God's secret decrees for their rule of duty, are thus restrained from exhorting, inviting, and persuading sinners at all; and far greater numbers are contented with a cold, unmeaning harangue, as if they did not wish to be thought in earnest, in calling men to that feast, for which, it is to be feared, they themselves have no appetite. (Prov. 1: 21—33. P. O. 20—33. 9. Matt. 22: 1—14.) SCOTT.

(23.) *Compel, &c.* 'True religion imports an entire change of the heart, and must be founded in the inward conviction of the mind; or it is impossible it should be what yet it must be, a reasonable service. Let it only be considered, what violence and persecution can do toward producing such an inward conviction. A man might as

reasonably expect to bind an immortal spirit with a cord, or to beat down a wall with an argument, as to convince the understanding by threats and tortures. Let it ever be the glory of the Protestant church, that it discountenances and abhors all persecution or religious

Oppression, and CLARE

25 ¶ And there went great multitudes with him: and he turned, and said unto them,

26 If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

27 And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple.

28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth, whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh a-

argument from hence for compelling men's consciences, nay, for compelling men against their consciences, in matters of religion; 'You shall receive the Lord's supper, or you shall be fined and imprisoned, and ruined in your estate.' Certainly nothing like this was the compulsion here meant, but only that of reason and love; the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. (5.) Though many be brought to partake the benefits of the Gospel, still there is room for more; for the riches of Christ are unsearchable and inexhaustible; there is in Him enough for all, and for each; and the Gospel excludes none that do not exclude themselves. (6.) Christ's house, though large, shall at last be filled: it will be so when the number of the elect is completed, and as many as were given Him are brought to Him.

V. 25-35. See how Christ suited his doctrine to those to whom He spake, and gave every one his portion of meat. To Pharisees He preached humility and charity, but to the multitudes, as here, the terms of discipleship. See here,

I. How zealous people were in their attendance on Christ, v. 25. Here was a *mixt multitude*, like that which went with Israel out of Egypt; such we must expect there will always be in the church, and it will therefore be necessary that ministers should carefully separate between the precious and the vile.

II. How considerate He would have them be in their zeal. Those that undertake to follow

against him with twenty thousand?

32 Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace.

33 So likewise, 'whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

34 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be seasoned?

35 It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

o 1241. John 6:24-27. p Deut. 19:28-33. Ps. 78:25-36. Matt. 19:37. 1 Pet. 12:11. 1 Cor. 29:30-31. Deut. 21:15. Job 7:15-16. Eccl. 2:17-19. Mal. 1:2, 8. John 12:25. Rom. 9:13.

Christ, must count upon the worst, and prepare accordingly.

1. He tells them what the worst is. They expected that He should say, 'If any man come to me, and be my disciple, He shall have wealth and honor'; but He tells them quite the contrary. They must come thoroughly weaned from all their creature-comforts, and dead to them, so as cheerfully to part with them rather than quit their interest in Him, v. 26. A man cannot be Christ's disciple—he is not sincere, he will not be constant and persevering, unless he loves Christ better than any thing in this world, and be willing to part with it, when Christ may be glorified by his parting with it, or he put into a better capacity of serving Christ. Thus Abraham parted with his own country, and Moses with Pharaoh's court. Mention is not made here of houses and lands; philosophy will teach a man to look on those with contempt; but Christianity carries it higher. Every good man loves his relations; and yet, if he be a disciple of Christ, he must comparatively hate them, must love them less than Christ, as Leah is said to be hated, when Rachel was better loved. Not that their persons must be in any degree hated, but our comfort and satisfaction in them must be lost and swallowed up in our love to Christ, as Levi's was, when he said to his father, I have not seen him, Deut. 33:9. When our duty to our parents comes in competition with our evident duty to Christ, we must give Christ the preference. If we must either deny Christ, or

r 9:22-25. Matt. 10:38. 16:24-25. Mark 8:34-37. 10:21. 15:21. John 15:17. 2 Tim. 3:12. s Matt. 13:21. Acts 14:22. 2 Tim. 4:12. t Gen. 11:4-9. Prov. 24:27. u 33. Josh. 24:19-24. Matt. 8:20. 10:22. 20:22, 23. Acts 21:13. 1 Thes. 3:4, 5. 4 Pet. 1:13, 14. v Matt. 7:27. 27:23-5. Acts 1:18, 19. 1 Cor. 3:11-15. 1 Jo. 6:4-8. 10:38. 2 Pet. 2:19-22. 2 John 7. y 1 Kings 20:11. 2 Kings 18:20-22. Prov. 20:18. 25:8. z 12:58. 1 Kings 20:31-34. 2 Kings 10:4, 5. Job 40:9. Matt. 5:25. Acts 12:20. Jam. 4:4-10. a 26. 5:11, 28. 18:22, 23, 28-30. Acts 5:11-5. 8:19-22. 1 Tim. 4:16. 1 John 2:15, 16. b Matt. 5:1. Mark 9:49, 50. Col. 3:6. Heb. 24-8. c 8:8. 9:44. Matt. 11:15. 13:9. Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29.

Verses 25-27.

As our Lord journeyed towards Jerusalem, great multitudes flocked about Him; but He knew that they had generally very erroneous notions of his kingdom, and were not prepared to submit to the losses and privations, or to encounter the various dangers and difficulties, which certainly awaited his true disciples. He therefore turned Himself, and addressed them in a manner, which was apparently calculated to drive them from Him. (Note, Josh. 24:19.) Men are in general expressly required to honor and to love their relations, and to take care of their own lives. But this love and regard must be entirely subordinated to the love of Christ; and they must give his favor, will, and glory, a decided preference to the approbation, interests, or comfort of their dearest relatives. (Marg. Ref. q—Notes, Gen. 29:30, 31. Deut. 13:6-11. P. O. Note, 33:9.) Nay, at some times they may be called to be, as it were, cruel to themselves, (in respect to temporal life,) as well as to their friends; exposing themselves to persecution, torture and death, if they will obey Christ. So that unless they are habitually prepared, by a deep sense of their need of his salvation, and of their immense obligations to Him, to venture every consequence, and meet any extremity rather than forsake Him, they 'cannot be his disciples'; for in that case they will refuse to bear their cross and go after Him. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Matt. 10:37-39. 16:24-28. Mark 8:31-33. 2 Cor. 5:16.)

(28.) Hate not, &c. 'Owing thing is said to be loved, another hated, in Scripture, when the former is much preferred; and especially when, out of regard to it, the latter is neglected and forsaken. Compare Gen. 29:31. Deut. 21:15-17. Mal. 1:3. Rom. 9:13. Matt. 6:24.' DODDIDGE.

Verses 28-33.

To become the disciple of Christ implies a declaration of war against Satan, sin, and this evil world, which are far too powerful for any man to withstand in his own strength; unless a sinner therefore be led to such a conviction of his own weakness, and of the power of his enemies, as to seek help from God, he will never stand his ground; and in all cases, the warfare will be attended with so many hardships, perils, and losses, that if a man be not aware of them, and instructed how to support them, he will never be able to 'continue to the end.' Though it is, therefore, desperate for him to remain in his present state of subjection to his enemies, yet it will rather make the matter worse, for him to take up a mere profession of the Gospel, without that sincerity, humility, and entire dependence on Christ, which alone can give him victory in the conflict. In like manner, 'whosoever he be of you,' said Jesus, 'that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.' (Marg. Ref. a.) It would not in general consist with a man's duty, to leave his business and relatives, or to quit possession of his

estate; but he must be prepared for this, whenever the commandment or the providence of God may call him to it. In this way a professed disciple will be repeatedly put to the trial; he will be called on, in steadily acting according to his principles and conscience, to blast his opening prospects of preferment, reputation, or riches; to renounce worldly pleasures; to forego relative comforts and agreeable friendships; and to bear losses, reproaches, and various hardships, for the sake of Christ; and in times of fierce persecution, (such as were at hand when this was spoken,) he may be required to renounce his country, friends, and possessions, to become an exile or a captive, and to part with his liberty or his life; otherwise he cannot follow Christ as his true disciple. (Matt. 16:24-28. 19:16-22. Phil. 3:5-11.) The judgment and disposition of a man for every Christian must possess: these will habitually be evinced in inferior concerns; and, when it becomes necessary, God will strengthen him, and enable him to bear the greatest extremities for his sake. Many things may hereafter be expedient and useful, which are not essential to being a Christian; but this decided preference of Christ to the whole world, and to life itself, when placed in competition with Him, is the very heart, or the most vital part, of Christianity. (Matt. 13:44-46.)

(29.) Tower.] 'The best philologists agree that the original word means a large and splendid mansion.' See Schleusen. Lex.

BLOOMFIELD.

Verses 34, 35.

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 5:13. Mark 9:43-50.) Without the preparation of heart above described, professed Christians, or hearers, can be no real credit or advantage to the church, or to the world; and after a temporary profession they generally decline, till they totally apostatize, and become the most worthless of men; and as this subject is of universal importance, it demands the serious attention of every one 'that hath ears to hear.' (Marg. Ref. c.) It is evident, that 'salt' is here spoken of in popular language, according to the uses which are made of it in common life, and not as a chemist would define it; and that the common opinion, that the residuum, when the saline particles were separated, was of no use for manure, or any other purpose, was mentioned merely by way of illustrating the subject. It is clear, that 'salt may lose its savor; and that true Christians might lose the principle of divine life, unless God have engaged to preserve it; (Notes, 22:31-34. 1 Pet. 1:3-5.) but in respect of all those mentioned in Scripture, who became like 'salt which hath lost its savor,' some intimation is annexed that there was previous; a radical defect: 'No root in themselves,' 'no oil in the vessel.' 'They went out from us, because they were not of us.' (Jer. 32:39-41. Ez. 3:20, 21. Matt. 13:20-22. 22:1-14. 26:1-13. John 16:2, 6-8. 1 John 2:18, 19.)

SCOTT.

CHAP. XV.

The Pharisees murmur at Christ for receiving sinners. 1-2. The parable of the lost sheep, 3-7; that of the lost piece of silver, 8-10; and that of the prodigal son and his elder brother, 11-32.

THEN drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him.

5:28-32. 7:29. 13:30. Ex. 18:27.
28. Matt. 9:10-13. 21:28-31.
Rom. 5:20. 1 Tim. 1:15.

we love better, Christ or our relations and lives; yet even in days of peace, this matter is sometimes brought to the trial. Those that decline the service of Christ, and opportunities to converse with Him, and are ashamed to confess Him, for fear of disobliging a relation or friend, or losing a customer, give cause to suspect that they love them better than Christ.

They must come willing to bear the cross, v. 27. Though the disciples of Christ are not all crucified, yet they all bear their cross, as if they counted upon being crucified. They must be content to be put into an ill name, and to be loaded with infamy and disgrace; for no name is more ignominious than the gibbet-bearer. He must bear his cross, and come after Christ; that is, he must bear it in the way of his duty, whenever it lies in that way. He must bear it when Christ calls him to it; and in bearing it, he must have an eye to Christ, and fetch encouragements from Him, and live in hope of a recompense with Him.

2. He bids them consider it. Joshua obliged the people to consider what they did when they promised to serve the Lord, Josh. 24: 19. It is better never to begin than to proceed; and therefore before we begin, we must consider what it is to proceed. This is to act rationally, and the cause of Christ will bear a scrutiny. This considering of the case is necessary to perseverance, especially in suffering times; and its necessity is illustrated by two similitudes, showing that we must consider both the expenses and the perils of our religion.

When we make a profession of religion, we are like a man that undertakes to build a tower, and therefore must consider the expense of it, v. 28-30. And he must be sure to count upon a great deal more than his workmen tell him it will cost. Let him compare the charge with his purse, lest he be laughed at for beginning to build what he is not able to finish. Note, [1.] All that take upon them a profession of religion, undertake to build, as it were, a tower. Let them then begin low, and lay the foundation deep, lay it on the rock, and make sure work, and then aim as high as heaven. [2.] Those that intend to build this tower, must sit down, and count the cost; let them consider, it will cost them the mortifying of their sins, even the most beloved lusts, it will cost them a life of self-denial and watchfulness, and a constant course of holy duties; it may, perhaps, cost them their reputation among men, their estates and liberties, and all that is dear to them in this world, even life itself. And if it cost us all this, what is it in comparison with what it cost Christ to purchase the advantages of religion for us, which come to us without money and without price? [3.] Many that begin to build this tower, do not persevere in it, and it is their folly; they have not courage and resolution, have not a rooted, fixed principle, and so bring nothing to pass. It is true, we have none of us in ourselves sufficient to finish this tower; but Christ hath said, My grace is sufficient for thee, and that grace shall not be wanting to any who seek for, and use it. [4.] Nothing is more shameful than for him that has begun well in religion to break off; every one will justly mock him, as having lost all his labor hitherto, for want of perseverance. We lose the things we have wrought; (2 John 8.) and all we have done and suffered, is in vain, Gal. 3: 4.

When we undertake to be Christ's disciples, we are like a man that goes to war, and therefore must consider the hazard of it, and the difficulties to be encountered, v. 31, 32. Note, [1.] The state of a Christian in this world, is a military state. Is not the Christian life a warfare? We have many passes in our way, that must be disputed with dint of sword; nay, we must fight every step we go, so restless are our spiritual enemies in their opposition. [2.] We ought to consider whether we can endure the hardness which a good soldier of Christ must count upon, before we enlist under Christ's banner; whether we are able to encounter the forces of hell and earth, which come against us fully armed and strong. [3.] Of the two, it is better to make the best terms we can with the world, than pretend to renounce it, and afterward, when tribulation and persecution arise because of the Word, to return to it. That young man who could not find in his heart to part with his possessions

for Christ, did better to go away from Christ sorrowing, than to have staid with Him dissembling.

This parable is applicable another way, and may be taken as designed to teach us to begin speedily to be religious, rather than to begin cautiously, (Matt. 5: 25.) Agree with thine adversary quickly. Note, Those that persist in sin, make war against God, and rebel against their lawful Sovereign, whose government is perfectly just and good. What is the proudest and most daring sinner in the hand of God? Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He? Who knows the power of his anger? It is our interest then to make peace with Him; we need not send to desire conditions of peace, they are offered to us, are unexceptionable, and infinitely to our advantage; let us acquaint ourselves with them, and be at peace; do this in time, while the other is yet a great way off; delay is dangerous, and makes after-applications difficult.

But this parable is here (v. 33.) applied to the consideration to be exercised when we take on us a profession of religion. Solomon saith, With good advice make war; (Prov. 20:18.) so with good advice, enter on a profession of religion, as those who know, that, except you forsake all you have, you cannot be Christ's disciples; that is, except you count on forsaking all, and consent to it, for all that will live godly in Christ Jesus, must suffer persecution, and yet continue to live godly.

3. He warns them against apostasy and degeneracy from the truly Christian spirit and temper, for that would make them utterly useless, p. 34, 35. (1.) Good Christians are the salt of the earth, and good ministers especially; (Matt. 5: 13.) by their instructions and examples they season all they converse with. (2.) Degenerate Christians, who, rather than part with what they have in the world, will throw up their profession, and then of course become carnal, and worldly, and wholly destitute of a Christian spirit, are like salt that has lost its savor, the most useless, worthless thing in the world. [1.] It can never be recovered; Wherewith shall it be seasoned? You cannot salt it. This intimates that it is extremely difficult, and next to impossible, to recover an apostate, Heb. 6: 4-6. If Christianity will not prevail to cure men of worldliness and sensuality, their case must be concluded desperate. [2.] It is of no use; it is not fit for the land, to manure that, nor will it be the better if laid in the dunghill to rot, nothing is to be got out of it. A professor of religion, whose mind and manners are depraved, is the most insipid animal. If he speak of the things of God, which he hath had some knowledge of, it is so awkwardly, that none are the better for it: it is a parable in the mouth of a fool. [3.] It is abandoned; men cast it out. Such scandalous professors ought to be cast out of the church, because there is danger that others will be infected by them. Our Savior concludes this with a call to all to notice it, and take warning; He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. Now, can the faculty of hearing be better employed than in attending to the Word of Christ, particularly to the alarms He has given us of the danger we are in of apostasy, and run ourselves into by it?

CHAP. XV. v. 1-10. Evil manners, we say, beget good laws; so, in this chapter, the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 25-35. Though men are bound to use every proper means, God alone can prevail with sinners to partake of his salvation. Great multitudes may attend on the Gospel; and the opportunity should be embraced, of warning and instructing them; but, unless they are taught of God supremely to value spiritual blessings, and to feel their perishing need of Christ, they will by no means become his true disciples. Indeed by the greater number of teachers state this matter very conveniently; and whilst many follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken of, it is almost become obsolete, (at least very unfashionable, even where some doctrines of the Gospel are preached,) to declare the necessity of acting, as if we hated our nearest relatives, or our own lives, when we aspire to be Christ's disciples. It is to be feared, many dream that they are interested in the cross of

Christ, who were never willing to bear the cross for Him; and who neither renounce their worldly interests, nor mortify their lusts, in order to follow Him. But, if we be not prepared to give up iniquitous gain, forbidden indulgences, and the friendship of the world, and to bear ridicule and reproach, and the displeasure or loss of friends; how should we be able to forsake all, and lay down our lives for Christ? (Jer. 12: 5, 6. P. O. Heb. 12: 4-8.) While men shrink from the perils and sufferings of a warfare with sin and Satan, let them reflect how dreadful their case must be, if they continue exposed to the wrath of God! If on any terms they have made their peace with Him, they may bear, resist, and overcome every thing by his grace; but who can help them against his omnipotent indignation?

SCOTT

3 And ^bthe Phari-
sees and Scribes mur-
mured, saying, This
man receiveth sinners,
and eateth with them.

3 And he spake this
parable unto them,
saying,

4 What ^cman of
you, ^dhaving an hun-
dred sheep, if he lose
one of them, doth not
leave the ninety and
nine in the wilderness,
and go after that which
is lost, until he find it?

5 And ^ewhen he
hath found it, ^fhe lay-
eth it on his shoulders,
^grejoicing.

6 And when he com-
eth home, he calleth
together his ^bfriends
and neighbors, saying
unto them, Rejoice
with me; for I have found
my sheep which was
lost.

b 29, 30. 5:30. 7:34, 39. 19:7. Matt.
9:11. Acts 11:3. 1 Cor. 5:9-11.
Ovi. 2:12.

c 12:6. Matt. 12:11. Rom. 2:1.
1 Ps. 119:176. Is. 53:6. Jer. 50:6.
Ez. 34:8, 11, 12, 16, 31. Matt. 18:12,
13. John 10:15, 16, 26-28. 1 Pet. 1:
9, 25.

e 19:9. 23:43. Is. 62:12. John 4:34,
35. Acts 9:1-16. Rom. 10:20, 21.
Eph. 2:3-6. Tit. 3:3-7.

f 12:10, 11. 46:34. 63:9. Mic. 5:
4. Eph. 1:19, 20. 2:10. 3:7. 1
Thes. 1:5. 2 Tim. 2:6. 1 Pet. 1:5.

g 22:24, 32. Is. 53:10, 11, 25:5. Jer.
32:41, 42. Ez. 18:23. 33:11. Mic.
7:18. Zeph. 3:17. Joba 15:11. Heb.
12:2.

h 7:10, 24. 2:13, 14. Is. 66:10, 11.
John 3:29. 15:11. Act. 11:23. 15:3.
Phil. 1:4. 2:17. 4:1. 1 Thes. 2:19.
3:7-9.

most innocent and excellent persons, but on the most innocent and excellent

actions, and we must not think it strange.

III. Christ's justifying Himself, showing that the worse the people were to
whom He preached, the more glory there would be to God, and the more joy
in heaven, if, by his preaching, they were brought to repentance. It would be
a more pleasing sight in heaven, to see Gentiles brought to the worship of
the true God, than to see Jews go on in it; and to see publicans and sinners
live an orderly life, than to see scribes and Pharisees go on in living such a life.
This He illustrates by,

1. The parable of the lost sheep. Something like it we had, Matt. 18:12.
There the care God takes for the preservation of saints, was shown, as a
reason why we should not offend them; here the pleasure God takes in
the conversion of sinners, as a reason why we should rejoice in it.

(1.) The case of a sinner that goes on in sinful ways; he is like a sheep *gone
astray*; lost to God, who has not the honor and service He should have from
him; *lost* to the flock, which has not communion with him; *lost* to himself,

murmuring of the scribes and Pharisees at the
grace of Christ and the favor He showed to
publicans and sinners, gave occasion for a more
full discovery of that grace than perhaps other-
wise we should have had, in the three para-
bles in this chapter; the scope of all which is
the same, to show, not only what God hath said
and sworn in the Old Testament, that He hath
no pleasure in the death and ruin of sinners,
but that He has great pleasure in their return
and repentance, and rejoices in the gracious en-
tertainment He gives them thereupon.

Here is,

I. The diligent attendance of the publicans
and sinners on Christ's ministry. The *publicans*,
who collected the tribute paid to the *Romans*,
were perhaps some of them *bad men*, but they
were all industriously put into an *ill name*,
because of the prejudices of the Jewish nation
against their office; they are sometimes ranked
with *harlots*, (Matt. 21:32,) as here and else-
where with *sinners*, openly vicious. Some
think *sinners* here means *heathens*, and that
Christ was now on the other side Jordan, or
in *Galilee of the Gentiles*. These *droop near*,
within *hearing*; not as some, from curiosity to
see *Him*, nor as others, to solicit cures, but to
hear his excellent doctrine. Note, In all our
approaches to Christ, this we must have in our
eye, to *hear Him*; to hear the instructions He
gives us, and his answers to our prayers.

II. The offence the scribes and Pharisees took
at this. They turned it to the reproach of our
Lord, v. 2. 1. They were angry that *publicans*
and *heathens* were allowed the means of grace,
called to repent, and encouraged to hope for
pardon on repentance; they looked upon their
case as *desperate*, and that none but Jews had
the privilege of repenting and being pardoned,
though the prophets preached repentance to the
nations, and Daniel particularly to Nebuchad-
nezzar. 2. They thought it a disparagement
to Christ, and inconsistent with the dignity of
his character, to make Himself familiar with
such sort of people. They could not, for shame,
condemn Him for *preaching to them*, though at
that they were the most enraged; therefore they
reproached Him for *eating with them*, which
was more expressly contrary to the tradition of
the elders. Censure will fall, not only on the

whoever receiveth them, in him the spirit of wisdom dwelleth not,"

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verses 3-7.

The lost sheep represents the sinner, as departed from God,

exposed to certain ruin, if not brought back to Him, and utterly with-

out either power or inclination to return. (7.) More than over ninety

and nine, &c. This may be differently explained, as referring to

angels who are perfectly righteous and need no repentance; or to

the company of the redeemed, who are already brought home, and have

no further occasion for that entire repentance from dead works, which

the newly-awakened sinner exercises. But doubtless our Lord intend-

ed more immediately to address the Pharisees, according to their own

opinion of themselves. They proudly fancied that they needed no

repentance; yet the conversion of one publican or harlot was far more

pleasing and honorable to God, and matter of far greater joy in heaven,

than the formality and decency of any number of those, who yet

thought themselves exclusively 'the sheep of his pasture'; and the

publican's tears of godly sorrow, and broken cries for mercy, were far

more acceptable, than all their long prayers and ostentatious austeri-

ties. (8-10, 22-32. Jer. 31:18-34. Matt. 21:28-32.) Scott.

(4.) Wilderness. Uncultivated ground, used merely as common

or pasture, was called wilderness, or desert, by the Jews in distinction

from arable or inclosed land. Compare Josh. 15:16. 1 Kings 2:34.

2 Kings 3:8. Matt. 3:1. 1 Mark 6:31. DODDIDGE.

(5.) On his shoulders. From Tanchuma, it appears to have been

usual with the Jewish shepherds to carry their sheep on their should-

ers. WELSTEIN, in BLOOMFIELD.

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NOTES.

CHAP. XV. v. 1, 2. Some suppose that the term 'sinners' is here
meant of the Gentiles; but this is highly improbable, for 'He received
and ate with' the 'sinners' here mentioned; (2.) whereas had He eaten
with Gentiles, his apostles would hardly have scrupled it after his
ascension, as they most evidently did, (Acts 10: 9-16, 27-33. 11:
1-3.) It is probable He ate with the Samaritans, when He staid two
days at Sychar, and accordingly we find that the apostles readily went
along with them as he embraced the Gospel. But these were circum-
cised, and observed the distinction of meats; though they were heret-
ics and schismatics, and abhorred by the Jews. Our Lord was 'sent
to the lost sheep of the house of Israel'; did He then 'come to call the
Gentiles' exclusively 'to repentance'? (5: 32.) Was Zachæus a Gen-
tile? (19: 7-9.) Was Paul a Gentile before his conversion? or did
Jesus come to save only Gentiles? (1 Tim. 1: 15.) In fine, the word
a sinner' is applied to our Lord Himself; but did the Jews suppose
Him to be a Gentile? (John 9: 16, 24, 25, 31.) Scott.

(1.) Then. 'The same day Christ dined with the Pharisees. (ch.
14: 1-14,) which, being the sabbath-day, would give the publicans,
&c., other days were employed in their office, a more convenient
opportunity of attending.' DODDIDGE.

(2.) Receiveth sinners. 'The sinners here are not Gentiles, but
Jews of the order of tax-gatherers, and other persons of bad reputation.
Even supposing any such converted, to associate with them was direct-
ly contrary to the custom of the Pharisees. 'Our doctors promul-
gated this law,' says Tanchuma, cited by Schoettgen, 'Thieves
and usurers, even though they repent, are not to be received;'

7 I say unto you, That likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.

8 ¶ Either what woman, having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?

9 And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost.

10 Likewise, I say unto you, There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.

[Practical Observations.]

11 ¶ And he said, A certain man had two sons:

32. 5:22. Matt. 18:12.
33. 16:15. 18:9-11. Prov. 30:12.
Rom. 7:9. Phil. 3:6, 7.
34. Drachma, Heb. translated a piece of silver, is the eighth of an ounce, and equal to the Roman penny.
19:10. Ez. 34:12. John 10:18. 11:52. Eph. 2:17. m. 6, 7.
2:16-14. Matt. 18:10, 11. 28:5-7. Acts 5:19, 20. 10:3-5. Heb. 1:14. Rev. 5:11-14.
7:47. 13:5. 2 Chr. 23:13-19. Matt. 18:14. Acts 11:18. 2 Cor. 7:10.
¶ Matt. 21:23-31.

ty-nine to one of God's creation, in whom He is praised, and never was dishonored. O the numberless beings, for aught we know, numberless worlds of beings, that never were lost, or steeped aside from the laws and ends of their creation!

That which is lost, is a piece of silver—the fourth part of a shekel. The soul is of intrinsic worth; not of base metal, as iron or lead, but of silver. The Hebrew word for silver, is taken from the desirableness of it. It is silver coin, for so the drachma was; it is stamped with God's image and superscription, and therefore must be rendered to Him. Yet it is comparatively but of small value; intimating that if sinful men were left to perish, God would be no loser. This silver was lost in the dirt; a soul plunged in the world, and overwhelmed with the love of it, and care about it, is like a piece of money in the dirt; any one would say, It is a thousand pities it should lie there.

Here is a great deal of care and pains taken in quest of it, v. 8. This represents the various means and methods God makes use of to bring lost souls home to Himself.

Here is a great deal of joy for the finding of it, v. 9. Those that rejoice, desire that others should rejoice with them. The pleasing surprise of finding it, put her, for the present, into a kind of transport. So the expression intimates.

The explication of these two parables is to the same purport; v. 7, 10. Observe,

1. The repentance and conversion of sinners on earth, are matter of joy and rejoicing in heaven. The greatest sinners may be brought to repentance; while there is life, there is hope, and the worst, if they repent and turn, shall find mercy. Yet that is not all. God will delight to show them mercy; will reckon their conversion a return for all the expense He has been at upon them. There is always joy in heaven; God rejoiceth in all his works, but particularly in the works of his grace. He rejoiceth, not only in the conversion of churches and nations, but even over one sinner that repenteth, though but one. The good angels will be glad that mercy is shown them; so far are they from repining at it, though those of their nature that sinned, be left to perish; though sinners that are so mean, and have been so vile, are, on their repentance, to be taken into communion

with them, and shortly to be made like and equal to them. The conversion of sinners is the joy of angels, who gladly be, as ministering spirits to them for their good, on their conversion. The redemption of mankind was matter of joy in the presence of the angels; for they sung, *Glory to God in the highest*, Luke 2:14.

2. There is more joy over one sinner that repenteth, and turneth to be religious, from a course of life notoriously vile and vicious, than over ninety-nine just persons, who need no repentance. More joy for the redemption and salvation of fallen man, than for the preservation and confirmation of the angels that stand, and indeed need no repentance. More joy for the conversion of sinners of the Gentiles, and those publicans that now heard Christ preach, than for all the praises and devotions, and all the God, I thank Thee, of the Pharisees, and other self-justifying Jews, who thought that they needed no repentance. Nay, more joy for the conversion of one such great sinner, such a Pharisee as Paul, than for the regular conversation of one that had always conducted himself decently and well, and comparatively needs no repentance, needs not such a universal change of the life as those great sinners need. Not but that it is best not to go astray; but the power and pity of the grace of God is most manifested in the reducing of great sinners, more than in the conducting of those that never went astray. And many times those that have been great sinners before their conversion, prove more eminently and zealously good after; of which Paul is an instance, and, therefore, in him God was greatly glorified, Gal. 1:24. They to whom much is forgiven, will love much. It is spoken after the manner of men; we are moved with a more sensible joy for the recovery of what we had lost, than for the continuance of what we had always enjoyed; for health out of sickness, than for health without sickness. It is as life from the dead. Now if there is such joy in heaven, for the conversion of sinners, then the Pharisees were very much strangers to a heavenly spirit, who did all they could to hinder it, were grieved at it, and exasperated at Christ when doing a piece of work, of all others, most grateful to heaven.

V. 11—32. The scope of this parable, as of

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. When the chief of sinners draw near to hear the Gospel, they should be addressed with compassion, as well as plainness, and never be driven away with contempt and upbraidings: nor should we shun to go among them for their good, however the self-wise and self-righteous may murmur or revile. Nay, it is reasonable for us to bestow peculiar attention on them. We 'all have been as sheep going astray,' and He 'on whom were laid the iniquities of us all,' comes to seek us, and rejoices in bringing us back to his chosen flock; and He requires all who love Him, to rejoice over every instance of this abundant grace. Let us then leave it to those, who think that 'they need no repentance,' to refuse their tribute of joyful praise, on such occasions. We know, it we be indeed true believers, that there is joy in heaven over every weeping penitent, more than over ninety and nine formal professors of Christianity.—But shall Christians, ministers, angels, yea, the Lord of angels, do so much for the repentance of one sinner, and judge it a matter of such high importance and cordial re-

joicing; and shall sinners themselves not think it worth while to bestow any pains in seeking the inestimable blessing? Shall they not desire to cause holy joy in heaven by repenting, who have excited a malignant joy in hell by their crimes? We may likewise conclude, that the powers of darkness will never rejoice in the final ruin of those, over whom angels have thus rejoiced: and we may be excited to employ our labors, and pour out our prayers with all earnestness, for the conversion of sinners around us; for if one only should be rescued by our means, it will incalculably overpay all the labors of our whole lives.—Nor should we yield to discouragement, when our labors seem but little successful: for, perhaps, while we complain and grieve, and with others suppose we are doing little or nothing, angels are rejoicing over one and another, by our means brought to true repentance. In this, as far as we can know it, we are bound to be joyful and thankful, while we take encouragement to labor and pray with redoubled earnestness, for more extensive usefulness.

SCOTT.

(7.) 'Undoubtedly, the ninety-nine who are spoken of as needing no repentance or universal change of heart and life, are confirmed and established saints.'

VERSES 8—10.

The purport of this parable is nearly the same with that of the preceding; it shows the value Christ puts on the souls of his people. They are his property, the fruit of his toil and sufferings; and He will use suitable means, and render them effectual, to bring them home to his church; and then all who love Him will be called on to rejoice with Him on that account. The repentance of a sinner implies his deliverance from eternal misery, and his being made an heir of everlasting felicity. It is a trophy of Christ's victory over the powers of darkness, and a blessed effect of his atoning sacrifice. As then angels love the Lord, and hate iniquity; are free from pride, enmity, and envy, and filled with benevolence; they must rejoice with the divine Savior, whenever they are made acquainted with a work of his grace, even the repentance of one single sinner; and all true Christians rejoice, and praise God, in exact proportion to the degree of their humility, zeal, and love. In this declaration, the Pharisees might see, as in a glass, the hatefulness of their own temper and conduct; and nothing could be more suited to give encouragement to the poor sinners, who came to hear our Lord's instructions. Some expositors seem to

confine the 'joy in heaven' to God Himself, who rejoices in the presence of his angels. But the good shepherd called on all his friends to rejoice with him; and the whole family rejoiced when the prodigal returned; so that, doubtless, angels and 'the spirits of just men made perfect,' participate the joy of God our Savior when one sinner repents; as it is intimated in each of these parables. (Marg. Ref. n. 3—7, v. 6, 7, 22—24.) This consideration should inflame the zeal, and quicken the industry, of the spiritual shepherd, for the conversion of sinners; as knowing this is a work so highly acceptable to the God of heaven, and that for which He sent 'the great Shepherd of the sheep' into the world.' Whitby. (Jam. 5:19, 20. P. O. 12—20.)

SCOTT.

(8.) Light a candle. 'It will not seem strange that the woman should have needed to light a candle, in order to search for the coin, when we consider how exceedingly lit were the houses of the lower ranks in ancient times. This is manifest from the relics of Heracleum and Pompeii, where many of the smaller houses have windows at all, and in such as have them, they are rather loop-holes (like those found in our barns) than windows.'

VERSES 11, 12.

(Matt. 21:28—32.) The preceding parables chiefly illustrate the importance of conversion; but this further shows the nature of

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12 And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

13 And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

14 And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

15 And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

those before, is to show how pleasing the conversion of sinners is to God, and how ready He is, on their repentance, to receive and entertain them; but the circumstances of the parable much more largely and fully set forth the riches of gospel-grace, and it has been, and will be, while the world stands, of unspeakable use, both to direct and encourage poor sinners, in repenting and returning to God.

I. The parable represents God as a common Father to all mankind; we are all his offspring; one God created us, Mal. 2: 10. In Him we have our being; and from Him we receive our maintenance. He has the educating and portioning of us, and will put us in his will, or leave us out, according as we are, or are not, dutiful children. Our Savior hereby intimates that these publicans and sinners, whom those proud Pharisees thus despised, were their brethren, partakers of the same nature, and that therefore they ought to be glad of any kindness shown them. God is the God, not of the Jews only, but of the Gentiles; (Rom. 3: 29.) the same Lord over all, rich in mercy to all that call upon Him.

II. It represents men as of different characters, though all related to God as their common Father. He had two sons, one of them a solid, grave youth, reserved and austere, sober, but ill-humored, one who would adhere to his education; but the other volatile and mercurial, impatient of restraint, roving, willing to try his fortune, and, if he fell into ill hands, likely to be a rake, notwithstanding his virtuous education. Now this latter represents the publicans and sinners, whom Christ would bring to repentance, and the Gentiles to whom the apostles were to be sent forth, to preach repentance. The former represents the Jews in general, and particularly the Pharisees, whom He was endeavoring to reconcile to the grace of God.

The younger son is the prodigal, whose character and case are designed to represent that of a sinner, of every one of us in our natural state, but especially of some.

Now, observe,

1. His riot and ramble when a prodigal, and the extravagances and miseries he fell into. We are told,

(1.) What his request to his father was; v. 12. He said to his father, proudly and pertly enough, 'Father, give me, (he might have put a little more in his mouth, and have said, Pray give me, or, Sir, if you please, give me,) give me the portion of goods that falleth to me; not so much as you think fit to allot me, but what falls to me as my due.' Note, It is bad, and the beginning of worse, when men look upon God's gifts as due debts. 'Give me the portion, all my child's part, that falls to me; not, Try me with a little, and see how I can manage that, and accordingly trust me with more; but, Give it me all at present.' Note, The great folly and ruin of sinners is, being content to have their portion by hand; now in this life-time to receive their good things. They look only at things seen, and temporal, covet only a present gratification, but have no care for a future felicity.

And why did he desire to have his portion in his own hands? [1.] He was weary of his father's government, and fond of liberty, falsely so called.

tance, and the gracious reception, which the truly penitent experience from our merciful God and Father. In those, the exposed and helpless condition of lost sinners is represented; in this, their rebellion and ingratitude. The distinction between formal and moral persons, and those of more scandalous lives, is found in every country, and the two companies include all, except the remnant of penitent believers. We are led to consider 'the younger son' as having been well educated, and kindly treated, by a pious, prudent, and affectionate father, in whose family he had every profitable indulgence; but, without cause, he ungratefully demanded 'the portion of goods that fell to his share.' This accords to the foolish and perverse conduct of many children; who vainly suppose they can manage better for themselves, than their parents do for them, and think themselves entitled to a 'portion of goods,' as if they had a legal claim to it. But it also aptly describes the temper of sinners respecting God; who, notwithstanding his providential kindness and the reasonableness of his commands, cast off all regard to his authority, break loose from restraint, count themselves entitled to a large share of worldly possessions, and foolishly imagine that they shall best enjoy themselves when they cannot forget or rebel against Him. The father's division of his substance between his sons, shows that God often indulges men in their carnal inclinations, that they may be more inexcusable in rebellion, and may know by experience the folly of their own choice. It is said that there is a custom, or law, in the East, by which the son may demand his portion, in the lifetime of his father, who cannot legally refuse compliance. Nothing of this, however, is at all intimated in Scripture.

(12.) Divided.] It was not unusual for fathers to divide all their substance even in their life-time. This custom is alluded to by Theophrastus.

Verdes 13-16.

The removal of the younger son with all his property into a far country, as if to traffic with it, but in such a way that he might receive no more

counsel or control from his father, represents the prosperous sinner's increasing impiety, and disregard of God; and his 'wasting his substance in riotous living, shadows forth the abuse men make of the bounty of Providence, by spending it on their lusts, ruining their health, and shortening their lives, by excess. (Marg. Ref. r. s.) The prodigal's having 'spent all,' and a famine at the same time prevailing in the land, his deserting by companions and flatterers, and beginning to be destitute, show the wasting, transient nature of ungodly pleasure and prosperity, and the tendency of sin to produce misery; also that the Lord often visits the sinner with additional afflictions, especially when He proposes to bring him to repentance. (Marg. Ref. t.—Hos. 2: 6, 7.) Feeding swine was a mean employment in itself; but among the Jews, to whom those animals were ceremonially unclean, it might be considered as the greatest debasement imaginable, especially to one who had been brought up in affluence. Yet, as if the hardship and disgrace had been too little, the prodigal was scarcely allowed to satisfy the cravings of his appetite with the husks, or mast, the coarse wild fruits, on which the swine fed; though for want of other food, he earnestly desired it; so that he was reduced to the danger even of perishing by hunger. Thus the sinner often plunges into the basest crimes, and sells himself to Satan, to work iniquity; and yet sometimes can hardly obtain the meanest sustenance, and grows more and more despicable and miserable, having nothing but destruction before his eyes!

(13.) Riotous living.] 'This was among harlots, (v. 30.) the readiest way to exhaust the body, debase the mind, ruin the soul, and destroy the substance.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

(15.) To feed swine.] An employment contemptible among the Jews, as it had been with the Egyptians. Thus Herodot. So Sota, "Cursed is he who feeds swine." Equally contemptible was it among the Greeks. So Martial.

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19 And an ¹no more worthy to be called thy son ²make me as one of thy hired servants.

20 And he arose, and came to his father.

But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, ³and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

21 And the son said unto him, ⁴'Father, I have sinned ⁵against heaven, and in thy sight, and an ⁶no more worthy to be called thy son.

g 58. 7:6-7. Gen. 32:10. Job 42:6. 1 Cor. 15:9. 1 Tim. 1:13-16. 1 John 1:8, 23. Ps. 34:10. Matt. 15: 26-27. Jam. 4:8-10. 1 Pet. 5:6. 1 Dem. 30:2-4. Job 32:27, 28. Ps. 38:5, 15. 108:10-12. Is. 49:15, 55: 6-9. 57:18. Jer. 31:20. Ez. 10:4-8. Hos. 11:8. Mic. 7:18, 19. Acts 2:39. Eph. 2:13, 17. 1 Gen. 33:4. 45:14, 15. 46:29. Acta 20:27. 1 Th. 1:9. Jer. 31:13. Ez. 16:63. Rom. 2:4. m Ps. 51:4. 149:2. 1 Cor. 8:12.

Observe what he considered.

[1.] How had his condition was; *I perish with hunger*. Not only, *'I am hungry'*, but, *'I perish with hunger'*; I see not what way to expect relief. Note, Sinners will not come to Christ, till brought to see themselves just ready to perish in sin; *Master, save us, we perish*. And though we be thus driven to Christ, He will not therefore reject us, nor think Himself dishonored, but rather honored, by his being applied to in a desperate case.

[2.] How much better it might be, if he would but return; the meanest in my father's family, the very day-laborers, *have bread enough, and to spare*: such a good house he keeps! Note, 1st. In our Father's house, is bread for all his family; that was taught by the twelve loaves of *shew-bread*, even on the holy table in the sanctuary, a loaf for every tribe. 2dly. There is *enough and to spare*, for all, for each, for such as will join themselves to his domestics, for *charity*. Yet there is room; crumbs fall from his table, which many would be glad of, and thankful for.

3dly. *Hired servants* in God's family are well provided for; even the meanest that hire themselves into his family, and depend on his reward, shall be well provided for.

4thly. This consideration should encourage sinners, astray from God, to return to Him.

(3.) The purpose of it. Since his condition is so bad, and may be bettered by returning, his conclusion is, *I will arise, and go to my father*. Note, Good purposes are good things, but good performances all in all.

He will take no longer time to consider of it, but will *forthwith arise* and go. Though in a far country, a great way off, yet, far as it is, he will return; every step of backsliding from God, must be a step back again in return to Him. Though *joined to a citizen of this country*, he makes no difficulty of breaking his bargain. *We are not debtors to the flesh*, are under no obligation to give warning, but are at liberty to quit the service of our Egyptian task-masters when we will. Observe with what resolution he speaks, *I will*; I am resolved, whatever the issue be, rather than *stay here, and starve*.

True repentance is a rising, and coming to God; *Behold, we come unto thee*. But what words shall we take with us? He here considers what to say. Note, In al. our addresses to God, it is good to deliberate beforehand what we shall say, that we may order our cause before Him, and fill our mouth with arguments. We have liberty of speech, and we ought to consider seriously with ourselves, how we may use that liberty to the utmost, and yet not abuse it.

Let us observe what he purposed to say.

1st. He would confess his fault and folly; *I have sinned*. Note, As we have all sinned, so we all ought to own it. It is required and insisted on, as a necessary condition of peace and pardon. If we plead *not guilty*, we put ourselves on trial by the covenant of innocence, which will certainly condemn us. We plead *guilty*, with a contrite, penitent, and obedient heart, we refer ourselves to the covenant of grace, which offers forgiveness to those that confess their sins.

Verses 20, 21.

According to his determination, the prodigal set out on his journey home; distressed, we may conceive, with fears of many hardships to endure, and lest his father should reject or upbraid him. But, being received, and made the more ashamed of his own misconduct by his father's kindness, he acknowledged his guilt and unworthiness, in the words he had premeditated, save that he omitted the latter clause; e. the: interrupted by his kind father, or not counting it necessary, see-

foolish hopes; and they are, of all diseased persons, most enemies to their own cure.

2. His return from this ramble, his penitent return to his father. When brought to the last extremity, he bethought himself how much it was his interest to go home. The grace of God can soften the hardest heart, and give a happy turn to the strongest stream of corruption. Now observe here,

(1.) The occasion of his return and repentance: it was his affliction, when he was *in want*, then he came to himself. Note, Afflictions, when sanctified by divine grace, prove happy means of turning sinners from the error of their ways. By them the ear is opened to discipline, and the heart disposed to receive instruction; and they are sensible proofs, both of the vanity of the world, and of the mischievousness of sin. Apply it spiritually; when we find the insufficiency of creatures, and have tried all other ways of relief for our poor souls in vain, then it is time to think of returning to God. When we see what miserable comforters, physicians of no value, all but Christ are, for a soul that groans under the guilt and power of sin, and no man gives unto us what we need, then surely we shall apply ourselves to Jesus Christ.

(2.) The preparative for it: it was *consideration*. He reasoned within himself, when he recovered his right mind, *How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough!* Note, Consideration is the first step towards conversion, Ezek. 18: 28. *He considers and turns*. To consider, is to retire into ourselves, to reflect on ourselves, to compare one thing with another, and determine accordingly.

2dly. He would aggravate it; so far from extenuating the matter, he would load himself for it; *I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee*. Let those that are *unconscious* to their earthly parents, think of this; they sin against heaven, and before God. Offences against them are offences against God. Let us all think of this, as that which renders our sin exceeding sinful, and should render us exceedingly sorrowful for it. 1. Sin is committed in contempt of God's authority; *We have sinned against heaven*. God is here called *Heaven*, to signify how highly He is exalted, and the dominion He has over us, for the *Heavens do rule*. The malignity of sin aims high, against Heaven. The daring sinner is said to have set his mouth against the Heavens, Ps. 73: 9. Yet it is impotent malice, foolish malice; what is shot against the Heavens, will return on the head of him that shoots it, Ps. 7: 16. Sin is an affront to the God of heaven, a forfeiture of the glories and joys of heaven, a contradiction to the designs of the kingdom of heaven. 2. It is committed in contempt of God's eye upon us; *I have sinned against heaven, and yet before thee*, under thine eye; than which there could not be a greater affront.

3dly. He would judge and condemn himself, and acknowledge himself to have forfeited all the privileges of the family, v. 29. He does not deny the relation, (that was all he had to trust to), but owns his father might justly shut his doors against him. He had, at his own demand, his portion of goods, and had reason to expect no more. Note, It becomes sinners to acknowledge themselves unworthy to receive any favor from God, and to humble and abase themselves before Him.

4thly. He would nevertheless sue for admission into the family, though in the meanest post; *'Make me as one of thy hired servants'*; that is good enough, and too good for me. Note, True penitents have a high value for God's house, and its privileges, and will be glad of any place, so they may but be in it, though it be but as *door-keepers*, Ps. 84: 10. To sit with the servants even, he will count a preferment in comparison with his present state. Those that from their revolt return to God, cannot but be desirous to be employed for Him, and put into a capacity of serving and honoring Him; *'Make me as a hired servant, that I may show I love my father's house as much as ever I slighted it.'*

5thly. In all this, he would have an eye to his father as a father; *I will arise, and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father*. Note, Eying God as a Father, and our Father, will be of great use in our repentance, and return to Him. It will make our sorrow for sin genuine, our resolutions against it strong, and encourage us to hope for pardon. God delights to be called *Father*; *Is not Ephraim a dear son?*

(4.) The performance of this purpose; *He arose, and came to his father*. His good resolve he put in execution without delay. Note, It is our interest speedily to close with our convictions. Have we said, *We will arise, and go?* Let us immediately. He did not come half way, and then pretend he was tired, and could go no further; but weak and weary as he was, he made a thorough business of it. *If thou wilt return, O Israel, return unto Me and do thy first works*.

3. His reception and entertainment with his father; *He came to his father*; but was he welcome? Yes, heartily. And by the way, it is an example to parents whose children have been foolish and disobedient, if they repent and submit, not to be harsh and severe with them, but to be governed in such a case by the wisdom that is from above, which is *gentle*

ing he was welcomed as a son. Thus the penitent sinner nulls the bondage of Satan, and returns ¹armed by faith and prayer, ²against a variety of fears and difficulties; and the Lord graciously meets him with unexpected tokens of his forgiving love. These conduct still further to humble his heart, though they inspire him with more confidence of hope, in the mercy of his gracious Lord. (Marg. Ref. 1, m.—Ps. 2 3-5. Is. 55: 6-9. 57: 15, 16. Ez. 16: 60-63, v. 63.) Scorr.

22 But the father said to his servants, Bring forth, the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet:

23 And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry:

24 For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to bemoan.

[Practical Observations.]

22 Ps. 45:13. 132:9, 16. Is. 61:10. Ez. 16:9-13. Zech. 3:3-4. Matt. 22:11. 12. Rom. 8:22. 13:14. Gal. 3:27. Eph. 4:22-24. Rev. 3:4, 5, 18. 6:41. 7:9, 13, 14. 19:8.
23 Gen. 41:42. Eccl. 3:10. 8:2. Rom. 8:15. Gal. 4:5, 6. Eph. 1:13, 14. Rev. 2:17.
24 Deut. 33:25. Ps. 18:33. Cant. 7:1. Ez. 16:10. Eph. 6:15.
25 Gen. 18:7. Ps. 63:5. Prov. 9:2. Is. 25:6. 65:13, 14. Matt. 22:2, &c. 52. Matt. 8:22. John 5:21, 24, 25. 11:25. Rm. 6:13. 8:2. 2 Cor. 6:14, 15. Eph. 2:1, 5. Col. 2:13. 1 Tim. 5:8. Jude 12. Rev. 3:1. 4:8. 19:10. Gen. 45:28. Jer. 31:15-17. Matt. 18:11-13. 23. 7:9, 10. Ec. 9:7. 10:19. Is. 35:10. 66:11. Jer. 13:12-14. Rom. 12:15. 1 Cor. 12:26.

but the tender father ran to meet him with his encouragements. [4.] Here were arms of mercy, and those stretched out to embrace him; *He fell on his neck*; though guilty, and deserving to be beaten, though dirty, and newly come from feeding swine, that any one who had not the strongest and tenderest compassions of a father, would have loathed to touch him; yet he thus takes him in his arms, and lays him in his bosom. Thus dear are true penitents to God, thus welcome to the Lord Jesus. [5.] Here are lips of mercy, and those dropping as a honey-comb; *He kissed him*. This kiss not only assured him of his welcome, but sealed his pardon; his former follies shall be all forgiven, and not mentioned against him, nor is one word said in way of upbraiding. This was like David's kissing Absalom, 2 Sam. 14:33. And this inculcates how ready and free and forward the Lord Jesus is to receive and entertain poor, returning, penitent sinners, according to his Father's will.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17-24. Happy are they, who, by means of any afflictions, are made to see the madness and folly of their rebellion against God! With what new eyes do they then begin to behold the divine character and law, their own obligations and conduct, their interest and duty, their state and prospects! The sinner, when 'he is come to himself,' is made sensible that he is a wretch undone; and that the meanness of those servants of God, whom he formerly despised, is happy, compared with him. He discovers that there is no hope of escaping destruction, except by repentance, and returning unto God through Jesus Christ, and by faith in his blood; the riches of whose goodness and mercy give him his sole encouragement to repent, and hope for pardon: he sees and confesses the greatness of his guilt, and its manifold aggravations, which before he palliated, excused, or gloried in: he allows himself to be utterly unworthy of those blessings, which, from the goodness of God, he enjoyed and ungratefully despised: and he is rendered willing to submit to any abasement, or self-denial, if he may be admitted into the number of the Lord's servants, and be preserved from impending destruction. Nor does he rest in recollections, or good purposes to be realized at some future period (*Ps. 119: 57-63.*) without delay, he arises, breaks his league with sin, encounters difficulties, ceases to do evil, learns to do well; uses the means of grace, mortifies sinful propensities, and performs self-denying duties, even on a peradventure that he Lord may have mercy on him: and he proceeds in this course, though harassed with fears, lest his sins should be un-

(2.) The poor prodigal's penitent submission; v. 21. As it commends the good father's kindness, that he showed it before the prodigal expressed his repentance so it commends the prodigal's repentance, that at he expressed it after his father had showed him so much kindness. When he had received the kiss which sealed his pardon, yet he said, *Father, I have sinned.* Note, Even those that have received the pardon of their sins, and the comfortable sense of their pardon, must have in their hearts sincere contrition, and with their mouths make penitent confession. David penned Psalm 51: after Nathan had said, *The Lord has taken away thy sin, thou shalt not die.* Nay, the comfortable sense of the pardon of sin should increase our sorrow for it; and that is ingenuous, evangelical sorrow, which is increased by such a consideration. See Ezek. 16: 63. *Thou shalt be ashamed and confounded, when I am pacified toward thee.* The more we see of God's readiness to forgive us, the more difficult it should be to us to forgive ourselves.

(3.) The splendid provision this kind father made for the returning prodigal. He was going on in his submission, but one word we find in his purpose to say, (v. 19.) which we do not find that he did say, (v. 21.) and that was, *Make me as one of thy hired servants.* We cannot think that he forgot it, much less that he changed his mind; but his father interrupted him, prevented his saying it; 'Hold, son, talk no more of thine unworthiness, thou art heartily welcome, and shalt be treated as a dear son, as a pleasant child.' He who is thus entertained at first, needs not ask to be made as a hired servant. Thus when Ephraim bemoaned himself, God comforted him, Jer. 31: 18, 20. It is strange that here is not one word of rebuke; 'Why not stay with your harlots and your swine? You could never find the way home, till beaten hither with your own rod.' Here is nothing like this; intimating that, when God forgives the sins of true penitents, He forgets them, *thy shall not be mentioned against them*, Ezek. 18: 22.

But this is not all; here is rich, royal provision made for him, according to his birth and quality, far beyond what he did, or could, ex-

pardonable, or lest he should finally be rejected. But when our gracious Lord has thus humbled sinners, He will not delay to come to their relief and comfort. He sees all their remorse and anguish. He witnesses their groans and tears, He hears and accepts their broken petitions and confessions; and He never upbraids those, who loathe and abhor themselves. This genuine repentance is increased by every fresh discovery of the Lord's goodness and mercy: every token of forgiveness renders the heart more contrite, godly sorrow more ingenuous, and confessions of guilt more unreserved. Thus a blessed reconciliation takes place between an offended God and a heinous transgressor of his laws: and while the broken-hearted penitent feels himself unworthy of the least favor, his heavenly Father puts him in full possession of all the blessings of his salvation, 'seals him with the Spirit of adoption,' and comforts him beyond his largest hopes. Thus he is encouraged, animated, and even constrained, by redeeming love, to walk with pleasure in the ways of holy obedience: and his services will be as much superior to those of formal Pharisees, as his joy in the Lord exceeds their conception and experience. Then angels and saints rejoice, that the lost sinner is found, that the dead is raised, and that the rebel is reconciled.—And let it be here hinted, that this is an example, which parents especially are called to imitate in their conduct towards their children: when, having been even very disobedient and profligate, they 'come to themselves,' desire to return to their duty, and to obtain forgiveness of the past. SCOTT.

(22.) *The best robe.* 'Or, long robe, which servants never wore; the ordering of which, therefore, by the father, was a most moving declaration how far he was from intending to treat the prodigal like a servant. He mentioning the ring and the shoes spake the same language.'

DODDRIDGE.

Verse 23.

Kill it. Literally, *sacrifice it*. In ancient times, the animals provided for public feasts were first sacrificed to God. The blood of the beast being poured out before God, by way of atonement for sin, the flesh was considered as consecrated, and the guests were considered as feeding on divine food. This custom is observed among the Asiatics to this day.

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Dr. A. CLARKE.

Though some think Christ spoke this parable to an assembly composed of Gentiles principally—and Elser urges that it was customary to offer a sacrifice at the birth, and sometimes at the unexpected recovery of a child, yet as this was said in presence of Jews—among whom no sacrifice of this kind was appointed, Raphael, Wolf, Doddridge, and Bloomfield think there is no such classical allusion here. ED.

Verse 24.

Was dead. 'By a very common and beautiful emblem, vicious persons are represented as dead, both by sacred and profane authors; (compare 1 Tim. 5: 6. Eph. 2: 1. 5: 14. and Wolfius.) and the natural death would be less grievous to pious parents, than to see their abandoned; to such a course as this young sinner took.' DODDRIDGE.

25 Now ^{his} elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, ^{he} heard music and dancing.

26 And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant.

27 And he said unto him, 'Thy brother is come: ^{and} thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound.'

28 And ^{he} was angry, and would not go in: ^{therefore} came his father out and entreated him.

29 And he answered and said to his father,

11, 12.
Ex. 15:20. 2 Sam. 6:14. Ps. 30:11. 149:3. 150:4. Ec. 3:4. Jer. 31:4.
30. Acts 9:17. 22:13. Philem. 15.
23
2. 5:30. 7:39. 1 Sam. 17:23. 18:3. 16:55. 66:1. 10:1. 11:1. 12:1. 13:1. 14:1. 15:1. 16:1. 17:1. 18:1. 19:1. 20:1. 21:1. 22:1. 23:1. 24:1. 25:1. 26:1. 27:1. 28:1. 29:1. 30:1. 31:1. 32:1. 33:1. 34:1. 35:1. 36:1. 37:1. 38:1. 39:1. 40:1. 41:1. 42:1. 43:1. 44:1. 45:1. 46:1. 47:1. 48:1. 49:1. 50:1. 51:1. 52:1. 53:1. 54:1. 55:1. 56:1. 57:1. 58:1. 59:1. 60:1. 61:1. 62:1. 63:1. 64:1. 65:1. 66:1. 67:1. 68:1. 69:1. 70:1. 71:1. 72:1. 73:1. 74:1. 75:1. 76:1. 77:1. 78:1. 79:1. 80:1. 81:1. 82:1. 83:1. 84:1. 85:1. 86:1. 87:1. 88:1. 89:1. 90:1. 91:1. 92:1. 93:1. 94:1. 95:1. 96:1. 97:1. 98:1. 99:1. 100:1. 101:1. 102:1. 103:1. 104:1. 105:1. 106:1. 107:1. 108:1. 109:1. 110:1. 111:1. 112:1. 113:1. 114:1. 115:1. 116:1. 117:1. 118:1. 119:1. 120:1. 121:1. 122:1. 123:1. 124:1. 125:1. 126:1. 127:1. 128:1. 129:1. 130:1. 131:1. 132:1. 133:1. 134:1. 135:1. 136:1. 137:1. 138:1. 139:1. 140:1. 141:1. 142:1. 143:1. 144:1. 145:1. 146:1. 147:1. 148:1. 149:1. 150:1. 151:1. 152:1. 153:1. 154:1. 155:1. 156:1. 157:1. 158:1. 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The righteousness of Christ is the robe, that principal robe, with which they are clothed; they put on the Lord Jesus Christ, are clothed with that Sun. The robe of righteousness is the garment of salvation, Isa. 61: 10. A new nature is this best robe, true penitents are clothed with that, being sanctified throughout. 2dly. The earnest of the Spirit, by whom we are sealed to the day of redemption, is the ring on the hand. After that ye believed, ye were sealed. They that are sanctified, are adorned and dignified, put in power, as Joseph by Pharaoh's giving him a ring; 'Put a ring on his hand, to be before him a constant memorial of his father's kindness, that he may never forget it.' 3dly. The preparation of the Gospel of peace, is shoes for our feet; (Eph. 6: 15.) so that, compared with this here, signifies (saith Grotius) that God, when He receives true penitents into his favor, makes use of them for the convincing and converting of others by their instructions, at least, by their examples. David, when pardoned, will teach transgressors God's ways, and Peter, when converted, will strengthen his brethren. Or, it intimates that they shall go on cheerfully, and with resolution, in the way of religion, as a man does when he has shoes on his feet, above what he does when he is barefoot.

[2.] He came home hungry, and his father not only fed him, but feasted him, v. 23. Cold meat might have served, or the leavings of the last meal; but he shall have fresh meat, and hot meat, and the fatted calf can never be better bestowed. Note, Excellent food is provided by our heavenly Father for all who arise and come to Him. Christ Himself is the Bread of life;

his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed; in Him there is a feast for souls, a feast of fat things. It was a great change with the prodigal, who a while ago would fain have filled his belly with husks. How sweet the supplies of the new covenant, and the relish of its comforts, to those who have been laboring in vain for satisfaction in the creature! Now he found his own words made good, *In my father's house there is bread enough, and to spare.*

(1.) The great joy and rejoicing that were in his return. The bringing of the fatted calf was designed to be not only a feast for him, but a festival for the family, v. 23, 24. Note, [1.] Conversion is the raising of the soul from death to life, the finding of that which seemed to be lost, a great, wonderful, happy change. What was in itself dead, is made alive; what was lost to God and his church, is found, and what was unprofitable, becomes profitable, Philem. 11. It is such a change as that on the face of the earth, when the spring returns. [2.] The conversion of sinners is greatly pleasing to God; and al. that belong to his family, ought to rejoice in it, those in heaven do, and those on earth should. Observe, the father began the joy, and all the rest rejoiced. Therefore we should be glad of the repentance of sinners, because it accomplishes God's design; it is the bringing of those to Christ, whom the Father had given Him, and in whom He will be forever glorified. We joy for your sakes before our God, with an eye to Him, (1 Thess. 3: 9.) and ye are our rejoicing in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Master of the family, 1 Thess. 2: 19.

The family complied with the master; They began to be merry. Note, God's children and servants ought to be affected with things as He is.

4. The repining and envying of the elder brother, is described by way of reproof to the scribes and Pharisees, for their discontent at the repentance and conversion of the publicans and sinners, and the favor Christ showed them, but so represented as not to aggravate the matter, but as allowing them still the privileges of elder brethren, which the Jews had, (though the Gentiles were favored,) for the preaching of the Gospel must begin at Jerusalem. Christ accosted them mildly, to soothe them into a good temper toward the poor publicans. But by the elder brother here, we may understand those who are really good, and have been so from their youth up, and never went astray into any vicious course of living; who comparatively need no repentance: to such these words in the close, *Son, thou art ever with me*, are applicable without any difficulty, but not to the scribes and Pharisees. Observe,

(1.) How foolish and fretful the elder brother was, on occasion of his brother's reception, and how disgusted at it. It seems he was abroad

Verses 25-32.

In the subsequent part of this parable, the character of the Pharisees is delineated, as to the most prominent feature of it. Had they been as righteous as they thought themselves, their conduct towards the publicans and sinners would have been very unreasonable. (Note, 1, 2.) On this ground, our Lord took the opportunity of expostulating with them; as, on other occasions, He exposed their hypocrisy and wickedness. The elder son is represented as having been in the field employed in labor; but when he returned, and heard the unexpected expressions of festive rejoicing, he incurred the reason; and being told on what account the feast was made, he was angry, and would not go in. This represented the Pharisees though not them alone. They were exact in external duties, but proud of their goodness; they deemed themselves the peculiar favorites of heaven, and could not endure that publicans and abandoned sinners should receive any encouragement. (Marg. Ref. a.—7: 37-39. 18: 9-14. 19: 1-10, v. 7.) Thus, were angels, and the Lord of angels, and all the friends of God, were rejoicing over penitent and pardoned sinners, they envied, murmured, and raged! The father is next described, as going out to entreat his son to come in; but he answered with boasts and complaints. This represents the condescension of the Lord, and the arrogant manner in which his invitations and persuasions are often received. The Pharisees supposed that there was great merit in their services; and because not guilty of the outward scandals they charged on the publicans, they thought themselves exempt from all blame; yet they had never experienced those joys in religion, to which the penitent sinner professed to be admitted. (Marg. Ref. b.—f.—Matt. 20: 1-16, v. 12. 25: 24-30, v. 24, 25.) It is well known that the Jews in general were of the same spirit, respecting the converted Gentiles; and numbers, in every age, object to the Gospel and its preachers, on similar grounds. To this proud, rude, ungrateful reply, the father meekly answered, that as his son he was the acknowledged heir of all his substance, though

no feast had expressly been made on his account, because he had never left home. But, that it was meet that they should all rejoice over his 'brother,' who had so unexpectedly been reclaimed from his evil courses, and restored to the family, as one that was alive from the dead. (Marg. Ref. g.—i.) Some expositors have been greatly perplexed in applying this latter part of the parable; yet the difficulty will vanish, if we advert to the general scope of it. Had it been true, that the Pharisees were the favorites of heaven, and had always been obedient and deserving their present privileges, would have been continued to them, and their future inheritance secure and undiminished by the favor shown to the publicans. The same would have been the case with the Jews, notwithstanding the calling of the Gentiles, if they had been indeed the children of believing Abraham. So that they could not be deprived of the blessing, except they were found among unbelievers and hypocrites. In the mean time, it was meet, that all the servants of God should rejoice with Him over the repentance and reconciliation of the poor publicans and harlots, by which his name would be glorified, and immortal souls saved. They were of the same nature and nation with the Pharisees, who disinclined them; and the less hope there was of their conversion, the more heartily it ought to be rejoiced in. Thus our Lord closed the subject, not seeing good at that time to push the argument further. The elder son is not represented as having returned any answer to his father, and it is not said that he went in, or that he did not; we may therefore suppose our Lord to mean, that they ought to be satisfied with this statement of the matter, and that some of them would be so; but that others would remain sullen and untractable, after all that could be said to convince them. 'The elder son, in this parable, representeth not the just, or righteous; for they are not angry either that sinners do return to God, or that He graciously entertains them when they do so, but rather are industrious to bring them home to Him, and rejoice at their return.' Whately says.

*I, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

30 But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

31 And he said unto him, Son, thou art over with me, and all that I have is thine.

32 It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

c 17:10, 19:9, 11, 12, 20, 21. 1 Sam. 15: 13, 14. Is. 58:2, 3. Zech. 7:3. Matt. 20:12. Rom. 9:20, 27. 7:9, 10:3. Phil. 3:4-6. 1 John 1:8-10. Rev. 3:17.
d 7. 1921. Mal. 1:12, 13. 3:14.
e 217. Rev. 2:17.
f 22. 18:11. Matt. 13:12, 13. 13:12, 23.
g 19:22, 23. Ex. 30:13-16. Mark 7:27, 28. Rom. 9:4. 11:23.
h 7:34. Hos. 14:9. Jon. 4:10, 11. Rom. 24:19. 15:9-13. 24. Eph. 2:1-10.

it comparatively; he had not been so disobedient as his brother had been. O what need have good men to take heed of pride, a corruption that arises out of the ashes of other corruptions! Those that have long served God, and been kept from gross sins, have a great deal to be humbly thankful for, but nothing proudly to boast of.

2dly. He complained of his father, as if he had not been so kind to him as he ought, v. 29. He was out of humor now, else he would not have made this complaint; for, no question, had he asked a kid at any time, he might have had it at first word; and we have reason to think he did not desire it, but the killing of the fatted calf induced him to make this peevish reflection. Men in a passion are apt to reflect, as they would not, if in their right mind. Note, Those that think highly of themselves and their services, are apt to think hardly of their master, and meanly of his favors. We ought to own ourselves utterly unworthy of the mercies God hath thought fit to give us, much more of those He hath not thought fit to give us, and therefore we must not complain.

3dly. He was very ill-humored to his younger brother, and harsh in what he thought and said of him. Some good people are liable to this fault, nay, to indulge in it; to look with disdain on those who have not preserved their reputation so clean as they have done, and to be sour and morose to them, yea, though they have given very good evidences of repentance and reformation; this is not the spirit of Christ, but of the Pharisees. Observe the instances of it:

1. He would not go in, except his brother be turned out; one house shall not hold him and his own brother, nor his father's house. The language of this was that of the Pharisee, (Isa. 65:5.) *Stand by thyself, come not near me, for I am holier than thou;* and, (Luke 18:11.) *I am not as other men are, nor even as this publican.* Note, Though we are to shun the society of those sinners whom we are in danger of being infected by, yet we must not that of penitent sinners, whom we may get good by. Note, We think too well of ourselves, if we cannot find in our hearts to receive those whom God hath received, and to admit those into favor, and friendship, and fellowship with us, whom we have reason to think God has a favor for, and who are taken into friendship and fellowship with Him.

2. He would not call him brother; but this thy son, which sounds arrogantly, and not without reflection on his father, as if his indulgence had made him a prodigal. Note, Want of regard to the relation we stand in to our brethren, as brethren, is the bottom of all our neglects of duty to them. Let us give our relations, both in the flesh and in the Lord, the titles that belong to them.

3. He aggravated his brother's faults, and endeavored to incense his father against him; *He is thy son, who hath devoured thy living with harlots.* It is true, he had spent his portion foolishly enough; (whether on harlots, or no, we

when his brother came, and by the time he was returned home, the mirth was begun, v. 25. He inquired what those things meant, (v. 26.) and was informed that his brother was come, and received safe and sound, v. 27. It is but one word in the original; he had received him in health, well both in body and mind; a penitent, returned to his right mind, well reconciled to his father's house, cured of his vices and his rakish disposition. Now this disobliterated him to the highest degree; *He was angry, and would not go in,* (v. 28.) not only because he would not himself join in the mirth, but because he would show his displeasure at it, and intimate to his father, that he should have kept out his younger brother. This shows what is a common fault, [1.] In men's families, that those who have always been a comfort to their parents, think they should have the monopoly of their parents' favor, and are apt to be too sharp on those who have transgressed, and to grudge their parents' kindness to them. [2.] In God's family, those who are comparatively innocent, seldom know how to be compassionate toward those who are manifestly penitent. The language of such is what the elder brother said, (v. 29, 30.) written for warning to those who, by the grace of God, are kept from scandalous sin, that they sin not after the similitude of this transgression. Observe particularly,

1st. He boasted of himself, of his own virtue and obedience. He had not only not run from his father's house, as his brother did, but had made himself as a servant in it, and had done so long, v. 29. Note, It is too common for those that are better than their neighbors, to boast of it, yea, before God Himself, as if He were indebted to them for it. This elder brother said more than was true, when he gloried that he had never transgressed his father's commands, for then he would not have been so obstinate as now to his father's entreaties. However, admit

are not told before, perhaps that was only the language of the elder brother's jealousy and ill will; but that he had devoured all his father's living, was false, the father had still a good estate; now this shows how apt we are, in censuring our brethren, to make the worst of every thing, and to set it out in the blackest colors; which is not doing as we would be done by, nor as our heavenly Father does by us, who is not extreme to mark iniquities.

4. He grudged him the kindness his father showed him: *Thou hast killed for him the fatted calf,* as if he were such a son as should be. Note, It is a wrong thing to envy penitents the grace of God, and to have our eye evil because his is good: we must not envy them their pardon, peace, and comfort, no, nor any gift God bestows on them, which makes them eminently acceptable or useful. Paul, before his conversion, had been a prodigal; yet, when, after his conversion he received greater measures of grace, and more honor than the other apostles, they who were the elder brethren, who had been serving Christ when he was persecuting Him, and had not transgressed at any time his commandments, did not envy him his visions and revelations, nor his more extensive usefulness, but glorified God in him; which ought to be an example to us, as the reverse of this elder brother.

(2.) Let us now see how favorable and friendly his father was to him, when he was thus sour and ill-humored; this is as surprising as the former. Methinks the mercy and grace of God in Christ shine almost as bright, in his tender and gentle bearing with peevish saints, represented by the elder brother here, as before, in his reception of prodigal sinners on their repentance, represented by the younger brother. The disciples of Christ themselves had many infirmities, and were men subject to like passions as others, yet Christ bore with them, as a nurse with her children; see 1 Thess. 2:7.

[1.] When he would not come in, his father came out, and entreated him, accosted him mildly, and desired him to come in. He might justly have shut the doors against him, and sent him to seek a lodging where he could find it; but no, as he went to meet the younger son, so now he goes to court the elder. did not send a servant, but went himself. Now, 1st. This is designed to represent the goodness of God; how strangely gentle and winning He has been toward those that were strangely forward and provoking. He reasoned with Cain; *Why art thou wrath?* He bare Israel's manners in the wilderness, Acts 13:18. How mildly did God reason with Elijah, when he was on the fret, (1 Kings 19:4-6,) and especially with Jonah, who was disquieted at the repentance of Nineveh, and the mercy showed it, as the elder brother here; and those questions, *Dost thou well to be angry;* and, *Should not I spare Nineveh?* are not unlike these expostulations of the father with the elder brother here. 2dly. It is to teach all superiors to be mild and gentle with their inferiors, even when in fault, and passionately justifying themselves: even in that case, let fathers not provoke their children to more wrath, let masters forbear threatening, and both show all meekness.

[2.] His father assured him that the kind entertainment he gave his younger brother, was neither any reflection on him, nor should be any prejudice to him, v. 31. The reception of him is no rejection of thee, nor what is laid out on him, any sensible diminution of what I design for thee; thou shalt still remain entitled to the double portion; all that I have is thine, by an indefeasible title. If he had not given him a kid, to make merry with his friends, he had eaten bread at his table continually; and it is better to be happy with our Father in heaven, than merry with any friend we have in this world. Note, 1st. It is the unspeakable happiness

(31.) *All that I have is thine.* Rosenmueller explains, *Thou art my heir, and therefore "master of all."* Kuinoel, however, lays down the following sense: "Thou mayest use mine as thy own. For he had every thing in common with his father, lived in the family—on his father's property."

(32.) *This thy brother.* There is a lovely opposition between '5361.

this and the 30th verse; the elder son had there indecently said, *This thy son;* and the father in his reply tenderly says, *This thy brother.* And it is a moving intimation, that the best of men ought to look on the most abandoned sinners, as, in some respects, their brethren still; and especially when there appears any inclination to return.

DONBRIDGE.

CHAP. XVI.

The parable of the unjust steward; and the instructions deduced from it. 1-13. Jesus reproves the hypocrisy of the Pharisees, who deride Him; and speaks of the introduction of the Gospel, 14-18. The parable of the rich man and Lazarus, 19-31.

AND he said also unto his disciples, There was a certain rich man which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods.

2 And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.

^a Matt. 18:23-24, 25:14, &c. ^b 8:3. 12:42. Gen. 15:2. 45:19. 1 Chr. 21:2. 1 Cor. 4:1, 2. Tit. 1:7. 1 Pet. 4:10. ^c 19: 13:13-30. 19:30. Prov. 18:9. Hos. 2:8. Jam. 4:3. ^d Gen. 39-41. 4:9, 10. 18:20, 21. 1 Sam. 2:25, 24. 1 Cor. 1:11. 1 Tim. 5:24. ^e Ec. 11:9, 10. 12:14. Matt. 12:36. Rom. 14:12. 1 Cor. 4:5. 2 Cor. 5:10. 1 Pet. 4:5. Rev. 20:12. ^f 12:20. 19:21-26.

and his father put him in mind that he was his brother; *This thy brother.*

Note, A good man, though he have not such command of himself at all times, as to keep his temper, yet will, with the grace of God, recover his temper; though he fall, yet shall he not be utterly cast down. But as for the scribes and Pharisees, for whose conviction it was primarily intended, for aught that appears, they continued the same disaffection to the sinners of the Gentiles, and to the Gospel of Christ because it was preached to them.

CHAP. XVI. v. 1-18. The scope of Christ's discourse in this chapter is, to awaken and quicken us all, so to use this world as not to abuse it; so to manage all our possessions and enjoyments here, as that they may make for us, and not against us, in the other world; I. If we do good with them; and lay out what we have in works of piety and charity, we shall reap the benefit of it in the world to come; and this He shows in the parable of the unjust steward. II. If instead of doing good with them, we make them the food and fuel of our lusts, and deny relief to the poor, we shall certainly perish eternally, and the things of this world, which were thus abused, will but add to our misery and torment. This He shows in the other parable of the rich man and Lazarus, which has likewise a further reach, to awaken us all to take the warning given us by the written Word, and not to expect immediate messages from the other world.

We mistake, if we imagine that the design of the Gospel is, merely to amuse us with notions. No, it is intended to engage and quicken us to the practice of Christian duties, and, as much as any one thing, to the duty of beneficence, or of doing good to those who stand in need of any thing that either we have, or can do for them. To this our Savior is here pressing us, by reminding us that we are but stewards of the manifold grace of God; and since we have been

of all the children of God, who keep close to their Father's house, that they are, and shall be, ever with Him; they are so in this world by faith, they shall be so in the other world by fruition, and all that He has, is theirs; for if children, then heirs, Rom. 8: 17. 2dly, Therefore we ought not to envy others God's grace, because we shall have never the less for their sharing in it. If we be true believers, all that God is, and all that He has, is ours; and if others come to be true believers, all is theirs too, and yet we have not the less; as they that walk in the light and warmth of the sun, have all the benefit they can have by it, and yet not the less for others, having as much: for Christ in his church is like, as they say of the soul in the body, the whole in the whole, and yet the whole in each part.

[3.] His father gave him a good reason for this uncommon joy in the family, v. 32. He might have insisted on his own authority; but it does not become even those that have authority, to be vouching and appealing to it on every occasion, it makes it cheap and common; it is better to give a convincing reason, as the father does here. Any family would be much more transported with joy at the raising of a dead child to life, yea, or at the recovery of a child from sickness that was adjudged mortal, than for the continued life and health of many children. Note, God will be justified when He speaks, and all flesh shall, sooner or later, be silent before Him. We do not find any reply that the elder brother made to what his father said, which intimates that he was entirely satisfied, and acquiesced in his father's will, and was well reconciled to his prodigal brother; and his father put him in mind that he was his brother; *This thy brother.*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 25-32. How hateful that disposition in a sinner, which leads him to repine at an event, that fills all heaven with rejoicing! which excites him to despise and abhor those, for whom the Savior shed his precious blood, who are the objects of the Father's special choice, and the temples of the Holy Spirit! and which induces a worm on earth to disdain him as a brother, whom the God of heaven has numbered among his children. (Acts 9: 17-22, p. 17).—Where this disposition is habitual and allowed, it far more than counterbalances all external decency of conduct: and he who boasts of his obedience, complains of the Lord's dealings with him, grudges the favor shown to return ag prodigals, and disdains their company; and who quarrels with the Gospel itself, or with those who preach it, for giving them encouragement: this man is of a more hateful disposition, than the profligates whom he abhors and as far from the spirit of Christ, and the temper of angels, as the most abandoned debauchee on earth; however moral he may be, and exact in forms of godliness. But a degree of the same temper may be found in men of a better character. Even believers are sometimes apt to limit the mercies of God, and to give up, as hopeless, those who are abandoned to crimes, from which they themselves have been graciously preserved. Many who have been long preserved from any remarkable inconsistency of conduct, seem to have little tenderness for those who have been foiled by temptation, even when they give clear evidence of deep repentance. Others look with suspicion on those

unfaithful, and forfeit the favor of our Lord, is our wisdom to think how we may, some way, make what we have in the world turn to a good account. Parables must not be forced beyond their primary intention, and therefore we must not hence infer, that any one can befriend us if we lie under the displeasure of our Lord; but that, in general, we must so lay out what we have, in works of piety and charity, as that we may meet it again with comfort, on the other side death and the grave. If we would act wisely, we must be as diligent and industrious to employ our riches in the acts of piety and charity, in order to promote our future and eternal welfare, as worldly men are in laying them out to the greatest temporal profit, in making to themselves friends with them, and securing other secular interests. So Dr. [S.] Clarke.

Now let us consider,

I. The parable itself, in which all the children of men are represented as stewards—and we are but stewards; whatever we have, the property of it is God's, we have only the use of it, and that according to the direction of our great Lord, and for his honor. Rabbi Kimchi, quoted by Lightfoot, saith, 'This world is a house; heaven, the roof; the stars, the lights; the earth with its fruits, a table spread; the Master of the house is the holy and blessed God; man is the steward, into whose hands the goods of this house are delivered; if he behave himself well, he shall find favor in the eyes of his Lord; if not, he shall be turned out of his stewardship.'

Now, 1. Here is the dishonesty of this steward. He embezzled and misapplied his lord's goods, or through carelessness suffered them to be lost and damaged, and for this was accused to his lord, v. 1. We are all liable to the same charge; not having made a due improvement of what God has intrusted us with, but perverted his purpose. And that we may not be for this judged of our Lord, it concerns us to judge ourselves.

2. His discharge, v. 2. His lord speaks as one sorry to find himself disappointed in him, and under a necessity of dismissing him from his service: it troubles him to hear it, but the steward cannot deny it, and therefore there is no remedy, he must make up his accounts, and be gone in a little time. Now this is designed to teach us, (1.) That we must all shortly be discharged from our stewardship in this world. Death will come, and deprive us of the abilities and opportunities we now have of doing good, and others will come in our places, and have the same. (2.) That our discharge from our stewardship at death, is just, and what we have deserved, having wasted our Lord's goods, and thereby forfeited our trust. (3.) That when our stewardship is taken from us, we must give an account of it to our Lord; after death the judgment; of which, both our discharge and

of their brethren, however deep their repentance, or however unexceptionable their conduct, who have been reclaimed from very immoral practices; and sometimes they are even surprised or offended, to see them assured of their acceptance, and rejoicing in the Lord! In these, and numberless other ways, the remains of the Pharisee may be discerned; and every feature of his countenance is most hateful, in one who must be saved by unmerited grace, or else perish forevermore. If a man be a true Christian, his present privileges and future inheritance will not be diminished, by the admission of the lowest profligates to the same felicity: but the prevalence of self-preference, on any ground whatever; of contempt, of envy, and such other malignant tempers, gives proportionable ground to suspect, that a man is a stranger to the true grace of God.—But how adorable is the condescension of the Lord, in thus continuing to reason the case with perverse worms of the earth, and in beseeching them to accept the blessings of his salvation! Happy will it be for those, who are at length won over, thankfully to accept of his invitation, and to come to the feast and rejoicing, of which repenting prodigals participate, and in which adoring angels join! But as for those, who persist in their enmity and contempt, their hoastings will speedily be silenced, and their portion allotted them 'with the devil and his angels'; with whom alone they accord in *repining*, when 'those that were dead are alive again, and those who were lost are found.'

Scott.

[537]

3 Then the steward said within himself,

'What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.'

4 I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.

5 So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord?

6 And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty.

7 Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.

8 And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this

world, we are fairly warned, and ought frequently to think.

3. His *after-wisdom*. Now he began to consider, *What shall I do?* v. 3. He would have done well to have considered that before; but it is better to *consider* late than never. Note, Since we have all received notice that we must shortly be turned out of our stewardship, we are concerned to consider what we shall do then.

(1.) He knows that he is not industrious enough to get his living by work; '*I cannot dig*'. But why? The truth is, he is *lazy*; his cannot is a *will not*; not a natural, but a moral disability. He cannot dig, for he was never used to it! Now this intimates that we cannot get a livelihood for our souls by any labor for this world; nor, indeed, can do any thing to purpose for our souls by any ability of our own.

(2.) He knows that he is not humble enough to get his bread by begging; *To beg I am ashamed*. This was the language of his pride, as the former of his slothfulness; those whom God, in his providence, has disabled to help themselves, should not be ashamed to ask relief of others. This steward had more reason to be ashamed of his cheating his master, than of begging his bread.

(3.) He therefore determines to make friends of his lord's debtors, or tenants that were behind with their rent, and had given notes for it; (v. 4.) '*I am resolved what to do*. I am acquainted with my lord's tenants; now I will do them one more good turn, which will so oblige them, that they will bid me welcome to their houses, so long as I live, at least till I can better dispose of myself.' So now he would make them his friends, by striking off a considerable part of their debt to his lord, and giving it in his accounts so much less than it was. Accordingly, he sent for one, who owed his lord a hundred measures of oil; (in that commodity he paid his rent); and reduced his debt one half, v. 6. Observe, He was in haste to have it done; '*Sit down quickly*, and do it, lest we be taken treacherous, and suspected.' He took another, who owed his lord a hundred measures of wheat, and from his bill he cut off a fifth part; (v. 7.) probably, he did the like by others, abating more or less, according as he expected kindness from them. See here what uncertain things our worldly possessions are; they are most so to those who have most of them, who devolve on others the care of them, and so put it in their power to cheat them. See also what treachery there is, even among those in whom trust is reposed. How hard is it to find one that can be confided in! Let God be true, but every man a liar. Though this steward is turned out for dealing dishonestly, yet still he does so. So rare is it for men to mend of a fault, though they smart for it.

4. The approbation of this, v. 8. It may be that servant, who, though he could not but be angry at his knavery, yet was pleased with his ingenuity and policy for himself; but, taking it so, the latter part of the verse must be the words of our Lord, and therefore I think the whole is meant of him. Christ did, as it were, say, 'Now commend me to such a man as this, that knows how to do well for himself, how to improve a present opportunity, and how to provide for a future necessity.' He does not commend him because he had done *falsely* to his master, but because he had done *wisely* for himself.

Now, this forecast of his, for a comfortable subsistence in this world, shames our improvidence for another world; *The children of this world*, who choose and save their portions in it, are wiser for their generation, act more con-

siderately, and better consult their worldly interest, than the children of light, who enjoy the Gospel, in their generation, that is, in the concerns of their souls and eternity. Note, (1.) The wisdom of worldly people in the concerns of this world, is to be imitated by us in the concerns of our souls: it is their principle to improve their opportunities; to do that first, which is most needful; to trust the faithful, and not the false. O that we were thus wise in our spiritual affairs! (2.) The children of light are commonly outdone by the children of this world. Not that the children of this world are truly wise, it is only in their generation; but in that they are wiser than the children of light in theirs: for though we are told that we must shortly be turned out of our stewardship, yet we live as if we were to be here always, not solicitous, as this steward was, to provide for hereafter; though, as children of the light, that light to which life and immortality are brought by the Gospel, we cannot but see another world before us, yet we do not prepare for it, as we should.

II. The application of this parable, and the inferences drawn from it, v. 9. Observe,

1. What our Lord here exhorts us to; to provide for our comfortable reception to the happiness of another world, by making good use of our possessions and enjoyments in this world. It is the wisdom of the men of this world so to manage their money, as that they may have the benefit of it hereafter, and not for the present only; therefore they put it out to interest, buy land with it, put it into this or the other fund. Now we should learn of them to make use of our money, so as that we may be the better for it hereafter in another world; so cast it upon the waters, as that we may find it again after many days, Eccl. 11: 1. And in our case, though whatever we have is our Lord's goods, yet, as long as we dispose of them among our Lord's tenants and for their advantage, it is so far from being a wrong to our Lord, that it is reckoned duty to Him, as well as policy for ourselves.

Note, (1.) The things of this world are the mammon of unrighteousness, or the false mammon; not only because often got by fraud and unrighteousness, but because those who trust to it for satisfaction and happiness, will certainly be deceived; for riches are perishing things, and will disappoint those that raise their expectations from them. (2.) Though this mammon of unrighteousness is not to be trusted to for happiness, yet it may and must be made use of in subserviency to our pursuit of that which is our happiness. Though we cannot find true satisfaction in it, yet we may make to ourselves friends with it, not by way of purchase or merit, but recommendation; so we may make God and Christ our friends, the good angels and saints our friends, and the poor our friends; and it is a desirable thing to be befriended in the account and state to come. (3.) At death we must all fail. Death eclipses us. A tradesman is said to fail, when he becomes a bankrupt; we must all thus fail shortly; death shuts up the shop, seals up the hand. Our comforts and enjoyments on earth will all fail us; flesh and heart fail. (4.) It ought to be our great concern to make it sure to ourselves, that, when we fail at death, we may be received into everlasting habitations in heaven.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVI. v. 6. Bill.] Obligation, bond. 'These bonds, it seems, were kept in the hands of the steward; and of this, says Grotius, we have instances in the Roman law.'

BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 8.

The lord commended, &c.] Not for his *iniquity*, but for his *policy*; in this respect alone is it proposed for our imitation; for our Lord addeth, that 'the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.' (Morg. Ref. v. 1.—Note, Eph. 5: 8—14.) In the choice of their object, they are emphatically foolish; but in the selection of means, in assiduity and perseverance, in subordinating every other concern to the favorite pursuit, and rendering every thing subservient to it; in politic contrivances to prevent disappointment, to get over untoward circumstances, and to elude advantages from them; in these and various other particulars, they are exceedingly 'wise in their generation;' yea, far wiser even than real believers, who are not so sincerely given up to the pursuit of their great object, nor so active, earnest, and persevering in the choice and use of means, in order to

the attainment of it. Much more, then, are they wiser than men in general are about their religious concerns; and than professed Christians are in improving their advantages.—'The Lord seems in this place to teach us, that the good things pertaining to this present life were granted to us by God; not that we should, as proprietors, spend them according to our own will; but that we should dispose of them, as intrusted to us by the Lord, in entire faithfulness. The proper way of averting this doom (of unfaithfulness), procuring the continuance of our stewardship, and obtaining the means of greater beneficence, is, to make amends to the poor, by a charitable use of them. Thus it will come to pass, that God, perceiving that we more properly use those perishing things, will count us worthy of more valuable endowments.' Beza. The name annexed to this quotation, is a sufficient pledge that nothing inconsistent with the doctrines of salvation by grace, and justification by faith alone, was intended. But it proves, that the first reformers considered many practical instructions, and even a kind of language in inculcating them, consistent with these doctrines, of which many at present would scarcely admit. *Psalm*

world are 'in their generation wiser than the children of light.'

[Practical Observations.]

9 And I say unto you, 'Make to yourselves friends' of the 'mammon of unrighteousness: that, when ye fail they may receive you 'into everlasting habitations.

10 He that is 'faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.

11 If therefore ye have not been faithful 'in the unrighteous

The habitations in heaven are everlasting; not made with hands, but eternal, 2 Cor. 5: 1. Christ is gone before, to prepare a place for those that are his, and is there ready to receive them; and the poor saints, that are gone before to glory, will receive those that in this world distributed to their necessities. (5.) This is a good reason why we should use what we have in the world for the honor of God, and the good of our brethren, that thus we may with them lay up in store a good bond, or security, a good foundation for the time to come, for eternity. See 1 Tim. 6: 17-19, which explains this here.

2. With what arguments he presses this exhortation, he abounds in works of piety and charity.

(1.) If we do not make a right use of the gifts of God's providence, how can we expect those present and future comforts, which are the gifts of his spiritual grace? Our Savior here compares these, and shows that though our faithful use of the things of this world cannot be thought to merit any favor at the hand of God, yet our unfaithfulness in the use of them may be justly reckoned a forfeiture of that grace necessary to bring us to glory, v. 10-12.

[1.] The riches of this world are the less; grace and glory, the greater. Now if we be unfaithful in the less, if we use the things in this world to other purposes, than those for which they were given us, it may justly be feared that we shall be so in the gifts of God's grace, that we shall receive them also in vain, and therefore they will be denied us, v. 10. He that serves God, and does good, with his money, will serve God, and do good, with the more noble and valuable talents of wisdom and grace, and spiritual gifts, and the earnest of

heaven; but he that buries the one talent of this world's wealth, will never improve the five talents of spiritual riches. God withhold his grace from covetous, worldly people more than we are aware of.

[2.] The riches of this world are deceitful and uncertain, the unrighteous mammon, hastening from us apace, of which, if we will, make any advantage, we must bestir ourselves quickly; but if we do not, how can we expect to be intrusted with spiritual riches, which are the only true riches? v. 11. Let us be convinced of this, that those are truly rich, and very rich who are rich in faith, and rich toward God, rich in Christ, in the promises, and in the earnest of heaven; and therefore let us lay up our treasure in them, expect our portion from them, and mind them in the first place, the kingdom of God, and the righteousness thereof, and then, if other things be aided to us, use them with a spiritual reference; so that, by using them well, we may take the faster hold of the true riches, and be qualified to receive yet more grace from God; for God giveth to a man that is good in his sight, a free-hearted, charitable man, wisdom, and knowledge, and joy; (Eccl. 2: 26.) that is, to a man that is faithful in the unrighteous mammon. He gives the true riches.

[3.] The riches of this world are another man's; not our own, foreign to the soul, its nature and interest; not our own, for they are God's, his title to them is prior and superior to ours; the property remains in Him, we are but usufructuaries; they are another man's; we have them from others, use them for others, and must shortly leave them to others, we know not who. But spiritual and eternal riches are our own, (they enter into the soul that becomes possessed of them,) and inseparably; they are a

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-8. All men are only stewards to the great Lord of all: yet alas! very few duly consider this; and numbers are continually 'accused to Him of having wasted his goods.' The Lord is also frequently calling on them, and reminding them that ere long, 'they must give account of their stewardship, and be no longer stewards.' If not prepared for that solemn event, the consequences will be awful beyond conception: we should therefore now seriously inquire, What shall we do, that when 'put out of our stewardship,' we may be received into a better habitation? The Lord Himself has shown us what we should do: and though we need the prudent foresight, yet we have no occasion for the dishonest policy, of the unjust steward; for the way of acceptance and of duty are plainly marked out for us.—The believer, though he knows that he can do nothing 'himself,' will yet 'work out his salvation with fear and trembling,' depending on God alone, 'for it is He that worketh in us to will and do, of his good pleasure.' The true believer also shows his faith in Christ by love to his brethren. Thus he attains 'a good hope through grace,' that 'everlasting mansions' are prepared for him, 'when flesh and heart shall fail.' But alas! in this respect, as well as in very many other in-

stances, 'the children of this world are wiser in their generation, than the children of light;' and though the security and advantage to a man's present comfort, to his family, and in respect of eternity, of communicating gladly and largely to the relief of the necessitous, be demonstrable; yet how scantily do most professed Christians 'lend to the Lord,' in comparison of the sums wasted in needless embellishments, and indulgence, and in feasting the rich! (14: 12-14.) It would be well, if 'the children of light' would, on scriptural principles, learn wisdom from the men of the world: and, having chosen their object, pursue it as singly and constantly, as they do their worthless interests. In this case, what a privilege would wealth be! How much good might be done with it! How much honor would redound to the Gospel! How many thanksgivings would be rendered to the Lord! and how many prayers, by those whose souls and bodies were benefited, for the felicity of their benefactors! (2 Cor. 9: 8-15.) And with what satisfaction might 'the faithful steward' expect the hour of dissolution, or the coming of his Lord; and anticipate the joy of being then welcomed by such friends to the regions of perfect felicity!

SCOTT.

Verses 9-13.

The mammon of unrighteousness is those worldly riches which men hoard, as if they worshipped a deity called *Mammon*; and in setting, keeping, or spending of which, they commit all kind of unrighteousness. (Marg. and Marg. Ref. u. x.—Matt. 6: 24. 1 Tim. 6: 6-10, v. 9, 10.) Some indeed interpret the expression, of the deceitfulness of riches, which impose on those who expect happiness from them; and the clause, 'the Mammon of unrighteousness,' afterwards called, 'the unrighteous Mammon,' is exactly similar to that before rendered 'the unjust steward,' which is literally, 'the steward of unrighteousness.' The disciples of Christ, however, are directed to use riches, in 'making to themselves friends;' that is, to expend them in acts of piety and charity, that many, being benefited by them, may pray for blessings on them as their benefactors. This alludes to the steward's failing of his former resources, by being discharged from his place, yet, 'having made himself friends,' by his use of his master's property, 'he was received into their houses.' Thus, when the believer 'shall fail,' and be removed from his stewardship by death, those whom he has made his friends, by his charitable assistance, 'will receive him into everlasting habitations.' Not that this will in any measure merit that blessed recompense, or that the poor whom he has relieved can have the disposal of it; or that all whom he has relieved were pious persons, or all removed to heaven; but, as the cries of the oppressed and neglected poor will testify against unfaithful stewards to their condemnation, so the prayers of widows and orphans, for their pious benefactors, will testify for them, that they were faithful; and such believers who have died before them, may be considered as standing ready to welcome their benefactors to their everlasting habitations, when they quit this world. And if any man were 'faithful in a very little,' and consulted the will and honor of his Lord in the use of it, he would as certainly be accepted and rewarded, as if much had been committed to him; and the same disposer of mind would also render him faithful,

if he should afterwards receive more. On the other hand, he who was unjust in the least, spending even small sums on his own vanity and indulgence, or wasting them through improvidence, and thus robbing God and the poor, would as certainly be condemned, as if he had been an unfaithful steward, in abusing a larger property; and the same temper of mind would render him unjust in much, if it were committed to him. Indeed, if men were unfaithful in 'the unrighteous mammon, who would commit to their trust the true riches?' 'The true riches' signify those blessings, which ennoble and satisfy the soul forever. Faith gives the sinner a title to these riches, and grace is the earnest of them and meetness for them; but faith and grace always render a man proportionably 'faithful in the unrighteous mammon.' If, therefore, a man spend his riches on himself, or hoard them in avarice, what evidence can he have that he is an heir of God through Christ? Or what reason to expect, that God will give him that eternal felicity? The verse indeed may signify, that they who were not faithful, as stewards of this world's riches, were improper persons to be made 'stewards of the mysteries of God,' to whom are committed the true riches, that they 'may make many rich.' If, however, any persons were unfaithful in the things intrusted to them for a time, and which an account must be rendered, how could they expect the Lord to give them at last an inheritance to be their own forever, by an unalienable tenure? (Marg. Ref. a-h.) This application of the parable our Lord closed by repeating a solemn warning, which has already been considered. (Matt. 6: 24.) 'At least he will attend to the one, and neglect the other.' Campbell.

(9.) When ye fail.—After your discharge. The word fail is obscure and indefinite; discharge not only bears a manifest reference to the act whereby a trustee is divested of his trust, but is also strictly applicable to our removal out of this world, which is the circumstance referred to.

C. MOORELL.

mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?

12 And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?

13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

14 ¶ And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things; and they derided him.

15 And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men, but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men, is abomination in the sight of God.

16 The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and

good part that will never be taken away from us. If we make Christ our own, the promises our own, and heaven our own, we have what we may truly call our own. But how can we expect God should enrich us with these, if we do not serve Him with our worldly possessions, of which we are but stewards?

(2.) We have no other way to prove ourselves the servants of God, but to give up ourselves so entirely to his service, as to make mammon, that is, all our worldly gain, serviceable to us in it; v. 13. If a man will love the world, and hold to that, it cannot be but he will hate God, and despise Him. He will make all his pretensions of religion truckle to his secular interests and designs, and the things of God shall be made to help him in serving and seeking the world; but, on the other hand, if a man will love God, and adhere to Him, he will comparatively hate the world, (whenever God and the world come in competition,) and despise it, and make all his business and success in the world some way or other conducive to his furtherance in the business of religion, serving God and working out his salvation. The matter is here laid plainly before us; he cannot serve God and mammon. So divided are their interests, their services can never be compounded. If therefore we be determined to serve God, we must disclaim and abjure the service of the world.

3. What entertainment Christ's doctrine met with among the Pharisees, and what rebuke He gave them.

(1.) They wickedly ridiculed Him, v. 14. Let us consider this, 1st, As their sin, and the fruit of covetousness, their reigning sin. Note, Many make a great profession of religion, have much knowledge, and abound in exercises of devotion, yet are ruined by love of the world; nor does anything harden the heart more against the word of Christ. These covetous Pharisees could not bear to have that touched, which was their Delilah, their darling lust; for this they derided Him: an expression of the utmost scorn; the Word of the Lord was to them a reproach, Jer. 6: 10. They laughed at Him for going so contrary to the opinion and way of the world, for endeavoring to recover them from a sin they were resolved to hold fast. Note, It is common for those to make a jest of the Word of God, who are resolved not to be ruled by it; but they will find at last it cannot be turned off so. 2dly, As his suffering. Our Lord endured not only the contradiction of sinners, but their contempt; they had Him in derision all the day. He that spake as never man spake, was bantered and ridiculed, that his faithful ministers, whose preaching is unjustly derided, may not be disheartened at it. It is no disgrace to a man, to be laughed at, but to deserve to be laughed at. Christ's apostles were mocked, and no wonder; the disciple is not greater than his Lord.

(2.) He justly reproved them; not for deriding Him, (He knew how to despise the shame,) but for deceiving themselves with the show of piety, while strangers to the power of it, v. 15. Here is,

[1.] Their specious nay, splendid outside. 1st, They justified themselves before men; denied whatever ill was laid to their charge, even by Christ Himself. They claimed to be

looked upon as men of singular sanctity and devotion, and justified themselves in that claim, 'Ye are they that make it your business to court the opinion of men, and, right or wrong, will justify yourselves before the world; you are notorious for this.' 2dly, They were highly esteemed among men; men not only acquitted but applauded them, and had them in veneration, not only as good men, but as the best of men. Their sentiments were esteemed as oracles, their directions as laws, their practices as inviolable prescriptions.

[2.] Their odious inside, which was under the eye of God. Note, 1st. It is folly to justify ourselves before men, and to think it enough, that men know no ill of us; for God, who knows our hearts, knows that ill of us, no one else can. This ought to check our value for, and confidence in ourselves, that God knows our hearts, and how much deceit is there. 2dly, It is folly to judge of persons and things by the opinion of men, and to go down with the stream of vulgar estimate; for that which is highly esteemed among men, who judge according to outward appearance, is perhaps an abomination in the sight of God, who sees things as they are, and whose judgment, we are sure, is according to truth. On the contrary, there are those whom men despise and condemn, who yet are accepted and approved of God, 2 Cor. 10: 18.

(3.) He turned from them to the publicans and sinners, as more likely to be wrought upon, v. 16. 'The Old-Testament dispensation was confined to you Jews, and you seemed to have the monopoly of righteousness and salvation; with this you are puffed up, and this gains you esteem among men, that you are students in the law and prophets; but since John, the kingdom of God is preached; a New-Testament dispensation, which values men not at all for their being doctors of the law; a kingdom into which every man, Gentile, as well as Jew, presses; and no man thinks himself bound to let his betters go in before him, or to stay till the rulers and the Pharisees have led the way. It is not so much a political, national constitution as the Jewish economy was, when salvation was of the Jews; but is made a particular, personal concern, and therefore every man that is convinced he has a soul to save, and an eternity to provide for, thrusts to get in, lest he should come short by trifling and complimenting.' Some give this sense of it; they derided Christ for speaking in contempt of riches, for, thought they, were there not many promises of riches and other temporal good things in the law and the prophets? And were not many of the best of God's servants very rich, as Abraham and David? 'True,' saith Christ, 'but now that the kingdom of God is begun to be preached, things take a new turn; now, blessed are the poor, the mourners, and the persecuted.' The Pharisees allowed the people in a cheap, easy, formal religion; 'But,' saith Christ, 'now that the Gospel is preached, the eyes of the people are opened, and as they cannot now have that veneration for the Pharisees they had, so they cannot content themselves with such indifference to religion as they have been trained up in, but press with holy violence into the kingdom of God.' Note, That they would go to heaven, must

Or, riches.
J 12:35. 18:22. Prov. 8:18, 19. Eph. 1:9. Jam. 2:5. Rev. 3:18.
E 19:13-26. 1 Chr 29:14-16. Job 1:3. Ec. 10:15. 29:11. Hos 2:8, 9. Matt. 25:14-29.
10:42. Col 3:24. 1 Pet. 1:4, 5.
E 9:50. 11:23. 1 Jeth. 24:15. Matt. 4:10. 9:24. Rom. 6:16-22. 8:5-8. Jam. 4:4. 1 John 2:15, 16.
14:26.
J 12:15. 20:47. Is. 56:11. Jer. 6:13. 8:10. Ez. 22:25-29. 33:31. Matt. 23:14.
E 8:53. 23:35. Ps. 35:15, 16. 119:51. Is. 53:3. Jer. 20:7, 9. Heb. 11:31. 12:2, 3.
J 10:29. 11:39, 40. 18:11, 12, 21. 20: 20, 47. Prov. 20:8. Matt. 9:2, 5, 16. 23:35-37. Rom. 5:20. Jam. 2: 21-25.
m 1 Sam. 18:7. 1 Chr. 29:17. 2 Chr. 6:30. Ps. 7:9. 139:1, 2. Jer. 17:10. John 2:25. 21:17. Acts 1:28. 15:8. 1 Cor. 4:5. Rev. 2:23.
E Ps. 10:6. 49:13, 18. Prov. 16:5. Is. 10:1-14. Am. 5:21, 22. Mal. 3:15. 1 Pet. 2:4. 5:5.
E 29:31. 1 Cor. 11:19-14. John 1:45. Acts 3:19, 24, 25.
E 9:2. 10:9, 11. Matt. 3:2. 4:17. 10:7. Mark 1:14.
J 7:26-29. Matt. 21:32. Mark 1:45. John 11:48. 12:19.

Verbs 14, 15.

The Pharisees were addicted to covetousness, in proportion as they desired to be thought exempt from licentiousness. (1, 2. Matt. 5: 27, 28, 31, 32.) When, therefore, they heard our Lord discourse in this manner on the use of riches, they treated his instructions with the utmost derision and contempt; sneering at Him, 'as a visionary, who did not understand human life, or only appeared to despise the world, because (as they supposed) it was out of his reach.' Doddridge. But He calmly replied to their disdain, that they indeed 'justified themselves' by various plausible pretences, and preserved a fair appearance before men; but 'God knew their hearts,' which were full of hypocrisy, pride, and wickedness; and, though their forms, austerities, superstitions and traditions were highly esteemed 'among men,' as if they were of great excellency; yet they were an 'abomination in the sight of God.' This is also the case with a variety of endowments, dispositions, and achievements, which men 'highly esteem,' but which God abhors: such, for instance, is the thirst for glory, the ambition of conquest, the desire of revenge, called a quick sense of honor; the disposition to grasp after riches as the grand object, if not attended with gross injustice or excessive penuriousness; and a lavish generosity, though not directed to any valuable purpose. In these and innumerable other instances God abhors what man highly esteems. SCOTT.

Verbs 16-18.

The Pharisees were very zealous for the ceremonial law, as well as for their own traditions; and they opposed Christ, supposing that his doctrine was contrary to it; but He intimated to them, that a more spiritual dispensation was about to be introduced. (Marg. Ref. o-q. —Matt. 11: 12-15.) They ought not, however, to suppose, that this new dispensation would interfere with the law of Moses. (Marg. Ref. r, s. —Matt. 5: 17-20.) The ceremonial law would not fail of being accomplished, in that great Antitype which it prefigured; and the moral law would be magnified by his obedience unto death, and established in its full authority by his religion, as well as vindicated from corrupt interpretations. (Note, Rom. 3: 29-31, v. 31.) But what they contended for as 'the law,' was frequently a perversion of it. This our Lord showed in one instance, which has been before considered; (Marg. Ref. t. —Matt. 5: 31, 32. 19: 3-9. Mark 10: 2-12.) for in this matter the real meaning of the moral law was contrary to the doctrine, which they grounded on a misinterpretation of a judicial regulation, a 'permission for the hardness of their heart.' So that, while they imposed on the people by an apparent zeal for the law, they were, in fact, supplanting its authority, and perverting its meaning by their traditions.

every man presseth into it.

17 And 'it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, * than one tittle of the law to fail.

18 Whosoever 'putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.

[Practical Observations.]

19 ¶ There was a certain 'rich man, which was * clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day.

20 And there was 'a certain beggar, named 'Lazarus, which 'was laid at his gate, ° full of sores,

21:38. Ps. 102:25-27. Is. 51:8. Matt. 5:18. 2 Pet. 3:10. Rev. 20:11. 21:44.

Is. 40:8. Rom. 3:31. 1 Pet. 1:25.

1 Matt. 5:32. 19:9. Mark 10:11, 12.

1 Cor. 7:4, 10-12. 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

12:18-21. 18:24-25. Jam. 5:1-5.

x. 1:13. Job 21:11-15. Ps. 73:3-7. Ec. 16:49. Am. 6:4-6. Rev. 17:18.

17:18. 22:25. Esth. 8:15. Ec. 13:13.

27:7. Mark 15:17, 20.

18:35-43. 1 Sam. 2:8. Jam. 1:9.

2:5.

a John 11:1.

b Acts 9:2.

c 21. Job 27:8. Ps. 34:18. 73:14.

Is. 1:9. Jer. 8:22.

ed by similitudes borrowed from worldly things; but here, *spiritual things themselves* are represented in a narrative or description of the different state of good and bad, in this world and the other. We need not call it a history of a particular occurrence, it is *matter of fact*, true every day; that poor godly people, whom men neglect and trample on, die and go to heavenly bliss, made the more pleasant by preceding sorrows; and that rich epicures, who live in luxury, and are unmerciful to the poor, die and go into a state of insupportable torment, the more grievous and terrible, because of their sensual lives; and that there is no relief from their torments. The discourse, indeed, between Abraham and the rich man is only an illustration of the description, to make it the more affecting, like that between God and Satan in the story of Job. Our Savior came to acquaint us with another world, and to show us the reference this world has to that; and here He does it.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9-18. Those who are in lower circumstances should not forget that they too are the Lord's stewards. Something almost all might spare, that is now wasted, with which to prove their faithfulness 'in a little'; and this would insure a gracious recompense, equally with the larger liberalities of our more wealthy brethren. But there are very many other things besides 'the unrighteous mammon,' in which they may prove themselves faithful or unfaithful. Some, being intrusted with a stewardship of the true riches, may in deep poverty be more useful, than those who are intrusted with great worldly riches; and need not aspire to or desire their advantageous situation. (1 Cor. 4:1, 2. 2 Cor. 6:3-10.) But surely they are unfit to be intrusted with 'the true riches,' who are 'unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon.' In vain do men attempt to serve two masters, or to worship God and Mammon: 'if the Lord be God,' let us decidedly serve Him, and devote all we have to his glory. (Josh. 24:14, 15. 1 Kings 18:21.)—When ministers discourse on such topics, the covetous will be sure to deride, if they do not revile them. But they little think how entirely the

take pains, must strive against the stream, must press against the crowd that are going the contrary way.

(4.) Yet still He protests against any design to invalidate the law; v. 17. The moral law is confirmed and ratified, and not one tittle of that fails; the duties enjoined by it are duties still; the sins forbidden by it are sins still. Nay, the precepts of it are explained and enforced by the Gospel, and made to appear more spiritual. The ceremonial law is perfected in the Gospel, and its shades filled up with gospel-colors; not one tittle of that fails, for it is found printed off in the Gospel, where, though the force of it as a law is taken off, yet its figure as a type shines very bright; witness the epistle to the Hebrews. Some things were connived at by the law, for the preventing of greater mischiefs, of which the Gospel has indeed taken away the permission, but without any detriment or disparagement to the law, having thereby only reduced them to the primitive intention of the law, as in the case of divorce, (v. 18.) which we had before, Matt. 5:32. 19:9. Christ will not allow divorces, for his Gospel is intended to strike at the bitter root of men's corrupt appetites and passions, to kill them and pluck them up; and therefore they must not be indulged, for the more they are indulged, the more impetuous and headstrong they grow.

V. 19-31. As the parable of the prodigal son set before us the grace of the Gospel, encouraging us all; so this sets before us the *wrath to come*, and is designed for our awakening! and very fast asleep those are in sin, that will not be awakened by it. The Pharisees made a jest of Christ's sermon against worldliness; here, therefore, He intends to make those mockers serious. The tendency of the Gospel is both to reconcile us to poverty and affliction, and to arm us against temptations to worldliness and sensuality; both of which this parable, by drawing the curtain, and letting us see what will be the end in the other world, goes very far to accomplish.

In Christ's other parables, (except that of the sheep and goats,) spiritual things are represented by similitudes borrowed from worldly things; but here, *spiritual things themselves* are represented in a narrative or description of the different state of good and bad, in this world and the other. We need not call it a history of a particular occurrence, it is *matter of fact*, true every day; that poor godly people, whom men neglect and trample on, die and go to heavenly bliss, made the more pleasant by preceding sorrows; and that rich epicures, who live in luxury, and are unmerciful to the poor, die and go into a state of insupportable torment, the more grievous and terrible, because of their sensual lives; and that there is no relief from their torments. The discourse, indeed, between Abraham and the rich man is only an illustration of the description, to make it the more affecting, like that between God and Satan in the story of Job. Our Savior came to acquaint us with another world, and to show us the reference this world has to that; and here He does it.

In this description, (for so I call it,) observe I. The different condition of a *wicked rich man*, and a *godly poor man*, in this world. We know that, as some of late, so the Jews of old, were ready to make prosperity one of the marks of a true church, a good man, and a favorite of heaven, so that they could hardly have any favorable thoughts of a *poor man*. This mistake Christ, on all occasions, corrects, and here very fully; we have,

1. A wicked man, one that will be forever miserable, in the height of prosperity; (v. 19.) There was a certain *rich man*, from the Latin we commonly call him *Dives*—a rich man; but, as Bp. Tillotson observes, he has no name gives him, as the poor man, because it had been invidious to name any particular rich man in such a description as this, and apt to provoke ill-will. But others observe, that Christ would not do the rich man so much honor as to name him. This rich man, (1.) Was clothed in purple, and fine linen, for pleasure, clean, no doubt, every day. He had purple for state, for that was the wear of princes; whence some conjecture that Christ had an eye to Herod in it. (2.) He fared sumptuously every day. His table was furnished with all the varieties and dainties of nature and art; his side-table richly adorned with plate, his servants, who waited at table, in rich liveries, and the guests at his table, no doubt, such as he thought graced it.

Well, what harm in all this? It is no sin to be rich, to wear purple and fine linen, nor to keep a plentiful table, if a man's estate will afford it. Nor are we told that he got his estate by fraud, oppression, or extortion, no, nor that he was drunk, or made others drunk; but, [1.] Christ would hereby show that a man may have great wealth, and pomp, and pleasure of this world, and yet perish forever under God's wrath and curse. We cannot infer from men's living great, either that God loves them in giving them so much, or that they love God for it; happiness consists not in these things. [2.]

That plenty and pleasure are a very dangerous, and to many a fatal temptation to luxury, sensuality, and forgetfulness of God and another world. This man might have been happy, if he had not had great possessions and enjoyments. [3.] That the indulgence of the body, and the ease and pleasure of that, are the ruin of many a soul. It is true, eating good meat and wearing good clothes are lawful; but it is as true, that it often becomes the food of pride and luxury, and so turns into sin to us. [4.] That feasting ourselves and friends, and, at the same time, forgetting the poor and afflicted, are very provoking to God and damning to the soul. The sin of this rich man was not so much his dress or his diet, but his providing for himself only.

servant of God disregards their contempt and ridicule, and pities their ungodly prosperity. Some indeed of this character are zealous professors of evangelical truth: and if ministers preach against covetousness, or exhort to liberality, they 'justify themselves' by a variety of excuses, and so make the matter out 'before men' as well as they can: but God knows the wickedness of their hearts; and to Him it must be left, when we have reminded them, that 'those things which are highly esteemed among men, are abomination in the sight of God,' as is every thing exalted, self-sufficient, or haughty. Persons of this description are commonly the bitterest enemies to the power of godliness: and while those, who know the worth and the danger of their souls, are pressing through difficulties and temptations into the kingdom of God; they are objecting to the doctrine or exhortations of faithful ministers, and explaining away those Scriptures which run counter to their sins; 'making void the law' of God by their own notions or traditions, and attempting to prejudice better disposed persons against the truth.

SCOTT.

(16.) Every man presseth into it.] 'The intention is manifestly to inform us, not how great the number was of those who entered into the kingdom of God, but what the manner was in which all who entered obtained admission.'

Verse 19.

Purple.] 'This color, which was a medium hue between brown and pure red, was very bright, and very highly esteemed; it was essentially the same with the celebrated Tyrian purple, and was obtained from the blood taken from a vein in the throat of a certain shell-fish.'

JAHN.

Verse 20.

Beggar.] 'In the time of Christ, beggars were found sitting in the streets, at the doors of the rich, at the gates of the temple, and the entrance of synagogues; though there is no reason to suppose that there existed then that class of persons called *vagrant beggars*, found at the present day in the East, and more frequently in Europe. The first express mention of mendicants in the Bible, is in Psalms. See Ps. 109:10. Moses made abundant provision for the poor; but it does not appear that he says any thing in respect to *beggars*.'

JAHN.

21 And ¹desiring to be fed with ²the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table; moreover, the dogs came and licked his sores.

22 And it came to pass, ¹that the beggar died, and ²was carried by the angels into ³Abraham's bosom: ⁴the rich man also died, ⁵and was buried;

23 And ¹in hell he lifted up his eyes, being ²in torments, and ³seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

d 1 Cor. 4:11. 2 Cor. 11:27.
e Matt 15:27. Mark 7:25. John 6:12.
f Job 3:13-19. Is. 57:1,2. Rev. 14:13.
g Ps 91:11,12. Matt 13:33-43. 24: 31. Heb. 2:14.
h Matt. 8:11. John 13:23. 21:20.
i 12:29. Job 21:13,30-32. Ps. 49:6-12. 16-19. 73:18-20. Prov. 14:32. Mark 8:35,37. Jam. 1:11. 1 Pet. 2:24.
k 2 Kings 9:34,35. Ec. 8:10. Is. 14: 18. 22:16.
l Ps. 9:17. 15:10. 49:15. 85:13. Prov. 5:5. 7:27. 9:18. 15:24. Is. 14:9,45. Matt. 5:22,29. 18:9. 23: 33. 1 Cor. 15:56. margin. 2 Pet. 2: 4. Rev. 20:13,14.
m 28. 2:28. Matt. 8:29. Rev. 14:10. 11. 20:10.
n 13:28,29. Matt. 8:11,12.

man. He was poor, but poor in spirit, contentedly poor. He did not lie at the rich man's gate, complaining, and bawling, and making a noise, but modestly desiring to be fed with the crumbs. This miserable man was a good man, in favor with God. Note, It is often the lot of some of the dearest of God's saints to be greatly afflicted in this world, while wicked people prosper, and have abundance; see Ps. 73: 7, 10, 14. Here is a child of wrath and an heir of hell sitting in the house, faring sumptuously; and a child of love and an heir of heaven, lying at the gate, perishing for hunger. And is men's spiritual state to be judged of then by their outward condition? 2dly. The temper of the rich man toward him; we are not told that he abused him, forbid him his gate, or did him any harm, but it is intimated that he had no concern for him. Here was a real object of charity, and a very moving one. A little thing would be a great kindness, and yet he took no cognizance of the case. Note, It is not enough not to oppress and trample on the poor; we shall be found unfaithful stewards of our Lord's goods in the great day, if we do not succor and relieve them. The reason given for the most fearful doom is, *I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat*. I wonder how those rich people who have read the Gospel of Christ, and say that they believe it, can be so unconcerned as they often are, in the necessities and miseries of the poor and afflicted!

2. The usage he had from the dogs; *The dogs came and licked his sores*. The rich man kept a kennel of hounds, it may be, or other dogs, for his diversion, and those were fed to the full, when poor Lazarus could not get enough to keep him alive. Note, It is a great aggravation of the uncharitableness of many rich people, that they bestow that on their fancies and follies, which would supply the necessity, and rejoice the heart, of many a good Christian in distress. Those offend God, nay, put contempt on human nature, that pamper their dogs and horses, and let the families of their poor neighbors starve. Now those dogs came, and licked the sores of poor Lazarus; which may be taken, 1st. As an aggravation of his misery. His sores were bloody, which tempted the dogs to come and lick them, as they did the blood of Naboth and Ahab, 1 Kings 21: 19. And we read of the tongue of the dogs dipped in the blood of enemies, Ps. 68: 23. They attacked him while he was yet alive, as if he had been already dead, and he had not strength himself to keep them off, nor would any of the servants be so civil as to check them. The dogs were like their master, and thought they fared sumptuously when they regaled themselves with human gore. Or, it may be taken, 2dly. As some relief to him in his misery; the master was hard-hearted to him, but the dogs, more kind, came and licked his sores, which mollified and eased them.

II. The different condition of this godly poor man, and this wicked rich man, at, and after death.

Crumbs. 'Anciently, they made no use of napkins, but wiped their hands [which they dipped into the dishes] with the soft and fine part of the bread; this they afterwards threw to the dogs.'

Abraham's bosom. The joys of heaven are here represented as a feast; Abraham, 'the father of the faithful,' is placed, as it were, at the head of the table; so that 'Abraham's bosom' denotes a place in [542]

Verse 21.

Verse 22.

BURDEN.

heaven near to that distinguished patriarch, and intimates that the poor man was an eminent believer, a saint of superior excellency.

The Jews, as well as Romans, reclined on couches at table, the upper part of the body resting upon the left elbow. Some say the worthiest reclined first,—Lightfoot says in the middle; the next in dignity lay with his head reclining on the bosom of the first; (John 13: 23.) and hence the phrase, to be in Abraham's bosom, to signify the highest state of felicity, next to that of Abraham himself. BURDEN.

1. They both die; v. 22. Death is the common lot of rich and poor godly and ungodly; there they meet together. One dieth in his full strength, and another in the bitterness of his soul; but they lie down alike in the dust, Job 21: 26. Death favors not the rich man for his riches, or the poor man for his poverty; it concerns both to prepare for it. *Death blends the sceptre with the spade*. Saints die, that they may bring their sorrows to an end, and may enter on their joys. Sinners die, that they may go to give up their account.

2. The beggar died first. God often takes godly people out of the world, when He leaves the wicked to flourish still. It was an advantage to the beggar, that such a speedy end was put to his miseries; and since he could find no other shelter or resting-place, he was hid in the grave, where the weary are at rest.

3. The rich man died, and was buried. Nothing is said of the interment of the poor man; they dug a hole any where, and tumbled his body in, without any solemnity; nay, it is well if they that let the dogs lick his sores, did not let them gnaw his bones. But the rich man had a pompous funeral, lay in state, had a train of mourners to attend him to his grave, and a stately monument set up over it; probably, he had a funeral oration in praise of him, and the good table he kept, which those would commend, that had been feasted at it. It is said of the wicked man, that he is brought to the grave with no small ado, and laid in the tomb, and the clouds of the valley, were it possible, are made sweet to him, Job 21: 32, 33. How foreign is the ceremony of a funeral to the happiness of the man!

4. The beggar died, and was carried by angels into Abraham's bosom. How much did the honor done to his soul, by this convey of it to its rest, exceed the honor done to the rich man, by the carrying off his body with so much magnificence to its grave! Observe, (1.) His soul existed in a state of separation from its body. It did not die, or fall asleep, with the body, but lived, and acted, and knew what it did, and what was done to it. (2.) His soul removed to another world, to the world of spirits; it returned to God who gave it, to its native country; this is implied in its being carried; the spirit of a man goes upward. (3.) Angels took care of it; it was carried by angels. They are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, not only while they live, but when they die. One angel, one would think sufficient, but here are as many as were sent for Elijah. Amasis, king of Egypt, had his chariot drawn by kings; but what was that honor to this? Saints ascend in the virtue of Christ's ascension; but this convey of angels is added for state and decorum, saints shall be brought home, not only safely, but honorably. The angels were not shy of touching Lazarus, for his sores were not on his soul; that was presented to God, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. 'Now, blessed angels,' said a good man just expiring, 'now come, and do your office.' (4.) It was carried into Abraham's bosom. The Jews expressed the happiness of the righteous at death, three ways; they go to the garden of Eden; they go to be under the throne of glory; and they go to the bosom of Abraham; and this our Savior here makes use of. Abraham was the father of the faithful; and whither should the souls of the faithful be gathered but to him, who, as a tender father, lays them in his bosom, especially at their first coming, to bid them welcome, and to refresh them when newly come from the sorrows and fatigues of this world? He was carried to his bosom, that is, to feast with him, for at least the guests are said to lean on one another's breasts; and the saints in

24 And he cried, and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me: and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame."

25 But Abraham said, "Son," remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

• 30, 3-8. Matt. 2:9. John 8:33-39, 53-54. Rom. 4:12. 9:27, 9. 1 Sam. 28:15. Is. 27:11. Jer. 2:13. Q. Is. 41:17, 18. 65:13, 14. John 4:10, 14. 7:37. Rev. 7:16, 17. 22:1. Zech. 14:12. Jam. 3:6. • Is. 66:24. Matt. 25:41. Mark 9:43-49. 2 Theas. 1:8. Rev. 14:10, 11. 19:20. 20:15. • 24. • 22. Lam. 1:7. Dan. 5:22, 23, 30. Mark 9:46. • 24. Job 21:13, 14. 23:18. Ps. 17: 37. 35:36. 37: 17. 73:7, 12-20. Rom. 8:7. Phil. 4:1 John 9: 15, 16. • 20. John 18:23. Acts 14:22. 1 Thes. 5:3, 4. Heb. 11:25, 26. Rev. 7:14.

ment, and they are the eyes of his mind that are lifted up. This same aggravation of the miseries of the damned we had before; (ch. 13: 28.) *Ye shall see Abraham, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and yourselves thrust out.* To see Abraham, we should think a pleasing sight; but to see him afar off, was a tormenting sight. Near himself he saw devils and damned companions, frightful sights, and painful; afar off he saw Abraham. Every sight in hell is aggravating. That same Lazarus whom he had looked upon with so much contempt, as not worthy his notice, he now sees preferred, and to be envied. This brought to his mind his own cruel and barbarous conduct toward him, and the sight of him in that happiness made his own misery the more grievous.

III. What passed between the rich man and Abraham in the separate state—a state of separation one from another, and of both from this world. It is probable there will not be, nor are, any such dialogues or discourses between glorified saints and damned sinners, yet it is very proper, and what is usually done in descriptions, especially such as are designed to be pathetic and moving, to represent, by such dialogues, what will be the mind and sentiments both of the one and the other. And since we find damned sinners tormented in the presence of the Lamb, (Rev. 14: 10.) and the faithful servants of God looking on them that have transgressed the covenant, there where their *words die not, and their fire is not quenched.* (Isa. 66: 23, 24.) such a discourse as this is not incongruous to be supposed. In it we have,

1. The request the rich man made to Abraham for some mitigation of his present misery; (*v. 24.*) *he cried to him, cried aloud, as one in earnest, one in pain and misery, mixing shrieks with his petitions, to enforce them by moving compassion.* He that used to command aloud, now begs aloud; louder than ever Lazarus did at his gate. The songs of his riot and revels are all turned into lamentations. Observe,

(1.) The title he gives Abraham: *Father Abraham.* Note, There are many in hell, that can call Abraham father; that were Abraham's seed after the flesh; nay, that were, in name and profession, children of the covenant made with Abraham. Perhaps this rich man, in his carnal mirth, had ridiculed Abraham and the story of Abraham, as the scoffers of later days do; but now he gives him a title of respect, *Father Abraham.* Note, The day is coming, when wicked men will be glad to become acquainted with the righteous, and to claim kindred to them, though now they slight them. Abraham in this description represents Christ, for to Him all judgment is committed, and it is his mind that Abraham here speaks. Those that now slight Christ, will shortly make their court to Him, *Lord, Lord.*

Verses 24—26.

It is not needful to determine, whether condemned spirits actually know or see what takes place in the realms of bliss; the representation is intended to show the hopeless misery, to which they are reduced. The Jews were prone to confide in their relation to Abraham, even though not partakers of his faith; (*Marg. Ref. o.—Matt. 3: 7—10. John 8: 30—40. v. 33, 37, 39.*) and when the rich man in hell claimed him for his father, Abraham did not deny the relation, yet showed him no compassion. The rich man despaired of mercy from God, yet cried to Abraham to have mercy on him; as if Abraham had been more merciful than his Maker, and was either able or willing to favor and help the irreconcilable enemies of God! This is the only scriptural instance of a prayer, offered to a departed saint, and it gives small encouragement to that prevalent species of idolatry. (24.) *Drop the tip, &c.* A man scorched by intense heat, and parched with exqui-

sive thirst, might crave such a small and momentary alleviation; thus this poor, condemned sinner sought a transient abatement of his exquisite misery; being all he could hope for. His desire that Lazarus might be sent, may either intimate, that he retained his haughty spirit in his deepest misery, or a conviction that Lazarus had been a benevolent man, who wished him well, and was glad to do any one a service when he had it in his power; or, as some think, he considered Lazarus under obligation to him for his charitable donations. (*Marg. Ref. p.—v. 25.*) *Us and you.* Both of them were finally and eternally fixed in their respective states, by the unchangeable decrees of God. (*Marg. Ref. y.*) Many in different ages have endeavored, as it were, to fill up or make a bridge over this great gulf; and multitudes have wished them success in the enterprise, as this was their only hope of escaping the rich man's doom; but it has been and must be forever as vain as his expectation of a drop of water from Lazarus.

(2.) The representation of his deplorable condition; *I am tormented in this flame.* He complains of the torment of his soul, and therefore of such a fire as will operate on souls; and such a fire the *wrath of God* is, fastening on a guilty conscience; such a fire horror of mind is, and the reproaches of a self-accusing, self-condemning heart. Nothing is more painful and terrible to the body, than to be tormented with fire; by that, therefore, the miseries and agonies of damned souls are represented.

(3.) His request in consideration of this misery; *Have mercy on me.* Note, The day is coming, when those that make light of divine mercy, will beg hard for it. O for mercy, mercy, when the day of mercy is over, and offers of mercy are no more made. He that had no mercy on Lazarus, yet expects Lazarus should have mercy on him. The particular favor he begs is, *Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue.*

[1.] Here he complains of the torment of his tongue particularly, as if he were more tormented there than in any other part, the punishment answering the sin. The tongue is one of the organs of speech, and by the torments of that he is put in mind of all the wicked words he had spoken against God and man; his cursing, and swearing, and blasphemy, all his *hard speeches, and filthy speeches*; by his words he is condemned, and therefore in his tongue he is tormented. The tongue is also one of the organs of tasting; and therefore the torments of that will remind him of his inordinate relish of the delights of sense, which he had rolled under his tongue. [2.] He desires a drop of water to cool his tongue. He does not say, "Father Abraham, send for me to thy bosom;" unsanctified souls do not, cannot, truly desire the happiness of heaven; nay, he does not say, "Father Abraham, order me a release from this misery, help me out of this pit;" for he utterly despair'd of that; but he asks as small a thing as could be asked, a drop of water to cool his tongue for one moment. [3.] He desires that Lazarus might bring it. He names him, because he knows him, and thinks Lazarus, therefore, will not be unwilling to do him this good office. Grotius here quotes Plato describing the torments of wicked souls, and among other things he saith, *They are continually raving on those whom they have murdered, or been any way injurious to, calling on them to forgive them the wrongs they did them.* Note, There is a day coming, when those that now hate and despise the people of God would gladly receive kindness from them.

2. The reply of Abraham to this request. In general, he did not grant it. He would not allow him one drop of water to cool his tongue. Note, The damned in hell shall not have any the least abatement or mitigation of their torment. If we now improve the day of our opportunities, we may have a full and lasting satisfaction in the streams of mercy; but if we now slight the offer, it will be in vain in hell to expect the least drop of mercy. See how justly this rich man is paid in his own coin: He that denied a crumb, is denied a drop. Now it is; said to us, *Ask, and it shall be given you*; but if we let slip this accepted time, we may ask, and it shall not be given us. But this is not all; Abraham

(1.) Calls him son; a kind and civil title, but here it only aggravates the denial which shut up a father's bowels of compassion from him. He had been a son, but a rebellious one,

site thirst, might crave such a small and momentary alleviation; thus this poor, condemned sinner sought a transient abatement of his exquisite misery; being all he could hope for. His desire that Lazarus might be sent, may either intimate, that he retained his haughty spirit in his deepest misery, or a conviction that Lazarus had been a benevolent man, who wished him well, and was glad to do any one a service when he had it in his power; or, as some think, he considered Lazarus under obligation to him for his charitable donations. (*Marg. Ref. p.—v. 25.*) *Us and you.* Both of them were finally and eternally fixed in their respective states, by the unchangeable decrees of God. (*Marg. Ref. y.*) Many in different ages have endeavored, as it were, to fill up or make a bridge over this great gulf; and multitudes have wished them success in the enterprise, as this was their only hope of escaping the rich man's doom; but it has been and must be forever as vain as his expectation of a drop of water from Lazarus.

26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

[Practical Observations.]

27 Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:

1 Sam. 25:36. Ps. 49:14. Mal. 3:19. 2 Thes. 1:4-10. Jam. 1:11, 12. 19:50. Ps. 50:22. Mat. 23:45. Jam. 3:28. 2 Cor. 1:9. Rev. 22:10.

wouldst not accept? He is here reminded, [1.] That *from us they [the sinners] received their good things*. Not he had *given* them, but he had *received* them. Remember what a bountiful benefactor God has been to thee, how ready to do thee good; thou canst not therefore say, He owes thee any thing, no, not a drop of water. What He gave thee, thou *receivedst*, and that was all; thou never gavest Him a receipt for them, in a thankful acknowledgment of them, much less didst thou ever make any grateful return for them, or improvement of them: thou hast been the grave in which God's blessings were buried; not the field, in which they were sown. Thou *receivedst* thy *good things*; and usedst them, as if they had been *thine own*, and thou wert not at all accountable for them. Or rather, they were the things thou didst choose for thy *good things*, thy *best things*, didst content thyself with, and portioned thyself in, and hadst no thought of better things in another life, and therefore hast no reason to expect them. The day of thy *good things* is past and gone, and now is the day of thine *evil things*, of recompense for all thine evil deeds. Thou hast already had the last drop of the *cup of mercy*, that thou couldst expect to fall to thy share; and there remains nothing but *trials of wrath* without mixture. [2.] Remember, too, what *evil things Lazarus received*. Thou hadst as much *good* as could fall to the lot of so good a man, and he as much *evil* as could fall to the lot of so good a man. He *received* his evil things: received them patiently from the hand of God, as Job did: (Job. 2:10.) he *received* them as physic appointed for the cure of his spiritual distempers, and the cure was effected. As wicked people have *good things* only in this life, and at death are forever separated from all

good; so godly people have evil things only in this life, and at death they are forever put out of the reach of them. Now Abraham, by putting him in mind of both together, awakening his conscience to remind him how he had behaved toward Lazarus, when revelling in his *good things*, and Lazarus greening under his *evil things*; he cannot forget that then he would not help Lazarus, and how could he expect Lazarus should now help him? Had Lazarus in his life-time afterward grown rich, and he poor, Lazarus would have thought it his duty to relieve him, and not have upbraided him with former unkindness; but in the future state of recompense and retribution, those that are now dealt with, both by God and man, better than they deserve, must expect to be rewarded *every man according to his works*.

(3.) He puts him in mind of Lazarus' present bliss, and his own misery, that by comparing one thing with another, he might observe the *incomprehensibility of God*, in recompensing tribulation to them who trouble his people, and to those who are troubled, *rest*, 2 Thess. 1:6, 7. Observe, [1.] Heaven is comfort and bliss; torment: heaven is joy, hell is weeping and mourning, and pain in perfection. [2.] The soul, as soon as it leaves the body, goes immediately to heaven or hell, to comfort or torment, and does not sleep, or go into purgatory. [3.] Heaven will be heaven indeed to those that go thither through many and great calamities in this world; of those that had grace, but little of the comfort of it here. In heaven there is everlasting consolation. And, on the other hand, hell will be hell indeed to those that go thither from the midst of the enjoyment of all the delights and pleasures of sense; to them the torture is the greater, as temporal calamities are described to be to the *tender and delicate woman*, Deut. 28:56.

[4.] He assures him that it was to no purpose to think of any relief by the ministry of Lazarus: for (17, 26.) *Besides all this, worse yet, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed*, an impassable one; a great chasm, that so there can be no communication between glorified saints and damned sinners. [1.] The

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V. 19-26. It is most astonishing, that any man can read this chapter, and profess to believe it to be 'the Word of God,' and continue to spend his life in those very courses, of which the consequences are so awfully and expressly declared! Yet, what numbers are there, in our prosperous cities, of these 'rich men!' and how many more would there be, if men could attain the objects of their wishes! Multitudes go to the utmost limits of their ability, nay, beyond what they can afford; and then fret continually to see themselves outdone by their more prosperous neighbors!—What person of common sense would deliberately prefer the rich man's lot, in life, death, and eternity, to that of Lazarus? yet how few prefer 'suffering affliction with the people of God, to the enjoyment of the pleasures of sin for a season?' Heb. 11:24-26. 'Let no man deceive himself.' He who said, 'Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away,' has here stated, that when any one dies, his soul immediately is received into heavenly felicity, or cast into the fire of hell: that whilst the bodies of rich sinners are entombed, often with the vain ostentation of the survivors, 'they lift up their eyes in hell, being in torment;' that neither God, nor saints, nor angels, will show them any more mercy; that even pious parents, who here prayed for and wept over their children, will hereafter approve of their final condemnation: that not the least mitigation of their misery can be obtained; that with the dying sinner's breath all his hopes expire, and an end is put to all 'his good things;' and that 'a great gulf is fixed,' and all escape rendered forever

impossible.—Plausible objections to these truths, or direct contradictions of them, may be advanced; and those 'who speak according to the oracles of God,' will be ridiculed and reviled, as melancholy or malevolent men: for numbers feel it *their interest*, (according to the tenor of their present conduct,) that any view of this subject should be true, rather than that of revelation: but when one after another dies, and 'lifts up his eyes in hell,' he awfully finds whose words have been accomplished, the Lord's, or those of such as dared to contradict Him. Instead, therefore, of presumptuously speculating on the brink of this tremendous precipice, let us copy the example of those, who fled from the gaping earth, 'lest it should swallow them up also.' Num. 16:34. If there were only a *per- adventure* of sinking into everlasting misery, or of obtaining eternal life; a wise man would surely relinquish (if needful) the greatest affluence, submit to abject poverty, and endure far severer miseries than those of Lazarus, without a murmur or hesitation. But the matter is as certain as the Word of 'God who cannot lie.' And should the Lord call the believer to poverty, pain and sickness, He will not leave him comfortless. Nay, should want or neglect (which rarely happens) even shorten his life, the believer will only be the sooner removed from 'his evil things,' and introduced to the enjoyment of complete felicity: so that, in every possible case, they, and they only, 'are blessed, who have the Lord for their God.' (Ps. 84:11, 12. P. O.)

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Verses 27-31.

(25.) *Five brethren.* They are represented as thus indulging themselves on earth, while he [the rich man] was in a place of torment. This fully proves the separate state between death and judgment; unless any man can think that our Lord would decorate a parable, in a manner suited to mislead the upright inquirer. It is intimated in this representation, that the rich man died young: for nothing is said of a family left behind him, and his brethren are supposed to continue together in their father's house, as joint heirs of his estate. We cannot imagine that there is any *clarity*, or even *natural affection* in hell; we must therefore either consider this as a mere circumstance, intended to introduce the subsequent instruction, or else we must conclude that they, whose exalted discourse, or seductive have led others into infidelity, impiety, and profligacy, will be rendered more miserable

hereafter, by the upbraidings of those whose souls they have murdered; they would therefore most anxiously prevent their destruction, for fear of an addition to their own intolerable misery. Many admired writers would now be willing to publish recantations of their apostical, berelical, or licentious works; many actors would wish to come on the stage again, to act a different part from those, by which they informed the passions, and corrupted the principles and morals of mankind; and many false teachers, to innuendate and defend a more sacred creed, than once they propagated. For men will be *accommodate* for all the effects of their conduct, however wicked they may spread, or fatally they may last. Circumstances occur to every one, which sufficiently evince, that *temptations, arguments, or communications can effect no repentance, without the special grace of God renewing the sinner's heart* (1 Sam. 25:11-25.)

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28 For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, ^blest they also come into this place of torment.

29 Abraham saith unto him, They ^chave Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.

30 And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will ^drepent.

31 And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, ^eneither will they ^fbe persuaded though one rose from the dead.

b Ps. 49:13.
c 16: 1s. 8:20. Mal. 4:2-4. John 5: 28-29. Acts 15:21. 17:11, 12. 2 Tim. 3:15-17. 2 Pet. 1:19-21.
d 13:3-5. Rev. 16:9-11.
e John 11:43-53. 12:19, 11.
f Gen. 2:27. mtrc. Acts 19:8. 26: 28. 28:3. 2 Cor. 5:11.

sinner is made to know that the sentence they are under is just, and they cannot alleviate their own misery by making any objection against it. And since he cannot obtain a drop of water to cool his tongue, we may suppose he gnawed his tongue for pain, as those on whom one of the vials of God's wrath is poured out, Rev. 16: 10. But he will improve his opportunity of speaking to Abraham, for his relations whom he had left behind.

(1.) He begs that Lazarus might be sent on an errand to his father's house, v. 27. And in this request he is importunate; 'I pray thee. O deny me not this.' When he was on earth, he might have prayed, and been heard, now he prays in vain. 'Therefore, because thou hast denied me the former request, surely thou wilt be so compassionate as not to deny this: or, Therefore, because there is a great gulf fixed, seeing there is no getting out hence when they are once here, O send to prevent their coming hither.' or, 'Though there is a great gulf fixed between you and me, yet since there is no such gulf fixed between you and them, send him thither. Send him back to my father's house; he knows well enough where it is, has been there many a time, having been denied the crumbs that fell from the table. He knows I have five brethren there; if he appear to them, they will know him, and will regard what he saith, for they knew him to be an honest man; let him testify to them; let him tell them what condition I am in, and that I brought myself to it by my luxury and sensuality, and my unmercifulness to the poor; let him warn them not to tread in my steps, nor to go on in the way wherein I led them, and left them, lest they also come into this place of torment,' v. 28. Some observe, that he speaks of five brethren only, whence they infer he had no children, else he would have mentioned them, and then it was an aggravation of his uncharitableness, that he had no children to provide for. Now he would have them stopped in their sinful course. He does not say, 'Give me leave to go, he knew there was a gulf fixed, and despaired of a permission so favorable to himself: his going would frighten them; but, 'Send Lazarus, whose address will be less terrible, and yet his testimony sufficient.'

Now he desired the preventing of their ruin, partly in tenderness to them, for whom he could not but retain a natural affection, and partly in tenderness to himself; for their coming to him, to that place of torment, would but aggravate

kindest saint in heaven cannot make a visit to the congregation of the dead and damned, to comfort or relieve any there, who once were their friends. 'They that would pass from hence to you, cannot; they cannot leave beholding the face of their Father, nor the work about his throne, to fetch water for you; that is no part of their business.' [2.] The most daring sinner in hell cannot force his way out of that prison, cannot get over that great gulf. They cannot pass to us, that would come from thence: It was not to be expected, for the door of mercy is shut, the bridge is drawn; there is no coming out on parol or bail, no, not for one hour. In this world, blessed be God, there is no gulf fixed between a state of nature and grace, but we may pass from one to the other, from sin to God; but if we die in our sins, if we throw ourselves into the pit of destruction, there is no coming out. It is a pit in which there is no water, and out of which there is no redemption. The decree and counsel of God have fixed this gulf, which all the world cannot unfix. This abandons this miserable creature to despair; it is now too late for any change of his condition, or any the least relief: it might have been prevented in time, but it cannot now be remedied to eternity. The state of damned sinners is fixed by an irreversible and unalterable sentence.

3. The further request to his father Abraham; not for himself, his mouth is stopped, and he has not a word to say in answer. Damned

his misery, as did the sight of Lazarus. When partners in sin come to be sharers in woe, as tares bound in bundles for the fire, they will be a terror to one another.

(2.) Abraham denies him this favor too. There is no request granted in hell. Those who make the rich man's praying to Abraham, a justification of their praying to departed saints, as they are far to seek for proofs, when the practice of a damned sinner must be valued for an example, so they have little encouragement to follow the example, when all his prayers were made in vain. Abraham leaves them to the ordinary means of conviction and conversion; they have the written Word, which they may read and hear read; 'Let them attend to that sure word of prophecy, for God will not go out of the common method of his grace for them.' Here is their privilege; They have Moses and the prophets, and their duty; 'Let them hear them, and mix faith with them, and that will be sufficient to keep them from this place of torment.' By this it appears that there is sufficient evidence in the Old Testament, in Moses and the prophets, to convince those that will hear them impartially, that there is another life after this, and a state of rewards and punishments for good and bad men.

(3.) He urges his request yet further, v. 30. 'It is true, they have Moses and the prophets, and would they but regard them, it would be sufficient; but they do not, they will not; yet it may be hoped, if one went to them from the dead, they would repent; this would be a new thing, and more startling. Note, Foolish men are apt to think any method of conviction better, than that which God has chosen and appointed.

(4.) Abraham insists on the denial of it, with a conclusive reason, v. 31. 'If they regard not the public revelation, which is confirmed by miracles, neither would they be wrought upon by a private testimony to themselves.' [1.] The matter was long since settled on trial, that God should speak by Moses and such prophets, and not by immediate messengers from heaven. Israel chose it in mount Sinai, because they could not bear the terrors of such expresses. [2.] A messenger from the dead could say no more than what is said in the Scriptures, nor with more authority. [3.] There would be every jot as much reason to suspect that to be a cheat and a delusion, as to suspect the Scriptures to be so, and much more; and infidels in one case would certainly be so in another. [4.] The same strength of corruption that breaks through the convictions of the written Word, would certainly triumph over those by a witness from the dead; and though a sinner might be frightened at first by such a testimony, when the fright was over, he would soon return to his hardness. [5.] The Scripture is now the ordinary and sufficient way of God's making known his mind to us; and it is presumption for us to prescribe any other way, nor have we any ground to expect or pray for the grace of

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V. 27-31. It is vain to imagine, that other evidence, or means of instruction, would induce men to repentance, while they neglect 'the Word of God,' the best and the only means of converting souls, which God has promised to bless and prosper. Though the witness of saints or angels is great, the witness of God is greater: 'the same things are testified to in the sacred Scriptures, which would be told us by 'one that should come from the dead.' He that rejects this testimony, 'makes God a liar,' and further proof would be improper: an apparition might produce a greater temporary alarm, but it would not afford so solid and permanent a ground of

conviction; and therefore if men 'believe not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.' Instead then of indulging unwarranted speculations, let every one take heed to the sure Word of truth, and pray to God for that new heart and humble spirit, without which all means must prove ineffectual: and let us conclude by seriously inquiring, 'What is a man profited, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' (P. O. Matt. 16: 21-28.)

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(31.) If they hear not, &c. 'It is true, Moses no where expressly asserts a future state of rewards and punishments; yet the facts recorded by him strongly enforce the natural arguments in proof of it, and the prophets speak plainly of it in many places. (See Ps. 16: 9-11. 17: 15. 23: 6. 49: 14, 15. 73: 17. Prov. 14: 32. Eccl. 3: 17-21. 11: 9. 12: 7, 13, 14, and Ezek. 18: 19-21.)'

Which injury has been done to our Savior's instructions, by ill-judged attempts to improve and strengthen them. In this parable, many, dissatisfied with its simplicity, and to vindicate the Judge from the charge of severity, would load the rich man with all the crimes that can blacken hum in nature. But for this they have no authority, and in doing it they pervert the design of the parable; which is, to admonish us, not that a waster of wickedness shall be punished in another world, but that the

man who, though not chargeable with doing much ill, does little or no good, and who, though not perhaps intemperate, or sensual, is yet careless about the situation of others, and exists only for the gratification of himself, the indulgence of his own appetites and vanity, shall not escape punishment. It shows the danger of living in the neglect of duties, though not chargeable with the commission of crimes; and particularly, the danger of considering the gifts of Providence as our own property, and not as a trust from our Creator, to be employed in his service, [i. e. in doing his will], and for which we are accountable to Him. These appear to be the reasons for which our Lord has here shown the evil of a life which, so far from being universally detested, is, at this day but too much admired, envied, and imitated.

CAMPBELL.

CHAP. XVII.

Jesus teaches his disciples carefully 1 to avoid giving offences, 1, 2; and to forgive one another, 3, 4. Being asked by the apostles to increase their faith, He shows the power of faith, 5, 6; and that man's best obedience is to have faith in God, 7-10. He cleanses ten lepers; of whom one only, and he a Samaritan, returns to give thanks to God, 11-19. The spiritual nature of being "sons of God," 20-22. The sinner in which it was about to be washed, and with the ruin of all who are saved, it, 23-37.

THEN said he unto the disciples, 'It is impossible but that offences will come; but woe unto him through whom they come!

2 It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones.

3 Take heed to yourselves: if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him.

4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.

5 And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith.

6 And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, ye might say unto this sycamore-tree, Be thou

God to work on us in any way abstracted from that, and when that is rejected. What our Savior here said, was soon after verified in the unbelieving Jews, who would not hear Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, and then would not be persuaded, though Lazarus rose from the dead; (and perhaps it was with some eye to him, that Christ named this poor man Lazarus;) nay, they consulted to put Him to death, and did put Him that raised him, to death, and would not be persuaded by Him neither, though He also rose from the dead. When Eutychus was raised to life, the people that were present continued to hear Paul preach, but did not turn to inquire of him, Acts 20: 10, 11. Let us not therefore desire visions and apparitions, nor seek to the dead, but to the law and to the testimony, (Isa. 1: 19, 20.) for that is the sure word of prophecy, which we may depend on.

CHAP. XVII. v. 1-10. We are here taught, I. That the giving of offences is a great sin, which we should every one of us carefully watch against and avoid, v. 1, 2. We can expect no other than that offences will come, considering the perverseness and frowardness of man's nature, and the wise purpose and counsel of God, who will carry on his work even by those offences, and bring good out of evil. But the doom of him, through whom the offences come, will be more terrible than that of the worst of the malefactors, condemned to be thrown into the sea, for they perish under a load of guilt more ponderous than that of millstones, v. 2.

This speaks a woe, 1. To persecutors, who discourage any the least of Christ's little ones, or endanger their apostasy. 2. To seducers, who corrupt the truths and ordinances of Christ, and so trouble the minds of the disciples. 3. To those who, under the profession of the Christian name, live scandalously, and thereby weaken the hands, and sadden the hearts of God's people: for by all these, offences come, and it is no abatement of their guilt, nor will be any of their punishment, that it is impossible but offences will come.

II. That we should every one of us make conscience of forgiving offences, (v. 3.) Take heed to yourselves. This may refer either to what goes before, or to what follows. Ministers must be very careful not to say or do any thing that may discourage weak Christians; and they ought to speak and act very considerately, for fear of this: or, 'When your brother trespasses against you, is necessary to any damage done you in your property or reputation, take heed lest you be put into a passion; lest, when provoked, you speak unadvisedly, and rashly vow revenge, Prov. 24: 29. Take heed what you say at such a time, lest you say amiss.'

1. 'If permitted to rebuke him, you are advised to do so. Smother not the resentment, but give it vent; show him wherein he has not done well nor fairly by you, and, it may be, you will perceive (and you must be very willing to perceive) that you mistook him, that it was not a trespass against you, or not designed, but an oversight, and then you will be glad his pardon for misunderstanding him;' as Josh. 22: 30, 31.

2. 'You are commanded, on his repentance,

to forgive him, and to be perfectly reconciled to him; if he repent, forgive him; forget the injury, never think of it again, much less upbraid him with it. Though he do not repent, you must not therefore bear malice to him, or meditate revenge; but if he do not at least say that he repents, you are not bound to be so free and familiar with him as you have been. If guilty of gross sin, to the offence of the Christian community he is a member of, let him be gravely and mildly reproved for his sin, and, in his repentance, received into friendship and communion again.' This the apostle calls forgiveness, 2 Cor. 2: 7.

3. 'You are to repeat this every time he repeats his trespass, v. 4. If he could be supposed to be either so negligent, or so impudent, as to trespass against thee seven times in a day, and as often professes himself sorry for his fault, and promises not again to offend in like manner, continue to forgive him.' To err is human. Note, Christians should be of a forgiving spirit, willing to make the best of every body, and all about them easy; forward to extenuate faults, and not to aggravate them, and should contrive as much to show that they have forgiven an injury, as others to show that they resent it.

III. That we all need to get our faith strengthened, because, as that grace grows, all other graces grow. The more firmly we believe the doctrine, and the more confidently we rely on the grace of Christ, the better it will be with us every way. Now observe here,

1. The address the disciples made to Christ, for the strengthening of their faith, v. 5. The apostles themselves, so they are here called, though prime ministers of state in Christ's kingdom, yet acknowledged the weakness and deficiency of their faith, and saw their need of Christ's grace for the improvement of it: they said unto the Lord, 'Increase our faith, and perfect what is lacking in it. Let the discoveries of faith be more clear, the desires more strong, the dependences more firm and fixed, the dedications more entire and resolute, the delights more pleasing.' Note, We should earnestly desire and pray for increase of faith. Some think they pray to Christ on occasion of his pressing on them the duty of forgiving injuries; 'Lord, increase our faith, or we shall never be able to practise such a difficult duty.' Faith in God's pardoning mercy will enable us to get over the greatest difficulties that lie in the way of forgiving our brother. Others think it was on some other occasion, as Matt. 17: 16, &c. To Him that blamed them they must apply themselves for grace to mend them.

2. The assurance Christ gave them of the wonderful efficacy of true faith; (v. 6.) 'With faith as a grain of mustard-seed,—so small or so sharp,—so pungent, so exciting to all other graces, as mustard to the animal spirits, you might do wonders much beyond what you now do; nothing would be too hard for you, that were fit to be done for the glory of God, and the confirmation of the doctrine you preach, yea, though it were the transplanting of a tree from the earth to the sea.' See Matt. 17: 20. As with God nothing is impossible, so are all things possible to him that can believe.

IV. That whatever we are in Christ's service, we must be very humble, not imagining we can

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. v. 3, 4. 'This contains a strong and important intimation, how much sin and scandal is occasioned by a severe, quarrelsome temper in the disciples of Christ; as it not only sires up the corruptions of those with whom they contend, but leads others to think meanly of our assistance, which has so little efficacy to soften and sweeten the temper of those who maintain it.' Doddridge. (3.) 'forgive, &c.' (Matt. 6: 12, 14, 15. 18-35.) We are required to forgive those who do not repent, so as to pray for them, and to wait for an opportunity of doing them good: but our friendly intercourse with such as have been evidently injurious, and obstinately persist in evil, and our confidence in them, or esteem of their character, must necessarily be in some measure interrupted. (Marg. Ref. 6: 27-38. 1 Sam. 26: 28-31. Matt. 5: 43-48. Rom. 12: 14-21.) Scott.

Verses 5, 6.

The apostles perceived the excellency, and the difficulty of the command prescribed to them; and that faith was the principle from which must proceed: they therefore besought Jesus to 'increase their faith.' (Mark 9: 16-24. v. 24.) True faith is 'the gift of God,' and the work of his power; nor can it be conceived possible for one mere man, or

creature, so to influence the mind of another, by any direct act of power, as to produce faith, where it did not before exist, or to increase it when weak and wavering. (Marg. Ref. 1-1 Cor. 2: 3-5. Eph. 2: 4-10. v. 8.)

Heb. 12: 2, 3. According, therefore, to the system of Arians and Socinians, our Lord would have repented the disciples for attributing too much to Him; but, on the contrary, his answer evidently implied an approbation of their petition; and was a further recommendation to them of that powerful principle, to which 'all things are possible.' The idea of a tree being planted, taking root, and growing, in the unstable ocean, is a most emphatical figure to represent to us, that by faith 'we may do all things, through Christ who strengtheneth us.' (Marg. Ref. k.—Notes, Matt. 17: 19-21. 21: 21, 22. Mark 11: 22-26. 2 Cor. 12: 7-10.) (5.) 'Increase our faith.' 'Add to us faith.' (3: 20. Matt. 6: 27. Acts 2: 41.) 'Give us faith; and if we have any true faith, add to it, and increase our faith.' Scott.

(6.) This sycamore. 'Probably the same as the sycamore. The tree falsely so called with us, is the acer majus, greater maple. The true sycamore is the ficus Pharaonis, or Ægyptia; Pharaoh's, or Egyptian fig-tree; called also, from its similitude in leaves and fruit,

plucked up by the root and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you.

7 But¹ which of you, having a servant ploughing, or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat?

8 And wilt not rather say unto him, 'Make ready wherewith I may sup,' and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

9 Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not.

10 So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

[Practical Observations.]

11 ¶ And it came to pass as he went to Jerusalem, that he

merit any favor, or claim it as a debt; even the apostles, who did so much more than others for Christ, must not think they had thereby made Him their debtor.

1. We are all God's servants; (his apostles and ministers are so in a special manner;) and, as servants, are bound to do all we can for his honor; our whole strength and time are to be employed for Him; for *we are not our own*, nor at our own disposal, but at our Master's.

2. As God's servants, it becomes us to fill up our time with duty, and we ought to make the end of one service the beginning of another, v. 7, 8.

3. Our principal care here must be to do the duty of our relation, and leave it to our Master to give us the comfort of it, when and how He thinks fit. No servant expects that his master should say to him, *Go and sit down to meat*; it is time enough to do that, when we have done our day's work. Let us be in care to finish our work well, the reward will come in due time.

4. It is fit Christ should be served before us, v. 8. Doubting Christians say they cannot give Christ the glory of his love as they should, because they have not yet obtained the comfort of it; but this is wrong; first, let Christ have the glory of it, and then we shall have the comfort of it, and in that is a feast.

5. Christ's servants, when they are to wait on Him, must free themselves from every thing entangling or encumbering, and fit themselves by a close application of mind to go on, and go through, with their work. When we have made ready for Christ's entertainment, we must then *gird ourselves*, to attend Him. This is expected from servants, and Christ might require it from us, but He does not insist on it. He came not, as other masters, to take state, and to be ministered unto, but to minister; witness his washing his disciples' feet.

6. Christ's servants do not so much as merit his thanks for any service they do Him: 'Doth He thank that servant?' Doth he reckon Him-

self indebted to him for it? By no means.' No good works of ours can merit any thing at the hand of God. We expect God's favor not because we have by our services made Him a debtor to us, but because He has by his promises made Himself a debtor to his own honor, and that we may plead with Him, but let Him more.

7. Whatever we do for Christ, though more perhaps than some others, yet it is no more than our duty. Though we should do *all things that are commanded us*, and alas! in many things we come short of that, yet there is no work of *supererogation*, it is but what we are bound to by that first and great commandment, of *loving God with all our heart and soul*, which includes the utmost.

8. The best servants of Christ, even when they do the best services, must humbly acknowledge, that, though they are not those unprofitable servants that bury their talents, and shall be cast into *utter darkness*, yet as to Christ, and any advantage that can accrue to Him by their services, they are *unprofitable*: our *goodness extendeth not to God, nor, if we are righteous, is He the better*, Ps. 16: 2. Job 22: 2. 35: 7. God cannot be a gainer by our services, and therefore cannot be made a debtor by them. He has no need of us, nor can our services make any addition to his perfections; it becomes us therefore to call ourselves unprofitable servants, but to call his service a profitable service, for God is happy without us, but we are undone without Him.

V. 11-19. We have here an account of the cure of ten lepers, which we had not in any other of the evangelists. The Jews supposed leprosy to be inflicted for the punishment of some particular sin, and to be, more than other diseases, a mark of God's displeasure; therefore Christ, who came to take away sin, and turn away wrath, took particular care to cleanse the lepers He met. Christ was now in his way to Jerusalem, about mid-way, in the frontier country between Samaria and Galilee, where He had little acquaintance, in comparison with what He had either at Jerusalem or in Galilee. He went that road to find out and

13:15, 14:5, Matt. 12:11.
n Gen. 41:16. 2 Sam. 12:20.
o 12:37

P 1 Chr. 29:14-16, Job 22:2, 35:6,
P 1 Ps. 162:3, Is. 6:5, 64:8. Matt.

25:30, 37-40,
Cor. 9:16, 17.

Rom. 3:12, 11:35, 1
15:9, 10. Phil. 3:8, 9.

1 Pet. 5:5, 6.
q 9:51, 52. John 4:4.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-10. We should fear, more than even a violent and ignominious death, every action, which may prejudice men against the Gospel, or stumble so much as one weak believer: and we ought to 'abstain from all appearance of evil,' in every case when we can do it without committing *real* evil. We should be harmless in all things, do good to all men as we are able, and 'take heed to ourselves' not to yield to resentment against such as injure us. If our brother has trespassed against us, we should privately and meekly expostulate with him; and if he repent, cordially forgive him, and be reconciled to him, without insisting rigorously on satisfaction: nay, if this should be repeated many times in a day, we must not allow our animosity to be interrupted by it, provided the private wrong do not involve in it a public scandal; for thus the peace of the church, the good of souls, and the honor of God and his Gospel, may best be promoted, to which all other considerations should be subordinated.—But this strict precept is replete with encouragement to the humble believer. He is often betrayed, more than 'seven times a day,' into those things, which need repentance and forgiveness; and this consciousness, which covers him with shame, would also sink him into dejection, did he not recollect that his gracious Lord would not require him so constantly to forgive his offending brother, were He not ready also in like manner to forgive his offendin^g children. This will by no means encourage him to sin, but rather 'lead him to repentance;' (Note, Rom. 2: 4-6.) yet it will support him, in his painful conflict, while he grieves that 'he cannot do the

things that he would,' (P. O. Matt. 18:—) When we would imitate the example of our forgiving Lord, or perform any duty which runs counter to corrupt nature, we shall perceive our need of faith, and be led to look unto Jesus, both as the Author and the Object of faith: beseeching Him to increase that precious grace, on which the exercise of all others depend: nor will the Lord refuse to answer this request.—All men are bound to be the servants of the great Creator, and to devote all their time and powers to Him; and are justly condemned, for not doing 'all those things which are commanded.' But, as Christians, we are servants to our redeeming God, and bound to obedience by immensely superior obligations. We should therefore serve Him in our several places, without intermission; and every personal interest or indulgence should be postponed, and give place to his glory and command: yet at last we *merit* no reward, and have nothing to boast of, but must humbly confess our guilt in every instance, in which we have come short of this perfect obedience. But were it possible for a man to serve God as Paul did, or even as Gabriel does, and then to become exalted in an opinion of his own worthiness, this would tarnish all, and he would 'fall into the condemnation of the devil.' How horribly impious then, how sacrilegious must it be, for sinners to boast of their poor, polluted services, as if they could atone for their sins, make God their Debtor, purchase heavenly felicity, or even merit for others also!

SCOTT.

moraycus, or mulberry fig-tree. It grows in Cyprus, Caria, Rhodes, Judea, and Galilee. Jerome, who was well acquainted with these countries, translates it *mulberry tree*. Dr. A. Clarke. The *aycom* more is a spreading tree, of great size, and one of the most common in Egypt and Palestine. It strikes its large, diverging roots deep into the soil; and on this account is added to as the most difficult to be rooted up.

Verses 7-10.

The connection between strong and lively faith, with its practical effects, and deep humility, is here pointed out. The Lord has such a property in every creature, as no man can have in another; and He can never be indebted to us for our most constant and unremitted services. The obedience of angels, who 'do all that is commanded them,'

and that perfectly, leaves them 'unprofitable servants,' who have only done their duty, without having at all benefited the Lord, or conferred any favor on Him. (Rom. 11: 33-36) The services of redeemed sinners, therefore, who are under peculiar obligations to obedience, who do no good thing except by his grace, and who 'in many things offend all,' can never deserve recompense, or give any ground for boasting, or in any way be profitable to God. (Marg. Ref.—Job 22: 1-4. Ps. 16: 2, 3. Matt. 25: 24-30.) Here Christ destroys two 'doctrines of the schools; the merit of good works, and works of supererogation.' Whitby.

(8.) *Gird thyself*. A common practice with servants, while waiting on their masters; alluded to by Horace and Anacreon.

passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee.

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, 'Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God;

16 And fell down on his face at his feet giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answering, said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.

[Practical Observations.]

* 5:12, 18:13, Lev. 13:45-46, Num. 5:2, 3, 12:14, 2 Kings 5:27, 7:3, 2 Chr. 26:20, 21, 15:35, 39. Matt. 9:27, 15:22, 20:30,

etc. these lepers; He is found of them that sought Him not. Observe,

1. Their address; they were ten in a company; shut out from society with others, yet at liberty to converse with one another.

They did not stay till Christ had refreshed Himself after the fatigue of his journey, but met Him as He entered the town, weary as He was; and yet He did not put them off.

They stood afar off, knowing that by the law their disease obliged them to keep their distance. A sense of our spiritual leprosy should make us very humble in all our approaches to Christ. Who are we, that we should draw near to Him that is infinitely pure? We are impure.

2. Their request was unanimous, and very importunate; (v. 13.) They lifted up their voices, being at a distance, and cried, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. Those that expect help from Christ, must take Him for their Master, then He will be Jesus, a Saviour, and not otherwise. They ask not in particular to be cured of their leprosy, but, Have mercy on us; it is enough to refer ourselves to the compassions of Christ, for they fail not. The fame of this Jesus, (though He had not been much conversant in that country,) encouraged them to apply to Him.

3. Christ sent them to the priest, to be inspected by him, who was the judge of the leprosy. He did not tell them positively that they should be cured, but hid them go shew themselves to the priests, v. 14. This was a trial of their obedience, and it was fit it should be so tried, as Naaman's in a like case, Go wash in Jordan. Note, Those that expect Christ's favors, must take them in his way and method. Some of these lepers, perhaps, would be ready to quarrel with the prescription; but, overruled by the rest, they all went to the priest. While the ceremonial law was yet in force, Christ took care it should be observed, and its reputation kept up, and due honor paid to the priests in things pertaining to their function: but, probably, a further design was, to have the priest's judgment of, and testimony to, the perfectness of the cure; and that the priest might be awakened, and others by him, to inquire after One that had such power over diseases.

4. As they went, they were cleansed, and so

became fit to have a certificate from the priest that they were clean. Observe, We may expect God to meet us with mercy, when found in the way of duty. If we do what we can, God will not be wanting to do that for us which we cannot. Go, attend on instituted ordinances, can, and pray, and read the Scriptures; Go shew thyself to the priests; go and open thy case to a faithful minister; and though the means will not heal thee of thyself, God will heal thee in the diligent use of those means.

5. One of them, and but one, returned to give thanks, v. 15. When he saw that he was healed, instead of going to the priest, to be by him declared clean, and so discharged from his confinement, which was all that the rest aimed at, he turned back to Him who was the Author of his cure, whom he wished to have the glory of it, before he received the benefit of it. He appears to have been very hearty and affectionate in his thanksgivings; With a loud voice, as in his prayers, (v. 13.) he glorified God, acknowledging it to come originally from Him. He also made a particular address of thanks to Christ; (v. 16.) and put himself into the most humble, reverent posture he could. Note, We ought to give thanks for the favors Christ bestows on us, particularly for recoveries from sickness; and to be speedy in it, lest time wear out the sense of the mercy. It becomes us also to be very humble in thanksgivings, as well as prayers. The seed of Jacob, like him, should own themselves less than the least of God's mercies, when they have received them, as well as when in pursuit of them.

6. Observe, (1.) The particular notice Christ took of the Samaritan, of the grateful return he made, and the ingratitude of those that were sharers with him in the mercy, v. 17, 18. How rich Christ is in doing good. Were there not ten cleansed? Note, There is an abundance of healing, cleansing virtue in the blood of Christ, sufficient for all patients. We shall have never the less grace for others' snaring it. How poor we are in our returns; 'Where are the nine?' This intimates that ingratitude is a very common sin. Of the many that receive mercy from God, few, very few, scarcely one in ten, return to give thanks, in a right manner, according to

a Gen. 3:9, Ps. 106:13, John 8:7-10. Rom. 12:1. b Ps. 22:1, 50:23, Is. 42:12, Rev. 14:7. c Matt. 8:10, 11, 15:24-28, 19:30, 20:16. d 7:30, 8:48, 18:42, Matt. 9:22, Mark 5:34, 10:52.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11-19. Through pride came ingratitude to God into the world. Of the pumberless multitudes, who have been created, are upheld by his power, and feast on his bounty, how few are thankful for his goodness! When vice and folly bring sickness on men, and the Lord in mercy again restores their health, most of them immediately use their returning vigor, in adding to their former provocations. (Note, Ps. 107: 17-22. P. O. 1-22.) Even of those, who cry unto Him in distress, and entreat Him mercifully to spare them, how few afterwards 'praise Him for his goodness,' and live to his glory! Of those whom ministers visit in sickness, and who give some indications of repentance, how large a proportion, when they recover answer to their prayers, live only to disappoint their expectations! In this case it may generally be said, 'Were there not ten healed? But where are the nine?' And of those, who enjoy the best means of grace, and make some general profession of seeking mercy from Jesus, how few are there, who glorify God by living according to that profession! All this springs from the want of a broken heart, a deep sense of their need of free salvation, real reliance on Christ, and earnest, fre-

quent, persevering application to Him to cleanse them from the leprosy of sin. For when a man is convinced that he must forever be excluded from the company of God and his saints, unless he be cleansed by the divine Savior, he will heartily seek mercy, by using the means of grace, and observe the Lord's directions in humble expectation: and when he experiences the comfort of his forgiveness, and the power of his new-creating Spirit, he will glorify God, and most thankfully adore the gracious Savior. This is the source of gratitude in our sinful hearts; it springs from deep humility and lively faith, and it produces fervent praises and cheerful obedience. Thus strangers are brought nigh to the Lord; poor Samaritans shame and condemn proud Israelites; those who have greatly sinned, love much, because much hath been forgiven them; and whilst they give the whole praise to the Lord, He delights in communicating comfort to them. (P. O. 7: 39-50.)—And let us not forget that we cannot 'honor the Father,' except we honor his beloved Son; and that when we bow to Jesus in adoring gratitude, we most acceptably give glory to God. Scott.

Verses 11-19.

'Marg. Ref. 1-Matt. 8: 1-4, Mark 1: 40-44.) At some place on the confines of Galilee and Samaria, these lepers met Christ in his last circuit; having a general belief of his power to perform the miracle (of their cure.) The priests would not have attended to the case of a Samaritan, and he could not be admitted to offer the appointed sacrifices at the temple; but he took the proper method of showing his gratitude. Probably, the Samaritan alone believed in Jesus, as the Messiah, the Savior of sinners; and this faith, united with a consciousness of his own unworthiness, produced the difference in his conduct. He was therefore dismissed, with the assurance that his faith had saved him; the others obtained this outward cure, he alone the spiritual blessing. (Marg. Ref. 1-Matt. 8: 4-5, Acts 4: 5-12.) The connection between 'returning' to give thanks to Jesus, and 'giving

glory to God,' is peculiarly to be observed. It is probable; that the others, at the temple, gave thanks to God for their recovery; but they disregarded Jesus, their immediate Benefactor. (John 5: 20-23.) Scott

(12.) Afar off. 'These lepers, being excluded from cities, &c., met Christ as He was entering the town, outside the gate. From the rabbinical passages cited by Wetstein and Schoettgen, it appears that the rabbins were not agreed as to the distance lepers must keep from others. Some said, four cubits; others, an hundred.' Bloomfield.

(16.) 'Triller observes that it was customary with sick persons, (especially the poor,) on recovery, to cast themselves down and embrace the knees of their physician; as we find from Hippocrates and Seneca.' L.

20 ¶ And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, ^a when the kingdom of God should come; he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with ^{*} observation.

21 Neither shall they say, 'Lo here! or, Lo there! for, behold, ^a the kingdom of God is [†] within you.

22 And he said unto the disciples, The days will come, ^a when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man, and ye shall not see it.

23 And they shall say unto you, 'See here, or, See there: go not after them, nor follow them.'

24 For ^a as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven, so shall also the Son of man be ^a in his day.

25 But first ^a must he suffer many things, and be ^a rejected of this generation.

26 And ^a as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in ^a the days of the Son of man.

27 They ^a did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark; and the flood came, and destroyed them all.

28 Likewise also, ^a as it was in the days

the benefit done them, and those often prove most grateful, from whom it was least expected. A Samaritan gives thanks, and a Jew does not. Thus many who profess revealed religion, are outdone, and quite ashamed, by some that are governed only by natural religion, not only in moral virtue, but in piety and devotion. This serves here to aggravate the ingratitude of those Jews of whom Christ speaks, as *taking it very ill* that his kindness was so slighted. And it intimates how justly He re- sents the ingratitude of the world of mankind, for whom He had *done so much*, and from whom He has *received so little*.

(2.) The great encouragement Christ gave him, v. 19. The rest had their cure, and not revoked, as justly it might have been, for their ingratitude, though they had such a good example; but he had his cure confirmed particularly with an encomium; *Thy faith hath made thee whole*. The rest were made whole by the power of Christ, in compassion to their distress, and in answer to their prayer; but he by his faith, in which Christ saw him differentiated from the rest. Note, Temporal mercies are then doubled and sweetened, when fetched in by the prayers and returned by the praises of faith.

V. 20-37. We have here a discourse concerning the kingdom of God, that is, the kingdom of the Messiah, now shortly to be set up, and of which there was great expectation.

I. The Pharisees' demand concerning it; they asked *when it should come*; forming a notion of it as a temporal kingdom, which should advance the Jewish nation above all nations: they were impatient to hear some tidings of its approach; they understood perhaps that Christ had taught his disciples to pray for its coming, and they had long preached that it was *at hand*; 'Now,' say the Pharisees, 'when will that glorious view open? When shall we see this long-looked-for kingdom?'

II. Christ's reply to that demand, directed to the Pharisees first, and afterwards to his own disciples, who knew better how to understand it; (v. 22.) what He said to both, he saith to us.

1. That the kingdom of the Messiah was to be a spiritual kingdom, not temporal and external. They asked *when it would come*. 'You know not what you ask,' saith Christ; 'it may come, and you not be aware of it.' (1.) 'It will have a silent entrance, without pomp, without noise; *it cometh not with observation, — with outward show*.' As to the time of it, Christ gives them no answer, but will have their mistakes rectified, concerning its nature; 'The times are secret things, which belong not to you: but the great intentions of this kingdom, those are things revealed.' When Messiah the Prince comes to set up his kingdom, they shall not say, *Lo here, or, Lo there*, as when a prince goes to visit his territories, it is in every body's mouth, he is here, or he is there. Christ will not thus come, nor will the court of his kingdom be here or there; as it respects the country men are of, or the place they dwell in. Those who confine Christianity to place or party, cry, *Lo here, or, Lo there*, than which nothing is more contrary to its design; so do they who make prosperity and external pomp a mark of the true church. (2.) 'It has a spiritual influence; The kingdom of God is within you.' It is not of this world: (John 18: 36.) its glory strikes not men's fancies, but affects their spirits; its power is over their souls and consciences; from them it receives homage, and not from their bodies only. The kingdom of God will not change men's outward condition, but their hearts and lives; then it comes, when it makes those humble, serious and heavenly, who were proud, vain, and carnal; when it weans those from the world, that were wedded to the world; and therefore look for the kingdom of God in the revolutions of the heart, not of the civil government. The kingdom of God is among you; so some read it. 'You inquire when it will come, and are not aware that it is already begun to be set up in the midst of you.'

The Gospel is preached, it is confirmed by miracles, it is embraced by multitudes, so that it is in your nation, though not in your hearts.' Note, It is the folly of many curious inquirers concerning the times to come, that they look for that before them, which is already among them.

2. That the setting up of this kingdom would meet great opposition and interruption, v. 22. The disciples thought they should carry all before them, and expected a constant series of success; but Christ tells them it would be otherwise; 'The days will come, before you have finished your testimony, and done your work, when you shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of man,' (one such a day as we now have,) 'of the prosperity and progress of the Gospel, and shall not see it.' At first, indeed, you will have wonderful success; (so they had, when thousands were added to the church in a day;) but do not think it will be always so; no, you will be persecuted and scattered, silenced and imprisoned.' This looks forward to his disciples, in after-ages; they must expect much disappointment. Ministers and churches will sometimes be under outward restraints. Then they will wish to see such days of opportunity as they formerly enjoyed: those are days of the Son of man; in which we hear from Him, and converse with Him; the time may come, when we may in vain wish for such days. God teaches us to know the worth of such mercies by the want of them; it concerns us while they are continued, to improve them, and in the years of plenty to lay up in store for the years of famine. They will not always have such tokens of the presence of the Son of man, as they have sometimes had; the Spirit is withdrawn from them, they see not their signs, there is great stupidity among the children of men, and great lukewarmness among the children of God; then we would wish to see such victorious, triumphant days of the Son of man as we have sometimes seen, when He has ridden forth with his bow and his crown, conquering and to conquer, but we cannot see them. Note, Christ's church and cause are not lost, because not always alike visible and prevailing.

3. That Christ and his kingdom are not to be looked for in this or that particular place, but his appearance will be general in all places at once, v. 23, 24. 'They will say to you, See here, or, See there; here is one will deliver the Jews out of the hands of the oppressing Romans, or there is one will deliver the Christians out of the hands of the oppressing Jews; here is the Messiah, and there is his prophet. Here in this mountain, or there at Jerusalem, you will find the true church. Go not after them, or follow them; do not heed such suggestions; the kingdom of God was not designed to be the glory of one people only, but to give light to the Gentiles; for as the lightning that lightens out of one part under heaven, shines all on a sudden, irresistibly, to the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of man be in his day.' (1.) 'The judgments that are to destroy the Jewish nation, and deliver the Christians from them, shall fly like lightning through the land; and those marked for this destruction, can no more avoid or oppose it, than they can a flash of lightning.' (2.) 'The Gospel that is to set up Christ's kingdom in the world, shall fly like lightning through the nations; the kingdom of the Messiah is not to be a local thing, but is to be dispersed far and wide over the whole earth; it shall shine from Jerusalem to all parts about, and that in a moment; the kingdoms of the earth shall be leavened by the Gospel, ere they are aware.' The trophies of Christ's victories shall be erected on the ruins of the devil's kingdom, even in those countries that could never be subdued by the Roman yoke. The design of setting up Christ's kingdom, was not to make one nation great, but to make all nations good; some at least, of all nations; and this point shall be gained, though the na-

Verse 21.

Within you.] Several learned men would render the words, 'the

kingdom of God is among you.' (Marg.) But the original word rendered within never has that meaning in Scripture.

of Lot, they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded :

29 But *the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all.

30 Even thus shall it be *in the day when the Son of man is revealed.

31 In that day, *he which shall be upon the house-top, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away ; and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back.

32 *Remember Lot's wife.

33 Whosoever *shall seek to save his life shall lose it ; and whosoever shall lose his life, shall preserve it.

34 *I tell you, *in that night there shall be *two men in one bed ; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left.

35 Two women shall be *grinding together ; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

36 Two *men shall be in the field ; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

37 And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord ? And he said unto them, *Whosoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together.

tions rage, and the kings of the earth set themselves with all their might against it.

4. That the Messiah must suffer before He must reign ; v. 25. His disciples must expect no other than to suffer and be rejected for his sake. They thought of having the kingdom of the Messiah set up in external splendor ; 'No,' saith Christ, 'we must go by the cross to the crown. The Son of man must suffer many things ; pain, and shame, and death, are those many things ; He must be rejected by this generation of unbelieving Jews, before He be embraced by another generation of believing Gentiles ; that his Gospel may have the honor of triumphing over the greatest opposition from those who ought to have given it the greatest assistance ; and thus the excellency of the power will appear to be of God, and not of man ; for though Israel be not gathered, yet He will be glorious to the ends of the earth.'

5. That the setting up the kingdom of the Messiah would introduce the destruction of the Jewish nation, whom it would find in a deep sleep of security, and drowned in sensuality as the old world was in the days of Noah, and Sodom in the days of Lot, v. 26, &c. Observe,

(1.) How it had been with sinners formerly. Concerning both these, [1.] They had fair warning of the ruin coming on them for their sins. Noah was a preacher of righteousness to the old world, so was Lot to the Sodomites : they gave them timely notice of what would be in the end of their wicked ways, and that it was not far off. [2.] They did not regard the warning, but were very secure, went on in their business as unconcerned as you could imagine ; ate, drank, indulged themselves in pleasures, and took no care of any thing, but to make provision for the flesh ; counted on the perpetuity of their present flourishing state, and therefore married, and were given in marriage ; all very merry ; yet very busy too ; they bought, sold, planted, builded : lawful things, but the fault was, they minded these inordinately, so that they had no heart to prepare against the threatening judgments, when they should have been, as the men of Nineveh, fasting and praying, repenting and reforming, upon warning given them. [3.] They continued in their security ; sensuality, till the threatened judgment came ; until the day Noah entered into the ark, and Lot went out of Sodom, nothing said or done to them served to alarm or awaken them. Note, The stupidity of sinners in a sinful way, though as strange as it is inexcusable, yet we are not to think strange, for it is not without example. It is the old way that wicked men have trodden, that have gone slumbering to hell, as if their damnation slumbered while they did. [4.] God took care for the preservation of those that were his, who believed and feared, and took the warning themselves, which they gave to others. Noah entered into the ark, and there was safe ; Lot went out of Sodom, and so out of harm's way. If some run on heedless and headlong to destruction, that shall be no prejudice to the salvation of them that believe. [5.] They were surprised with the ruin which they would not fear, and swallowed up in it, to their unspeakable horror and amazement. The flood came, and destroyed all the sinners of the old world ; fire and brimstone came, and destroyed all the sinners of Sodom. God has many arrows in his quiver, and uses which He will, in making war upon his rebellious subjects, for He can make which He will effectual. But it is especially intended, here, to show what a dreadful surprise destruction will be to the secure and sensual.

(2.) How it will be with sinners still ; v. 30. When Christ comes to destroy the Jewish nation by the Roman armies, the generality of that nation will be found under such a reigning security and stupidity as this. They have warning given by Christ now, and will have it repeated by the apostles after Him ; but it will be all in vain. They will continue secure, will go on in their neglect and opposition of Christ

and his Gospel, till all the Christians are withdrawn from among them, and gone to the place of refuge. God will provide for them on the other side Jordan, and *when a deluge of judgments shall flow in, which will destroy all the unbelieving Jews. One would have thought that this discourse of our Savior's, which was public, and not long after published to the world, should have awakened them ; but it did not, for the hearts of that people were hardened, to their destruction. In like manner, when Christ shall come to judge the world, at the end of time, sinners will be found in the same secure and careless posture, altogether regardless of the judgment approaching, which will therefore come on them as a snare ; and in like manner sinners of every age go on securely in their evil ways, and remember not their latter end, nor the account they must give. Woe to them that are thus at ease in Zion.

6. That it ought to be the care of his disciples and followers, to distinguish themselves from the unbelieving Jews in that day, and leaving them, their city and country, to themselves, to flee at the signal given, according to the direction that should be given ; let them retire, as Noah to his ark, and Lot to his Zoar. You would have healed Jerusalem, as of old Babylon, but she is not healed, and therefore forsake her, flee out of the midst of her, and deliver every man his soul, Jer. 51: 6, 9.

(1.) Their flight from Jerusalem must be expeditious, and not retarded by any concern about their worldly affairs, v. 31. It will be their concern to do as Lot and his family were charged to do ; Escape for thy life. Save yourselves from this uncared generation.

(2.) When they have made their escape, they must not think of returning, v. 32. 'Take warning ; not only flee, but persevere in your flight ; be not loath to leave a place marked for destruction, whomsoever or whatsoever you leave behind.' Those who have left the Sodom of a natural state, let them go forward, and not so much as look a kind look towards it again. Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt, a lasting monument of God's displeasure against apostates, who begin in the spirit and end in the flesh.

(3.) There would be no other way of saving their lives than by quitting the Jews, and if they thought to save themselves by a coalition with them, they would find themselves mistaken, v. 33. Note, Those do best for themselves that trust God in the way of duty.

7. That all good Christians should certainly escape, but many of them very narrowly, from that destruction, v. 34-36. When God's judgments are laying all waste, He will take an effectual course to preserve those that are his, by remarkable providences distinguishing between them and others that were nearest to them. Note, Though the sword devours one as well as another, and all things seem to come alike to all ; yet, sooner or later, it shall be made to appear that the Lord knows them that are his, and them that are not, and how to take out the precious from the vile. We are sure the Judge of all the earth will do right ; and therefore, when He sends a judgment, on purpose to avenge the death of his Son upon those that crucified Him, He will take care that none of those who glorified Him, and gloried in his cross, shall be taken away by that judgment.

Lastly, That this distinguishing, dividing, discriminating work shall be done in all places, as far as the kingdom of God shall extend, v. 37. Where, Lord ? They had inquired concerning the time, and He would not gratify that curiosity ; they therefore ask another question, 'Where, Lord ? Where shall those be safe, that are taken ? Where shall those perish, that are left ?' The answer is proverbial, and may be explained so as to answer each side of the question ; Whosoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together. (1.) Wherever

Gen. 19:15-25. Dent. 29:22-25.
Is. 1:9. 13:19. Jer. 50:40. Hos. 11:1.
Am. 4:11. Zeph. 2:9. Matt. 11:23, 24. 2 Pet. 26. Jude 7. Rev. 11:2.
11:21, 22, 27, 34-35. Matt. 24:37, 38. 2 Thes. 1:1. 2 Tim. 1:13. Rev. 1:7.
1 Jer. 24. Jer. 45:5. Matt. 6:25, 26.
23. 24:17-21. Mark 13:14-16.
Phil. 3:7, 8.
Gen. 19:17, 26. 1 Cor. 10:6-12.
Heb. 10:33, 39. 2 Pet. 2:18-22.
24:25. Matt. 10:39. 16:25. Mark 8:35-37. John 12:25. Rev. 2:10.
13:5, 3, 24. Is. 42:9. Matt. 24:25.
John 13:23. John 14:29.
A Matt. 24:40, 41.
B Ps. 28:9. 28:3. Jer. 45:5. Ex. 9:4-7. Matt. 16:16-18. Rom. 11:4-7.
1 Thes. 4:13, 17. 2 Pet. 2:9.
C Ex. 11:5. Jude 16:21.
D T's wife is wanting in most of the Greek copies.
E John 9:22, 39. Dan. 9:25, 27. Am. 9:1-4. Zech. 13:8, 9. 14:2. Matt. 24:28. 1 Thes. 2:16. Rev. 17:18.

ing security and stupidity as this. They have warning given by Christ now, and will have it repeated by the apostles after Him ; but it will be all in vain. They will continue secure, will go on in their neglect and opposition of Christ

Verse 29.
Rained fire and brimstone. See note. Gen. 19: 24, 25
Evs Biocnfield, 'a sulphureous fire ; that is, lightning.'

'Denoting,'
Ed.

The manner in which our Lord introduces this short but the hatic
warning, is suited to excite our deepest attention.
See note, Gen. 19: 26. E. 077.
Ed.

CHAP. XVIII

The parable of the unjust judge, and the importunate widow, shewing that men should pray without fainting. 1.—8. That of the Pharisee and the publican, 9.—14. ¹ *Jesus receives and blesses little children, shewing that his disciples should be like them, 15.—17. He detects the covetousness of a young ruler; shows the dangers of riches; and promises great rewards to those who forsake things present for his sake, 18.—30. He foretells his own sufferings, death, and resurrection, 31.—34. He opens the eyes of a blind man, 35.—43.*

AND he spake a parable unto them to this end, ^a that men ought always to pray, ^b and not to faint;

2 Saying, There was in a ^c city a judge, ^d which feared not God, neither ^e regarded man:

3 And there was ^a a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, 'Avenge me of mine adversary.'

4 And he would not for a while: but afterward ^e he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;

^a 11:5-4, 21:38. Gen. 39:9-12, 24:26. Job 22:8-10. Ps. 35:16-17, 86:26. ^b *Mark, 14:25-7, Jer. 29:12-13. Rom. 12:12. Eph. 6:18. Phil. 4:6. Col. 3:12, 1 Thes. 5:17. Tit. 2:13. Jas. 5:7. Gal. 6:9. Heb. 12:3-5.*

^c *Gen. certainly, 16:9. Ex. 18:21, 22. 2 Chr. 19:6-9. Job 29:7-17. Ps. 32:1-4. Jer. 22:16, 17. Is. 22:5-8. Mic. 3:1-3. Rom. 3:14-18.*

^d *Prov. 25:7. Is. 23:8. Deut. 27:18. 2 Sam. 14:5, &c. Job 22:9, 23:13. Is. 1:17, 21-23. Jer. 6:28.*

^e *Rom. 13:24. f 12:17. 18:3. Heb. 4:12, 13.*

the wicked are, who are marked for perdition, they shall be found out by the judgments of God. The Jews having made themselves a dead and putrefied carcass, odious to God's holiness and obnoxious to his justice, wherever any of that unbelieving generation is, the judgments of God shall fasten on them, as the eagles do on the prey: *Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies*, (Ps. 21: 8.) though they set their nests among the stars, Obad. 4. The Roman soldiers will hunt the Jews out of all their recesses and fastnesses, and none shall escape. (2.) Wherever the godly are, who are marked for preservation, they shall be found happy in the enjoyment of Christ. As the dissolution of the Jewish church shall be extended to all parts, so shall the constitution of the Christian church. Wherever Christ is, believers will flock to Him, by the instinct of the new nature, and meet in Him, as eagles about the prey, without being directed. Now Christ is where his Gospel, ordinances and church are; *For where two or three are gathered in his name, there is He in the midst of them*, and thither therefore others will be gathered to Him. *Wherever Christ records his name, He will meet his people, and bless them*, John 4: 21, &c. 1 Tim. 2: 8. Many good interpreters understand it of the gathering of the saints together to Christ in the kingdom of glory; 'Ask not where the carcass will be, and how they shall find the way to it, for they shall be under infallible direction; to Him who is their living, quickening Head, and the Centre of their unity, to Him shall the gathering of the people be.'

CHAP. XVIII. v. 1—8. This parable has its key hanging at the door; the drift and design of it are *prefixed*, v. 1. It supposes that all God's people are praying people; all God's children keep up both a constant and an occasional correspondence with Him, send to Him *steadily*, and on every emergency. To pray is our privilege, honor, and duty; we sin if we neglect it. It is to be our constant work; *always, the duty of every day requires it*; we must pray, and never grow weary of praying, nor think of leaving it off till it be swallowed up in everlasting praise. It seems to be the particular design here, to teach us constancy and perseverance in our requests for spiritual mercies, either for ourselves or the church; when

praying for strength against our spiritual enemies, our lusts and corruptions, the worst enemies, we must continue instant in prayer, must pray and not faint, for we shall not seek God's face in vain.

1. Christ shows the power of importunity among men, who will be swayed by that, when nothing else will influence to what is just and right. Observe,

1. The bad character of this judge, v. 2. He had no manner of concern either for his conscience or reputation; no fear of the wrath of God, or the censures of men; or, he took no care to do his duty either to God or man; was a perfect stranger both to godliness and honor. It is not strange, if those that have cast off the fear of their Creator, be altogether regardless of their fellow-creatures; where no fear of God is, no good is to be expected. Such a prevalence of irreligion and inhumanity is bad in any, but very bad in a judge. *Wickedness in the place of judgment*, was one of the sorest evils Solomon saw under the sun, Eccl. 3: 16.

2. The distressed case of this poor widow, v. 3. She had manifestly right on her side; but, it should seem, in soliciting to have right done, she confined not herself to the formalities of the law, but made daily personal application to the judge, crying, *Avenge me of mine adversary*, that is, *Do me justice against mine adversary*; not that she desired revenge, but, 'Oblige him to restore what effects he has of mine, and disable him from oppressing me any more.' Note, Poor widows have often many adversaries, who barbarously take advantage of their weak and helpless state, to invade their rights, and defraud them of what little they have; and magistrates are particularly charged, not only not to do violence to the widow, (Jer. 22: 3.) but to judge the fatherless, and plead for the widow, (Isa. 1: 17.) to be their patrons and protectors; then they are as gods, for God is so, Ps. 68: 5.

3. The difficulty and discouragement she met with; *He would not for a while*: according to his usual practice, he frowned on her, took no notice of her cause, but connived at all the wrong her adversary did her; for she had no bribe to give him, no great man whom he stood in any awe of, to speak for her; and he himself was conscious of the reason of his dilatoriness, and could not but own within himself, that he neither feared God, nor regarded man; it is sad

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 20—37. It is not uncommon for men to profess, that they are inquiring after truth, and 'waiting for the kingdom of God,' while they oppose the progress which it makes among them, and despise those who have set it up within them: and it commonly has the greatest success, when least attended with ostentation; when unassuming modesty and gentleness characterize the instruments employed; and when 'the word of truth and the power of God' silently operate, and nothing noisy or showy attracts notice, or needlessly excites opposition.—Many, who now despise 'the days of the Son of man,' and refuse to hearken to his Gospel, will at length dolefully wish that they might see one more such day; but this will forever be in vain: and, even in this world, those who despise the truth commonly become the dupes of destructive lies, and are given up to strong delusions.—Our blessed Redeemer has finished his sufferings, and ascended into his glory. The generation to whom He preached, and among whom He wrought his miracles, rejected and crucified Him: but his day of vengeance soon arrived, and the Jews were destroyed. Yea, divine vengeance followed even the

scattered remnant of them; and indeed they are in a measure pursued by it to this day. Yet the remnant, who obeyed and trusted Christ, were as remarkably preserved.—But has not the Savior been rejected by other generations also? and is there not a still more awful day coming, when He shall appear to judge the world? In this we are all interested. Yet alas! most men live now, as they did in the days of Noah and of Lot; notwithstanding the warnings given in the Word of God, to prepare to meet Him in judgment! They are generally given up to worldly interests or pleasures, as if life had no period, or there were no future judgment. But let those, who profess to be Christ's disciples, make haste to prepare to meet their God. The time is speedily coming, when they who have lived together in the most endeared relations; will, in numberless instances, be finally and eternally separated; while one shall be taken to heaven, and another left to perish forever in hell. Remember us, O Lord, with the favor that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit us with thy salvation.' (Note, Ps. 106: 4, 5.)

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NOTES

CHAP. XVIII. v. 1—8. (*Marg. Ref. a, b—21: 34—36.*) Men might to pray constantly at stated times: to be habitually in that spirit of humble dependence, desire, and expectation, which give life to prayer; to be frequently offering ejaculatory petitions; and to be always ready for prayer, secret, social, or public, when opportunity is afforded; and they ought not to 'faint,' or grow slack, through delays, disappointments, difficulties, temptations, persecutions, and conflicts with indwelling sin; or even if foiled repeatedly in those conflicts. Our Lord, in giving this general rule, seems to have had a particular reference to the state of his disciples, under the persecutions which visited them from the unbelieving Jews, before his coming with power to set up his kingdom, and execute vengeance on their enemies. For this they were exhorted 'to pray without fainting.' He might indeed deal with them, and leave them to pray, for a long time, under troubles and discouragements, to prove their sincerity, and to increase their humility, simplicity, and fervency; but He would doubtless answer them in due time, deliver them from their afflictions, and speedily^a avenge them on their enemies. This will be speedily; as ^b *God will come soon enough for every good purpose, and in a sudden and*

unexpected manner. (*Marg. Ref. k—p.*) The word *elect*, or *chosen*, must, in this connection, especially mean those who have already been called by divine grace to join the number of fervent supplicants; and the answer to their prayers for deliverance, necessarily implies the infliction of vengeance on their impotent persecutors. The concluding clause may be differently interpreted. Probably our Lord meant, that when He came to deliver the church, and to avenge his people on their Jewish persecutors, He should find but little faith in the land. The Jews would be hardened in unbelief; and the Christians, harassed by long persecutions, would be ready to doubt of the performance of his word; while many would draw back to perdition. It may also refer to the general weakness of the faith of his tempted and afflicted people, while waiting for Him to come to their relief. (*Matt. 24: 13—14, Heb. 10: 23—25.*) Some think a great prevalence of infidelity will take place, just before Christ shall come to judge the world; (*Rev. 20: 7—9.*) as it is probable there will be immediately before the introduction of the millennium. (7, 8.) *Avenge*, (21: 22. *Rom. 12: 19 2 Thes. 1: 8. 1 Pet. 2: 14.*) 'Vengeance belongeth to God'; ^c *but belongs also to the magistrate, as his vicegerent.* (*Rom. 12: 17—21. Rev. 6: 9—11.*)

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5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.

6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.

7 And shall not God ¹avenge his own elect, ²which cry day and night unto him, ³though he bear long with them?

8 I tell you, that ⁴he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, ⁵when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?

[Practical Observations.]

h 118. Judg. 16:16. 2 Sam. 13:24-27. i 39. Matt. 15:23. Mark 10:47, 48. k 11:13. Matt. 7:11. l 1 Sam. 24:12-15. 26:10, 11. Ps. 9:13. 10:15-18. 51:1-7. Jer. 20:11. -13. 2 Thes. 1:6, 7. Rev. 6:10, 11, 12, 13. m 2:37. Ps. 83:1. 1 Thes. 3:10. 1 Tim. 5:5. 2 Tim. 1:3. Rev. 1:15. n Ps. 131:2. Hab. 2:3. Heb. 10:35-37. o Ps. 46:5. 143:7-9. 2 Pet. 2:3. 3:9. p Matt. 24:9-13, 24. 1 Thes. 5:1-3. Heb. 10:23-36. Jam. 5:1-3.

made their duty, and to this He has promised mercy. We ought to be particular in praying against spiritual enemies, as Paul was; *For this thing I besought the Lord thrice*, (like this importunate widow), *that it might depart from me*; Lord, mortify this corruption; Lord, arm me against this temptation. We ought to concern ourselves for the persecuted and oppressed churches, and to pray that God would do them justice, and set them in safety. And herein we must be very urgent, we must cry with earnestness; we must cry *day and night*, as those that believe prayer will be heard at last; we must *restless with God*, as those that know how to value the blessing, and will have no nay. God's praying people are bid to *give Him no rest*, Isa. 62:6, 7.

(3.) What discouragements they may perhaps meet with in their prayers and expectations; He may *bear long with them*.—*He exercises patience toward the adversaries of his people*, and does not take vengeance on them; and *He exercises the patience of his people*, and does not plead for them. He *bore long with the cry of the sin of the Egyptians* that oppressed Israel, and with the cry of the sorrows of those that were oppressed.

(4.) What assurance they have that mercy, though delayed, will come at last, supported by what the unjust judge saith; If this widow prevail by being importunate, much more shall God's elect prevail. For this widow was a *stranger*, nothing related to the judge; but God's praying people are his own elect, whom He knows, and loves, and delights in, and has always concerned Himself for. She was but *one*; but the praying people of God are *many*, all come to Him on the same errand, and agree to ask what they need, Matt. 18: 19. As the saints of heaven surround the throne of glory with united praises, so saints on earth besiege the throne of grace with united prayers. She comes to a *judge* that bid her *keep her distance*; we to a *Father* that bids us *come boldly* to Him, and teaches us to cry, *Abba, Father*. She comes to an *unjust judge*; we to a *righteous Father*, (John 17: 25.) one that regards his own glory and the comforts of his poor creatures, especially those in distress, as *widows and fatherless*. She came to this judge purely on her own account; but God is Himself engaged in the cause we are soliciting; and we can say, *Arise, O Lord, plead thine own cause*; and *what will*

that a man should know so much amiss of himself, and be in no care to amend it.

4. The gaining of her point by *importunity*, v. 5. 'She is resolved she will give me no rest till it is done; therefore I will do it, to save myself further trouble; as good at first as at last.' Thus she got justice done her by continual craving; she begged it at his door, followed him in the streets, solicited him in open court, and still her cry was, *Avenge me of mine adversary*, which he was forced to do, to get rid of her; for his conscience, bad as he was, would not suffer him to send her to prison for an affront to the court.

II. He applies this, for the encouragement of God's praying people to pray with faith and fervency, and to persevere therein.

1. He assures them that God will at length be gracious to them, v. 6. Observe,

(1.) What they desire and expect; that God would *avenge his own elect*. Note, [1.] That there are a people that are God's people, his *elect*, his own *elect*, a choice, chosen people. And this He has an eye to in all He does for them; it is because they are his *chosen*, and in pursuance of this choice. [2.] God's own elect meet with a great deal of trouble and opposition in this world; *many adversaries* fight against them; Satan is their great adversary. [3.] That which is wanted and waited for, is God's preserving and protecting them, and his own work in them; his securing the interest of the church in the world, and of his grace in the heart.

(2.) What is required of God's people to obtain this; they must *cry day and night to Him*; not that He needs their remonstrances, or can be moved by their pleadings, but this He has

Thou do to thy great name? She had no friend to speak for her, and to use interest for her more than her own; but we have an *Advocate with the Father*, his own Son, who *ever lives to make intercession* for us, and has a prevailing interest in heaven. She had no promise of success, no encouragement to ask; but we have the golden sceptre held out to us, are bid to ask, and it is promised that it shall be given us. She could have access to the judge only at certain times; but we may cry to God *day and night*, at all hours, and therefore may the rather hope to prevail by importunity. Her importunity was provoking to the judge, and she might fear lest it should set him more against her; but our importunity is pleasing to God; the prayer of the upright is *his delight*, and therefore, we may hope, shall avail much, if it be an effectual, fervent prayer.

2. He intimates to them that, notwithstanding this, they will begin to be weary of waiting for Him, v. 8. 'Nevertheless, though such assurances are given, that God will avenge his own elect, yet, when the Son of man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?' The Son of man will come to *avenge his own elect*, to plead the cause of persecuted Christians against persecuting Jews; He will come in his providence to plead the cause of his injured people in every age, and finally, at the great day, to determine the controversies of Zion. Now, when He comes, will He find faith in the earth? The question implies a strong negation; No, He shall not; He Himself foresees it. This supposes that it is on earth only that there is occasion for faith: for sinners in hell are *feeling* that which they would not believe, and saints in heaven are *enjoying* that which they did believe. It supposes that faith is the great thing Christ looks for. He looks down on the children of men, and does not ask, Is there *innocency*? but, Is there *faith*? He inquired concerning the faith of those who applied to Him for cures. It supposes that if there were faith, though ever so little, He would discover it. His eye is on the weakest and most obscure believer. It is foretold that, when Christ comes to plead his people's cause, He will find but *little faith* in comparison with what one might expect. That is,

[1.] In general, He will find but *few* really and truly *good people*. Many that have the form and fashion of godliness, but few that have faith, that are sincere and honest: nay, He will find little *fidelity* among men; the *faithful* *few*, Ps. 12: 1, 2. Even to the end of time there will still be occasion for the same complaint; the world will grow no better, nor when it is drawing towards its period. Bad it is, and bad it will be, and worst of all just before Christ's coming; the last times will be the most perilous.

[2.] In particular, He will find few that have *faith* concerning his coming. When He comes to *avenge his own elect*, He looks if there be any faith to *help* and to *uphold*, and wonders that there is none, Isa. 59: 16. 63: 5. It intimates that Christ, both in his particular comings for the relief of his people, and in his general coming at the end of time, may, and will,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-8. The great importance of earnest, persevering prayer, and the hindrances we must expect to meet in attending to it, are brought to our minds with peculiar energy, by these repeated exhortations, 'to pray always, and not to faint' (Eph. 6: 18-20.) and we may learn how to draw instruction from every object, and every incident, by the animating conclusions deduced from the conduct of 'the unjust judge.'—Alas! that there should be so many, even in authority, among professed Christians, who 'neither fear God, nor regard man,' and who glory in impiety and iniquity! No wonder when this is the case, that cruel oppressions and unrighteous decrees abound in cities and provinces: but what will such men do, when God shall cite them to his tribunal, to avenge on them the cause of those whom they have injured, 'because it was in the power of their

hand to do it?'—Whether importunity, or any other address to their self-love, will induce them to do justice, or not, yet God will surely plead the cause of 'his own elect, who cry night and day unto Him, and avenge them' on all their adversaries. We must not indeed seek vengeance on our enemies, but should pray for their conversion: yet we may, and ought, to desire the deliverance of the church from those, who oppress or corrupt her; even though accompanied with their destruction. Whether we seek to be delivered from temptation, to have our iniquities subdued, and our souls comforted; or pray for the peace of the church; we shall at length be answered, if earnest, importunate, and persevering; and, however long the Lord 'bears with us,' our requests will be granted in the best time, and per naps when we least expect it. Scott.

(8.) *Shall He find faith on the earth?* 'The word rendered earth, often signifies, not the earth in general, but some particular land, or country; as in Acts 7: 3, 4, 11. and in numberless other places.' DODDRIDGE.

'The faith referred to seems to be the belief of the particular truth He had been inculcating, namely, that God will, in due time, avenge his elect, and signal^y punish their oppressors.'

CAMPBELL.

9 ¶ And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, and despised others.

10 Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

q 10:29, 15:29, 16:15, Prov. 30:12, 35:55, 66:5, John 9:28, 34, Rom. 7:9, 9:31, 32, 10:3, Phil. 3:4—6.
r 11, 7:39, 15:23, 30, 19:7, John 7:47—49, 8:48, Acts 24:21, 22, Rom. 1:10.
s 1:9, 10, 19:46, 1 Kings 8:30, Acts 3:1.
t 7:29, 30, Matt. 21:31, 32, Acts 23:6—8, 26:5, Phil. 3:5.
u R. 134:1, 135:2, Matt. 6:5, Mark 11:25.
v Jer. 2:23, 35, Ez. 33:31, Mic. 3:11, 1 Cor. 4:7, 8, 15:9, 10, 1 Tim. 1:12, 2 Cor. 1:1, Rev. 3:17.
w 20:47, Matt. 3:7—10, 19:18—20, Gal. 3:10, Phil. 3:9, Jam. 2:9—12.

I. Both address themselves to the duty of prayer at the same place and time, v. 10. It was not the hour of public prayer, but they went thither to offer up their personal devotions, as was usual with good people at that time, when the temple was not only the place, but the medium of worship, and God had promised, in answer to Solomon's request, that, whatever prayer was made in a right manner, in or toward that house, it should therefore the rather be accepted. We must have an eye to Christ, our Temple, in all approaches to God. The Pharisee and the publican both went to the temple, to pray. Note, Among the worshippers of God, in the visible church, there is a mixture of good and bad, some that are accepted of God, and some that are not; and so it has been ever since Cain and Abel brought their offering to the same altar. The Pharisee, proud as he was, could not think himself above prayer; nor could the publican, humble as he was, think himself shut out from the benefit of it; but these went with different views.

1. The Pharisee went to the temple to pray, because it was a public place, more public than the corners of the streets, and therefore he should have many eyes on him, to applaud his devotion. The character Christ gave of the Pharisees, that all their works they did to be seen of men, gives us occasion for this suspicion. Note, Hypocrites keep up the external performances of religion only to save or gain credit. We see many every day at the temple, whom, it is to be feared, we shall not see in the great day at Christ's right hand.

2. The publican went to the temple, because it was appointed to be a house of prayer for all people, Isa. 56:7. The Pharisee came on a compliment, the publican on business; the Pharisee, to make his appearance; the publican, to make his request. Now God sees with what disposition and design we wait on Him in holy ordinances, and will judge of us accordingly.

Verses 9—14.

(9.) *Despised.* It is a very expressive term, and, no doubt, was used, as designating one prominent feature in the character delineated. Many, on different grounds, may have confidence that they are righteous persons; and something in themselves may be either the support or the evidence of that confidence; but when any look down with disdain on other men, it is manifest, that their self-confidence is that of the character here described. Others, 'The rest,' all others, who did not comply with their rules. The Pharisees were especially intended, who relied on exemption from gross immoralities, attendance on the externals of religion, and exact observance of the traditions of the elders. A humble believer indeed will say, 'God, I thank Thee, that I am not like other men;' meaning that the whole difference between him and the worst of those who disgrace civil society, or are cut off from it by the hand of the executioner, is owing wholly to providential restraints, or to the sanctifying grace of God: but at the same time he has very many sins to confess with deep humiliation; he feels himself a guilty, polluted, weak, foolish, indigent creature; he does not generally conclude any one to be viler than he is, all circumstances considered; he prides and prays for the most abandoned, and hopes that they are penitent, whenever there are favorable appearances; and he knows, that he is still liable to be tempted to the most atrocious crimes, yea, and overcome by temptation, unless the Lord uphold him. But the Pharisee spoke as if he had not been a sinner, in any respect; and as if he were in no danger at all of falling into temptation and sin. In fact, there was neither confession of sin nor petition in his prayer; but he was, in his own opinion, 'rich, and increased with goods, and had need of nothing.' (Rev. 3:17.) But truly a man may be exempt from the gross crimes of robbery, extortion, and adultery; and yet be covetous, unmerciful, contentious, revengeful, proud, envious, deceitful;

delay it so long as that, 1st. Wicked people will begin to defy it, and to say, *Where is the promise of his coming?* 2 Pet. 3:4. They will challenge Him to come; (Isa. 5:10. Amos 5:19.) and his delay will harden them in wickedness, Matt. 24:48. 2dly. Even his own people will begin to despair of it. God's time to appear for his people is, when things are brought to the last extremity, and when Zion begins to say, *The Lord has forsaken me.* See Isa. 49:14. 40:27. But this is our comfort, that, when the time appointed comes, it will appear that the unbelief of man has not made the promise of God of no effect.

V. 9—14. The scope of this parable likewise is prefixed to it, and we are told, (v. 9.) for whom it was calculated. For such as had a great conceit of themselves, and their own goodness; they thought themselves as holy as they need be, and holier than all their neighbors, and examples to them. But that was not all; they had a confidence in themselves before God, and depended on the merit of their own righteousness, whenever they addressed God; they thought they had made God their debtor, and might demand any thing from Him. They despised others, as not worthy to be compared with them. Now Christ, by this parable, would show such their folly, and that thereby they shut themselves out from acceptance with God. This is called a *parable*, though there be nothing of similitude in it; it is rather a description of the different temper and language of those that proudly justify themselves, and those that humbly condemn themselves; and their different standing before God. It is matter of fact every day.

II. The Pharisee's address; (a prayer I can not call it; he stood and prayed thus with himself; (v. 11, 12.) standing by himself, he prayed thus, so some read it; he was wholly intent on self, his own praise, and not God's glory; or, standing in some conspicuous place, or setting himself with great state and formality, he prayed thus. What he is supposed to say, shows,

1. That he trusted to himself that he was righteous. Many good things he saith of himself, which we will suppose to be true—he was free from gross and scandalous sins; was not an extortioner, or usurer, nor oppressive to debtors or tenants, but fair and kind to all that depended on him; he was not unjust in any of his dealings; did no man any wrong; was no adulterer, but had possessed his vessel in sanctification and honor. Yet this was not all; he fasted twice in the week, partly as an act of temperance, partly of devotion. The Pharisees and their disciples fasted twice a week, Monday and Thursday; thus he glorified God with his body yet that was not all; he gave tithes, according to the law, and so glorified God with his worldly estate: now all this was very well and commendable. Miserable is the condition of those who come short of the righteousness of this Pharisee; yet he was not accepted; and why? (1.) His giving God thanks for this, though in itself a good thing, yet seems a mere formality. He does not say, *By the grace of God I am that I am*, as Paul, but exclaims, *God, I thank Thee*; intending but a plausible introduction to a proud, vain-glorious ostentation of himself. (2.) He boasts of this, dwells with delight on the subject, as if all his business to the temple was to tell God Almighty how very good he was; and he is ready to say, with those hypocrites that we read of, (Isa. 65:3.) *Wherefore have we fasted, and Thou seest not?* (3.) He trusted to it as a righteousness, not only mentioned, but pleaded it, as if hereby he had merited of God, and made Him his debtor. (4.) Here is not one word of prayer in all he saith. He went up to the temple, to pray, but forgot his errand, was so full of himself and his own goodness, that he thought he had need of nothing, no, not of the favor and grace of God, which, it should seem, he did not think worth asking.

2. That he despised others. (1.) He thought meanly of all mankind but himself; *I thank Thee that I am not as other men are.* He speaks indefinitely, as if he were better than any. We may have reason to thank God that we are not as some notoriously wicked and vile men are; but to speak at random thus, as if all beside us were reprobates, is to judge unwarrantably. (2.) He thought meanly of this publican in particular, whom he had left behind, probably, in the court of the Gentiles, and whose company he had fallen into as he came to the temple. He knew that he was a publican, and therefore very uncharitably concluded that he was an extortioner, unjust, and all that is naught. Sup-

ful; in short, like Satan in all the leading features of his character. He may use uncommanded austerities, 'fast twice a week,' or more frequently, be scrupulously honest in some particulars, even to minuteness; and yet be destitute of judgment, mercy, and the love of God; nay, he may be a hypocrite, a perjurer, and even a sensualist; he may not be 'like the publican,' and yet far worse than he. These emphatical words, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner,' (which in the original imply the idea of atonement as the ground of forgiveness,) when really the language of the heart, express humiliation for sin, repentance, submission to God's righteousness, faith, and hope of pardon and acceptance. (Marg. Ref. b—g.—Ps. 32:3—5. Prov. 28:13. Is. 57:15, 16. Matt. 3:3.) The Pharisee, relying on the merit of his own goodness, and puffed up with an opinion of his singular holiness, remained under the condemnation of the law, and a stranger to the grace of the Gospel; but the publican, by confessing his guilt, and crying for mercy as a sinner, became partaker of the blessings of the new covenant of mercy and grace, according to that rule which has before been considered. (14:7—11.) (12.) Tithes. (11:42. Lev. 27:30—31. Matt. 23:23, 24. Heb. 7:4—10.)

(11.) *Stood.* The Jews were accustomed to pray standing.

'None but persons of the blood royal were allowed to pray sitting.'

'In illustration of such extemporaneous prayer, Weinstein cites R. Bechai: "From the times of Moses to those of the men of the great synagogue, there was no set form of prayer, but every one, for himself peculiarly, made prayer according to his knowledge, wisdom and eloquence."

Extortioners, unjust.] 'The original words denote those who injure by force, and those who overreach by fraud.'

12 I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

13 And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.'

14 I tell you, This man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

15 ¶ And they brought unto him also infants, that he would touch them: but when his disciples saw it, they rebuked them.

16 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not;

for he had been so, and he had known it, what business had he to take notice of it? Could not he say his prayers, (and that was all that the Pharisees did,) without reproaching his neighbors? Or was this a part of his God, I thank Thee? And was he as much pleased with the publican's badness as with his own goodness? There could not be a plainer evidence, not only of the want of humility and charity, but of reigning pride and malice.

III. The publican's address, as full of humility and humiliation as the Pharisee's was of pride and ostentation; and of repentance for sin, and desire toward God, as his was of confidence in himself, and his own righteousness and sufficiency.

1. He expressed his repentance and humility in what he did; and his gesture, when he addressed himself to his devotions, was expressive of great seriousness and humility, and the proper clothing of a broken, penitent, and obedient heart. (1.) He stood afar off. The Pharisee stood, but crowded up as high as he could, to the upper end of the court; the publican, in a sense of his unworthiness to draw near to God, kept at a distance, and perhaps, for fear of offending the Pharisee, whom he observed to look scornfully at him, and of disturbing his devotions. (2.) He would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven, much less his hands, as was usual in prayer. He did lift up his heart to God in the heavens, in holy desires, but, through prevailing shame and humiliation, he did not lift up his eyes in holy confidence and courage. His iniquities are gone over his head, as a heavy burden, so that he is not able to look up, Ps. 40: 12. The dejection of his looks is an indication of the dejection of his mind at the thought of sin. (3.) He smote upon his breast, in a holy indignation at himself for sin; 'Thus would I smite this wicked heart of mine, the poisoned fountain whence flow all the streams of sin.' The sinner's heart first smites him in a penitent rebuke, 2 Sam. 24: 10. David's heart smote him; Sinner, what hast thou done? And then he smites his heart with penitent remorse; O wretched man that I am! Ephraim is said to smite on his thigh, Jer. 31: 19. Great mourners are represented taboring on their breasts, Nah. 2: 7.

2. He expressed it in what he said. His prayer was short; fear and shame hindered him from saying much; sighs and groans swallowed up his words; but what he said was to the purpose, God, be merciful to me a sinner! And blessed be God, that we have this prayer on record, as an answered prayer, and that we are sure that he who prayed it, went to his house justified; so shall we, if we pray it, as he did, through Christ. (1.) He owns himself a sinner by nature, by practice, guilty before God; Behold, I am vile, what shall I answer Thee? The Pharisee denies himself to be a sinner; none of his neighbors can charge him, and he sees no reason to charge himself with any thing amiss;

17:10. Num. 23:4. 1 Sam. 15:13. 2 Kings 10:16. Ps. 7:15. 58:23. Zech. 7:5,6. Matt. 6:1,5,16. 9:14. 15:7-9. Rom. 3:27. 10:1-3. 1 Cor. 1:29. Gal. 1:14. Eph. 2:9. 1 Tim. 4:8.
11:42. Lev. 27:30-33. Num. 18: 24. Mal. 3:8. Matt. 23:23,24.
6:53. 7:6,7. 17:12. Ezr. 9:5. Job 42:5. Ps. 40:12. 1. 6:2. Ezr. 16:53. Dan. 9:7-9. Acts 2:37
23:44. Jer. 31:13,19. 2 Cor. 7:11.
d Ps. 25:7,11. 41:4. 51:1-3. 86:15. 116. 112:1. 133:3,4,7. Dan. 9:5. 9:11,18,19. Heb. 4:16. 8:12.
e 15:18-21. 22:40-43. 2 Cor. 3:12. 13:19,23. Ps. 106:6. 12:1,18. 94:6.
6. Matt. 9:13. Rom. 5:8,20,21. 1 Tim. 1:15. 1 John 1:8-10.
f 9:97. 7:47-50. 1 Sam. 1:18. 2:9-27.
g 10:29. 16:15. Job 9:20. 25:4. Ps. 143:2. In 45:25. 53:11. Rom. 3:20. 4:5. 5:1. 8:33. Gal. 2:18. Jam. 2: 21-25.
h 1:52. 14:11. Ezr. 18:11. Job 22:29. 42:13. Ps. 138:6. Prov. 3:34. 15: 53. 16:9,19. 17:12. 26:23. 27:10. 34:17. 57:15. Dan. 4:37. Hab. 2:4. Matt. 5:3. 23:12. Jam. 4:8,10. 1 Pet. 5:5.
i 1 Sam. 1:24. Matt. 19:13-15. Mark 10:13-16.
k 9:49,50,54.
l Gen. 17:10-14. 9:14. Deut. 29:11. 31:12. 2 Cor. 2:13. Jer. 32:53. Acts 2:39. 1 Cor. 7:14.

he is clean, he is pure from sin; but the publican gives himself no other character than that of a sinner, a convicted criminal at God's bar. (2.) He has no dependence but on the mercy of God; on that, and that only, he relies. The Pharisee had insisted on the merit of his fastings and tithes; but the poor publican disclaims all thought of merit. 'Justice condemns me, nothing will save me but mercy, mercy.' (3.) He earnestly prays for the benefit of that mercy; O God, be merciful, be propitious to me; forgive my sins, be reconciled to me; take me into thy favor; receive me graciously; love me free-y.' He comes as a beggar for an alms, when ready to perish for hunger. Probably, he repeated this prayer with renewed affections, and perhaps said more to the same purport; made a particular confession of his sins, and mentioned the particular mercies he wanted; still this was the burden of his prayer, God, be merciful to me a sinner.

IV. The publican's acceptance with God. There were those who would cry up the Pharisee, and by whom he would go to his house applauded,

and who would look with contempt on this mean-spirited, whining publican. But our Lord, to whom all hearts are open, and no secret hid, who is perfectly acquainted with all proceedings in the court of heaven, assures us that this penitent, broken-hearted publican went to his house justified, rather than the other. 'I tell you, I affirm, and declare it to you with the utmost concern; it is the publican rather.' The proud Pharisee goes away, rejected of God; his thanksgivings, so far from being accepted, are an abomination; he is not justified, his sins are not pardoned, nor he delivered from condemnation: he is not accepted as righteous in God's sight, because so righteous in his own, but the publican, on this humble address to heaven, obtains the remission of his sins.

The reason given for this is, because God's glory is to resist the proud, and give grace to the humble. 1. Proud men, who exalt themselves, are rivals with God, and therefore they shall certainly be abased. God, in his discourse with Job, appeals to this proof that He is God, that He looks upon every one that is proud, and brings him low, Job 40: 12. 2. Humble men, who abase themselves, are subject to God, and they shall be exalted. God has preference for those that will take it as a favor, not demand it as a debt. He shall be exalted into the love of God, and communion with Him; into a satisfaction in Himself, and at last as high as heaven. See how the punishment answers the sin; He that exalteth himself, shall be abased. See how the recompense answers the duty; He that humbles himself, shall be exalted. See also the power of God's grace in bringing good out of evil; the publican had been a great sinner, and out of the greatness of his sin was brought the greatness of his repentance. See, on the contrary, the power of Satan's malice in bringing evil out of good. It was good that the Pharisee was no extortioner, or unjust; but the devil made him proud of this, to his ruin.

V. 15-17. This we had both in Matthew and Mark; it very fitly follows here after the story of the publican, as a confirmation of the truth to be illustrated by that parable, that those shall be accepted with God, and honored, who humble themselves. Observe,

1. Those who are themselves blessed in Christ, should desire to have their children also blessed in Him, and should hereby testify the true honor they have for Christ, by making use of Him, and their true love for their children, by concern about their souls; they brought to Him infants, very young, not able to go, sucking children, as some think. None are too little, too young, to bring to Christ, who knows how to show kindness to them that are not capable of doing service to Him.

2. One gracious touch of Christ's will make our children happy; they brought infants to Him, that He might touch them, in token of the application of his grace and Spirit to them, for that always makes way for his blessing, which, likewise they expected; see Isa. 44: 3. I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and then my blessing on thine offspring.

3. It is no strange thing for those who apply to Christ, for themselves or their children, to meet with discouragement, even from those who should countenance and encourage them; When the disciples saw it, they thought, if this were admitted, it would bring endless trouble on their Master, and therefore they rebuked them, and frowned on them. The spouse complained of the watchmen, Cant. 3: 3. 5: 7.

4. Many, whom the disciples rebuke, the Master invites; Jesus called them unto Him, when, on the disciples' check, they were retiring.

(12.) I fast twice a week. 'It is said these fasts were observed by the Jews on the second day of the week, because Moses then ascended mount Sinai; and on the fifth, because he then descended, on account of the worship of the golden calf.'

(13.) God be merciful, &c. 'Be propitious to me through sacrifice; or, in an atonement he made for me. I am a sinner, and cannot be saved but in this way.'

(14.) Justified. The original word here denotes absolved, treated as just, accepted, approved, as Rom. 3: 20. Schoettgen tells us, that it is a well-known formula among the Jews, that those who have offered up sacrifices depart from the temple just; and one of their [654]

writers says, whosoever approaches the temple full of sins, and offers sacrifices, his sins are remitted.'

Verse 15.

Of such, &c. 'I cannot approve of rendering the original words here such as resemble these. It is the part of a faithful translator not to limit the sense of the original, nor to fix what it leaves ambiguous. Doddridge. 'Children must have been included in the word, "such," because the proposition, "the kingdom of God belongs to humble adults, to such as have as little pride and arrogance as children," would be no reason why children should not be prevented from coming to Jesus.'

STORR AND PLATE

BLOOMFIELD.

of such is the kingdom of God.

17 Verily I say unto you, 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein.

[Practical Observations.]

18 ¶ And a certain ruler asked him, saying, 'Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?

19 And Jesus said unto him, 'Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is God.

20 Thou 'knowest the commandments, 'Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor thy father and thy mother.

21 And he said, 'All these have I kept from my youth up.

22 Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou 'one thing: 'sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: 'and come, follow me.

m Matt. 19:3,4. 1 Cor. 14:20. 1 Pet. 2:2.

n Ps. 131:1,2. Mark 10:15, 16. Matt. 19:16. Mark 10:17. p 6:46. Ez. 33:31. Mal. 1:8. John 13:14-16.

q 10:25 Acts 2:37. 16:30. 12:25. 11:13. Job 14:4. 15:14-16. 23:4. 1 Tim. 3:16. Heb. 7:26. Jam. 1:7.

r 10:26-28. Is. 8:20. Matt. 19:17-19. Mark 10:18,19. Rom. 3:20. 7:7-11.

Ex. 20:12-17. Deut. 5:16-21. Rom. 13:9. Gal. 3:10-13 Eph. 6:2. Col. 3:20. Jam. 2:8-11.

u 11:12. 15:7-29. Matt. 19:20,21. Mark 10:20,21. Rom. 10:2,3. Phil. 8:8.

x 10:42. Ps. 27:4. Phil. 3:13. 2 Pet. 3:8.

y 12:33. 16:9. Matt. 6:19,20. Act. 2:44,45. 4:34-37. 1 Tim. 6:18,19. z 12:20,57-62. Matt. 19:21,23.

V. 9-17. Too many, of different descriptions, 'trust in themselves that they are righteous'; whilst their contempt of others proves the haughtiness and uncharitableness of their hearts. Such men may address the Lord, in a high tone of confidence and familiarity, profess to give Him the glory, boast that they are not extortioners, unjust, or adulterers, and glory in their gifts, fortunes, notions, or austerities; yet it will be proved, that 'they have exalted themselves,' and therefore God will certainly 'abase them'; and all their revellings, calumnies, and rash judgments will fall on their own heads, and increase their shame and everlasting contempt; except they be previously humbled in deep repentance, and come, with 'the publicans and sinners' whom they disdain, for unmerited mercy through the great atonement.—But 'blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven.' Matt. 5: 3. The man, who abhors and condemns himself; who approaches God

They did not appeal from the disciples to the Master, but the Master took cognizance of their despised cause.

5. It is the mind of Christ, that *little children* should be brought to Him, and presented as living sacrifices to His honor; 'Suffer little children to come to Me, and forbid them not; let nothing be done to hinder them, for they shall be as welcome as any.' The promise is to us, and to our seed; and therefore He has the dispensing of promised blessings, will bid them welcome to Him with us.

6. The children of those who belong to the kingdom of God, likewise belong to that kingdom, as the children of freemen are freemen. If the parents be members of the visible church, the children are so too; for if the root be holy, the branches are so.

7. So welcome are children to Christ, that those grown people are most welcome to Him, who have in them most of the disposition of children; (p. 17.) *Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child*, that is, receive the benefits of it with humility and thankfulness, not pretending to merit them, as the Pharisee, but gladly owning himself indebted to free grace for them, as the publican; unless brought to this self-denying frame, he shall in no wise enter into that kingdom. They must receive the kingdom of God as children, receive their estates by descent and inheritance, not by purchase, and call it their Father's gift.

V. 18-30. In these verses we have, I. Christ's discourse with a ruler, that had a good mind to be directed in the way to heaven. Observe,

1. It is a blessed sight to see persons of distinction in the world, distinguish themselves by concern about their souls and another life. Luke notes that he was a ruler; few of these had any esteem for Christ; whether a church or state-ruler, does not appear, but he was one in authority.

2. The great thing every one of us is concerned to inquire after is, what we shall do, to get to heaven; to inherit eternal life. This implies such a belief of an eternal life after this, as atheists and infidels have not; such a concern to make it sure, as a careless, unthinking world have not; and such a willingness to comply with any terms that it may be made sure, as those have not, who are resolutely devoted to the world and the flesh.

3. Those who would inherit eternal life, must apply to Christ as their Master, their teaching Master, so it signifies here, and their ruling Master, and so they shall certainly find Him. There is no learning the way to heaven, but in the school of Christ.

4. Those who come to Christ as their Master, must believe Him to have not only a divine mission, but a divine goodness. Christ would have this ruler know, that, if he understood himself aright in calling Him good, he did, in effect, call Him God; and indeed He was so; (p. 19.)

'Why callest thou Me good? Thou knowest there is none good but One, that is, God: and dost thou then take Me for God? If so, thou art in the right.'

5. Christ Himself has not altered the way to heaven from what it was before his coming, but only has made it more plain and easy, and provided for our relief in case we take any false step. Thou knowest the commandments; Christ came not to destroy the law and the prophets, but to establish them. Wouldest thou inherit eternal life? Govern thyself by the commandments.

6. The duties of the second table must be conscientiously observed, in order to our happiness, and we must not think that any acts of devotion, how plausible soever, will atone for the neglect of them. Nor is it enough to keep ourselves free from the gross violations of these commandments, but we must know these commandments, as Christ has explained them in his sermon on the mount, in their extent an spiritual nature, and so observe them.

7. Men think themselves innocent, because they are ignorant; so this ruler did, v. 21. He knows no more evil of himself than the Pharisee did, v. 11. He boasts that he began early in a course of virtue; that he had continued in it to this day; and that he had not in any instance transgressed. Had he been acquainted with the extent and spiritual nature of the divine law, and with the workings of his own heart; had he been but Christ's disciple a while, and learned of Him, he would have said the quite contrary; 'All these have I broken from my youth up, in thought, word, and deed.'

8. The great things by which we are to try our spiritual state are, how we stand affected to Christ and to our brethren, to this world and to the other; by these this man was tried. If he have a true affection to Christ, he will come and follow Him, attend to his doctrine, and submit to his discipline. None shall inherit eternal life, who are not willing to take their lot with the Lord Jesus, to follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes. If he have a true affection to his brethren, he will, as there is occasion, distribute to the poor, who are God's receivers of his dues out of our estates. If he think meanly of this world, as he ought, he will not stick at selling what he has, if there be a necessity for it, for the relief of God's poor. If he think highly of the other world, as he ought, he will desire no more than to have treasure in heaven, and will reckon that a sufficient, abundant recompense for all that he has left, lost, or laid out for God in this world.

9. Many have much in them that is very commendable, and yet perish for lack of some one thing; so this ruler here liked all Christ's terms very well, but this which would part between him and his estate; 'In this, I pray Thee, have me excused.'

10. Many are loath to leave Christ, who yet do leave Him. After a long struggle between

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with deep self-abasement and reverence; who looks into his past life, his present conduct, his heart, his duties, with humiliation of soul; who is ready to think every one better than himself, and must despair were it not for free salvation by the Gospel of Christ; who seeks for mercy in the way, and through the name, which God has revealed: this man will surely be heard and accepted, when he breathes out, 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' This is the path to honor, glory, immortality, and eternal life; whilst 'pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.' Let us then take heed, not to glory in ourselves, or to despise others; let us also be careful not to discourage the weak or the ignorant, or to deter men from coming themselves, or bringing their children, to Christ; and let us recollect, that 'except we receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, we shall in no wise enter therein.'

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Verses 18-30.

(Marg. Ref.) 'Let us not mistake the character of this individual. He was unquestionably covetous; for it is said of him that he had large possessions, which he could not find in his heart to sell, and give to the poor, at the command of Him whom he professed to reverence as the Messiah. Christ detected the covetousness of his heart, by his refusal to pursue the course of external conduct prescribed to him: and this exposed the deficiency of his moral charac-

ter; for covetousness is immorality of the worst kind, according to 'the Gospel.' Christian Observer. (18.) A ruler. (See on 14:1. It is not very probable, that this person was a member of the sanhedrim; but rather a magistrate in some other court, or a ruler of a synagogue. (30.) Manifest more.) 'From the joys of a good conscience, and of the Holy Ghost, the sense of God's favor, and the hope of treasures in heaven, and the affection of good Christians to him.' Whitby.

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CHAP. XIX.

The conversion of Zaccheus the publican 1-10. The parable of a nobleman going to receive a kingdom, and intrusting money to his servants; with the account required of them, and the punishment of his enemies, 11-27. Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on an ass, amidst the acclamations of the multitude, 28-38. He answers the objection of the Pharisees, 39, 40; weeps over the city, and predicts its destruction, 41-44; drives the traders from the temple, 45, 46; and teaches daily here, while the rulers seek to kill him, 47, 48.

AND Jesus entered and passed through Jericho.

Josh. 21, 61. Gal. 2. 23. 1 Kings 16: 34. 2 Kings 21: 18-22.

things, that they *understood none of these things*, v. 34. Their prejudices were so strong, that they *could not understand them literally*, and they *could not understand them otherwise*, so that they did not understand them at all; it was a mystery, a riddle to them—it must be so; but they think it impossible to be reconciled with the glory and honor of the Messiah, and the design of setting up his kingdom. This saying was *hid from them*,—was apocrypha to them, they could not receive it: they had read the Old Testament many a time, but could never see any thing in it that should be *accomplished* in the disgrace and death of this Messiah. They were so intent on those prophecies that spake of his glory, that they overlooked those that spake of his *sufferings*; these the scribes and doctors of the law should have directed them to notice, and should have brought into their creeds and catechisms, as well as the other; but they did not suit their scheme, and therefore were laid aside. Note, *Therefore it is that people run into mistakes*, because they *read their Bibles by halves*, and are as partial in the prophets as in the law. They are only for the *smooth things*, Isa. 30: 10. Thus now we are too apt, in reading the prophecies yet to be fulfilled, to have our expectations raised of the glorious state of the church in the latter days. But we overlook its wilderness, sackcloth-state, and are willing to fancy that is over, and nothing is reserved for us but halcyon days; and then, when tribulation and persecution arise, we do not *understand it*, neither *know we the things that are done*; though told plainly that *through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God*.

V. 35-43. Christ came not only to bring *light to a dark world*, and so to set before us the *objects* we are to have in view, but also to give *sight to blind souls*, and, by healing the *organ*, to enable them to view those objects. As a token of this, He cured many of bodily blindness; here He gave *sight to one near Jericho*; Mark (10: 46.) names one whom He cured as *He went out of Jericho*; Matthew (20: 30.) speaks of two, whom He cured as they *departed from Jericho*. Luke says it was *when He was near to Jericho*, which might be when He was going out of it, as well as when He was coming into it. Observe,

I. This blind man *sat by the way-side begging*, v. 35. It seems he was not only *blind but poor*, had nothing to subsist on, nor any relations to maintain him; the fitter emblem of the world of mankind which Christ came to heal and save: who are *wretched and miserable*, being both *poor and blind*, Rev. 3: 17. He sat begging, for he could not work for his living. Note, Those ought to be relieved by charity, whom providence has disabled to get their own bread. Christ here cast a favorable eye on a *common beggar*, and though there are *creatures among such*, yet they must not therefore be all thought so.

II. Hearing the noise of a multitude passing by, he asked *what it meant*, v. 36. This we had not before. It teaches us that it is good to be *inquisitive*, and that such, some time or other, find the benefit of it. Those who want their *sight*, should make so much the better use of their *hearing*, and by *asking questions*, make use of other people's eyes. So this blind man did, and so came to understand that *Jesus of Nazareth passed by*, v. 37. It is good being in Christ's way; and, when we have an opportunity of applying to Him, not to let it slip.

V. 18-43. The best obedience of mere man must leave him under condemnation; and the higher any man's confidence is, that he has kept all the commandments, or any of them, the more clearly does it appear, that he wants understanding as to the spiritual meaning of them; and that he is a stranger to repentance, to faith, to his own real character and heart; and his need of a gratuitous salvation. (Rom. 7: 7-12.) Prosperity, authority, and reputation, conduce to feed self-flattery, as well as an idolatrous attachment to earthly objects; so that it would be impossible for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God; were it not, that 'with God all things are possible.'—Men in general are as backward to derive instruction from the humiliation, crucifixion, and resurrection of Christ, as the disciples were to regard his declarations concerning those events. Thus they are left in the dark about the evident meaning of

to our Savior. No instance is recorded in Scripture of this miracle having been wrought, either by prophets before his coming, or by his apostles afterwards: nor is it mentioned among the miraculous powers which He conferred on them. In answer to Elisha's prayer, indeed, the Lord smote with a temporary and partial blindness, the men who came to take the prophet, and afterwards, at his request, their eyes were again opened; but this was very different from giving sight to

ferings, are here most insisted on. The other evangelists had said that He should be *mocked*; but here it is added, *He shall be spitefully treated—He shall be loaded with contumely and contempt*, shall have all possible reproach put on Him. This was that part of his sufferings by which, in a spiritual manner, he satisfied God's justice for the injury we had done Him in his honor by sin. This particular instance of disgrace, that *he was spit upon*, had been particularly foretold, Isa. 50: 6. But here as always, when Christ spake of his sufferings and death, He foretold his resurrection as taking off both the terror and reproach of his sufferings, v. 33.

II. The confusion of the disciples; this was so contrary to their notions of the Messiah and his kingdom, and their expectations from their Master, and such a breaking of all their measures, that they *understood none of these things*, v. 34. Their prejudices were so strong, that they *could not understand them literally*, and they *could not understand them otherwise*, so that they did not understand them at all; it was a mystery, a riddle to them—it must be so; but they think it impossible to be reconciled with the glory and honor of the Messiah, and the design of setting up his kingdom. This saying was *hid from them*,—was apocrypha to them, they could not receive it: they had read the Old Testament many a time, but could never see any thing in it that should be *accomplished* in the disgrace and death of this Messiah. They were so intent on those prophecies that spake of his glory, that they overlooked those that spake of his *sufferings*; these the scribes and doctors of the law should have directed them to notice, and should have brought into their creeds and catechisms, as well as the other; but they did not suit their scheme, and therefore were laid aside. Note, *Therefore it is that people run into mistakes*, because they *read their Bibles by halves*, and are as partial in the prophets as in the law. They are only for the *smooth things*, Isa. 30: 10. Thus now we are too apt, in reading the prophecies yet to be fulfilled, to have our expectations raised of the glorious state of the church in the latter days. But we overlook its wilderness, sackcloth-state, and are willing to fancy that is over, and nothing is reserved for us but halcyon days; and then, when tribulation and persecution arise, we do not *understand it*, neither *know we the things that are done*; though told plainly that *through many tribulations we must enter into the kingdom of God*.

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the Scriptures; while they perplex or amuse themselves and others, by endeavoring to find out some hidden sense, which accords better to their preconceived opinions. Were it not for this, all would see, that they would best consult their present comfort, as well as their eternal good, by renouncing every earthly possession or enjoyment, at Christ's command and for his sake.—Would we then rightly understand these things, we must come to Him, like the blind man, earnestly beseeching Him to open our eyes, and to show us, more and more clearly, the excellency of his precepts, and the preciousness of his salvation; and then, being saved by our faith, we shall learn to follow Him, glorifying God: and his other disciples also, witnessing the change, will praise God continually on our behalf. (Gal. 1: 15-24.)

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III. His prayer, as much both of faith and fervency, v. 38. He owns Christ to be the *Son of David*, the Messiah promised; he believes Him to be Jesus a Savior, able to help and succor him, and earnestly begs his favor; *'Have mercy on me, pardon my sin, pity my misery.'* Christ is a merciful King; those that apply to Him as the *Son of David*, shall find Him so, and ask enough when they pray, *'Have mercy'*, for Christ's mercy includes all.

IV. Persons in earnest for Christ's blessings, will not be put by from the pursuit of them, by opposition and rebuke. They who went along, chid him as troublesome to the Master, noisy, and impertinent, and bid him *hold his peace*; but he went on with his petition, nay, the check was but as a dam to a full stream, making it swell so much the more; he *cried the louder*, *'Thou Son of David, have mercy on me.'* Those who would speed in prayer, must be importunate in it. This history, in the close of the chapter, speaks the same thing with the parable in the beginning of it, that *men ought always to pray and not to faint*.

V. Christ encourages poor beggars, whom men frown on, invites them to come to him, and is ready to bid them welcome; v. 40. Note. Christ has more tenderness and compassion for distressed supplicants than any of his followers; though on his journey, yet He stopped and stood, and *commanded him to be brought to Him*.

VI. Though Christ knows all our wants, He will know them from us, v. 41. By spreading our case before God, with a particular representation of our wants and burdens, we teach ourselves to value the mercy we are in pursuit of; if we do not, we are not fit to receive it. This man poured out his soul before Christ, when he said, *'Lord, that I may receive my sight.'* Thus particular should we be in prayer, on particular occasions.

VII. The prayer of faith, guided by and grounded on Christ's encouraging promises, shall not be in vain; nay, it shall not only receive an *answer of peace*, but of *honor*, v. 42. True faith will produce fervency in prayer, and both together will fetch in abundance of the fruits of Christ's favor; doubly comfortable, when coming in that way, when we are *saved by faith*.

VIII. The *grace of Christ* is to be thankfully acknowledged, to the *glory of God*, v. 43. 1. The poor beggar *followed Christ, glorifying God*. Christ made it his business to glorify his Father; and those whom He healed, then *pleased Him best*, when they *praised God*, as those shall *please God best*, who *praise and honor Christ*; for in *confessing that He is Lord*, we *give glory to God the Father*. It is for the *glory of God* if we *follow Christ*, as those will do, whose eyes are opened. 2. The people that *saw it*, could not forbear *giving praise to God*, who had given such power to the *Son of man*, and by Him had conferred such favors on the *sons of men*. Note, We must give praise to God for his mercies to others as well as ourselves.

CHAP. XIX. v. 1-10. Many, no doubt were converted to the faith of Christ, of whom

those who were born blind, or who had become blind by disease. Our Lord was 'the Light of the world.' 'The eyes of the blind being opened,' is frequently mentioned by the prophets, as accompanying the advent of the Messiah; and the literal fulfillment of these predictions was a striking emblem of the effects of his Gospel and grace, in enlightening the minds of men. (Ps. 146: 8. Jer. 39: 17-19.) See also (38.) *By the way-side begging.* See on ch. 16 2^o.

2 And, behold, *there was* a man named Zaccheus, which was the chief among the publicans; and he was rich.

3 And ^ehe sought to see Jesus, who he was; and could not for the press, ^dbecause he was little of stature.

4 And he ran before, ^eand climbed up into ^aa sycamore tree to see him: for he was to pass that way.

5 And when Jesus came to the place, ^ehe looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, ^bZaccheus, make haste, and come down; ^cfor to-day I must abide at thy house.

6 And ^bhe made haste, and came down, and received him ^bjoyfully.

b 18:24-27. 2 Chr. 17:5, 6.
c 8:7-9. 33:8. John 12:21.
d 18:25.
e 5:19.
f 1 Kings 10:27. Is. 9:10. Am. 7:14.
g Ps. 16:6. John 1:48. 4:7-10.
h Ec. 9:10. 2 Cor. 6:1, 2.
i 10. Gen. 18:3-5. 19:1-3. Ps. 101:2-3. John 14:23. Eph. 3:17.
j Heb. 13:2. Rev. 3:20.
k 2:16. Gen. 18:6, 7. Ps. 119:59, 60.
l Gal. 1:15, 19.
m 5:29. Is. 64:5. Acts 2:41. 16:15, 34.

2. He could not gratify his curiosity in this, because he was little, and the crowd great.

Christ did not study to *show Himself*, was not carried on men's shoulders, (as the pope is in procession,) that all might see Him: neither He nor his kingdom came with observation; He did not ride in an open chariot, as princes do, but, as *one of us*, He was lost in a crowd; for that was the day of his humiliation. Many that are little of stature, have large souls, and a lively spirit. Who would not rather be a Zaccheus than a Saul, though he was *higher by head and shoulders* than all about him? Let not the little of stature take thought of adding cubits to it.

3. Because he would not disappoint his curiosity, he *forgot his gravity*, as chief of the publicans, and *ran before*, like a boy, and *climbed up into a sycamore-tree*, to see Him. Note, Those that sincerely desire a sight of Christ, will use the proper means, will break through difficulty and opposition, and be willing to take pains to see Him.

III. Christ's notice of him, calling him to a further acquaintance, (v. 5.) and the efficacy of that call, v. 6.

1. Christ *invited Himself* to Zaccheus' house, not doubting of a hearty welcome; nay, wherever Christ comes, as He brings his own *entertainment* with Him, so He brings his own *welcome*; He opens the heart, inclining it to receive Him. See how Christ *prevented* him with the blessings of his goodness, and *outdid* his expectations; how He *encouraged* very weak beginnings. He that had a mind to know Christ, shall be *known of Him*; he that only courted to see Him, shall be admitted to converse with Him. Note, Those that are faithful in a little, shall be intrusted with more. And sometimes those that come to hear the Word of Christ, like Zaccheus, only for curiosity, beyond what they thought of, have their consciences awakened, and their hearts changed. Christ called him *by name*; He knows his chosen by

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. v. 1-10. It is probable Zaccheus possessed considerable property, before he engaged in this employment (of a publican;) as large securities were required of those who farmed the taxes under the Roman governors; but he had doubtless greatly increased his wealth by his lucrative occupation. (Marg. Ref. a, b.) It does not appear, that he had previously any serious concern about religion. In what manner the words of our Lord affected his mind, we cannot tell; but, without doubt, they were attended with a divine influence, to humble and change his heart, and to make way for true repentance and living faith: he therefore gladly welcomed Christ, and doubtless was further instructed, convinced, and determined, by his discourse. Whilst the Pharisees and others, as usual, murmured at our Lord's thus inviting Himself to be the guest of a man "who was a sinner," (15: 1, 2,) and this in preference to any of the priests or Levites who resided there, (Note, 10: 30-37, v. 31.) Zaccheus stood forth, in the midst of the company, and avowed the change which had taken place in his mind and heart, his judgment and disposition. The publicans were used to charge the people more than the real amount of their taxes; and thence, if they refused to pay it, they falsely accused them

name; are they not in his book? He might ask, as Nathanael, (John 1: 48.) *Whence knowest Thou me?* But before he climbed the sycamore-tree, Christ saw him, and knew him. He bid him *make haste, and come down*. Those that Christ calls, must come down, must humble themselves, and not think to climb to heaven by any righteousness of their own: and they must *make haste*, for delays are dangerous. Zaccheus must not hesitate, but hasten; he knows it is not a matter that needs consideration, whether he should welcome such a guest to his house. *Behold, He stands at the door, and knocks*.

2. Zaccheus was *overtaken* by his house thus honored, v. 6. And his receiving Him into his house, betokens his receiving Him into his heart. Note, When Christ calls, we must make haste to answer; and when He comes to us, we must receive Him joyfully; *Lift up your heads, O ye gates*. We may well receive Him joyfully, who brings all good with Him, and when He takes possession of the soul, opens springs of joy there, which shall flow to eternity. How often has Christ said to us, *Open to Me*, when we have, with the spouse, made excuses, Cant. 5: 2, 3. Zaccheus' forwardness to receive Christ, shames us. We have Him not now to entertain in our houses, but we have his disciples, and what is done to them, He takes as to Himself.

IV. The offence taken at this kind greeting. Those narrow-souled, censorious Jews murmured, saying, *He was gone to be a Guest with a sinner,—a sinful man*; and were not they themselves sinful men? Was it not Christ's errand into the world, to seek and save men that are sinners? But Zaccheus they think to be a sinner above all that dwell in Jericho; a sinner not fit to be conversed with.

Now this was very unjust to blame Christ for going to his house; for, 1. Though he was a publican, and many of the publicans were bad men, it did not therefore follow that they were all so; we must take heed of condemning men in the lump, or by common fame, for at God's bar every man will be judged as he is. 2. Though he had been a sinner, it did not therefore follow that he was now as bad as he had been; though they knew his past life to be bad, Christ might know his present frame to be good. God allows room for repentance, and so must we. 3. Though now a sinner, they ought not to blame Christ's going to him, because He was in no danger of getting hurt by a sinner, but in great hopes of doing good to a sinner; whether should the physician go but to the sick? Yet see how what is well done, may be ill construed.

V. The proofs Zaccheus gave publicly, that, though he had been a sinner, he was now a penitent, a true convert, v. 8. He does not expect to be justified by his works, as the Pharisee who boasted of what he had done, but by his good works he will, through the grace of God, evidence the sincerity of his faith and repentance; and here he declares his determination. He stood, to be seen and heard by those who murmured; with the mouth confession is made of repentance as well as faith. He stood, which denotes his saying it deliberately and with solemnity, as a vow to God. He addressed himself, not to the people, (they were not to be his judges,) but to the Lord; he stands, as it

to the Romans, as disobedient to their authority; thus they obtained the assistance of the military to enforce their exorbitant demands. (Marg. Ref. n, o.—10-14.) It has been argued, that he could not have got much of his wealth by extortion; or his estate would not have sufficed for such a restitution, after half of it had been given to the poor; especially if he reserved any part of it for himself. But it is more reasonable to suppose, that he did not give half to the poor, till after restitution had been made; as he could not previously consider his riches as his own, even to give away. (Is. 61: 8.) Perhaps he lay under a worse character than he really deserved; yet the transaction seems to be purposely recorded as an illustrious triumph of mercy and grace; (18: 24-27. Matt. 19: 23-26.) and the whole narration implies that he was before a man who bore a bad character. Scott.

(2.) Chief.] 'Zaccheus seems to have been what was called a promagister, or chief officer of the customs, having the superintendence of the sub-receivers of taxes, who collected the tolls of harbors, &c. Such a promagister (or vice-master) represented in the province the chief of a society of farmers of the revenue, consisting of Roman knights, or a *magister societatis publicanorum*, who always resided in Rome.' Adam, in ROBINSON.

7 And when they saw *it*,^a they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.

8 And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, ^a Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man^b by false accusation, ^a I restore him four-fold.

9 And Jesus said unto him, ^a This day is salvation come to this house, ^a forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham.

10 For ^a the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.

[Practical Observations.]

11 ¶ And as they heard these things, he

Mat. 5:30, 7:34, 39, 15:2, 18:9-14.
 Matt. 9:11, 21:28-31.
 a 3:3-13, 11:41, 12:33, 16:9, 18:22, 23:35, Acts 2:44-46, 4:34, 35, 2 Cor. 8:7, 8, 1 Tim. 6:17, 19, Jam. 1:10, 11.
 b Ex. 22:1-4, Lev. 6:1-8, 1 Sam. 12:3, 2 Sam. 12:6, Prov. 6:31.
 c 2:30, 13:30, John 4:38-42, Acts 16:30-32, 1 Cor. 6:9-11, 1 Pet. 2:10.
 d 13:16, Rom. 4:11, 12, Gal. 3:7, 14, 23, 5:31, 12:32, 15:4-7, 32, Matt. 1:21, 9:12, 13, 10:6, 1:24, 18:11, 1 Tim. 1:12-16, Heb. 7:25, 1 John 4:9-14.

tion, or if I have wronged any man in the way of my business as a publican, exacting more than was appointed, I promise to restore him *fourfold*.^c This restitution a thief was to make, Exod. 22: 1. (1.) He seems plainly to own he had *done wrong*, (his office giving him opportunity,) imposing on the merchants, to get in favor with the government. True penitents will not only own themselves in general guilty before God, but will particularly reflect on that iniquity which, by reason of their employment in the world, has most easily beset them. (2.) That he had done wrong *by false accusation*; of this temptation, John Baptist had warned publicans particularly, Luke 3: 14. They had the ear of the government, and every thing would be stretched in favor of the revenue, giving them opportunity of gratifying their revenge, if they bore a man an ill-will. (3.) He promises to restore *four-fold*, as far as he could recollect, or find by his books, that he had *wronged any man*. He does not say, 'If I be sued, and compelled to it, I will make restitution;' (some are *honest* when they cannot help it;) but he will do it *voluntarily*. Note, Those who are convinced of having done wrong, cannot evade the sincerity of their repentance but by *making restitution*. Observe, He does not think that giving half his estate to the poor, will atone for the wrong he has done. *God hates robbery for burnt-offerings*, and we must first do *justly*, and then *love mercy*. It is no charity, but hypocrisy, to give what is *not our own*; and we are not to reckon that our own which we have not come honestly by, nor which is not so, when all our debts are paid, and restitution made for wrong done.

V. 1-10. Our Lord illustrates by facts, what He declares in words, concerning the omnipotency of his grace, and the exceeding riches of his pardoning mercy. Many are brought to the places where Jesus dispenses his blessings, without any design of obtaining a share of them: and curiosity, though idle and vain, is often overruled to bring men acquainted with the Gospel. Where the Gospel is preached, Jesus 'stands and knocks at the door' of a man's heart, demanding admission, proposing to be his guest, and promising a royal recompense for his entertainment' (Rev. 3: 20-22, P. O. 14-22), but unless grace prepare the heart, no one will 'make haste to receive Him joyfully' when therefore this event takes place, though Pharisees murmur, yet angels rejoice, adoring the Redeemer's condescension, and congratulating the sinner's felicity.—Repentance is not to be estimated by terrors or distresses, but by its *effects*: where it is genuine, a new judgment and dis-

position are produced, a new character is formed, and a new life is entered on. The penitent gladly welcomes the Savior, and, while he accepts of his free salvation, he devotes himself to his service. If he possess wealth, he will immediately think of becoming a faithful steward: though he may not be called actually to leave all, and follow his Lord, yet he will begin, without any express command, to employ a considerable part of it in charitable uses, according to the degree of his faith and love: and if conscious of having defrauded others, he will not count any thing his own, till he has made ample restitution, according to his ability and opportunity. When we see such 'fruits meet for repentance,' we may conclude, that salvation is come to the sinner's heart, and that he is become 'a son of Abraham' by faith in Jesus Christ; and we may cheerfully hope, that mercy is intended to his family also. SCOTT.

His resolutions are of second-table duties; as suited to his condition and character; and Christ, on all occasions, laid great stress on them; for in them will best appear the truth of our repentance.

1. Whereas Zaccheus had hitherto been laying up treasure for himself, and going hurt to himself, he now resolves that in future he will be all toward God, and do good to others with it; *Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor*. Not, 'I will give it by will when I die,' but, 'I do give it now.' Probably, he had heard of the command of trial Christ gave another rich man, to sell what he had, and give to the poor, (Matt. 19: 21.) and how he broke with Christ upon it. 'But so will not I,' saith Zaccheus, 'I agree to it at the first word; though hitherto uncharitable to the poor, now I will relieve them, and give so much the more for having neglected the duty so long; even the half of my goods.' A very large proportion for works of piety and charity. The Jews used to say that a fifth part of a man's income yearly was very fair to be given to pious uses, and about that share the law directed; but Zaccheus would go much further, and give one moiety to the poor; this would oblige him to retrench all his extravagant expenses, which would enable him to relieve many with his superfluities. If more temperate and self-denying, we should be more charitable; if content with less ourselves, we should have more to give them that need. This he mentions here as a fruit of his repentance. Note, It well becomes converts to God to be charitable to the poor.

2. Zaccheus was conscious to himself that he had not gotten all he had honestly, and of what he had gotten by indirect and unlawful means he promises to make restitution; 'If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, or if I have wronged any man in the way of my business as a publican, exacting more than was appointed, I promise to restore him *fourfold*.' This restitution a thief was to make, Exod. 22: 1. (1.) He seems plainly to own he had *done wrong*, (his office giving him opportunity,) imposing on the merchants, to get in favor with the government. True penitents will not only own themselves in general guilty before God, but will particularly reflect on that iniquity which, by reason of their employment in the world, has most easily beset them. (2.) That he had done wrong *by false accusation*; of this temptation, John Baptist had warned publicans particularly, Luke 3: 14. They had the ear of the government, and every thing would be stretched in favor of the revenue, giving them opportunity of gratifying their revenge, if they bore a man an ill-will. (3.) He promises to restore *four-fold*, as far as he could recollect, or find by his books, that he had *wronged any man*. He does not say, 'If I be sued, and compelled to it, I will make restitution;' (some are *honest* when they cannot help it;) but he will do it *voluntarily*. Note, Those who are convinced of having done wrong, cannot evade the sincerity of their repentance but by *making restitution*. Observe, He does not think that giving half his estate to the poor, will atone for the wrong he has done. *God hates robbery for burnt-offerings*, and we must first do *justly*, and then *love mercy*. It is no charity, but hypocrisy, to give what is *not our own*; and we are not to reckon that our own which we have not come honestly by, nor which is not so, when all our debts are paid, and restitution made for wrong done.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

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VI. Christ's approbation and acceptance of Zaccheus' conversion, by which also He cleared Himself from any imputation in going to be a Guest with him, v. 9, 10.

1. Zaccheus is declared a *happy man*, now he is turned from sin to God, now he has bid Christ welcome to his house, and is become an honest, charitable, good man; *This day is salvation come to this house*. Now he is *converted*, he is, in effect, *saved*, saved from his sins, from the guilt and power of them; all the benefits of salvation are his; where Christ comes, He brings salvation with Him; He is, and will be, the *Author of eternal salvation* to all that own Him as Zaccheus did. Yet this is not all. Salvation this day comes to his house. (1.) When Zaccheus becomes a convert, he will be, more than he had been, a *blessing to his house*. He will bring the means of grace and salvation to his house, for he is a *son of Abraham* indeed now, and, like him, will teach his household to keep the way of the Lord. *He that is greedy of gain, troubles his own house*, and brings a curse on it; (Hab. 2: 9.) but he that is charitable to the poor, does a kindness to his own house, and brings a blessing on it, and salvation to it, temporal at least, Ps. 112: 3. (2.) Zaccheus being brought to Christ, his family become related to Christ, and his children members of his church, and so *salvation comes to his house*, as he is a *son of Abraham*, interested in God's covenant with him, that *blessing of Abraham*, which comes on the publicans, *on the Gentiles*, through faith, that God will be a God to them and their children; therefore, when he believes, *salvation comes to his house*, as to the jailer's, to whom it was said, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thine house, Acts 16: 31. Zaccheus is, by birth, a son of Abraham, but being a publican, he was deemed a heathen; they are put on a level, Matt. 18: 17. And as such the Jews avoided conversing with him, and expected Christ should do so; but he shows that, being a true penitent, he is become as good a son of Abraham as if he had never been a publican, which therefore ought not to be mentioned against him.

2. What Christ had done to make him, in particular, a happy man, was consonant to the great design of his coming; (v. 10.) with the same argument He had before justified his conversing with publicans, Matt. 9: 13. There He pleaded, that He came to call sinners to repentance; now, that He came to seek and save that which was lost,—the lost thing. Observe, (1.) The deplorable case of the sons of men; they were lost; here the whole race is spoken of as one body. Note, The whole world by the fall, is become a *lost world*: lost, as a revolted city; as a traveller who has missed his way in a wilderness; as a sick man whose disease is incurable; or as a prisoner when sentenced. (2.) The gracious design of the Son of God; He came to seek and save, to seek in order to save; from heaven to earth, to seek that which was lost, (Matt. 18: 11, 12.) and to save that which was perishing, when there was no salvation in any other. In prosecution of that design, He seeks those that sought Him not, as Zaccheus here.

added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.

12 He said therefore, 'A certain nobleman went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

13 And he called his ten servants and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come.

14 But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.

15 And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading.

16 Then came the first, saying, 'Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds.

17 And he said unto him, 'Well, thou good

V. 11—27. Our Lord is now on his way to Jerusalem, to his last passover, when He was to suffer and die; we are told,

I. How the expectations of his friends were raised on this occasion, v. 11. The Pharisees expected it about this time, (ch. 17: 20.) and, it seems, so did Christ's own disciples; but both had a mistaken notion of it. The Pharisees thought it must be introduced by some other temporal prince or potentate. The disciples thought that their Master should introduce it, but with temporal pomp and power, with which, they knew, He could soon clothe Himself, by the power He had to work miracles. Jerusalem, they concluded, must be the seat of his kingdom, and therefore now He is going directly thither, they doubt not but in a little time to see Him enthroned there. Note, Even good men form wrong notions concerning the kingdom of Christ, and are ready to think that should immediately appear, which is reserved for hereafter.

II. How their expectations were checked, and the mistakes on which they were founded, rectified; and this in three things.

1. They expected He should appear in his glory now presently, but He tells them He must not be publicly installed in his kingdom for a great while yet, v. 12. Christ must go to heaven, to sit down at the right hand of the Father there, and to receive from Him honor and glory, before the Spirit were poured out, by which his kingdom should be set up on earth, and before a church should be set up for Him in the Gentile world. He must receive the kingdom, and then return. Christ returned when the Spirit was poured out; when Jerusalem was destroyed, by which time that generation, both of friends and enemies, which He had personally conversed with, was wholly worn off by death, and gone to give up their account. But his chief return here meant, is, that we are yet in expectation of, at the great day. That which they thought should immediately appear, Christ tells them will not appear, till this same Jesus, which is taken into heaven, shall in like manner come again; see Acts 1: 11.

2. They expected his apostles and immediate attendants should be advanced to dignity and honor; be made princes and peers, privy-counsellors and judges, and have all the pomp and preferments of the court; but Christ here tells them, that, instead of that, He designed them to be men of business, that they might employ themselves in serving Him, and the interest of his kingdom among men. That is the true honor of a Christian and a minister, of which, if we be, as we ought to be, truly ambitious, we shall be able to look on all temporal honors with a holy contempt. The apostles were pleasing themselves with the dream of sitting on his right hand, and on his left, in his kingdom, enjoying ease after their present toil, and honor after present contempt; but Christ tells them that which, if they understood it aright, would fill them with care and serious thoughts, instead of the aspiring ones they indulged.

(1.) They have a great work to do now; their Master leaves them to receive his kingdom, and at parting, He gives each of them a pound; (3l. 2s. 6d.) this signifies the same as the talents in the parallel parable, (Matt. 25:) all the gifts with which Christ's apostles were endowed, their advantages and capacities of

serving the interest of Christ in the world, and others, both ministers and Christians, like them in a lower degree. But perhaps it is this represented in the parable, to make them more humble.

He gave these pounds to his servants, not to buy rich liveries, much less robes, and a splendid equipage, to appear in as they expected, but with this charge, *Occupy, till I come.* Or, (as it might much better be translated,) *Trade till I come: Be busy.* So the word properly signifies; 'You are sent forth to preach the Gospel, to set up a church for Christ in the world, to bring the nations to the obedience of faith, and to build them up in it; *Ye shall receive power to do this, for ye shall be filled with the Holy Ghost,*' Acts 1: 8. When Christ breathed on the eleven disciples, saying, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost,* then He delivered them ten pounds. 'Now,' saith He, 'mind your work, and make a business of it; set about it in earnest, and persevere; lay out yourselves to do all the good you can to the souls of men, and to gather them in to Christ.' Note, All Christians have a work to perform for Christ in this world, and ministers especially; the one was not baptized, nor the other ordained, to be idle. Those that are called to labor for Christ, He furnishes with the necessary gifts; and on the other hand, from those to whom He gives power, He expects service. He delivers the pounds with this charge, *Go work, go trade.* The manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man, to profit withal, 1 Cor. 12: 7. And as every one has received the gifts, so let him minister the same, 1 Pet. 4: 10. We must continue to mind our business till our Master comes, whatever difficulties or oppositions we meet; those only that endure to the end, shall be saved.

(2.) They have a great account to make shortly. These servants are called to Him, to show what use they made of the gifts they were dignified with, what service they had done to Christ, and what good to the souls of men. v. 15. Note, [1.] They that trade diligently and faithfully in the service of Christ, shall be gainers; we cannot say so of the business of the world. [2.] The conversion of souls is the winning of them; every true convert is clear gain to Christ. Ministers are but factors for Him, and to Him they must give account what they have gained by trading. Now in the account given up, observe,

1st. The good account given by some of the servants, and the master's approbation. Two are instanced, v. 16, 19.

1. They had both made considerable improvements, but not both alike; one had gained ten pounds, and another five. Those that are diligent and faithful in serving Christ, are commonly blessed in being made blessings to the places where they live. They shall see the travail of their soul, and not labor in vain. And yet, all that are alike faithful, are not alike successful. And, perhaps, though they were both faithful, it is intimated that one of them took more pains, and applied himself more closely to his business, than the other, and sped accordingly; as blessed Paul, who labored more abundantly than they all, and fully preached the Gospel of Christ.

2. They both acknowledge their obligations to their Master, for intrusting them with these

Verses 11—27.

Our Lord now drew near Jerusalem; and his numerous attendants supposed He was about to avow himself the Messiah, and to set up his kingdom, in outward authority and majesty; (17: 20—23.) but to obviate this erroneous conclusion, He gave them a parabolical representation of what was about to take place in those respects. (Marg. Ref.—Matt. 25: 14—30.) The 'nobleman' evidently signifies Christ Himself, ascending into heaven to be exalted on the mediatorial throne, till his coming to judgment. The 'ten servants' denote his professed disciples, who were few, in comparison of the multitudes of his enemies, or of his subjects in the heavenly world. The 'pound,' given to each of them, to 'occupy,' or trade with, till his return, represents the gifts, abilities, or possessions intrusted to each person; with the means of grace, and encouragements and advantages for improvement, vouchsafed him; in the proper use of which, they prove themselves faithful servants, glorify their Lord, and do good, during their continuance on earth. (16: 1—8.) The 'citizens who hated him,' represent especially the Jewish nation, who hated the doctrine and kingdom of Christ, and did all they could to prevent his establishment. (Ps. 2: 1—6.) It was

very common for ambassadors to be sent to Rome by cities and states, to oppose such as sought there an appointment to be king over them. His 'return,' after he had received the kingdom, which his enemies could not prevent, had reference to his coming to take vengeance on the Jews; but it also represents the final judgment of all men. (12.) *Went into.* Most of the kings of the East, in those times, were vassals to the Romans; so that the next heir seldom ventured to ascend the vacant throne, without their permission; and, in many instances, it was needful to travel to Rome; and very heavy expenses, and tedious delays, generally preceded even a favorable decision. To this case, which frequently occurred, and was familiar to the hearers, perhaps our Lord intended to make some distant allusion. (23.) *Travelling.* (Matt. 25: 27.) Not elsewhere N. T. Ex. 22: 25. Deut. 23: 10. Sept. A fair and adequate profit on money lent for commercial purposes, not gain made by occasion of the necessities of the poor, and by oppressing them. (Ex. 22: 25—27.)

(12.) 'Here is an allusion to the way in which Archelaus, and even Herod himself, had "procured royalty for themselves" in Judea, by favor of the Romans.'

servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities.

18 And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds.

19 And he said likewise to him, 'Be thou also over five cities.

20 And another came, saying, 'Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin.

21 For ¹ I feared thee, because thou art an austere man; thou takest up that thou saydest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow.

22 And he saith unto him, 'Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow.

23 Wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury?

24 And he said unto them that stood by, 'Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds.

25 (And they said unto him, 'Lord, he hath ten pounds.)

26 For I say unto you, 'That unto every one which hath, shall

abilities and opportunities to do him service; Lord, it is not my industry, but thy pound, that has gained ten pounds. Note, God must have all the glory of all our gains; not unto us, Ps. 115: 1. Paul, who gained the ten pounds, acknowledges, 'I labored, yet not I. By the grace of God I am what I am, and do what I do; and his grace was not in vain,' 1 Cor. 15: 10. He will not speak of what he had done, but of what God had done by him, Rom. 15: 18.

3. They were both commended for fidelity and industry; v. 17, 19. Note, They who do that which is good, shall have praise of the same. Do well, and Christ will say to thee, Well done; and if He saith, Well done, the matter is not great who saith otherwise. See Gen. 4: 7.

4. They were preferred in proportion to the improvement they had made; 'Because thou hast been faithful in a very little, and didst not say, "As good sit still as go to trade with one pound, what can one do with so small a stock?" but didst humbly and honestly apply thyself to the improvement of that, have thou authority over ten cities.' Note, Those are in a fair way to rise, who are content to begin low. He that has used the office of a deacon well, purchaseth to himself a good degree, 1 Tim. 3: 13. Two things are hereby promised the apostles; (1.) That, when they have taken pains to plant many churches, they shall have the satisfaction and honor of presiding in them, and governing among them, and have a great interest in the love and esteem of good Christians. He that keepeth the fig-tree, shall eat the fruit thereof; and he that laboreth in the word and doctrine, shall be counted worthy of double honor. (2.) That, when they have served their generation according to the will of Christ, though they pass through this world despised and trampled on, and perhaps pass out of it under disgrace and persecution, as the apostles did, yet in the other world they shall reign as kings with Christ, shall sit with Him on his throne, shall have power over the nations, Rev. 2: 26. The happiness of heaven will be a much greater advancement to a good minister or Christian, than it would be to a poor tradesman, that with much ado had cleared ten pounds, to be made governor of ten cities. He that had gained but five pounds, had dominion over five cities. This intimates that there are degrees of glory in heaven; every vessel will be alike full, but not alike large. And the degrees of glory there, will be according to the degrees of usefulness here.

2dly. The bad account given by one of them, and the sentence passed on him, for his slothfulness and unfaithfulness, v. 20, &c.

1. He owned that he had not traded with the pound, v. 20. 'True, I have not made it more, but withal I have not made it less.' This represents the carelessness of those who have gifts, but never lay out themselves to do good with them; it is all one to them, whether the interests of Christ's kingdom go backward or forward; for their parts, they will take no care about it, no pains, be at no expenses, run no hazard; those are the servants that lay up their pound in a napkin; who think it is enough to say, that they have done no hurt in the world, but did no good.

2. He justified himself in his omission, with a plea that made the matter worse, not better, v. 21. Austere is the Greek word itself; a sharp man; Thou takest up that thou laidst not down. He thought his master put a hardship on his servants, when he required and expected the improvement of their pounds, and that it was reaping where He did not sow, whereas

really it was reaping where he had sown, and, as the husbandman, expects in proportion to what he had sown. He had no reason to fear his master's austerity, nor blame his expectations; but this was a mere frivolous, groundless excuse for his idleness, which there was no manner of excuse for. Note, The pleas of slothful professors, when they come to be examined, will be found more to their shame than their justification.

3. His excuse is turned upon him, v. 22. He will be condemned by his crime, but self-condemned by his plea. If he durst not trade, for fear of losing the principal, and so being made accountable to his lord for it, though it was lost, which he pretends, yet that would be no excuse for his not setting it out to interest where it would be sure. Note, Whatever may be the pretences of slothful professors, in excuse for slothfulness, the true reason of it is a reigning indifference to the interests of Christ and his kingdom, and their coldness therein. They care not whether religion gets ground or loses ground, so they can but live at ease.

4. His pound is taken from him, v. 24. It fits those should lose, who will not use their gifts; and that those who have gifts falsely should be no longer trusted. Those who will not serve their master with what he bestows on them, why should they be suffered to serve themselves with it? Take from him the pound.

5. It is given to him that had the ten pounds. When this was objected against by the standers-by, because he had so much already, (v. 25.) it is answered, (v. 26.) Unto every one that hath shall be given. It is the rule of justice, (1.) That those should be most encouraged, who have been most industrious, and that those who have laid out themselves most to do good, should have their opportunities of doing good enlarged, and be put into a higher and more extensive sphere of usefulness. To him that hath gotten shall more be given, that he may be in a capacity to get more. (2.) That those who have their gifts, as if they had them not, who do no good with them, should be deprived of them. To those who endeavor to increase the grace they have, God will increase it; those who neglect it, and suffer it to decline, can expect no other than that God should do so too. This needful warning Christ gives to his disciples, lest, while they were gaping for honors on earth, they should neglect their business, and so come short of their happiness in heaven.

6. Another thing they expected was, that, when the kingdom of God should appear, the body of the Jewish nation should immediately fall in with it, and all their aversions to Christ and his Gospel immediately vanish; but Christ tells them that, after his departure, the generality of them would persist in their obstinacy and rebellion, and it would be their ruin. This is showed here,

(1.) In the message which his citizens sent after him, v. 14. They not only opposed Him, while He was in obscurity, but continued their enmity, and protested against his dominion, when He was gone into glory, to be invested in his kingdom. We will not have this man to reign over us. [1.] This was fulfilled in the prevailing infidelity of the Jews, after the ascension of Christ, and the setting up of the gospel-kingdom; they would not submit their necks to his yoke, nor touch the top of his golden sceptre. They said, Let us break his bands in sunder, Ps. 2: 1-3. Acts 4: 26. [2.] It speaks the language of all unbelievers; they could be content that Christ should save them, but they will not have him to reign over them; whereas Christ is a Savior to those only to whom he is a Prince, and who are willing to obey Him.

h 16:10. 22:30. Rev. 2:26-29.
i Matt. 13:23. Mark 4:20. 2 Cor. 12:14.
k Is. 3:10. 1 Cor. 3:8. 15:41, 42, 58.
l 2 Cor. 9:8. 2 John 8.
m 13: 39. 6:48. Prov. 26:13-18.
n Matt. 25:24. Jam. 4:17.
o Ex. 20:19, 20. 1 Sam. 12:20. Matt. 4:5-8. Rom. 8:15. 2 Tim. 1:7.
p Jam. 2:19. 1 John 4:18.
q 1 Sam. 31:19-21. 2 Sam. 6:9-11.
r Job 21:14, 15. Ec. 18:25-29. Mal. 3:14, 15. Rom. 8:7. Jude 15.
s 2 Sam. 1:16. Job 15:5-8. Matt. 12:27. 22:12. Rom. 3:19.
t Matt. 25:26, 27.
u Ex. 22:25-27. Deut. 23:19, 20.
v 12:20. 16:2.
w 16:2. 2 Sam. 7:19. 15:8, 9.
x 5:18. Mat. 13:12. 25:28, 29. Mark 4:25. John 15:1-3.

(17.) Over five cities. 'An allusion to the custom formerly (as it seems) prevalent in the East, of assigning the government and revenues of a certain number of cities or towns, as a reward to a meritorious officer. So Athenæus. Thus Artaxerxes assigned to Theomistocles two cities, or, as some say, five.'

(20.) Laid up in a napkin. 'The Greek word here used is adopted by the Jews for a veil, and for a linen cloth. They had a custom, called possession by a napkin, when buying or selling any thing, to use a piece of cloth called a sudar; (the word here;) this the contractors lay hold of to confirm the bargain. Dr. Gill observes, that this

man made no use of his sudar, or napkin, in buying or selling, but wrapped up his money in it, and both lay useless.'

(21.) 'This is not an acknowledgment of the vile and detestable charge, of God's demanding of men more difficult services than He has furnished them for, or would assist them in; but his lord only argues with him on his own base principles, and shows that, even on them, he would be justly condemned for his negligence.'

(23.) Bank. 'Literally, a money-table, counter, or desk; and this is all our word bank originally denoted. Sometimes, as here, it denotes the nummularius.'

be given: "and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him.

27 But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.

[Practical Observations.]

28 ¶ And when he had thus spoken, he went before, ascending up to Jerusalem.

29 And it came to pass, when he was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples,

30 Saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which, at your entering, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither.

31 And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him.

32 And they that were sent went their way, and found even as he had said unto them.

33 And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt?

34 And they said, The Lord hath need of him.

35 And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt,

(2.) In the sentence passed on them at his return, v. 27. When his faithful subjects are preferred and rewarded, then He will take vengeance on his enemies; and particularly on the Jewish nation, the doom of which is here read. When Christ had set up his gospel-kingdom, and thereby put reputation on the gospel-ministry, then He comes to reckon with the Jews; then it is remembered against them, that they had particularly disclaimed and protested against his kingly office, when they said, *We have no king but Cæsar*, nor would own him for their king; they appealed to Cæsar, and to Cæsar they shall go; Cæsar shall be their ruin. Then the kingdom of God appeared, when vengeance was taken on those irreconcilable enemies to Christ and his government; they were brought forth, and slain before Him. Never was so much slaughter made in any war as in the wars of the Jews. That nation lived to see Christianity victorious in the Gentile world, in spite of their enmity and opposition to it, and then it was taken away as dross. The wrath of Christ came on them to the uttermost, (1 Thess. 2: 15, 16.) and their destruction roundly very much to the honor of Christ, and the peace of the church. But this is applicable to all others who persist in infidelity. Note, [1.] Utter ruin will certainly be the portion of all Christ's enemies; in the day of vengeance they shall all be brought forth, and slain before Him. Bring them hither, to be made a spectacle to saints and angels; see Josh. 10: 22, 24. Bring them hither, that they may see the glory and happiness of Christ and his followers, whom they hated and persecuted. Bring them hither, to have their frivolous pleas overruled, and to receive sentence according to their merits. Bring them, and slay them before Me, as Agag before Samuel. The Savior whom they have slighted, will stand by, and see them slain, and not interpose on their behalf. [2.] Those that will not have Christ to reign over them, shall be reputed and dealt with as his enemies. We are ready to think that none are Christ's enemies but persecutors of Christianity, or scoffers at least; but you see that those will be

and they set Jesus thereon.

36 And as they went, they spread their clothes in the way.

37 And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works that they had seen;

38 Saying, Blessed

be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord; peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

39 And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto him, Master, rebuke thy disciples.

12:2, 1 Pet. 4:1.
a Matt. 21:1, &c. Mark 11:1, &c. John 12:12-16.
a 27, 21:27, 22:29, 24:50. Zech. 14:4.
b 32, 22:8-13, 1 Sam. 10:2-9, John 14:29.
c Ps. 24:1, 50:10-12, Matt. 21:2 & Mark 11:2 & Acts 10:35.
d Zech. 9:9, John 10:35, 12:16, 1 Cor. 8:9.
e 2 Kings 8:13, Matt. 21:7, 8. Mic. 1:7, 8. Gal. 4:15, 16.
f 29, Mark 13:3, 14:26.
g 7:16, Ex. 15:1, &c. Judg. 5:1, & 2 Sam. 6:2-8, 1 Kings 5:5, 6:5.
h 15:28, 16:4, &c. 2 Chr. 29:28-30, 36. Ezra 3:10-13, Ps. 106:12, 13, John 12:13.
i 15:35, Ps. 72:17-19, 118:22-26, Zech. 9:9, Matt. 21:9, Mark 11:9, 10.
j 2:10-14, Eph. 2:14-18, Col. 1:20, 2 Eph. 1:6, 12, 3:10, 21, 1 Tim. 1:7, 1 Pet. 1:12, Rev. 5:9-14, 19:1-4.
k 1a 26:11, Matt. 23:13, John 11:47, 48, 10:19, Acts 4:12, 16-17, Jam. 4:5.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11-27. It behoves us carefully to study the nature of the Redeemer's kingdom, that we may understand our present situation, and form just expectations in respect of the future. Our blessed Lord is indeed established on his glorious throne; and it is vain to send a message after Him, refusing submission to his authority: yet many, even from professed regard to the honor and worship of God, (like the Jews of old,) speak as if this was left to their option. They seem to think, that they may choose their own way of approaching God, or entering heaven; and determine for themselves by what Judge, or according to what rule, their final doom shall be determined. But these things are immutably settled; and all, who will not have the Savior to reign over them, shall be punished as enemies to his Person and kingdom.—He has indeed received a kingdom, and will certainly return; but He is now unseen, except by faith; so that true believers alone act as in his presence, and as expecting and preparing for his coming. (Phil. 3: 20, 21. 2 Tim. 4: 6-8. Tit. 2: 13. Heb. 9: 27, 28. 2 Pet. 3: 1-4.) Alas! the number, even of his professed servants, is very small, in proportion to that of his enemies; and their

ability is often little, compared to the talents and possessions which ungodly men abuse. Yet if, in humble faith, cheerful diligence, and patient hope, they occupy with that little, till their Lord comes, their reward shall be exceedingly great, and exactly proportioned to the improvement made: though every faithful servant will allow, that the power, the opportunity, and the will to improve them, were wholly from the Lord. (1 Chr. 29: 9-19.) This union of faithfulness, diligence, and humility, insures a gracious acceptance; and these views of the Redeemer's abundant grace encourage the humble believer to increasing diligence; whilst hypocrites are deterred from activity by hard thoughts of Him, and a persuasion that his service is unprofitable. But, whatever excuses and pleas such men now make for their indolence or avarice, their mouths will soon be stopped; and their unimproved advantages will be taken from them, to enrich the faithful servants. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away. (P. O. Matt. 25: 14-30.)

SCOTT.

(27) Slay them before me.]
and Cæsar, quoted by Weistien.
[5:2]

This verse is said by the king. The custom was not unusual to the generals of old.

Plutarch, Justin,
Bloomfield

40 And he answered and said unto them, I tell you, that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out.

41 ¶ And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it,

42 Saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.

43 For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side,

44 And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

45 ¶ And he went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought;

46 Saying unto them, "It is written, My house is the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

47 ¶ And he taught daily in the temple. But the chief priests, and the scribes, and the chief of the people sought to destroy him,

48 And could not find what they might do: for all the people were very attentive to hear him.

¶ Ps. 96:11, 98:7-9. 114:1-8. Is. 55:12. Hab. 2:11. Matt. 3:9, 21:15, 16. 27:45, 51-54. 2 Pet. 2:2.

they have not, should not think that enough, but should be ready to serve Him with whatever they have themselves, wherewith He may be served and honored. Many can attend Christ at other people's expense, who care not to be at any charge for Him themselves; but those disciples not only fetched the ass's colt for Him, but cast their own garments upon the colt.

VII. Christ's triumphs are the matter of the disciples' praises. When Christ came nigh to Jerusalem, God suddenly put it into the hearts of the whole multitude of the disciples, not the twelve only, but abundance more, that were disciples at large, to rejoice and praise God; (v. 37.) and their spreading of their clothes in the way, (v. 36.) was a common expression of joy, as at the feast of tabernacles. Observe, 1. The matter of their joy and praise. They praised God for all the mighty works of Christ they had seen, especially the raising of Lazarus, John 12:17, 18. Fresh miracles and mercies should revive the remembrance of the former. 2. How they expressed their joy and praise, v. 38. Christ is the King, He comes in the name of the Lord, clothed with a divine authority, commissioned from heaven to give law, and treat of peace: blessed be He. Let us praise Him, let God prosper Him. He is blessed forever, and we will speak well of Him. Peace in heaven. Let the God of heaven send peace and success to his undertaking, and then there will be glory in the highest. It will redound to the glory of the most high God: and the angels, the glorious inhabitants of the upper world, will give Him the glory of it. Compare this song of the saints on earth with that of the angels; (ch. 2:14.) they both agree to give glory to God in the highest, there the praises of both centre; the angels say, On earth peace, rejoicing in the benefit which men on earth have by Christ; the saints say, Peace in heaven, rejoicing in the benefit which the angels have by Christ; such is the communion we have with the holy angels, that, as they rejoice in the peace on earth, so we rejoice in the peace in heaven, the peace God makes in his high places, (Job 25:2.) and both in Christ, who hath reconciled all things, on earth and in heaven, to Himself.

VIII. Christ's triumphs, and his disciples' joyful praises of them, are the vexation of proud Pharisees, that are enemies to Him and his kingdom. Some of these, so far from joining with the multitude, were enraged at them, and Christ being so remarkable an example of humility, they thought He would not admit such acclamations, and expected He should rebuke his disciples, v. 39. But Christ, as He

n Ps. 119:53, 138:158. Jer. 9:1, 13:17, 16. Hos. 11:8. John 11:35. Rom. 9:2, 3. 9:29. Ps. 81:13. Is. 48:18. Ez. 18:31, 32. 33:11. p Ps. 44. 32:6. Is. 55:5. John 12:35, 36. 2 Cor. 6:2. q 1:77-79. 2:10-14. 10:5, 8. Acts 10:38. 13:46. Heb. 3:7. 10:26-29. 12:24-26. r Is. 6:9, 10. 29:10-14. 44:18. Matt. 13:14, 15. John 12:38-41. Acts 28:

25-27. Rom. 11:7-10. 2 Cor. 3:14-16. 4:3, 4. 2 The. 2:9-12. s 21:20-24. Deut. 28:49-58. Ps. 37:12, 13. Dan. 9:26, 27. Matt. 22:7. 23:37-39. Mark 13:14-20. 1 The. 2:15, 16. t Is. 29:1-4. Jer. 6:3-6. u 1 Kings 9:7, 8. Mic. 3:12. x 13:34. Matt. 23:31. y Matt. 24:2. Mark 13:2. z 4:2. 1:88. John 3:18-21. 1 Pet. 2:12.

a Matt. 21:12, 13. Mark 11:15-17. John 2:13-16. b Deut. 14:25, 26. c Ps. 88:5. Is. 56:7. Jer. 7:11. Ez. 43:12. Hos. 12:7. Matt. 23:14. d 21:37, 38. Matt. 21:23. Mark 11:27, &c. John 18:20. e Matt. 26:34. Mark 12:12. 14:1. f John 7:19, 44. 8:37-40. 10:39. 11:52-57. g 20:19-20. 22:2-4. Matt. 22:15, 16. h Or, hanged on him. Neh. 8:3. John 7:46-49. Acts 16:14.

Verse 40.

I tell you, &c.] The numerous miracles which had wrought up our Lord, and the evident fulfilment of ancient prophecies in Him, rendered it so manifest that He was the promised Messiah, that if the Jews refused to own and honor Him as such, some other method would be taken, which would appear to the Pharisees as strange, as if the very stones should speak, and declare Him to be 'the King of Israel,' and 'the Lord of glory.' The expression was proverbial; but the calling of the Gentiles seems to have been alluded to. (Marg. Ref. m.—Hab. 2:9-11. Matt. 3:7-10.) It is observable, that towards the close of his life, our Lord gradually laid aside that reserve, which He before used. He no longer enjoined silence on those who were healed by Him; and in this instance He expressly declared Himself to be 'the Son of David' and 'the King of Israel.' His time was now come; and the reasons for his former caution no longer existed. 'When they linger, who ought to be the chief preachers and setters forth of the kingdom of God, He will raise up others extraordinarily, in despite of their sin.' Beza.

Verses 42, 43.

'Christ is not simply delighted with the destruction, no, not of the wicked,' Beza. The possibility, nay, the actual existence, of a union between awful, inflexible justice, denouncing sentence against the criminal, and benevolence sympathizing in his misery, even to tears, is most affectingly shown in this passage. So that it stands as an unanswerable refutation of the charges, which are constantly

despises the contempt of the proud, so He accepts the praises of the humble.

IX. Whether men praise Christ or no, He will, and shall, and must, be praised, v. 40. The stones would immediately cry out, rather than that Christ should not be praised; which was, in effect, literally the case, when, upon men's reviling Christ on the cross, instead of praising Him, and his own disciples' sinking into a profound silence, the earth did quake, and the rocks rent. Pharisees would silence the praises of Christ, but cannot gain their point; for as God can out of stones raise up children unto Abraham, so He can out of the mouths of those children perfect praise.

V. 41-48. The great Ambassador from heaven is here making his public entry into Jerusalem, not to be respected there, but to be rejected; yet see here two instances of his love and concern for that place.

I. The tears He shed, for the approaching ruin of the city, v. 41. Probably, it was when coming down the descent of the mount of Olives, where He had a full view of the city, the large extent of it, and its many stately structures, his eye affected his heart, and his heart his eye again. See, 1. What a tender spirit Christ was of; we never read that He laughed, but we often find Him in tears. In this very place his father David wept, and those that were with him, though men of war. There are cases in which it is no disparagement to the stoutest of men, to melt into tears. 2. Christ wept in the midst of his triumphs, when all about Him were rejoicing, to show how little He was elevated with the applause and acclamation of the people. Thus He would teach us to rejoice with trembling, and as though we rejoiced not. If Providence do not stain the beauty of our triumphs, we may ourselves see cause to sully it with our sorrows. 3. He wept over Jerusalem. Note, There are cities to be wept over, and none to be more lamented than Jerusalem, that had been the holy city, and the joy of the whole earth, if it be degenerated. But why did Christ weep at the sight of Jerusalem? Was it because 'Yonder is the city in which I must be betrayed, bound, scourged, spit on, condemned, crucified?' No, He gives us the reason:

1. Jerusalem has not improved the day of her opportunities. He wept, and said, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, if thou wouldst but yet know, while the Gospel is preached to thee, and salvation offered thee by it; if thou wouldst at length bethink thyself, and understand the things that belong to thy peace, the making of thy peace with God, and the securing of thine own spiritual and

brought against those who denounce the vengeance of God on impenitent sinners, as if they must of course be actuated by malevolence. All such accusations involve the Savior Himself, as well as the prophets and apostles, and with modern teachers and professors of Christianity, under one general condemnation. (Jer. 9:1, 2, 10, 11. Ez. 18:23. Rom. 9:1-3.) The language of the original is abrupt and interrupted, and peculiarly suited to show the deep interest which the Speaker took in the concerns of those about whom He was discoursing. 'It was judged an almost impracticable work, to compass the whole city with a wall; yet Titus animating his soldiers, in three days they built a wall of thirty-nine furlongs, having thirteen castles in it.' Josephus, quoted by Whitby. (Marg. Ref. s.—21:20-24. Matt. 23:37-39.)

(33.) 'Euthymius observes that here is both a prophecy and a description of the siege. French.] "First, they dug a ditch; then from the earth thrown up they constructed a mound; finally, the wooden pales (the word here used) were driven down at the bottom part of the mound near the ditch, to prevent the earth from falling back, and to preserve the mound in due form. The whole was called *agger*." Wetstein.

Verse 48.

Were very attentive.] 'Listened with so great attention and pleasure, that they hung, as it were, on his lips while He spoke.'

CHAP. XX.

Jesus answers those who demand by what authority He so, it, 1-3; speaks the parable of the vineyard let out to wicked husbandmen, 9-19; shews that tribute should be paid to Caesar, 19-26; confutes the Sadducees, concerning the resurrection of the dead; and puts all his adversaries to silence, 27-40; inquires how Christ was both David's Son, and David's Lord, 41-44; and warns the people against the ambitious and hypocritical scribes, 45-47.

AND it came to pass, ^athat on one of those days, as he taught the people in the temple, ^bthe chief priests and the scribes came upon him, with the elders,

a 19.47. 48. Mark 11.27. John 18.20. l. Chr. 24:

kened, then is the *time of visitation*, when those things which belong to our peace, which we are all concerned to *know and understand*; the way, the offers, the terms, the benefits of peace. The things that belong to our peace, are those things that relate to our present and future welfare; these we must know with application. [2.] There is a *time of visitation*, when those things which belong to our peace, may be known by us, and to good purpose. When we enjoy the means of grace in great plenty, as powerfully preached to us, when the Spirit strives with us, and our own consciences are startled and awakened, then is the *time of visitation*, which we are concerned to improve. [3.] Those that have long neglected the time of their visitation, if at length, if at last, in this their day, their eyes be opened, and they bethink themselves, all will be well yet. Those shall not be refused, that come into the vineyard at the *eleventh hour*. [4.] It is the amazing folly of multitudes that enjoy the means of grace, and it will be of fatal consequence to them, that they do not improve the day of their opportunities. The things of their peace are revealed to them, but are not minded or regarded by them; they hide their eyes from them, as if they were not worth taking notice of. They are not aware of the *accepted time and the day of salvation*, and so let it slip and perish through mere carelessness. None are so blind as those that will not see; nor have any the things of their peace more certainly hid from their eyes, than those that turn their back on them. [5.] The sin and folly of those that persist in a contempt of gospel-grace, are a great grief to the Lord Jesus, and should be so to us. He looks with weeping eyes on lost souls, that continue impenitent, and run headlong upon their own ruin; He had rather they would *turn and live*, than *go on and die*, for He is not willing that any should perish.

2. Jerusalem cannot escape the day of her desolation. The things of her peace are now in a manner hid from her eyes; they will be shortly. Not but that after this the Gospel was preached to them by the apostles: *all the house of Israel* were called to *know assuredly* that Christ was their Peace, (Acts 2: 36.) and multitudes were convinced and converted. But as to the body of the nation, and the leading part of it, it was sealed up under unbelief, God had given them the spirit of slumber, Rom. 11: 8. They were so prejudiced and enraged against the Gospel, and those few that did embrace it then, that nothing less than a miracle of divine grace (like that which converted Paul) would work upon them; and it could not be expected that such a miracle should be wrought, and so they were justly given up to judicial blindness and hardness. The peaceful things are not hid from the eyes of particular persons; but it is too late to think now of the nation of the Jews as such, becoming a Christian nation, by embracing Christ.

And therefore they are marked for ruin, which Christ here foresees and foretells, as the certain consequence of their rejecting Him. Note, Neglecting the great salvation often brings temporal judgments on a people; it did so on Jerusalem in less than forty years after this; when all that Christ here foretold was exactly fulfilled. [1.] The Romans besieged the city, *cast a trench about it, compassed it round, and kept their inhabitants in on every side*. Jose-

phus relates, that Titus run up a wall in a very short time, which surrounded the city, and cut off all hopes of escaping. [2.] They laid it even with the ground. Titus commanded his soldiers to dig up the city, and the whole compass of it was levelled, except three towers; see Josephus' History of the Wars of the Jews, lib. 5. cap. 27. lib. 7. cap. 1. Not only the city but the citizens, were laid even with the ground. (thy children within thee,) by the cruel slaughters that were made of them: and there was scarcely one stone left upon another. This was for their crucifying of Christ, this was because they knew not the day of their visitation. Let other cities and nations take warning.

II. The zeal He shewed for the present purifying of the temple. Though it must be destroyed ere long, it does not therefore follow, that no care must be taken of it in the mean time.

1. Christ cleared it of those who profaned it. He went straight to the temple, and began to cast out the buyers and sellers, v. 45. Hereby (though represented as an enemy to the temple, and that was the crime laid to his charge before the high priest) He made it to appear that He had a truer love for the temple than they had who had such a veneration for its corban, its treasury, as a sacred thing; for its purity, more than its wealth, was its glory.

2. He put it to the best use it was ever put to, for He taught daily in the temple, v. 47. Note, It is not enough that the corruption of a church be purged out, but the preaching of the Gospel must be encouraged. Now, when Christ preached in the temple, observe,

(1.) How spiteful the church-rulers were against Him; how industrious to seek opportunity, or pretence rather, to do Him mischief, v. 47. The great sanhedrim, that should have attended Him, and summoned the people too to attend Him, sought to destroy Him.

(2.) How respectful the common people were to Him; they were very attentive to hear Him. He spent most of his time in the country, but when He preached in the temple, the people paid Him great respect, and let no opportunity slip of hearing Him—would not lose a word. Some read it, *All the people, as they heard Him, took his part*; and so it comes in very properly, as a reason why his enemies could not find what they might do against Him; they saw the people ready to oppose, if they offered Him any violence. Till his hour was come, his interest in the common people protected Him: but when his hour was come, the chief priests' influence on them delivered Him up.

CHAP. XX. v. 1-8. Nothing is added here to what we had in the other evangelists; only in the first verse,

I. He was now teaching, and preaching the Gospel. Note, Christ was a Preacher of his

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 29-49. When 'the Lord hath need of' ought belonging to us, we should readily devote it to his service.—But what will be the feelings of the multitude of the disciples, when they shall behold their Lord and Savior return in his glory to judge the world! How will they then rejoice and praise God, with a loud voice, for all the mighty works which they have seen! In anticipation of this joy, let us now gladly welcome every display of his grace, in the conversion of sinners and the success of his Gospel; exulting in the triumphs of our 'King, who cometh in the name of the Lord,' and rejoicing that 'there is glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, and good-will to men.'—But, who can behold the holy Jesus weeping over the city, where his precious blood was about to be shed, in the prospect of the miseries awaiting his insulting murderers; without perceiving that the image of God, in human nature, consists very much in expanded benevolence and tender compassion to the miserable, even when their miseries are most justly deserved? Surely, then, those persons, who take up certain doctrines of the Gospel in such a manner, as to have

their hearts rendered by them more callous towards their fellow-sinners; and who (from topics grounded on God's secret purposes) object to compassion for perishing sinners, or prayers for men in general, have far more of the Pharisee in them, than of 'the mind that was in Christ Jesus!—But let every one apply his mind to know, 'in the day of his visitation,' the things which belong to his eternal peace; for though Jesus wept over Jerusalem, yet He did not fail to execute vengeance upon it: and though 'He delighteth not in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should repent and live;' yet He will surely accomplish his most awful threatenings on all who 'neglect his great salvation.' May He then come, and cleanse our hearts by his Spirit, that they may be a holy temple to the Lord! May He purify his church and his holy ordinances, from all those practices and persons, which pervert or defile them! May his obstinate enemies be disappointed, and not find what to do; while sinners on every side become attentive to his words of truth and salvation! (P. O. Matt. 21: 1-11.)

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX. v. 1. The chief priests, and the elders of the people. These titles frequently occur, but it is not easy to fix a determinate idea to them. By the chief priests, I think we may understand any particular distinction in the Aaronic family; so that it may include the high priest his deputy or sagan, any of the heads of the twenty-four

courses of priests who might happen to be in waiting, and likewise any of those whom the Talmudists called Catholicin, Amarcalin, and Mummim, who, (if their testimony be true) were appointed to preside over the other priests and Levites, and to regulate the watch, the singers, &c.' See Reland.

DESI RIDER.

2 And spake unto him, saying, 'Tell us, By what authority doest thou these things? or, 'Who is he that gave thee this authority?

3 And he answered and said unto them, 'I will also ask you one thing; and answer me, 4 The 'baptism of John, was it 'from heaven, or of men?

5 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, 'Why then believed ye him not?

6 But and if we say, Of men; 'all the people will stone us: 'for they be persuaded that John was a prophet.

7 And they answered, 'That they could not tell whence it was.

8 And Jesus said unto them, 'Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

9 ¶ Then began he to speak to the people 'this parable: A certain man 'planted a vineyard, 'and let it forth to 'husbandmen, and 'went into a far country for a long time.

10 And at 'the season he 'sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen 'beat him, and sent him away empty.

11 And again he sent another servant; and they beat him also, and 'entreated him shamefully, 'and sent him away empty.

12 And again he sent the third; and they wounded him also, and cast him out.

13 Then said the lord of the vineyard, 'What shall I do? 'I will send my beloved son: 'it may be they will reverence him when they see him.

14 But when the husbandmen saw him, they 'reasoned among themselves, saying, This is 'the heir: come, 'let us kill him,

own Gospel. He not only purchased salvation for us, but published it to us, a great confirmation of the truth of the Gospel, and abundant encouragement to receive it, for it is a sign that the heart of Christ was much upon it, to have it received. This likewise honors preachers of the Gospel, their office and work, how much soever despised by a vain world. It honors *sober preachers*; Christ thus condescended to the capacities of the people, and taught them. And observe, He had this interruption (v. 1.) when *preaching the Gospel to the people*: which Satan and his agents do all they can to hinder, for nothing weakens his kingdom more.

II. His enemies are here said to come upon Him—a word used only here, intimating, 1. That they came on Him suddenly, hoping to catch Him unprovided with an answer, as if this were not a thing He had Himself thought of. 2. That they thought to frighten Him with this question. They came upon Him in a body, with violence. But how could the *wrath of men* terrify Him who had power to restrain it, and turn it to his praise? From this we learn,

(1.) That it is not to be thought strange, if even that which is evident to a demonstration, be called in question, as doubtful, by those that shut their eyes against the light. Christ's miracles showed plainly *his authority*, and sealed his commission; yet this is here *arraigned*.

(2.) Those that question Christ's authority, if but catechized in the plainest principles of religion, will have their folly made manifest to all. Christ answered these priests and scribes with a plain question concerning the baptism of John, which the meanest of the common people could answer: *Was it from heaven, or of men?* They all knew it was from heaven, nothing but it had an earthly relish or tendency, but all was divine. This question run them aground, and shamed them before the people.

(3.) It is not strange if men, governed by reputation and secular interest, imprison the plainest truths, and stifle the strongest convictions, as these priests and scribes, who, to save their credit, would not own John's baptism to be from heaven, and had no other reason for not saying it was of men, but because they *feared the people*. What good can be expected from men of such a spirit?

(4.) Further knowledge is justly denied to those who bury what they have. It was just with Christ, to refuse to give an account of his authority to them, that knew the baptism of John to be from heaven, and would not believe in him, nor own their knowledge, v. 7, 8.

V. 9–19. Christ spake this against those who were resolved not to own his authority, on evidence ever so full and convincing: and very appositely to show that, by questioning his authority, they forfeited their own. Their disowning the lord of their vineyard, was a defeasance of their lease of it, and a giving up of their title.

I. The scope of the parable is to show that the Jewish nation, by persecuting the prophets, and at length Christ Himself, had provoked God to take away all their church privileges, abandoning them to ruin.

1. God, by setting up revealed religion and instituted orders in the world, hath planted a vineyard, which He lets out to those among whom his tabernacle is. They have *vineyard work* to do, needful and constant work, but pleasant and profitable. Man was, for sin, con-

demned to till the ground; they that have a place in the church, are resorted to Adam's work in innocency, to dress the garden, and keep it, for the church is a paradise, and Christ the Tree of life in it. They have also *vineyard-fruits* to present to the Lord of the vineyard; rents to be paid, and services done, which, though bearing no proportion to the value of the premises, must be done, and paid.

2. The work of God's ministers is, to call on those who enjoy the privileges of the church, to bring forth fruit accordingly. They are God's rent-gatherers, to remind the husbandmen of their arrears, or rather to remind them that their Landlord expects to hear from them, and to receive some acknowledgment of their dependence on, and obligation to Him, v. 10. The Old-Testament prophets were sent on this errand to the Jewish church, to demand from them the duty and obedience they owed to God.

3. God's faithful servants have often been wretchedly abused by his own tenants; beaten and treated shamefully by those who resolved to send them empty away. They that are resolved not to do their duty to God, cannot bear to be called on to do it. Some of the best men in the world have had the hardest usage from it, for their best services.

4. God sent his Son into the world to carry on the same work with the prophets, to gather the fruits of the vineyard for God. The prophets spake as servants, *Thus saith the Lord*; but Christ as a Son, among his own, *Verily I say unto you*. Honoring them so far as to send Him, one would have thought, should have won on them.

5. Those who reject Christ's ministers, would reject Christ Himself, should He come to them; for it has been tried, and found, that the persecutors and murderers of his servants the prophets, were the persecutors and murderers of Christ Himself. They said, *This is the Heir; come, let us kill him*. When they slew the servants, other servants were sent; 'But if we can but kill the son, there is no other son to be sent, and then we shall no longer be molested with these demands.' The scribes and Pharisees promised themselves, that if they could but get Christ out of the way, they should forever be masters in the Jewish church; and therefore took the bold step.

6. Putting Christ to death, filled up the measure of Jewish iniquity, and brought on them ruin without remedy. No other could be expected than that God should destroy those wicked husbandmen. They began in not paying their rent, then proceeded to beat and kill the servants, and at length the Son of their Master Himself. Note, Those that neglect their duty to God, know not what degrees of sin and destruction they are running into.

II. To the application of the parable is added here, what we had not before, their deprecation of the doom included in it; *God forbid, let not this be done*; so it should read; though they could not but own that for such a sin such a punishment was just, and to be expected, yet they could not bear to hear of it. Note, It is the folly and stupidity of sinners, that they persevere in sinful ways, though at the same time they have a foresight and dread of the destruction at the end of those ways. They cheat themselves, in thinking to avoid it by a cold *God forbid*, when they do nothing to prevent it; but will this make the threatening of no effect?

Verse 13.

'The question is not here, how prudent it would have been in a human father to venture his son in such a case as this; for the power which God

had of raising Christ from the dead, and making all his sufferings redound to his glory and happiness, quite alters the case.' DODDRIDGE.
'It may be.' The original means *scarcely*.
ED PEARCE

that the inheritance may be ours.

15 So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them?

16 He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid.

17 And he beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the Head of the corner?

18 Whosoever shall fall upon that Stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

[Practical Observations.]

19 And the chief priests and the scribes, the same hour, sought to lay hands on him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them.

20 And they watched him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor.

21 And they asked him, saying, Master, we know that thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest thou the person of any, but teachest

Observe what Christ said to this ch. 21. deprecation. 1. He beheld them; (noticed only by this evangelist, v. 17.) He looked on them with compassion, grieved to see them cheat themselves thus to their own ruin. He beheld them, to see if they would blush at their folly, or to discern in their countenances any show of relenting. 2. He referred them to the Scripture: 'What is this then that is written?' How can you escape the judgment of God, when you cannot prevent the exaltation of Him whom you despise and reject? The word of God hath said, The Stone which the builders rejected, is become the Head of the corner. Jesus will be exalted to the Father's right hand, to Him all judgment and power are committed, He is the Corner-stone and Top-stone of the church; his enemies then can expect no other than to be destroyed; for even those that slight Him, that stumble at, and are offended in Him, shall be broken, ruined; but those that not only reject, but hate and persecute Him, as the Jews, He will fall upon them, and grind them to powder. The condemnation of spiteful persecutors will be much sorer, than that of careless unbelievers.

Lastly, The chief priests and scribes were exasperated; v. 19. They perceived He spake this parable against them. A guilty conscience needs no accuser; but they, instead of yielding to conviction, fell into a rage at Him who awakened that sleeping lion in their bosoms, and sought to lay hands on Him. Their corruptions rebelled against their convictions, and got the victory. And it was not because they had any fear of God, but only because they feared the people, that they did not now make his words good; This is the heir, come let us kill Him. Note: When the hearts of the sons of men are fully set to do evil, the fairest warnings both of the sin they are about to commit, and of its consequences, make no impression on them. Christ tells them they would kill the Son of God; upon which they should have said, What, is thy servant a dog? But they, in effect, say, 'And so we will; and that now.' And though they deprecate the punishment of the sin, in the next breath they are projecting the commission of it.

V. 20-26. Christ here evades a snare laid for Him, by a question about tribute. We had this both in Matthew and Mark.

I. The mischief designed Him, more fully related than before. The plot was to deliver Him unto the power and authority of the governor, v. 20. They could not themselves put

the way of God truly:

22 Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no?

23 But he perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye me?

f Heb 13:12.

g Matt. 21:37-40. Mark 12:6-9.

h 18:27. Ps. 2:8-9. 21:8-10. Matt. 21:41. 22:7. Acts 13:46.
i 19:41. 22:61. Mark 9:5. 10:23.
k 22:37. 24:44. John 15:25
l Ps. 118:22. Is. 28:16. Zech. 3:9.
m Matt. 21:42. Mark 12:10, 11. Acts 4:11. 1 Pet. 2:7.
n Is. 8:14, 15. Dan. 2:34, 35, 44, 45.
o Zech. 12:3. Matt. 21:44. 1 Thes. 2:16.
p 14. 19:47, 48. Matt. 21:45, 46. 26: 3, 4. Mark 12:12.
q Ps. 77:32, 33. 117:1. Is. 29:20, 21.
r Jer. 11:19. 12:15. 20:10. Matt. 22: 18. Mark 12:15.
s 2 Sam. 14:2. 1 Kings 14:2-6. Ps.

66:3. 81:5. marg. 2 Pet. 2:3.
t Matt. 27:2. John 19:28-32.
u Ps. 122. 55:21. Jer. 49:3. Matt. 22:16. 26:49, 50. Mark 12:14. John 3:2.
v 2 Cor. 2:17. Gal. 1:10. 1 Thes. 2: 1.
w 2 Chr. 19:7. Job 34:19. Acts 10:34. 35. Gal. 2:6. Or, of a truth.
x Deut. 17:15. Ezra 4:13, 18-22. 9:7. Neh. 5:4. 9:37. Matt. 22:17-21.
y Mark 12:14-17. Acts 5:37.
z 5:22. 6:8. 11:17. John 2:24, 25. 1 Cor. 3:19. Heb. 4:16.
aa 20. 11:15, 53, 54. Ps. 95:9. Matt. 16:1. 22:18. 1 Cor. 10:9.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-18. Men often profess to inquire into the evidences or doctrines of Revelation, when secretly determined not to submit to its authority, and in fact, only seeking plausible apologies for their infidelity and disobedience. But the fear of man, and regard to reputation, deter them from avowing their real sentiments and purposes. Objectors of this character should be answered with pertinence, brevity, and caution. Without formal controversy with them, the best way is to address their consciences by apt illustrations, closely applied; and so to detect those corrupt affections, or secret sins, which are the real grounds of their dislike to the Bible, but which they endeavor to conceal even from themselves. In this way it may often be

shown, that they resemble, in pride, perverseness, ingratitude, enmity to God, and aversion to his holy service those men who murdered the prophets, and crucified the Son of God.—But it behoves every one of us, who are favored with the Word and ordinances of God, to inquire, whether we make an adequate improvement of our advantages, and act consistently with our professed subjection to the Gospel. For awful will be the doom, not only of builders who reject 'the Head-Stone of the corner,' but of those who profess to 'reverence the Son,' and yet render not the fruits of the vineyard in due season. (P. O. Matt. 21: 23-46.)

SCOTT.

Verse 17.

Head of the corner.] The splendor and magnificence of an edifice seems to have been estimated, in a measure, by the size of the square stones, of which it was constructed. 1 Kings 7:9-12. The foundation-stone, which was probably placed at the corner, and thence called the corner-stone, was an object of particular regard, and was selected with great care from among the others.

Verse 18.

On whom.] The persevering opposition of the Roman empire, in all its forms, and in every age, to Christ and his cause, and the final dreadful destruction, of it, may here be predicted, along with the

calamities and miseries of the Jews. (Dan. 2: 34-45. Zech. 14: -3.) The dreadful punishment of all persecutors is also intimated.

SCOTT.

Verses 19-26.

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 22: 15-22. Mark 12: 13-17.) It would be well, if all who are insidiously watched and questioned on political subjects, would imitate our Lord's conduct; neither intermeddling with disputable points, nor maintaining a suspicious silence; but plainly showing, that obedience and tribute should be rendered, ever to usurpers and heathens, while possessed of authority; except where the higher obligation of obedience to God requires the contrary. Lu.

24 Shew me * a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it? They answered and said, 'Caesar's.'

25 And he said unto them, 'Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's, and unto God the things which be God's.'

26 And they could not take hold of his words before the people; and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace.

27 ¶ Then came to him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him,

28 Saying, Master, 'Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.'

29 There were therefore seven brethren; and the first took a wife, and died without children.

30 And the second took her to wife, and he died childless.

31 And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also; and they left no children, and died.

32 Last of all the woman died also.

33 Therefore in the resurrection, whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife.

34 And Jesus answering, said unto

free them from the Roman yoke, and stand by them in denying tribute to Caesar. But if He should say that it was not lawful, as they expected, (for if He had not been of that mind, they thought He could not have been so much the darling of the people,) then they should have what they wanted, something to accuse Him of to the governor.

IV. His evading their snare, v. 23. Note. The most crafty cannot, with all their art, conceal from his cognizance their designs against Christ and his Gospel. He did not give them a direct answer, but reproved them for offering to impose on Him; (Why tempt ye Me?) and called for a piece of money, current with the merchants; (Shew Me a penny;) and asked whose it was; whose stamp it bore; who coined it. They owned, 'It is Caesar's.' 'Why then,' saith Christ, 'you should first have asked whether it was lawful to pay and receive Caesar's money among yourselves, and to admit that to be the instrument of your commerce. But you, having granted that by common consent, are concluded by your own act, and, no doubt, ought to give tribute to him who furnished you this convenience for trade, protects you in it, and lends you the sanction of his authority for the value of your money. Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's. In civil things submit to the civil powers, and if Caesar protects you in your civil rights by laws and the administration of justice, pay him tribute; but in sacred things, God only is your King, you are not bound to be of Caesar's religion; you must render to God the things that are God's, must worship and adore Him only, and not any golden image Caesar sets up; and we must worship and adore Him in a way He has appointed, and not according to the inventions of Caesar. God only has authority to say, My son, give Me thy heart.'

V. Their confusion, v. 26. 1. The snare is broken. They could not fasten on any thing wherewith to incense either the governor or people against Him. 2. Christ is honored; even the wrath of man is made to praise Him. They marvelled at his answer, it was so discreet and unexceptionable, and such an evidence of that wisdom and sincerity which make the face to shine. 3. They had nothing to object, and durst ask Him nothing else, lest He should shame and expose them.

V. 27—33. This we had before, only the description of the future state is somewhat more full here. Observe,

them, * The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage.

35 But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead,

neither marry, nor are given in marriage.

* Matt. 18:28, marg. 20:2.
22, 31, 32, 33, Acts 11:26.
26:8, 12, 26:32, Phil. 4:22.
a Prov. 24:21. Matt. 17:27, 22:21.
Mark 12:17. Rom. 13:6, 7, 1 Pet. 2:13—17.
b Acts 4:19, 20, 5:29, 1 Cor. 10:31.
1 Pet. 4:11.
c 20:39, 40, Job 5:12, 13. Prov. 26:4, 5.
2 Tim. 3:9.
d 13:17, Matt. 22:12, 24, Rom. 8:19, Tit. 1:11.

I. In every age, men of corrupt minds unavailingly endeavored to subvert the fundamental principles of revealed religion. As there are deists now, who call themselves free-thinkers, but are really false-thinkers; so there were Sadducees in our Savior's time, who bantered the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come, though plainly revealed in the Old Testament, and articles also of Jewish faith. The Sadducees deny that there is any resurrection, any future state; so the original may signify; not only no return of the body to life, but no continuance of the soul in life; no world of spirits, no state of recompense and retribution for what was done in the body. Take away this, and all religion falls.

II. Commonly those that design to undermine any truth of God, perplex it, and load it with difficulties. So here those Sadducees, when they would weaken people's faith in the doctrine of the resurrection, put a question on supposition of it, which they thought could not be answered either way to satisfaction. The case might be matter of fact, of a woman that had seven husbands. Now in the resurrection, whose wife shall she be? It was not at all material, whose she was, for when death ends that relation, it is not to be resumed.

III. There is a great difference between the state of the children of men on earth and the children of God in heaven; between this world and that world; and we wrong ourselves, and the truth of Christ, when we form notions of that world of spirits by present enjoyments in this world of sense.

1. The children of men in this world marry and are given in marriage. Much of our business in this world is, to raise up and provide for families. Much of our pleasure is in our relations, our wives, and our children; nature inclines to it. Marriage is instituted for our comfort in this bodily state. It is likewise a remedy against fornication. The children of this world are dying, therefore they marry, and give their children in marriage, to furnish the world of mankind with recruits, that they may have offspring to leave the fruit of their labors to; especially that the chosen of God in future ages may be introduced, for a godly seed is sought by marriage, (Mal. 2: 15.) a seed to serve the Lord, a generation to Him.

2. The world to come is called that world, by way of emphasis. Note, There are more worlds than one; a present visible, and a future invisible world; and it is the concern of every one of

e Matt. 16:1, 6, 12, 22:23, Mark 12:18, Acts 14: 15:17, 26:8—9, 1 Cor. 15:12, 2 Tim. 2:17, 18.
f Gen. 38:8, 11, 28, Deut. 25:5—10, Ruth 1:11, 12.
g Lev. 21:3, Jer. 29:30.
h Judg. 2:10, Ec. 1:4, 9:5, Heb. 9:27.
i Matt. 22:24—28, Mark 12:19—23, k 16:8.
l 17:27, 1 Cor. 7:2, &c. Eph. 5:31, Heb. 13:4.
m 26:35, Acts 5:41, 2 Thes. 1:5, Rev. 3:4.
n Dan. 12:2, John 5:29, Acts 24: 15, Heb. 11:35.
o Matt. 22:29, 30, Mark 12:24, 25.

(24.) The cuts represent denarii (the word translated 'penny') of



These are the reigning emperor, and Caesar; as given in Cooke's Medallist History of Imperial Rome.

Verses 27—33.

'Marg. Ref.—Matt. 22: 23—33. Mark 12: 18—27.) (34.) Children, &c.; 'They are here called "the children of this world," who live in this world; and not they that are wholly given to the world, as before, 16: 8.' Beza. Equal, &c.) 'Angel-like.' Campbell. To be angel-like, and to be equal to angels, are certainly very different things. God is not the God of the dead. That is, them who are to abide in a state of death, and never to enjoy the resurrection of the just.' He will not be called their God, as not having prepared

for them a heavenly city. (Heb. 11: 16.) Hence both the Scripture say of them, that 'they are passed from death unto life;' (John 5: 24.) because Christ 'will raise them up at the last day.' (John 6: 40.) God here styles Himself the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; that is, not of their souls only, but of their persons; in which sense the Jews always understood these words. He would be the God of the dead, though their souls lived, unless their bodies also rose again. Wholly. God is not the God of the dead; but He is 'the God of Abraham,' &c. therefore Abraham now lives, as to his soul, and shall awake, as to the body, at the resurrection, like one out of sleep; for, if 'God be not the God of the dead,' all who have Him for their God, 'live by Him.' Their souls now live, their bodies shall at length arise, and 'death be swallowed up in victory.' (Rom. 8: 10, 11. 1 Cor. 15: 50—54.) (38.) Live unto Him. 'Live by Him,' or, 'in Him,' &c. with Him.' All who have the Lord for their God, 'live by Him.' 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' 'Ye are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our Life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.' (John 14: 18—20. Col. 3: 1—4, v. 4.) Believers as one with Christ, 'shall die.' (John 11: 26—27.) 'They sleep in Jesus, and God will bring them with Him.' (1 Thes. 4: 13—18.) 'For whether we live, we live unto the Lord, and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, we die, we are the Lord's.' (Rom. 14: 8.)

(35.) 'Agreeably to the Jewish style of that period, our Lord calls that only the resurrection, which is a resurrection to glory.'

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CAMPBELL.

16 Neither² can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels: and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.

37 Now that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.

38 For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him.

39 Then certain of the Scribes answering said, Master, thou hast well said.

40 And after that, they durst not ask him any question at all.

41 ¶ And he said unto them, How say they that Christ is David's Son?

42 And David himself saith in the book of Psalms, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand,

43 Till I make thine enemies thy footstool.

44 David therefore calleth him Lord, how is he then his Son?

45 ¶ Then in the audience of all the people, he said unto his disciples,

46 Beware of the Scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts;

47 Which devour widows' houses, and for a shew make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation.

us to compare this world, and that world, and give the preference in our thoughts and cares to that which deserves them. Observe,

(1.) Who shall be the inhabitants of that world; they that shall be accounted worthy to obtain it, i. e. that are interested in Christ's merit, who purchased it for us, and have a holy meanness for it wrought in them by the Spirit, who prepares us for it. They have not a legal worthiness, on account of any thing in them or done by them, but an evangelical worthiness, on account of the inestimable price Christ paid for the redemption of the purchased possession. It is a worthiness imputed, by which we are glorified, as well as a righteousness imputed, by which we are justified; they are made agreeable to that world. The disagreeableness in corrupt nature is taken away, and the dispositions of the soul are, by the grace of God, conformed to that state. They are by grace made and counted worthy to obtain that world; it intimates some difficulty in reaching after it, and danger of coming short. They shall obtain the resurrection from the dead, that is, the blessed resurrection; for that of condemnation, (as Christ calls it, John 5: 29.) is rather a resurrection to a second, an eternal death.

(2.) The happy state of the inhabitants of that world, we cannot express or conceive, 1 Cor. 2: 9. Christ saith of it,

(1.) They neither marry, nor are given in marriage. Entered into the joy of their Lord, they are entirely taken up with that, and need not the joy of the bridegroom in his bride. The love in that world of love is all seraphic, eclipsing and losing the purest and most pleasing loves of this world of sense. Where the body itself shall be spiritual, the delights of sense vanish; and where there is perfect holiness, there is no occasion for marriage as a preservative from sin; into that new Jerusalem nothing enters that defiles.

(2.) They cannot die any more; therefore they do not marry. Where there are no burials, there is no need of weddings. This crowns the comfort of that world, that there is no more death there, which sullies all the beauty, and damps all the comforts, of this world.

(3.) They are equal unto the angels. In the other evangelists it was said, They are as the angels—here they are said to be angels' peers; in glory and bliss no way inferior to the holy angels. They shall see the same sight, be employed in the same work, and share in the same joys, with the holy angels. Saints, when they come to heaven, shall be naturalized, and though by nature strangers, yet having obtained this freedom with a great sum, which Christ paid for them, they have in all respects equal

privileges with them that were free-born, the angels that are natives.

(4.) They are the children of God, and so are as the angels, who are called the sons of God. In the inheritance of sons, the adoption of sons will be completed. Hence believers are said to wait for the adoption, even the redemption of the body, Rom. 8: 23. Now are we the sons of God, 1 John 3: 2. We have the nature and disposition of sons, to be perfected in heaven.

(5.) They are the children of the resurrection, that is, are made capable of the employments and enjoyments of the future state; born to that world, belong to that family, were educated for it here, and shall there have their inheritance in it. They are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. These only God owns for his children.

IV. That there is another life after this, is an undoubted truth, of which were eminent discoveries made in the early ages of the church, v. 37, 38. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were then dead many years before, and their bodies turned to dust in the cave of Machpelah; how then could God say, not I was, but I am, the God of Abraham? It is absurd that the living God and Fountain of life should continue related to them as their God, if there were no more of them in being than what lay in that cave, undistinguished from common dust; we must therefore conclude that they were then in being in another world, for God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Luke here adds, For all live unto Him, that is, all who, like them, are true believers; though dead, yet they do live; their souls which return to God that gave them, (Eccl. 12: 7.) live to Him as the Father of spirits; and their bodies shall live again at the end of time by the power of God; for He calleth things that are not as though they were, because He is the God that quickens the dead, Rom. 4: 17. And there is more in it; when God called Himself the God of these patriarchs, He meant that He was their Felicity and Portion, a God all-sufficient to them, (Gen. 17: 1.) their exceeding great Reward, (Gen. 15: 1.) Now it is plain, He never, in this world, answered the true intent and full extent of that great undertaking, therefore there must be another life after this, in which He will fully discharge that promise, that He would be to them a God; which He is able to do, for all live to Him, and He has wherewithal to make every soul happy that lives to Him; enough for all, enough for each.

V. 39—47. The scribes were student, and expositors of the law; men in reputation for wisdom and honor, and most of them enemies to Christ

P Is. 25:8. Hos. 13:14. 1 Cor. 15:26.
42, 53, 54. Phil. 3:21. 1 Thes. 4:13
—17. Rev. 20:6. 21:4. 22:2—5.
q Zech. 3:7. Matt. 22:30. Mark 12:
25. Rev. 5:5—14. 7:9—12. 22:9.
r Rom. 8:19—23. 1 John 3:2.
s Ex. 3:2—6. Deut. 33:16. Acts 7:
50—52.
t Gen. 17:7. 28:13, 21. 32:9. Matt.
22:31—33. Mark 12:26, 27.
u Ps. 135—11. 133:23—26. 145:1, 2.
v Heb. 11:16.
x John 6:37 11:26, 28. 14:19. Rom.
6:22, 23. 14:7—9. 2 Cor. 6:16. 13:
4. Col. 3:3—4. Rev. 7:15—17. 22:1.
y Matt. 22:34—40. Mark 12:28—34.

Acts 23:9.
z Prov. 26:5. Matt. 22:46. Mark
12:34.
a Matt. 22:42. Mark 12:35.
b 18:38, 39. Is. 9:6, 7. 11:1, 2. Jer. 23:
5, 6. 33:15, 16, 21. Matt. 1:1. John
7:42. Acts 2:30. Rom. 1:3, 4. Rev.
22:16.
c 24:44. 2 Sam. 32:1, 2. Matt. 22:43.
d Mark 12:36, 37. Acts 1:20. 13:33.
e 15. Heb. 3:7.
f Ps. 110:1. Matt. 22:44, 45. Acts 2:
34, 35. 1 Cor. 15:25. Heb. 1:13.
g 19:27. Ps. 21:—9. 21:8—12. 72:9.
h 10:9—20. 110:5, 6. Rev. 19:14—21.
i 1:31—35. 21:1. Is. 7:14. Matt. 1:
23.

23. Rom. 9:5. Gal. 4:4. 1 Tim. 3:
16. Rev. 12:16.
g Matt. 15:10. 23:1, 2. Mark 8:34.
1 Tim. 5:20.
b 12:1. Matt. 16:6. Mark 8:15. 9:
12. 4:15.
i 11:43. 14:7. Prov. 29:23. Matt.
22:5—7. Mark 12:38, 39. Rom. 12:
10. Phil. 3:5—6. 3 John 5.
k Jer. 7:8—10. Ez. 22:7. Am. 2:7.
8:4—6. Mic. 2:2, 8, 9. 3:3. Matt.
23:24. Mark 12:40.
l 12:1. Ez. 33:31. Matt. 23:26—28.
1 Thes. 2:5. 2 Tim. 3:2—6. Tit. 1:16.
m 10:12, 13. 14:25, 45. Matt. 11:24—
26. Jam. 3:1.

(36.) Equal, &c.] 'This is a stronger word than Matthew or Mark uses; yet all arguments drawn hence, as proving an entire equality of glorified saints with angels, in all respects, must be weak and inconclusive. It is indeed the glorious scheme of redeeming love to incorporate angels and saints into one happy society, under Christ as their common head: (Eph. 1: 10.) but there are subordinations in united societies. And if the fall of the apostate spirits occasioned any thing like a vacancy in the celestial hierarchy, it would seem most probable it might be filled up from heavenly spirits of an inferior order, who might be preferred to the rank their degenerate brethren lost, as a reward for their approved fidelity to God. But it becomes us to be exceedingly modest in our conjectures on such subjects as these, lest we incur the censure of intruding into things which we have not seen. Col. 2: 18.' DODDRIDGE.

Neither can they die any more.] 'By this, Jesus meant to impugn the doctrine of the metempsychosis, held, says Josephus, by the Pharisees.' BLOOMFIELD.

Children of God.] 'Or, sons of God. The angels are so called on account of their participation in the divine felicity and glory. See Matt. 22: 30. By sons of, are meant those who are like unto God, i. e. immortality, &c. The expression "sons of the resurrection," is equivalent to "the raised up." Id.

(37.) At the bush.] "That is, in the story of the burning bush The Jewish doctors in that age were accustomed to quote any portion of Scripture, in this brief way, by some most remarkable subject there treated on." Jablonsky. So Rom. 11: 3. In a similar manner the ancient Greek critics used to cite from Homer, and some other authors of celebrity.' BLOOMFIELD.

Verses 41—44.

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 22: 41—46. Mark 12: 35—37.) 'Christ is so the Son of David, according to the flesh, as to be his Lord, being the eternal Son of God.' Beza. SCOTT.

Verses 45—47.

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 23: 1—7. Mark 12: 38—40.) The example of ambitious and covetous pastors must be avoided,' Beza. 'The clergy are to be distinguished, not so much by their apparel, as by their learning; not only by their habit, but by their conversation; not by the adornment of their body, but by purity of mind.' Pops. Cels. In.

(46.) Long robes.] 'In Bara Bathra, R. Johanan asks R. Hamaah, "What is the robe of a disciple of the wise? Such as that his flesh may not be seen below." The gloss is, The robe should reach to the sole of the foot, that it may not be discovered when he walks with naked feet.' BLOOMFIELD.

CHAP. XXI.

And he preferred the widow's two mites to the large offerings of the rich, 1-4. He foretells the destruction of the temple, 5, 6; the signs and calamities which would precede and accompany it, giving suitable exhortations and promises, 7-19; and the destruction and continued desolations of Jerusalem, 20-24. The signs of his coming, 25-33. He exhorts to watchfulness and prayer, 34-35. He daily preaches at the temple; and retires at night to the mount of Olives, 37, 38.

AND he looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury

2 And he saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites.

3 And he said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all:

4 For all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had.

5 And as some spake of the temple, how it was adorned

and his Gospel: some attend Him here, and four things we have in these verses concerning them, which we had before.

I. They commend Christ's reply to the Sadducees; v. 39. Christ had the testimony of his adversaries, that He said well; and the scribes were his enemies, because He would not conform to the traditions of the elders; yet when He vindicated the fundamental practices of religion, even the scribes owned He said well.

II. They are struck with an awe of Christ, his wisdom and authority, v. 40. They saw He was too hard for all that contended with Him. But his own disciples, though weak, yet being willing to receive his doctrine, durst ask Him any question.

III. They are puzzled with a question concerning the Messiah, v. 41. Many Scriptures said Christ was to be the Son of David; even the blind man knew that, (ch. 18: 39,) and yet David called the Messiah his Lord, (ch. 42, 44.) his Owner, Ruler, and Benefactor: The Lord said to my Lord. God said it to the Messiah, Ps. 110: 1. Now if He be his Son, why doth he call Him his Lord? If He be his Lord, why do we call Him his Son? They could not reconcile this seeming contradiction; thanks be to God, we can; that Christ, as God, was David's Lord, but Christ, as Man, was David's Son. He was both the Root and the Offspring of David, Rev. 22: 16. By his human nature He was the Offspring of David, a Branch of his family; by his divine nature, the Root of David, from whom he had being, and all the supplies of grace.

IV. They are described in their black characters, and a public caution against them given to the disciples, v. 45-47. So Mark 12: 38, and more largely, Matt. 23. Christ bid his disciples beware of the scribes, that is, 1. 'Take heed of being drawn into sin by them; beware of their way, and of such a spirit as they are governed by. Be not you such in the Christian church, as they are in the Jewish church.' 2. 'Take heed of being brought into trouble by them,' as Matt. 10: 17. 'Beware of men, for they will deliver you up to the councils; beware. Beware of them, for.'

of the scribes, for they do so.

(1.) 'They are proud and haughty; they desire to walk the streets in long robes, as those that are above business, (for men of business went with their loins girt up,) and that take state, and place.' Let arms yield to the gown. They loved to have obeisance made them in the markets, that many might see what respect was paid them; and were very proud of the precedence given them in all places of concourse. They loved the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts, and, when placed in them, looked on themselves with great conceit, and on all about them with great contempt.

(2.) 'They are covetous and oppressive, making religion a cloak for it.' They devour widows' houses, get their estates into their hands, and then by some trick make them their own; or, live on them, and eat up what they have. And widows are their easy prey, because apt to be deluded by their specious pretences; for a show they make long prayers, perhaps with the widows when in sorrow, as if they had not only a pious but a pious concern for them, and thus endeavor to ingratiate themselves with them, and get their money and effects into their hands. Trust such devout men with unfold gold; they will give such an account of it as they think fit.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 19-47. Christ, we see, argues a very important point of doctrine from premises in which, perhaps, we might not have been able to discover it without such a hint. Let us learn to judge by Scripture arguments not merely by the sound, but by the sense of the words. And as our Lord chose a passage from the Pentateuch, rather than from the prophets, for the conviction of the Sadducees, let us be engaged to study the tempers and even the prejudices of those with whom we converse; that we may, if possible, let in the light of divine truth on their hearts, on that side by which they seem most capable of receiving it.

When ministers succeed in bringing the Word of God home to the consciences of obstinate transgressors, they will surely be exasperated; and in return watch their opportunity, and assume every disguise, to fasten some charge on the character of the ministers, or to expose them to the displeasure of the ruler. But 'the wisdom from above' will direct faithful ministers to

Christ reads them their doom in a few words. These shall receive a more abundant judgment, a double damnation, for abuse both of the poor widows, whose houses they devoured, and of religion, and particularly of prayer, as a pretence for more plausibly and effectually carrying on their wicked projects; for dissimulation piety is double iniquity.

CHAP. XXI. v. 1-4. This we had in Mark It is recorded twice, to teach,

1. That charity to the poor is a main matter in religion; our Lord took all occasions to commend, and recommend it. He had just mentioned the barbarity of the scribes, who devoured poor widows, (ch. 20.) and perhaps this is designed as an aggravation of it, that the poor widows were the best benefactors to the public funds, which the scribes had the disposal of.

2. That Christ has his eye on us, to observe what we contribute to works of piety and charity; whether in proportion to our means, or parsimoniously. This should make us afraid of coming short of duty in this matter; (men may be deceived with excuses which Christ knows to be frivolous;) and should encourage us to be abundant in it, without desiring that men should know it; it is enough that Christ does; He sees in secret, and will reward openly.

3. That Christ observes and accepts the charity of the poor in particular. Those that have nothing to give, may yet do a great deal in charity, by ministering to the poor, and helping them, and begging for them, that cannot help themselves, or beg for themselves. Christ does not blame this widow for indiscretion, in giving what she wanted herself, nor for vanity in giving among the rich; but commends her liberality, and willingness to part with what little she had for the glory of God; proceeding from a belief of, and dependence on, God's providence to take care of her.

4. That we ought to respect, and according to, yea, beyond our power, contribute cheerfully to whatever may be called the offerings of God. What is given to the support of the Gospel, and to the spread of religion, the education of youth, the release of prisoners, the relief of widows and strangers, and the maintenance of poor families, is given to the offerings of God, and shall be so accepted and recompensed.

V. 15-19. I. Even Christ's disciples spake with admiration of the external pomp and magnificence of the temple, v. 5. When we speak of the temple, it should be of the presence of God in it, and of the ordinances of God administered in it, and the communion his people there have with Him. It is a poor thing, when we speak of the church, to dwell on its pomps and revenues, and the dignities and powers of its officers and rulers; for the king's daughter is all glorious within.

II. Christ spake with contempt of them, and with assurance of their being all desolated very shortly; v. 6. 'This building shall yet be utterly ruined; and that as soon as the spiritual temple of the gospel-church (the substance of

NOTES.

CHAP. XXI. v. 1-4. Marg. Ref.—Mark 12: 41-44.) It is probable that the public sacrifices, and the incense, were bought with their contributions; and that part was often expended in repairing the tem-

ple and its out-buildings. The worshippers from a distance might be the principal persons, who cast in money at the great feasts; but it does not appear, that [this treasury] was exclusively intended for them.

SCOTT.

with goodly stones and gifts, he said,

6 As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

7 And they asked him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?

8 And he said, Take heed that ye be not deceived; for many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them.

9 But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by.

10 Then said he unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom:

11 And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven.

12 But before all

10:44. 1 Kings 9:7-9. 2 Chr. 7:20-22. Is. 64:10, 11. Jer. 7:1-14. 26:6, 18. Lam. 2:6-8. 41. 5:18. Ez. 7:20-22. Dan. 9:28, 27. Mic. 3:12. Zech. 11:1. 14:2. Matt. 24:2. Mark 13:2. Acts 6:13, 14. 8:2. Dan. 12:6, 8. Matt. 24:3. Mark 13:3, 4. John 21:21, 22. Acts 14:7. 1. 90:21, 27, 28. Matt. 24:15, 16. Mark 13:34. 2. 8:29. 8:29. Matt. 24:15, 16. 29-35. Mark 13:35, 36. 2 Cor. 11:13-15. 2. Thes. 2:3, 10, 11. 2 Tim. 3:13. 1 John 4:1. Rev. 12:9. John 5:43. Acts 5:26, 27. 8:9, 10. 13:19. Ps. 27:1-3. 46:1, 2. 112:7. Is. 8:12. 51:12, 13. Jer. 41:20. Matt. 24:8-8. Mark 13:7, 8. 8:28. 2. 12:13, 15, 8. Hag. 2:21, 22. Zech. 14:2, 3. Mark 13:8. Acts 2:19, 20. 11:28. Ps. 122:7. Rev. 6:2-12. 29-27. Matt. 24:29, 30. 3. 11:49-51. Matt. 10:16-25. 22:6. 23:34-36. 24:10, 21. Mark 13:13-13. 11:15, 20. 16:3, 8. Acts 4:3-7. 5:7. 17-19, 40. 6:12-15. 7:57-60. 8:3, 8, 4. 12:1-4. 16:22-28. 21:30, 31. 22:38. 24:1, 6. 25:1, 2, 11, 12, 22-25. 26:4, 6. 1. Thes. 5:13, 14. 1 Pet. 4:12-14. Rev. 3:10.

that shadow) begins to flourish.' Did we by faith foresee the withering of all external glory, we should not set our hearts on it, as those that cannot or will not see so far before them.

III. Those about Him inquire with curiosity concerning the time of this great desolation; v. 7. It is natural to covet to know future things and their time, which it is not for us to know; when we are more concerned to ask what is our duty in the prospect of these things, and how to prepare for them. They ask not for a present sign, to confirm the prediction itself, (Christ's word was enough for that,) but the future signs of the near accomplishment of the prediction, by which they may be put in mind of it. These signs of the times Christ had taught them to observe.

IV. With what clearness and fulness Christ answers their inquiries, as far as was necessary to direct them in duty; for all knowledge is desirable for practice.

1. They must expect to hear of false Christs, false prophets, and false prophecies: (v. 8.) Many shall come in my name; he does not mean in the name of Jesus, though some deceivers pretended commissions from Him, (as Acts 19:13,) but usurping the title and character of the Messiah. Many pretended to be the deliverers of the Jewish church and nation from the Romans, and to fix the time when the deliverance should be wrought, by which multitudes were insnared, to their ruin. They shall say, that I am He, or, I am, as if they would assume that incommunicable name of God, by which He made Himself known, when He came to deliver Israel out of Egypt; and to encourage people to follow them, they added, 'The time draws near, when the kingdom shall be restored to Israel, and if they will follow Him, they shall share in it.'

As to this, He gives them a needful caution; (1.) Take heed that ye be not deceived; do not imagine I shall Myself come again in external glory, to take possession of the throne of kingdoms. Expect no such thing, for my kingdom is not of this world. When they asked solicitously and eagerly, Master, when shall these things be? the first word Christ said, was, Take heed that ye be not deceived. Note, Those that are most inquisitive in the things of God, (though it is very good to be so,) are in most danger of being imposed upon, and have most need to be on their guard. (2.) Go ye not after them. If we are sure that Jesus is the Christ, and his doctrine the Gospel of God, we must be deaf to all intimations of another Christ and another gospel.

2. They must expect to hear of great commotions in the nations, and many terrible judgments inflicted on the Jews and their neighbors. (1.) There shall be bloody wars: (v. 10.) Nation shall rise against nation; one part of the Jewish nation against another, or rather the whole against the Romans. When they had rejected the liberty with which Christ would have made them free, they were left to themselves, to grasp at their civil liberty in ways that were sinful, and therefore could not be successful. (2.) There shall be earthquakes, which shall destroy towns and houses, and bury many in their ruins. (3.) There shall be famines and pestilences, the common effects of war, which destroy the fruits of the earth, and, by exposing men to ill weather and ill diet, occasion infectious diseases. God has various ways of punishing a provoking people. Though spiritual

judgments are more commonly inflicted in gospel-times, yet God makes use of temporal judgments also. (4.) There shall be fearful sights, and great signs from heaven, uncommon appearances in the clouds, comets, and blazing stars, which frighten ordinary beholders, and have always been looked upon as portending something bad.

'As to the fearful sights,' He says, 'let them not be fearful to you, who look above the visible heavens, to the throne of God's government in the highest heavens. Be not dismayed at the signs of heaven, for the heathen are dismayed at them, Jer. 10:2. And as to famines and pestilences, you are in the hands of God, who has promised those who are his, that in the days of famine they shall be satisfied, and that He will keep them from the noisome pestilence; trust in Him and be not afraid. Nay, when you hear of wars, when without are fightings, and within are fears, yet then be not terrified; you know the worst these judgments can do you, therefore be not afraid of them; for, [1.] These things must first come to pass, there is no remedy, it will be your wisdom to make yourselves easy by accommodating yourselves to them.' [2.] 'There is worse behind; fancy not you will soon see an end of these troubles, no, the end is not by and by, not suddenly. Be not terrified, for if you begin so quickly to be discouraged, how will you bear up under what is yet before you?'

3. They must expect to be themselves so signs and wonders in Israel; their persecution prognosticates the destruction of the city and temple. Nay, this should be the first sign of ruin; 'Before all these, they shall lay their hands on you. But this must be considered not only as the suffering of the persecuted, but as the sin of the persecutors. Before God's judgments are upon them, they shall fill up the measure of their iniquity by laying their hands on you.' Note, The ruin of a people is always introduced by their sin; and nothing introduces a surer and sorer ruin than the sin of persecution. This is a sign that God's wrath is coming on a people to the uttermost, when their wrath against the servants of God comes to the uttermost.

Now as to this,

(1.) Christ tells them what hard things they should suffer for his name's sake, such as when He first called them to follow Him, Matt. 10. They should know the wages, that they might sit down and count the costs. Paul, the greatest laborer and sufferer of them all, not being now among them, was told by himself what great things he should suffer for Christ's name's sake. (Acts 9:16.) so necessary is it that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus, should count on persecution. The Christians having been originally Jews, and still retaining an equal veneration for the Old Testament, and all the essentials of their religion, and differing only in ceremony, might expect fair quarter with them; but Christ bids them not expect it; 'No, they shall be the most forward to persecute you.' [1.] 'They shall use their own church-power against you; they shall deliver you up to the synagogues to be scourged there, and stigmatized with their anathemas.' [2.] 'They shall incense the magistrates against you; shall deliver you into prisons, to be brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake, and be punished by them.' [3.] 'Your own relations and friends will betray you, (v. 16.) so that

Gifts.] Several writers have mentioned various oblations of massy gold, which were affixed to the walls and pillars, besides the immense riches contained in the treasuries.

Verses 7-11.

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 24: 3-8. Mark 13: 1-8.) (8.) The time, &c.] The time, when the deceivers would come. (11.) Fearful.] Josephus gives a very particular account of many terrible appearances in the heavens: as a comet, like a flaming sword, waving over Jerusalem, and the appearance of contending armies in the air. 'The great gate of the temple, which twenty men could scarcely shut, and which was made fast; with bolts and bars, was seen to open of its own accord, to let in their enemies: for so, saith he, our wise men construed this omen. At the feast of Pentecost, when the priests went at midnight into the temple to attend their service, they first heard a kind of noise, as of a movement from the place and then a voice, saying, Let

'us go hence,' &c. &c. These and many other extraordinary events excited great consternation among the Jews, and were intimations of their approaching miseries.

Verses 12-19.

(Notes, Matt. 24: 9-14. Mark 13: 9-13.) (13.) Turn to you, &c.] 'The persecutions which you endure, being thus exactly foretold, shall still more fully confirm and establish your faith in Me.' (15.) I will, &c. (12: 11, 12. Ez. 4: 11, 12. Prov. 2: 6. Jer. 1: 9, 10. Matt. 10: 16-20. Acts 2: 4. 8: 3-14. Rom. 1: 5-9.) In the text referred to it is declared, that it belonged to JERUSALEM alone, to make, or open, man's month, or to give wisdom; and the constant language of Scripture is, 'as the Spirit gave him utterance;' being 'filled with the Holy Ghost, he said,' &c. Yet Jesus, during his lowest humiliation on earth, promised expressly to give his disciples 'a mouth and wisdom.' Though seldom addressed, such texts are of immense importance in settling the doctrine of our Lord's Deity and of the Trinity

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shal. see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.

21 Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out: and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto.

22 For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled.

23 But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people.

24 And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times

lose a hair! It is a proverbial expression, frequent both in the Old and New-Testament, denoting the greatest indemnity and security. Some think it refers to the preservation of the lives of all the Christians that were among the Jews, when they were cut off by the Romans; historians tell us that not one Christian perished in that desolation. Others reconcile it with the deaths of multitudes in the cause of Christ, and take it figuratively in the same sense that Christ saith, *He that loseth his life for my sake, shall find it.* 'Not a hair of your head shall perish, but, 1st. 'I shall take cognizance of it.' To this end He had said, (Matt. 10: 30.) *The hairs of your head are all numbered;* and an account is kept of them, so that none of them shall perish but He will miss it. 2dly. 'It shall be upon a valuable consideration.' We do not reckon that *lost or perishing*, which is laid out for good purposes, and will turn to a good account. If we drop the body itself for Christ's name's sake, it does not perish, but is well bestowed. 3dly. 'It shall be abundantly recompensed; when you come to balance profit and loss, you will find great gain in present comforts, especially in the joys of a life eternal.' So that though we may be losers for Christ, we shall not, cannot, be losers by Him in the end.

[4.] 'It is therefore your duty and interest, in the midst of your own sufferings and those of the nation, to maintain a holy sincerity and serenity of mind, which will keep you always easy; (p. 19.) *In your patience possess ye your souls;* get and keep possession of your souls.' Some read it as a promise, 'you may or shall possess your souls.' It comes all to one. Note, 1st. It is our duty and interest at all times, especially in perilous, trying times, to secure the possession of our own souls; not only that they be not destroyed and lost forever, but that they be not distempered now, nor our possession of them disturbed and interrupted. 'Possess your souls, be your own men, keep up the authority and dominion of reason, and keep under the tumults of passion, that neither grief nor fear may tyrannize over you, or turn you out of the possession and enjoyment of yourselves.' In difficult times, when we can keep possession of nothing else, let us make that sure which will be made sure, and keep possession of our souls. 2dly. It is by patience, Christian patience, that we keep possession of our own souls. 'In suffering times, set patience on guard to preserve your souls; by it keep your souls composed and in a good frame, and keep out all those impressions which would ruffle you, and put you out of temper.'

V. 20—23. Having given them an idea of the times for about thirty-eight years next ensuing, He here shows them the issue, namely, the

destruction of Jerusalem, and the utter dispersion of the Jewish nation; which would be a little day of judgment; a type and figure of Christ's second coming, not so fully spoken of here as in Matt. 24: yet glanced at; for the destruction of Jerusalem would be, as it were, the destruction of the world to those whose hearts were bound up in it.

I. He tells them that they should see Jerusalem besieged, *compassed with armies*, (v. 20.) the Roman armies; and then they might conclude *its desolation was nigh*, for thus the siege, though long, would infallibly end. Note, As for mercy, so in judgment, when God begins, He will make an end.

II. He warns them, upon this signal given, to shift for their own safety; (v. 21.) 'Then let them which are in Judea, quit the country and flee to the mountains; let them which are in the midst of Jerusalem, depart out, before the city be closely shut up, "before the trenches be opened," as we say now; and let not them that are in the countries and villages about, enter into the city, thinking to be safe there. Abandon a city and country you see God has abandoned. Come out of her, my people.'

III. He foretells the terrible havoc that should be made of the Jewish nation; (v. 22.) *Those are the days of vengeance* so often spoken of in the Old-Testament, which would complete the ruin of that provoking people; all these predictions must now be fulfilled, and the blood of the Old-Testament martyrs now be required. *All things that are written, must be fulfilled at length.* After days of patience long abused, there will come days of vengeance: reprieves are not pardons. The greatness of that destruction is set forth, 1. By the inflicting cause of it, it is the *wrath of God on this people*. 2. By the particular terror it would be to women with child, and mothers that are nurses. *Woe to them*, not only because they are most subject to frights, and least able to shift for their own safety, but because it will be a very great torment to them, to think of having borne and nursed children for the murderers. 3. By the general confusion throughout the nation. There shall be *great distress in the land*; men will not know what course to take, nor how to help themselves.

IV. He describes the issue of the struggles between the Jews and the Romans; in short, 1. *Multitudes shall fall by the sword.* It is computed that in those wars of the Jews there fell by the sword above eleven hundred thousand. And the siege of Jerusalem was, in effect, a military execution. 2. The rest shall be *led away captive*, not into one nation, as when conquered by the Chaldeans, which gave them an opportunity of keeping together, but *into all nations*,

17:31—33. Gen. 19:17—22. Ex. 9:20, 21. Prov. 22:3. Matt. 24:16—18. Num. 13:15, 16. Num. 16:28. Jer. 6:1. 35:11. 37:12, 13. Rev. 18:4. 19:34, 35. 21:2. Jer. 51:6. Rom. 2:5. 2 Pet. 2:9. 37. b Lev. 26:14—33. Deut. 28:15—68. 28:10—28. 32:34, 43. Pa. 69:22—28. 149:7—9. Is. 63:1—16. Jer. 9:28. 27. Zech. 11:1, &c. Mal. 4:1. Mark 13:19, 20. 28:28. 28:36, 37. Lam. 4:10. Hos. 9:12—17. 13:16. Matt. 24:19. Mark 13:17. c 19:27, 43, 44. Matt. 21:41, 44. 1 Thess. 2:16. Heb. 10:26—31. Jam. 5:1. 1 Pet. 4:17, 18. 1 Dent. 28:64—68. m Is. 55: 63:18. Lam. 1:15. Rev. 12:2. n Is. 56:12. Dan. 12:7. Mal. 1:11. Rom. 11:25.

23: 9. Jer. 30: 10, 11.) This unparalleled event was doubtless intended, among other reasons, that they might be undeniable witnesses, or monuments, of the truth of the Scriptures; of that part which they reject, as well as of that which they retain. Jerusalem has ever since been 'tradition under foot,' or governed with despotic sway, by the Gentiles; by the Romans, Saracens, Mamelukes, Franks, and Turks who possess it to this day. The Roman victors forbade any Jew to dwell in their ancient inheritance, or to come within sight of Jerusalem; the foundations of the old city were ploughed up; a new city was at length builded by the conquerors, called *Elia*, and an idolatrous temple erected where the temple of *Jehovan* had stood. In the days of Constantine and afterwards, the city was indeed possessed by Christians among others; but they were chiefly the Gentile converts, and the Jews were driven thence with great severity. Julian, [as was hinted before] attempted to rebuild the temple, and to induce the Jews to settle there again, in avowed contempt and defiance of this prophecy; but his impious attempt was repeatedly frustrated, by the eruption of balls of fire from the earth, which destroyed his workmen. Great pains were taken some ages after, and many bloody wars, called 'the Crusades,' were waged, in order to rescue this 'holy city' from the hands of the infidels, [who had built a mosque on the very site of the temple], and to establish there a Christian empire, but the success was very imperfect and short-lived; and, in general, Mohammedans (who are Gentiles, neither Jews nor Christians,) have had possession of it; the few Christians, who reside there, have little more of their religion, than the name, and are most grievously oppressed by the Turks; and the Jews have generally been driven from their ancient city, though many may now be found there. 'The times of the Gentiles' seem to signify the times during which the Gentiles are permitted to keep possession of Jerusalem, namely, till the Jews be converted to Christ; then their 'times will be fulfilled'; probably the Jews will be restored to their own land, and vengeance will be taken on those who oppose their return; (Ez. 34: 23—31. 36: 25—28. 37: 25—28. 38: 39. Dan. 11: 40—45. Am. 9: 13—15. Zech. 14:) for these events seem to be predicted, as introductory to the calling of the nations into the church.

(Rom. 11: 15—32, v. 15—25.) Or, the times appointed for the calling of the Gentiles, or all nations, into the church may be meant. When this is arrived, or just at hand, the Jews will recover their holy city. This prediction, however, has already been so remarkably accomplished, that it may be said fully to demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion. No human or created sagacity could have foreseen or conjectured such remote events. It must have previously been supposed, that if the Jews were dispersed among all nations, they would be incorporated among them; and their preservation as a distinct people, in the midst of their several conquerors and oppressors, is an event which has no parallel in the annals of the world, an event that could never have been expected or thought of, if prophecy had not excited that expectation; an event which is a sure pledge of the accomplishment of all the other prophecies concerning this extraordinary people, as well as a preparation for it. (Hos. 3: 4, 5.) The three evangelists who recorded these predictions were dead, before Jerusalem was destroyed. But the fulfillment of the prophecy to this present day conveys the most unanswerable proof of its divine original; and if men were as impartial and unprejudiced in their religious inquiries, as they are in mathematical reasonings, no one, who well considered this prediction, and examined its accomplishment, could any more doubt of the truth of the Gospel, than learned men do of the theorems in Euclid.

SCOTT. (24.) *Until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* 'That is, even until the end of human things, when the nations shall no longer exist.' Rosenau. I prefer, however, the interpretation of Kuinoel, until the time when they, the nations, shall suffer the punishment of their impiety.

It seems reasonable to suppose that here, as in most other places, the Gentiles are opposed to the Jews; and consequently, that all the period between the destruction of Jerusalem and the restoration of the Jews to their own land, so expressly foretold in Scripture, is here intended. (See Is. 27: 12, 13. Ezek. 11: 17. 20: 40, 42. 34: 13. 36: 24, 25. 37: 21—28. 39: 28, 29. Hos. 3: 5. Amos 9: 14, 15. and Zech. 14: 11.) With this indeed is connected the bringing in the future of it

of the Gentiles be fulfilled.

25 ¶ And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring;

26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory.

28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.

29 ¶ And he spake to them a parable: Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees;

30 When they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.

31 So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand.

32 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled.

33 Heaven and earth shall pass away; but my words shall not pass away.

34 ¶ And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch ye therefore, and pray al-

ways, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

37 ¶ And in the day-time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.

38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the temple, for to hear him.

ways, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

37 ¶ And in the day-time he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out, and abode in the mount that is called the mount of Olives.

38 And all the people came early in the morning to him in the

Messiah; they that would not see Him coming in the power of his grace to save, shall see Him coming in the power of his wrath to destroy them; those that would not have Him to reign, shall have Him to triumph over them. 2. An earnest of his second coming. Then, the terrors of that day, they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud, and all the terrors of the last day. They shall see a specimen, a faint resemblance of it.

VII. He encourages all the faithful disciples in reference to the terrors of that day, v. 25. 'When Jerusalem is besieged, and every thing is concerning to the destruction of the Jews, then do you look up, when others are looking down, look heavenward, in faith, hope, and prayer, and lift up your heads with cheerfulness and confidence, for your redemption draws nigh.' 1. When Christ came to destroy the Jews, He came to redeem the Christians, persecuted and oppressed by them; then had the churches rest. 2. When He comes to judge the world at the last day, He will redeem all that are his from all their grievances. And the foresight of that day is as pleasant to all good Christians, as it is terrible to the wicked and ungodly. Their death itself is so; when they see that day approaching, they can lift up their heads with joy, knowing that their redemption draws nigh, their removal to their Redeemer.

VIII. Here is one word of prediction, (v. 24.) that looks further than the destruction of the Jewish nation, which is not easily understood; Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. 1. Some understand it of what is past; so Hammond. The Gentiles, who have conquered Jerusalem, shall keep possession of it, and shall be purely Gentile, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled, till a great part of the Gentile world is become Christian; and then, after Jerusalem is rebuilt by Adrian the emperor, with an exclusion of all the Jews from it, many of the Jews shall turn Christians, shall join with the Gentile Christians, to set up a church in Jerusalem, which shall flourish there for a long time. 2. Others understand it of what is yet to come; so Whitby. Jerusalem shall be possessed by the Gentiles, of one sort or other, for the most part, till the time comes when the nations that yet remain infidels shall embrace the Christian faith, when the kingdoms of this world shall become Christ's kingdoms, and then all the Jews shall be converted. Jerusalem shall be inhabited by them, and neither they nor their city any longer trodden down by the Gentiles.

V. 29-33. I. Christ appoints his disciples to observe the signs of the times, which they might judge by, if they had an eye to the foregoing directions, with as much certainty as they

temple, for to hear him.

o Is. 13:10, 13, 14. 24:23. Jer. 4:23, 3. 32:7, 8. Joel 2:30, 31. Am. 8:9, 10. Matt. 27:45. Mark 13:24-26. 15:33. Acts 2:19, 20. 2 Pet. 3:10-12. Rev. 6:12-14. 20:11. p Is. 24:4, 5. Mic. 7:4. 5:30. 51:15. q Ps. 46:3. 93:3. 161:4. r Lev. 26:36. Deut. 28:32-34, 65-67. Heb. 10:36, 37. s Matt. 24:29. Mark 13:25. t Dan. 7:13. Matt. 26:64. Mark 13:26. Acts 1:9-11. Rev. 1:7. 14:14. u Matt. 16:27, 28. 25:31. x Ps. 96:5-9. Is. 12:3-5. 25:5, 9. 60:12. y Rom. 8:23. Eph. 1:14. 4:30. z Matt. 24:32-35. Mark 13:28-30. a 12:31-37. Mat. 16:1-4. b Heb. 10:37. Jam. 5:9. 1 Pet. 4:7. c 11:50, 51. Matt. 16:28. 23:36. 24:34. Mark 13:30. d Ps. 102:26. Is. 51:6. Mat. 5:18. 24:35. Mark 13:31. 1 Pet. 1:25. 2. Pet. 3:7-14. Rev. 20:11. e 8. 17:3. Mark 13:9. Heb. 12:15.

Verse 25.

The sea, &c.) 'The prophets paint the heavens, earth, and sea, in dreadful commotion, and the nations in immediate expectation of a final dissolution, when they wish to describe any uncommon change that is impending. See Is. 13. Le Clerc. Here then the roaring of the waves is meant, (as earthquakes sometimes are,) to paint images of dire calamity; as is frequent in the Hebrew poets. Kuhnke observes, that there seems depicted a sort of congeries of evils, by which the inhabitants should be swept away as if by a rush of waters. The phrase, (says Dr. Owen.) symbolically represents a collection or multitude of people in commotion; and frequent commotions there were in Judea, before the destruction of Jerusalem.' Bloomfield

Gentiles, Rom. 11:25, 26. But unless it could be proved, (which I do not recollect) that the inhabitants of Palestine shall then peaceably surrender it to the returning Jews, it seems most natural to suppose the time of the Gentiles here signifies the time when they shall be visited and punished; which is the sense in which this very phrase, and others nearly parallel to it, frequently occur in the Old Testament, as Brennius justly observes. Compare Ezek. 30:3, as also Jer. 27:7, 60:27. Ezek. 21:25, 29. 22:3, 4. And if this be the sense of it, it seems an intimation that the Turks, or some other anti-Christian power, may continue possessed of the holy land till the restoration of the Jews; for one can hardly suppose their way into it should then be opened by the conquest of a Christian nation. Doddridge.

CHAP. XXII.

The priests and scribes determine to put Jesus to death. 1, 2. Judas bargains to betray Him, 3-6. Two apostles prepare the passover, and Jesus eats it with the twelve, 7-18. He institutes the Lord's supper, 19, 20; points out the traitor, 21-23; checks the ambition of the disciples, and promises them an honorable station in his kingdom, 24-30. He shows Peter that Satan desired to sift him and his brethren; but that his faith should not fail, though he would thrice deny Him, 31-34; and instructs his disciples about their approaching danger, 35-38. He agony and prayer in the garden, and his warnings to the apostles, 39-46. He is betrayed and apprehended, 47-49; holds him whose ear Peter cut off, 50-53; and is led to the high priest, 54. Peter thrice denies Him, 55-62. Jesus is mocked, insulted, and condemned, 63-71.

NOW ^{the} feast of Unleavened bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover.

2 And ^{the} chief priests and scribes sought how they might kill him; for they feared the people.

3 Then entered Satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve.

Ex. 12:6-23. Lev. 23:5, 6. Matt. 26:2. Mark 14:1, 2. John 11:55-57. 1 Cor. 5:7, 8. 13:47-48. 20:19. Ps. 2:1-5. Matt. 21:28, 45, 46. 25:3-5. John 11:47-53, 57. Acts 4:21. c John 6:7, 11. 12:6. 13:2, 27. Acts 5:3. d 21. 6:16. Ps. 41:9. 55:12-14. Matt. 26:23. Mark 14:18-20. John 13:18, 26.

watch against, lest our hearts be overcharged with them. (1.) The indulging the appetites of the body, and allowing ourselves in the gratifications of sense to excess; *Take heed lest you be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness*, the immoderate use of meat and drink, which burden the heart not only with the guilt thereby contracted, but by the ill influence such disorders of the body have on the mind; they make men dull and lifeless to duty; they stupefy the conscience, and make the mind *unaffected* with things most affecting. (2.) The inordinate pursuit of the good things of this world. The heart is overcharged with the *cares of this life*. The former is the snare of persons given to pleasures: this of men of business, that *will be rich*. We have need to guard on both hands, not only lest, at the time when death comes, but lest at *any time*, our hearts should be thus overcharged. Our caution against sin, and care of our souls, must be *constant*.

IV. He counsels them to prepare for this great day, v. 36. See, 1. What should be our aim—that we may be *accounted worthy to escape all those things*—that, when the judgments of God are abroad, either we may not be involved in the common calamity, or it may not be to us, what it is to others; that in the day of death we may escape the sting of it, which is the wrath of God, and the Cancellation of hell. Yet we must aim not only to *escape that*, but to *stand before the Son of man*; not only to stand *acquitted* before Him as our Judge, (Ps. 1:5.) to have boldness in the day of Christ, (that is supposed in our *escaping* all those things,) but to attend on Him as our Master, to stand continually before his throne, and serve Him day and night in his temple, (Rev. 7:15,) always to *behold his face*, as the angels, Matt. 18:10. The saints are here said to be *accounted worthy*, as before, ch. 20:35. God, by the good work of his grace in

could judge of the approach of summer by the budding forth of the trees, v. 29-31. As in the kingdom of nature, so in the kingdom of providence, there is a consequence of one event on another. When we see a nation filling up the measure of their iniquity, we may conclude that their ruin is nigh: when we see the ruin of persecuting powers hastening on, we may thence infer that the *kingdom of God is nigh at hand*.

II. He charges them to look upon those things as neither *doubtful* nor *distant*, (for then they would not make a due impression,) but as *sure* and *very near*. The destruction of the Jewish nation, 1. Was *near*; v. 32. There were some now alive, that should see it; some that now heard it predicted. 2. It was *sure*, the sentence was irreversible, v. 33.

III. He cautions them against security and sensuality, by which they would unfit themselves for the trying times coming on, and make them to be a great surprise and terror to them; (v. 34, 35.) *Take heed to yourselves*. This is the command to all Christ's disciples, '*Take heed that you be not overpowered by temptations, nor betrayed by your own corruptions*.' Note, We cannot be *safe*, if we be *secure*. It concerns us at *all times*, but especially at *some times*, to be very cautious. See here, 1. Our danger—that the day of death and judgment should come on us *unawares*, when we are not prepared for it; lest, when we are called to meet our Lord, that he found *furthest* from our thoughts, which ought always to be *nearest* our hearts, lest it come on us as a *snare*; for so it *will come* on most men, who *dwell on the earth*, and mind *earthly things only*, and have no converse with heaven; to them it will be as a *snare*; see Eccl. 9:12. It will be a *terror* and a *destruction* to them: it will put them into an inexpressible fright, and hold them fast for a doom yet more frightful. 2. Our duty, in consideration of this danger; we must *take heed lest our hearts be overcharged*, lest they be overloaded, and so unfitted and disabled to prepare for death and judgment. Two things we must

them, *makes them meet* for this happiness, and by the good will of his grace toward them, *accounts them worthy of it*: but, as Grotius here saith, a great part of our unworthiness lies in an acknowledgment of our unworthiness. 2. What should be our *actings* in these aims; *Watch therefore, and pray always*. Watching and praying must go together, Neh. 4:9. Those that would escape the wrath, and make sure of the joys to come, must *watch and pray*, always, must make it the constant business of their lives, (1.) To keep a guard on themselves; '*Watch against sin, watch to every duty, and to the improvement of every opportunity of doing good*. Keep awake, in expectation of your Lord's coming, that you may be in a right frame to receive Him, and bid Him welcome.' (2.) To keep up their communion with God; '*Pray always*; be always in an habitual disposition to that duty; keep up stated times for it, abound in it; pray on all occasions.' Those shall be accounted worthy to live a life of praise in the other world, that live a life of prayer in this.

In the last two verses we have an account how Christ disposed of Himself, during those three or four days, betwixt his riding in triumph into Jerusalem, and the night in which He was betrayed.

[1.] He was *all day teaching in the temple*. Christ preached on week-days as well as sabbath-days. He was indefatigable, He preached in the face of opposition, and in the midst of those that He knew sought occasion against Him.

[2.] At night He went to lodge at a friend's house, in the mount of Olives, about a mile out of town. Probably He had some friends in the city, that would gladly have lodged Him; but He chose to retire in the evening from the noise of the town, that He might have more time for secret devotion, now his hour was at hand.

[3.] Early in the morning He was in the temple again, where He had a morning-lecture for such as would attend it; and the people were forward to hear one that they saw forward to preach; (v. 38.) though the chief priests and scribes did all they could to prejudice them against Him. Sometimes the taste and relish which serious, honest, plain people have of good preaching, are more to be valued and judged by, than the opinion of the witty and learned, and those in authority.

CHAP. XXII. v. 1-6. The year of the redeemed, fixed from eternity in the divine counsels, and looked for by them that waited for the consolation of Israel, is now come; after the revolutions of many ages, Isa. 63:4. In the very first month of that year, the redemption is wrought out, so much was the Redeemer straitened till his undertaking was accomplished. It was at the same time of the same month, (Exod. 12:2.) that God by Moses brought Israel out of Egypt; that the Antitype might answer the type. Christ is here delivered up, *when the feast of unleavened bread drew nigh*, v. 1. About as long before that feast as they began to make preparation for it, here was preparation making for our Passover's being offered for us. Here we have his sworn enemies contriving

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 20-33. The performance of ancient prophecies is very encouraging to those who are waiting on God to perform his promises: for if 'the days of vengeance "arrived," that all things which were written might be fulfilled,' surely the predictions of Zion's prosperity will also be accomplished; for our 'God delighteth in mercy.'—The scattered Jews around us *unwillingly* preach to us the truth of Christianity, and prove, that 'though heaven and earth pass away, the words of Jesus shall not pass away;' and they may also remind us to pray for those times, when neither the literal nor the mystical Jerusalem shall any longer be trodden down by the Gentiles, and when both Jews and Gentiles shall be turned to the Lord. (Rev. 11:1, 2.)—If we would 'jitt up our heads, as knowing that our redemption draweth nigh,' in those seasons when there shall be 'dis-

tress of nations with perplexity,' or in the day when 'flesh and heart shall fail;' or when 'the powers of heaven shall be shaken, and the Son of man shall be seen coming in a cloud, with power and great glory;' we must continually be expecting and preparing for those events. May we then watch and pray incessantly, that we may 'be accounted worthy to escape' these fatal delusions; and 'that we may be found' of Christ, when He cometh, 'in peace, without spot and blameless.' (2 Pet. 3:11-15.) May we begin, employ, and conclude each of our days, in reading and hearing His Word, obeying his precepts, and imitating his example, that whenever He cometh we may 'be found watching.' (P. O. Matt. 24:16-51. 25:1-13. Mark 13:24-37. 1 Thes. 5:1-11. 2 Pet. 3:9-18.) Scott.

NOTES.

CHAP. XXII. v. 3-5. (3.) Then entered, &c.] John 13:1-5, 13-30. 'God, by his wonderful providence, causeth him to be the minister of our salvation, who was the author of our destruction.' Beza. (5.) Money.] 'As the priests proposed so small a price,' [574]

(thirty shekels), 'to express their contempt of Jesus; so God permitteth Judas, covetous as he was, to acquiesce in that mean and trifling sum; (though he might easily have raised it higher), that thus the prophecy of Zechariah might be fulfilled, in which it had been particularly specified.' Doddridge. Scott.

4 And he ^awent his way and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray him unto them.

5 And they were glad, ^aand covenanted to give him money.

6 And he promised, and sought opportunity to betray him unto them, ^ain the absence of the multitude.

7 ¶ Then came ^athe day of unleavened bread, when the passover must be killed.

8 And ^ahe sent Peter and John, saying, ^aGo and prepare us the passover, that we may eat.

9 And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

10 And he said unto them, ^aBehold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water: follow him into the house where he entereth in.

11 And ye shall say unto the good man of the house, ^aThe Master saith unto thee, ^aWhere is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

12 And ^ahe shall shew you ^aa large upper room furnished: there make ready.

13 And ^athey went and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

14 ¶ And ^awhen the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him.

15 And he said unto

it; (v. 2.) and a treacherous disciple joining with them, and coming to their assistance, v. 3. One would wonder that Christ, who *knew* all men, should take a traitor to be a disciple; and that one who could not but *know* Christ, should be so base as to betray Him; but Christ had wise and holy ends in appointing Judas, and how Judas came to betray Christ, we are here told, v. 3. It was the devil's work, who thought hereby to ruin Christ's undertaking, to have broken his head; but it proved only the bruising of his heel. Whoever betrays Christ, or his truths, or ways, it is Satan that puts them upon it. Judas knew how desirous the chief priests were to get Christ into their hands, and that they could not do it safely, without the assistance of some that knew his retirements, as he did. He therefore went himself, and made the motion to them, v. 4. Note, It is hard to say whether more mischief is done to Christ's kingdom by the power and policy of its open enemies, or by the treachery and self-seeking of its pretended friends: nay, without the latter, its enemies could not gain their point as they do. When you see Judas communing with the chief priests, be sure some mischief is hatching. The bargain made, Judas sought opportunity to betray Him. Probably, he slyly inquired of Peter and John, who were more intimate with their Master than he was, where He would be at such a time, and whither He would retire after the passover, and they were not sharp enough to suspect him. Somehow or other, in a little time, he gained the advantage he sought, and fixed the time and place where it might be done, in the absence of the multitude, and without tumult.

V. 7-20. What a hopeful prospect had we of Christ's doing great good by his preaching in the temple, during the seven days' feast of unleavened bread, when the people were every morning, and early in the morning, so attentive to hear Him! But here is a stop put to it. He must enter on work of another kind; in that, however, He shall do more good than in the other, for neither Christ's nor his church's suffering days are their idle, empty days.

Here is,

I. The preparation for the passover according to the law, v. 7. Christ was made under the law, and observed its ordinances, particularly that of the passover, to teach us in like manner to observe his gospel-institutions, particularly that of the Lord's supper. Probably He went to the temple to preach in the morning, when He sent Peter and John another way into the city to prepare the passover. Those who have attendants to do their secular business, must not think that that allows them to be idle; it engages them to employ themselves more in spiritual business, or service to the public. He directed those whom He employed, whither they should go, v. 9, 10. Christ might have said no more than, Go to such a one's house, or to a house in such a street, with such a sign, &c. But He directed them thus, to teach them to depend on the conduct of Providence, and to follow that, *step by step*. They went, not knowing whither they went, but whom they followed. Being come to the house, they must desire the master of the house to show them a room, (v. 11.) and he will readily do it, v. 12. Whether it was a friend's house, or a public house, does not appear; but the disciples found all just as He had said; (v. 13.) for they need not fear a disappointment, who go upon Christ's word.

m 19:5. Rev. 3:20.

n John 2:25. 21:17. Acts 16:14, 15.

o Acts 1:13. 20:8.

p 21:33. John 2:5. 11:40. Heb. 11:8.

q Deut. 16:6, 7. Matt. 26:20. Mark

14:17.

¶ Matt. 26:14. Mark 14:10, 11.
a Matt. 11:12, 13. Matt. 26:15, 16. 27: 2-5.
Acts 1:18. 8:20. 1 Tim. 6:9.
19. 2 Pet. 2:3, 15. Jude 11.
c Or, without tumult. Matt. 26:5.
Mark 14:2.
d 1. Ex. 12:6, 18. Matt. 26:17. Mark 14:12.
h Mark 14:13-15.
i 1:5. Matt. 3:18. Gal. 4:5.
j 19:28, 66. 1 Sam. 10:2-7. Matt. 26:18, 19. John 16:4. Acts 8:26-29.
l 19:31, 34. Matt. 21:3. John 11:28.

(4.) Captains.] 'Priests of high standing, who commanded the bands of Levites, that watched the temple.' Acts 4: 1. 5: 24.

JAHN.

Officers.] 'These were not military officers, but presidents of the temple, v. 52.' According to the Jewish custom, the Levites and priests kept (by turns) a nightly watch in the temple, over which one presided, (who was called, by way of eminence, the prefect of the temple. With these were also associated persons of rank, who were likewise called officers or prefects. Of this guard, mention is made in 2 Ku. 25: 18. These prefects were therefore Jews, not Romans.'

Rosenm., in Bloomfield.

Verses 8-12.

'After Jehovah had appointed Jerusalem to be the place of his habitation and temple, it was considered as the metropolis of the Jewish nation, and the common property of the children of Israel. On this account it was, that the houses were not let, and all strangers

II. The solemnizing of the passover, according to the law. When the hour of supper was come, He sat down, and the twelve apostles with Him, Judas not excepted; for it is possible they whose hearts are filled with Satan, and all manner of wickedness, may yet continue a plausible profession of religion, and be found in the performance of its external services. And while it is in the heart, and does not break out into any thing scandalous, such cannot be denied the external privileges of their external profession. Though Judas has already been guilty of an overt-act of treason, yet, it not being publicly known, Christ admits him to sit down with the rest at the passover. Observe,

1. Christ bids this passover welcome, to teach us in like manner to welcome with appetite ^{us} passover, the Lord's supper, v. 15. 'I have most earnestly desired, to eat this passover with you before I suffer.' He knew it to be the prologue to his sufferings, but desired it, in order to his Father's glory and man's redemption. He delighted to do even this part of the will of God concerning Him as Mediator. Shall we be backward to any service for Him, who was so forward in the work of our salvation? See his love to his disciples. He desired to eat it with them, that He and they might have a little time together; themselves and none besides, for private conversation, which they could not have in Jerusalem, ^{at} on this occasion. He was now about to leave them, but was very desirous to eat this passover with them before He suffered, as if the comfort of that would carry Him the more cheerfully through his sufferings, and make them easier. Note, Our gospel-passover, eaten by faith with Christ, will be an excellent preparation for sufferings, and trials, and death itself.

2. Christ in it takes his leave of all passovers, thereby abrogating all the ordinances of the ceremonial law, of which that of the passover was one of the earliest and most eminent; (v. 16.) 'I will not any more eat thereof, nor shall it be any more celebrated by my disciples, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.' (1.) It was fulfilled when Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us, 1 Cor. 5: 7. Therefore that type and shadow was laid aside, because now, in the kingdom of God, the substance was come, which superseded them. (2.) It was fulfilled in the Lord's supper, an ordinance of the gospel-kingdom, which the disciples, after the pouring out of the Spirit, frequently celebrated, as we find, Acts 2: 42, 46. Christ might be said to eat with them, because of their spiritual communion with Him in it. He is said to sup with them, and they with Him, Rev. 3: 20. But, (3.) The complete accomplishment of that commemoration of liberty will be in the kingdom of glory, when all God's spiritual Israel shall be released from the bondage of death and sin, and be put in possession of the land of promise.

What He had said of his eating the paschal lamb. He repeats concerning his drinking the passover-wine; the cup of blessing, or of thanksgiving, in which all the company pledged the master of the feast, at the close of the passover-supper. This cup He took, according to the custom, and gave thanks for the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt, and the preservation of their first-born, and then said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves, v. 17. This is not said after words of the sacramental

of the Jewish nation had the liberty of lodging there gratis, by right of hospitality. To this custom our Lord probably alludes here, as in the parallel passages. HORN.

Verses 14.

'In eating the passover, the master of the family began the feast with a cup of wine, which having solemnly blessed, i. e. having adored the name of God over it, he divided among the guests, (22: 17.) and afterwards washed his hands.—Then the supper began with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, which, when the company had tasted, one of the younger persons present, generally a child, asked the reason of what was peculiar in the feast, (Exod. 12: 26.) which introduced the haggadah, that is, the showing forth or declaration of it; in allusion to which we read of showing forth the Lord's death, (1 Cor. 11: 26.)—Then the master rose and took another cup, and washed his hands again: before the lamb was tasted; and in this interval, I suppose, Christ also washed the feet of his disciples. Then, after eating the passover, followed

them, *With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer :

16 For I say unto you, *I will not any more eat thereof, *until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves;

18 For I say unto you, *I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, *until the kingdom of God shall come.

19 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you : *this do in remembrance of me.

20 Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

21 But behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

cup; which being the *New Testament in his blood*, He might give unto every one's hand, to teach them to make a particular application of it to their own souls; but as for the paschal cup which is to be abolished, it is enough to say, *'Take it, and divide it among yourselves*, we shall have no more occasion for it, v. 18. I will have it no more drunk of, till the Spirit be poured out, and then you shall in the *Lord's supper* commemorate a much more glorious redemption; of which both the deliverance out of Egypt and the passover-commemoration of it were types and figures. The kingdom of God is now so near, that you will not need to eat or drink any more till it comes.' Christ dying next day, opened it. As Christ with great pleasure took leave of all the legal feasts (which fell of course with the passover) for the evangelical ones, both spiritual and sacramental; so many good Christians, when called to remove from the church militant to the church triumphant, cheerfully exchange even their spiritual repasts, much more their sacramental ones, for the eternal feast.

III. The institution of the Lord's supper, v. 19, 20. *The passover and deliverance out of Egypt were typical and prophetic signs of a Christ to come, who should by dying deliver us from sin, death, and the tyranny of Satan; but they shall no more say, The Lord lieth, that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, a much greater deliverance shall eclipse the lustre of that, and therefore the Lord's supper is instituted to be a commemorative sign or memorial of a Christ already come, that has by dying delivered us; and his death is in a special manner set before us in that ordinance.*

1. The breaking of Christ's body, as a sacrifice for us, is here commemorated by the breaking of bread; and the sacrifices under the law were called the bread of our God; (Lev. 21: 6, 8, 17.) *This is my body which is given for you.* And there is a feast upon that sacrifice instituted, in which we are to apply it to ourselves, and take the benefit and comfort of it; for nothing can more nourish and satisfy our souls than the doctrine of Christ's atonement for sin, and the assurance of our interest in that atonement; this bread that was broken and given for us, to satisfy for the guilt of our sins, is broken and given to us, to satisfy the desire of our souls. And this we do in remembrance of what He did for us, when He died for us, and for a memorial of what we do, in making ourselves partakers of Him, and joining ourselves to Him in an everlasting covenant; like the stone Joshua set up for a witness, Josh. 24: 27.

2. The shedding of Christ's blood, by which the atonement was made, (for the blood made atonement for the soul, Lev. 17: 11.) as represented by the wine in the cup; that being a sign and token of the New Testament, or new covenant, made with us. It commemorates the purchase of the covenant by the blood of Christ, and confirms the promises of the covenant, which are all *Yea and Amen* in Him. This will revive and refresh our souls, as wine

that makes glad the heart. In all our commemorations of the shedding of Christ's blood, we must have an eye to it as shed for us; we needed it, we hope to have benefit by it; who loved me, and gave Himself for me. And in all our regards to the New Testament, we must have an eye to the blood of Christ who gave life and being to it, and seals to us all its promises. Had it not been for the blood of Christ, we had never had the New Testament; and had it not been for the New Testament, we had never known the meaning of Christ's blood shed.

V. 21—38. Much of Christ's discourse here is new, and in John we shall find more still that is new. We should take example from Him, to entertain and edify our family and friends with such discourse at table as may minister grace to the hearers, especially after we have been at the Lord's table, to keep one another in a suitable frame. The matters Christ discoursed of, were of weight, and to the present purpose.

I. Concerning him that should betray Him.

1. He signifies to them that the traitor was now among them, and one of them, v. 21. By placing this after the institution of the Lord's supper, which in Matthew and Mark is placed before it, it seems plain that Judas did receive the Lord's supper, did eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; for after the solemnity was over, Christ said, Behold the hand of him that betrayeth Me, is with Me on the table. There have been those that have eaten bread with Christ, and yet have betrayed Him.

2. He foretells that the treason would take effect, (v. 22.) *Truly the Son of man goes as it was determined;* goes to the place where He will be betrayed; for He is delivered up by the counsel and foreknowledge of God, else Judas could not have delivered Him up. Christ was not driven to his sufferings, but cheerfully went to them. He said, *Lo, I come.*

3. He threatens the traitor; *Woe to that man by whom He is betrayed.* Note, Neither the patience of the saints under their sufferings, nor the counsel of God concerning their sufferings, will be any excuse for those that have any hand in their sufferings, or that persecute them. Though God has determined that Christ shall be betrayed, and He Himself has cheerfully submitted to it, yet Judas' sin or punishment is not the less.

4. He alarms the rest of the disciples into a suspicion of themselves, by saying it was one of them, and not naming which; (v. 23.) *They began to inquire themselves,* to put the question to themselves, who could be so base. The inquiry was not, *Is it you?* or *Is it such a one?* but, *Is it I?*

II. Concerning their strife for precedency or supremacy.

1. The dispute, v. 24. Such and so many contests among the disciples for dignity and dominion before the Spirit was poured on them, were a sad presage of the like strifes for, and affections of, supremacy in the churches, after the Spirit should be provoked to depart from

* Or, I have heartily desired. 12:50, John 4:34. 13:1. 17:1.

† 18—20.

1 Cor. 10: 27, 14:15. John 6:27, 50—58.

1 Cor. 9:16. Heb. 10:1—10.

19. 23:5. 116:13. Jer. 16:7.

U. 9:16. Dent. 8:10. 1 Sam. 9:13.

1 Tim. 14:6. 1 Tim. 4:10.

16. Matt. 26:29. Mark 14:23. 15:23.

Judg. 5:13. Ps. 104:15. Prov. 31:6.

Cant. 5:13. Ps. 24:1—17. 35:6.

15:1. Zech. 9:17. Eph. 5:18, 19.

9:27. 21:31. Dan. 2:4. Matt. 16:18.

Mark 9:1. Acts 2:30—36. Col. 1:13.

8. Matt. 26:28. Mark 14:22—24.

1 Cor. 11:23—29.

17. 24:30. John 6:23. 1 Thes. 5:18.

Gen. 41:20, 27. Ez. 37:1. Dan. 2:38.

4:29—34. Zach. 5:7, 8. 1 Cor. 10:4. Gal. 4:25.

d John 6:51. Gal. 1:4. Eph. 5:2.

Tit. 2:14. 1 Pet. 2:24.

e Ps. 73:4—6. 111:4. Cant. 1:4. 1 Cor. 11:24, 25.

f Kk. 24:3. Zech. 9:11. 1 Cor. 10:16.

21. 11:25. Heb. 9:6—13. 9:17.

13. 12:24. 13:20.

g Job 19:19. Ps. 41:9. Mic. 7:5, 6.

Matt. 26:21—23. Mark 14:18—20.

John 13:18, 19.

another cup, which, after having delivered to each a piece of bread, was the sacramental cup at this supper. Then, after some pious and friendly discourse, the whole family, having drunk at least a fourth cup, sang some psalms of praise.

Verse 18.

Jesus did not partake of the wine used in appointing the sacramental memorial of his death.

SCOTT.

'Until the day I drink it new, &c.' The expression is figurative. If we have not positive evidence that there will be anything in heaven analogous to eating and drinking, as little have we, that there will not; and there is no absurdity in the supposition, nor does it appear implausible, that the use of means for the preservation of life may constitute one distinction between the immortal existence of angels and men, and that of Him who, by way of eminence, is said (1 Tim. 6: 16.) *alone to have immortality.*

CAMPBELL.

'It is true, Christ did, after his resurrection, eat and drink with the apostles; but this was not his custom. He ate and drank with them only that they might believe He was really alive.'

ROSENEM.

'This may seem an intimation, that, though Christ drank with the disciples after his resurrection, (Acts 10: 41.) He did not make use of wine; and we do not find that He was ever present at any feast; at least we are sure He never celebrated another passover with them. Nor does it appear that he partook of the eucharist with them, or ever administered it, but at this time of its institution.'

Verse 19, 20.

DODDRIDGE.

(Marg. Ref.) (20.) After, &c.] This was said, after the paschal supper, to signify that this cup pertained not to the solemnity of

'the passover.' Whitby. 'The cup' is here put for the *reine* contained in it; and that is said to be 'the new covenant in my blood,' as representing the blood of Emmanuel. It is astonishing that, amidst language so undeniably figurative, one expression should have been so long, so extensively, and so pertinaciously, interpreted literally, in contradiction to Scripture, to fact, and to common sense. As we are not under the ritual law, and as nothing in this respect is spoken in the New Testament, it does not appear that unfermented bread is essential to the Lord's supper, or that cutting the loaf is improper: though to break a portion of it at least seems more scriptural. The passover was once celebrated by anticipation, before the deliverance of Israel out of Egypt; and the Lord's supper, once before our ransom had been paid.

SCOTT.

(19.) *This do, &c.*] Schoettgen here cites various rabbinical passages, which testify in a remarkable manner that the ancient Jewish church, in celebrating the paschal feast, always had in view the sufferings of the Messiah.

BLOOMFIELD.

(20.) *This cup is the New Testament in my blood.*] 'By the reaching to you of this cup, I institute a new religion, to be ratified by my blood.' Rosenem. 'It was customary with many nations to drink blood on concluding a covenant. By the more civilized, wine was substituted.' [We may easily comprehend how red wine, such as is used in the Eastern countries, may signify blood, &c.]

IN.

Verse 21—23.

(Marg. Ref.) (22.) *As it was determined.*] The other evangelists say, 'written,' that it was written because it was determined; but as Judas betrayed Christ, neither because it was decreed that he

22 And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

23 And they began to inquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

[Practical Observations.]

24 And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.

25 And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

26 But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

27 For whether is greater, he that sit-

them. How inconsistent is this with that in the verse before! There they were inquiring which could be the traitor, and here which should be the prince. Could such an instance of humility, and of pride and vanity, be found in the same men, so near together? What a self-contradiction is the deceitful heart of man!

2. Christ was not sharp upon them, as might have been expected, (He having so often reproved them, for this very thing,) but mildly showed them the sin and folly of this dispute.

(1.) It was to make themselves like the kings of the Gentiles, that affect worldly pomp, and with worldly power, v. 25. They exercise lordship over their subjects, and are ever and anon striving to exercise lordship too over princes about them, if they think them not so strong as themselves. Note, The exercising of lordship better becomes the kings of the Gentiles, than the ministers of Christ. But observe, They that exercise authority, and take on themselves to bear sway, and give law, are called benefactors: they call themselves so, and so their flatterers call them, and those that serve their interests. It is pretended, they have been benefactors, and on that account should have rule; nay, that in exercising authority they are benefactors; however they really serve themselves, they would be thought to serve their country. One of the Ptolemies was surnamed *Euergetes*—The Benefactor. Now our Savior, by noticing this, intimates, [1.] That to do good is much more honorable than to look great; for these princes that were the terror of the mighty, would not be called so, but rather the benefactors of the needy; so that, by their own confession, a benefactor to his country is much more valued than a ruler of it. [2.] That to do good is the surest way to be great, else they that aimed to be rulers would not have been so solicitous to be called benefactors: this therefore He would have his disciples believe, that their greatest honor would be to do all the good they could in the world. They would indeed be benefactors to the world, by bringing the Gospel to it. Let them value themselves on that title, and then they would all be greater; greater blessings to mankind than the kings of the earth. If they have what is confessedly the greater honor of being benefactors, let them despise the less, of being rulers.

(2.) It was to make themselves unlike the disciples of Christ, and unlike Christ Himself;

(v. 26, 27.) 'Ye shall not be so.' It was never intended that ye should rule any otherwise than by the power of truth and grace, but that ye should serve.' When church-rulers affect external pomp and power, and bear up themselves by secular interests and influences, they debase their office, and it is an instance of degeneracy, like that of Israel when they would have king like the nations around them; whereas the Lord was their King.

See here, [1.] Christ's rule to his disciples: He that is greater among you, that is senior, to whom precedence is due on account of age, let him be as the younger, in point both of lowliness of place, (conceding to sit with the younger, and be free and familiar with them,) and of labor and work. We say, Let the young work, and the aged receive honors. But let the elder take pains as well as the younger; their age and honor, instead of warranting them to take their ease, bind them to double work. And he that is chief, the president of the college or assembly, let him be as he that serves, as the deacon, let him stoop to the meanest and most toilsome services for the public good, if there be occasion.

[2.] Christ's example to his rule. Christ was among his disciples, just like one that waited at table; so far from taking state, or taking his ease, by commanding their attendance on Him. He was ready to do any office of kindness and service for them; witness his washing their feet. Shall they take on them the form of princes, who call themselves followers of Him, that took on Him the form of a servant?

(3.) They ought not to strive for worldly honor and grandeur, because He had better honors in reserve for them, of another nature, a kingdom, a feast, a throne, for each of them, wherein they should all share alike, having no occasion to strive for precedence, v. 23—30. Where observe,

[1.] Christ's commendation of the disciples' faithfulness to Him; which was honor enough, they need not strive for greater. It is spoken with an air of encomium: 'Ye are they, who have continued with Me in my temptations, who have stood by Me, when others have deserted Me.' Christ had his temptations; He was despised, rejected of men, reproached, reviled, and endured the contradiction of sinners. But his disciples continued with Him, and were afflicted in all his

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—23. When sinners have long gone on in wickedness, and still listen to temptation, Satan is often permitted to take full and final possession, and to hurry them into such crimes as 'bring on them swift destruction.' (John 12: 1—8. 13: P. O. 18—30.) This is more likely to be the doom of hypocritical preachers of the Gospel, than of any other persons: nor will eminence of rank, gifts, or abilities, in the least preserve them from it.—The avarice of false friends sometimes concurs with the malice of open enemies, in contriving plans of persecution; and, however they despise or hate one another, they are very glad of each other's assistance. The faithful followers of the Lamb, however, after the example of their Lord, should attend on the ordinances of God in due season: assured that no plots

of their enemies can accomplish more than 'was before determined,' with a view to the glory of God, and the salvation of their souls. If the Redeemer 'greatly desired' the approach of his last sufferings, that He might furnish an everlasting feast for our souls, 'by his body broken, and his blood poured out for us,' with what patience and cheerfulness should we meet those lighter trials, through which we are to follow Him to his kingdom above!—Let us beware of hypocrisy; and though the hand of traitors should be with us, either at his table, or at our own; we shall be free from their woe, and be able to appeal to the Lord, and confide in Him with conscious integrity. (P. O. Matt. 26: 1—35. Mark 14: 1—42.)

SCOTT.

should, of which he could know nothing; nor because it was so written, which assuredly he did not understand, or attend to, at the time; so neither the one nor the other interfered, in the smallest degree, with his free agency as an accountable being, and consequently did not excuse his wicked conduct. It is surprising, learned men should allow the system of prophecy to be consistent with man's free agency; and yet think the secret purposes of God inconsistent with it. Of predicted events we may know something; and this, in certain cases, may influence our conduct; but of secret decrees we can know nothing, previous to the accomplishing of them; and so it is impossible they should be the motives of our actions, or form any excuse for our sins. And as the predicted event must infallibly take place, for 'the Scripture cannot be broken,' this as certainly insures the predicted conduct, in the persons concerned, if only foreseen, as if absolutely decreed. The objection therefore, on this ground, is unreasonable; but the Scriptures must decide which system is true. 'The decree of Providence, though necessary to take place, yet does not excuse the crime of the instrument.' Beza. This Calvin himself would have maintained.

SCOTT.

(32.) As it was determined.] 'I look upon this passage as an evident proof that those things are, in the language of Scripture, said to be determined or decreed, (or exactly bounded and marked out by God) as the original word most naturally signifies, which He sees will in fact happen, in consequence of his volitions, without any necessitating agency, as well as those events of which He is properly the Au-

thor; and, as Beza well expresses it, we need not fear falling into any impropriety of speech, when we use the language which God has taught.'

Verses 24—27.

'It is wonderful, Christ should not have answered, that Peter was he to whom all the rest must be subject, as a prince or head; if indeed Peter was placed in any degree of apostolical authority above the rest.' Beza. This competition seems to have been secretly revived among the apostles, even at the last passover. The immediate introduction of 'the kingdom of God' would be considered by them as implied in what our Lord had before spoken; and they overlooked all He had said of his sufferings, as what they could not understand. He, however, saw the same ambition working in their hearts; and to repress it had recourse to arguments, similar to those He had used on a former occasion. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, v. 46—50. Matt. 18: 1—6. 20: 20—28. Mark 10: 35—45.) Exercise, &c.] Both the original words, here used, imply arbitrary, domineering authority; like that of a slaveholder over his slaves. When our Lord said, that He was among them as He that served, 'he seems to have referred to the washing of the disciples' feet, which took place about the same time. (12: 35—46. John 12: 1—8. 13: 1—17.)

(35.) Benefactors.] The original word was among the Greeks a title of honor, assigned to all who had deserved well of the monarch or state, defended its liberties, or increased its honor. So the Latin father of his country. Thus Quins (in 2 Macc. 4: 2.) is styled 'the bene-

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teth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

45 Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations:

29 And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me;

30 That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat:

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

Mat. 19:29, 30. 24:13. John 6:57, 68. 8:31. Acts 1:25. Heb. 2:18, 4:15. 12:32. 19:17. Matt. 24:47. 2 Tim. 2:12. Jam. 2:5. Rev. 21:14. 12:18. 13:27. 14:15. 2 Sam. 9. 10. 19:38. Rev. 19:9. Ps. 49:14. 1 Cor. 6:2, 3. Rev. 2:26, 27. 3:21. 4:4. Gr. 10:41. Acts 19:31. Job 18:11. 2 L. 6. Zech. 3:1. 1 Pet. 5:9. Rev. 12:10. Am. 9:9. John 14:19. 17:9. 11:15-21. Rom. 5:10. 8:32-34. Heb. 7:25. 1 Pet. 1:5. 1 John 2:1. 8:13. 2 Tim. 2:18. Tit. 1:1. Heb. 12:15. 2 Pet. 1:1. 1 John 3:19. 6:12. Matt. 18:3. 26:75. Mark 14:27. 16:7. Acts 3:19. Ps. 33:3-9. 51:12, 13. John 21:15-17. 2 Cor. 1:4. 1 Tim. 1:13-16. 1 Mch. 12:12, 13. 1 Pet. 1:13. 5:8-10. 2 Pet. 1:10-12. 3:14, 17, 18. 2 Kings 8:12, 13. Prov. 29:25. Jer. 10:25. 17:9. Matt. 20:22. 26:35-37. 44. Mark 14:39, 51, 37, 38. John 13:36, 37. Acts 20:23, 24. 21:13.

afflictions. It was but little help they could give Him; however, He took it kindly that they continued with Him, and He here owns their kindness, though it was by the assistance of his own grace that they did continue. Christ's disciples had been very defective in duty, guilty of many mistakes and weaknesses, very dull and forgetful, and often blundered, yet their Master had passed all by, and forgotten it, does not upbraid them with their infirmities, but gives them this memorable testimony, *Ye are they who have continued with Me*. Thus does He praise at parting, to show how willing He is to make the best of those whose hearts He knows to be upright within them.

[2.] The recompense for their fidelity; *I appoint, I bequeath to you a kingdom*. Or thus, *I appoint to you, as my Father has appointed a kingdom to Me, that ye may eat and drink at my table*. Understand it,

1st. Of this world. God gave his Son a kingdom among men, the gospel-church, of which He is the living, quickening, ruling Head; this kingdom He appointed to his apostles, and their successors in the ministry of the Gospel, that they should enjoy the comforts and privileges of the Gospel, help to communicate them to others by gospel-ordinances, sit on thrones as officers of the church, not only declaratively, but as exhortatively judging the tribes of Israel, that persist in their infidelity, denouncing the wrath of God against them, and ruling the gospel-Israel, the spiritual Israel, by the instituted discipline of the church, administered with gentleness and love. This is the honor reserved for you. Or,

2dly. Of what should be done for them in the other world; which I take to be chiefly meant. Let them go on in their services in this world, their preferences shall be in the other world. God will give them the kingdom, in which they shall be sure to have, 1. The richest dainties; for they shall eat and drink at Christ's table in his kingdom, of which He had spoken, v. 16, 18. They shall partake of those joys and pleasures which were the recompense of his services and sufferings. They shall have full satisfaction of soul in the vision and fruition of God; and herein the best society, as at a feast, in the perfection of love. 2. The highest dignities; 'You shall not only be provided for at the royal table, but preferred to the royal throne; shall sit down with Me on my throne, Rev. 3: 21. In the great day you shall sit on thrones, as assessors with Christ, to approve of and applaud his judgment of the twelve tribes of Israel.' If the saints shall judge the world, (1 Cor. 6: 2.) much more the church.

III. Concerning Peter's denying Him. And in this part of the discourse we may observe,

1. Christ's warning to Peter of the devil's design on Him and the rest of the apostles; v.

31 Peter, who used to be the mouth of the rest in speaking to Christ, is here made the ear of the rest; and what is designed for warning to them all, (*All you shall be offended because of Me*.) is directed to Peter, because he was principally concerned, being in a particular manner struck at by the tempter; *Satan has desired to have you*. He desired to have them, that he might sift them, that he might show them to be chaff, and not wheat. The troubles now coming on them, were sifting, would try what was in them; but that was not all, Satan desired to sift them by his temptations, and by those troubles to draw them into sin; to put them into a loss and hurry, as corn when it is sifted to bring the chaff uppermost, or rather to shake out the wheat, and leave nothing but the chaff. Observe, Satan could not sift them unless God gave him leave; he desired to have them, as he begged of God a permission to try and tempt Job. 'He hath challenged you, has undertaken to prove you hypocrites, and Peter especially, the forwardest of you.' Some suggest their punishment was meant for striving who should be greatest, in which contest Peter perhaps was very warm; 'Leave them to me, to sift them for it.'

2. His particular encouragement to Peter, in reference to this trial; 'Because thou wilt be most violently assaulted, I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; that it may not totally and finally fail.' Note, (1.) If faith be kept up in an hour of temptation, though we fall, we shall not be utterly cast down. Faith will quench Satan's fiery darts. (2.) There may be many failings in the faith of true believers, yet there shall not be a total and final failure. Faith is their seed, their root remaining in them. (3.) It is owing to the mediation and intercession of Christ that the faith of his disciples, though sometimes sadly shaken, yet is not sunk. If left to themselves, they would fail; but they are kept by the power of God, and the prayer of Christ. The intercession of Christ is not only general, for all that believe, but for particular believers; I have prayed for thee, which is an encouragement for us to pray for ourselves, and an engagement on us to pray for others too.

3. His charge to Peter, to help others as he should himself be helped of God; 'When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.' When thou art recovered by the grace of God, and brought to repentance, do what thou canst to recover others; when thou hast found thy faith kept from failing, labor to confirm the faith of others; when thou hast found mercy with God, encourage others also to hope.' Note, (1.) Those that are fallen into sin, must be converted from it: those that have turned aside, return; those that have left their first love, do their first works. (2.) Those that through grace are converted from sin, must do what they can to strengthen their brethren that stand, and pre-

factor of the city.' But the cognomen was given, by way of eminence, to kings, and to chief citizens, as a title of honor.

BLOOMFIELD.

'It seems to be our Lord's view, not only to check all ambition of power, every thing which savored of a desire of superiority and dominion, but also to restrain that species of vanity, which is near akin to it, the affectation of distinction from titles of respect and dignity.'

CAMPBELL.

Verses 29, 30.

I appoint, &c. Judas could not be intended in this promise; but as twelve apostles were at first appointed, and as the vacancy would soon be filled up, after he 'was gone to his own place,' the original number was mentioned. Some explain this of the authority of the apostles over the Christian church; but, while this authority is most readily allowed to belong to them, and in some respects to them exclusively, (Matt. 16: 19.) some special honor and distinction in the world above, seems to be more directly intended.

Verses 31-34.

Perhaps Peter was here called by his former name, Simon, because in the events referred to, his instability so little accorded to the signification of that which had been given him. (Matt. 16: 18. John 1: 35-42.) Our Lord addressed him in particular, and in a very emphatic manner: though the other apostles were in a measure concerned, and the pronoun is plural, *you, not thee*. (31.) *Sift you as wheat*. Agitate their minds by his inward suggestions, concur, or with their outward perils and difficulties, as the wheat is tossed about in the sieve; (*Marg. Ref. i-x. Am. 9: 7-10*.) but, whatever his intentions were, the Lord meant to permit him, by these means, to move them, and to overrule it for the increase of their purity. Not fed as life falls in death. His faith was grievously interrupted in its exercise and effects, when he denied his Lord; but the principle

did not fail in his heart. (*Marg. Ref. y, z. Rom. 5: 7-10. 8: 32-34. 1 Pet. 1: 2-5.*) 'The Spirit of life' did not finally leave Peter, who was a believer, and whose conduct on a sudden temptation was entirely contrary to his real character, and his habitual purpose; though he no more strove with Judas, who was a hypocrite, and acted according to his true character, which he had hitherto concealed. Peter was speedily brought to return; but Judas left to utter apostasy, despair, and suicide. (*Notes, Matt. 13: 20, 21. 25: 1-4. Rom. 7: 15-17.*) After his fall and recovery, Peter was peculiarly earnest in encouraging the disciples to hope for a happy event of their trials; and in animating them boldly to profess and preach the Gospel; while the humiliating lessons, which he learned by those events, had a very salutary effect on his own spirit, and tended to qualify him especially for encouraging and warning the tempted, the fearful, the desponding, or the fallen, even to the end of his days. The discerning reader will perceive the traces of it in his epistles. 'It was certainly Peter's advantage, that our Lord prayed for him; but not so much his honor, that he should stand in need of such a prayer, beyond all others.' *Lightfoot*. To Peter belonged shame, the honor was the Lord's—All need the same intercession of Christ, which is the believer's only security against final apostasy; and who dares say, that he needs it less than Peter did? 'It is through the prayers of Christ, the elect never utterly fall away from the faith. He shows that faith differeth much from a vain security, in setting before us the grievous example of Peter.' *Beza*.

SCOTT.

(31.) *Sift*. 'The clods of earth, (of the threshing floor) as is customary in the East at the present day, were collected, broken in pieces, and separated from the grain by a sieve. Sifting was accordingly used as a symbol of misfortune and overthrows.'

JOHN

'The temptations and trials of the godly are the sifting of the wheat.'

JOHN

34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

[Practical Observations.]

35 ¶ And he said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye any thing? And they said, Nothing.

36 Then said he unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.

37 For I say unto you, That this that is written must yet be accomplished in me, And he was reckoned among the transgressors: for the things concerning me have an end.

38 And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And he said unto them, It is enough.

39 ¶ And he came out, and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his dis-

cent their falling; see Ps. 51: 11—13. 1 Tim. 1: 13.

4. Peter's declared resolution to cleave to Christ, whatever it cost, v. 33. This was a great word, and yet I believe no more than he thought, at this time, he should make good. Judas never protested thus against denying Christ, though often warned of it. Note, All true disciples of Christ sincerely desire and design to follow Him, though into prison, though out of the world.

5. Christ's express prediction of his denying Him thrice, v. 34. Thou dost not know thine own heart, Peter, but must be left to thyself a little, that thou mayst know it, and never trust to it again. Note, Christ knows us better than we know ourselves, and what evil is in us, and will be done by us, which we do not suspect. And it is well He does, for therefore He knows where we are weak better than we do, and where to come in with grace sufficient; He knows how far a temptation will prevail, and therefore when to say, *Hitherto shall it come, and no further.*

IV. Concerning the condition of all the disciples.

1. He appeals to them concerning what had been, v. 35. He had owned they had been faithful servants to Him, v. 28. Now, at parting, He expects they should acknowledge He had been a kind and careful Master. (1.) He owns He had sent them out in a very poor and bare condition, because they were not to go far, nor be out long; and He would thus teach them to depend on the providence of God, and, under that, on the kindness of their friends. If God thus sends us out into the world, let us remember, that better than we have thus begun low.

(2.) Yet He will have them own that, notwithstanding, they then lived as plentifully and comfortably as ever; and they readily acknowledged it; *'Nothing, Lord, I have all, and abound.'* Note, [1.] It is good often to review the providences of God concerning us all our days, and to observe how we have got through straits and difficulties. [2.] Christ is a good Master, and his service a good service; for though his servants may sometimes be brought low, yet He will help them; and though He try them, yet will not He leave them. [3.] We must reckon ourselves well done by, and not complain, but be thankful, if we have the necessary supports of life, though we have neither dainties nor superfluities, though we have to live from hand to mouth, and live on the kindness of our friends. The disciples lived on contribution, and yet did not complain that their maintenance was precarious, but owned, to their Master's honor, they had lacked nothing.

2. He gives them notice of a very great change of their circumstances now approaching. For,

(1.) Their Master was now entering on his suffering He had often foretold, v. 37. *'This is yet to be accomplished, and then the things written concerning Me will have an end; then I shall say, It is finished.'* Note, It may be the comfort of suffering Christians, as it was of a suffering Christ, that their sufferings were foretold and determined in the counsels of heaven, and will shortly terminate in the joys of heaven.

(2.) They must therefore expect troubles, and not such an easy, fair life as they had had. They must now, in some degree, suffer with their Master; and when He is gone, suffer like Him. [1.] They must not now expect their friends to be so kind and generous to them as they had been; and therefore, *He that has a purse let him take it, for he may have occasion for it, and for all the good husbandry he can use.* [2.] They must now expect their enemies to be more fierce upon them than they had been, and they would need magazines as well as stores; *He that has no sword wherewith to defend himself against robbers and assassins.* (2 Cor. 11: 26.) will find a great want of it, and will be ready to wish, some time or other, that he had sold his garment, and bought one. This is intended only to show that the times will be very perilous, so that no man would think himself safe if he had not a sword by his side. But the sword of the Spirit is the sword which the disciples of Christ must furnish themselves with. *Christ having suffered for us, we must arm ourselves with the same mind.* (1 Pet. 4: 1.) arm ourselves with an expectation of trouble, that it may not surprise us, and with a holy resignation to the will of God in it, that there may be no contradiction in us to it: and then we are better prepared than if we had sold a coat to buy a sword. The disciples hereupon inquire what strength they had, and find they had among them *two swords.* (v. 38.) of which one was Peter's. The Galileans generally travelled with swords. Christ wore none Himself, but He was not against his disciples wearing them. But how little He would have them depend on that, He intimates when He saith, *It is enough;* which, some think, is spoken ironically; yet two swords are sufficient for those who need none, having God Himself to be the *Shield of their help, and the Sword of their excellency.* Deut. 32: 29.

V. 39—46. We have here the awful story of Christ's agony in the garden; in which Christ accommodated Himself to that part of his undertaking, which He was now entering upon—the making of his soul an offering for sin. He afflicted his own soul with grief for the sin He was to satisfy for, and an apprehension of the wrath of God, to which man had by sin made himself obnoxious, which He pleased as a Sacrifice to admit the impressions of, the consuming of a sacrifice with fire, from heaven, being the surest token of its acceptation.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 24—34. How unbecoming is worldly ambition in a follower of Jesus! It is our part to do good by stooping and laboring, and to become 'benefactors' indeed, by being servants to all men for Christ's sake, and after his example. (2 Cor. 4: E, 4. Gal. 5: 13—15.) Nor are we allowed to aspire after any other pre-eminence in his kingdom, than what springs from deeper humility, with superior diligence and usefulness. Thus following Christ in his 'temptations,' we too shall obtain a kingdom, even as He has been exalted to his mediatorial throne: and though we shall not have the distinguished honor of the holy apostles, yet we shall be admitted to a 'fulness of joy' and 'a weight of glory,' of which we at present can form no adequate conception.—But Satan, if he cannot destroy us, will endeavor to disgrace, pollute, or distress us: and the Lord may see good to permit him to harass us grievously, and even to baffle us in some painful conflicts, that He may the more power, humble, and sanctify us, and show the power of his

grace in making us at length more than conquerors. (2 Cor. 12: 7—10.) If we have experience of this conflict, and have been recovered, after having been foiled by temptation, we shall be both qualified and disposed to caution and encourage our brethren, and to 'restore in the spirit of meekness such as have been overtaken in a fault.' (Gal. 6: 1—5, v. 1.)—But nothing so certainly forebodes a fall, in a professed disciple of Christ, as self-confidence connected with disregard to warnings, and contempt of danger. We may honestly mean what we profess, when we say, 'I am ready to go with Thee to prison, or to death;' but it is not so easy to stand our ground in the hour of temptation: and unless we 'watch and pray always,' we may be drawn into those things, during the course of the day, against which in the morning we were most fully and honestly resolved. (P. O. Matt. 26: 26—35. Rom. 7: 18—25. P. O. 14—25.)

SCOTT.

Verse 33.

As Christ said, 'It is enough' (though two swords could not be enough to arm eleven persons;) and as He showed strong disapprobation of Peter's conduct in using the sword, we are sure, He did not intend to be understood literally, but as speaking of the weapons of their spiritual warfare. 'His meaning was not perfectly comprehended by them; and He did not think it necessary, at that time, to open the matter further to them.' Campbell.—'This whole speech is allegorical. When He prayed in the garden, and reproved Peter for setting up the sword, He Himself showed what those arms were.'

Beza.—'You may easily guess at the reception you are like to meet with, when you come in the name and authority of One, who has suffered as a malefactor; and yet demand faith and obedience to Him as an almighty Savior.' Doddridge.

It is enough. 'The apostles took Christ in a literal sense. Their misapprehension He did not think fit to rectify, because it would have been of no service to them; but gave them such an answer as a mild and humane master would have done to a well-meaning servant of great stupidity, "It is very well." Markland, in Bloomfield.

eyes also followed him.

40 And when he was at the place, he said unto them, 'Pray that ye enter not into temptation.'

41 And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed.

42 Saying, 'Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.'

43 And there appeared 'an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.'

44 And 'being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.'

45 And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

46 And said unto them, 'Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.'

[Practical Observations.]

• 46: 11,4. 1 Chr. 4:10. Ps. 17:5. 19:13. 119:116, 117, 133. Prov. 30:8. 9. Matt. 6:13. 26:41. Mark 14:38. 2 Cor. 12:7-10. Eph. 6:18, 19. 1 Pet. 4:7. 5:8, 9. Rev. 8:10.
• Matt. 26:39. Mark 14:35. John 13:27, 28.
• 17:30-31. Is. 51:17, 22. Jer. 25:15, &c. Matt. 20:22. John 18:11.
• Ps. 40:8. John 4:34. 5:30. 6:38. Heb. 10:7-10.
• 4:10, 11. Ps. 91:11, 12. Matt. 4:6, 11. 26:53. 1 Tim. 3:16. Hgb. 1:6, 14.
• 32. Dent. 3:28. Job 4:3, 4. Is. 39:3. 41. 149:6, 7. Lam. 3:33-36. Jon. 2:2, 3. John 12:27. Heb. 5:7.
• Is. 53:10. Lam. 1:12. Rom. 8:32.
• y Matt. 26:40, 43. Mark 14:37, 40.
• 40. 21:34-35. Prov. 6:4-11. Jon. 1:5.

We had this before, 1. That, when Christ went out, *his disciples*, except Judas, *followed Him*. Having continued with Him hitherto in his temptations, they would not leave Him now. 2. That He went to the place *where He was wont to be private*, which intimates that Christ accustomed Himself to retirement, was often alone, to teach us to be so, for freedom of converse with God and our own hearts. Though Christ had no convenience for retirement but a garden, yet He retired. This should particularly be our practice after we have been at the Lord's table; we have then work to do, which requires us to be private. 3. That He exhorted his disciples *to pray*, that, though the approaching trial could not be avoided, yet they might not in it *enter into temptation to sin*; that, when they were in the greatest fright and danger, yet they might not have any inclination to desert Christ; 'Pray that ye may be kept from sin.' 4. That He withdrew, and prayed; they had their errands at the throne of grace, and He his, therefore it was fit they should pray separately, as sometimes, when they had joint errands, they prayed together. He withdrew about a *stone's cast* further into the garden, which some reckon about fifty or sixty paces, and there *He kneeled down*, on the bare ground; the other evangelists say, that afterward *He fell on his face*, and there *prayed* that, if it were the will of God, this bitter cup of suffering might be *removed from Him*. This was the language of that innocent dread of suffering, which, being really and truly man, he could not but have in his nature. 5. That He, knowing it to be his Father's will that He should suffer and die, and that, as the matter was now settled, it was necessary for our redemption and salvation, presently withdrew that petition, and resigned Himself to his heavenly Father's will: 'Nevertheless, not my will be done; not the will of my human nature, but the will of God, (as it is written concerning Me), which I delight to do, let that be done,' Ps. 40: 7, 8. 6. That his disciples were *asleep* when He was at prayer, and when they should have been themselves praying, v. 45. When *He rose from prayer*, He *found them sleeping*, unconcerned in his sorrows; but see what a favorable construction is here put upon it, which we had not in the other evangelists—they were *sleeping for sorrow*. The great sorrow they were in on the mournful farewells of their Master this evening, had exhausted their spirits, and made them very dull and heavy, which (it being now late) disposed them to sleep. This teaches us to make the best of our brethren's infirmities, and if there be one cause better than another, charitably impute them to that. 7. That when He awakened them, He exhorted them to pray; (v. 46.) 'Why do ye allow yourselves to sleep? Rise and pray. Shake off your drowsiness, that ye may be fit to pray, and pray for grace, that ye may be able to shake off your

drowsiness; like the call to Jonah; (Jon. 1: 6.) Arise, call upon thy God. When we find ourselves either by outward circumstances or inward dispositions entering into temptation, it concerns us to pray, Lord, help me in this time of need.

Three things here we had not in the other evangelists:

1. That, when Christ was in his agony, *there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him*, v. 43. 1. It was an instance of the deep humiliation of our Lord Jesus, that He *needed* the assistance of an angel, and would *admit* it. The influence of the divine nature withdrew for the present, and then, as to his human nature, He was for a little while *lower than the angels*, and capable of receiving help from them. 2. When not delivered from his sufferings, yet He was *strengthened* and supported under them, which was *equivalent*. If God proportion the shoulders to the burden, we shall have no reason to complain, whatever He is pleased to lay on us. David owns this a sufficient *answer to his prayer*, in the day of trouble, that God strengthened him with strength in his soul, and so does the Son of David, Ps. 138: 3. The angels ministered to the Lord Jesus in his sufferings. He could have had legions of them to rescue Him; nay, this one could have chased and conquered the whole band that came to take Him; but He made use of his ministration only to *strengthen Him*; and the very visit which this angel made Him now in his grief, when his enemies were awake and his friends asleep, was such a seasonable token of the divine favor, as would be a very great strengthening to Him. Yet this was not all; he, probably, said something to Him, *to strengthen Him*; as that his sufferings were in order to his Father's and his own glory, and to the salvation of those that were given Him, in order to the *joy set before Him*, the *seeing of his seed*. Perhaps he did something to *strengthen Him*, wiped away his sweat and tears, ministered some cordial to Him, as after his temptation, helped Him off the ground, or bore Him up when ready to faint away; and in these services of the angel, the Holy Spirit was thus *putting strength into Him*; for so the word signifies. *It pleased the Lord to bruise Him* indeed; yet did He *plead against Him with his great power*? No, but He *put strength in Him*, (Job 23: 6.) as He had promised, Ps. 89: 21. Isa. 49: 8: 6: 7.

II. That, *being in an agony, He prayed more earnestly*, v. 44. As his sorrow and trouble grew upon Him, He grew more importunate in prayer: not that there was before any coldness or indifference, but there was now a greater vehemency, which was expressed in his voice and gesture. Note, Prayer, though never out of season, is especially seasonable when we are in an agony; and the stronger our agonies are, the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 35-46. Our experience of the Lord's faithfulness and goodness, in times past, should animate us to trust his providence and grace for the future: for many of us may say to his praise, that when in obedience to his Word, and depending on his promises, we neglected ordinary methods of obtaining temporal provisions, we in the event wanted nothing. Yet we should not so presume on his care, as to rush heedlessly into danger: and we may expect, that as our faith is strengthened, it will be more sharply tried than heretofore. We should then be continually preparing and arming for the battle, that we may be 'able to stand in the evil day' of sharp temptation: and we shall find, that a believing acquaintance with the Word of God, that 'sword of the Spirit,' will be more needful for us,

than even our ordinary raiment. We cannot expect to escape tribulation and ill usage, in a world which numbered the Lord of glory with the worst of malefactors, if we indeed profess his truth and obey his commandments: but if we pray fervently that we 'may not enter into temptation,' we shall either be preserved from the severer trials, or be enabled under them to say, 'Not my will, but thine, be done.' And surely, when we contemplate the Redeemer 'in an agony, praying more earnestly,' and his sweat like great drops of blood falling down to the ground, while 'He was bruised for our iniquities,' we shall pray also to be enabled 'to resist unto blood, striving against sin,' if we should ever be called to it. (P. O. Matt. 26: 36-46. Mark 14: 17-42. Heb. 12: 2-8. v. 2-4.) SCOTT.

Verses 32-46.

(*Marg. Ref.*—Matt. 26: 36-46. Mark 14: 32-35, v. 36, 37.) (40.) *Pray, &c.* Let this be your peculiar request. (*Note, Matt. 6: 13*) 'Prayers are a sure succor against the most perilous assaults of our enemies.' *Beza*. (43.) *Angel, &c.* The appearance of a holy angel to our Lord, in this conflict, and when thus weighed down with the feeling of the wrath of God against our sins, was an intimation of approaching victory. The angel could not *effectually* communicate strength, even to his human soul; but he might suggest encouraging thoughts; (32. *Note, Is. 35: 3, 4*) and it was doubtless a part of our Savior's humiliation, and an instance of his condescension. Just He was pleased to be thus 'strengthened' by 'a ministering spirit,' though 'all the angels of God worship Him.' (44.) *Drops, &c.* Earned men have adduced some instances of persons who have

sweated blood; but it was always in the greatest excess of anguish or terror; and commonly attended by weakness of body.—'Christ, by overcoming all the horrors of death, in conjunction with the curse of God for our sins, renders death friendly and lovely to us.' *Beza*.

(44.) *As it were drops of blood.* 'Like clots of blood. This interpretation the words themselves demand. There is a similar expression, Acts 9: 18. It is a sort of proverb applied to any one who labors excessively, as also to those who weep bitterly. There is an allusion to these proverbs in the words of Luke, who was not unacquainted with Grecian literature.' [So Grotius, Scaliger, Hammao, Price, Markland, Theophylact, Rosemauer, Kuinoel, &c.]

BLOOMFIELD.

47 ¶ And ^a while he yet spake, behold, ^a multitude, and he that was called ^b Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

48 But Jesus said unto him, Judas, ^c betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

49 When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

50 And ^d one of them smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

51 And Jesus answered and said, ^e Suffer ye thus far. ^f And he touched his ear, and healed him.

52 Then ^g Jesus said unto the chief priests, and ^h captains of the temple, and the elders, which were come to him, Be ye come out as against a thief, with swords and staves?

53 When I ⁱ was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me: ^j but this is your hour, and ^k the power of darkness.

54 Then ^l took they him, and led him, and brought him into the high priest's house. ^m And Peter followed afar off.

55 And when they ⁿ had kindled a fire in the midst of the hall, and were set down together, ^o Peter sat down among them.

more lively and frequent our prayers should be. Now it was that Christ offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears, and was heard in that He feared, (Heb. 5: 7.) and in his fear *wrestled*, as Jacob with the angel.

III. That, in this agony, *his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground*. Sweat came in with sin, and was a branch of the curse, Gen. 3: 19. Therefore when Christ was made Sin and a Curse for us, He underwent a grievous sweat, that He might sanctify and sweeten all our trials to us. It is some dispute among the critics, whether this sweat is only compared to drops of blood, being much thicker than drops of sweat commonly are, the pores of the body being more than ordinarily opened; or, that *real blood* out of the capillary veins mingled with it, so that it was in color like blood, and might truly be called a *bloody sweat*; the matter is not great. Some reckon this one of the times when Christ shed his blood for us, for without shedding of blood there is no remission. Every pore was, as it were, a bleeding wound, and his blood stained all his raiment. This showed the *travail of his soul*. He was now abroad in the open air, in a cool season, on the cold ground, far in the night, yet breaks out into a sweat; this bespeaks the extremity of his agony.

V. 47—53. Satan, finding himself baffled in his attempt to terrify our Lord, and so put Him out of the possession of his own soul, betakes himself (according to his usual method) to force and arms, and brings a party into the field to seize Him, and Satan was in them. Here is,

I. The marking of Him by Judas. Here a numerous party appears, and Judas at their head, for he was *guide to them that took Jesus*; so he drew near to Him to kiss Him, according to the wonted familiarity our Lord admitted his disciples to. Luke alone notices the question, *Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* What! Is that the signal? v. 43. Must the Son of man be *betrayed*, as if any thing could be concealed from Him, and a plot carried on against Him unknown to Him? Must one of his own disciples betray Him, as if He had been a hard Master, or deserved ill at their hands? Must the badge of friendship be the instrument of treachery? Was ever a love-token so desecrated and abused? Note, Nothing can be a greater affront or grief to the Lord Jesus, than to be betrayed, and betrayed with a kiss, by those that profess relation to Him, and an affection for Him. Those do so, who, under pretence of zeal for his honor, persecute his servants, who, under the cloak of a seeming affection for the honor of free-grace, give a blow to the root of holiness and strictness of conversation. Many instances there are of Christ's being betrayed with a kiss, by those who, under the form of godliness, fight against the power of it. It were well if their own consciences would put this question to them, which Christ here puts to Judas, *Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?* And will He not resent it? Will He not avenge it?

II. The effort his disciples make for his protection. v. 49. 'Thou didst allow us to have two swords, shall we now make use of them? Never was there more occasion.' They asked the question, as if they would not have drawn the sword without commission from their Master, but they were in too much haste and too much heat to stay for an answer. But Peter, aiming at the head of one of the servants of the high priest, missed his blow, and cut off his right ear. The other evangelists record the check Christ gave Peter for it. Luke here tells us, 1. How Christ excused the blow; *Suffer ye thus far*, v. 51. Whitby thinks He said this to his enemies who came to take Him, that they might not be provoked to fall on the disciples, whom He had undertaken to preserve; *'Pass by this injury and affront, it was without warrant from*

Me, and there shall not be another blow struck.' Though Christ had power to have struck them down, and struck them dead, yet He, as it were, begs their pardon for an assault made on them by one of his followers, to teach us to give good words even to our enemies. 2. How He cured the wound, which was more than amends for the injury. Christ hereby gave them a proof, (1.) Of his power. He that could *heal*, could *destroy* if He pleased, which should have obliged them in interest to submit to Him. Had they returned the blow on Peter, He would immediately have healed Him; and what could not a small regiment do, that had such a Surgeon! (2.) Of his mercy and goodness. Christ here gave an illustrious example to his own rule of *doing good to them that hate us*, as afterward He did of *praying for them that despitefully use us*. One would have thought that this generosity should have overcome them; that such coals, heaped on their heads, should have melted them; but their hearts were hardened.

III. Christ's expostulation with the officers of the detachment that came to apprehend Him, to show what an absurd thing it was for them to make all this rout and noise, v. 52, 53. Matthew relates it, as said to the multitude; Luke, as said to the chief priests and captains of the temple, who commanded the several orders of priests, and therefore are here put between the chief priests and the elders; so that they were all ecclesiastics, retainers to the temple, who were employed in this odious piece of service; and some of the first rank too disparaged themselves so far as to be seen in it.

See here, 1. How Christ reasons with them concerning their proceedings. What occasion was there for them to come out in the dead of the night, and with swords and staves? (1.) They knew He was one who would not resist, or raise the mob against them. He never had done it. Why then are ye come out as against a thief? (2.) They knew He was one that would not abscond, for He was daily with them in the temple, in the midst of them, and never sought to conceal Himself, nor did they offer to lay hands on Him.

2. How He reconciles Himself to their proceedings; this we had not before; *'But this is your hour, and the power of darkness*. How hard soever it may seem that I should be thus exposed, I submit, for so it is determined; this is the hour allowed you to have your will against Me, there is an hour appointed Me to reckon for it. Now the power of darkness, Satan, ruler of the darkness of this world, is permitted to do his worst, to bruise the heel of the Seed of the woman, and I resolve to acquiesce; let him do his worst. The Lord shall laugh at him, for He sees that his day, his hour, is coming,' Ps. 37: 13. Let this quiet us under the prevalence of the church's enemies; let it quiet us in a dying hour, that it is but an hour that is permitted for the triumph of our adversary, a short time, a limited time. It is their appointed hour, in which they are permitted to try their strength, that Omnipotence may be the more glorified in their fall. But the power of darkness must give way to the Prince of light. Christ was willing to wait for his triumphs till his warfare was accomplished, and we must be so too.

V. 54—62. Here is the melancholy story of Peter's denying his Master, but notice is not taken here, as in the other evangelists, of Christ's being now on his examination before the high priest, but only of his being brought into the high priest's house, v. 54. But the manner of expression is observable; they took Him, and led Him, and brought Him; like that concerning Saul, (1 Sam. 15: 3.) *He is gone about, and passed on, and gone down*; and intimates that, even when they had seized their prey, they were in confusion, and, for fear of the people, or, rather, struck with inward terror upon what they had seen and heard, they took Him the

Verses 51—53.

(51.) *Suffer, for Lord's* expression, as a check to his disciples' *Campbell*. Having always considered his words as addressed to the officers, desiring them thus far to endure the rash opposition of his disciples, and not to proceed to violence against them; and still thinking

it by far the most natural construction, and most obvious meaning, I yet thought it proper to introduce it, by stating what this learned writer asserts to be the general sense of antiquity. (52.) *Captains*. These are supposed to have been the leaders of the priests and 1 evites, who alternately kept guard at the avenues of the temple. *Marg.* Acts 4: 1—3.)

56 But ^a a certain maids be-held him as he sat by the fire, and earnestly looked upon him, and said, This man was also with him.

57 And ^b he denied him, saying, Woman, I know him not.

58 And after a little while, ^c another saw him, and said, Thou art also of them. And Peter said, Man, I am not.

59 And about the space of one hour after, another ^d confidently affirmed, saying, Of a truth this fellow also was with him; for he is a Galilean.

60 And Peter said, Man, I knew not what thou sayest. And immediately, while he yet spake, ^e the cock crew.

61 And the Lord ^f turned, and looked upon Peter: ^g and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, ^h Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

62 And Peter went out, ⁱ and wept bitterly.

63 ^j And ^k the men that held Jesus ^l mocked him, and smote him.

64 And when they had ^m blind-folded him, they struck him on the face, and asked him, saying, Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?

65 And many other things ⁿ blasphemously spake they against him.

66 ^o And ^p as soon as it was day, ^q the elders of the people, and the chief priests, and the scribes, came together, and led him into their council, saying,

67 ^r Art thou the Christ? tell us. And he said unto them, ^s If

furtherest way about, or, rather, knew not which way they hurried Him. Observe.

1. Peter's fall. 1. He followed Christ when led away prisoner, and showed a concern for his Master, which was well; but he followed afar off, that he might be out of danger. He thought to trim the matter; to follow Christ, and so satisfy his conscience, but to follow afar off, and so save his reputation, and sleep in safety. 2. He kept his distance still, and associated himself with the high priest's servants, when he should have been at his Master's elbow. 3. His fall itself was, disclaiming all acquaintance with Christ, and relation to Him, disowning Him because He was now in distress and danger. He was charged by a simple maid belonging to the house, with being a retainer to this Jesus, about whom there was now so much noise. She looked justly upon him as he sat by the fire, only because he was a stranger, and one whom she had not seen before; and concluding that at this time of night there were no neutrals there, and knowing him not to be any of the retinue of the high priest, she concludes him to be one of the retinue of this Jesus; or perhaps she had some time or other looked about in the temple, and seen Jesus there, and Peter with Him, and remembered him; and this man was with Him, saith she. And Peter, as he had not the courage to own the charge, so he had not the wit and presence of mind to turn it off, as he might have done many ways, and therefore flatly and plainly denies it; Woman, I know Him not. 4. His fall was repeated a second time; (v. 58.) After a little while, before he had time to recollect himself, another saw him, and said, Even thou art one of them, slyly as thou sittest here among the high priest's servants. Not I, saith Peter, man, I am not. And a third time, about the space of an hour after, another confidently affirms, strenuously asserts it, Of a truth this fellow also was with Him, let him deny it if he can, for you may all perceive he is a Galilean. But he that has once told a lie, is constantly tempted to persist in it; the beginning of that sin is as the letting forth of water. Peter now not only denies that he is a disciple of Christ, but that he knows any thing of Him, v. 60. I never heard of this Jesus.

II. Peter's rising again. See how happily he recovered himself, or, rather, the grace of God recovered him.

1. The cock crew, just as he was the third time denying that he knew Christ; this startled him, and put him upon thinking. Note, Small accidents may have great influences.

I tell you, he will not believe:

68 And if I also ask you, ye will not answer me, nor let me go.

69 Hereafter ^t shall the Son of man sit ^u on the right hand of the power of God.

70 Then said they all, Art thou then ^v the Son of God? And he said unto them, ^w Ye say that I am.

71 And they said, ^x What need we any

further witness? for we ourselves have heard of his own mouth.

q Matt. 26:59. Mark 14:56-58. John 18:17.

r 33:34. 12:9. Matt. 10:33. 26:70. John 18:25, 27. Acts 3:13, 14. 2 Tim. 2:10-12. 1 John 1:9.

s Matt. 26:71, 72. Mark 14:69, 70. John 18:25.

t Matt. 26:73, 74. Mark 14:69, 70. John 18:26, 27.

u 34. Matt. 26:74, 75. Mark 14:71, 72. John 18:27.

v 10:41. Matt. 5:30. Job 33:27. Is. 57:15-18. Jer. 31:18.

w 22:20. Hos. 11:9. Acts 5:31. 2 Ex. 16:33. 36:31, 32. Eph. 2:11. Rev. 2:5.

x Matt. 26:74, 75. John 18:38. Ps. 58:18. 126:5, 6. Jer. 31:18. Ez. 7:16. Zech. 12:10. Matt. 5:4. 23:75. Mark 14:72. 2 Cor. 7:9-11.

2. The Lord turned, and looked on him. This circumstance we had not in the other evangelists, but it is a very remarkable one. Christ is here called the Lord, for there was much of divine knowledge, power, and grace, appearing in this. Observe, Though Christ had now his back on Peter, and was on his trial, (when, one would think, He had something else to mind,) yet He knew all that Peter said. Note, Christ takes more notice of what we say and do than we think; when Peter disowned Christ, Christ did not disown Him, though He might justly, and never looked on him more, but denied him before his Father. It is well for us that Christ does not deal with us as we deal with Him. Christ looked on Peter, not doubting but that Peter would soon be aware of it, for He knew that, though he had denied Him with his lips, yet his eye would still be toward Him. Observe, Though Peter had now been guilty of a very great offence, and which was very provoking, yet Christ would not call to him, lest He should shame him or expose him; He only gave him a look which none but Peter would understand the meaning of, and it had a great deal in it. (1.) It was a convincing look. Peter said he did not know Christ. Christ turned, and looked on him, as if He should say, Dost thou not know Me, Peter? Look Me in the face, and tell Me so. (2.) It was a chiding look. Let us think with what a countenance Christ looks on us when we have sinned. (3.) It was an expostulating, upbraiding look. What, Peter, disownest thou Me now, when thou shouldst come and witness for Me? What, thou a disciple? Thou that wast the most forward to confess Me to be the Son of God, and didst solemnly promise thou wouldst never disown Me? (4.) It was a compassionate look: He looked on him with tenderness; Poor Peter, how weak is thine heart! How art thou fallen and undone, if I do not help thee! (5.) It was a directing look. Christ guided him with his eye, gave him a wink to go out from that sorry company, to retire, and bethink himself a little, and then he would soon see what he had to do. (6.) It was a significant look: it signified the conveying of grace to Peter's heart, to enable him to repent; the crowing of the cock would not have done it without this look, nor will external means ever bring any to repentance without special, efficacious grace. Power went along with this look, to change the heart of Peter, and to bring him to himself, to his right mind.

3. Peter remembered the words of the Lord. Note, The grace of God works in and by the Word of God, brings that to mind, sets it home

c Matt. 26:59-68. Mark 14:55-65. John 18:22.

d Job 16:9, 10. 30:9-14. Ps. 22:6, 7. 18. 55:15, 16, 25. 69:7-12. 1. 49:7.

e 50:6, 7. 62:14. 5:3. Mic. 5:1. Matt. 27:28-31. 39-44. Mark 15:10-20. 27-32. Heb. 12:2. 1 Pet. 2:23.

f Jude. 15, 21, 25. Matt. 12:31, 32. Acts 26:11. 1 Tim. 1:13, 14.

g Matt. 27:1. Mark 15:1. Ps. 22:3. Acts 4:25-28.

h Matt. 11:3-5. 26:63. Mark 14:61. John 10:24.

i 39:1. John 8:38-47. 8:43-45. 9: 27, 28. 10:33, 36. 12:37-43.

j 30:3-7, 41-44. m Matt. 26:64. Mark 14:62.

n Ps. 110:1. Dan. 7:13, 14. Matt. 22: 41. Mark 16:19. Acts 2:34-36. 7: 45-50. Rom. 9:24. Eph. 1:20-23.

o 4:8-10. Col. 3:1. Heb. 13. 8:1. 12:2. 1 Pet. 3:22. Rev. 2:1.

p 4:41. Ps. 2:7, 12. Matt. 5:37. 27: 43, 54. John 13:49. 10:30, 36. 19:57. p 23:3. Matt. 26:64. Mark 14:64.

q Matt. 26:65. Mark 14:65, 64.

Verse 59.

Man, &c.) A maid challenged Peter, in the second instance, according to Matthew and Mark; yet he here answers to a man. But Matthew writes, 'She said to them that were there;' and Mark, 'She began to say to them that stood by.' So that the maid gave the information to those around her, and some man charged Peter with it. Perhaps several joined, though he answered to one in particular, for John writes, 'They said unto him,' &c. How must these people have been surprised, when they saw (as no doubt some of them did) this timorous disciple, within the compass of a few weeks, when he was brought with John before the council, not only maintaining the honor of Jesus, but charging the murder of 'the Prince of life' on the chief men of the nation, and warning them of their guilt and danger in consequence of it. (Acts 4:5-13.) Dogdrudge.

Another. 'Matthew says, another maid-servant. But this disagree-

crepancy may be reconciled; as the word here may denote a female.

WESTEIN.

Verses 66-71.

(Matt. 26:57-68. 27:1, 2. Mark 14:65.) From the narrative of the two preceding evangelists, it appears that, after the council had condemned Jesus, they separated, and met again early in the morning; and the words here used, 'As soon as it was day,' &c. seem to refer to this latter meeting. Nor is it improbable, the high priests had again put the same questions to our Lord, as he had done the night before, both to see whether He would stand to what He had said, and that such members of the council, as had been absent, might hear his answers. (66.) As soon as it was day, &c. 'Sentences were pronounced as they stood in the day time.'

SCOTT.

HORNE.

CHAP. XXIII.

Jesus is accused before Pilate, who sends him to Herod, 1-7. He is silent before Herod, who mocks him and sends him back, 8-11. Pilate and Herod are made friends, 12. Pilate, convinced of the innocence of Jesus, is yet prevailed on by clamour to give him up to crucifixion, and to release Barabbas, 13-25. Jesus is led away, Simon of Cyrene bearing his cross, 26. To the women and others who bewailed him, He predicts the calamities coming on the Jews, 27-31. He is crucified between two thieves, and prays for his murderers, 32-34. The people, rulers, priests, and soldiers, and one of the thieves, scoff at him, 35-38. The other thief rebukes his companion, and confesses Christ, who promises that he shall "that day be with him in paradise," 39-43. The land is darkened, the veil of the temple rent, and Jesus, commending his spirit into the hand of his Father, expires, 44-46. The centurion confesses him; and the people with his acquaintance retire, emitting their breaths at what they had seen, 47-49. Joseph of Arimathea asks for the body, and buries it, 50-54. The women prepare spices; but rest on the Sabbath, according to the commandment, 55, 56.

AND the whole multitude of them arose, and led him unto Pilate.

2 And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying, 'That he himself is Christ a King.'

a 22:86. Matt. 27:1. Mark 15:1. John 18:28. Mark 15:3-5. John 18:30. 5. 1 Kings 18:17. Jer. 38:4. Am. 7:10. Isa. 16:20. 17:8, 7. 24:5. 29:21, 25. 1 Kings 21:13. Ps. 55:11. 62:4. 94:3-5. Jer. 20:10. 37:13-15. Matt. 21:21. 26:59, 60. Mark 14:55, 56. Acts 24:13. 1 Pet. 2:16-18. c 22:69, 70. Mark 14:61, 62. John 19:12.

Him to own it to them, v. 67. Had they asked him this question with a willingness to admit that He was the Christ, and to receive Him accordingly, if He could give sufficient proof of his being so, it had been well, and might have been forever well with them; but they asked it with a resolution not to believe Him, nay, a design to insnare Him.

2. He justly complained of their unfair and unjust usage, v. 67, 68. They all, as Jews, professed to expect the Messiah, and at this time; no other had appeared as the Messiah; He had no competitor, nor was He likely to have any; He had given amazing proofs of a divine power attending Him, which made his claims very well worthy of a free and impartial inquiry; it had been but just for these leaders of the people, to have taken Him into their council, and examined Him there as a candidate for the Messiahship, not at the bar as a criminal; 'But,' saith He, (1.) 'If I give you ever such convincing proofs that I am the Christ, you are resolved not to believe. Why should the cause be brought on before you, who have already prejudged it, and are resolved, right or wrong, to run it down, and condemn it?' (2.) 'If I ask you what you have to object against the proofs I produce, you will not answer Me.' Here He refers to their silence when He put a question to them, which would have led them to own his authority, ch. 20: 5-7. They were neither fair judges,

upon the conscience, and so gives the soul the happy turn. Take it up, and read.

4. Peter went out, and wept bitterly. One look from Christ melted him into tears of godly sorrow for sin. The candle was newly put out, so a little thing lighted it again. Christ looked on the chief priests, and made no impression on them as He did on Peter, who had the divine seed remaining in him to work upon. It was not the look, but the grace of God with it, that recovered Peter.

V. 63-71. We are here told, as in the other gospels,

I. How our Lord Jesus was abused by the servants of the high priest. The objects gathered themselves together against Him, the rude and barbarous servants. They that held Jesus, that had Him in custody till the court set, mocked and smote Him, v. 63. They would not allow Him to repose Himself one minute, though He had had no sleep all night, nor to compose Himself, though He was hurried to his trial, and no time given Him to prepare for it. They made sport with Him; as Samson's enemies with him. They hood-winked Him, and then, according to the common play among young people, they struck Him on the face, till He named the person that smote Him, (v. 64.) intending thereby an affront to his prophetic office, and that knowledge of secret things, which He was said to have. We are not told that He said any thing, but bore every thing; hell was let loose, and He suffered it to do its worst. A greater indignity could not be done to the blessed Jesus, yet this was but one of many, v. 65. They that condemned Him for a blasphemer, were themselves the vilest blasphemers.

II. How He was accused and condemned by the sanhedrim, consisting of the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, who were all up betimes, and got together as soon as it was day, about five o'clock in the morning, to prosecute this matter. They were working this evil on their beds, and, as soon as ever the morning was light, practised it, Mic. 2: 1. They would not have been up so early for any good work.

1. They ask Him, Art Thou the Christ? He was generally believed by his followers to be the Christ, but they could not prove He ever said so in so many words, and therefore urge Him to own it to them, v. 67. Had they asked him this question with a willingness to admit that He was the Christ, and to receive Him accordingly, if He could give sufficient proof of his being so, it had been well, and might have been forever well with them; but they asked it with a resolution not to believe Him, nay, a design to insnare Him.

V. 47-71. Our supineness often exposes us to rebukes and chastenings: yet sometimes our impenitent zeal betrays us into dishonorable mistakes, even as does our timidity at others. For corrupt nature still counteracts the tendency of grace, and warps our conduct to opposite extremes: we should therefore ask, and wait for, the Lord's directions, before we act in difficult circumstances. He will, however, prevent the most fatal consequences of our errors, provided our hearts be upright: yet when we contrast his temper and conduct with our own, we shall always see much to admire, and much to be ashamed of.—Neither the displays of his power, nor those of his love, can intimidate or soften hardened unbelievers; for such men could treat the divine Savior, as if He had been

nor fair disputants but, when pinched with an argument, would rather be silent than own their conviction, 'If I be not the Christ, you ought to answer the arguments with which I prove that I am; if I be, you ought to let Me go; but you will do neither.'

3. He referred them to his second coming for full proof of his being the Christ, to their confusion, since they would not now admit the proof of it, to their conviction, v. 69. 'Then you will not need to ask whether He be the Christ or no.'

4. Hence they inferred that He set up Himself as the Son of God, and asked Him *what?* He was so or no, v. 7. He called Himself the Son of man, referring to Daniel's vision of the Son of man that came near before the Ancients of days, Dan. 7: 13, 14. But they understood so much as to know that if He was that Son of man, He was also the Son of God. And art Thou so? By this it appears to have been the faith of the Jewish church, that the Messiah should be both Son of man, and Son of God.

5. He owns Himself to be the Son of God; 'Ye say that I am; that is, 'I am, as ye say.' Compare Mark 14: 62. This confirms Christ's testimony of Himself, that He was the Son of God, that He affirmed it, when He knew He should suffer for so doing.

6. On this they ground his condemnation, v. 71. True, they needed no further witness to prove that He said He was the Son of God, they had it from his own mouth; but did they not need proof that He was not so, before they condemned Him as a Blasphemer for saying that He was so? Had they no apprehension that it was possible He might be so, and then what horrid guilt they should bring on themselves in putting Him to death? No, they know not, neither will they understand. They cannot think it possible He should be the Messiah, though ever so evidently clothed with divine power and grace, if He appear not, as they expect, in worldly pomp and grandeur. Their eyes being blinded with the admiration of that, they rush on in this dangerous prosecution, as the horse into the battle.

CHAP. XXIII. v. 1-12. Our Lord was condemned as a blasphemer in the spiritual court, but that court was actuated by the most impotent malice; for when condemned, they knew they could not put Him to death, and therefore,

I. They accuse Him before Pilate. The *revolt* arose, when they saw they could go no further with Him in their court, led Him to Pilate, though it was no judgment day, and demanded justice against Him, not as a blasphemer, (he took no cognizance of that crime,) but as one disaffected to the Roman government; which they in their hearts did not consider a crime, if it was, they were much more chargeable with it than He; only it would answer the purpose of their malice: and it is observable, that the pretended crime, for which they employed the Roman powers to destroy Christ, was the real crime, for which the Roman powers not long after destroyed them.

1. The indictment against Him, (v. 2.) in

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 47-71. Our supineness often exposes us to rebukes and chastenings: yet sometimes our impenitent zeal betrays us into dishonorable mistakes, even as does our timidity at others. For corrupt nature still counteracts the tendency of grace, and warps our conduct to opposite extremes: we should therefore ask, and wait for, the Lord's directions, before we act in difficult circumstances. He will, however, prevent the most fatal consequences of our errors, provided our hearts be upright: yet when we contrast his temper and conduct with our own, we shall always see much to admire, and much to be ashamed of.—Neither the displays of his power, nor those of his love, can intimidate or soften hardened unbelievers; for such men could treat the divine Savior, as if He had been

a thief or a robber, even when He was working his gracious miracles before their eyes, nay, when healing their wounds! But their hour, and that of 'the power of darkness,' was of short continuance; and such will always be 'the triumphing of the wicked.'—To whatever part of the scene before us we turn our thoughts, we shall see proofs of the Redeemer's excellency, and of the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the human heart: but especially let us contemplate Him, amidst all the insults and cruelties which He meekly endured, looking with compassion on his fallen disciple; that we too may be excited to call our own sins to remembrance, and to renew 'that godly sorrow, which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of.'

SCOTT

NOTES.

CHAP. XXIII. v. 1-5. (2.) *Began to accuse.* 'The judicial authority properly rested with the president; though the procurator, (as was Pilate) had the office of collecting the taxes. But it seems that in the smaller provinces, (like Judea,) which were not of sufficient consequence to have a president, "the collector of taxes discharged also the judicial functions of the president." We found, "A judicial ex-

pression, intimating that they had brought him, as one convicted of guilt after diligent examination," Schleusner. This charge, if proved, would have exposed him to inevitable death; for never were prosecutions for treason more severe than under the reign of Tiberius. A charge of high treason, says Tacitus, was, at that time, an accumulation of all (possible) charges.'

BLOOMFIELD

3 And ¹ Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou ² the King of the Jews? And he answered him, and said, Thou sayest it.

4 Then said Pilate to the chief priests, and to the people, ³ I find no fault in this man.

5 And ⁴ they were the more fierce, saying, He stirreth up the people, teaching throughout all Jewry, ⁵ beginning from Galilee to this place.

6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the man were ⁶ a Galilean.

7 And as soon as he knew that he belonged unto ⁷ Herod's jurisdiction, he sent him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.

8 And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: ⁸ for he was desirous to see him of a long season, because he had heard many things of him: ⁹ and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by him.

9 Then he questioned with him in many words: ¹⁰ but he answered him nothing.

10 And the chief priests and scribes stood ¹¹ and vehemently accused him.

11 And ¹² Herod with his men of war ¹³ set him at naught, and mocked him, and arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and sent him again to Pilate.

which they pretend zeal for Cæsar, only to ingratiate themselves with Pilate, yet it was all nothing but *malice* against Christ. They misrepresented Him, (1.) As making the people *rebel against Cæsar*. Pilate knew that there was a general uneasiness in the people under the Roman yoke, who wanted nothing but an opportunity to shake it off; they would have him believe this Jesus was active to foment that general discontent they themselves were in truth exciting; *We found Him perverting the nation; as if converting them to God's government; whereas nothing tends more to make men good subjects than making them Christ's faithful followers.* Christ taught particularly that they ought to *give tribute to Cæsar*, though He knew many would be offended at Him for it; yet He is here falsely accused, as *forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar*. Innocence is no protection against calumny. (2.) As making Him *own a Rival with Cæsar*, though they would not own Him to be the Messiah, for the very reason that He did not appear in worldly pomp and power, as a temporal prince, nor attempt any thing against Cæsar; yet they charged Him with it. He said, *He Himself is Christ a King*. He did say He was *Christ*, and if so, a *King*, but not a king likely to disturb Cæsar. When his followers would have made Him a king, (John 6: 15.) He declined it, though his many miracles proved his power to be infinitely superior to that of Cæsar.

2. His pleading to the indictment; to Pilate's question, *Art Thou the King of the Jews?* (v. 3.) He answered, *Thou sayest it*; that is, 'It is as thou sayest, I am entitled to the government of the Jewish nation: but in rivalry with the scribes and Pharisees, not with Cæsar, whose government relates only to their civil interests.' Christ's kingdom is wholly spiritual, and will not interfere with Cæsar's jurisdiction.

3. Pilate's declaration of his innocence; (v. 4.) *He said to the chief priests, and the people that seemed to join in the prosecution, 'I find no fault in this man. What breaches of your law He may have been guilty of, I am not concerned to inquire, but I find nothing proved on Him, that makes Him obnoxious to our court.'*

4. The continued fury of the prosecutors, v. 5. Instead of being moderated by Pilate's declaration of his innocence, and considering, as they ought, whether they were not bringing the guilt of innocent blood on themselves, they were the more exceeding *fierce*. We do not find they have any particular fact to produce, much less any evidence to prove it; but they resolve to carry it with noise and confidence, and say it, though they cannot prove it; *He stirs up the people to rebel against Cæsar, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.* He did stir up the people, though not to faction or sedition, but to virtue. He did teach, but they could not charge Him with teaching any doctrine that tended to disturb the public peace, or make the government uneasy or jealous.

II. They accuse Him before Herod.

1. The accusers mentioned Galilee, the northern part of Canaan. 'Why,' saith Pilate, 'Is He a Galilean?' v. 6. 'Yes,' said they, 'that is his head-quarters.' 'Let us send Him to Herod then,' saith Pilate, 'for Herod is now in town, and it is but fit he should have cognizance of his cause, since He belongs to Herod's jurisdiction.' Pilate was already desirous to be rid of the cause, seemingly his true reason for

sending Him to Herod. But God ordered it so for the more evident fulfilling of Scripture, see Acts 4: 26, 27, where that of David, (Ps. 2: 2.) *The kings of the earth and the rulers see themselves against the Lord and his anointed,* is expressly said to be fulfilled in Herod and Pontius Pilate.

2. Herod was very willing to examine Him. (v. 9.) and perhaps the more so because he saw Him a prisoner. He had heard many things of Him in Galilee, where his miracles had for a great while been all the talk; and he longed to see Him, not from a y affection for Him or his doctrine, but purely out of curiosity; as he hoped to see some miracle done by Him which would serve Him to talk of as long as He lived. To this end, he questioned with Him in many things, that at length he might bring Him to something in which He might show his power. Perhaps he questioned Him concerning things secret, or things to come, or his curing of diseases. But Jesus answered him nothing; nor would He gratify him so much as with the repetition of one miracle. The poorest beggar, that asked a miracle for the relief of his necessity, was *never denied*; but this proud prince, that asked a miracle merely to gratify his curiosity, is denied; he might often have seen Christ and his wondrous works in Galilee, and would not; therefore it is justly said, Now he would see them, and shall not; they are hid from his eyes, because he knew not the day of his visitation. Herod thought, now he had Him in bonds, he might command a miracle, but miracles must not be made cheap, nor Omnipotence be at the beck of the greatest potentate.

3. His prosecutors appeared against Him before Herod, for they were restless in the prosecution; *They vehemently accused Him*, (v. 10.) *impudently and boldly*, so it signifies. They would make Herod believe He had poisoned Galilee too with his seditious notions. Note, It is no new thing for good men and good ministers, who are real and useful friends to the civil government, to be falsely accused as factious and seditious, and enemies to government.

4. Herod, with his attendants, and officers, and great men, was very *abusive* to Him. They made nothing of Him; so the word is. Horrid wickedness! To make nothing of Him who made all things. They laughed at Him as a fool; He had wrought many miracles to befriend others, and why not now work one to befriend Himself? Or, they laughed at Him as one who had lost his power, and was become weak as other men. Herod, who had been acquainted with John Baptist, and had more knowledge of Christ too, than Pilate had, was more *abusive* to Christ than Pilate was; for knowledge without grace, does but make me; the more *ingeniously* wicked. Herod arrayed Christ in a gorgeous robe, some gaudy, painted clothes, as a mocking; and so taught Pilate's soldiers afterwards to do Him the same indignity.

5. Herod returned Him to Pilate, and it proved an occasion of making them friends, they having been for some time at variance. Herod could not get sight of a miracle, but would not condemn Him neither as a malefactor, and therefore sent Him again to Pilate, (v. 11.) and this, with the messages that passed between them, brought them to a better understanding. They had been at enmity between themselves, (v. 12.) probably on Pilate's killing the Galileans, who were Herod's subjects, (Luke 13: 1.) on some such matter of controversy as usually oc-

f Matt. 27:11. Mark 15:2. John 18: 33-37. 1 Tim. 6:13.
g 38. 132,33. 19:38-40. Mark 15: 18,32. John 1:49. 19:3,19-21.
h 14,15. Matt. 27:19,24. Mark 15:14. John 18:38. 19:4-6. Heb. 7:26. 1. Pet. 1:19. 2:22.
i 23. 11:53. Ps. 22:12,13,16. 57:4. 69:4. Matt. 27:24. John 15:15. Acts 5:33. 7:54,57. 23:10.
k 6:14,15. Matt. 4:12-18,23. Mark 1:14. John 1:43. 2:11. 7:41,52. Acts 10:37.
l 13:1. Acts 5:37.
m 34. 14:31.
n 9:7-9. Matt. 14:1. Mark 6:14.
o 4:23. 2 Kings 2:3-5. 11. Acts 8:19.
p 15:32. Ps. 39:13,14. 39:12,9. 12. 58:7. Matt. 7:6. 27:15. Acts 8:32.

1 Pet. 2:23.
q 2,5,14,15. 11:53. Acts 24:5.

r Acts 4:27,23.
s 22:64,65. Ps. 22:6. 69:19,20. Isa.

48:7. 53:3. Matt. 27:27-30. Mark 9:12. 15:16-20.

(5.) *Stirreth up, &c.* Probably they referred to his public entrance into the city a few days before, to which Pilate could not be a stranger: and to his teaching at the temple, in contempt of their authority. Certain impostors had before this arisen in Galilee, and given the Romans considerable trouble; for which cause the rulers probably supposed Pilate would have been more jealous of Jesus: (13: 1, 2.) but that governor well understood the difference between armed forces and our Lord's inoffensive followers; who were formidable to nothing, but the hypocrisy and ambition of the scribes, priests, and Pharisees.

Verses 7.

Scorr.

As Pilate and Herod, the one a Roman, the other a proselyted Idumæan.

mean, and both very wicked men, governed adjacent regions, we need not wonder that they were jealous of each other, and that causes of enmity arose between them. 'This Herod was son to Herod the Great, under whom Christ was born; and uncle to Herod Agrippa, by whom James was beheaded and Peter imprisoned, who was eaten by worms; (Acts 12: 2, 3, 23.) and great uncle to that Agrippa, who, by Paul's discourse, was "almost persuaded to be a Christian." (Acts 26: 28.) — Doddridge. [See Notes, Matt. 2, 1, 2.]

Scorr.

law; though they had the right of trying all offences within their provinces. Wetstein. B. C. 38 P. 14.

12 And the same day Pilate and Herod were made friends together; for before they were at enmity between themselves.

[Practical Observations.]

13 ¶ And Pilate, who had called together the chief priests, and the rulers, and the people,

14 Said unto them, Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people: and, behold, I, having examined him before you, have found no fault in this man, touching those things whereof you accuse him:

15 No, nor yet Herod; for I sent you to him; and, lo, nothing worthy of death is done unto him:

16 I will therefore chastise him, and release him.

17 (For of necessity he must release one unto them at the feast.)

18 And they cried out all at once, saying, 'Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas:

19 (Who, for a certain sedition made in the city, and for murder, was cast into prison.)

20 Pilate therefore, willing to release Jesus, spake again to them.

21 But they cried, saying, 'Crucify him, crucify him.

22 And he said unto them the third time, 'Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore

curs among princes and great men. Observe how those that quarrelled with one another, yet could unite against Christ; as Gehal and Ammon, and Amalek, though divided among themselves, were confederate against the Israel of God, Ps. 83:7. Christ is the great Peace-Maker; both Pilate and Herod owned his innocency, and their agreeing in that cured their disagreeing in other things.

V. 13—25. Here,

I. Pilate solemnly protests that he believes Jesus has done nothing worthy of death or bonds. He ought then immediately to have discharged Him; nor only so, but to have protected Him from the fury of the priests and rabble, and to have bound his prosecutors to their good behavior for their insolent conduct. But, being himself a bad man, he had no kindness for Christ; and having made himself otherwise obnoxious, was afraid of displeasing either the emperor or the people; and therefore, for want of integrity, he called together the chief priests, and rulers and people, and will hear what they have to say, to whom he should have turned a deaf ear, for he plainly saw what spirit actuated them, v. 14.

II. He appeals to Herod concerning Him; (v. 15.) 'I sent you to him, who is supposed to have known more of Him than I, and he has sent Him back, not convicted of any thing, nor under any mark of his displeasure; in his opinion his crimes are not capital. He has laughed at Him as a weak man, but has not stigmatized Him as a dangerous man.'

III. He purposes to release Him, with their consent. He ought to have done it without. The fear of man brings many into this snare, that, whereas justice should take place, though heaven and earth come together, they will do an unjust thing, against their consciences. So Pilate declares Him innocent, and has a mind to release Him; yet, to please the people, 1. He will release Him as a malefactor, because of necessity he must release one, v. 17. 2. He will chastise Him, and release Him. Why so, if no fault be to be found in Him? There is as much injustice in scourging as in crucifying an innocent man; nor would it be justified by pretending that this would satisfy the clamors of the people, and make Him, who was now the

chastise him, and let him go.

23 And they were instant with loud voices, requiring that he might be crucified: and the voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed.

24 And Pilate gave sentence, that it should be as they required.

25 And he released unto them him that for sedition and mur-

der was cast into prison, whom they had desired; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

26 ¶ And as they led him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus.

t Ps. 83:4—6. Matt. 16:1. Rev. 17:13, 14. u Matt. 27:21—23. Mark 15:14. John 18:39. x 1, 2, 9.

object of their envy, the object of their pity. We must not do evil that good may come.

IV. The people chose rather to have Barabbas released; a wretched fellow, that had no claim to their favor but the dangerousness of his crimes, sedition, and murder; (of all crimes the least pardonable;) yet this criminal was preferred before Christ, v. 18, 19. No wonder such a man is the darling of such a mob.

V. When Pilate again urged Christ's release they cried out, *Crucify Him, crucify Him*, v. 20, 21. They not only will have Him die, but die so great a death.

VI. When Pilate the third time reasoned with them, to show them the unreasonableness and injustice of it, they were the more peremptory and outrageous; (v. 22.) 'Why? What evil hath He done? Name his crime. I have found no cause of death, and you cannot say what cause of death you have found in Him; therefore speak the word, and I will chastise Him, and let Him go.' But popular fury grows more furious, the more it is complimented; they were instant with loud voices, with great noises or outcries, not requesting, but requiring that He might be crucified; as if they had as much right, at the feast, to demand the crucifying of one that was innocent, as the release of one that was guilty.

VII. Pilate yields, at length, to their importunity. The voice of the people and chief priests prevailed, and overruled him to act contrary to his convictions and inclinations. He had not courage to stem so strong a stream, but gave sentence as they required, v. 24. Here is judgment turned away backward, and justice standing afar off, for fear of popular fury. Barabbas would thus be hardened in wickedness, and do the more mischief, yet him he released; but he delivered Jesus to their will; and he could not deal more barbarously with Him than to deliver Him to their will, who hated Him with a perfect hatred, and whose tender mercies were cruelty.

V. 26—31. The Lamb of God is here led as a lamb to the slaughter, to the sacrifice. With what expedition they went through his trial! How could they do so much in so little time! having so many great men to deal with, attendance on whom is usually a work of time. He

y 4. Dan. 6:4. Matt. 27:4, 19, 24, 54, 55. Acts 13:28. Heb. 7:26. z Matt. 27:26. Mark 15:15. John 19:1—4. Acts 5:40, 41. a Matt. 27:15. Mark 15:6. John 18:9 b Matt. 27:16—18, 20—23. Mark 15:7—14. John 18:40. Acts 3:14. c John 19:15. Acts 21:36. 22, 22. d 2, 5. e Matt. 14:8, 9. 27:19. Mark 15:1c. John 19:12. f 23. Matt. 27:22—25. Mark 15:13 g 14. John 19:15. h 14, 20. 1 Pet. 1:19. 3:18. h 16. i 5. Ps. 22:12, 13. 57:4. Zech. 11:8. k Matt. 27:26. Mark 15:15. John 19:16. l Or, assented. Ex. 23:2. Prov. 17:15. 1, 2, 5. Mark 15:7. John 18:40. m 1 Sam. 12:13. Mark 15:8. Acts 2:1. n Matt. 27:26. Mark 15:15. o Matt. 27:32. Mark 15:21. John 19:16, 17. p Acts 2:10. 6, 6, 9. 13:1. q 2:23. 14:27.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12. Envy, malice, cruelty, and calumny, are combined in the character of the 'seed of the serpent,' who hate and persecute 'the seed of the woman.' No prudence or harmlessness, can secure from their enmity and slander: yet an unexceptionable conduct may drive them into such egregious arduities and palpable falsehoods, as expose their malignity. The Lord conducts all his great designs to a glorious event, by means of those who are following the evil devices of their own hearts. Thus all parties concurred in proving the 'immaculate innocence' of our atoning Sacrifice. (Matt. 27:24, 25.) There are lengths to which even very wicked men are reluctant to proceed, especially without what appears an adequate advantage: yet while restrained by inward terror from some crimes, they are kept from actions they cannot but approve, by fear of their

fellow-creatures, even inferiors! Profligate professors of religion are commonly more hardened than open idolaters; and are entitled to less regard. Our Lord would take no notice of Herod, a man who had committed most enormous wickedness, (Mark 6:14—22.) against his conscience. How careful should men be, then, not to provoke God to give them up, as Herod, (v. 11.) to final infatuation and insensibility! As the enmities of the wicked are often excited about the veriest trifles, so their friendships are sometimes grounded on the basest combinations of wickedness, or spring from coincidence in vicious disposition and pursuits. Frequently they agree in little except enmity to God and contempt of Christ and his cause: death, then, will soon terminate their amity, and perfect hatred be their final temper and portion. (P. O. Matt. 27:1—25. Mark 15:1—26.) SCOTT.

Verse 15.

Done unto Him.] Rather, by Him. The use of the dative case, as here, for the ablative, with a preposition, after verbs passive, is frequent in the Latin and Greek classics. Instances of the mode of expression here used, occur frequently in Demosthenes.

SCOTT

Verses 18, 20, 21, 23.

Every word here implies the violence and fierceness, with which the Jews urged their demand.

SCOTT.

27 And there followed him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented him.

28 But Jesus, turning unto them, said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children.

29 For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck.

30 Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us; and to the hills, Cover us.

31 For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?

32 And there were

85. 8:2. Matt. 27:55, 56. Mark 15:40.
 1. Cant. 1:5. 2:7. 3:5, 10. 5:8, 16. 8:4.
 21:23, 24. Matt. 24:19. Mark 13:17-19.
 13:16. Deut. 28:53-57. Hos. 9:12-16.
 13:16. Is. 2:19. Hos. 10:8. Rev. 6:16. 9:6.
 7. Prov. 11:31. Jer. 25:29. Ez. 15:2-7. 30:47, 48. 21:3. Dan. 9:28.
 Matt. 3:12. John 15:6. Heb. 6:8.
 1 Pet. 4:17, 18. Jude 12.
 22:37. Is. 53:12. Matt. 27:38. Mark 15:27, 28. John 19:18. Heb. 12:2.

ing their lamentations; *Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me.* Not that they were to be blamed for it, but commended rather; those hearts were hard indeed, that were not affected with such sufferings of such a Person; but they must not weep only profitless tears for Him, but rather, *for themselves and children*, with an eye to the destruction coming on Jerusalem, which some of them might live to see, and share in the calamities of, or, at least, their children would. Note, When with an eye of faith we behold Christ crucified, we ought to weep, not for Him, but for ourselves. We must not be affected with the death of Christ, as with the death of a common person whose calamity we pity, or of a common friend whom we are likely to part with; the death of Christ was a thing peculiar, it was his victory and triumph over his enemies, it was our deliverance, and the purchase of eternal life for us. Therefore weep not for Him, but let us weep for our own and our children's sins, that were the cause of his death; and weep for fear (the tears here prescribed) of the miseries we shall bring on ourselves, if we slight his love, and reject his grace, as the Jewish nation did, which brought on them the ruin here foretold. When dear relations and friends die in Christ, we have no reason to weep for them who have put off the burden of the flesh, are made perfect in holiness, and are entered into perfect rest and joy, but for ourselves and children, left behind in a world of sins, and sorrows, and snares.

2. A particular reason why they should weep *for themselves and children*; 'For behold, sad times are coming on your city, it will be destroyed, and you will be involved in the common destruction.' When Christ's own disciples sorrowed after a *godly sort* for his leaving them, He wiped away their tears with the promise that He would see them again, and they should rejoice, John 16: 22. But when these daughters of Jerusalem bewailed Him only with a *worldly* sorrow, He turned their tears into another channel, and told them they should have something to weep for. Let them be afflicted, and mourn, and weep, Jam. 4: 9. He had lately wept over Jerusalem Himself, now He bids them weep over it. Christ's tears should set us to weeping. Let the daughters of Zion, that own Christ for their King, rejoice in Him, for He comes to save them; but let the daughters of Jerusalem, that only weep for Him, but do not take Him for their King, weep and tremble to think of his coming to judge them.

The destruction of Jerusalem is here foretold by two proverbial sayings, then fully used, both bespeaking it very terrible, that what people commonly dread they would then desire, to be *written childless*, and to be *buried alive*. (1.)

was brought before the chief priests at day-break, (ch. 22: 66.) after that to Pilate, then to Herod, then to Pilate again; between whom and the people there seems to have been a long struggle about Him. He was scourged, crowned with thorns, and contumeliously used, all in four or five hours, or six at most, for He was crucified between nine o'clock and twelve. Christ's persecutors resolve to lose no time, for fear his friends should get notice of their doings, and rise to rescue Him. Never was any one so *chased out of the world* as Christ, but so He Himself said, *Yet a little while, and ye shall not see Me*; a very little while indeed.

As they led Him to death we find,

1. A bearer, that carried his cross, *Simon*, who, probably, was a friend of Christ, and known to be so, and this was done to put a reproach on Him; they laid Christ's cross on him, that he might bear it after Jesus, (v. 26.) lest Jesus should faint under it and die away, and so prevent the further instances of malice they designed. A cruel pity that gave Him this ease.

II. Many true mourners, who followed, bewailing and lamenting Him. Not only of his friends and well-wishers, but the common people, (not his enemies,) moved with compassion, because they had heard his fame, and what an excellent, useful Man He was, and had reason to think He suffered unjustly; this drew a great crowd after Him; *A great company followed*, especially of women; (v. 27.) some led by pity, others by curiosity, but they also (as well as his particular friends and acquaintance) bewailed and lamented Him. Though many reproached and reviled, yet some valued and pitied Him, and were partakers in his sufferings. The dying of the Lord Jesus may move natural affections in many that are strangers to devout affections; many bewail Christ, that do not believe in, and lament Him, that do not love Him above all.

Though one would think Christ should be wholly taken up with his own concern, yet He found time and heart to take cognizance of their tears. He turned to them, though strangers, and diverts their lamentation, v. 28.

1. He gives them a general direction concerning

To be *written childless*. Commonly those that have no children, envy those that have, as Rachel envied Leah. Then those that have children, will find them such a burden in attempting to escape, and such a grief when they see them either fainting for famine, or falling by the sword, that they will envy those that have none, and say, *Blessed are the barren*, that have no children to be given up to the murderer, or to be snatched out of his hands. It would not only go ill with those who at that time were *written child*, or *giving suck*, (Matt. 24: 19,) but be terrible to those who had children now alive. See Hos. 9: 11-14. See the vanity of the creature and the uncertainty of its comforts, for such may be the changes of Providence concerning us, that those very things may become the greatest burdens, cares, and griefs, which we have delighted in as the greatest blessings. (2.) To be *buried alive*, v. 30. This also refers to a passage in the same prophecy with the former, Hos. 10: 8. They shall wish to be hid in the darkest caves, [with which Palestine abounded,] to be out of the noise of these calamities; will be willing to be sheltered, even with the hazard of being crushed. This would be the language of the great and mighty especially, Rev. 6: 16. They that would not flee to Christ for protection, will in vain call to hills and mountains to shelter them from his wrath.

3. He shows how naturally they might infer that desolation from his sufferings, v. 31. Some think this borrowed from Ezek. 20: 47. *The fire shall devour every green tree in thee, and every dry tree.* The words may be applied, (1.) More particularly to the destruction of Jerusalem; 'If they (the Jews and the inhabitants of Jerusalem) do these things upon the green tree, that is, thus abuse an innocent and excellent person for his good works, how may they expect God to deal with them for their so doing, who have made themselves a dry tree, a corrupt and wicked generation, and good for nothing! If this be their sin, what think you will be their punishment?' Or take it thus; 'If they (the Romans, their judges, and soldiers) abuse Me thus, who have given them no provocation, who am to them as a green tree, what will they do by Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, who will be so very provoking to them, and make themselves as a dry tree, as fuel to the fire of their resentments! If God suffer those things to be done to Me, what will He appoint to be done to those barren trees, of whom it hath been often said, that they should be *hewn down and cast into the fire*?' Matt. 3: 10. 7: 19. (2.) They may be applied more generally to all the revelations of God's wrath against sin and sinners; 'If God deliver Me up to these sufferings because I am made a Sacrifice for sin, what will He do with sinners themselves?' Christ was a green Tree, fruitful and flourishing; now if such things were done to Him, we may thence infer what should have been done to the whole race of mankind, if He had not interposed, and what shall be done to those that continue dry trees, notwithstanding all that is done to make them fruitful. If God did this to the Son of his love, when He found but sin imputed to Him, what shall He do to the generation of his wrath, when He finds sin reigning in them? Note, The consideration of the bitter sufferings of our Lord Jesus should engage us to stand in awe of the justice of God, and to tremble before Him. The best saints, compared with Christ, are dry trees; if He suffer, why may not they expect to suffer? And what then shall the damnation of sinners be?

V. 32-43. We have here,

I. Divers passages we had before in Matthew and Mark, concerning Christ's sufferings.

1. There were two others, malefactors, led with Him to execution; who, probably, had been for some time under sentence of death, and were designed to be executed at this day, the pretence, probably, for such haste in the

(31.) *Green*, &c.] 'The Hebrews call holy and virtuous men, green trees, and the wicked, dry ones. So Ps. 1: 3. Comp. Ez. 20: 47, explained by 21: 3. So 1 Pet. 4: 18.' BLOOMFIELD.

(Marg. Ref.--Matt. 27: 32-44. Mark 15: 21-28. John 19: 13-24. (34.) *Forgive*, &c.] This prayer seems to have been made by the

as two others, malefactors, led with him to be put to death.

33 And *when they were come to the place which is called *Calvary, there ^bthey crucified him, and the malefactors: one on the right hand, and the other on the left.

34 Then said Jesus, *Father, forgive them; for ^cthey know not what they do. *And they parted his raiment, and cast lots.

35 And ^dthe people stood beholding: and the rulers also with them ^ederided him, saying, He saved others; let him save himself, if he be ^fChrist, the chosen of God.

36 And the soldiers also ^gmocked him, coming to him, and offering him vinegar,

prosecution of Christ, that one solemnity might serve.

2. He was crucified at a place called [in Latin] *Calvary*, [in Greek] *Cranion*, for *Golgotha—the place of a skull*: an ignominious place, to add to the reproach of his sufferings, but significant, for there He triumphed over death, in his own domain. He was *crucified*; his hands and feet were nailed to the cross as it lay on the ground; and then it was *lifted up*, and fastened into the earth, or some socket to receive it. This was a painful and shameful death above any other.

3. He was crucified *between two thieves*, as if the worst of the three; thus He was not only treated as a transgressor, but *numbered with them*, the worst of them.

4. The soldiers employed seized his garments as their fee, and divided them among themselves *by lot*; *They parted his raiment, and cast lots*.

5. He was reviled, reproached, and treated with all scorn and contempt, when *lifted up*. Strange that so much barbarity should be found in the human nature; *The people stood beholding*, not at all concerned, but rather pleasing themselves with the spectacle; and the rulers, whom from their office one would take to be men of sense and honor, stood among the rabble, and *derided Him*, to set those about them to do so too; and they said, *He saved others, let Him save Himself*. Thus is He upbraided for the good works He had done, as if it were indeed for these that they *crucified Him*. They triumph over Him as if conquered by them, whereas He was Himself then more than a conqueror; they challenge Him to save Himself from the cross, when He was saving others by the cross; *If He be the Christ, the chosen of God*, let Him save Himself. They knew that the Christ is the chosen of God; designed by Him, and dear to Him. If He, as the Christ, would deliver our nation from the Romans, (and they could not form any other idea of the Messiah,) let Him now deliver Himself from the Romans. Thus the Jewish rulers jeered Him as captivated by the Romans, instead of subduing them. The Roman soldiers jeered Him as the King of the Jews; 'A people good enough for such a prince, and a prince good enough for such a people.' *They mocked Him*, (v. 36, 37.) made sport with Him, and a jest of his sufferings; and when drinking sharp, sour wine themselves, such as was generally allotted them, they triumphantly asked Him to pledge them, or drink with them.

6. The superscription over his head, setting forth his crime, was, *This is the king of the Jews*, v. 38. He is put to death for pretending to be the king of the Jews; so they meant it; but God intended it to be a declaration of what He really was; He is the King of the Jews, the King of the church. This was written in those called the *three learned languages*, the Greek, Latin, and Hebrew, those are best learned, that have learned Christ. It was written in these three languages, that it might be known and read of all men; but God designed by it to signify that the Gospel of Christ should be preached to all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem*, and be read in all languages. The Gentile philosophy made the Greek tongue famous, the Roman laws and government, the Latin; and the Hebrew excelled them all for the sake of the Old Testament. In these three languages is Jesus Christ proclaimed King. Young scholars that are taking pains to master these three languages, should *aim* in the use of them to increase their acquaintance with Christ.

II. Two very remarkable passages here we had not before.

1. Christ's prayer for his enemies; (v. 34.) *Father, forgive them*. Seven remarkable words Christ spake after He was nailed to the cross; this is the first. One reason why He died this death was, that He might have liberty of speech to the last, and so glorify his Father, and *edify* those about Him. As soon as He was fastened to the cross, or while they were nailing Him, He prayed this prayer: in which, observe,

the soldiers were nailing our Lord's hands and feet to the cross; in which extremity He seems to have been more concerned for the sin of his murderers, than for his own sufferings. The soldiers who crucified Him were primarily intended, whose guilt was far less heinous than that of the chief priests, or people, who had enjoyed fuller means of instruction. (John 19: 8, 12. v. 11.) Probably the soldiers immediately concerned, and many of the surrounding multitude also were saved in answer to this prayer; and in some sense it may be applied to every one who is justified by faith in his blood.

(34.) *Malefactors*, &c. These are by Matthew and Mark termed *thieves*, as Barabbas is by John. The Greek here denotes malefactors in general, not only highway robbers, or house-breakers, or pilferers, and also brigands, rebels, pirates, or any who carry on unauthorised hostilities. Nay, these were sometimes irregular troops, like the Spanish *guerrillas*, or the Russian *zassacs*, who carried on petty devastations, pillagers in regular war. To which of these classes Barabbas and these (See Mark 15: 7.) belonged, it is not possible exactly to determine; it seems probable they were lawless *insurgents*. They were men, says Malby, who had taken up arms on a principle of resistance to Roman oppression, especially the tribute money; though they made no scruple to rob all the Romans they met with; and when engaged in these unlawful courses, no doubt made afterwards less difference between Jews and Romans, than they at first meant to do.

(1.) The petition; *Father, forgive them*. One would think He should have prayed, 'Father, consume them; the Lord look on, and requite it.' Their sin might justly have been made unpardonable. No, these are particularly *prayed for*. Now He made intercession for transgressors, as was foretold, (Isa. 53: 12.) and it is to be added to his prayer, (John 17.) to complete the specimen He gave of his intercession within the veil; that for saints, this for sinners. But these sayings, as well as his sufferings, had a further reach than they seemed to have. This was a mediatorial word, explicatory of the intent and meaning of his death; 'Father, forgive—not only these, but all that shall repent, and believe the Gospel;' and He did not intend these should be forgiven on other terms. 'Father, I am now suffering and dying, that sinners may be pardoned.' Note, [1.] *The great thing Christ died to purchase and procure for us, is the forgiveness of sin*. [2.] *This is what Christ intercedes for, for all that repent, and believe in the virtue of his satisfaction; his blood speaks this, Father, forgive them*. [3.] *The greatest sinners may, through Christ, on repentance, hope for mercy*. Father, forgive them; though his persecutors and murderers.

(2.) The plea; *They know not what they do, for, had they known, they would not have crucified Him*, 1 Cor. 2: 8. A veil was on his glory and on their understandings; and how could they see through two veils? They wished his blood on them and their children; but had they known what they did, they would have unwished it. Note, [1.] *The crucifiers of Christ know not what they do*. They that speak ill of religion, speak ill of that which they know not, and it is because they will not know it. [2.] *There is a kind of ignorance that in part excuses sin; ignorance through want of the means of knowledge, or of a capacity to receive instruction, or through the infelicities of education*. The crucifiers of Christ were kept in ignorance by their rulers, and had prejudices against Him instilled into them, so that, in what they did against Christ and his doctrine, they thought they did God service, John 16: 2. Such are to be pitied and prayed for. Christ's prayer was not long after answered, when many of those that had a hand in his death, were converted by Peter's preaching.

This is written also for example to us. 1st. We must in prayer call God *Father*, and come to Him with reverence and confidence, as children to a father. 2dly. The great thing we must beg of God, both for ourselves and others, is the forgiveness of sins. 3dly. We must pray for our enemies, and those that hate and persecute us; must extenuate their offences, and not aggravate them, as we must our own; and we must be earnest with God in prayer for the forgiveness of their sins, even against us. This is Christ's example to his own rule, (Matt. 5: 44, 45.) *Love your enemies*; and it very much strengthens the rule, for if Christ loved and prayed for such enemies, what enemies can we have, which we are not obliged to love and pray for?

2. The conversion of the thief on the cross, an illustrious instance of Christ's triumphing over principalities and powers, and when He seemed to be triumphed over by them. In the two thieves were represented the different effects the cross of Christ would have on the children of men, to whom it would be brought near in the preaching of the Gospel. They are all malefactors, all guilty before God. Now the

(36.) *Vinegar*, &c. 'Pasca, a mixture of vinegar and water, a common drink for the Roman soldiers; not the medicated drink of wine and myrrh which was given to intoxicate and benumb, and which Jesus refused, because He would die undisturbed and unaided in his mind.'

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37 And saying, If thou be the King of the Jews, save thyself.

38 And ^a a superscription also was written over him in letters of Greek, and Latin, and Hebrew, **THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

39 [†] And [†] one of the malefactors which were hanged, railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

40 But the other answering, rebuked him, saying, ^a Dost not thou fear God, ^b seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And [†] we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: ^a but this man hath done nothing amiss.

k 3. Matt. 27:11, 37. Mark 15:18, 26, 32. John 19:3, 19-22.
1 Matt. 27:44. Mark 15:32.
m Lev. 19:17. Eph. 5:11.
n 125. Ps. 36:1. Rev. 15:4.
o 2 Chr. 28:22. Jer. 5:3. Jer. 16:11.
p 15:18, 19. Lev. 24:40. 41. Josh. 7:19, 20.
q 2 Chr. 33:12. Ezra 9:13.
Neh. 9:3. Dan. 9:14. Jam. 4:7. 1 John 1:8, 9.
r 47. 22:69, 70. Matt. 27:43, 19:24, 54.
s 1 Pet. 1:18.

Judas, and the preservation of Peter, erects this further trophy of his victory over him.

The case is extraordinary; observe,

[1.] The extraordinary operations of God's grace on him, apparent in what he said. More evidences of a blessed change wrought in him could not have been in a compass so little.

1st. See what He said to the other malefactor, v. 40, 41. 1. He reproved him as destitute of the *fear of God*, and having no sense of religion. This implies that the fear of God restrained him from following the multitude to do this evil, and all whose eyes are opened, see this to be at the bottom of the wickedness of the wicked, that they have not the fear of God before their eyes. 'I thou hast any humanity in thee, thou wouldst not insult over thy Fellow-sufferer; thou too art a *dying man*.' 2. He owns he deserved what was done to him; *We indeed justly*. Probably they both suffered for the same crime, and therefore he spake with the more assurance, *we receive the due reward of our deeds*. This magnifies divine grace, as acting in a distinguishing way. These two had been comrades in sin and suffering, yet one is *saved*, and the other *perishes*; yet now one is *taken* and the other *left*. He does not say, *Thou indeed justly*, but, *We*. Note, True penitents acknowledge the justice of God in all the punishments of their sin. 3. He believes Christ to have suffered *wrongfully*. Though condemned in two courts, and run upon as if He had been the worst of malefactors, yet this penitent thief is convinced, by his conduct in his sufferings, that *He has done nothing amiss*. The chief priest would have Him crucified between the malefactors, as *one of them*; but this thief owns He is *none of them*,—*has done nothing absurd, or unbecoming his character*. Whether he had before heard of Christ and his wondrous works does not appear, but the Spirit of grace enlightened him with this knowledge, and enabled him to say, *This man has done nothing amiss*.

Verses 39-43.

It is in itself improbable that *both* the malefactors reviled; especially as the *penitent* one neither confessed his own guilt *in this particular*, nor assigned any reason for so suddenly altering his opinion, when he rebuked the other. There is no proof that he was at all penitent, even when nailed to the cross. Most of what he had previously heard of Christ, must have been from his enemies; but being a Jew, he probably had some general knowledge of the prophecies concerning the Messiah, and might have heard reports of our Lord's doctrines and miracles. Knowing why Jesus was condemned, and witnessing his present conduct, (v. 34, &c.) he seems to have been led, under the immediate teaching of the Holy Spirit, to believe that He was the promised Messiah, 'the Son of God,' and 'King of Israel,' and perhaps to remember and understand, that He was to be a suffering Redeemer, and be 'led as a lamb to the slaughter.' Fearing God, conscious of deserving eternal condemnation, believing Jesus to be 'the Son of the living God,' and that He certainly would possess the promised kingdom, and have the disposal of eternal life and salvation, he humbly prays, 'remember me when Thou comest into thy kingdom.' Here was evidently the substance, or embryo, of all Christian graces

2dly. See what he said to our Lord, v. 42. *A dying sinner to a dying Savior*. It was the honor of Christ to be *thus prayed to*, though on the cross reproached and reviled; it was the happiness of the thief *thus to pray*; perhaps he never prayed before, and yet now was heard, and saved at the last gasp. While there is life, there is hope; and while there is hope, there is room for prayer.

1. Observe his *faith*. In his confession of sin, (v. 41,) he discovered *repentance toward God*; in this petition, *faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ*. He owns Him to be the Lord, and to have a kingdom, and He was going to it that He should have authority in it, and *tho* those should be happy whom He favors; *to believe and confess* all which at that time was a great thing. Christ was now in the depth of disgrace, deserted by his own disciples, reviled by his own nation, suffering as a pretender, and not delivered by his Father. It was before those prodigies happened which put honor on his sufferings, and which startled the centurion; *verily we have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel*. He believed *another life* after this, and desired to be happy *in that life*, not as the other thief, to be *saved from the cross*, but when the cross had done its worst.

2. Observe his *humility*. All his request is, *Lord, remember me*. He does not pray, *Lord, prefer me*, (as they did, Matt. 20:21,) though, having the honor so as none of the disciples had, to drink of Christ's cup, and to be baptized with his baptism, either on his *right hand* or on his *left* in his sufferings, when his own disciples had deserted him. He might have had some color to ask as they did, to sit on his right hand and on his left in his kingdom; acquaintance in sufferings hath sometimes gained such a point, Jer. 52:31, 32. But he is far from the thought of it; all he begs is, *Lord, remember me*, referring himself to Christ as to the way; it was like Joseph's request to the chief butler, *Think on me*, (Gen. 40:14,) and it sped better; the chief butler forgot Joseph, but Christ remembered this thief.

3. His importunity and fervency. He doth, as it were, breathe out his soul in it; '*Lord, remember me, and I have enough; I desire no more; into thy hands I commit my case*.' Note, Now He is in his kingdom, we should earnestly desire and pray to be remembered by Christ, and it will be enough to secure our welfare, living and dying. Christ is *in his kingdom*, interceding; '*Lord, remember me, and intercede for me*.' He is there, ruling; '*Lord, remember me, and rule in me by thy Spirit*.' He is there, preparing palaces for those that are his; '*Lord, remember me, and prepare a place for me; remember me at death, remember me in the resurrection*.' See Job 14:13.

[2.] Christ's extraordinary favor to him; *Jesus said*, in answer to his prayer, '*Verily I say unto thee, I the Amen, the faithful Witness, I say Amen to this prayer, put thy fiat to it: nay, thou shalt have more than thou didst ask. This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise*,' v. 43. Observe,

1st. To whom this was spoken: to the penitent thief, not to his companion. Christ on the cross is like Christ on the throne: for *now* is the judgment of this world, one departs with a curse, the other with a blessing. Though

which would have expanded into all the actions of a holy life, had time been allowed. Perhaps he actually more honored Christ in this short space, than many do who live a number of years to profess faith in Him. Accordingly our Lord assured him, that that day, before the setting of the sun, when the Jewish day ended, he should enter with Him into a state of happiness. Thus He communicated life when in the very agonies of death. This was doubtless intended as the grand display of the Redeemer's power and grace, in the view of numberless invisible spectators; and for the instruction of mankind, in all future ages, about those things which relate to the freedom and sovereignty of His mercy, the efficacy of His atoning blood, and the omnipotence of His saving arm. It is a single instance, an act of grace, well suited to honor the extraordinary occasion which once occurred, but never can again occur; teaching us to despair of none, and that none ought to despair of themselves; but yet checking presumption, and showing, by contrast with the case of the other thief, that *in general men die as they live*.

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(40.) 'One example of this late repentance is afforded us, lest any one should despair, and one only, lest any one should presume.'

PFLOMFIELD.

3. Christ used these words in a sense peculiar to Himself as Mediator. He was now to *make his soul an offering for our sin*, (Isa. 53: 10.) to *give his life a ransom for many*, (Matt. 20: 28.) by the *eternal Spirit to offer Himself*, Heb. 9: 14. He was Himself both the Priest and Sacrifice; our souls were forfeited, and his must redeem the forfeiture. The price must be paid *into the hands of God*, the Party offended by sin; to Him He had undertaken to make full satisfaction. Now by these words He *offered up the Sacrifice*, laid his hand, as it were, on the head of it, and surrendered it; 'I deposit it, I pay it into thy hands. Father, accept my life and soul instead of the lives and souls of the sinners I die for.' *The good will of the Offerer* was requisite to the accept-

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46 And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.

47 Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.

43 And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done, smote their breasts, and returned.

49 And all his acquaintance, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.

50 ¶ And, behold, there was a man named Joseph, a counselor; and he was a good man, and a just:

51 (The same had not consented to the counsel and deed of them:) he was of Arimathea, a city of the Jews; who also himself waited for the kingdom of God.

52 This man went unto Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus.

53 And he took it down, and wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, where in never man before was laid.

54 And that day was the preparation, and the sabbath drew on.

55 And the women also, which came with him from Galilee, followed after, and beheld the sepulchre, and how his body was laid.

56 And they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the sabbath-day, according to the commandment.

c Matt. 27:46-49. Mark 15:34-36.
d Pa 31.5. Acts 7:59. 1 Pet. 2:23.
e Matt. 27:50. Mark 15:37. John 19:30.

ance of the Offering. Christ here expresses his cheerful willingness to offer Himself, as when it was first proposed to Him, (Heb. 10: 9, 10.) *Lo, I come to do thy will, by the which will we are sanctified.*

4. Christ hereby signifies his dependence on his Father for his resurrection, the reunion of soul and body. He commends his spirit into his Father's hand, to be received into paradise, and returned the third day. By this it appears that our Lord, as He had a true body, so He had a reasonable soul, which existed in a state of separation from the body, and thus He was like his brethren; this soul He committed to his Father's custody, resting in hope that it should not be left in *hades*, in its state of separation from the body, nor, not so long as that the body might see corruption.

5. Christ hath hereby left us an example, fitted those words of David to the purpose of dying saints, and, as it were, sanctified them for their use. In death our great care should be for our souls, and we cannot more effectually provide for their welfare, than by committing them now into the hands of God as a Father, to be sanctified and governed by his Spirit and grace; and at death by committing them into his hands, to be made perfect in holiness and happiness. We must show we are freely willing to die, that we firmly believe another life after this, and are desirous of it, by saying, *Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.*

III. Christ's dying improved by the impressions made on those that attended Him.

1. The centurion that commanded the guard, was much affected, v. 47. He was a Roman, a Gentile, a stranger to the consolations of Israel, yet glorified God. He never saw such amazing instances of divine power, and therefore took occasion thence to adore God as the Almighty. And he bore a testimony to the patient Sufferer; 'Certainly this was a righteous Man, unjustly put to death. God's manifesting his power so much to do Him honor, was a plain evidence of his innocence. His testimony in Matthew and Mark goes further; *Truly, this was the Son of God.* But in this case this amounts to the same; for if He was a righteous Man, He said very truly when he said that *He was the Son of God*; and therefore that testimony of his concerning Himself must be admitted; for if it were false, He was not a righteous man.

2. The disinterested spectators could not but be concerned. This is noticed here only, (v. 48.) *All the people that came together to that sight*, as usual on such occasions, *beholding the things done*, could not but go away very serious for the time, whatever they were when they came home; *They smote their breasts, and returned.* (1.) They laid the thing very much to heart for the present. They looked on it as a wicked thing, to put Him to death, and could not but think that some judgment of God would come on their nation for it. Probably, those very people were of them that cried, *Crucify Him, crucify Him*, and, when nailed to the cross, reviled and blasphemed Him; but now they were so terrified with the darkness and earthquake, and the uncommon manner of his expiring, that not only were their mouths stopped, but their consciences startled, and, in remorse for what they had done, *they smote upon their breasts.* Some think this a happy step toward that good work afterward wrought on

f 41. Matt. 27:54. Mark 15:39. John 19:7.
g 19:13. Jer. 31:19. Acts 2:37.
h Job 19:13. Ps. 38:11. 88:18.
i 1 Pet. 2:21. Matt. 27:55, 56, 61.
k Mark 15:40, 41. John 19:25-27.
l Matt. 27:57, 58. Mark 15:42-45.

them, when they were pricked to the heart, Acts 2: 37. (2.) Yet, it should seem, the impression soon wore off; *They smote their breasts, and returned.* They showed no further token of respect to Christ, nor inquired more concerning Him, but went home, and, we have reason to fear, in a little time quite forgot it. Thus many that see Christ evidently set forth crucified among them, in the Word and sacraments, are a little affected, but it does not continue; they smite their breasts, and return. They see Christ's face in the glass of ordinances, and admire Him; but go away, and straightway forget what manner of Man He is, and what reason they have to love Him.

3. His own friends and followers were forced to keep their distance, and yet came as near as they durst, to see what was done; (v. 49.) *All that knew Him, and were known of Him, stood afar off*, for fear lest, had they been near Him, they should have been taken up as favorites of Him; this was part of his sufferings, as of Job's, (ch. 19: 13.) *He has put my brethren far from me, and mine acquaintance are verily estranged from me.* Ps. 88:18. And the women that followed Him together from Galilee were beholding these things, not knowing what to think of them, nor ready, as they should have been, to take them for certain preludes of his resurrection. Now was Christ set for a Sign that should be spoken against, as Simeon foretold, that the thoughts of many hearts might be revealed, ch. 2: 34, 35.

V. 50-56. Here is an account of Christ's burial. Observe,

1. Who buried Him. His acquaintance stood afar off; but God raised up one, (v. 50.) a man of unsponsored reputation; not only just to all, but good, a person of distinction, a counselor, a senator, a member of the sanhedrim, one of the elders of the Jewish church; and who, though of that body of men who had put Christ to death, yet entered his protest against it, v. 51. Note, That evil counsel and deed we have not consented to, shall not be reckoned our act. Nay, he not only dissented openly from Christ's enemies, but consented secretly with Christ's friends; *He himself waited for the kingdom of God*; he believed the Old-Testament prophecies of the Messiah and his kingdom, and expected their accomplishment. This man appears on this occasion to have had a true respect for Jesus. Note, Many who do not make any show in their outward profession of it, are yet hearty in Christ's interests, and more ready to do Him real service, on occasion, than others who make a greater figure and noise.

2. What he did toward his burial. (1.) *He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus*, for it was at his disposal; though he might have raised a party sufficient to carry it off by violence, yet he would take the regular course, and do it peaceably. (2.) *He took it down*, it should seem, with his own hands, and wrapped it in linen. They tell us that it was the manner of the Jews, (and that the word here used signifies so much,) to roll the bodies of the dead as we do little children in swaddling clothes; so that the piece of fine linen which he bought whole, he cut into many pieces for that purpose. It is said of Lazarus, *He was bound hand and foot*, John 11: 44.

3. Where He was buried; *in a sepulchre hewn in stone*, that the prison of the grave might

q Is. 53:9. Matt. 27:59, 60. Mark 15:46.
r Matt. 27:62. John 19:41, 42.
s 49. 52. Matt. 27:61. Mark 15:47.
t 24:1. 2 Chr 16:14. Mark 16:1.
u Ex. 20:8-10. 31:14. 35:2, 3. Is. 58:13-14. Jer. 17:24, 25.

Verses 50-56

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 27: 57-61. Mark 15:42-47. v. 43, 44. John 19: 38-42. (54.) *The sabbath, &c.*) Literally, 'the Sabbath dayne 1,' yet the close of the sixth day, and the beginning of the seventh, in the evening, is evidently meant. (55.) *Rested, &c.* Even the embalming of Christ was not absolutely a work of urgent necessity, as to authorities, in the just judgment of these women, the interruption of the hallowed rest of the Sabbath. How unscriptural and injurious is the too general custom, whether to accommodate the priest or the people, of making the Lord's day the chosen time of funerals! by which numbers are kept from the worship of God, either as concerned, or as curious spectators, and much positive evil is occasioned. (Marg. Ref. n.)

Scott.

(49.) *The women, &c.* 'The frequent mention in the evangelists of the generous and courageous zeal of some pious women in serving Christ, especially their faithful and resolute constancy in attending Him in these last scenes of suffering, might be intended to obviate that haughty and senseless contempt, which the pride of men, often irritated by those vexations to which their own irregular passions have exposed them, has in all ages affected to throw on that sex, which probably, in the sight of God, constitute by far the better half of mankind, and to whose care and tenderness the wisest and best of men generally owe and ascribe much of the daily comfort and enjoyment of their lives.'

CHAP. XXIV.

Two angels inform the women at the sepulchre, that Jesus is risen, 1-7. They report it to the others, but are not believed, 8-11. Peter goes to the sepulchre, 12. Jesus appears as a stranger, to two disciples when going to Emmaus; converses with them, explains the Scriptures, and then discovers Himself, but disappears, 13-35. They return, and report it to the eleven, who inform them that Jesus had appeared to Simon, 33-35. He joins the company, shows them his hands and his side, and eats with them, 36-43. He reminds them of his words concerning his suffering and resurrection, 'opens their understandings,' interprets the Scriptures, and commissions them to preach his Gospel to the nations, beginning at Jerusalem, 44-48. He promises the Holy Spirit, leads them forth to Bethany, blesses them, and ascends into heaven, 49-51. They worship Him with joy, and praise God at the temple continually, 52, 53.

NOW upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.

2 And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.

3 And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

5 And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

6 He is not here, but is risen: remember

he made strong; as the church, when brought into darkness, had her way inclosed with heaven stone, 1am. 3: 2, 9. In a sepulchre in which never man before was laid, for He was buried as was never any one before, only in order to his rising again the third day by his own power; and He was to triumph over the grave as never man did.

4. When He was buried, p. 54: They made such haste with the funeral, because the Sabbath drew on, which required their attendance on other duties, preparatory to it. Note, Weeping must not hinder sowing. Though in tears for the death of Christ, yet they must apply themselves to the sanctifying of the Sabbath. And when the Sabbath draws on, there must be preparation. Worldly affairs must be so ordered, as not to hinder sabbath-work; and our holy affections so excited, as to carry us on in it.

5. Who attended the funeral; only the women that came with Him from Galilee, (p. 55.) who, as they staid by Him while on the cross, so they followed Him, and beheld the sepulchre where it was, the way to it, and how his body was laid in it. They were led to this, not by curiosity, but by their affection to Jesus, strong as death, and which many waters could not quench. Here was a silent funeral, and not a ceremonious one, yet his rest was glorious.

6. The preparation made to embalm the body after burial; (p. 56.) which was more an evidence of their love than of their faith; for had they remembered and believed what He had so often told them, that He should rise again the third day, they would have spared their cost and pains herein, as knowing that in a short time his body would be more honored by the glory of his resurrection, than now with their most precious ointments; but busy as they were in this preparation, they rested on the sabbath-day, and did none of this servile work thereon, not according to the custom of their nation, but according to the commandment of their God, which, though the day be altered, is still in full force; Remember the sabbath-day, to keep it holy.

CHAP. XXIV. v. 1-12. Our Lord Jesus went gloriously down to death, in spite of the malice of his enemies, who did all they could to make his death ignominious; but He rose again more gloriously; of which we have an account in this chapter; and the proofs and evidences of Christ's resurrection are more fully related by this evangelist, than by Matthew and Mark. The manner of the re-uniting of Christ's soul and body in his resurrection, is a mystery, one of the secret things that belong not to us; but the infallible proofs of his resurrection, that He did indeed rise from the dead, and was thereby proved to be the Son of God, are things revealed, which belong to us, and to our children; some of them we have here:

I. The affection and respect the good women had that followed Christ, showed Him, after He was dead and buried, p. 1. As soon as ever they could, after the Sabbath, they came to embalm his body, not to take it out of the linen, but to anoint the head and face, and perhaps the wounded hands and feet, and to scatter sweet

spices on and about the body; as it is usual with us to strew flowers about the dead bodies and graves of our friends, only to show our good will toward taking off the deformity of death; if we could, and to make them somewhat the less loathsome to those that are about them. The zeal of those good women for Christ continued; the spices which they had prepared the evening before the Sabbath, at a great expense, they did not, upon second thoughts, dispose of otherwise, suggesting, To what purpose is this waste? But they brought them to the sepulchre on the morning after the Sabbath, early, very early. It is a rule of charity, Every man according as he purposes in his heart, so let him give, 2 Cor. 9: 7. What is prepared for Christ, let it be used for Him. Notice is taken of the names of these women, Mary Magdalene and Joanna, and Mary, the mother of James; a brave, matronly women. Notice is also taken of certain others with them, (p. 1.) and again, p. 17. These that had not joined in preparing the spices, would yet go along with them to the sepulchre; as if the number of Christ's friends increased when He was dead, John 12: 24-32. The daughters of Jerusalem, when they saw how inquisitive the spouse was after her Beloved, were desirous to seek Him with her; (Cant. 6: 1.) so were these other women. The zeal of some provokes others.

II. Their surprise on finding the stone rolled away, and the grave empty; (p. 2, 3.) they were much perplexed at that, (p. 4.) in which they had much reason to rejoice. Note, Good Christians often perplex themselves about that which should comfort and encourage them.

III. The account they had of Christ's resurrection, from two angels. They first saw one angel without the sepulchre, who presently went in, and sat with another angel in the sepulchre, one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain; so the evangelists may be reconciled.

The women, when they saw the angels, were afraid lest they had some ill news for them; but, instead of inquiring, they looked for the Master in the grave. A dying Jesus has more beauty in the eyes of a believer than angels themselves. These women, like the spouse when found by the watchmen, (and angels are called watchers,) enter not into any other conversation with them, than, Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth? Now here,

1. They upbraid the women with the absurdity of their search, p. 5. Witness is hereby given to Christ, that He is living, of Him it is witnessed, that He liveth, (Heb. 7: 8.) and it is the comfort of all the saints, I know that my Redeemer liveth; for because He lives we shall live also. But a reproof is given to those that look for Him among the dead, as if He were but like one of the dead heroes the Gentiles worshipped; that look for Him in an image, or a crucifix, the work of men's hands, or among unwritten traditions, and the inventions of men. And indeed all they that expect happiness and satisfaction in the creature, or perfection in this imperfect state, may be said to seek the living among the dead.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 44-56. Let us come unto Jesus without delay, approaching the throne of grace, through his atoning blood and prevailing intercession; that when we die, we may by his light pass through that scene, which to unbelievers is encompassed with inexpressible darkness and horror. Let us not content ourselves with superficial views; but seek to glorify God by repentance and conversion; by a sober, righteous, godly life; and by filling up our stations in the community, and employing all our

talents, in the service of Him, who died for us and rose again. Finally, in whatever business we engage, or however our hearts may be affected; nay, whatever be the claim of the most revered and beloved relatives and friends, living or deceased; unless it clearly amount to an act of necessity, piety, or mercy, we should never omit to prepare for the day of sacred rest, and keep it holy, according to the commandment of our God and Savior. (Is. 58: 13, 14.)

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NOTES.

CHAP. XXIV. v. 1-9. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, 23: 50-56. Matt. 28: 1-8. Mark 16: 1-8. John 20: 1-17.) (4.) Two, &c.] Mary Magdalene and the other Mary saw only one angel in white, sitting on the stone, which had rolled from the door of the sepulchre; but the women here mentioned saw no angel till they had entered the sepulchre, when two appeared to them, in garments shining as lightning; for so the word signifies. Probably, two distinct events are intended. (Note, John 20: 10.) (5.) Bowed.] As afraid of looking on the angels, or dazzled with the glory of their appearance. Living.] Or, 'in a living flesh.' (Marg. and Ref.—Notes, John 14: 18-20, p. 19. Rom. 14: 7-9. Rev. 1: 12-20, p. 18.) The sepulchre was a place for the dead, though none had before been buried there. (6.) How

He spake.] The familiar manner, in which the angel speaks of what passed between Jesus and them in Galilee, seems to intimate that he had been present, though invisible, and heard what Jesus said. Doddridge.

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(5.) Bowed down, &c.] The words do not intimate their prostrating themselves before the angels, but a respectful and reverential declining their heads, and looking downward, that they might not appear to gaze, which is well known to have been forbidden to the Jews, upon the sight of a celestial vision. Ex. 19: 21. Job. 13: 20. Doddridge.

(6.) Why seek ye the living among the dead? A popular adage as appears from the rabbinical citations in Lighfoot and Westcott. It also occurs in Plautus. Bloomfield.

how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee,

7 Saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.

8 And ^h they remembered his words,

9 And ⁱ returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest.

10 It was ^k Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles.

11 And their words seemed to them as ^l idle tales, and they believed them not.

12 Then ^m arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre; and, stooping down, he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass.

[Practical Observations.]

13 ¶ And, behold, ⁿ two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs.

14 And ^o they talked together of all these things which had happened.

15 And it came to pass, that while they communed ^p together,

2. They assure them He is risen from the dead, v. 6. These angels were competent witnesses, having been sent express from heaven with orders for his discharge. And we are sure that their record is true.

3. They refer them to his own words, v. 6. Had they duly believed and observed the prediction of it, they would easily have believed the thing itself when it came to pass; and therefore, that the tidings might not be such a surprise as it seemed, he repeats what Christ had often said, in their hearing; (v. 7.) and though He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, yet they that did it, were not the less sinful for doing it; He told them that He *must be crucified*; surely they could not forget that which they had with so much concern seen fulfilled; and would not that bring to mind what always followed, *The third day He shall rise again*? Observe, These angels bring not any *new Gospel*, but put them in mind, as the angels of the churches do, of the sayings of Christ, and teach them how to improve and apply them.

IV. Their satisfaction in this account, v. 8. The women seemed to acquiesce; and concluded that if He were risen, it was no more than they had reason to expect; and now, they were ashamed of their preparations to embalm Him on the third day, who had often said that He would on the third day rise again. Note, A reasonable remembrance of the words of Christ will help us to a right understanding of his providence.

V. Their report to the apostles, v. 9. One went to some, and another to others of them, so that in a little time, that morning, they got them all notice of it. But we are told, (v. 11.) how the report was received. They thought it was only the fancy of the women, for they also wanted to be put in mind of Christ's words, not only what He had said in Galilee some time ago, but very lately in the night wherein He was betrayed, *Again a little while, and ye shall see Me. I will see you again*. One might be amazed at the stupidity of these disciples, who had themselves so often professed that they believed Christ to be the Son of God, and the true Messiah, had been so often told that He must die, and rise again, and then enter into his glory, and had seen Him more than once raise the dead, that they should be so backward to believe his raising Himself; surely it would seem the less strange to them, (when hereafter this complaint would justly be taken up by them,) to remember that there was a time when it might justly have been taken up against them, *Who hath believed our report*?

VI. Peter's inquiry hereupon, v. 12. Mary Magdalene brought the report to him, as appears in John 20: 1, 2, where this story, of his running to the sepulchre, is more particularly related. 1. Peter hastened to the sepulchre, on the report; ashamed, probably, that she should have been there before him; and yet, perhaps, he had not been so ready to go thither now, if she had not told him, among other things, that *the watch was fled*. Many that are *swift-footed* enough when there is no danger, are but *faint-hearted* when there is. 2. He looked into the

sepulchre, and was very particular in making his observations, as if he would rather credit his own eyes, than the testimony of the angels. 3. He went away, as he thought, not much the wiser, v. 12. Had he remembered the words of Christ, even this was enough to satisfy him that He was risen from the dead; but, having forgotten them, he is only amazed with the thing, and knows not what to make of it. Many a thing is puzzling and perplexing, which would be both plain and profitable, did we but rightly understand the words of Christ, and had them ready to us.

V. 13—35. This appearance of Christ to *two disciples* going to Emmaus, just mentioned before, (Mark 16: 12.) is here largely related. It happened the same day Christ rose. One of these two disciples was *Cleopas*, or *Alpheus*, said by the ancients to be the brother of Joseph, Christ's supposed father; the other, some think, was Peter; it should seem, indeed, Christ did appear particularly to Peter that day, v. 34. and 1 Cor. 15: 5. But Peter could not be one of the *two*, for he was one of the *eleven* to whom the *two* returned; and besides, had he been one of the *two*, he and not Cleopas would have been the *chief speaker*. It was one of those associated with the eleven, v. 9.

Now observe here,

I. The *walk and talk* of those two disciples. Emmaus is reckoned about two hours' walk, or seven measured miles, (v. 13.) from Jerusalem. Why they went thither, does not appear. I suspect they were going home to Galilee, with an intention not to inquire more after this Jesus and without asking or taking leave of their company; for the accounts brought them that morning of their Master's resurrection, seemed to them as *idle tales*; and if so, no wonder they began to think of making the best of their way home.

But, as they travelled, they *talked together of all these things which had happened*, v. 14. They had not courage to *confer*, and *consult* what was to be done at Jerusalem; but when out of the hearing of the Jews, they could, and did talk with more freedom; reasoning with themselves concerning the probabilities of Christ's resurrection; for, according as these appeared, they would either go forward, or return. Note, It well becomes Christ's disciples, when together, to talk of his death and resurrection; thus they may improve their knowledge, refresh their memory, and stir up each other's devout affections.

II. The good company they met with on the road, when Jesus Himself came, and joined Himself to them, v. 15. Perhaps they were warm in argument, one hoping their Master was risen, and would set up his kingdom, the other despairing. *Jesus drew near*, as a stranger, who seeing them travel the same way *He went*, told them *He should be glad of their company*.

We may observe it, for our encouragement to keep up Christian discourse, that where but two together do so, Christ will come to them, and make a third. When they that fear the Lord, *speak one to another*, the Lord *hearkens and hears*, and is with them of a truth; so that two, thus united in faith and love, become a

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12. The Lord 'loveth those who love Him, and they who seek Him early shall find Him.'—All our mistakes in religion spring from ignorance or forgetfulness of the Word of God: and our judgments will be rectified, when we call to remembrance, and are enabled to understand, what He has revealed and promised.—Even where a measure of faith and

grace are found, how unbelieving are men! not only in those things which are contrary to their prejudices, but in those also that are above their experience, or expectation. Yet a diligent spirit of inquiry will gradually lead to a more clear perceptor of spiritual things. (P. O. Matt. 28: 1—10. Mark 16: 1—11.)

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Verses 10—12.

Luke gives no intimation that these women saw Jesus Himself, in the way to the city; as the women mentioned by Matthew did. (Marg. Ref.—Note, Matt. 28: 9, 10.) This confirms the supposition, that the women did not go to the sepulchre all in one company; that they returned at several times, and by different ways; and that some of them were at the sepulchre more than once. Peter, who is supposed to have been with John at the sepulchre before this, (Note, John 20: 1—10.) fearing that the women had seen angels, who declared that Jesus was alive, went again to the sepulchre, probably expecting to see the angels, and perhaps with some feeble hope of seeing Jesus also; yet he departed, 'wondering in himself at these things, and saying nothing of them to others.

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(10.) *Joanna*.] 'Griesbach thinks it was from this person Luke derived his information of these circumstances, which he also records. She is not mentioned except by Luke here, and in ch. 8: 3, whence one may conjecture she was known to him.'

BLOOMFIELD.

Verses 13—24.

Cleopas is supposed to be the same with Alpheus, the father of two apostles, and also nearly related to our Lord Himself. (13. Mark 2: 14, 3: 18. John 19: 25.) Many conjecture that Luke himself was the other; but of this there is no intimation, nor indeed probability. (Preface to Luke.) This account seems to imply, that these disciples came away before the women 'who had seen Jesus' returned to the apostles; though some think the contrary is intimated in the expression, 'Him they saw not;' which may signify, that the women

and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them;

16 But their eyes were hidden, that they should not know him.

17 And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?

18 And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days?

19 And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word, before God and all the people:

20 And how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him.

p 38. Matt. 18:20 John 14:18, 19
q 31. 2 Kings 6:18-20, Mark 16:12, John 20:14, 21:4.
r Ez. 9:4-6. John 16:5, 20-22.
s John 19:25.
t 7:16. Matt. 21:14. John 6:14. 7:40-42, 52. Acts 2:22. 10:38.
u Acts 7:22.
v 22:66-71. 23:1-5. Matt. 27:1, 2, 20. Mark 15:1-5. Acts 3:13-15. 4:8-10, 27, 38. 5:30, 31. 13:27-29.

Note, 1st. It becomes Christians to talk of Christ. Were our hearts as full of Him, and of what He has done and suffered for us, as they should be, out of the abundance of the heart the mouth would speak, not only of God and his providence, but of Christ, and his grace and love. 2dly. Good company, and good converse, are an excellent antidote against prevailing melancholy. When Christ's disciples were sad, they did not each one get by himself, but continued as He sent them out, two and two, for two are better than one, especially in times of sorrow. Giving vent to the grief, may perhaps give ease to the grieved; and, by talking it over, we may talk ourselves, or our friends may talk us, into a better frame. Joint-mourners should be mutual comforters; comforts sometimes come best from such.

(2.) Christ came up, and inquired into the matter of their talk, and the cause of their grief, v. 17. Though now entered into his state of exaltation, yet He continued tender of his disciples. He speaks as one troubled to see their melancholy; *Wherefore look ye so sadly to-day?* Gen. 40:7. Note, Our Lord notices the sorrow and sadness of his disciples, and is afflicted in their afflictions. Christ hereby taught us to be conversable. He here fell in to discourse with two grave, serious persons, and though a stranger to them, and they knew Him not, they readily embraced Him. It does not become Christians to be morose and shy, but to take pleasure in good society. We are hereby taught to be compassionate. When we see our friends in sorrow and sadness, we should give them the best counsel and comfort we can; *Weep with them that weep.*

2. In answer, they put a question to Him concerning his strangeness; v. 18. Observe,

(1.) Cleopas gave Him a civil answer. Note, We ought to be civil to those who are civil to us, and to conduct ourselves obligingly to all, both in word and deed. It was a dangerous time now with Christ's disciples; yet Cleopas was not jealous of this Stranger, that He had any design to inform against them, or bring them into trouble. Charity is not forward to think evil, no, not of strangers.

(2.) He is full of Christ himself, of his death and sufferings, and wonders very body else is not so too. Note, Those are strangers indeed in Jerusalem, that know not of the death and sufferings of Christ. What! are they

threefold cord, not easily broken, Eccl. 4:12. They, in their communings and reasonings, were searching for Christ, and now Christ comes to them. Note, They who seek Christ shall find Him: He will give knowledge to those who use the helps for knowledge which they have. When the spouse inquired of the watchmen concerning her Beloved, it was but a little that she passed from them, but she found Him. Cant. 3:4.

But though they had Christ with them, they were not at first aware of it, v. 16. It should seem, there were both an alteration of the object, (for it is said in Mark, that now He appeared in another form,) and a restraint on the organ; for here it is said, *their eyes were held by a divine power*; or, as some think, there was a confusion in the medium; the air was so disposed, they could not discern who it was. No matter how, but so it was, they did not know Him; Christ so ordering it, that they might the more freely discourse with Him, and He with them; and that it might appear that his Word, and the influence of it, did not depend on his bodily presence, which the disciples had too much doted on, and must be weaned from; but He could teach them, and warm their hearts, by others, who should have his spiritual presence with them, and his grace going along with them unseen.

III. The conference between Christ and them, when He knew them, and they knew not Him.

1. Christ's first question is concerning their present sadness, which plainly appeared in their countenances, v. 17. It is a very kind and friendly inquiry. Observe,

(1.) They were sad; it appeared to a stranger they were so. [1.] They had lost their dear Master, and were, in their own apprehensions, quite disappointed in their expectations from Him. They had given up the cause, and knew not what course to take to retrieve it. Note, Christ's disciples have reason to be sad when He withdraws from them; to fast when the Bridegroom is taken from them. [2.] Though He was risen from the dead, yet either they did not know it, or did not believe it, and so were still in sorrow. Note, Christ's disciples are often sad and sorrowful, even when they have reason to rejoice; through the weakness of their faith they cannot take the comfort offered them. [3.] Being sad, they had communications one with another concerning Christ.

daughters of Jerusalem, and yet so little acquainted with Christ, as to ask, *What is He Beloved more than another beloved?*

(3.) He is very willing to inform this stranger concerning Christ, and to draw on further discourse with him on this subject. He would not have any one, that had the face of a man, to be ignorant of Christ. Note, Those who have themselves the knowledge of Christ crucified, should do what they can to spread that knowledge, and lead others into an acquaintance with Him. And it is observable, These Disciples, that were so forward to instruct the Stranger, were instructed by Him; for to him that has, and uses what he has, shall be given.

(4.) It appears, by what Cleopas says, that the death of Christ made a great noise in Jerusalem, so that it could not be imagined that any man should be such a stranger in the city, as not to know of it; it was discoursed of in all companies. Thus the matter of fact came to be universally known, which, after the pouring out of the Spirit, was to be explained.

3. Christ, by way of reply, asked concerning their knowledge; (v. 19.) thus making Himself yet more a stranger. Observe,

(1.) Christ made light of his own sufferings, in comparison with the joy set before Him, which was the recompense of it. Now that He was entering on his glory, see with what unconcern He looks back on his sufferings; *What things?* He had reason to know what things; for to Him they were bitter things, and heavy things, and yet He asks, *What things?* The sorrow was forgotten; He took pleasure in infirmities for our sakes, to teach us to do so for his sake.

(2.) Those whom Christ will teach, He will first examine; they must tell Him *what things* they know, and then He will tell them the meaning, and lead them into the mystery of them.

4. Observe the story they tell, v. 19, &c. They give,

(1.) A summary of Christ's life and character. They are full of the things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, (so He was commonly called,) who was a Prophet, a Teacher come from God. He preached a true and excellent doctrine, which had manifestly its rise from, and a tendency toward heaven; He confirmed it by many glorious miracles of mercy, so that He was mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; that is, He was both a great favorite of heaven, and a great blessing to men. Many, as the scribes and Pharisees, are great before all the people, and caressed by them, who are not so before God; but Christ was, before both, mighty in doctrine and doings. Those were strangers in Jerusalem, that did not know this.

(2.) A modest narrative of his sufferings and death, v. 20. It is strange that they did not aggravate the matter more, and lay more load on those that had been guilty of crucifying Christ; but perhaps because they spake to one that was a stranger, they thought it prudence to avoid all reflection on the chief priests and their rulers, how just soever.

(3.) An intimation of their disappointment, as the reason of their sadness, v. 21. 'We are of those who not only looked upon Him to be a Prophet, like Moses, but, like him, a Redeemer too; He was depended on, and great things expected from Him, by them that looked for redemption, and the consolation of Israel.' Now, if hope deferred makes the heart sick, hope disappointed, especially such a hope, kills the heart. But see how they made that the ground of their despair, which, if they had understood it aright, was the surest ground of their hope—the dying of the Lord Jesus, v. 21. And is it not He that doth redeem Israel? Nay, is He not by his death paying the price of their redemption? Was it not necessary, in order to his saving Israel from their sins, that He should suffer? So that, now that most difficult part of his undertaking was got over, they had more

reported that they had seen Him; but that the disciples thought it was only the appearance of an angel in his form. (Acts 12:15.) 'But why would not Christ be as yet known by them? That they might

more unreservedly express their sentiments; and that they might now rest on the bare authority of a Teacher, but on the arguments which He was about to produce.' Beza.

Scott.

21 But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and, beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done.

22 Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre:

23 And when they found not his body, they came, saying, That they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive.

24 And certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not.

25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!

26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

27 And, beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

v 1:58. 2:38. Ps. 130:8. Is. 59:20.
1 Pet. 1:18, 19. Rev. 5:9.
e 5:11. Matt. 26:7, 8. Mark 16:9, 10.
John 20:1, 2.
a 12: John 20:1-10.
b Mark 7:18. 8:17, 18. 9:19. 16:14.
c Heb. 5:11, 12.
d Ps. 22: 69^a Is. 53: Zech. 13:7.
e 1 Cor. 15:3, 4. Heb. 2:8-10. 1 Pet. 1:11.
f 44. Gen. 3:15. 22:18. 49:10. Num. 24:9. Deut. 18:15 John 5:39, 45.
g 47. Acts 3:22. 7:37.
h 28. Ps. 16:10. 132:11. Is. 7:14. 9:6, 7. 40:10, 11. 50:6. 52:13, 14. 53: Jer. 23:5, 6. 33:14, 15. Ez. 34:23, 27, 28. Dan. 9:24-26. Mic 5:2-4. Zech. 9:9. 13:7. Mal. 3:1-3. 4:2. John 1:45. Acts 3:24. 10:43. 13:27.
i 30. 28:23. Rev. 19:10.

read the fifty-third of Isaiah, speak so very plainly of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow? 1 Pet. 11. The cross of Christ was what they could not reconcile themselves to; now here He shows them two things, which take off its offence; 1st. That the Messiah ought to suffer these things; and therefore his sufferings were not only no objection against his being the Messiah, but really a proof of it, as the afflictions of the saints are an evidence of their sonship. Christ's undertaking of our salvation was voluntary; but, having undertaken it, it was necessary He should suffer and die. 2dly. That, when He had suffered these things, He should enter into his glory; which He did at his resurrection, that was his first step upward. Observe, It is called his glory; because He was *duly* entitled to it; and had it before the world was; He ought to enter into it, for in that, as in his sufferings, the Scripture must be fulfilled. He ought to suffer first, and then to enter into his glory; and thus the reproach of the cross is forever rolled away; and we are directed to expect the crown of thorns, and then that of glory.

Verses 25-31.

What a sermon this! where all the prophecies relative to the incarnation, birth, teaching, miracles, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the blessed Jesus were adduced, illustrated, and applied to Himself, by an appeal to the well known facts of his life! We are almost irresistibly impelled to exclaim, What a pity this discourse had not been preserved! Dr. A. Clarke. (25.) Fools, &c. (Rom. 1:14. Gal. 3:1, 3.) The word thus translated, (Matt. 5:22.) is a term of great indignation, and sometimes of attempt; that employed here, a

reason than ever to trust, that this is He that shall deliver Israel; yet they are ready to give up the cause.

(4.) An account of their present amazement, with reference to his resurrection. [1.] 'This is the third day since He was crucified and died, and that was the day, when it was expected, if ever, that He should rise again, and rise in glory and outward pomp, and show Himself as publicly in honor as He had been shown three days before in disgrace; but we see no sign of it; nothing appears as we expected, but all is silent.' [2.] They own that there was a report among them, that He was risen, but they seem to speak of it very slightly, and as what they gave no credit at all to, v. 22, 23. [3.] They acknowledge some of the apostles had made a visit to the sepulchre, and found it empty, (v. 24.) 'But Him they saw not, and therefore we have reason to fear He is not risen, for if He were, surely He would have showed Himself to them; so, on the whole, we have no great reason to think He is risen, and therefore have no expectations from Him now.'

(5.) Our Lord, though not known by face, makes Himself known to them by his word.

[1.] He reproves their incognitancy, and the weakness of their faith in the Old Testament, v. 25. Christ called them fools, not as it signifies wicked men, in which sense He forbade it us, but as it signifies weak men. He might call them fools, for He knows our foolishness. They are fools, that act against their own interest; so they did, who would not admit the comforting evidence that their Master was risen. Their foolishness is, 1st. Their slowness to believe. Believers are branded as fools by atheists and infidels, and their most holy faith is censured as a fond credulity; but Christ tells us those are fools, who are kept from believing by prejudices never impartially examined. 2dly. Their slowness to believe the writings of the prophets. He does not so much blame them for their slowness to believe the testimony of the women and of the angels, but for that which was the cause thereof—their slowness to believe the prophets; for if they had given the prophets of the Old Testament their due weight and consideration, they would have been as sure of Christ's rising from the dead that morning, (being the third day after his death,) as they were of the rising of the sun; for the series and succession of events as settled by prophecy, are no less certain and inviolable than as settled by Providence; were we but more conversant with the Scripture, and the divine counsels as there made known, we should not be subject to such perplexities as we often entangle ourselves in.

[2.] He shows them that the sufferings of Christ, which were such a stumbling-block to them, were really the only appointed way to his glory, v. 26. 'Was it not decreed, and the decree declared, that the promised Messiah must first suffer, and then reign? that He must go by his cross to his crown?' Had they never seen the ninth of Daniel, where the prophets

[3.] He expounded to them the Scriptures of the Old Testament, which spoke of the Messiah, and showed them how they were fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, and now can tell them more concerning Him than they could before tell Him; (v. 27.) showing that the sufferings He had now gone through, were so far from defeating the prophecies of the Scripture concerning Him, that they were the accomplishment of them. He began at Moses, who recorded the first promise, in which it was plainly foretold that the Messiah should have his heel bruised, but that by it the serpent's head should be incurably broken. Note, 1st. There are things dispersed throughout all the Scriptures concerning Christ, which it is of great advantage to have collected and put together. You cannot go far in any part of Scripture, but you meet with something that has reference to Christ, some prophecy, promise, prayer, some type or other; He is the true Treasure hid in that field. A golden thread of gospel-grace runs through the whole web of the Old Testament. 2dly. The things concerning Christ need to be expounded. The enunch, though a scholar, would not pretend to understand them, except some man should guide him; (Acts 8:31.) for they were delivered darkly, according to that dispensation; but now the veil is taken away, the New Testament expounds the Old. 3dly. Jesus Christ is Himself the best Expositor of Scripture, particularly the Scriptures concerning Himself; and even after his resurrection, it was in this way He led people into the knowledge of the mystery concerning Himself; not by advancing new notions independent of the Scriptures, but by showing how the Scriptures were fulfilled, and turning them over to the study of them. Even the Apocalypse itself, is but a second part of the Old Testament prophecies, and has continually an eye to them. If men believe not Moses and the prophets, they are incurable. 4thly. In studying the Scriptures, it is good to be methodical, and to take them in order; the Old Testament light shone gradually to the perfect day. Some begin their Bible at the wrong end, who study the Revelation first; Christ has here taught us to begin at Moses. Thus far the conference between them.

IV. The discovery Christ at length made of Himself to them, v. 28-31. If a stranger he shy, every one knows the meaning of it, he will not thrust himself rudely on your house or company; but if you make it appear that you are freely desirous of him for your guest or companion, he knows not but he may accept your invitation; and this was all that Christ did, when He made as though He would have gone further, and would have, if they had not courted his stay.

And now,

1. They courted his stay with them, v. 28. Note, Those that would have Christ dwell with them, must invite Him, and be importunate with Him; though often found of those that seek Him not, yet those only that seek, can be sure to find Him; and if He seem to draw off from us, it is but to draw out our importunity; as here, Abide with us. Note, Those that have experienced the pleasure and profit of communion with Christ, cannot but covet more of his company, and beg of Him, not only to walk with them all day, but to abide with them at night. When the day is far spent, and it is towards evening, we begin to think of retiring for our repose, and then it is proper to have our eye to Christ, and beg of Him to abide with us; to manifest Himself to us, and to fill our minds with good thoughts of Him, and good affections to Him. Christ yielded to their importunity; He went in, to tarry with them. Thus ready is Christ to give further instruction, and comforts

'term of expostulation and reproof;' (meaning, misjudging, stupid, Bloomfield.) Cmprrll. (27.) Beginning, &c. 'We may hence learn that the Mosaic sacrifices, and especially the solemn anniversary expiation, typified the sufferings of Christ; as also did the oblation of Isaac, and the lifting up of the brazen serpent.' Whistly

(27.) The things concerning Himself. See v. 46 or Mat. 13:28 for the prophetic history of Christ.

28 And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

33 And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them,

34 Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon.

35 And they told what things were done in the way, and how

to those who improve what they have received. He has promised, that, if any man open the door, to bid Him welcome, He will come in to him, Rev. 3: 20.

2. He manifested Himself to them, *v. 30, 31.* We may suppose He continued his discourse, which He began on the road; for thou must talk of the things of God when thou sittest in the house, as well as when thou walkest by the way; while supper was getting ready, it is probable He entertained them with such communications as were good, and to the use of edifying; and so likewise as they sat at meat, his lips fed them. But still they little thought it was Jesus Himself that was all this while talking with them: till at length He was pleased to throw off his disguise, and then to withdraw.

(1.) They began to suspect it was He, when, as they sat down to meat, He undertook the office of the Master of the feast; He performed it so like Himself, and like what He used to do among his disciples. Not that this was a miraculous meal, like that of the five loaves, or a sacramental meal, like that of the eucharist; it was a common meal; yet Christ here did the same as He did in those; to teach us to keep up our communion with God through Christ in common providences, as well as in special ordinances, and to crave a blessing, and give thanks at every meal, and to see our daily bread provided for us, and broken to us, by the hand of Jesus Christ, the Master, not only of the great family, but of all our families. Wherever we sit down to eat, let us set Christ at the head of the table, take our meat as blessed to us by Him, eat and drink to his glory; and receive contentedly and thankfully what He is pleased to carve out to us, be the fare ever so coarse and mean; we may well receive it cheerfully, if we can by faith see it coming to us from Christ's hand, and with his blessing.

(2.) Presently their eyes were opened, and then they saw who it was, and knew Him well enough; whatever it was which had hitherto concealed Him from them, it was now taken out of the way, the mists were scattered, the veil taken off, and they made no question but it was their Master; He might for wise and holy ends put on the shape of another, but no other could put on his; and therefore it must be He. See how Christ, by his Spirit and grace, makes Himself known to the souls of his people. He opens the Scriptures to them, for these are they which testify of Him to those who search them, and search for Him in them. He meets them at his table, in the ordinance of the Lord's supper, and commonly there makes further discoveries of Himself to them; is known to them in breaking of bread. And the work is completed by the opening of the eyes of their mind, and causing the scales to fall off from them, as from Paul's in his conversion. If He that gives the revelation, do not give the understanding, we are in the dark still.

3. He immediately disappeared; withdrew Himself; slipped away of a sudden, and went out of sight. Or, He became not visible by them.

It should seem that though Christ's body, after his resurrection, was the very same body in which He suffered and died, as appeared by the marks in it, yet it was so far changed, as to become either visible or not visible, as He thought fit to make it, which was a step towards its being made a glorious body. As soon as He had given his disciples one glimpse of Him, He was gone presently. Such short and transient views have we of Christ in this world; we see Him, but in a little while lose the sight of Him again; when we come to heaven, the vision of Him will have, no interruptions.

V. The reflection of these disciples on this conference, and the report they made of it to their brethren at Jerusalem.

1. The reflection each made on the influence Christ's discourse had on them, *v. 32.* They found the preaching powerful, even when they knew not the Preacher; it made things very plain and clear; and, which was more, brought a divine heat with a divine light into their souls, such as put their hearts into a glow, and kindled a holy fire of pious and devout affections in them. Now this they take notice of, to confirm their belief, that it was indeed, as at last they saw, Jesus Himself, that had been talking with them all along. What fools were we, that we were not sooner aware who it was; no word but his, could make our hearts burn within us as they did; it must be He that has the

key of the heart, it could be no other." See here (1.) What preaching is likely to do good—such as Christ's was; plain teaching, familiar and level to our capacity—He talked with us by the way; and scriptural preaching—He opened to us the Scriptures, the Scriptures relating to Himself. Ministers should show people their religion in their Bibles, and that they preach no other doctrine to them than what is there; they must show that they make that the fountain of their knowledge, and the foundation of their faith. Note, The expounding of those Scriptures which speak of Christ, has a direct tendency to warm the hearts of his disciples, both to quicken them, and to comfort them. (2.) What hearing is likely to do good—that which makes the heart burn; when we are much affected with the things of God, especially with the love of Christ in dying for us, and have our hearts thereby drawn out in love to Him, and drawn up in holy desires and devotions, then our hearts burn within us: when our hearts are raised and elevated, and are as the sparks which fly upward toward God, and when they are kindled and carried out with a holy zeal and indignation against sin, both in others and in ourselves, and we are in some measure refined and purified from it by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, then we may say, 'Through grace our hearts are thus inflamed.'

2. Their report to their brethren at Jerusalem, *v. 33.* So transported were they with joy at the discovery Christ had made of Himself to them, that they could not stay to end their supper, but returned with all speed to Jerusalem, though it was towards evening. If they had had any thoughts of forsaking Christ, this soon banished them all; and now that they had seen Christ, they could not rest till they had brought the good news to the disciples, both to confirm their trembling faith, and to comfort their sorrowful spirits, with the same comforts whereunto they were comforted of God. Note It is the duty of those to whom Christ hath manifested Himself, to let others know what He has done for their souls. When thou art converted, instructed, comforted, strengthen thy brethren. Observe,

(1.) How they found them; just when they came in among them, discoursing on the same subject, and relating another proof of the resurrection of Christ. They found the eleven, and their usual companions, gathered together late in the night, to pray together, it may be, and consider what was to be done in this juncture; and they found them saying among themselves, (it is the saying of the eleven, not of the two, as is plain by the original,) and when these two came in, they repeated to them will, joy and triumph, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon, *v. 34.* That Peter had a sight of Him before the rest of the disciples had, appears 1 Cor. 15: 5. where it is said, He was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. The angel having ordered the women to tell Peter of it particularly, (Mark 16: 7.) for his comfort, it is highly probable that our Lord Jesus did Himself presently the same day appear to Peter, though we have no particular narrative of it. This he had related to his brethren; but observe, Peter does not here proclaim it, and boast of it himself, (he thought that did not become a penitent,) but the other disciples speak of it with exultation, The Lord is risen indeed, really: no room is left to doubt or dispute it, for He has appeared not only to the women, but to Simon.

(2.) How they seconded their evidence with an account of what they had seen, *v. 35.* The words spoken by Christ, are not an empty sound, but they are spirit, and life, and wondrous things are done by them. They told also how He was at length known to them in the breaking of bread; then when He was carving out blessings to them, God opened their eyes to discern who it was. Note, It would be of great use for the discovery and confirmation of truth,

(B.) Took bread, and blessed it, and brake, &c.] 'This was contained, except when the host, out of respect, chose to resign it to the clergy to the custom of guests; since that office belonged to the enter-guest.'

he was known of them in breaking of bread.

[Practical Observations.]

36 ¶ And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, "Peace be unto you."

37 But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit.

38 And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?

p Mark 16:4. John 20:19—23.
q 16:5. Is. 57:15. Matt. 10:13.
John 14:27. 16:33. 20:25. 2 Theas. 3:16. Rev. 14.
r 16:30. 1 Sam. 28:13. Job 4:14—16.
Matt. 14:25, 27. Mark 6:49, 50. Acts 12:15.
s Jer. 4:14. Dan. 4:5, 19. Matt. 16:8. Heb. 4:13.

ing them together; for He deals not with us as we deserve. They did not credit those who had seen Him; therefore He comes Himself, that they might not continue in their disconsolate incredulity. He had promised to see them after his resurrection in Galilee; but so desirous was He to see and satisfy them, that He anticipated the appointment, and sees them at Jerusalem. Note, Christ is often better than his word, never worse. Peace be to you, was a common form of salutation among the Jews, and Christ would thus express his usual familiarity with them, though He was now entered into his state of exaltation. Christ would at the first word intimate to them that He did not come to quarrel with Peter for denying Him, and the rest for running away from Him; but peaceably to signify to them that He had forgiven them, and was reconciled to them. 2. Their fright thereupon, v. 37. They were terrified, supposing they had seen a spirit, because He came in among them without any noise, and was in the midst of them ere they were aware. The word

if the disciples of Christ would compare their observations and experiences, and communicate to each other what they know and have felt in themselves.

V. 36—49. Five times Christ was seen the same day that He rose; by Mary Magdalene alone in the garden; (John 20:14.) by the women, as they were going to tell the disciples; (Matt. 28:9.) by Peter alone; by the two disciples going to Emmaus; and now at night by the eleven; which we have an account of in these verses, as also John 20:19. Observe,

I. Their great surprise at his appearing. He came very seasonably, as they were conferring concerning the proofs of his resurrection; ready perhaps to put it to the question, whether the proofs produced amounted to evidence sufficient or no, and how they should proceed; Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and put it out of question. Note, Those who make the best use they can of their evidences for their comfort, may expect further assurances, and that the Spirit of Christ will witness with their spirits, that they are the children of God, and risen with Christ. Observe, 1. The comfort Christ spake to them; Peace be unto you. This intimates in general that Christ now made them a visit of love and friendship. Though they had very unkindly deserted Him in his sufferings, yet He takes the first opportunity of seeing them together; for He deals not with us as we deserve. They did not credit those who had seen Him; therefore He comes Himself, that they might not continue in their disconsolate incredulity. He had promised to see them after his resurrection in Galilee; but so desirous was He to see and satisfy them, that He anticipated the appointment, and sees them at Jerusalem. Note, Christ is often better than his word, never worse. Peace be to you, was a common form of salutation among the Jews, and Christ would thus express his usual familiarity with them, though He was now entered into his state of exaltation. Christ would at the first word intimate to them that He did not come to quarrel with Peter for denying Him, and the rest for running away from Him; but peaceably to signify to them that He had forgiven them, and was reconciled to them. 2. Their fright thereupon, v. 37. They were terrified, supposing they had seen a spirit, because He came in among them without any noise, and was in the midst of them ere they were aware. The word

used, (Matt. 14:26.) when they said, *It is a spirit*, signifies a spectre, an apparition; but the word here used properly signifies a spirit; they supposed it a spirit not clothed with a real body. Though we have an alliance and correspondence with the world of spirits, and are hastening to it; yet, while here in this world of sense and matter, it is a terror to us to have a spirit so far change its own nature as to become visible to us, and conversable with us; for it is something, and bodes something, very extraordinary.

II. Their great satisfaction in his discourse; wherein we have,

1. Reproofs for their causeless fears, v. 38. Observe here,

(1.) When we are troubled, thoughts are apt to rise in our hearts, that do us hurt. Sometimes the trouble is the effect of the thoughts, our griefs and fears take rise from those things that are the creatures of our own fancy: sometimes the thoughts are the effect of the trouble; without are fightings, and then within are fears. Those that are melancholy and troubled in mind, have thoughts arising in their hearts, which reflect dishonor on God, and create disquiet to themselves. *I am cut off from thy sight. The Lord has forsaken and forgotten Me.*

(2.) Many of the troublesome, disquieting thoughts, arise from our mistakes concerning Christ. They here thought they had seen a spirit, when they saw Christ, and that put them into this fright. We forget that Christ is our elder Brother, and look upon Him to be at as great a distance from us as the world of spirits is from this world, and therewith terribly ourselves. When Christ is by his Spirit convincing and humbling us, when He is by his providence trying and converting us, we mistake Him, as if He designed our hurt, and that troubles us.

(3.) All our troublesome thoughts, are known to the Lord Jesus, even at their first rise, and are displeasing to Him. He chide his disciples for such thoughts, to teach us to chide ourselves

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13—35. When Christians travel, or are in any way employed, in company with each other, they should commune of those things, which relate to their gracious Lord; and open their difficulties to each other for mutual edification. Thus, they may expect that Jesus Himself will be invisibly present. (Mat. 3:13—18, v. 16, 17.) When we have carefully investigated the causes of our sorrow and dejections, we shall find perhaps that our fears and troubles arose from unbelief alone, and not from want of evidence, security, or information.—Our gracious Lord will reprove his disciples for their folly and ignorance, and we should keep in mind continually, that every part of Scripture testifies of Christ, in some way or other; this we shall perceive, in proportion as we spiritually understand

the Word of God. (Note, Rev. 19:9, 10.)—When we earnestly desire and intreat his presence with us, He will come and abide with us, and render our conversation, our worship, and even our meals, blessed. Our more rejoicing seasons of communion with Him, are commonly of short duration; yet it may afterwards be exhilarating to remember them.—We should hasten to make known, to our sorrowing brethren, those discoveries and communications, which have gladdened our hearts; that we may thus mutually strengthen each other's faith, and hope, and assurance "that the Lord is risen indeed," as our experience of his power, truth, and love has abundantly proved. (2 Pet. 1:19. 1 John 5:9, 10.)

SCOTT.

Verses 36—49.

There are either three or four instances recorded, of the risen Savior's delivering to his disciples the substance of his last great command. (Matt. 28:19, 20.) If the instance recorded by Mark, 16:14—16, is the same as that at Luke 24:33—48, and John 20:19—25, there are, but three; if not, there are four. If but three, in all the instances, if four, in all the instances but one, He addressed it to his other disciples, as well as to the eleven apostles, and to all alike. The first instance is that recorded by Luke and John, (and perhaps by Mark also,) when He appeared to his assembled disciples on the evening after his resurrection, when, Luke says, (24:33,) "the eleven were gathered together, and them that were with them," i. e. the other disciples then at Jerusalem; and, as they were listening with wonder to the account of the two who had just returned from Emmaus, "Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them." And as He said to them all alike, "Peace be unto you," so also He said to them all alike, "Repentance and remission of sins must be preached in my name among all nations; and ye are my witnesses of these things." The second instance is that recorded by Matthew, 28:16—20 and referred to by Paul, (1 Cor. 15:5.) when, according to an appointment made before his crucifixion, (Matt. 26:32; Mark 14:28.) and renewed after his resurrection, (Matt. 28:7. Mark 16:7.) He met the whole company of his followers then on earth, above five hundred brethren; doubtless, to make to them some important communication, in which they and those who should come after them, were deeply interested. "And He came and spake unto them," addressing all alike, "As power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." The third instance was when He "led them out as far as Bethany;" and to the whole company who witnessed his ascension, which, there is reason to think, included the greater part of the hundred and twenty disciples then at Jerusalem, (Acts 1:6—15.) He said, to them all alike, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto

the uttermost part of the earth." We are not, then, from the Savior's last great command, to derive, by inference merely, the duty of private Christians, as well as ministers, to be engaged in the work of evangelizing the world, arguing that ministers must be sent, and aided and supported in the work, by the church. That command imposes the duty on private Christians, as well as ministers; on all Christ's disciples, in the same direct and impressive manner. Not that all are to go forth to the unevangelized nations, and preach and baptize; but that all, in their appropriate spheres, are to labor, efficiently and constantly, making it a governing aim in all their pursuits, for the conversion of the world. The command, however, from the very nature of the duty enjoined, has a special application to ministers. And if the instance of its delivery recorded in Mark is distinct from that recorded by Luke and John, it was, in one instance at least, addressed, and with peculiar emphasis, to the eleven apostles. Ministers, then, wherever stationed, should make it the grand object of their labors and efforts, that the influence of the Gospel may be extended over the earth as speedily as possible. And in reference to the question, where they shall be stationed, how did the divinely guided apostles understand and execute their commission? As directing them first to evangelize thoroughly Judea, and then the next contiguous countries, and then the next, and so on, till the whole world should be brought under the influence of the Gospel? Just the reverse. To begin, indeed, at Jerusalem; but to go forth, as speedily as possible, into every country, and kindle up, in stations scattered among all nations and tribes the light of the world. And this commission, thus correctly interpreted, is the commission of ministers in all ages. It is not, then, as is commonly done, to be taken for granted, by those who come into the ministry, that they are to remain in their own Christian land unless a case of duty can be made out for them to go to some unevangelized people; but it is to be taken for granted, that they are to be employed in conveying the Gospel to some destitute people, unless a case of duty can be made out for them to remain in their own, already Christian country.

Dr. WISEMAN.

39 Behold 'my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me, and see: "for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.

40 And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them *his hands and his feet*.

41 And while they yet *believed not* for joy, *wondered*, he said unto them, 'Have ye here any meat?'

42 And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb.

43 And he took it, and did eat before them.

† John 20:20, 25, 27. Acts 1:3. 1 John 1:1.
‡ 2 Sam. 16:22. Ec. 12:7. 1 Thes. 5:23. Heb. 12:9.
§ Gen. 45:26-28. Job 9:16. Ps. 126:1, 2. John 16:22.
¶ John 21:5, 10-13.
‡ Acts 10:41.

that they might be proofs that it was He Himself; and He was willing that they should be *seen*; He afterward showed them to Thomas, for He is not ashamed of his sufferings for us; little reason then have we to be ashamed of them, or of ours for Him. As He showed his wounds here to his disciples, to enforce his instructions to them, so He showed them to his Father, to enforce his intercessions with Him. He appears in heaven as a *Lamb that had been slain*; (Rev. 5: 6.) his blood speaks, Heb. 12: 24. Zech. 13: 6, 7.

He appeals to their touch! *Handle Me, and see.* He would not let Mary Magdalene touch Him at that time, John 20: 17. But the disciples here are intrusted to do it, that they who were to preach his resurrection, and to suffer for doing so, might be themselves abundantly satisfied concerning it. He bid them *handle Him*, that they might be convinced that He was not a *spirit*. If there were really no spirits, nor apparitions of spirits, (as by this and other instances it is plain the disciples believed there were,) this had been a proper time for Christ to undeceive them; but He seems to take it for granted that there have been, and may be, apparitions of spirits, else what need of so much pains to prove that He was not one? There were many heretics in the primitive times, atheists I rather think they were, who said Christ had never any substantial body, but that it was a mere phantasm, which neither really was born, nor did truly suffer; such, we are told, were the Valentinians and Manichees, and the followers of Simon Magus. Blessed be God, these heresies were long since *buried*; and we know and are sure that Jesus Christ was no *spirit* or *apparition*, but had a true and real body, even after his resurrection.

(2.) He *eats* with them to show it, and was willing to converse freely and familiarly with his disciples, as one friend with another. Peter lays great stress on this, (Acts 10: 41.) *We did eat and drink with Him, after He rose from the dead.*

[1.] When they *saw his hands and his feet*, yet they knew not what to say, p. 41. It was their infirmity that yet they believed not. This very much corroborates the truth of Christ's resurrection, that the disciples were so slow to believe it. Instead of stealing away his body, and saying, *He is risen*, when He is not, as the chief priests suggested they would do, they are ready to say again and again, *He is not risen*, when He is. Their being incredulous of it at first, and insisting on the utmost proofs of it, shows that when afterward they did believe it, and venture their all on it, it was not but upon the fullest demonstration of the thing that could be.

But their infirmity was excusable; it was not from any contempt of the evidence, but they *believed not for joy*, as Jacob, when told that Joseph was alive; they thought it too good news to be true. When faith and hope are *weak*, because love and desire are *strong*, faith shall be helped, and not rejected. They *wondered*; they thought it not only *too good*, but *too great*, to be true, forgetting both the Scriptures and the power of God.

[2.] For their further conviction and encouragement, *He called for some meat.* He sat down to meat with the two disciples at Emmaus, but it is not said that He *ate* with them; now lest that should be made an objection, He here actually *ate* with them and the rest, to show how his body was really *returned to life*; though He did not eat and drink, and converse constantly with them, as He had done, (and as Lazarus did after his resurrection, who

returned not only to life, but to his former state of life, and to die again,) because it was not agreeable to the economy of the state He was risen to.

They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of a honey-comb, p. 42. The Master will fare as the disciples, because in the kingdom of our Father they shall fare as He does.

3. The insight He gave them into the Word of God.

(1.) He refers them to the word they had heard from Him, while with them, p. 44. We should better understand what Christ doth, if we did but better remember what He hath said, and had but the art of comparing them together.

(2.) He refers them to the word they had read in the Old Testament; *All things must be fulfilled which were written.* Christ had given them this general hint to regulate their expectations—that, whatever they found written concerning the Messiah, in the Old Testament, must be fulfilled in Him; whether concerning his sufferings, or his kingdom; those God had joined together in the prediction, and they could not be put asunder in the event. *All things* must be fulfilled, the hardest, and the heaviest; even the *vinegar*, He could not die till He had that, because He could not till then say, *It is finished*. The several parts of the Old Testament are here mentioned, as containing each of them things concerning Christ: *The law of Moses*, that is, the Pentateuch, or the first books written by Moses; the *prophets*, containing not only the books that are purely prophetic, but those historical books that were written by prophetic men; the *Psalms*, containing the other writings, which they called the *Hagiographa*. See in what various ways of writing God did of old reveal his will; but all proceeded from one and the self-same Spirit, who by them gave notice of the coming and kingdom of the Messiah; for to Him bare all the prophets witness.

(3.) By an immediate, present work on their minds, of which they could not but be sensible. He gave them to apprehend the true intent and meaning of the Old-Testament prophecies of Christ, and to see them all fulfilled in Him, p. 45. Observe here, [1.] Jesus Christ by his Spirit operates on the minds of men. on the minds of all that are his. He has access to our spirits, and can immediately influence them. It is observable, how He now, after his resurrection, gave a specimen of those two great operations of his Spirit on the spirits of men; his enlightening the intellectual faculties with a divine light, and his invigorating the active powers with a divine heat. [2.] Even good men need to have their understandings opened; for though not darkness, as they were by nature, yet in many things they are in the dark. David prays, *Open mine eyes. Give me understanding.* And Paul, who knows so much of Christ, sees his need to learn more. [3.] Christ's way of working faith in the soul, and gaining the throne there, is, by opening the understanding to discern the evidence of things to be believed.

[4.] The design of opening the understanding is, not that we may be wise above what is written, but wiser in what is written, and be made wise to salvation by it. The Spirit in the Word, and the Spirit in the heart, say the same thing. That we may have right thoughts of Christ, and our mistakes concerning Him be rectified, there needs no more than to be made to understand the Scriptures.

4. The instructions He gave them as apostles, who were to be employed in setting up his kingdom in the world, p. 48. 'You are to carry the notice of them to all the world; not only to report them as matter of news but to assert them as evidence. Fully assured of these things yourselves, go and assure the world of them; and the same Spirit that has enlightened you,

(42.) Broiled fish, and an honey-comb.] Some think a kind of cake, or bread, in use among them. Eating might consist with, though were not needful to, that kind of life to which He was risen. It is evident from the appeal of our Lord to the senses of the apostles, that a greater certainty can in this world be had of any thing than the testimony of our eyes, ears, and other senses; and that it is unreasonable.

able, in the highest degree, to require men to believe in direct opposition to them. It is likewise manifest from our Lord's words, that disembodied spirits, even the spirits of deceased men, do exist; whether they ever become visible or not.

Honey-comb.] A frequent food with the ancients, nearly akin to that of John the Baptist. This was also used by Pythagoras. See

SCOTT.

44 And he said unto them, 'These are the words which I spake unto you,' while I was yet with you, 'that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.'

45 Then he opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures,

46 And said unto them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day;

47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

48 And ye are witnesses of these things.

49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

50 ¶ And he led

shall go along with you to enlighten others.' Now here they are told,

(1.) *What they must preach*; they must preach the Gospel, the *New Testament* as the full accomplishment of the *Old*, as the continuation and conclusion of divine revelation. They must take their Bibles with them, (especially when they preached to the Jews; nay, and Peter, in his first sermon to the Gentiles, directed them to consult the prophets, Acts 10: 43.) and must show people how it was written of old concerning the Messiah, and the glories and graces of his kingdom, and then must tell them how, on their certain knowledge, all this was fulfilled in the Lord Jesus.

[1.] The great gospel-truth concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, must be published to all men. 'Go, and tell the world,' 1st. 'That Christ suffered, as was written of Him. Go, preach Christ crucified, be not ashamed of his cross. Tell them what, and why He suffered, and now all the Scriptures of the Old Testament were fulfilled in his sufferings. Tell them it behoved Him to suffer, that it was necessary to the taking away of the sin of the world, and the deliverance of mankind from death and ruin; nay, that it became Him to be perfected through sufferings,' Heb. 2: 10. 2dly, 'That He rose from the dead on the third day, by which not only all the offence of the cross was rolled away, but He was declared to be the Son of God with power, and in this also the Scriptures were fulfilled; (see I Cor. 15: 3, 4.) go, tell the world how often you saw Him after He rose from the dead, and how intimately you conversed with Him. Your eyes see; (as Joseph said to his brethren,) 'that it is my mouth that speaketh unto you, Gen. 45: 12. Go, and tell them, then, that He that was dead, is alive, and lives for evermore, and has the keys of death and the grave.'

[2.] The great gospel-duty of repentance must be pressed upon all men. Repentance for sin must be preached in Christ's name, and by his authority. All men everywhere must be called and commanded to repent, Acts 17: 30. 'Go, and tell people that the God that made them, and the Lord that bought them, expects and requires that, immediately on this notice given, they turn from the worship of the gods that they have made, to the worship of the God that made them; and not only so, but from serving the interests of the world and the flesh; they must turn to the service of God in Christ, mortify all sinful habits, and forsake all sinful practices. Their hearts and lives must be changed, and they must be universally renewed and reformed.'

[3.] The great gospel-privilege of the remission of sins must be proposed to all, and assured to all that repent, and believe the Gospel. 'Go, tell a guilty world, that stands convicted and condemned at God's bar, that an act of indemnity has passed the royal assent, of which all that repent and believe shall have the benefit, and not only be pardoned, but preferred. Tell them that there is hope concerning them.'

(2.) To whom they must preach.

[1.] Among all nations. They must disperse themselves, like the sons of Noah after the flood, some one way and some another, and carry with them this light wherever they go. The prophets had preached repentance and remission to the Jews, but the apostles must preach them to all the world. None are exempted from the obligations the Gospel lays on men to repent, nor are any excluded from those inestimable benefits which are included in the remission of sins, but those that debar themselves by their unbelief and impenitency.

[2.] They must begin at Jerusalem; then they must preach their first gospel-sermon; there the gospel-church must be first formed, and the gospel-day dawn, and thence that light shall go forth, which must take hold on the ends of the earth. And whither again there? 1st, Because thus it was written. The word of the Lord must go forth from Jerusalem, Isa. 2: 3. And see Joel 2: 32. 3: 16. Obad. 21. Zech. 14: 8. 2dly, Because there the matters of fact, or which the Gospel was founded, were transacted; for where they were first attested, there, if there had been any just cause for it, they might be best contested and disproved. 'Begin at Jerusalem, that the chief priests may try to crush the Gospel, and see themselves disappointed.' 3dly, Because He would give us a further example of forgiving enemies. Jerusalem had put the greatest affronts imaginable on Him, (both the rulers and the multitude,) for which that city might justly have been excepted by name out of the act of indemnity; but no, so far from that, the first offer of gospel-grace is made to Jerusalem, and thousands there are in a little time brought to partake of that grace.

(3.) What assistance they should have in preaching. They are here called to a vast undertaking, a very large and difficult province, especially considering the opposition this service would meet with, and the sufferings it would be attended with; if therefore they ask, Who is sufficient for these things? here is an answer ready, (v. 49.) Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you, and ye shall be endued with power from on high. He here assures them that in a little time the Spirit should be poured out on them in greater measure than ever, and they should thereby be furnished with all those gifts and graces necessary to discharge this great trust: therefore they must tarry at Jerusalem, and not enter upon it till this be done. Note, [1.] Those who receive the Holy Ghost, are thereby endued with a power from on high, a supernatural power: it is from on high, and therefore draws the soul upward, and makes it aim high. [2.] Christ's apostles could never have planted his Gospel, and set up his kingdom in the world, as they did, if they had not been endued with such a power; and their admirable achievements prove that there was an excellency of power going along with them. [3.] This power from on high was the promise of the Father, the great promise of the New Testament, as the promise of the coming of Christ was of the Old Testament. And if it be the promise of the Father, we may be sure the promise is inviolable, and the thing promised invaluable. [4.] Christ would not leave his disciples, till the time was just at hand to perform this promise. It was but ten days after the ascension of Christ, that there came the descent of the Spirit. [5.] Christ's ambassadors must stay till they have their powers, and not venture on their embassy till they have received full instructions and credentials; though, one would think, never was such haste as now for the preaching of the Gospel, yet the preachers must tarry till they be endued with power from on high, and tarry at Jerusalem, though a place of danger, because there this promise of the Father was to find them, Joel 2: 28.

V. 50-53. This evangelist omits the solemn meeting between Christ and his disciples in Galilee; but what He said to them there, and at other interviews, He subjoins to what He said to them at the first visit He made them on the evening of the day He rose; and has now nothing more to account for but his ascension

6: 7. 9: 22. 13: 31-33. Matt. 21: 17, 22, 23. 20: 18, 19. Mark 8: 31, 32. 9: 31. 10: 33, 34.

6: 10. 16: 4, 5, 16, 17. 17: 11-13.

26: 27, 42. Matt. 29: 54, 55. John 19: 24, 27. Acts 13: 39-41. 1 Cor. 15: 3, 4.

Gal. 3: 15. 14: 18, 19. 22: 18. 49: 10.

Lev. 16: 2, 8c. Num. 21: 8, 9. 35: 25.

Deut. 18: 15-19. John 3: 14, 15. 5: 46, 47. Acts 3: 22-24. 7: 57. Heb.

9: 31. 7: 1-3. 9: 36-38. 12: 13, 14.

Is. 7: 14. 9: 6, 7. 11: 1-10. 28: 16.

40: 1-11. 42: 1-4. 49: 1-8. 50: 1-11.

6: 52: 13-15. 53: 6: 11-13. Jer.

23: 5. 33: 14, 15. 34: 13. 37: 22-24.

34: 22-24. Dan. 2: 34. 7: 13, 14. 9: 4.

27. Hos. 1: 7-11. 3: 5. Joel 2: 28-32.

Am. 9: 11, 12. Mic. 5: 1-4.

Hag. 2: 7-9. Zech. 12: 13. 13: 9.

11: 18-13. 12: 10. 13: 7, 14. Mal.

3: 1-3. 4: 2-6. 5: 1. 22: 40-48. 69: 1.

72: 88. 109: 2-40. 110: 118-22, 23.

John 5: 39. Acts 17: 2, 3. 1 Pet. 1: 11.

Rev. 19: 10.

Ex. 4: 11. John 3: 16. Ps. 118: 18.

Is. 59: 10. 12: 18, 19. Acts 16: 14. 26: 18.

2 Cor. 3: 14-18. 4: 4-6. Eph.

5: 14. 2 Tim. 3: 7. 1 Th. 2: 4.

1 Th. 3: 2. 2 Th. 3: 13. 2 Cor. 13: 9.

5: 31. 11: 18. 13: 38, 39. 17: 30, 31.

20: 21. 28: 20.

1 Th. 2: 27. 2 Tim. 4: 7. 9: 6, 9. 98: 1-3.

117: 1. 2: 1-3. 1: 10. 49: 5.

52: 10, 15. 60: 1-3. 68: 13-21. Matt.

2: 23. Mal. 1: 11. Matt. 8: 10, 11. Acts

13: 48-49. 18: 5, 18. 19: 32. Rom.

10: 12-18. 15: 8. Eph. 3: 2, 3. Col.

1: 13, 27.

1 Th. 3: 14. Is. 54. Hos. 11: 8. Matt.

11: 6. Acts 3: 25, 26. 13: 46. Rom.

6: 20. 11: 26, 27. Eph. 1: 5.

John 15: 27. Acts 18: 22. 2: 32. 3: 15.

15: 43, 53. 5: 32. 10: 39, 41. 13: 31.

13: 5. Heb. 2: 3, 4. 6: 13. 13: 9.

Is. 44: 3. 59: 20, 21. Jer. 2: 28.

John 14: 17, 17. 15: 26. 16: 17.

1 Cor. 15: 14. Acts 1: 4, 8. 2: 1-4.

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them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them.

51 And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven.

52 And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy;

53 And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God. Amen.

Mark 11:1. Acts 1:12. Gen. 14:18-20. 27:4. 48:9. 49:28. Num. 9:23-27. Mark 10:10. Heb. 7:9-12. Kings 2:11. Mark 16:19. John 20:17. Acts 1:3. Eph. 4:8-10. Heb. 1:3. Matt. 28:19. John 20:19. 1 Pet. 3:9. 11. John 14:28. 16:7, 22. 1 Pet. 1:3. Acts 2:46, 47. 5:41, 42. Matt. 28:20. Mark 16:20. Rev. 22:21.

were still *z*, for He showed *witnesses*. The disciples did not see Him rise out of the grave, because his resurrection was capable of being proved by their seeing Him alive afterward; but they saw Him *ascend* into heaven, because they could not otherwise have an *ocular* demonstration of his ascension.

3. His farewell to them; *He lifted up his hands, and blessed them*, as the high priest when he blessed the people; see Lev. 9:22. He blessed as one having authority, commanded by the blessings which He had purchased; *He blessed them* as Jacob his sons. The apostles were now as the representatives of the twelve tribes, so that, in blessing them, He blessed all his spiritual Israel, and put his Father's name on them. He blessed them as Jacob his sons, and Moses the tribes, at parting, to show that, having loved his own which were in the world, He loved them to the end.

4. How He left them; *While He was blessing them*; not as if taken away before He had said all He had to say, but to intimate that his being parted from them did not put an end to his blessing them, for the intercession which He went to heaven to make for all his, is a continuation of that blessing. Christ was now sending his apostles to preach his Gospel to the world, and He gives them his blessing, not for *themselves* only, but to be conferred in his name on *all* that should believe on Him through their word, for in Him *all the families of the earth were to be blessed*.

5. How his ascension is described. (1.) *He was parted from them*, taken from their head, as Elijah from Elisha's. Note, The dearest friends must part. Those that love us, and pray for us, and instruct us, must be parted from us. Those that knew Christ after the flesh, must now henceforth know Him so no more. (2.) As He arose, so He ascended, by his own power, yet attended by angels. There needed no chariot of fire, or horses of fire. He ascended in a cloud, as the angel in the smoke of Manoa's sacrifice, Judg. 13:20.

II. How cheerfully his disciples continued their attendance on Him, and

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 36-53. When we meet together in the name of the gracious Savior, He will again and again 'manifest Himself unto us, as He doth not unto the world,' (John 14:21-24.) speak pardon and peace to our souls, dispel our terrors and troubles, assure us of his love, and 'open our understanding to understand the Scriptures.' Then we shall see, with increasing clearness, that 'thus it was written,' that redemption is completed, and that 'repentance and remission of sins by faith in his name' should freely 'be preached to all nations.' Blessed be God, that ever they were preached in this nation!

Verse 50.

As far as to Bethany.] *The boundaries* of Bethany. What is said elsewhere will not allow us to extend the sense to include the *town itself*; for that was fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, (John 11:18.) whereas mount Olivet, from which our Lord ascended, was but about half that distance, Acts 1:12.

DODDIDGE.

Verse 53.

They repaired to the temple continually, (i. e. at all fit times,) in preference to any other place; since there the Jews were accustomed to pray and return thanks to God, especially on momentous occasions.

BLOOMFIELD.

Things related at large by Luke, either not mentioned, or but transiently, in the other Gospels.

Conventor, of Elisabeth, 1:5-25. Salutation of Mary, 26-33. Her visit to Elisabeth, 39-56. Birth of John, 57-79. Decree of Cæsar to 1-6. Apparition of the angel to the shepherds, 8-20. Circumcision of Christ, 21. His presentation in the temple, 22-38. Dispute with the doctors, 40-52. Dates at the commencement of Christ's ministry, 3:1, 2. Success of John's preaching, 10-15. Christ's preach-

ing and escape at Nazareth, 4:15-30. Remarkable particulars in the call of Simon, Andrew, James, and John, 5:1-10. Calamities of certain Galileans, 13:1-5. Mission of the seventy, 10:1-16. Their return and success, 17-24. The good Samaritan, 25-37. Cure of the woman diseased eighteen years, 13:10-20. The question, Are there few that be saved? answered, 22, 23. Cure of the dropsical man, 14:1-24. Difficulties of a profession of Christianity, to be carefully preconceived, 25-35. Parables of the lost sheep, and piece of money, 15:1-10. The prodigal son, 11-32. The unjust steward, 16:1-13. The rich man and beggar, 19-31. Christ's instructions to his disciples, 17:1-10. Samaritans refuse to receive Him into their city, 9:52-56, 17:11. Cleansing of ten lepers, 17:12-19. The Pharisees ask when the kingdom of God should come, and Christ's answer, 20-38. The Pharisee and publican, 18:1-14. Domestic avocations of Martha and Mary, 10:38-42. Account of Zaccheus, 19:2-10. Parable of the nobleman who went to obtain a kingdom, 11-28. Pilate sends Jesus to Herod, 23:6-16. Account of the women that deplored Christ's sufferings 27-32. Remarkable particulars of the two thieves, 39-43. The walk to Emmaus, 24:13-35. Remarkable circumstances concerning our Lord's appearance to the eleven after his resurrection, 37-49.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

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GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN,

WITH AN EXPOSITION AND PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

The Scripture records, concerning the inspired writer of this gospel, may be seen and compared by consulting the annexed references. (13: 23—26. 19: 25—27, 35. 20: 2—10. 21: 2—7, 20—25. *Matt.* 4: 21, 22. 11: 2. 20: 26—23. *Mark* 1: 19, 20. 5: 37. 9: 2, 38—40. 14: 33. *Luke* 9: 49—56. 22: 8. *Acts* 3: 1—11. 4: 13—20. 5: 14. *Gal.* 2: 9. *Rev.* 1: 1, 9. 10: 9—11.) 'In all the controversies maintained with Celsus, with Porphyry, and with the emperor Julian, who strained every nerve to undermine the authority of the gospels, they never thought of controverting, that they were written by those whose names they bear. So clear was this point accounted, for ages, even by the most acute adversaries of the Christian name.' *Campbell.*

The general current of ancient writers declare that the apostle wrote this gospel, at an advanced time of life yet many learned moderns are of a different opinion. The question is perhaps more difficult than important: but appears to me, that several passages become far more interesting, by supposing that it was written long after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the martyrdom of the other apostles. This evangelist alone mentions Peter as the apostle who smote the high priest's servant, and Malchus as the name of that servant. (*Note*, 18: 10—14.) Now it is obvious to conclude, that he disclosed what the others had purposely concealed; because Peter was, at the time when he wrote, out of the reach of all his enemies.—He alone records the resurrection of Lazarus; a miracle so stupendous and notorious, that one can hardly conceive how the other evangelists could pass it over in silence. But the Jews had consulted to put Lazarus also to death. (*Notes*, 11: 12: 9—11.) While Lazarus lived, the memory of the miracle could not be lost in Judea; in other countries, it might be published by word of mouth: but the public recording of it by the evangelists, while the Jewish priests and rulers possessed authority, might needlessly have exasperated them, and exposed Lazarus and his sisters to much hatred, and even to imminent danger.

While this Gospel, published long after, by the only surviving apostle, was suited to establish the authority of those which preceded, it is almost entirely an original narrative, and far more than an appendix to them, as some have very improperly called it. From about the twenty-sixth verse of the sixth chapter, to the end of the eleventh, the whole is entirely new; and even the events, which preceded and made way for our Lord's crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension, though for substance the same, are enriched with a variety of new and interesting information, exceedingly suited to fix the attention and impress the mind of the reader, especially the discourse of our Lord with his disciples just before his crucifixion, and his prayer for them, and for his church to the end of time. Various circumstances respecting his crucifixion, are recorded in this gospel alone, especially his committing his afflicted mother to the care of the beloved John, when about to expire on the cross, in the most affecting manner imaginable.—Our Lord's repeatedly meeting his assembled disciples, 'on the first day of the week;' with the instructive account of Thomas's absence the first time; his obstinate incredulity; our Savior's condescension to him, and Thomas's conviction and confession of Him as 'his Lord and his God,' are not mentioned elsewhere. The beautiful account also of Jesus' meeting the disciples at the lake of Tiberias; his threefold rebuke of Peter, (who had thrice denied Him,) by thrice questioning his love to Him, and thrice requiring him to show his love, by feeding his sheep and his lambs; with the prediction of the manner, in which this apostle should at length glorify God; the tacit readiness of John to follow in the same path; and the obscure intimation, that perhaps this might not be the case, is added by this evangelist, in the most artless and affecting language. (*Notes*, 21: 15—25.)—St. John's style is always plain, simple, and unaffected, and generally perspicuous: and when it appears not so, this will commonly be found to arise from the sublimity of his subject, to which no human language is adequate, rather than from any want of exactness in selecting and arranging his words and expressions.—Learned men have noted several particulars in which the language of this gospel differs from that of the others.—The phrase, 'And it came to pass,' so common in the other gospels, never occurs in this. 'The Word,' and 'the Only-begotten,' as applied to Christ, and the word, rendered 'the Comforter,' as a title given to the Holy Spirit, are peculiar to this gospel. SCOTT.

John was the brother of James, one of the twelve, and the disciple whom Jesus loved; one of the three whom He took to be the witnesses of his transfiguration and agony. John lived longest of all the twelve apostles, and was the only one of them that did not suffer martyrdom; and some say that he wrote this gospel at Ephesus, at the request of the ministers of the churches of Asia, in opposition to the heresy of Cerinthus and the Ebionites, who held that our Lord was a mere man. It is most probable he wrote it before his banishment to Patmos, for there he wrote his *Apocalypse*, the close of which seems designed for the closing up of the canon of Scripture; and if so, this gospel was not written after. I cannot therefore credit those fathers, who say that he wrote it in banishment, or after his return from it, many years after the destruction of Jerusalem, when he was ninety or a hundred years old. However, it is clear that he wrote last of the evangelists, and, comparing his gospel with theirs, we may observe, 1 That he relates what they had omitted; his gospel is as the rearward or gathering-host, it gleams up what they had passed by. Thus there was a later collection of Solomon's wise sayings, (*Prov.* 25: 1.) and yet far short of what he delivered, 1 Kings 4: 32. 2 He gives us more of the mystery of that which the other evangelists give us only the history of. It was necessary that the matters of fact should be first settled, which was done in their declarations of those things which Jesus began both to do and teach, *Luke* 1: 1. *Acts* 1: 1. But that being done out of the mouth of two or three witnesses, John goes on to perfection, (*Heb.* 6: 1.) not laying again the foundation, but building upon it; leading us more within the veil. Some of the ancients observe, that the other evangelists wrote more of the bodily things of Christ; but John writes of the spiritual things of the Gospel, its life and soul; therefore some have called this gospel the key of the evangelists. Here it is that a door is opened in heaven, and the first voice we hear, is, 'Come up higher.' Some of the ancients, that supposed the four living creatures in John's vision to represent the four evangelists, make John the flying-eagle, so high doth he soar, and so clearly doth he see into heavenly things.

H N 2

CHAP. I.

The Word who was in the beginning with God, and was God, is the Creator of all things, his life in himself, and is the Light of men, 1-5. John a witness to that true and only Light, which was unknown to the world which He made, and not received by his own, except by such as were born of God, and these were adopted as "sons of God." The Word became flesh, and displayed his glory, as the only-begotten of the Father, 14. John testifies to his superior dignity, and fulfills whence all receive; for grace and truth came by Him, 17-18. He declares the invisible God to men, 18. Various testimonies of John to the Pharisees, concerning himself and Jesus, 19-28. John points Him out as the "Lamb of God," and the "Son of God," who "baptizeth with the Holy Ghost," 29-34. Two of John's disciples follow him, 35-39. Andrew, one of them, brings Peter to him, whom He surnames Cephas, 40-42. Philip is called, who brings Nathanael, 43-45. Jesus declares himself to be "an Israelite," and by confesses Jesus as the Son of God and the King of Israel, 46-49. Jesus promises that he shall see still greater things, 50, 51.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were

- a Gen. 1:1. Prov. 8:22-32. Eph. 3:9. Col. 1:17. Heb. 1:10. 13:18. Rev. 1:8, 11. 21:3. 22:5.
b 14. 1 John 1:2. 5:7. Rev. 19:13.
c 18. 16:28. 17:15. Prov. 8:22-30. 1 John 1:2.
d 16:30-33. 20:28. Ps. 45:5. Is. 7:14. 9:6. 40:9-11. Matt. 1:23. Rom. 8:5. Phil. 2:1. 1 Tim. 3:18. Tit. 2:13. Heb. 1:3. 2 Pet. 1:1. Gr. 1 John 5:7-19. Gen. 1:1. 36. Ps. 33:6. 105:25. Is. 42:12, 13. Eph. 3:9. Col. 1:16, 17. Heb. 12:10-12. 3:4. Rev. 4:11.

CHAP. I. v. 1-5. A Platonic philosopher saith, that these verses were *worthy to be written in gold*. The learned Francis Junius says, that he was in youth infected with loose notions in religion, and by the grace of God was recovered, on reading these verses in a Bible which his father laid in his way. He observed such divinity in the argument, such authority and majesty in the style, that his flesh trembled, and he was in amazement for a day; and from thence he dates the beginning of his being religious. The evangelist lays down the great truth he is to prove, that Jesus Christ is God.

1. *The Word*. This is an idiom peculiar to John's writings. See 1 John 1:1. ch. 5:7. Rev. 19:13. Yet some think that Christ is meant by the *Word*, in Acts 20: 32. Heb. 4:12. Luke 1: 2.

The Chaldee paraphrase very frequently calls the Messiah *the Word of Jehovah*, and speaks of many things in the Old Testament said to be done by the *Lord*, as done by that *Word of the Lord*; even the vulgar Jews were taught that the *Word of God* was the same with God. The evangelist, in the close of his discourse (v. 18.) plainly tells us why he calls Christ *the Word*—because *He is the only-begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, and has declared Him*. *Word* is twofold: *word conceived*; and *word uttered*.

1. There is the *word conceived*; that is, thought, which is the only immediate product of the soul, (all the operations of which are performed by *thought*;) and it is one with the soul. Thus the second person in the Trinity is fully called the *Word*; for He is the *first-begotten of the Father*; that eternal Wisdom which the *Lord* possessed, as the soul doth its thought, in the *beginning of his way*, Prov. 8: 23. There is nothing we are more sure of than *that we think*, yet nothing we are more in the dark about than *how we think*; who can declare the generation of *thought* in the soul? Surely then the generations and births of the eternal mind may well be allowed to be great mysteries of godliness, which we cannot fathom, while yet we adore the depth.

NOTES.

CHAP. I. v. 1-3 Critics have shown, that there is an important difference between 'in the beginning,' and 'from the beginning': the context, however, generally fixes the meaning. 'The devil was a murderer' or man-slayer, 'from the beginning'; but this he could not be, ere man existed. 8: 44.—Some imagine that the evangelist referred to the speculations of Plato and his disciples, in the term 'THE WORD,' or the LOGOS, which that philosopher used: but it is not likely that he would at all countenance such speculations, as those of that philosopher, which seem originally to have been borrowed from Revelation, though they were at length so distorted and darkened, as to be little better than atheism.—The Jews were constantly taught in their synagogues, that "the Word of God" was the same as God; and that by "the Word all things were made," which undoubtedly was the cause, why St. John delivered so great a mystery in so few words, as "speaking unto them, who at the first apprehension understood him. 'Only that which I knew not was, that this "Word was made flesh," and that this Word made flesh was Jesus Christ.' Bp. Pearson. The same learned divine shows that this way of speaking was in use, before Platonism was at all introduced among the Jews. What can we understand by this testimony, 'The Word was God,' but that He was possessed of the same divine nature and perfections with the Father; participated the same glory and felicity; and was in every respect as fully entitled to the adoration of all rational creatures which should ever exist, as that God with whom He was? 'All things were made by Him.' In what language can the divine power and operation of the great Creator be more emphatically described? Or what could have been said, better suited to lead every one to adore 'the Word,' as his Father and Saviour, Lord? To suppose, that this "Word was made," to suppose infinite power and perfection communicable to a creature; and the whole universe standing in the same relation to a creature, as they do to the infinite and eternal God: and to assert that 'the Word' was only an instrument or subordinate agent in creation, beside the absurdity of the notion, expressly contradicts the Scripture, which says, that 'JEHOVAH stretcheth forth the heavens alone, and spreadeth abroad the earth by Himself;' and that 'He will not give his glory to another.' (Notes, Is. 42: 8, 9. 44: 6-8. 24.) Indeed it is self-evident, that 'He who built all things is God.' In the strictest and fullest meaning of the word. This doctrine, however, is not grounded on any single expression, but on a combination of very many; and it will therefore appear more and more incontrovertible as we proceed.

SCOTT.

In the beginning. 'That is, before any thing was formed—ere God began the work of creation. This is the meaning of the word in Gen. 1: 1 to which the evangelist evidently alludes. This phrase fully proves, in the mouth of an inspired writer, that Jesus Christ was no part of the creation, as He existed when no part of that existed; and that consequently He is no creature, as all created nature was formed by Him, for without Him was not any thing made that was true, v. 3. Now as what was before creation was made to eternal;

2. There is the *word uttered*, and that is speech. Thus Christ is the *Word*, for by Him God has in these last days spoken to us; (Heb. 1: 2.) and has directed us to hear Him, Matt. 17: 5. He has made known God's mind to us, as a man's word or speech makes known his thoughts, as far as he pleases, and no farther. Christ is called that *wonderful Speaker*, (Dan. 8: 13.) the *Speaker of things hidden and strange*. He is the *Word speaking from God* to us, and to God for us. John Baptist was the *voice*; but Christ the *Word*: being the *Word*, He is the *Truth*, the *Amen*, the *faithful Witness*, of the mind of God.

II. What he saith of Him is enough to prove beyond contradiction that *He is God*. He asserts,

1. His existence in the beginning; 'In the beginning was the Word.' This speaks his existence, not only before his incarnation, but before all time. The beginning of time, in which all creatures were produced and brought into being, found this eternal Word in being. The world was *from* the beginning, but the Word was *in* the beginning. Eternity is usually expressed by being *before* the *foundation of the world*. The eternity of God is so described: (Ps. 90: 2.) *Before the mountains were brought forth*. So Prov. 8: 23. The Word had a being before the world had a beginning. He that was in the beginning never began, and therefore was without beginning of time.

2. His co-existence with the Father; *The Word was with God, and the Word was God*. Let none say that when we invite them to Christ, we would draw them from God, for Christ is *with God*, and is *God*; it is repeated again, (v. 2.) the same was in the beginning *with God*, that is, He was so from eternity. In the beginning, the world was *from God*, as it was created by Him; but the Word was *with God*, as ever with Him. In respect of *essence* and *substance*, the *Word* was a distinct Person or Substance, for He was *with God*; and yet the same in substance, for He was *God*; and, v. 3. There was a glory and happiness which Christ had *with God* before the world was, *ch.*

and as what gave being to all things could not have borrowed or derived its being from any thing, therefore, Jesus, who was before all things, and who made all things, must necessarily be the *ETERNAL God*.

Dr. CLARKE.

The Word was with God. 'The apostle here affirms that the Word was God, and yet was *with God*; viz. that He was truly divine, but still divine in such a manner, that there did exist a distinction between Him and the Father. I take the word *God* in one case, to mean, as in a great number of cases it does mean, God as Father; in the other case; I regard it as a description of divine being, of the Divinity, without reference to the distinction of Father, a use which is very common.'

Prof. STUART.

The Word was God. 'Many have contended that the word *God* is used here in an inferior sense, the necessary consequence of which is, that this clause should be rendered, *The Word was a God*, that is, a kind of inferior deity, as governors are called gods. 1 Cor. 8: 5. But it is impossible He should here be so called merely as a governor, because He is spoken of as existing before the production of any creatures whom He could govern. And it is to me most incredible that, when the Jews were so exceeding averse to idolatry, and the Gentiles so unhappily prone to it, such a plain writer as this apostle should lay so dangerous a stumbling-block on the very threshold of his work, and represent it as the Christian doctrine that in the beginning of all things there were *two Gods*, one supreme and the other subordinate.'

DODDRIE.

'Here is a passage in which, beyond all reasonable doubt, Christ is called *God*, and where the context, instead of furnishing us with reasons for understanding the word *God* in an inferior sense, as is usual, when it is applied to inferior beings, being a governor, and unequivocally taught us, that this *God*, who was the Word, created the universe, v. 3. The question then is reduced to this simple state; is He who created the universe truly and properly divine? If the act of creation does not prove the being, who performs it, to be omniscient, omnipotent, and independent, then is it possible to conceive of any thing which does or can prove the existence of such a being? If to bring this world into existence from nothing, and to establish such perfect harmony and design through all the operations of nature do not designate the absolute, supreme, omnipotent, and omniscient Being; then no proof that such a Being exists can possibly be adduced. It is in vain to say that the creation of the universe can be performed by *delegation*; by an inferior and subordinate Being. What can be delegated by omnipotence, omniscience, and infinite wisdom, (all of which must belong to a Creator,) being delegated? Can God delegate his perfections?

Prof. STUART.

'In Gen. 1: 1. God is said to have created all things; and here Christ is said to have created all things; the same unerring Spirit spoke in Moses, and in the evangelist; therefore *Christ* and the *Father* are *One*. To say that Christ made all things by a delegated power from God, is absurd, because the thing is impossible. Creation means causing that to exist that had no previous being; this is evidently a word

made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4 In him was life; and the Life was the Light of men.

5 And the Light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not.

[Practical Observations.]

5:21, 26. 1. 25. 14-6. 1. Cor. 15:45.
Col. 3:1. 1. John 1:2. 5:11. Rev. 22:1.
6:9. 8:12. 9:5. 12:35-46. Ps. 84:11. Is. 33:1-5. 42:6, 16. 49:6. 60:1. Mal. 2:1. Mic. 6:1-6. Luke 1:1-78, 79. 2:22. Acts 9:23. Eph. 5:14. 1. John 1:5-7. Rev. 22:16.
2. 10:19-20. 12:36-40. Job 24:13-17. Prov. 1:22, 29, 30. Rom. 1:28. 1. Cor. 5:14.

not any thing made, that was made, from the highest angel to the meanest worm. God the Father did nothing without Him in that work. Now, [1.] This proves that *He is God*; for He that built all things is God; Heb. 3:4. The God of Israel often proved Himself to be God, with this, that He made all things; Isa. 40:12, 28. 41:4. and see Jer 10:11, 12. [2.] This proves the excellency of the Christian religion; the Author and Founder of it is the same that was the Author and Founder of the world. How excellent must that constitution needs be, which derives its institution from Him who is the Fountain of all excellency! When we worship Christ, we worship Him to whom the patriarchs gave honor as the Creator, and on whom all creatures depend. [3.] This shows how well qualified He was for the work

17:5. Prov. 8:30. The mystery of man's redemption by this Word incarnate, was *had in God*, before all worlds, Eph. 3:9. *He* that undertook to bring us to God, (1 Pet. 3:18.) was Himself from eternity with God; so that man's reconciliation to God was concerted between the Father and Son from eternity, Zech. 6:13. Matt. 11:27. He was by Him as one brought up with Him for this service, Prov. 30. He was with God, and therefore is said to come forth from the Father.

3. His agency in making the world, &c. This is here, (1.) Expressly asserted; All things were made by Him. He was with God; not only acquainted with the divine counsels, but active in the divine operations in the beginning of time. Then was I by Him, Prov. 8:30. God made the world by a word; (Ps. 33:6.) and Christ was that Word. By Him, not as a subordinate, but a co-ordinate Agent, God made the world; (Heb. 1:2-) not as a workman cuts by his axe, but as the body sees by the eye. (2.) The contrary is denied: Without Him was

of our salvation; help was laid upon One that was mighty, for He made all things; and He is the Author of our bliss, who was the Author of our being.

4. The original of life and light is in Him; (v. 4.) In Him was life. This further proves that He is God, and every way qualified for his undertaking; for, (1.) He has life in Himself; not only the true God, but the living God. God is life; He swears by Himself, when He saith, As I live. (2.) All living creatures have their life in Him; not only was all the matter of the creation made by Him, but all the life that is in the creation, is derived from Him, and supported by Him. It was the word of God that produced the creatures that had life, Gen. 1:20. Acts 17:25. He is that Word by which man lives, more than by bread, Matt. 4:4. (3.) Reasonable creatures have their light from Him; that life which is the light of men. Life in man is nobler than in other creatures; it is rational, and not merely animal; when man became a living soul, his life was light, his capacities such as distinguished him from, and dignified him above, the beasts that perish. The spirit of a man is the candle of the Lord, and it was the eternal Word that lighted it. The light of reason, as well as the life of sense, is derived from Him, and depends upon Him. This proves Him fit to undertake our salvation; for spiritual and eternal life and light, are the two great things that fallen man, who lies so much under the power of death and darkness, needs. From whom may we better expect the light of

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-5. While we carefully avoid the error of those, who seem to place the whole of religion in an orthodox creed, and sacrifice every Christian temper, and violate plain precepts of Scripture, in vehement contention for doctrinal sentiments and expressions; we should beware of the opposite extreme of treating the doctrines of Scripture, as speculative points of comparatively little consequence. 'All the apostles and prophets witness,' yea, God Himself has testified, 'that He sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.' Beware of those, who degrade Him whom the Spirit of truth and holiness delights to glorify; and while we allow 'the mystery to be, without controversy, great,' that 'God was manifest in the flesh;' let us still glory in it, as 'the great mystery of godliness,' with which all true piety, in the heart and life, is inseparably connected. Let us never think of 'The Word of God,' as any other than 'God over all, blessed forevermore;' as before all worlds 'with God, and equal with, yet distinct from, the Father. Without indulging vain reasonings or requiring curious explanations, let us avoid with equal caution, those who allow indeed the distinct personality, but deny or interpret away the proper Deity, of 'the Word;' and those who zealously assert his Deity, but seem to lose sight of his distinct personality, and thus unwarily verge to the sentiments which they seem to oppose. It is not for us to comprehend such exalted subjects, or to resolve all questions about them: but we can prove by arguments, which no infidel ever yet was, or ever will be, able to answer, that the Scripture is a divine revelation: and

we can fully show these mysterious doctrines to be contained in the express language of revelation. By faith we receive this testimony, and by grace derive nourishment from it to our souls. But it is the most unreasonable thing in the world, to reject the testimony of the infinite God, concerning his own mysterious existence; when every process of nature baffles our feeble powers; and when the best philosophers allow, that we can only know that things are so, but cannot comprehend the manner how, or the reason why. He who knows the worth of his soul, the evil of sin, and other things pertaining to our present fallen condition, can see no ground of hope, but in Him who made all things, and without whom was not any thing made that was made.' This will be his encouragement 'to hope and not be afraid, because God has become his Salvation;' and 'the Life' is become 'the Light of life' to 'men.' Nothing can be more evident than these truths, as they are revealed in Scripture, by which the personal Word of God speaks to us; but this 'Light still shineth in darkness, and the darkness apprehendeth it not.' Every absurd system, detached imagination, and conjecture of soothing error, is preferred to it, as more congenial to the pride and lusts of men: thus 'they walk on still in darkness,' and neither understand nor value 'the Light of the world!' May we then pray without ceasing, that our eyes may be opened to behold this Light, that we may walk in it, and be 'made wise unto eternal salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.'

SCOTT.

which can be effected only by omnipotence. Now God cannot delegate his omnipotence to another; were this possible, he to whom this omnipotence was delegated would, in consequence, become God, and He from whom it was delegated would cease to be such, for it is impossible that there should be two omnipotent beings.' Dr. A. Clarke.

'According to this reasoning, the Bible every where appeals to creative power as the peculiar and distinguishing prerogative of the supreme God, and attributes it solely to Jehovah. Read Gen. 2:2, 3. Ex. 20:11. Is. 44:24. Jer. 10:12. Ps. 8:3, 4. 102:25. and other passages of the same tenor. Read Isaiah 40, and onward, where God, by his prophet, makes a most solemn challenge to all polytheists to bring the objects of their worship into competition with Him, and declares Himself to be distinguished from them all by his being "the Creator of the ends of the earth." (v. 28.); and by his having formed and arranged the heavens. v. 26. Can it be made plainer than these passages make it, that creative power was regarded by the Hebrew prophets, as the appropriate and peculiar attribute of the supreme God? The Old Testament is filled with passages which ascribe the work of creation to Jehovah alone. Who does not find them every where intermixed, in the most delightful and affecting manner, with all the instructions of the sacred Hebrew writers? The apostle, then, having decided the question that Christ did create the world, has decided consequently, that He must be truly divine.'

Prof. Stuart.

Verse 4.

The expression, *in Him was life*, is not to be understood of life natural, but of life eternal, which He revealed to the world, (2 Tim. 1:10.) to which He taught the way, (ch. 14:6.) which He promised to beavers, (ch. 10:28.) which He purchased for them, (ch. 3:1, 53, 54,) which He is appointed to give them, (ch. 17:2.) and to raise them up, (v. 23.) because He hath the life in Him-

self, v. 26. All this may be proved, 1. From the like expressions, 1 John 5:11. This is the promise that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: whence He is styled, the true God and eternal life, (v. 20.) the resurrection and the life, (ch. 11:25.) the way, the truth, and the life, ch. 14:6. 2. From v. 7. John came to bear witness of this light, that all might believe through Him, viz. to eternal life, (1 Tim. 1:76.) for so John witnesseth, ch. 3:15, 31. And hence it follows, that this life must be the light of men, by giving them the knowledge of this life, and of the way leading to it.

Dr. A. Clarke.

Verse 5.

The evangelist's language is very remarkable, and has been considered as the mere effect of inattention to the common rules of grammar. The first verb is present, 'shineth;' the second is the past, 'comprehended,' or 'apprehended.' But may he not have intended to state that the light of divine truth still shone, when he wrote, in the midst of a dark world; yet, that during the ages preceding Christ, viz. during his personal ministry, this light had been less apprehended and made use of in the world, than it was after his ascension, and the pouring out of the Spirit, and the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles? Before, it shone dimly among the Jews; but then it shone far more clearly both on Jews and Gentiles. (Note, Is. 60:1, 2.)

SCOTT.

'And the light long shone in the heathen world, and under the dispensation of Moses, and it still shineth in darkness, even upon the most ignorant and prejudiced part of mankind, and yet the darkness was so gross that it opposed its passage, and such was the prevailing ignorance of their hearts, that they did not apprehend it, or regard its dictates in such a manner, as to secure the blessings to which it would have led them.'

Dr. Dodridge.

6 ¶ There was 'a man sent from God, whose name was John.

7 The same came for 'a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all men through him might believe.

8 He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light.

9 That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

1. 3. 3:28. Is. 40:3-6. Mal. 3:1. 4:5, 6. Matt. 3:1, 4:5. 11:10. 21:25. Mark 1:1-8. Luke 1:15-17, 76. 3:2. &c. Acts 13:24, 25. Luke 1:13, 61-63. 1:19-20, 27, 32-34, 36. 3:25-36. 5:39. 3:28. Eph. 3:9. 1 Tim. 2:4. Tit. 2:11. 2 Pet. 3:9. 2:20. 3:28. 4:6, 3:22. 14:9. 15:1. Matt. 6:23. 1 John 1:8. 5:20. 7:8, 12. 12:46. Is. 8:20. 1 Thes. 5:4-7.

(2.) The degenerate world comprehended it not; most men received the grace of God in these discoveries, in vain. [1.] The world of mankind comprehended not the light that was in their understandings, but became vain in their imaginations concerning God and the eternal Word, Rom. 1:21, 27. The darkness of error and sin overpowered this light. God spake once, yea, twice, but man perceived it not, Job 33:14. [2.] The Jews, who had the Old Testament, comprehended not Christ in it. As there was a veil upon Moses' face, so upon the people's hearts. In the darkness of the types and the shadows, the light shone; but such was the darkness of their understandings, that they could not see it. Therefore, Christ came both to rectify the errors of the Gentile world, and to improve the truths of the Jewish church.

V. 6-14. The evangelist designs to bring in John Baptist bearing testimony to Christ.

1. John signifies *gracious*; his conversation was austere, but he was not less *gracious*. Now,

1. He was a man sent of God. The evangelist had said concerning Christ, that He was with God, and that He was God; but John was a mere man; God is pleased to speak to us by men like ourselves. John was a great man, but he was a man; he was God's messenger, Mal. 3:1. God gave him both his mission and his message, his credentials and his instructions. John wrought no miracle, nor had he revelations; but the strictness and purity of his life and doctrine, and their tendency to reform the world, and to revive the interests of God's kingdom among men, were indications that he was sent of God.

2. We are here told what his office and business were; (v. 7.) *The same came as an eye-witness.* He came for a testimony. The legal institutions had been long a testimony for God in the Jewish church; by them, revealed religion was kept up; hence we read of the *tabernacle of the testimony, the ark of the testimony, the law and the testimony*; but now divine revelation is to be turned into another channel; now the testimony of Christ is the testimony of God, 1 Cor. 1:6. 2:1. Among the Gentiles, God indeed had not left Himself without witness, (Acts 14:17.) but the Redeemer had no testimonies among them. There was a profound silence concerning Him, till John Baptist came for a witness to Him. Observe,

(1.) The matter of his testimony; he came to bear witness of the light. Light witnesses for itself, and carries its own evidence with it; but to those who shut their eyes against the light, it is necessary to bear witness to it. Christ's light needs not man's testimony, but the world's darkness does. John was like the night watchman that proclaims the approach of morn to those that have closed their eyes, and are not willing to observe it; or like that watchman that was set to tell those who asked what of the night, that the morning comes inquire, inquire ye, Isa. 21:11, 12. He was sent of God to tell the world that the long-looked-for Messiah was come, a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel; and that dispensation which would bring life and immortality to light.

(2.) The design of his testimony was, that all men through him might believe in Christ, whose way he was sent to prepare. He taught men to look through him, to Christ; through the doctrine of repentance to that of faith in Christ. He prepared men for the reception of Christ and his Gospel, by awakening them to a sight and sense of sin; that, their eyes being thereby opened, they might be ready to admit those beams of divine light, which, in the

Messiah, were ready to shine in their faces. If they would but receive this witness of man, they would find that the witness of God was greater, 1 John 5:9. See ch. 10:41. Observe, It was designed that all men through him might believe, excluding none that did not exclude themselves, as multitudes did, who rejected the counsel of God against themselves, and so received the grace of God in vain.

3. We are here cautioned not to mistake him for the Light, who only came to bear witness to it; (v. 8.) *He was not that Light* expected and promised. He was a star, like that which guided the wise men to Christ, a morning-star; but he was not the Sun; not the Bridegroom, but a friend of the Bridegroom; not the Prince, but his harbinger. There were those who rested in John's baptism, and looked no further, as those Ephesians, Acts 19:3. To rectify this mistake, the evangelist, when he speaks very honorably of him, yet shows that he must veil to Christ. He was great as the prophet of the Highest, but not the Highest Himself. Note, We must take heed of over-valuing ministers, as well as of undervaluing them; they are not our lords, nor have they dominion over our faith; but ministers by whom we believe, stewards of our Lord's house. We must not give up ourselves by an implicit faith to their conduct, for they are not that light; but we must attend to and receive their testimony; for they are sent to bear witness of that Light; so let us esteem them. Had John pretended to be that Light, he had not been a faithful witness. Those who usurp the honor of Christ, forfeit the honor of being his servants; yet John was very serviceable as a witness to the Light, though he was not that Light. Those may be of great use to us, who shine with borrowed light.

II. Having showed in the beginning of the chapter, the glories of Christ's Godhead, the writer here returns to show his incarnation, as Mediator.

1. Christ was the true Light, (v. 9.) not as if John Baptist were a false light, but in comparison with Christ, a very small light. Christ is that great Light. Other lights are but figuratively called so: Christ is the true Light. The Fountain of all knowledge and of all comfort must needs be the true Light. He is the true Light; for proof of it he does not refer us to the beams with which He enlightens the invisible world, but to those rays of his light which are darted downwards to this dark world. But how doth Christ lighten every man that comes into the world?

(1.) By the light of reason; that life which is the light of men, is from Him; all the discoveries of reason, all the comfort it gives us, and all the beauty it puts upon us, are from Christ.

(2.) By the publication of his Gospel to all nations. He lightens every man. John Baptist was like a candle that enlightens one room; Christ is the Light to lighten the Gentiles. His everlasting Gospel is to be preached to every nation, Rev. 14:6. Like the sun which lightens every man that will receive its light, (Ps. 19:6.) to which the preaching of the Gospel is compared, Rom. 10:18. Divine revelation is not to be confined, as it had been, to one people, but diffused to all, Matt. 5:15.

(3.) By the operation of his Spirit and grace. He lightens all that are enlightened to salvation; and those that are not enlightened by Him, perish in darkness. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God is said to be in the face of Jesus Christ, and is compared with that light which was at the beginning commanded to shine out of darkness, and which lightens every man that comes into the world. Whatever light any man has, whether natural or supernatural, he is indebted to Christ for it.

2. Christ was in the world, (v. 10.) before his

Verse 9.
We can no more infer from this expression, that Christ gives every individual a measure of spiritual light; than from one just before (7.) that every man actually 'believeth in Christ' through John's testimony both inferences are alike contrary to Scripture and to facts.

SCOTT.

Christ in this gospel once and again distinguished as the light that

cometh into the world, ch. 12:46. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. Also ch. 3:19. To say that the Messiah, by coming into the world, lightens every man, is no more than to say that He has, by his coming, rendered the spiritual light of his Gospel accessible to all, without distinction, who chose to be guided by it.

(NPTLL.)

10 He 'was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world 'knew him not.

11 He 'came unto his own, and his own received him not.

q 18. 5:17. Gen. 11:5-9 16:13. 17:1. 18:33. Ex. 34:6. Acts 14:17. 17:24-27. Hb. 1:3.
r 2. v. 3-Jer 10:11,12. Heb. 1:2. 11:25.
11:25. Matt. 1:27. 1 Cor. 1:21. 2:1. 1 John 3:1.
s Matt. 15:24. Acts 9:25, 26. 13:26, 46. Rom. 9:4, 5. 15:8. Gal. 4:4.
u 2:32. Is. 53:2, 3. Luke 19:14. 20:13-15. Acts 7:51, 52.

should reconcile us to our present abode in this world, that once Christ was here. He was in the world for a while, but it is spoken of as a thing past; and so it will be said of us shortly, *We were in the world*. O that when we are here no more, we may be where Christ is!

Christ had reason to expect the most affectionate and respectful welcome into this world; for the world was made by Him. He came to save a lost world, because it was a world of his own making. Why should not He concern himself to revive the light that was of his own kindling, to restore a life of his own infusing, and to renew the image that was originally of his own impressing? The world was made by Him, and therefore ought to do Him homage.

But notwithstanding, the world knew Him not. The great Maker, Ruler, Redeemer of the world was in it, and few or none of the inhabitants of the world were aware of it. The ox knows his owner, but the more brutish world did not; they did not own Him, nor bid Him welcome, because they did not know Him; and they did not know Him, because He did not make himself known in external glory and majesty. His kingdom came not with observation, because it was to be a kingdom of probation. When He shall come as a Judge, the world shall know Him.

3. He came (v. 11.) not only to the world, which was his own, but to the people of Israel, that were peculiarly his own; of them He came, among them He lived, and to them was first sent. The Jews were at this time a mean, despicable people, the crown was fallen from their heads; yet in remembrance of the ancient covenant, bad and poor as they were, Christ was not ashamed to look upon them as his own. The Jews were his, as a man's house and lands and goods are his, which he uses and possesses; but believers are his, as a man's wife and children are his own, which he loves and enjoys, ch. 13:1. He came to his own, to seek and save them, because they were his own. He was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, for it was He whose own the sheep were. Now observe,

(1.) The generality rejected Him; His own received Him not. He had reason to expect that those who were his own, should have bidden Him welcome, considering their obligations to Him, and how fair were the opportunities they had of coming to the knowledge of Him. They had the oracles of God, which told them beforehand when and where to expect Him, and of what tribe and family He should arise. He came among them Himself, with signs and wonders, Himself the greatest; and therefore it is not said of them, as it was of the world, (v. 10.) that they knew Him not; but his own, though they could not but know Him, yet received Him not; did not receive his doctrine, did not welcome Him as the Messiah, but fortified themselves against Him. The chief priests, that were in a particular manner his own, (for the Levites were God's tribe,) were ringleaders in this contempt put upon Him. This was very unjust, because they were his own, and therefore He might command their respect; and it was very unkind and ungrateful, because He came to seek and save them. Note, Many who profess to be Christ's own, do not receive Him, because they will not part with their sins, nor have Him to reign over them.

(2.) Yet there was a remnant who owned Him, and were faithful to Him. Though his own received Him not, yet there were those that received Him; v. 12. Though Israel were not gathered, Christ was glorious. Though the body of that nation perished, and perished in unbelief, yet there were many of them that were wrought upon to submit to Christ, and many more that were not of that fold. Observe here,

The true Christian's description and property; he receives Christ, and believes on his name; the latter explains the former. Note, First, To be a Christian indeed, is to believe on Christ's name; it is to assent to the gospel-discovery, and consent to the gospel-proposal, concerning Him. His name is the Word of God; the King of kings; the Lord our Righteousness; Jesus a Savior. Now to believe on his name, is to acknowledge that He is what these names bespeak Him to be; and to acquiesce in it, that He be so to us. Secondly, Believing in Christ's name is receiving Him as a Gift from God. We must receive his doctrine as true and good; his law as just and holy; his offers as kind, and the image of his grace, and impressions of his love, as the governing principle of our affections and actions.

The true Christian's dignity and privilege are two-fold:

First, The privilege of adoption, which takes them into the number of God's children: To them gave He power to become the sons of God. Hitherto the adoption pertained to the Jews only; (Israel is my son, my first-born; but

now, by faith in Christ, Gentiles are trodden of God, Gal. 3: 26. They have power, authority; for no man taketh this power to himself, but who is authorized by the gospel-charter. To them gave He a right, a pre-eminence. This power have all the saints. Note, 1. It is the unspeakable privilege of Christians, that they become the children of God. They were by nature children of wrath; children of this world. If they be the children of God, they are made so. Persons are not born Christians, but made such. Tertull. Behold what manner of love is this, 1 John 3: 1. God calls them his children, they call Him Father, and are entitled to the privileges of children; those of the way, and those of their home. 2. The privilege of adoption is entirely owing to Christ; He gave this power to them that believe on his name. God is his Father, and so ours; and it is by virtue of our espousals to Him and union with Him, that God is our Father. It was in Christ that we were predestinated to the adoption; from Him we receive both the character and the Spirit of adoption, and He is the First-born among many brethren. The Son of God became a Son of man, that the sons and daughters of men might become the sons and daughters of God Almighty.

Secondly, The privilege of regeneration; (v. 13.) which were born. Note, All the children of God are born again; all that are adopted, are regenerated. This real change evermore attends that relative one. Wherever God confers the dignity, He creates the nature and disposition, of children. Men cannot do so, when they adopt. Here we have an account of the original of this new birth. (1.) It is not propagated by natural generation from parents. It is not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of corruptible seed, 1 Pet. 1: 23. Man is called flesh and blood, because thence he has his original; but we do not become the children of God as we become the children of our parents. Note, Grace does not run in the blood, like corruption. Man polluted begat a son in his own likeness; (Gen. 5: 3.) but man renewed does not beget a son in that likeness. The Jews gloried much in their parentage and noble blood. We are Abraham's seed, and therefore to them pertained the adoption; but this New-Testament adoption is not founded in any such relation. (2.) It is not produced by the natural power of our will. As it is not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, so neither is it of the will of man; that is impotent in determining itself to that which is good; so that the principles of the divine life are not of our own planting, it is the grace of God that makes us willing to be his. Nor can human laws or writings prevail to sanctify and regenerate a soul; if they could, the new birth would be by the will of man. But, It is of God. This new birth is owing to the Word of God as the means. (1 Pet. 1: 23.) and to the Spirit of God as the sole Author. True believers are born of God, 1 John 3: 9, and 5: 1. And this is necessary to their adoption; for we cannot expect the love of God, if we have not something of his likeness, nor claim the privileges of adoption, if we be not under the power of regeneration.

4. The Word was made Flesh, v. 14. This expresses Christ's incarnation more clearly. By his divine presence, He always was in the world, and by his prophets He came to his own. But now that the fullness of time was come, He was sent forth made of a woman, (Gal. 4: 4.) God manifested in the flesh, according to the faith and hope of holy Job, (ch. 19: 26.) Yet shall I see God in my flesh. Observe here,

(1.) The human nature of Christ with which He was veiled expressed two ways.

[1.] The Word was made Flesh. Forasmuch as the children who were to become the sons of God, were partakers of flesh and blood, He likewise took part of the same, Heb. 2: 14. The Socinians agree that Christ is God and

Verse 11.

(His own.) 'The Jewish nation, to whom He had been so expressly promised as their great Messiah.'

DODDRIDGE.

'To receive Christ is to acknowledge Him as the promised Messiah.'

to believe in Him as the victim that bears away the sin of the world to obey his Gospel, and to become a partaker of his holiness, without which no man can ever see God.' It A CARRER

12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

[Practical Observations.]

Matt. 10:40. 18:5. Col. 2:6. 14:56,5. Jer. 3:19. Hos 1:10. Rom. 8:14,15. 2 Cor. 6:17,18. Gal. 3:26. 4:6. 1 John 3:1. 2:23. 3:18. 20:21. Matt. 12:21. Acts 1:6. 1 John 3:23. 5:12. 3:3. 1 Pet. 1:3,23. 2:2. 1 John 3:9. 4:7. 5:14,15. b 3:3-41. Matt. 3:9. Rom. 9:7-9. c Gen. 25:22,28. 27:34. Rom. 9:10-16. d Ps. 110:3. Phil. 3:1-5. 10:1-3. 1 Cor. 3:6. Rom. 2:13. Jam. 1:18. e 3:6-8. Tit. 3:5. 1 John 2:28,29.

things, and submit to that from which He was at the greatest distance. The voice that ushered in the Gospel, cried, *All flesh is grass*; (Isa. 40:6.) to make the Redeemer's love the more wonderful, who, to redeem and save us, was made Flesh, and withered as grass; but the Word of the Lord, who was made Flesh, endures for ever; when made Flesh, He ceased not to be the Word of God.

[2.] He dwelt among us in this lower world. Having taken upon Him the nature of man, He put himself into the condition of men. The Word might have been made Flesh, and dwelt among the angels; but, having taken a body of the same mould with us, He came, and resided with us. He dwelt among us, worms of the earth, us that He had no need of, that He got nothing by; that were corrupt and depraved, and revolted from God. The Lord God dwelt even among the rebellious, Ps. 68:18. He that had dwelt among angels, came, and dwelt among a generation of pipers, sinners, which was worse to Him than David's dwelling in Mesech and Kedar, or Ezekiel's dwelling among scorpions, or the church of Pergamos dwelling where Satan's seat is. When we look upon the world of spirits, how mean and contemptible does this flesh appear, which we carry about with us, and this world in which our lot is cast; and how hard is it to a contemplative mind, to be reconciled to them! But that the eternal Word was clothed with a body as we are, and dwelt in this world as we do; this has put an honor upon them both, and should make us willing to abide in the flesh while God has any work for us to do, for Christ dwelt in this world, bad as it is, till He had finished what He had to do, ch. 17:4. He dwelt among the Jews, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, *He shall dwell in the tents of Shem*, Gen. 9:27. And see Zech. 2:10. Though the Jews were unkind to Him, yet He continued to dwell among them; though (as some of the ancient writers tell us) He was invited to better treatment by Abgarus king of Edessa, yet He removed not to any other nation.

He dwelt among us. He was in the world, not as a wayfaring man that tarries but for a night, but dwelt; made a long residence; the original word is observable, *He dwelt among us as in a tabernacle*, which intimates, First, That He dwelt here in very mean circumstances, as shepherds that dwell in tents. He did not dwell among us as in a palace, but as in a tent; for He had not where to lay his head, and was always upon the remove. Secondly, His state here was a military state; soldiers dwell in tents. He had long since proclaimed war with the seed of the serpent, and now He takes the

field in person; sets up his standard, and pitches his tent, to prosecute this war. Thirdly, His stay among us was not perpetual. He dwelt here as in a tent, not as at home. The patriarchs, by dwelling in tabernacles, confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on earth, and sought the better country, and so did Christ, leaving us an example, Heb. 13:13, 14. Fourthly, As of old God dwelt in the tabernacle of Moses by the Shechinah between the cherubim, so now He dwells in the human nature of Christ, the true Shechinah, the symbol of God's peculiar presence. And we are to address God through Christ, and from Him receive divine oracles.

(2.) The beams of his divine glory darted through this veil of flesh; We beheld his glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The sun is still the fountain of light, though eclipsed; so Christ was still the Brightness of his Father's glory, even when He dwelt among us. And how slightly soever the Jews thought of Him, there were those that saw through the veil.

The witnesses of this glory were, we, his disciples and followers, most familiar with Him, among whom He dwelt. Other men discover their weaknesses to those that are most familiar with them; those that were most intimate with Him, saw most of his glory. As the disciples knew the mysteries of his doctrine, while others had it under the veil of parables; so they saw the glory of his divinity, while others saw only the veil of his human nature. He manifested himself to them, and not unto the world. These witnesses were a competent number, twelve, a jury of witnesses; men of plain integrity, and far from intrigue.

They had not their evidence at second-hand, but were themselves eye-witnesses of those proofs, on which they built their testimony that He was the Son of the living God. We saw it. The word signifies a fixed, abiding sight, so that we gave the opportunity of making their observations. This apostle himself explains this. What we declare unto you of the Word of life, is, what we have seen with our eyes, and what we have looked upon, 1 John 1:1.

He gave us the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father. The glory of the Word made Flesh, was such a glory as became the only-begotten Son of God, and could not be the glory of any other. Note, First, Jesus Christ is the Only-begotten of the Father. Believers are the children of God by adoption, and regeneration; they are in a sense of a like nature, (2 Pet. 1:4.) and have the image of his perfections; but Christ is of the same nature, the express Image of his person, and the Son of God by an eternal generation. Angels are sons of God, but He never said to any of them, *This day have I begotten thee*, Heb. 1:5. Secondly, He was evidently declared to be the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 6-13. Many have, in different ages, been 'sent from God to bear witness to the truth,' that 'all men through them might believe;' and these have 'shone as lights in the world;' but every one of them has confessed that all his light was a reflection of the beams of 'the Sun of Righteousness;' and all the boasted illumination, set up in opposition to Him, will infallibly lead men down to everlasting darkness. But what numbers, even of his professed disciples, refuse to welcome the condescending Savior of the world! Too wise to submit to his teaching, too proud of their goodness to rely on his merits, too attached to their own will to be subject to his commands, they reject Him in each of his offices; or, like Galileo, they 'care for none of these things;' and should He come in person again on earth, He would be despised by numbers, who could see no glory in Him, and who would feel no need of Him. But there are those, who, conscious of their ignorance, guilt,

pollution, and slavery to sin and Satan, gladly receive Him as their Prophet, Priest, King, Redeemer, Physician, and Savior, believe his Word, and rely on his truth and love. He is to them 'the Pearl of great price;' they would 'sell all to purchase Him;' and, having once received Him, they ever after renew and ratify that important transaction. To this chosen remnant the Savior gives the privilege of becoming the children of God, and will surely preserve and prepare them for the inheritance reserved for them in heaven. These are not found in one family or nation; they are not selected by the partiality of ministers or pious friends; they are not chosen because of previous excellency, but 'born of God.' They begin to fear God, mourn for sin, believe, hope, pray, perceive the preciousness of Christ, and gladly embrace his salvation.

SCOTT.

Verses 12, 13.

'To as many as received Him, (even) to all of them, without any exception of even the poorest or the vilest, He granted the glorious privilege of becoming the sons of God; that is, He adopted them into God's family, so that they became entitled to the present immunities, and the future eternal inheritance of his children. And they who thus received (believed on) Him were possessed of these privileges, not in consequence of their being born of blood, of their being descended from the loins of the holy patriarchs, or sharing in circumcision, and

the blood of the sacrifices; nor could they have it merely to themselves of the flesh, or to their own superior wisdom and goodness, as if by the power of corrupted nature alone, they had made themselves to differ; nor to the will of man, or to the wisest advice and most powerful exhortations which their fellow-creatures might address to them; but most humbly acknowledge, that they were born of God, and indebted to the efficacious influences of his regenerative grace for all their privileges, and for all their hopes. Compare John 3:1-8. TIME 3:3-7, and Jam. 1:18.'

ADDISON

[605]

14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

15 ¶ John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me; for he was before me.

1. Is. 7:14. Matt. 1:18, 20-23. Luke 1:31-33. 2:11. Rom. 1:3, 4. 9:5. 1 Cor. 15:47. Gal. 4:4. Phil. 2:6-8. 1 Tim. 3:16. Heb. 2:14-17. 10:5. 1 John 4:2, 3. 2 John 7. 21. 1 Th. 1:10. 2 Th. 1:10. 14. 2. 1 Cor. 15:2. 60:1, 2. Matt. 17:1-5. 2 Cor. 4:4-6. Heb. 1:3. 1 Pet. 2:7. 2 Pet. 1:17. 3. 18. 3:15, 16. Ps. 27. Acts 13:33. Heb. 1:3. 5:5. 1 John 4:9. 16:17. 1 Tim. 2:9. Eph. 2:8, 18. Col. 1:19. 1 Tim. 1:14-16. 8:4-7. 2 Th. 2:14. 2 Tim. 5:3. 35. Matt. 3:11. Mark 1:7. Luke 3:16. 12:30. 8:58. 17:5. Prov. 9:22. Is. 9:5. Mic. 5:2. Phil. 2:6, 7. Col. 1:17. Heb. 1:3. Rev. 1:11, 17, 18. 2:8.

struct us. He had a fulness of knowledge and of compassion. *Secondly*, He has a fulness of grace and truth for us. He received that He might give, and God was well pleased in Him, that He might be well pleased with us in Him; and this was the truth of the legal types.

V. 15-18. I. Here, 1. Observe how he expressed his testimony; he cried according to the prediction, that he should be the voice of one crying. The Old-Testament prophets cried aloud, to show people their sins; this New-Testament prophet cried aloud, to show people their Savior. This intimates, (1.) That it was a public testimony, that all manner of persons might take notice of it, for all are concerned in it. False teachers entice secretly, but wisdom publishes her dictates in the places of concourse. (2.) He was free and hearty in bearing this testimony. He cried as one that was both well assured of, and well affected to, the truth he witnessed of. With exultation of spirit, he welcomes the public appearance of the Savior.

2. He appeals to what he had said at the beginning of his ministry, when he had directed them to expect one that should come after him, whose forerunner he was, and never intended any other honor than to lead them to Him, and to prepare his way. This he had given them notice of from the first. Note, It is very comfortable to a minister, to have the testimony of his conscience, that he sets out in his ministry with honest principles and sincere intentions, with a single eye to the glory and honor of Christ. What he had then said, he applies to this Jesus whom he had lately baptized, and who was so remarkably owned from heaven; *This was He of whom I spake*. John did not tell them that there would shortly appear such an one among them, and then leave them to find Him out; but in this he went beyond all the Old-Testament prophets, that he particularly specified the person; *This was He*, of whom I told you, and to Him all I said is to be accommodated.¹ What was it he said?

(1.) He had given the preference to Jesus; *He that comes after me*, in birth and public appearance, is preferred before me; *He that succeeds me* in preaching and making disciples, is a more excellent Person; as the prince that comes after, is preferred before the harbinger. Note, Jesus Christ, the Son of the Highest, (Luke 1:32.) was preferred before John Baptist, who was only the prophet of the Highest, Luke 1:76. John was a minister, but Christ the Mediator of the New Testament. Though John had a great name and interest, yet he gave the preference to Him to whom it belonged. Note, Ministers of Christ must prefer Him and his interest before themselves and their own interests: they will make an ill account, that seek their own things, not the things of Christ, Phil. 2:21. He comes after me, and

yet is preferred before me. Note, God recompenses his gifts according to his good pleasure, and many times crosses and, as Jacob did, preferring the younger before the elder. Paul far outstripped those that were in Christ before him.

He here gives a good reason for it; for he was before me. *He was my first, or first to me*; He was my first Cause. The First, is one of God's names, Isa. 44:6. [1.] In respect of seniority: for He was before Abraham, ch. 8:58. Nay, He was before all things, Col. 1:17. I am but of yesterday, He from eternity. It was but in those days that John Baptist came, (Matt. 3:1.) but the goings forth of Jesus were of old, from everlasting, Mic. 5:2. This proves two natures in Christ; Christ, as Man, came after John as to his public appearance; Christ, as God, was before him; and how could He otherwise be before him but by an eternal existence? [2.] In respect of supremacy, for He was my Prince; so some princes are called the first. 'It is He for whose sake and service I am sent: He is my Master, I his minister.'

II. He returns to speak of Christ. The 16th verse has a manifest connection with v. 14, where the incarnate Word was said to be full of grace and truth. This he makes the matter, not only of adoration, but of thankfulness, because, from that fulness we all have received. He received gifts for men, (Ps. 68:18.) that He might give gifts to men, Eph. 4:8. He was filled, that He might fill all in all, (Eph. 1:23.) might fill our treasures, Prov. 8:21. He has a fountain of fulness or flowing; *We all have received*. All we apostles; so some. We have received the favor of this apostleship, that is grace; and a fitness for it, that is truth; or rather, All we believers. Note, All true believers receive from Christ's fulness; the greatest saints cannot live without Him, the weakest may live by Him. This excludes boasting, that we have nothing but we have received it; and silences perplexing fears, that we want nothing but we may receive it.

We have received grace for grace. Our receivings by Christ are all summed up in this one word, grace; we have received even grace, a gift, so rich, so invaluable; we have received no less than grace; a gift to be spoken of with an emphasis. It is repeated, *grace for grace*: for to every stone in this building, as well as to the top-stone, we must cry, *Grace, grace* Observe,

Grace is the good will of God towards us, and the good work of God in us. God's good will works the good work, and then the good work qualifies us for further tokens of his good will. As the cistern receives from the fulness of the fountain, the branches, from the root, and the air, from the sun; so we receive grace from the fulness of Christ.

Grace for grace: The phrase is singular, and interpreters put different senses upon it, each of which will be of use to illustrate the unsearchable riches of Christ. It speaks,

[1.] The freeness of this grace. It is grace for grace-sake. We receive grace, not for our sakes, but because it seemed good in thy sight. It is a gift according to grace, (Rom. 12:6.) for the sake of Jesus Christ. God was well pleased in Him, and is therefore well pleased with us in Him, Eph. 1:6.

[2.] Grace for grace is abundance of grace,

Verse 14.

And the Word was made flesh.] 'That very person who was in the beginning—who was with God—and who was God, (v. 1.) in the fulness of time became flesh.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'In the language of the synagogues the term *flesh* was so often employed to denote a human being, that the evangelist's expression would not sound so harshly in ears accustomed to that idiom, as the literal version of the words does in ours. I have preferred the phrase *became incarnate*, which, if it does not so much trace the letter of the original as the common rendering does, is closer to the sense, and sufficiently simple and intelligible. This expression, the *Word became incarnate*, has been thought by some, not implausibly, to have been pointed by the evangelist against the error of the Docetæ, who denied the human nature of Christ, supposing Him to have been a man only in appearance; and the expression, *The Word was God*, (v. 1.) to have been pointed against the error of the Ebionites, who denied his divine nature, affirming that He was no more than a man.'

CAMPBELL.

'The two expressions,—*The Word was God*, and *the Word became flesh*,—when taken together, accord precisely with other passages of Scripture in which He is denominated God, in the very same kind of connection.—Isa. 9:6. For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given;—and his name shall be called,—*the mighty God*. Compare also Matt. 1:22, 23. Rom. 9:5.'

Full of grace and truth.] 'Full of favor, kindness, and mercy to men, teaching the way to the kingdom of God, with all the simplicity, plainness, dignity and enrgy of truth.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 15.

Preferred, &c.] 'This is properly said of those, who are placed in rank before others, as masters whom their attendants follow. It signifies a more honorable situation, and, by consequence, superior dignity.' Beza. (27. Notes, Matt. 3:11, 12. Luke 3:15-17.)

SCOTT.

Was before me.] 'He was from eternity, and from Him I have received both my being and my ministry. Read also note v. 30.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

16 And ^{of} his fulness have all we received ^a and grace for grace.

¹⁷ For ^{the} law was given: by Moses, ^{but} grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.

18 No man hath seen God at any time: the only begotten Son,

¹⁹ Matt. 11:14. Luke 21: 15. Acts 13:12. Rom. 8:9. 1 Cor. 14:5. Eph. 4:12. Col. 2:3.

²⁰ 1 Pet. 1:11. Zech. 17: Matt. 13:12. Rom. 10: 47. 1 Pet. 1:2.

²¹ 3:45. 9:29. Acts 7:38. 28:23. Rom. 8:10. 2 Cor. 3:7-10. Gal. 3:10-13, 17. Heb. 3:5, 6. 8:1-12.

²² 14:1. Gen. 3:15. 22:18. Ps. 85:10. 89:1, 2. 98:3. Mic. 7:20. Luke 1: 34, 35, 68-79. Acts 13:34-39. Rom. 8:1-16. 12:13. 15:8. 2 Cor. 1:20.

²³ Heb. 9:22. 10:4-10. 11:39, 40. Rev. 5:8-10. 7:9-17.

²⁴ 8:46. Ex. 33:20. Col. 1:15. 1 Tim. 1:17. 6:16. 1 John 1:20.

²⁵ 14: 3:16-18. 1 John 4:5.

[5.] It speaks the *augmentation and continuance of grace*. *Grace for grace* is one grace to confirm and perfect, another grace. We are changed into the divine image, from *glory to glory*, from one degree of grace to another, 2 Cor. 3:18. Those that have *true grace*, shall have *more grace*, Jam. 4:6. When God gives grace, He saith, Take this *in part*; for He who hath promised, will perform.

[6.] It speaks the *conformity of grace in the saints to the grace that is in Christ*. *Grace for grace* is, grace in us answering to grace in Him, as the impression upon the wax answers the seal. The grace we receive from Christ, *changes us into the same image*, 2 Cor. 3:18. The image of the Son, (Rom. 8:29.) the image of the heavenly, 1 Cor. 15:49.

2. We have received *grace and truth*, v. 17. He had said, (v. 14.) that Christ was *full of grace and truth*: now here he saith, that by Him *grace and truth* came to us. From Christ we receive *grace*; this is a string he delights to harp upon. He further observes concerning this grace,

Its preference above the law of Moses. *The law was given by Moses*; it was a discovery of God's will concerning man, and his good will to man; but the gospel of Christ is a much clearer discovery both of duty and happiness. That which was given by Moses, was terrifying, bound with penalties, a law which could not *give life*, given with abundance of terror; (Heb. 12:18.) but that by Christ, is of another nature; it has all the uses of the law, but not the terror, for it is *grace*: *grace teaching*, (Tit. 2:11.) *grace reigning*, Rom. 5:21. It is a law, but a remedial law: the endearments of love, not the afflictments of the curse.

It is connected with truth; *grace and truth*. The gospel discovers truths, for the understanding, as well as *grace*, for the will and affections. It is a *faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance*; it is grace and truth. The offers of *grace* are *sincere*, we may venture our souls upon them; they are made in earnest, for it is *grace and truth*. It is *grace and truth*, with reference to the law given by Moses. For it is, [1.] The performance of all the Old Testament promises. In the Old Testament we often find *mercy and truth* put together, that is, mercy according to promise; so here, *grace and truth* denote grace according to promise. See Luke 1:72. 1 Kings 8:56. [2.] It is the substance of all the types and shadows. There was grace both in the ordinances and the providences concerning Israel; but they were only shadows of that grace that is to be brought to us by the revelation of Jesus Christ. He is the true paschal Lamb, the true Scape-goat, the true *Manna*. They had grace in the picture, we in a person, that is *grace and truth*. *Grace and truth was made*; the same word *was* was used, (v. 3.) concerning

one grace upon another; as *skin for skin* is skin after skin, even all that a man has, Job 2:4. It is a blessing poured out; that there shall not be room to receive it; *plenteous redemption*: one grace a pledge of more grace. It is the *fulness of God*, with which we are filled. We are not straitened in the grace of Christ, if we be not straitened in our own bosoms.

[3.] *Grace for grace*, is grace for the promoting and advancing of grace. Grace to be exercised by ourselves, gracious habits for gracious acts; grace to be ministered to others, vouchersafements for gracious performances, a talent to be traded with. The apostles received grace, (Rom. 1:5. Eph. 3:8.) that they might communicate it, 1 Pet. 4:10.

[4.] The substitution of New-Testament grace in the stead of Old-Testament grace. And this sense is confirmed by what follows; (v. 17.) for the Old Testament had grace in type, the New Testament in truth. There was a grace under the Old Testament; the Gospel was preached then; (Gal. 3:8.) but that grace is superseded, and we have gospel-grace instead of it, a *glory which excelleth*, 2 Cor. 3:10. Discoveries of grace are now more clear, distributions of it far more plentiful; this is grace instead of grace.

[5.] It speaks the *augmentation and continuance of grace*. *Grace for grace* is one grace to confirm and perfect, another grace. We are changed into the divine image, from *glory to glory*, from one degree of grace to another, 2 Cor. 3:18. Those that have *true grace*, shall have *more grace*, Jam. 4:6. When God gives grace, He saith, Take this *in part*; for He who hath promised, will perform.

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principle. It is, however, doubted by many, who steadfastly maintain the doctrine of our Lord's deity, and of a Trinity of persons in the God-head, whether the title of 'the Son of God,' relates to any thing more than his human nature, his miraculous conception, and his mediatorial character and work; and the opinion of former orthodox divines on this subject seems to be given up by them as unscriptural. Now it is allowed, that numbers have speculated, explained, and disputed too much concerning these mysteries, of which we can know no more than is expressly revealed: and it must also be remembered, that such relative terms as Father and Son, when applied to the Deity, can only be used in a figurative sense, or one not comprehensible by us, in order to help our feeble apprehensions: and therefore they must not be made the foundation of any conclusions inconsistent with the eternal self-existence and equality of 'the Word.' Yet I apprehend, that Christ is called in Scripture 'the only-begotten Son of God,' and 'the Son of the Father,' in respect of his divine nature; and that He is the Son of God, by 'a generation that none can declare.' Various expressions, concerning the love of God in giving his Son for us, seem to refer, not to his giving Him to death, *when incarnate*; but to his giving Him to be incarnate for that purpose. 'He spared not his own Son,' and this gift was so immense, that the apostle counted all other things to be as nothing in comparison. Indeed it does not appear why He should be called 'the only-begotten Son of God,' merely in respect of his human nature; for the formation of Adam, and of all the angels was produced equally immediately and divine, as that of the human nature of Christ; and 'the glory as of the Only-begotten of the Father,' (v. 14) evidently relates to his divine, and not to his human nature. (Notes, 3: 607.)

Christ's making all things. The law was only made known by Moses, but the being of *grace and truth*, as well as the discovery of it, is owing to Christ; this was made by Him, as the world at first was; and by Him this *grace and truth* do consist.

We also receive from Christ a clear revelation of God, (v. 18,) whom *no man hath seen at any time*. This was the grace and truth which came by Christ, the knowledge of, and acquaintance with God.

No man hath seen God at any time. This intimates, [1.] That the nature of God being *spiritual*, He is invisible to bodily eyes, a Being whom *no man hath seen, or can see*, 1 Tim. 6:16. We therefore need to live by faith only which we see Him that is invisible, Heb. 11:27. [2.] The revelation which God made of Himself in the Old Testament was short and imperfect, in comparison with that made by Christ; *No man hath seen God at any time*: that is, what was seen and known of God before the incarnation of Christ, was *not* seeing to that which is now seen and known; *and* immortality are now brought to a much clearer light. [3.] None of the Old-Testament prophets were so well qualified to make known the mind and will of God as Jesus was, for none of them had seen God at any time. Moses beheld the similitude of the Lord, (Num. 12:8.) but could not see his face, Exod. 33:20. But this recommends Christ's religion to us, that it was founded by One that had seen God, and knew more of his mind than any one else ever did, for He had seen Him.

The only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

How fit He was to make this discovery, and every way qualified for it. He alone was worthy to take the book, and open the seals, Rev. 5:9. For He is the only-begotten Son; and who so likely to know the Father as the Son; or, in whom is the Father better known than in the Son? Matt. 11:27. He is of the same nature with the Father, so that He who hath seen Him, hath seen the Father, ch. 14:9. The servant is not supposed to know so well what his Lord does, as the Son, (ch. 15:) Moses was faithful as a servant, but Christ as a Son. He is in the bosom of the Father from eternity; when He was here upon earth, yet still as God, He was in the bosom of the Father, and thither He returned when He ascended. In the bosom of the Father, 1. In his special love, dear to Him, in whom He was well pleased. All God's saints are in his hand, but his Son was in the highest degree in his love. 2. In his secret counsels. As there was complacency, so there was a mutual consciousness, between the Father and Son; (Matt. 11:27.) none so fit as He to make known God, for none knew his mind as He did. Our most secret counsels we are said to hide in our bosom; Christ was privy to the bosom-counsels of the Father. The prophets sat down at his feet as scholars, Christ lay in his bosom as a Friend. See Eph. 3:11.

He hath declared Him. He has declared that

Verse 16. 'When the immediate connection between the 16th and the 14th verses is attended to, the meaning of the clause is equally obvious as that of any of the foregoing examples. The Word incarnate, says the apostle, resided among us, full of grace and truth, and of his fulness we all have received, even grace for his grace; that is, of every grace or celestial gift, conferred above measure upon Him, his disciples have received a portion according to their measure. If there should remain a doubt whether this were the sense of the passage, the words immediately following seem calculated to remove it. For the law was given by Moses, the grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Here the evangelist intimates that Jesus Christ was as truly the channel of divine grace to his disciples, as Moses had been of the knowledge of God's law to the Israelites.' CAMPBELL.

President Edwards gives the same interpretation as above. Ed. Grace and truth.] 'The grace and the truth,' viz. which was set forth in the Old Testament from the beginning. SCOTT.

Verse 18. We have frequently had occasion to observe, that, from the beginning, every discovery of God to man, and all the visions and displays of JAHUAH to Adam, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Isaiah, and others, were made by the eternal Son, who afterwards became incarnate, being anticipations of that event: (Notes, Gen. 3: 8. 16: 10, 11, 13, 14. 18: 33. 22: 26-30. 43: 16. Ex. 3: 2, 14. Josh. 6: 1-25. 13: 6. 14: 8. 18: 3-6.) not, can these appearances be of God reconciled with this, and similar declarations, on any other

which is 'in the bosom of the Father, 'he hath declared him.

[Practical Observations.]

19 ¶ And this is the record of John, "when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem, to ask him, 'Who art thou?

20 And he confessed, and denied not; but confessed, 'I am not the Christ.

12:23. Prov. 8:30. Is. 40:11. Lam. 2:12. Luke 16:22-23. Gen. 16:13. 12:41. 14:9. 17:26. 28. 18:33. 24:29-30. 48:15, 16. Ex. 3:4-5. 23:21. 33:18-23. 34:5-7. Num. 12:8. Josh. 5:13-15. 6:1, 2. Judg. 6:12-26. 13:20-23. Is. 6:1-5. Ez. 1:28-29. Hos. 12:3-5. Matt. 11:27. Luke 10:22. 1 John 5:20. n 5:33-36. Dent. 17:9-11. 24:8. Matt. 21:23-32. s 10:24. Acta 13:25. 19:4. 3:28-36. Matt. 3:11, 12. Mark 1:7, 8. Luke 3:15-17.

a priest of the seed of Aaron, and therefore was examined by priests. It was prophesied concerning John's ministry, that it should *purify the sons of Levi*, (Mal. 3:3.) and therefore they were jealous of him and his reformation. They were of the *Pharisees*, proud, self-justiciaries, that thought they needed no repentance, and therefore could not bear one that preached repentance.

Their errand was to inquire concerning John and his baptism. They did not send for John, probably lest the people where John was, should be provoked to rise, or lest the people where they were, should be brought acquainted with him; they thought it was good to keep him at a distance.

They inquired concerning him, 1. To satisfy their curiosity; as the Athenians inquired concerning Paul's doctrine, for the novelty of it, Acts 17:19, 20. Such conceit they had of themselves, that the doctrine of repentance was to them strange doctrine. 2. It was to show their authority. They thought that they *looked great* when they arraigned him at their bar whom all men counted as a prophet. 3. It was with a design to *suppress* and silence him if they could, for they were jealous of his growing interest; and his ministry agreed neither with the Mosaic dispensation, which they had been long under, nor with their notions of the Messiah's kingdom.

They asked him, *Who art thou?* John's appearance in the world was surprising; he was in the wilderness till the day of his showing unto Israel; his spirit, his converse, his doctrine, commanded and gained respect; but he did not, as seducers do, give out himself to be some great one. He was more industrious to *do good* than to *appear great*; and therefore waved saying any thing of himself till he was legally interrogated. Those speak best for Christ, that say least of themselves, whose *own works* praise them, not their *own lips*.

He answers their interrogatory,

V. 14-13. To unbelievers, there appears in Christ 'no beauty that they should desire Him'; but all who truly believe, adore the condescension of the 'Word, who became flesh to tabernacle among us.' They discern Him as 'the Only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth'; they value 'the unsearchable riches' and inexhaustible fullness, laid up in Him; they see that 'He is the Chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely'; worthy to be adored and loved, far beyond all the sons of earth and heaven. They therefore consider prophets, apostles, martyrs, and saints, as so many monuments to the Redeemer's glory, and so many encouragements to apply to Him, who is able to render them also wise and happy; and to furnish them with grace, which may enable them to 'shine

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as lights in the world,' and live to the glory of his name. We ought highly to value every discovery of the perfections of JEHOVAH: his 'law is holy, just, and good,' was given for most important purposes; and we should endeavor to make the proper use of it. But we cannot from it derive pardon, or righteousness; it may teach us to 'adorn the doctrine of God our Savior,' but it cannot supply the place of it. No mercy comes from God to sinners, but through Christ; 'no man can come to the Father but by Him'; no man can know God, except as the only-begotten Son reveals Him. Ignorance, condemnation, and wrath, must be the portion of every man, who rejects the Son of God; the Centre of all the promises; the Life and Soul of doctrines, ordinances and precepts. SCOTT.

16 1 John 4:9-12.]—In short, it seems to denote something incomprehensible, and infinitely superior to creation, and to every thing of which we have the most remote conception, constituting an equality of nature, and a relation between the eternal Father and the Son, of which that relation among men is but a feeble shadow; yet suited to help our conceptions about it. Perhaps we should never have been informed of the distinction of persons in the Godhead, but on account of the economy of the work of redemption: or, to speak more properly, that work seems to have been planned, in order to a display of the glory of God, as well in this distinction of persons, as in the harmony of his attributes. The apprehensions of the most exalted creatures, on such a subject, must be inadequate. Ours must *I present* be also confused and defective. SCOTT.

In the bosom.] 'Or, upon the bosom. This formula, derived its origin from the custom of the ancients in sitting, or rather in reclining, at meals: according to which, he who reclined immediately below another at table, seemed, as it were, to lie in his bosom: and the most favored guests, (who were placed the nearest to the host,) sometimes literally did so. (See the note on Luke 16: 22.) And as the same words of reclining subsisted among the Greeks and Romans, so they had themselves the same expression: and sometimes used it as here, in a metaphorical sense. The sense is therefore this, "who is nearest to [608]

Negatively. He was not that great one whom some took him to be. God's faithful witnesses guard against undue respect more than against unjust contempts. Paul writes as warmly against those that overvalued him, and said *I am of Paul*, as against those that undervalued him, and said that his 'bodily presence was weak; and he rent his clothes when he was called a god.

John disowns himself to be the Christ, (20.) He said, *I am not the Christ*. Note, The ministers of Christ must remember that *they are not Christ*, and therefore must not usurp his powers and prerogatives, nor assume the praises due to Him only. They are not Christ, and therefore must not lord it over God's heritage, nor pretend to a dominion over the faith of Christians. They cannot create grace and peace, they cannot enlighten; convert, quicken, comfort, for they are not Christ. Observe, how emphatic! He confessed, and denied not, but confessed; it denotes his vehemence and constancy in making this protestation. Note, Temptations to pride, and assuming honor which doth not belong to us, ought to be resisted with great vigor and earnestness. When John was taken to be the Messiah, he did not connive at it, saying, *If the people will be deceived, let them*; but openly and solemnly, without any ambiguities, confessed, *I am not the Christ*. His disowning of himself to be the Christ, is called his *confessing* and not *denying* Christ. Note, Those that abase themselves, thereby confess Christ, and give honor to Him; but those that will not deny themselves, do in effect deny Christ.

The Jews expected Elias to return and live among them, and promised themselves great things from it; hearing of John's character, doctrine and baptism, and observing that he appeared in the same part of the country from which Elijah was carried to heaven, it is no wonder that they were ready to take him for this Elijah; but he disowned this honor. He was indeed prophesied of under the name of Elijah, (Mal. 4:5.) and he came in the spirit and power of Elias, (Luke 1:17.) and was the Elias that was to come; (Matt. 11:14.) but he was not the person of that Elias that went to heaven in the fiery chariot, that met Christ in his transfiguration; he was the Elias that God had promised, not the Elias that they foolishly dreamed of. Elias did come, and they knew him not, (Matt. 17:12.) nor did he make himself known to them as the Elias, because they had promised themselves such an Elias as God never promised them.

the Father, most intimately conjoined, and the dearest to Him." It appears from Lampe, that something more is denoted than perfect familiarity and participation in any one's counsels, which is the sense of the phrase among classical writers. BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 19.

Now this is the record of John.] 'There ought to be a full stop here, which would add to the simplicity and perspicuity of what follows.' CAMPBELL.

Verse 20.

I am not the Christ.] 'It may be inquired how the sanhedrim (priests as they were,) could ask such a question; since they knew John's ancestry was not what had been predicted of Christ. Yet when they remembered what had happened to Zechariah in the temple; and that Elisabeth his mother, was of the lineage of David, and especially as it was not entirely determined among the doctors, whether Christ was to be born at Bethlehem; hence, the sanhedrim might easily (as a Messiah was then anxiously expected,) fall into the opinion that John was possibly that Messiah, and they therefore sent to interrogate him; hoping at the same time (as we may suppose,) that John would prove himself to be the Messiah, and head them in an attempt to throw off the Roman yoke.' BLOOMFIELD.

21. And they asked him: What then? Art thou Elias? And he said, I am not. Art thou that prophet? And he answered, No.

22 Then said they unto him, Who art thou? that we may give an answer to them that sent us: What sayest thou of thyself?

23 He said, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias.

24 And they which were sent were of the Pharisees.

25 And they asked him, and said unto him, Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?

26 John answered them, saying, I baptize with water; but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not.

a Mal 4:5. Matt. 11:14. 17:10-12. Luke 1:17.
b 1:10. Deut. 18:15-18. Matt. 11:9-11. 16:14.
c Or, a prophet.
d 2 Sam. 21:13.
e Mal 3:1. 3:3. Mark 1:3. Luke 1:18, 17:75-78. 3:4-6.
f Is. 40:5-6.
g 3:1-2. 7:17-19. Matt. 23:13-15, 26. Luke 7:30. 11:32-44. 35:16, 17.
h Acts 9:34. 26:5. Phil. 3:5, 6.
i Matt. 21:23. Acts 4:5-7. 5:28.
j See on 1:20-22. Dan. 9:24-26.
k Mal. 3:1. Mark 1:3. Luke 3:16. Acts 1:5. 11:16.
l 10:11. 8:9. 16:3. 17:3, 25. Mal. 3:1, 2. 1 John 3:1.

He also disowns himself to be that prophet, or the prophet. He was not that Prophet which Moses said the Lord would raise up to them of their brethren, like unto him. That Prophet was the Messiah, and he had said already, I am not the Christ. He was not such a prophet as they expected and wished for, who, like Samuel and Elijah, would interpose in public affairs, and rescue them from the Roman yoke. He was not one of the old prophets from the dead, as they expected one to come before Elias, as Elias before the Messiah. Though John was a prophet, yea, more than a prophet, he had his revelation, not by dreams and visions, as the Old-Testament prophets had theirs; his commission and work were of another nature, and belonged to another dispensation. If John had said that he was Elias, and a prophet, he might have made his words good; but ministers must, upon all occasions, express themselves with the utmost caution, both that they do not confirm the people in any mistakes, and, particularly that they give not occasion to any to think of them above what is meet.

They that were sent to examine him, pressed for a positive answer, (v. 22.) urging the authority of them that sent them, to which they expected he should pay a deference; Tell us what art thou? Not that we may believe and be baptized, but that we may give an answer to them that sent us, and it may not be said that we were on a fool's errand. John was looked upon as a man of sincerity, and therefore they believed he would not give an evasive and ambiguous, but a plain answer to a plain question. And he did so, I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Observe,

[1.] He gives his answer in the words of Scripture, to show that the Scripture was fulfilled in him, and that his office was supported by a divine authority. What the Scripture saith of the office of the ministry, should be often thought of by those in that high calling, who must look upon themselves as that, and that only, which the word of God makes them.

[2.] He gives his answer, in very humble, self-denying expressions; He chooses to apply that Scripture to himself, which spake, not his dignity, but his duty and dependence, which speaks him little; I am the voice, as if he were merely voice.

[3.] He gives such an account of himself as might excite and awaken them to hear him; for he was the voice, (see Isa. 40:3.) a voice to alarm, and to instruct. Ministers are but the voice by which God is pleased to communicate

his mind. What are Paul and Apollos but messengers? Observe,

First, He was a human voice. The people received the law by the voice of thunders, and a trumpet exceeding loud, which made them tremble; but they were prepared for the Gospel by the voice of a man, a still small voice, such as that in which God came to Elijah, 1 Kings 19:20.

Secondly, He was the voice of one crying; which denotes, 1. His earnestness and importunity in calling people to repentance; he cried aloud, and did not spare. Ministers must preach as those that are in earnest, and are themselves affected with those things which they desire to affect others with. Those words are not likely to thaw the hearers' heart, that freeze between the speaker's lips. 2. He was the voice of one crying, that all manner of persons might hear. Doth not wisdom cry? Prov. 8:1.

Thirdly, It was in the wilderness; in a place of silence and solitude, out of the noise of the world, and the hurry of its business; the more retired we are from the tumult of secular affairs, the better prepared we are to hear from God.

Fourthly, He cried, Make straight the way of the Lord; that is, 1. He came to rectify the mistakes of people concerning the ways of God; it is certain that they are right ways; but the scribes and Pharisees, with their corrupt glosses upon the law, had made them crooked. Now John Baptist calls people to return to the original rule. 2. He came to dispose people for the reception of Christ and his Gospel. It is an allusion to the harbingers of a prince or great man, that cry, Make room. Note, When God is coming towards us, we must prepare to meet Him, and let the Word of the Lord have free course. See Ps. 24:7.

Why baptizest thou, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet? [1.] They readily apprehended baptism to be fitly used as a sacred rite, for the Jewish church had used it with circumcision in the admission of proselytes, to signify the cleansing of them from the pollutions of their former state. That sign was made use of in the Christian church, that it might be the more passable. Christ did not affect novelty, nor should his ministers. [2.] They expected it would be used in the days of the Messiah, because it was promised that then there should be a fountain opened, (Zech. 13:1.) and clean water sprinkled, Ezek. 36:25. It is taken for granted, that Christ and Elias, and that prophet, would baptize, for they came to purify a polluted world. Divine justice drowned the old

Verse 21.

That prophet? That is, in the sense in which the question was asked: for in another sense, he might be called Elias. See Luke 1:17. It is plain (says Rosenm.) from the article translated "that" that the particular prophet is meant: who if his commentators are not agreed, [To me it is evident, both from what is said here, and from other hints in the N. T. that there was at that time a general expectation in the people of some great prophet, beside Elijah, who was soon to appear, and who was well known by the emphatical appellation the prophet, without addition, or description. In ch. 6:40, 41, the prophet is distinguished from the Messiah, as he is here from Elijah. Campbell.] Beza, Bengel, Heumann, and others, (following Cyril, Chrysostom, and Theophylact,) have thought that the passage had reference to Deut. 18:15 which they understood of some particular prophet, like unto Moses, but different from Christ. Lampe observes, it was an ancient tradition that Jeremiah is here meant, who is sometimes so called, by way of eminence. In this Kuinoel acquiesces, and also thinks, that the word here is a gradation, Elias being inferior to Christ, and Jeremiah to Elias. Whence this persuasion of the appearance of Jeremiah at the Messiah's coming, arose, is evident from 2 Macc. 2:7.

BLOOMFIELD.

There is here an apparent contradiction to the words of our Lord concerning John, in Matt. 11:14. This is Elias that was to come. But Jesus evidently refers to the words of Malachi 4:5, his purpose being to inform his disciples that John was Elijah in the meaning of that prophet, and that the prophet's prediction was accomplished in the Baptist, inasmuch as he came in the spirit and power of Elijah. But when the question was proposed to John, the laws of truth required that he should answer it, according to the sense wherein the words were used by the proposer. The intended purport, he well knew, was whether he acknowledged that he was intrinsically the prophet Jeremiah returned from heaven to sojourn again upon the earth; for, in this manner they explained the prediction. To this he could not, without falsehood, answer in the affirmative.

CAMPBELL.

Verses 22-25.

John answers in the Jewish manner, i. e. in words borrowed from the O. T. (perhaps Is. 40:3) quoted memoriter, from the Sept. q. d. What the prophet has there said, will hold good of me." In such declarations the general purport is done regarded by the speaker;

the words ought not therefore to be too grammatically interpreted. John, instead of giving a description of his own character and office, refers those who questioned him to the words of the prophet Isaias, in which they would find it. Campbell. These legends were, (we may observe) Pharisees as indeed were most of the scribes. Now the Pharisees were extremely tenacious of rites and ceremonies, strenuous defenders of the liberties of the people, and especially anxious for an earthly Messiah. The right and power of baptizing Jews, and of collecting them by baptism into a new religion, was confined to the Messiah, and his precursors in establishing his terrestrial monarchy, and to no others. Thus, when the Pharisees saw themselves disappointed of their hope, they indignantly ask, "Why baptizest thou then?" Lightfoot, Rosenmuller and Kuinoel. There is, too, an evident allusion to the Jewish baptism of proselytes.

CAMPBELL.

(23.) Make straight the way of the Lord. Before we reached Mayar, we were met by a confidential officer of the governor of Ispahan, by a hakeem or doctor, and by several other men of respectability. These deputation were of the Persian nobles, and were one of the principal modes among the Persians of doing honor to their guests. The more distinguished the persons sent, and the greater the distance to which they go, so much more considerable is the honor.

MORIER.

Verse 26.

I baptize.] The Jews maintained that the Messiah (see Zech. 1:3. 1. seq. Mal. 3:2. seq.) and his precursors would baptize the people: and from the present passage also, it is plain they maintained, that the Messiah and his heralds, the prophets of the O. T., would return to life, would purify the people, and initiate them by baptism, into a new form of worship. Comp. Zech. 3:1. seq. Luke 3:7. Matt. 3:6. Now when the priests had notified to John (25.) that he had no right to baptize Jews, since he is neither Christ, nor Elias, nor Jeremiah, John answers, "I only baptize with water, but," &c. where one can not but admire the forcible brevity of the phraseology. The sense of the answer is plainly this: "I only baptize Jews in order to gather together a body for the Messiah, from whom a very different baptism is to be expected, and who will more effectually collect votaries, and thoroughly purify the people. He whom you require (the Messiah, and by whose authority I do this, is among you." The word translated "standeth" in the sense of live and to be, is frequent." BLOOMFIELD

27 He it is 'who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose.

28 These things were done in "Bethabara beyond Jordan," where John was baptizing.

29 ¶ The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, "Behold the Lamb of God," which *taketh away the sin of the world.

1 See on 15, 30.—Acts 10:4.
1 Matt. 3:11. Mark 1:7. Luke 3:16.
15 10:40. Judg. 7:24. Bethabara.
12 5.
8 23.
38. Gen. 22:7, 8. Ex. 12:3 & c.
Num. 28:3—10. Is. 53:7. Acts 8:32.
1 Pet. 1:18. Rev. 5:6 & 12:13.
16 7:10, 14, 17. 12:11. 13:8. 14:1.
14 10. 15:8. 17:14. 19:7, 9. 21:8.
14 22:37. 22:1—3.
1 53:11. Hos. 14:2. Matt. 20:28.
1 Cor. 15:8. 2 Cor. 5:21. Gal. 1:4.
2:13. 1 Tim. 2:6. Tit. 2:14. Heb. 13: 2:17. 9:28. 1 Pet. 2:24. 3:18.
1 John 2:2. 3:5. 4:10. Rev. 13:5.
Or, *heneath*. Ex. 28:38. Lev. 10:17.
16:21, 22. Num. 18:1, 23.

First, He tells them of Christ's presence among them—now at this time; *There stands One among you, whom you know not*. Christ stood among the common people, and was as one of them. Note, 1. Much true worth lies hid in this world: obscurity is often the lot of real excellency. Saints are God's *hidden ones*, therefore *the world knows them not*. 2. God Himself is often nearer than we are aware; *The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not*. They were gazing in expectation of the Messiah: *Lo, He is here*, or *He is there*, when the kingdom of God was already among them, Luke 17: 21.

Secondly, He tells them of his preference above himself; He comes after me, and yet is preferred before me. This he had said before; he adds here, "Whose shoe-latchet, I am not worthy to unloose; I am not fit to be named

Verse 28.

Bethabara. 'See Lightfoot, Whitby or Eiseley. Dr. Campbell, with reason, prefers the reading "in Bethany," which is found in MSS. both in number, and in value, more than a counterpoise to those which contain the common reading. Add to these the Vul. Sax. and both the Syriac versions, together with Nonnus' Greek paraphrase of this gospel, which is entitled to be put on the footing of an ancient translation. Also, several ancient authors, and some of the best editions so read. It is certain that, in several instances, the same name was given to different places, and this *Bethany* seems here to be expressly distinguished from another of the name, by the addition "*upon the Jordan*." It adds also to the probability of the reading here adopted, that *Bethany*, by its etymology, signifies a place, or house, close by a ferry.'

BLOOMFIELD. [So Dr. A. CLARKE.]

'*Bethabara* signifies literally, the house of passage, and is thought to be the place where the Israelites passed the river Jordan under Joshua. *John 7: 24*.'

Verse 29.

'We are often told that... repentance and reformation are fully sufficient to restore the most abandoned sinners to the favor of a just and merciful God, and to avert the punishment due to their offences. But what does the great herald and forerunner of Christ say to this? He came professing as a *preacher of repentance*. If then repentance alone had sufficient efficacy for the expiation of sin, surely we should have heard this from him who came on purpose to preach repentance. But what is the case? Does he tell us that repentance alone will take away the guilt of our transgressions, and justify us in the eyes of our Maker? Quite the contrary. Notwithstanding the great stress he justly lays on the indispensable necessity of repentance, yet he tells his followers at the same time, that it is *not* Christ only, and to his death, that they were to look for the pardon of their sins. "Behold," says he, "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." And again, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth upon him."

Bp. Porteus in Scott.

Lamb. 'The fitness and propriety of this type, or emblem, consists partly in some natural properties belonging to a lamb, and partly in some circumstances peculiar to the paschal lamb. A lamb being, perhaps, the least subject to cholera of any animal in the brute creation, was a very proper emblem of our Savior's humility and meekness; and of his inoffensive behavior.' Matt. 11: 29. 'The mute and meekness of the lamb also, under the most inhuman treatment, must strike the most heartless observer, and is an admirably forcible type of that resignation under intolerable evil, which He manifested who "overcame evil with good." "For He, by whose precious blood we were redeemed, was "a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Pet. 1: 19.) a phrase expressive of his exemplary patience and submission to his Father's will, under all his sufferings, and in the agony of death; for though He was *oppressed and afflicted*, yet He *opened not his mouth*." (Is 53: 7.) *Wetstein* by HORNE. Ed.

'There is an allusion *etiam* to the paschal lamb, or rather to the lambs

world, but divine grace cleanses this new world. [3.] They would therefore know by what authority John baptized. His deifying himself to be Elias, or that prophet, subjected him to this further question, *Why baptizest thou?* Note, It is no new thing for a man's modesty to be improved to his prejudice; but it is better that men should take advantage of our low thoughts of ourselves, to *trample upon us*, than the devil take advantage of our high thoughts of ourselves, to *tempt us* to pride, and draw us into his condemnation.

1. He owned himself to be only the minister of the outward sign; 'I baptize with water, and that is all; I am no more, and do no more, than what you see; I have no other title than *John the Baptist*; I cannot confer the spiritual grace signified by it. Paul cared that none should think of him above what they saw him to be, (2 Cor. 12: 6.) so John Baptist. Ministers must not set up for masters.

2. He directed them to one that was greater than himself, and would do that for them, if they pleased, which he could not do. Note, The great business of Christ's ministers is to direct all people to Him; we preach not ourselves, but *Christ Jesus the Lord*. John here gave the same account that he had given to the people, (p. 15.) *This was He of whom I spake*. John was uniform in his testimony, not a reed shaken with the wind. The sanhedrim were jealous of his interests in the people, but he is not afraid to tell them that there is One at the door, that will go beyond him.

Christ stood among the common people, and was as one of them. Note, 1. Much true worth lies hid in this world: obscurity is often the lot of real excellency. Saints are God's hidden ones, therefore the world knows them not. 2. God Himself is often nearer than we are aware; The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not. They were gazing in expectation of the Messiah: Lo, He is here, or He is there, when the kingdom of God was already among them, Luke 17: 21.

Secondly, He tells them of his preference above himself; He comes after me, and yet is preferred before me. This he had said before; he adds here, "Whose shoe-latchet, I am not worthy to unloose; I am not fit to be named

the same day with Him; it is an honor too great for me to pretend to be in the meekness of Him," 1 Sam. 25: 41. Those to whom Christ is precious, reckons his service, even the most despised instances, an honor. See Ps. 84: 10. If so great a man as John accounted himself unworthy of the honor of being near Christ, how unworthy then should we account ourselves? Now, one would think, these chief priests and Pharisees, upon this information concerning the approach of the Messiah, should presently have asked, who, and where, this excellent Person was; and who more likely to tell them than he who had given them this notice? No, they did not think that any part of their concern; they came to molest John, not to receive instruction from him: so that their ignorance was *willful*; they might have known Christ, and would not.

Lastly, All this was done, (p. 23.) in *Bethabara beyond Jordan*. *Bethabara* signifies the house of passage; some think it was the very place where Israel passed over Jordan into the land of promise, under Joshua; there was opened the way into the gospel-state by Jesus. It was at a great distance from Jerusalem, beyond Jordan; probably because what he did there, would least offend the government. Amos must prophesy in the country, not near the court; but it was said that Jerusalem should put far from her the things that belonged to her peace. He made this confession in the same place where he was baptizing, that all who attended his baptism, might be witnesses of it, and none might say that they knew not what to make of him.

V. 29—36. Here is an account of John's testimony concerning Jesus, to his own disciples. As soon as Christ was baptized, He was hurried into the wilderness, to be tempted; there He was forty days; during his absence, John bore testimony to Him, and told the people of Him; but now, he sees Jesus coming to him from the wilderness of temptation. As soon as that conflict was over, Christ returned

ordered to be sacrificed, in the O. T. (particularly the lambs every day, morning and evening slain in the temple. Ex. 29: 38. seq. Num. 23: 3. seq. Is. 53: 7.) In this every day sacrifice, the whole of the carcass was burnt and offered up, to expiate the sins not only of the Jews, but of the whole human race. Jos. 13: 2. 10: 4. Philo de Vict. Scit. Vitrin. Wetstein. Rosenm. Thus Josephus relates that the Jews affirmed to Suetonius the president, that they every day offered up sacrifices for the welfare of Caesar and the Roman people.'

BLOOMFIELD.

The Lamb of God, which expiates and takes away sin. 'It is well observed by the author of that excellent treatise, called *Christ the Mediator*, that this is the only sense in which a lamb can be said to take away sin.'

DODDRIDGE.

Bloomfield, coinciding with the above interpretation of Doddridge, remarks that 'commentators, especially those of the last century, are by no means agreed on the exact meaning of this verse. The various opinions may be found detailed in Poole's Synopsis, Wolf's Curæ, Koehler's Analecta, Kuinoel, and Magree on the Atonement. En.

Kuinoel thus defines the sense of these words: 'View this innocent, pious, meek Person, wholly devoted and consecrated to God! Great and wonderful things will He perform: He will remove the sins of men, and extirpate vice from the earth: He will purify men by his doctrine; but, though mild, He will punish the obstinately contumacious. He will exclude them from the society of his faithful worshippers, and deprive them of the felicity of his kingdom, and then will collect a people purified, holy, and approved unto God.' This is indeed beautifully true, as far as relates to the effects of the Gospel on the hearts and lives of men; but, as Bloomfield observes, 'scarcely at all differs, indeed, substantially the same with the interpretations of Grotius, to which Doddridge justly applies the following censure.' 'Grotius strangely enervates the force of this text, by choosing to explain it of that reformation of the lives of men, to which Christ did not only press them by the doctrine that He taught, but gave them an example of it in his death, redeeming them (as it is said) from their vain conversation by his own precious blood; (1 Pet. 1: 18, 19.) whereas there is not any more evident than that the great design for which He died was to atone for sin, and to exempt us from the punishment that our iniquities deserved; that, having put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, we might have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins. Comp. Heb. 9: 26, 28. Eph. 1: 7. and Col 1: 14. It is not, in point of fact, true,' continues Bloomfield, 'that vice and sin have been so completely removed and extirpated by the Christian religion.' En.

In support of the doctrine of the atonement, there is more authority than for any other revealed in the Jewish or Christian Scriptures. It is enforced by the uniform testimony of the Jewish church. It is the peculiar foundation and principal doctrine of the Christian church in all ages, which never has deviated from the opinion that the death of Christ on the cross was the full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world.'

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then suspected that He was the Messiah, till the descent of the Holy Ghost at his baptism. All that is affirmed here is, that till this evidence was given him, he did not know Him to be the Messiah." There must, therefore, indeed, be a discrepancy between the present passage and that of Matt. 3: 14, where John is said to have refused to baptize Christ, doubtless because he knew Him to be the Messiah. But the difficulty in that passage is removed, if we suppose that Christ had held religious conversation with John, previously to his going with him to be baptized. The evangelist therefore relates *briefly* what in v. 32, he expresses more at *large*; namely, that he had on the occasion of that baptism learnt that Jesus was the Messiah. For when John took upon himself the office of baptizing, he did it only for the purpose of admonishing the people that the Messiah was at hand, but *who* the Messiah was to be, was then unknown to him.' *Kuiznel.*

BLOOMFIELD.

'It was chiefly for this end, with a particular regard to Him [Christ], that I came baptizing with water, that He might thus be more remarkably made manifest to Israel, and might be thus adorned with greater solemnity

ADDITION.

(2.) The great intention of John's ministry; and baptism was, to introduce Christ. That He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore, *unto I come baptizing with water.* Though J. un- did not know Jesus by face, he knew that He should be made manifest. Note, We may know the certainty of that which yet we do not fully know the nature and intention of. We know that the happiness of heaven shall be made manifest to Israel, but cannot describe it. The assurance John had, that Christ should be made manifest, served to carry him with dili- gence and resolution through his work, though he was kept in the dark concerning particulars; *Therefore I am come.* Our assurance of the reality of things, though they are unseen, is enough to quicken us to duty. God reveals Himself to his people by degrees. At first, John knew no more concerning Christ but that He should be made manifest; in confidence of that, he came baptizing, and now is favored with a sight of Him. They who, upon God's word, believe what they do not see, shall shortly see

And I knew Him not. "Many think that John had frequently seen Jesus, but had not known Him to be the Messiah. "This has been thought by some (says *Campbell*) not perfectly consistent with what Luke acquaints us concerning the connection of their families; and particularly with what we are told in Matt. 3: 14. where we find that John, when Jesus came to him, to be baptized, modestly declined the office, and acknowledged the superiority of the latter. But, that there is no absurdity in supposing that John had never seen the Baptist knew concerning our Lord's personal character, his superior wisdom and sanctity. Nay, he might have known further, that He was a robust and highly honored of God, and yet not have known, or

then suspected that He was the Messiah, till the descent of the Holy Ghost at his baptism. All that is affirmed here is, that till this evidence was given him, he did not know Him to be the Messiah." There must, therefore, indeed, be a discrepancy between the present passage and that of Matt. 3: 14, where John is said to have refused to baptize Christ, doubtless because he knew Him to be the Messiah. But the difficulty in that passage is removed, if we suppose that Christ had held religious conversation with John, previously to his going with him to be baptized. The evangelist therefore relates *briefly* what in v. 32, he expresses more at *large*; namely, that he had on the occasion of that baptism learnt that Jesus was the Messiah. For when John took upon himself the office of baptizing, he did it only for the purpose of admonishing the people that the Messiah was at hand, but *who* the Messiah was to be, was then unknown to him.' *Kuiznel.*

BLOOMFIELD.

'It was chiefly for this end, with a particular regard to Him [Christ], that I came baptizing with water, that He might thus be more remarkably made manifest to Israel, and might be thus adorned with greater solemnity

ADDITION.

33 And ^a I knew him not; but he that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me. Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, ^b the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost.

34 And I saw and bare record that ^c this is the Son of God.

[Practical Observations.]

35 ¶ Again the next day after, John stood, ^a and two of his disciples:

36 And looking upon Jesus as he walked, ^b he saith, Behold the Lamb of God!

37 And the two disciples heard him speak; ^c and they followed Jesus.

^a 31. Matt. 8:13-15.
^b 35, 36. Matt. 8:11, 14. Mark 1:7, 8.
Luke 3:16. Acts 1:5. 24. 10:44-47.
11:15, 16. 19:2-6. 1 Cor. 12:13. Tit. 2:6.
^c 18, 49. 8:15-19. 36, 38. 5:23-27. 6:1, 58. 9:20, 26. 11:7. 19:7. 20:28.
31. Ps. 27. 98:27. Matt. 3:17. 4:3, 6. 9:29. 11:27. 16:16. 17:15. 26:37-40. 33, 54. Mark 1:11. Luke 1:35. 3:22. Rom. 14. 2 Cor. 1:18. 11:6. 11, 25, 8. 7:3. 1 John 2:23. 3:19. 4:14, 15. 5:9-13, 20. 2 John 1. Rev. 2:18.
^a 32, 28. Mat. 1:16.
^b See on 29.—Is. 45:22. 65:1, 2. Heb. 12:1. 1 Pet. 1:19, 20.
^c 43. 4:19-42. 1 Cor. 15:23. Zech. 8:21. Rom. 10:17. Eph. 4:29. Rev. 22:17.

might know it certainly, ^a of Him than other people did, otherwise than by revelation. But *He that sent me to baptize, gave me this sign, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, the same is He.*

(2.) See what sure grounds John went upon, in his ministry and baptism, that he might proceed with all satisfaction. *First*, He did not run *without sending*; God sent him to baptize. He had a warrant from heaven. When a minister's call is clear, his comfort is sure, though his success is not always so. *Secondly*, He did not run *without speeding*; for when he was sent to baptize with water, he was directed to One that should baptize with the Holy Ghost; under that notion John Baptist was taught to expect Christ, as One who would give that repentance and faith to which he called people, and would carry on and complete that blessed structure of which he was now laying the foundation. Note, It is a great comfort to Christ's ministers, in their administration of the outward signs, that He whose ministers they are, can confer the grace signified thereby, and so put life and power into their ministrations; can speak to the heart what they speak to the ear, and breathe upon the dry bones on which they prophesy.

See what sure grounds he went upon, in his designation of the person of the Messiah. God had before given him a sign, as He did to Samuel concerning Saul; 'On whom thou shalt see the Spirit descend, that same is He.' This not only prevented mistakes, but gave him boldness in his testimony. When he had such assurance, he could speak with assurance. His expectations could not but be very much raised; and when the event exactly answered the prediction, his faith could not but be confirmed: and these things are written that we may believe.

This is the conclusion of John's testimony, in which all the particulars centre, (v. 34.) *I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God.*

This is the Son of God. The voice from heaven proclaimed, not only that He should baptize with the Holy Ghost by a divine authority, but that He

what they now believe. The ministry of the word and sacraments is designed for no other end than to lead people to Christ, and to make Him more and more manifest. Baptism with water made way for the manifesting of Christ, as it supposed our corruption, and signified our cleansing by Him who is the Fountain opened.

To confirm his testimony concerning Christ, he here vouches the appearance at his baptism, in which God himself bore witness to Him. This was a considerable proof of Christ's mission. To assure us of the truth of it, we are here told, (v. 32, 33.)

(1.) That John Baptist saw it; he bare record, attested it, with the solemnity of witness-bearing. *I saw the Spirit descending from heaven.* John could not see the Spirit, but he saw the dove, which was a representation of the Spirit. The Spirit came upon Christ, both to make Him fit for his work, and known to the world. Christ was notified, not by the descent of a crown upon Him, or by transfiguration, but by the descent of the Spirit as a dove, to qualify Him for his undertaking. Thus the first testimony given to the apostles, was by the descent of the Spirit upon them. God's children are made manifest by their graces, their glories are reserved for their future state. Observe, The Spirit descended from heaven; for every good and perfect gift is from above. He descended like a dove—an emblem mild, and gentle, which makes Christ fit to teach. The dove brought the olive-branch of peace, Gen. 8:11. The Spirit that descended upon Christ, abode upon Him, as was foretold, Isa. 11:2. The Spirit did not move Him at times, as Samson, (Judg. 13:25,) but at all times. The Spirit was given Him without measure; it was his prerogative to have the Spirit always upon Him, so that He could at no time be found either unqualified for his work Himself, or unfurnished for the supply of those that seek his grace.

John was bidden to expect this sign, which very much corroborates the proof. It was not bare conjecture, that surely He on whom he saw the Spirit descending, was the Son of God; but it was a sign given before, by which he

33. He insists much that he knew no more of Him than other people did, otherwise than by revelation. But *He that sent me to baptize, gave me this sign, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, the same is He.*

(2.) See what sure grounds John went upon, in his ministry and baptism, that he might proceed with all satisfaction. *First*, He did not run *without sending*; God sent him to baptize. He had a warrant from heaven. When a minister's call is clear, his comfort is sure, though his success is not always so. *Secondly*, He did not run *without speeding*; for when he was sent to baptize with water, he was directed to One that should baptize with the Holy Ghost; under that notion John Baptist was taught to expect Christ, as One who would give that repentance and faith to which he called people, and would carry on and complete that blessed structure of which he was now laying the foundation. Note, It is a great comfort to Christ's ministers, in their administration of the outward signs, that He whose ministers they are, can confer the grace signified thereby, and so put life and power into their ministrations; can speak to the heart what they speak to the ear, and breathe upon the dry bones on which they prophesy.

See what sure grounds he went upon, in his designation of the person of the Messiah. God had before given him a sign, as He did to Samuel concerning Saul; 'On whom thou shalt see the Spirit descend, that same is He.' This not only prevented mistakes, but gave him boldness in his testimony. When he had such assurance, he could speak with assurance. His expectations could not but be very much raised; and when the event exactly answered the prediction, his faith could not but be confirmed: and these things are written that we may believe.

This is the conclusion of John's testimony, in which all the particulars centre, (v. 34.) *I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God.*

This is the Son of God. The voice from heaven proclaimed, not only that He should baptize with the Holy Ghost by a divine authority, but that He

has a divine nature. The peculiar Christian creed is, that Jesus is the Son of God, (Matt. 1:16,) and here is the first framing of it.

'I saw, and bare record.' Not only I now bear record of it, but I did so soon as I had seen it.' Observe, [1.] What he saw he was forward to bear record of, as they, Acts 4:20. *We cannot but speak the things which we have seen.* [2.] What he bare record of, was what he saw. Christ's witnesses were eye-witnesses, and therefore the more to be credited, 2 Pet. 1:16.

John took every opportunity to lead people to Christ; *John stood looking upon Jesus as He walked.* It would seem, John was now retired from the multitude, in conversation with two of his disciples. Note, Ministers should not only in their public preaching, but in their private converse, witness to Christ. He saw Jesus walking at some distance, yet did not go to Him himself, because he would shun every thing that might give the least color to suspect a combination. He was looking upon Jesus steadfastly, and fixed his eyes upon Him. Those that would lead others to Christ, must be diligent and frequent in the contemplation of Him themselves. John had seen Christ before, but now looked upon Him, 1 John 1:1.

He repeated the testimony which he had given the day before, though he could have delivered some other great truth concerning Him; but thus he would show that he was constant in his testimony, and consistent. His doctrine was the same in private that it was in public, Acts 20:20, 21. It is good to have that repeated, which we have heard, Phil. 3:1. The doctrine of Christ's sacrifice for the sin of the world, ought especially to be insisted upon by ministers: Christ, the Lamb of God, Christ and His crucifixion.

He intended this especially for his two disciples that stood with him; he was willing to turn them over to Christ; for to this end he bore witness to Christ in their hearing, that they might leave all to follow Him, even that they might leave him. He did not reckon that he lost those disciples who went over from him to Christ, any more than the school-master reckons that scholar lost whom he sends to the university. John gathered disciples not for himself, but for Christ, to prepare them for the Lord, Luke 1:17. So far was he from being jealous of Christ's growing interest, that there was nothing he more desired. Humble, generous souls will give others their due praise without fear of diminishing themselves by it. What we have of reputation, as well as of other things, will not be the less for our giving every body their own.

V. 37-42. Here two disciples come from John to Jesus, and one of them fetches a third, and these are the first fruits of Christ's disciples; how small the church was in its beginnings, and in the dawning of the day of its great things!

Andrew and another with him were the two that John Baptist had directed to Christ, v. 37. The other, some think, was Thomas, comparing ch. 21:2 others, that it was John himself, the penman of this gospel, whose manner it is industriously to conceal his name, ch. 13:23, and 20:3.

Here is their readiness to go to Christ; they heard John speak of Jesus as the Lamb of God, and they followed Jesus. Probably they had heard John say the same thing the day before, and then it had not the effect upon them which now it had; see the benefit of repetition

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

V. 12-34. That John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost from his birth; he was 'great in the sight of God,' and one of the most excellent of men; yet he was nothing but the voice of a herald, to proclaim the Savior's glory; 'unworthy even to loose the latchet of his shoes.' He knew that Jesus was 'before him,' as the eternal Word; that He would forever be 'preferred before him' and all creatures; and that He alone could pardon sin, or baptize with the Holy Ghost. He thought he could not enough abase himself, or exalt his Lord; he only desired to prepare his way, and manifest Him to Israel. Their light is darkness, and their wisdom madness, who exalt themselves; and degenerate Christ, being directly in opposition to the wisdom of God, and 'the Light of the world.' Let us behold Jesus 'as the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world.' Sin must be taken away, or sinners must be ruined forever: 'God hath provided Himself a Lamb for a burnt offering,' through whose atonement, He can be 'just and the Justifier of the ungodly.' Let sinners then behold and trust in Him: let believers look to Him for pardon, strength, encouragement, righteousness, and a perfect example. Thus guilt will be removed from the conscience, and sin from the heart. While we look to Him for pardon, let us also seek to be like Him, and to partake of his baptism, that we may abound in holy fruits.

38 Then Jesus ^d turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, 'What seek ye? They said unto him, 'Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) 'where dwellest thou?'

39 He saith unto them, 'Come and see. They came and saw where he dwelt, and abode with him that day: for it was [†]about the tenth hour.'

40 One of the two which heard John speak, and followed him, was ^kAndrew, Simon Peter's brother.

41 He [†]first findeth his own brother Simon, and saith unto him, 'We have found ^mthe Messias, which is, being interpreted, the [†]Christ.'

42 And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, he said, 'Thou art Simon ^othe son of Jona: thou shalt be ^pcalled Cephas, which is, by interpretation, ^qA stone.'

^d Luke 14:25. 15:20. 19:5. 22:61.
^e 18:4, 7. 9:15, 18. Luke 7:24-27.
18:40, 41. Acts 10:21, 23.
^f 19. 3:2, 28. 6:25. Matt. 23:7, 8.
^g 1:22. Ruth 1:13, 17. Kings 10:8. Ps. 27:4. Prov. 3:18. 8:34. 13:20. Cant. 1:7, 8. Luke 8:38. 10:39.
^h Or, *alldid*.
ⁱ 46. 1:27-30. 14:22, 23. Prov. 8:17. Matt. 11:28-30.
^j 4:0. Acts 28:30, 31. Rev. 3:20.
^k That was two hours before night.
^l 2:14, 24, 29.
^m 6:8. Matt. 4:18. 10:2. Acts 1:13. 18:27, 45. 4:28, 29. 2 Kings 7:9. 1a. 2:3-5. Luke 2:17, 26. Acts 13:32, 33. 1 John 1:3.
ⁿ 4:25. Dan. 9:25, 26.
^o Or, *appointed*. Ps. 2:2. 45:7. 89:20. 1a. 11:2. 61:1. Luke 4:18-21. Acts 4:37. 10:38. Heb. 1:8, 9.
^p 47, 48. 2:24, 25. 6:70, 71. 13:18.
^q 21:15-17. Jonas. Matt. 16:17. *Jonanna*.
^r 1 Cor. 1:12. 3:22. 9:5. 15:5. Gal. 2:9.
^s Or, *Peter*. 3:12. Matt. 10:2. 16:18. Mark 3:16. Luke 5:3. 6:14.

Christ saith unto them, 'Come, and see. Good desires toward Christ and communion with Him should be countenanced. (1.) He invites them to come to his lodgings; the nearer we approach to Christ, the more we see of his beauty and excellency. Deceivers maintain their interest in their followers by keeping them at a distance, but that which Christ desired to recommend Him to his followers, was, that they would *come, and see*; 'Come, and see what poor accommodations I have, that you may not expect worldly advantage by following Me, as they do who court the scribes and Pharisees. *Come, and see what you must count upon if you follow Me.*' See Matt. 8: 20. (2.)

Verse 33.

Where dwellest Thou? 'By calling Jesus "Master," [i.e. teacher] they plainly intimate the purpose of their visit; and by this question they hint a wish to have some private and uninterrupted converse with Him.'

'They desired to be as it were, his "esoteric" disciples, and to be instructed more perfectly in the great doctrines which then occupied the attention of the reflecting part of the Jews.'

Verse 39.

Come and see. 'This is a formula frequent among the rabbinical writers, when they require singular attention to any thing of moment, which needs explanation, &c.'

'It may here, however, be taken in the physical sense.'

About the tenth hour. 'That was, two hours before night.'

Verse 41-43.

This narration may seem at variance with Matt. 4: 18. seq. and

and of private personal converse. They heard him speak of Christ as the *Lamb of God*, that takes away the sin of the world, and that made them follow Him. Note, The strongest and most prevailing argument with an awakened soul to follow Christ, is, that it is He, and He only, that takes away sin.

They came behind Him; but He soon turned, and saw them following. Note, Christ takes cognizance of the first motions of a soul toward Him, and the first step in the way to heaven; see Isa. 64: 5. Luke 15: 20. He did not stay for them to speak, but spake first. What communion there is between a soul and Christ! It is He that begins the discourse. He saith unto them, *What seek ye?* This was not a reprimand for their boldness; He that came to seek us, never checked any for seeking Him; it is a kind invitation of them to his acquaintance; What is your petition? What is your request? Note, They whose business it is to instruct people in the affairs of their souls, should be humble, and easy of access, and should encourage those that apply to them. This question we should all put to ourselves when we begin to follow Christ, and profess religion; 'What seek ye? What do we design and desire? Those that follow Christ, yet seek the world or the praise of men, deceive themselves. 'What seek ye in seeking Christ, a Teacher, Ruler, and Reconciler? In following Christ, do we seek the favor of God and eternal life? If our eye be single in this, we are full of light.'

Rabbi, where dwellest thou? (1.) In calling him Rabbi, they intimate their desire to be taught by Him; *rabbi* signifies master, a teaching master; the Jews called their learned men, rabbis. Never was there such a rabbi as Jesus, in whom were hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. They came to Christ, to be his scholars, so must all that apply to Him. John had told them that He was the *Lamb of God*; now this *Lamb* is worthy to take the book, and open the seals, Rev. 5: 9. And unless we give up ourselves to be ruled and taught by Him, He will not take away our sins. In asking where He dwelt, they intimate a desire to be better acquainted with Him. Christ was a stranger in this country, so that they mean, where was his inn where He lodged, for there they would attend Him at some time when He should appoint, to receive instruction from Him. Civility and good manners well become those who follow Christ. And besides, they hoped to have more from Him than they could have in a short conference by the way. They resolved to make a business of conversing with Christ. Those that have had some communion with Christ, cannot but desire, [1.] A further communion with Him; they follow on to know more of Him. [2.] A fixed communion with Him; where they might sit down at his feet, and abide by his instructions. It is not enough to take a turn with Christ now and then, but we must dwell with Him.

He invites them to come and without delay. They asked Him where he lodged, that they might wait upon Him at a more convenient season; but Christ invites them immediately to come, and see; never in better time than now. Hence learn, [1.] As to others, that it is best taking people when they are in a good mind; [2.] As to ourselves, it is wisdom to embrace the present opportunities; Now is the accepted time, 2 Cor. 6: 2.

They came, and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day. It had been more modesty than had done them good if they had refused this offer. They readily went with Him; They came, and saw where He dwelt. Gracious souls cheerfully accept Christ's gracious invitations; as David, Ps. 27: 8. They inquired not how they might be accommodated with Him, but would venture, and make the best of what they found. It is good being where Christ is, wherever it be. They were so well pleased with what they found, that they abode with Him that day; 'Master, it is good to be here;' and He bid them welcome. It was about the tenth hour. Some think that John reckons according to Roman time, and that it was about ten o'clock in the morning; others think that John reckons as the other evangelists did, according to Jewish time, and that it was four o'clock in the afternoon, and they abode with Him till the next day. Lightfoot conjectures that this next day that they spent with Christ was sabbath, and, it being late, they could not get home before the sabbath. As it is our duty, wherever we are, to contrive to spend the sabbath to our spiritual benefit and advantage; so they are blessed, who, by exercises of faith, love, and devotion, spend their sabbaths in communion with Christ. These are Lord's days indeed, days of the Son of man. Andrew brought his brother Peter to Christ. If Peter had been the first-born of Christ's disciples, the Papists would have made a noise with it: he did indeed afterward come to be more eminent in gifts, but Andrew had the honor first to be acquainted with Christ, and to be the instrument of bringing Peter to Him.

He first finds his own brother Simon; his finding implies his seeking him. Simon came with Andrew, to attend John's ministry and baptism, and Andrew knew where to look for him. Perhaps the other disciple that was with him, went out to seek some friend of his at the same time, but Andrew sped first; He first findeth Simon, who came only to attend on John, but has his expectations out-done; he meets with Jesus.

He told him whom they had found; We have found the Messias. Observe, He speaks humbly; not, 'I have found,' assuming the honor of the discovery to himself, but 'We have,' rejoicing that he had shared with others in it. He speaks exultingly, and with triumph; We have found that pearl of great price; and, having found it, he proclaims it as those lepers, (2 Kings 7: 9.) for he knows that he shall have never the less in Christ for others' sharing. He speaks intelligently; We have found the Messias, which was more than had yet been said. John had said, He is the *Lamb of God*, and the Son of God, which Andrew compares with the Old Testament, and comparing them together, concludes that He is the Messias promised to the fathers, for now the fulness of time is come. Thus, by making God's testimonies his meditation,

Luke 5: 1. seq.; but, in fact, there is no discrepancy. For what John relates happened at quite different times to what Matthew and Luke record. Andrew brought his brother Simon to Jesus in Judea; for on the following day Jesus departed into Galilee. v. 44. But Jesus called both as he was walking by the sea of Galilee. Matt. 4: 18. compared with Luke 6. When Jesus called Andrew and Simon, John had been already thrown into prison. Matt. 4: 12, 18. Mark 1: 14, 16. But after the story here narrated by John, Jesus departed from Judea into Galilee, (v. 44.) and from Galilee returned to Jerusalem, in order to celebrate the Passover, (ch. 2: 13.) while John was yet alive and teaching without molestation. ch. 3: 24. We may therefore suppose that Andrew, Peter, and some others, for a time continued under the instruction of Jesus, but exercised (for a livelihood) their trade of fishing; and it was not till they had been expressly and formally called, that they attended on Him as his constant companions. When Christ imposes on Simon a new surname, namely, Peter, (rock), He shows that He is perfectly well acquainted with his disposition and manners.

1613

43 ¶ The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me.

44 Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, "Jesus of Nazareth," the son of Joseph.

46 And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.

47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

q. 18, 65:1. Matt. 4:18-21. 9:9. Luke 9:10. Phil. 3:12. 1 John 4:19.
v. 12:21. 14:8-9. Matt. 10:3. Mark 3:18. Luke 24:4. Acts 1:13.
v. Matt. 11:21. Mark 6:45. 9:22.
Luke 9:10. 10:13.
v. 5:45, 46. Gen. 32:5. 22:18. 49:10. Dent. 18:18-22. See on Luke 24:44.
v. 18:57. 19:19. Matt. 2:23. 21:11. Mark 14:57. Acts 2:22. 3:8. 10:38. 21:8. 25:9.
v. 14:1, 42, 52. Luke 6:23. 9:29.
v. 4:29. Luke 12:57. 1 Thes. 5:21.
v. 9:31, 39. Rom. 2:28, 29. 9:5. Phil. 3:3.
v. Ps. 32:2. 73:1. 1 Pet. 21:22. Rev. 14:5.

Acts 9: 36. *Tabitha, which by interpretation is called Dorcas*; the former Hebrew, the latter Greek, for a young roe. Peter's natural temper was stiff, and resolute, which I take to be the principal reason why Christ called him *Cephas*. When Christ afterward prayed for him, that his faith might not fail, that so he might be firm to Christ himself, and at the same time bid him *strengthen his brethren*, then He made him what He here called him. Those that come to Christ, must come with a fixed resolution to be firm and constant, like a stone, solid and steadfast; and it is by his grace that they are so. His saying, *Be thou steady*, makes them so. This no more proves that Peter was the only rock upon which the church is built, than the calling of James and John, *Boanerges*, proves them the only sons of thunder, or the calling of Joseph, *Barnabas*, proves him the only son of consolation.

V. 43-51. We have here the call of Philip and Nathanael.

Philip was called by Christ himself; not as Andrew, who was directed to Christ, by John, or Peter, who was invited by his brother. God has various methods of bringing his chosen ones to Himself. But, whatever means He uses He is not tied to any.

Philip was called in a preventing way; *Jesus findeth Philip*. Christ sought and found us, before we made any inquiries after Him. The name *Philip* is of Greek origin, much used among the Gentiles, an instance of the degeneracy of the Jewish church at this time, and their conformity to the nations; yet Christ changed not his name.

He was called the day following. See how closely Christ applied himself to his business. When work is to be done for God, we must not lose a day. Yet observe, Christ now called one or two a day; but, after the Spirit was poured out, there were thousands a day effectually called, in which was fulfilled ch. 14: 12. 'and greater works shall he do.' &c.

Jesus would go forth into Galilee, to call him. Christ will find out all those that are given Him, and none of them shall be lost.

Philip was brought to be a disciple by the power of Christ going with the word, *Follow me*. See the nature of true Christianity; it is following

tion, he speaks more clearly concerning Christ than ever his teacher had done, Ps. 119: 99.

He brought him to Jesus; would not undertake to instruct him himself, but brought him to the Fountain-head. Now this was an instance of true love to his own brother, so he is called here, because he was very dear to him. Note, We ought particularly to endeavor the spiritual welfare of those that are related to us; for their relation to us adds both to the obligation and to the opportunity of doing good to their souls. It was an effect of his conversation with Christ. Note, The best evidence of our profiting by the means of grace is, the usefulness of our conversation afterward. Hereby it appeared that Andrew had been with Jesus, that he was full of Him; he had been in the mount, for his face shone. He knew there was enough in Christ for all; and, having tasted that He is gracious, could not rest till those he loved had tasted it too. Note, True grace hates monopolies, and loves not to eat its morsels alone.

Peter was never the less welcome for being influenced by his brother to come, v. 42. Christ called him by his name; *When Jesus beheld him, he said, Thou art Simon, the son of Jona*. It would seem that Peter was a stranger to Christ, and if so, it was a proof of Christ's omniscience, that, without inquiry, He could see the name both of him and of his father. *The Lord knows them that are his*. It was an instance of condescension, that He did thus affably call him by name, though of mean extraction, and an obscure man. It was an instance of God's favor to Moses, that He knew him by name, Exod. 33: 17. Some observe the signification of these names, *Simon*—obedient, *Jona*—a dove. An obedient, dove-like spirit qualifies us to be disciples of Christ.

His giving him a name, speaks Christ's favor to him. A new name speaks some great dignity, Rev. 2: 17. Isa. 62: 2. By this Christ not only wiped off the reproach of his mean parentage, but adopted him into his family.

The name which He gave him, speaks his fidelity to Christ. *Thou shalt be called Cephas*, which is Hebrew for a stone; which is by interpretation Peter; so it should be rendered, as by interpretation is called Dorcas; the former Hebrew, the latter Greek, for a young roe. Peter's natural temper was stiff, and resolute, which I take to be the principal reason why Christ called him *Cephas*. When Christ afterward prayed for him, that his faith might not fail, that so he might be firm to Christ himself, and at the same time bid him *strengthen his brethren*, then He made him what He here called him. Those that come to Christ, must come with a fixed resolution to be firm and constant, like a stone, solid and steadfast; and it is by his grace that they are so. His saying, *Be thou steady*, makes them so. This no more proves that Peter was the only rock upon which the church is built, than the calling of James and John, *Boanerges*, proves them the only sons of thunder, or the calling of Joseph, *Barnabas*, proves him the only son of consolation.

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Philip was brought to be a disciple by the power of Christ going with the word, *Follow me*. See the nature of true Christianity; it is following

Christ, attending his motions and treading in his steps. The grace of Christ makes the call of his word prevail; it is the rod of his strength.

Philip, Andrew and Peter were of Bethsaida, v. 44. They received not their honor from, but reflected honor upon the place of their nativity. *Bethsaida* signifies the house of nets, because inhabited mostly by fishermen; thence Christ chose disciples, who, furnished with extraordinary gifts, needed not the ordinary advantages of learning. Bethsaida was a wicked place, (Matt. 11: 21.) yet even there was a remnant, according to the election of grace.

In what passed between Philip and Nathanael, there appears a mixture of pious zeal with weakness, such as is found in those that are yet but asking the way to Zion.

As Andrew before, so Philip here, having got some knowledge of Christ, rests not till he has made manifest the savor of that knowledge. Philip, though newly acquainted with Christ, steps aside to seek Nathanael. Note, When we have opportunities of getting good, even then we must seek opportunities of doing good to others; remembering the words of Christ, *It is more blessed to give than to receive*, Acts 20: 35. O, saith Philip, we have found Him of whom Moses and the prophets did write.

What transport Philip was in, upon this new acquaintance with Christ; 'We have found Him whom we have so often talked of, so long wished and waited for; at last, He is come, He is come!' What an advantage it was to him, that he was so well acquainted with the Old Testament, which prepared his mind for the reception of evangelical light. What was written from eternity in the book of the divine counsels was, in part, copied into the book of revelations. Glorious things were written there concerning the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, Shiloh, the Prophet like Moses, the Son of David, Emmanuel, the Man, the Branch, Messiah, the Prince. Philip had studied these things, and was full of them, which made him readily welcome Christ. He called Christ, *Jesus of Nazareth*, whereas He was of *Bethlehem*; and the Son of Joseph, whereas he was but his supposed Son. Young beginners in religion are subject to mistakes, which time and the grace of God will rectify. It was his weakness to say, *We have found Him*, for Christ found them before they found Christ. He did not yet apprehend, as Paul did, how he was apprehended of Christ Jesus, Phil. 3: 12.

Can there any good come out of Nazareth? Nathanael's caution was commendable; he did not lightly assent to every thing, but took it into examination; our rule is, *Prove all things*. But his objection arose from ignorance. If he meant that no good thing could come out of Nazareth, it was owing to his ignorance of divine grace, as if that were less affected to one place than another, or tied itself to men's foolish and ill-natured observations. If he meant that the Messiah could not come out of Nazareth, so far he was right; (Moses, in the law, said that he should come out of Judah, and the prophets had assigned Bethlehem for the place of his nativity;) but then he was ignorant of the matter of fact, that Jesus was born at Bethlehem; so that the blunder Philip made, in calling Him *Jesus of Nazareth*, occasioned this objection. Note, The mistakes of preachers often give rise to the prejudices of hearers.

The short reply Philip gave to this objection, was, *Come and see*. [1.] It was his weakness, that he could not give a satisfactory answer to it; yet it is the common case of beginners in religion. We may know enough to satisfy our-

We have found the Messiah! [The testimony of John the Baptist and the conversation of Jesus Himself had, it seems, completely convinced Andrew that Jesus was the Messiah.]

(43.) Galilee.] The name of a region of country, which in the time of Christ included all the northern part of Palestine lying between the Jordan and Mediterranean, and between Samaria and Phenicia. It was a happy, says Calmet, varied in its limits.

Verse 44. Bethsaida of Galilee was situated on the western shore of the lake of Genesareth, a little south of Capernaum.

Verses 47-49. [Which divine knowledge can be lodged in a no meaner person.] Just

thus the woman of Samaria argued, (John 4: 23.) "Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?" which plainly intimates that they supposed the Messiah would be endowed with the most perfect knowledge, and have the gift of prophecy in the highest degree.

(47.) The Nazarenes, nay indeed all the Galileans, were held in as little contempt by the Jews; the cause for which may be attributed to their being a mixed race, partly of Gentile origin, and contaminated with many vices. They were reckoned boorish and stupid, even to a proverb. No wonder then that it should have produced no good prophets or teachers. Hence in ch. 7: 52. it is said, "No prophet is arisen from Galilee." BLOOMFIELD.

48 Nathanael saith unto him, 'Whence knowest thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee.

49 Nathanael answered and saith unto him, 'Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel.

50 Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these.

51 And he saith unto him, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

e 2:25. Gen. 32:24—"O. Is. 65:24. e 1:18, 6:5. 1 Cor. 4:5. 14:25. Rev. 2:18, 19.

d See on 38.

e See on 18, 34. Matt. 14:33.

f 12:15-15. 18:37. 19:19-22. Ps. 2:6. 110:1. Is. 9:7. Jer. 23:5, 6. Eze. 3:21-25. Dan. 9:25. Hos. 3:5. Mic. 5:2. Zeph. 3:15. Zech. 6:12, 13. 9:9. Matt. 2:2. 21:5. Luke 13:38.

g 20:29. Luke 1:45. 7:9.

h 11:40. Matt. 18:12. 25:29.

i 1:40. 5:19, 24, 25. 6:58. 14:7, 53. 8:24, 51, 58. 10:1, 7. 12:24. 13:16, 30. 21:38. 14:12. 16:20, 23. 21:16.

j 2:11. Matt. 3:16. Mark 1:10. Luke 3:21. Acts 1:58. 10:11. Rev. 4:1. 19:11.

k Gen. 28:12. Mark 4:11. Luke 22:43. 24:4. Acts 1:10. 2:Thes. 1:7.

l 1 Tim. 3:16. Heb. 1:14. Jude 1:24.

m 3:14. 5:27. 12:23, 24. Dan. 7:13, 14. 12:7. 13:7. Matt. 9:16. 18:15. 16:27, 28. 25:3. 38:24. Mark 14:62. Lu. 22:69.

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self, and yet not be able to say enough to silence cavils. [2.] It was wise, that, when he could not answer the objection, he would have him go to one that could. Let us not argue, and raise difficulties, which we cannot get over; but go, and converse with Christ, and these difficulties will vanish. Note, It is folly to spend time in dispute, which might be spent to better purpose, in piety and devotion. Not, Go, and see, but, Come, and I will go with thee; as Isa. 2:3. Jer. 50:5. From Philip and Nathanael, we may learn, *First*, That many are kept from religion by unreasonable prejudices against religion upon the account of some foreign circumstances which do not touch the merits of the cause. *Secondly*, The best way to remove the prejudices they have entertained against religion, is, for themselves, to make trial of it. Let us not answer this matter before we hear it.

Nathanael came, and saw not in vain.

Our Lord bore honorable testimony to Nathanael's integrity; *Jesus saw him coming*, and met him with encouragement; He said to those about Him, Nathanael himself being within hearing, *Behold an Israelite indeed*. Observe,

That He commended him; not to puff him up, but perhaps because He knew him to be a modest man, if not a melancholy man, one that had mean thoughts of himself, was ready to doubt his own sincerity, and Christ by his testimony put the matter out of doubt. Nathanael had, more than any, objected against Christ; but Christ showed that He excused it, and was not extreme to mark what he said amiss, because He knew his heart was upright. He did not retort upon him, *Can any good thing come out of Cana*, (ch. 21: 2.) an obscure town in Galilee? but kindly gives him this character, to encourage us to hope for acceptance, notwithstanding our weakness, and to teach us to speak honorably of those who without cause have spoken lightly of us, and to give them due praise.

He commended him for his integrity.

Behold an Israelite indeed. Christ knows what men are indeed; we can but hope the best. The whole nation were Israelites in name, but all are not Israel that are of Israel; (Rom. 9: 6.) here, however, was an Israelite indeed. 1.

A sincere follower of Israel, who was a plain man, in opposition to Esau, a cunning man. He was a genuine son of honest Jacob, not only of his seed, but of his spirit. 2. A sincere professor of the faith of Israel; he was true to the religion he professed; he was as good as he seemed, and his practice of a piece with his profession. He is the Jew, that is one inwardly; (Rom. 2: 29.) so is he the Christian.

He is one in whom is no guile—that is the character of an Israelite indeed, a Christian indeed; no guile toward men; a man without trick or design; a man that one may trust; no guile toward God, sincere in his repentance for sin; sincere in covenanting with God, Ps. 32: 2. Not without guile, but, without guile. Though in many things foolish and forgetful, yet in nothing false, nor wickedly departing from God: there is no allowed guile in him; not painted, though he have his spots. *Behold this Israelite indeed.* 1. 'Take notice of him, that you may learn his way, and do like him.'

2. 'Admire him; behold and wonder.' Hypocrites had so leavened the Jewish church and nation, and their religion was so formal, or from state policy, that an Israelite indeed was a man wondered at; a miracle of divine grace, like Job, ch. 1: 8.

Nathanael was much surprised; upon which, Christ gives him further proof of his omniscience, and a kind memorial of his former devotion.

Here is Nathanael's modesty at the kind notice Christ was pleased to take of

him; 'Whence knowest thou me, unworthy of thy cognizance; who am I, O Lord God?' 2 Sam. 7: 18. This was an evidence of his sincerity, that he did not catch at praise, but declined it. Christ knows us better than we know ourselves; we know not what is in man's heart by looking in his face, but all things are naked and open before Christ, Heb. 4: 12, 13. Doth Christ know us? Let us covet to know Him.

Christ further manifests Himself to him; *Before Philip called thee, I saw thee*.

He tells him that He knew him, and so manifest his divinity. It is God's prerogative infallibly to know all persons and things; by this, Christ proved Himself to be God upon many occasions. It was prophesied concerning the Messiah that He should be of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord, that is, in judging the sincerity and degree of the fear of God in others, and that He should not judge after the sight of his eyes, Isa. 11: 2, 3. *How* He answers that prediction. See 2 Tim. 2: 19.

Before Philip called him, He saw him under the fig-tree; this manifests particular kindness for him. His eye was toward him before Philip called him, which was the first time that ever Nathanael was acquainted with Christ. Christ has knowledge of us before we have any knowledge of Him: see Isa. 45: 4. Gal. 4: 9. This was a private token which nobody understood but Nathanael. When thou wast retired under the fig-tree in thy garden, and thought that no eye saw thee, I saw thee. It is most probable that Nathanael was employed, as Isaac in the field, in meditation, and prayer. Perhaps then and there it was that he solemnly joined himself to the Lord in covenant. Christ saw in secret, and by this public notice of it did in part reward him openly. *Sitting under the fig-tree* notes a quiet and composed spirit, which much befriends communion with God. See Mic. 4: 4. Zech. 3: 10. Nathanael herein was an Israelite indeed, that, like Israel, he wrestled with God alone, (Gen. 32: 24.) not like the hypocrites, in the corners of the streets.

Nathanael hereby obtained a full assurance of faith in Christ, expressed in that noble acknowledgment, (v. 49.) *Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel*: that is, in short, the true Messiah.

He 'believed with the heart.' Though he had lately labored under some prejudices concerning Christ, they were now vanished. Now, the grace of God, in working faith, casts down imaginations. Now he asks not, *Can any good come out of Nazareth?* for he believes Jesus of Nazareth to be the Chief Good, and embraces Him accordingly.

He 'confessed with the mouth.' His confession is in form of an adoration, directed to our Lord himself; which is a proper way of confessing our faith. *First*, He confesses Christ's prophetic office, in calling Him *Rabbi*, a title which the Jews commonly gave their teachers. Christ is the great Rabbi, at whose feet we must all be brought up. *Secondly*, He confesses his divine nature and mission, in calling Him the Son of God; (Ps. 2: 7.) though He had but a human form, yet, having a divine knowledge of the heart, and of things distant and secret, from thence he concludes Him to be the Son of God. *Thirdly*, He confesses, 'Thou art the

(13.) *Fig-tree*. 'On account of the thick-spreading branches and broad leaves of the fig-tree, which in warm eastern countries, grows much larger and stronger than with us, it was very suitable for the purpose of overshadowing those who sat under it.' *Hasselquist*. That conversation, meditation, reading, prayer, &c. was carried on under fig-trees is certain from the numerous examples produced from the rabbinical writers by *Lightfoot* and *Schoettgen*. 'Hence it is probable that Nathanael was engaged in prayer or pious meditation, perhaps in religious conversation with Philip respecting the promised Messiah.' *Bloomfield*.

Verse 51.

Many commentators take the words of this verse, in their literal and proper signification, of angelic ministrations, and refer to Matt. 4: 11. Luke 22: 43. But as to the former passage, the temptation in the desert was a thing then past; and as to the other passage, it is observed that Christ here speaks not of what would happen once or rarely, but frequently and perpetually. It therefore seems clear, that the words must be taken improperly, and understood tropically. The ministry of angels (for the Hebrews, says *Rosenm.* referred all the interpretations of Providence, and all unforeseen events to invisible au-

thors, to spirits, whose ministry God used in effecting his purposes,) indicates divine providence, and God is said to send his angels to those whom He supports with his assistance, or defends by his providential interposition. See Ps. 34: 8. 91: 11, 12. We must however, understand not merely the providence of God to be evinced in the defence of Christ, but especially the testimony to his divine mission to be borne by miracles. The sense, therefore, may be thus expressed: 'You will see me enjoy the especial providence and signal defence of the Almighty; you will see far greater works than this, even mighty miracles wrought by Me; so as to leave no doubt of my Messiahship.' Thus *Morus*, *Rosenm.*, and others. *Quinod*, however, explains it of the presence of angels, to bring messages and impart assistance and protection; and he thinks the sense of the words (after laying aside the imagery) may be this: 'It will be manifest to all, that there exists the closest connection between Me and the Deity. The commands of God will aid Me in delivering and propagating the divine doctrine. God will succor Me with his assistance, and both by doctrines and mighty deeds I shall prove Myself to be the Messiah.'

BLOOMFIELD.

CHAP. II.

at a marriage in Cana, Jesus turns water into wine, 1-11. He goes to Cananaim, 12; and thence to Jerusalem, where He drives the buyers and sellers out of the temple, 13-17. He predicts His own death and resurrection, as the proof of His authority, 18-22. Many believe in Him because of His miracles; but He does not commit Himself to them, as 'knowing what was in man,' 23-25.

AND^a the third day there was^b a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there.

^a 143.
^b Gen. 1:27-28, 2:18-25. Ps. 128:1-4. Prov. 19:22. 19:14. 31:10-12. Eph. 5:30-33. 1 Tim. 4:1-3. Heb. 13:4.
^c 143. 21:2. Josh. 19:28. Kannh.

tion. Note, 1. To him that maketh good use of what he hath, more shall be given. 2. Those who truly believe the Gospel, will find its evidences grow upon them, and will see more and more cause to believe it. 3. Whatever discoveries Christ is pleased to make of Himself to His people while they are here in this world, He hath still greater things than these to make known to them; a glory yet further to be revealed.

Secondly, 'Not thou only, but ye, my disciples, whose faith this is intended to confirm, shall see heaven opened;' that is more than telling Nathanael of his being under the fig-tree. This is introduced with a solemn preface, *Verily, verily*. This commands a fixed attention to what is said as very weighty, and a full assent to it, as undoubtedly true; 'I say it, whose word you may rely upon, amen, amen.' None used this word at the beginning of a sentence but Christ, though the Jews often used it at the close of a prayer, and sometimes doubted it. It is a solemn asseveration. Christ is called the Amen. (Rev. 3: 14.) and so some take it here, *I the Amen, the Amen, say unto you*. I the faithful Witness. Note, The assurances we have of the glory to be revealed, are built upon the word of Christ.

Christ assures them that *hereafter*, or *ere long*, or from henceforth, ye shall see heaven opened.

It is a mean title that Christ here takes to Himself; *the Son of man*; a title frequently applied to Him in the Gospel, but always by Himself. Nathanael had called Him *the Son of God*, and *King of Israel*: He calls Himself *Son of man*, (1.) To express his humility. (2.) To teach his humanity. (3.) To intimate his state of humiliation, that Nathanael might not expect this King of Israel in external pomp.

Yet they are great things here foretold; *Ye shall see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man*.

1. Some understand it literally, as of some particular event. Either there was some vision of Christ's glory, in which this was fulfilled, of which Nathanael was an eye-witness, as Peter and James and John were of his transfiguration. There were many things which Christ did, and those in the presence of His disciples, which were not written; (ch. 20: 30.) why not that? Or, (2.) It was fulfilled in the ministrations of angels to Jesus, especially at His ascension, when heaven was open to receive Him, and the angels ascended and descended, to do Him honor, in the sight of the disciples. Christ's ascension was the great proof of His mission, and much confirmed the faith of His disciples, ch. 6: 6, 7. Or, (3.) It may refer to Christ's second coming, to judge the world, when the heavens shall be open, and every eye shall see Him, and the angels of God shall ascend and descend as attendants on Him, every one employed; and a busy day it will be. See 2 Thess. 1: 10.

2. Others take it as speaking of a state of things to commence from henceforth; we may understand it, (1.) Of Christ's miracles. Nathanael believ-

King of Israel, whom we have been waiting for.' If He be the Son of God, He is King of the Israel of God. Nathanael hereby proves himself an Israelite indeed, that he so readily owns and submits to the King of Israel.

Christ hereupon raises the expectations of Nathanael, v. 50, 51. Christ is very tender of young converts, and will encourage good beginnings, though weak, Matt. 12: 20.

He here signifies His acceptance, and (it would seem) His admiration, of the ready faith of Nathanael; *Because I said, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou?* That such a small indication of Christ's divine knowledge should have such an effect, was a sign that Nathanael's heart was prepared beforehand. Note, It is much for the honor of Christ, when the heart is surrendered at the first summons.

He promises him greater helps to confirm and increase his faith, than he had had for the first production of it.

First, 'Thou shalt see stronger proofs of my being the Messiah;' his miracles and resurrection maketh good use of what he hath, more shall be given. 2. Those who truly believe the Gospel, will find its evidences grow upon them, and will see more and more cause to believe it. 3. Whatever discoveries Christ is pleased to make of Himself to His people while they are here in this world, He hath still greater things than these to make known to them; a glory yet further to be revealed.

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ed, because Christ could tell him things secret but what is this? Christ is now beginning a dispensation of miracles, much more strange, as if heaven were opened; and such a power shall be exerted by the Son of man, as if angels were continually attending his orders. Immediately after this, Christ began to work miracles, ch. 2: 11. Or, (2.) Of his mediation, and that intercourse which He had settled between heaven and earth, of which his disciples should by degrees be let into the mystery [1.] By Christ, as Mediator, they shall see heaven opened, that we may enter into the holiest by His blood; (Heb. 10: 19, 20.) heaven opened, that by faith we may look in, and at length go in; may now behold the glory, and hereafter enter into the joy of our Lord. And, [2.] They shall see angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man. Through Christ we have communion with, and benefit by, the holy angels, and things in heaven and things on earth are reconciled and gathered together. Christ is to us as Jacob's ladder, (Gen. 28: 12.) by whom angels continually ascend and descend for the good of the saints.

CHAP. II. v. 1-11. There were some so well disposed as to believe in Christ, and to follow Him when He did no miracle; yet it was not likely that many would be wrought upon till He had something wherewith to answer those that asked, *What sign showest Thou?* He could have wrought miracles before, could have made them the common actions of his life and the common entertainments of his friends; but miracles being designed for the seals of his doctrine, He began not to work any till He began to preach his doctrine.

It is to the honor of Moses, that all the signs he did in the wilderness, he did upon necessity; so did Christ.

The third day after He came into Galilee. The evangelist keeps a journal of occurrences, for no day passed without something extraordinary. Our Master filled up his time better than his servants, and never lay down at night complaining, as the Roman emperor, that He had lost a day.

Cana in Galilee was in the tribe of Asher, (Josh. 19: 23.) of which it was said, *he shall yield royal dainties*, Gen. 49: 20. Christ began to work miracles in an obscure corner of the country, remote from Jerusalem, to show that He sought not honor from men, (ch. 5: 41.) but would honor the lowly. His doctrine and miracles would not be so much opposed by the plain, honest Galileans, as by the proud and prejudiced at Jerusalem.

The occasion itself was a marriage; probably one or both of the parties were akin to our Lord. The mother of Jesus is said to be there and not to be called, as Jesus and his disciples were, which intimates that she was there as one at home. Christ graced the solemnity, not only with his presence, but with his first mira-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 35-51. The ministers of Christ must never desire to make disciples to themselves: inquirers must hearken to those who direct them to 'the Lamb of God,' and distinguish them from all others; and they, who have known Him, should recommend Him to others; that thus each believer may bring his friend, and so, these exertions combining to draw attention to the testimony of ministers, the light may diffuse itself widely, in cities and countries.—All who desire to profit by the word of God, must beware of prejudices against places or denominations, from which even Christians are by no means exempt: they should come and examine for themselves; and then perhaps they will find good where they expected none.—Let us seek and pray to be Israelites indeed, in whom there is no guile; true Christians approved of Christ. Defects and infirmities are found in all; but hypocrisy and guile belong not to a believer. He does not profess one thing, and think another: he

is not a double-minded man; allows nothing before God which he disavows before men, pretends to nothing before men, which God knows that he does not aim to perform. He is *consciously*, as well as *by confession*, a sinner, who has no hope of deliverance but through Christ; and while he seeks free salvation, he earnestly endeavors to lead a godly life, and is continually abased before God, because he 'cannot do the things that he would.' He 'who seeth in secret' observes and approves this disposition, and hears the supplications which it dictates. He marks the humble believer, when beseeching Him to teach him, and He will evince that He accepts such petitions. Thus the believer obtains 'the witness in himself,' that 'Jesus is the Son of God, and the King of Israel;' and he will attain continually to fuller discoveries of his glory, and larger communications from Him, till he learns to 'love his appearing.'

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. II. v. 1-5. There is not the least disrespect in the word, *woman*; the greatest princesses were accosted, even by their own servants in the same manner among the ancients; and He afterwards used it, when speaking from the cross with the most endeared affection and tenderness. (Note, 19: 25-27.) The occasion on which this miracle was wrought, the miracle itself, and this answer of our Lord to Mary, seem to have been expressly intended, as a prophetic protest

against the superstitions and idolatries of the church of Rome; especially against two leading branches of that system, namely, the prohibiting of marriage, and the worship of the virgin Mary. Even to this day, there are very large multitudes who call on her, not to beseech, but to command, her Son, now that He fills the throne of glory; though on earth, He would not allow her even to counsel Him.

SCOTT.

(1.) *Cana of Galilee.* 'The village now bearing the name, and supposed to occupy the site of the ancient town, is pleasantly situated

2 And ^d both Jesus was called, and ^e his disciples, to the marriage.

3 And ^f when ^g they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto him, ^h They have no wine.

4 Jesus saith unto her, ⁱ Woman, ^j what have I to do with thee? ^k mine hour is not yet come.

5 His mother saith unto the servants, ^l Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.

^d Matt. 12:19. Luke 7:34—38. 1 Cor. 7:29. 10:31. Gal. 3:17. Rev. 3:20.
^e Matt. 9:10—12. 23:40, 47.
^f 10:19. Ec. 10:19. Is. 24:11.
^g 11:2. 26:8—29.
^h 11:3. Phil. 1:5.
ⁱ 19:25—27. 20:13—15. Matt. 15:28.
^j Deut. 32:9. 2 Sam. 16:10. Luke 2:49. 2 Cor. 5:16. Gal. 2:5, 6.
^k 7:6, 30. 8:20. 12:23. 13:1. Ec. 3:1.
^l 15:14. Gen. 6:22. Judg. 13:14. Luke 6:45—49. Acts 9:5. Heb. 5:9. 11:3.

heaven for Him, and He will come; *Thou shalt call, and I will answer.* And He will turn the water into wine.

The five disciples also were invited, for as yet He had no more: they were his family, and were invited with Him. They had thrown themselves upon his care, and they soon find though He had no wealth, He had friends. Note, [1.] Those that follow Christ, shall feast with Him: they shall *fare as He fares*; (ch. 12: 26.) *Where I am, there shall my servant be.* [2.] Love to Christ is testified by a love to those that are his, for his sake; *our goodness extendeth not to Him, but to the saints.* Calvin observes how generous the maker of the feast was, though he seems to be but of small substance, to invite four or five strangers because they were followers of Christ, which shows, saith he, there is more liberality, and true friendship, in some meaner persons than among many of higher rank.

They wanted wine, v. 3. (1.) There was *want at a feast*; though much was provided, yet all was spent. In this world, we sometimes find ourselves in straits, even when we think ourselves in the *fullness of our sufficiency*. If always spending, perhaps all is spent ere we are aware. (2.) There was want at a *marriage-feast*. Note, They who being married, are come to care for the things of the world, must expect trouble in the flesh, and disappointment. (3.) There was more company than they expected when the provision was made; but they who straiten themselves for Christ, shall not lose by Him.

The mother of Jesus saith unto Him, *They have no wine.* Some think that she did not expect from Him a miraculous supply. (He having as yet wrought no miracle,) but that she would have Him make excuse to the company, and save the bridegroom's reputation, or make up the want of wine with holy, profitable discourse. But, most probably, she looked for a miracle, for she knew He was the great Prophet, like unto Moses, who so often supplied the wants of Israel; and though this was his first public miracle, perhaps He had sometimes relieved her and her husband in their low estate. The bridegroom might have sent out for more wine, but she was for going to the Fountain-head. Note, [1.] We ought to be concerned for the wants of our friends, and not seek our own things only. [2.] In our own and our friends' straits, it is wisdom and duty to apply to Christ. [3.] We must not prescribe to Him, but humbly spread our case before Him, for Him to do as He pleases.

on the descent of a hill, about sixteen miles north-west of Tiberias, and six north-east of Nazareth, facing the south-west, with a copious spring, surrounded with plantations of olive and other fruit trees; and contains about three hundred inhabitants, chiefly Catholic Christians.' CALMET, &c.

'Most of Christ's disciples,' says Bloomfield, 'had before been followers of John the Baptist, who himself had led an ascetic life, abstaining from wine, animal food, &c. and recommended the same to his disciples. (See Matt. 3:4—11. Luke 7:33. Matt. 9:14.) But this austerity of diet formed no part of Christ's doctrine, nor ought ever to have been engrained upon it. (See Matt. 9:16. Col. 2:16. 1 Tim. 4:3.) Christ therefore meant by this miracle to indicate an important truth: "His social and obliging temper," says Doddridge, 'should sweeten ours, and be a lesson to his followers, that they avoid every thing sour and morose, and do not censure others for innocent liberties, at proper seasons of festivity and joy.'

(2.) 'At nuptial feasts there were guests of two sorts: 1st, those who had been invited; secondly, others who came of their own accord, and who were expected to bring presents. Lightfoot, That Jewish nuptial feasts sometimes continued seven or eight days, appears from Gen. 29:27. Judg. 14:14. What is here related of the wine failing short may therefore be understood of the fifth, sixth, or seventh day: for it is scarcely probable that such a deficiency should have occurred much earlier. It seems to have been occasioned by the unexpected arrival of Jesus and his disciples: Jesus being invited as being in the neighborhood; probably not as a *prophet*, but as a countryman, relation, and acquaintance.'

BROOMFIELD.

He reprimanded her for it, for He saw more amiss in it than we do, else He had not treated it thus.

Woman, what have I to do with thee? As many as Christ loves, He rebukes and chastens. He calls her Woman, not Mother. When we begin to be assuming, we should be minded that we are men and women, frail and foolish. The question might read, *What is that to Me and thee?* What is it to us if they do want? But it is always used as we render it. *What have I to do with thee?* as Judges 11:12. 2 Sam. 16 10. Ezra 4:3. Matt. 8:29. It therefore he speaks a resentment, yet not at all inconsistent with reverence and subjection to his mother according to the fifth commandment; (Luke 2:51.) for there was a time when it was Levi's praise, that he said to his father, *I have not known him*, Deut. 32:2. This was intended to be, *First*, a check to his mother for interposing in a matter which was the act of his God-head, which had no dependence on her, and of which she was not the mother. Though, as man, He was David's Son, and hers; yet, as God, He was David's Lord, and hers, and He would have her know it. The greatest advancements must not make us forget ourselves and our place, nor the familiarity which the covenant of grace admits us to, breed contempt, or any presumption. *Secondly*, It was an instruction to others of his relations present, that they must never expect Him to have any regard to his kindred in working miracles, or that therein He should gratify them, who, in this matter were no more to Him than other people. In the things of God, we must not *know faces*. *Thirdly*, It is a testimony against that idolatry which He foresaw his church would in after-ages sink into, in giving undue honors to the virgin Mary; a crime which the Roman Catholics, as they call themselves, are guilty of, when they call her the *queen of heaven*, the *salvation of the world*, their *mediatrix*, their *life and hope*; not only depending upon her intercession, but beseeching her to command her Son to do them good; *Show that thou art his mother; lay thy maternal commands on the Savior.* Does He not here expressly say, when his mother did but tacitly hint an intercession, *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* This was plainly designed either to prevent or aggravate such gross idolatry, such horrid blasphemy. The Son of God is our Advocate with the Father; but the mother of our Lord was never designed to be our advocate with the Son.

Mine hour is not yet come. For every thing Christ had his hour, the fixed, and the fittest time, which was punctually observed. *First*, 'Mine hour for working miracles is not yet come.' Yet He wrought this before the hour, because it would confirm the faith of his infant disciples, v. 11. *Secondly*, 'Mine hour of working miracles openly is not yet come.' *Thirdly*, *Is not the hour of my exemption from thine authority yet come*, now that I have begun to act as a Prophet? *Fourthly*, 'Mine hour for working this miracle is not yet come.' His

(3.) *They have no wine.* 'As to the motive which influenced the mother of Jesus, Euthymius suggests that she might wish to confer an obligation on the new-married couple, and acquire celebrity from her Son's power: for which last less commendable motive she probably received the rebuke contained in the following words.'

(4.) *What have I to do with thee?* 'The force of all the words of this phrase is modified not only by the occasion, but softened by the tone of voice of the speaker. The formula may be susceptible of a milder interpretation that it usually bears, or would seem to import, according to our ideas and modes of expression; so as to express a mild reproof, and gently to represent, that, in what concerned his office, earthly parents had no authority over Him, though in other respects He had yielded them prompt obedience.'

'It seems to have been intended as a rebuke to Mary; and it was surely expedient that she should know, that Jesus was not, upon such occasions, to be directed by her.'

VERSES 6—11.

It is not agreed how much each of these water-pots contained; but on the lowest computation the six must have held above a hoghead. The servants became unexceptionable witnesses to the reality of the miracle: and, though they had doubtless a variety of other employments on this occasion, and the order might seem ill timed and to no purpose, they obeyed without hesitation. The origin, word, which is rendered 'have well drunk,' is often used for drinking to intoxication, yet learned men have shown that it does not necessarily imply that idea, but merely a moderate exhilaration consistent with temperance.

6 And there were set there six water-pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece.

7 Jesus saith unto them, "Fill the water-pots with water. And they filled them up to the brim.

8 And he saith unto them, "Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it.

9 When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was, (but the servants which drew the water knew,) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom,

er 2:25, Mark 7:2-5, Eph. 5:28, Heb. 4:2, 9:10, 10:22, 12:5, Num. 21:6-9, Josh. 6:3-5, 1 Kings 17:13, 2 Kings 4:3-6, 5:10-14, Mark 11:2-6, 14:12-17, Acts 2:26, 6, 9, Prov. 3:5, 6,

orders, without asking questions. Conscious of a fault in prescribing to Him, she cautions the servants to take heed of the same fault, and attend both his time and way for supply; 'Whatever He saith unto you, do it, though you may think it ever so improper. If He saith, Give the guests water, when they call for wine, do it. If He saith, Pour out from the bottoms of the vessels that are spent, do it. He can make a few drops of wine so many draughts.' Note, Those that expect Christ's favors, must with an implicit obedience observe his orders. The way of duty is the way to mercy; and Christ's methods must not be objected against.

Christ did at length miraculously supply them: He is often better than his word, but never worse.

The miracle itself was turning water into wine; the substance of water acquiring a new form, and having all the qualities of wine. Such a transformation is a miracle; but the popish transubstantiation, the substance changed, the form and appearance remaining the same, is a monster. By this Christ showed Himself to be the God of nature, who maketh the earth to bring forth wine, Ps. 104: 14, 15. The extracting of the blood of the grape from the earth, is no less a work of power, though, being according to the common law of nature, it is not such a work of wonder, as this. The beginning of Moses' miracles was, turning water into blood; (Exod. 4: 9, ch. 7: 20.) the beginning of Christ's miracles was, turning water into wine; which intimates the difference between the law of Moses and the Gospel. The curse of the law turns water into blood, common comforts into bitterness and terror; the blessing of the Gospel turns water into wine. Christ hereby showed that his errand into the world was to heighten and improve creature-comforts to all believers, and make them comforts indeed. Shiloh is said to wash his garments in wine, (Gen. 49: 11.) the water for washing being turned into wine. And the gospel call is, Come ye to the waters and buy wine, Isa. 55: 1.

The circumstances magnified it, and freed it from all suspicion: for, First, It was done in water-pots, v. 6. There were set there six water-pots of stone. These water-pots were intended for legal purifications from ceremonial pollutions. The Jews cut not, except they wash often, (Mark 7: 3,) and they used much water in their washing, for which reason there were six large water-pots provided. It was a saying among them, He who uses much water in washing, will gain much wealth in this world. Christ put them to a use quite different from what they were intended; to be the receptacles of the miraculous

mother moved Him to help them when the wine began to fail; (so it may be read, v. 3.) but his hour was not come till there was a total want; not only to prevent suspicion of mixing wine with the water, but to teach us that man's extremity is God's opportunity for the help and relief of his people. Then his hour is come, when we are reduced to the utmost strait, and know not what to do. This encouraged those that waited for Him, to believe that though his hour was not yet come, it would come. Note, The delays of mercy are not the denials of prayer. At the end it shall speak.

She took the reproof submissively, and did not reply. It is best not to deserve reproof from Christ, but next best to be meek and quiet under it, and to count it a kindness, Ps. 141: 5.

She kept her hope in Christ that He would yet grant her desire. When we come to God in Christ for any mercy, two things discourage us. First, Sense of our own follies and infirmities: 'Surely such imperfect prayers as ours cannot speed.' Secondly, Sense of our Lord's frowns and rebukes. Afflictions are continued, deliverances delayed, and God seems angry at our prayers; this was the case of the mother of our Lord, and yet she encourages herself with hope that He will at length give an answer of peace; to teach us to wrestle with God by faith and fervency in prayer, even when He seems in his providence to walk contrary to us. We must against hope believe in hope, Rom. 4: 18.

She directed the servants to have an eye to Him, and not make their applications to her, as it is probable, they had done. She quits all pretensions to an influence upon Him, or intercession with Him; let their souls wait only on Him, Ps. 62: 5.

She directed them punctually to observe his orders, and not make their applications to her, as it is probable, they had done. She quits all pretensions to an influence upon Him, or intercession with Him; let their souls wait only on Him, Ps. 62: 5.

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wine. Thus Christ came to bring in the grace of the Gospel, which is as wine, that cheereth God and man, (Judg. 9: 13.) instead of the shadows of the law, which were as water, weak and beggarly elements. These were water-pots that had never been used to have wine in them; and as stone, which is not apt to retain the scent of former liquors. They contained two or three firkins apiece; the quantity is uncertain, but very considerable. We may be sure that it was not intended to be all drunk at this feast, but for a further kindness to the new-married couple, as the multiplied oil was to the poor widow, out of which she might pay her debt, and live of the rest, 2 Kings 4: 7. Christ gives like Himself, abundantly, according to his riches in glory. It is the penman's language to say, 'They contained two or three firkins, for the Holy Spirit could have ascertained just how much; thus (ch. 6: 19.) to teach us to speak cautiously of those things whereto we have not good assurance.

The water-pots were filled to the brim. As Moses, the servant of the Lord, when God bid him, went to the rock to draw water; so these servants, when Christ bid them, went to the water, to fetch wine. Note, Since no difficulties can be opposed to God's power, no improbabilities are to be objected against his command.

The miracle was wrought suddenly, and in such a manner as greatly magnified it. As soon as they had filled the water-pots, He said Draw out now; and it was done.

1. Without any ceremony, in the eye of the spectators. One would have thought, as Namaan, He should have come out, and stood and called on the name of God, 2 Kings 5: 11. He sits still in his place, says not a word, but wills the thing, and so works it. Note, Christ does great things and marvellous, without noise, works manifest changes in a hidden way. Sometimes Christ in working miracles, used words and signs, but it was for their sakes that stood by, ch. 11: 47.

2. He did not say, Draw out now, and let me taste it, questioning whether the thing were done; but with the greatest assurance, though it was his first miracle, He recommends it to the master of the feast first. As He knew what He would do, so He knew what He could do, and made no essay in his work, but all was very good, even in the beginning.

Our Lord directed the servants, To draw it out; not to let it alone in the vessel, to be admired. Note, [1.] Christ's works are all for use; He gives no man a talent to be buried. Has He given thee knowledge and grace? It is to profit *withal*; and therefore, draw out now. [2.] Those that would know Christ, must make trial of Him, use ordinary means, and then may expect extraordinary influences. That which is laid up for all that fear God, is wrought for them that trust in Him, (Ps. 31: 19.) who by the exercise of faith draw out what is laid up.

Some think that this governor of the feast was only the chief guest, that sat at the upper end of the table; but if so, surely Jesus was, upon all accounts, the principal guest; but it seems another had the uppermost room, probably one that *forced* it, Matt. 23: 6. and Luke 14: 7. And Christ, according to his own rule, and done in the lowest room; but, though He was not treated as the master of the feast, He kindly approved Himself a Friend to the feast and

(Note, Gen. 43: 34.) It may however be further observed, that the words refer to the general management of feasts, and not to any thing which took place on this occasion: where we may be sure, every circumstance was conducted with the utmost regard to temperance and propriety. This was the beginning of Christ's miracles, by which He manifested his glory: an expression never used concerning the miracles of any prophet or apostle, and which could not properly have been used; for they were only instruments, the power being of God and for the display of his glory which belonged to Him alone; but Jesus wrought by his own power, as Emmanuel, and displayed his own glory, as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' (6.) Purifying, &c.] On the largest computation of the contents of these vessels it must be evident, that they could not supply an efficiency of water, for the immersion of all the guests, on such occasions, as well as for all other purposes of ceremonial and traditional

purification; yet these are called baptisms; which is in fact a demonstration, that baptism does not always signify immersion. (Notes, 3: 25, 26, Mark 7: 3, 4, Luke 11: 37, 38.)

It is worthy of note, that walking among the ruins of a church, we saw large massive stone-pots, answering the description given of the ancient vessels of the country, not preserved nor exhibited as religious, but lying about, disregarded by the present inhabitants as antiquities with whose original use they were unacquainted. From their appearance, and the number of them, it was quite evident that a practice of keeping water in large stone-pots, each holding from eighteen to twenty-seven gallons, was once common in the country.

Dr. E. D. CLARK. (8, 9.) Governor, or ruler of the feast.] 'A person appointed to give directions to the servants, and to superintend every thing. It was part of his business to taste the wine, and present a glass to the guests.' CALMET.

10 And saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: *but* thou hast kept the good wine until now.

11 This beginning of miracles *did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.

[Practical Observations.]

12 After this he went down to Capernaum, he, and his mother, and his brethren, and his disciples; and they continued there not many days.

1 Gen. 49:34. Cant. 5:1.
Prov. 9:1-5, 16-18. Luke 16:25.
Rev. 7:16, 17.
1. 17. Ex. 4:9. 7:19-21. Ec. 9:7.
11:1. 2:2. 2 Cor. 4:17. Gal. 3:10-11.
1. 50:51. 3:2. 4:46.
1. 119. 5:23. 12:41. 14:9-11, 13. Deut. 5:24. Ps. 72:19. 99:3. Is. 40:5. 2 Cor. 3:18. 4:6.
1. 11:17. 20:30, 31. 1 John 5:13.
x 6:17. Matt. 4:13. 11:23.
y 7:13-5. Matt. 12:48. 13:55, 58.
z Mark 6:3. Acts 1:13, 14. 1 Cor. 9:5.
Gal. 1:19

the good wine until now; not good wine, he returns the thanks of the table to the bridegroom. *She did not know that I gave her corn and wine*, Hos. 2: 8.

Christ in providing thus plentifully for the guests, though He hereby allows a sober, cheerful use of wine, especially in times of rejoicing, (Neh. 8: 10.) yet He does not invalidate his own caution in the least, that our hearts be not at any time, no, not at a marriage feast, *overcharged with surfeting and drunkenness*, Luke 21: 34. When Christ provided so much good wine for them that had well drunk, He intended to try their sobriety, and to teach them how to abound, as well as how to want. Temperance, per force, is a thankless virtue; but if Providence gives us the delights of sense, and grace enables us to use them moderately, this is self-denial that is praise-worthy. He also intended that some should be left to confirm the truth of the miracle, to the faith of others. And we have reason to think that the guests at this table were so well taught, or awed by the presence of Christ, that none of them went to excess. It may be sufficient at any time to fortify us against intemperance, that our meat and drink are God's bounty, and we owe our liberty and comfort in them, to the mediation of Christ; it is therefore ungrateful and impious to abuse them. *Secondly*, That, wherever we are, Christ has his eye upon us; we should eat bread before God, (Exod. 18: 12.) and then we should not feed our selves without fear.

Here is the method He takes, in dealing with those that deal with Him, viz. to reserve the best for the last, and therefore they must deal upon trust. The recompense of service and suffering is reserved for the other world; it is a

if not its Founder, yet its best Benefactor. Others think that this governor was the monitor of the feast, whose office it was to see that each had enough, and that there were no indecencies or disorders. Note, Feasts have need of governors, because many at feasts have no government of themselves. Some think that this governor was a priest or Levite, that craved a blessing, and gave thanks, and Christ would have the cup brought to him, that he might bless it, and bless God for it: for the tokens of Christ's power were not to supersede the ordinary methods of piety and devotion.

The wine thus provided, was of the best and richest kind, which was acknowledged by the governor of the feast; and that it was really so, and not his fancy, is certain, because He knew not whence it was, *2. 9, 10*. It was certain that this was wine. The governor knew that, when he drank it, though he knew not whence it was; the servants knew whence it was, but had not tasted it. If the taster had seen the drawing of it, or the drawers had had the testing of it, something might have been imputed to fancy, but not now. Note, Christ's works commend themselves even to those that know not their Author. The products of miracles were always the best in their kind. This wine had a stronger body, and better flavor, than ordinary. This the governor of the feast takes notice of to the bridegroom, as uncommon. The common method was otherwise. Good wine is brought out to the best advantage at the beginning of a feast, when the guests can relish it, and will commend it; but when they have well drunk, and their appetites are palled, good wine is but thrown away upon them. All the pleasures of sense soon surfeit, but never satisfy; the longer they are enjoyed, the less pleasant they grow. *Thou hast kept* knowing to whom they were indebted for it.

She did not know that I gave her corn and wine, Hos. 2: 8.

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-11. We should always endeavor to insure the divine approbation in our undertakings. 'Marriage is honorable' among all men, and Jesus sanctioned that institution by his first miracle, and presence: yet the believer cannot expect comfort and a blessing, unless he engage in it on such principles, and in such a manner, as may give him confidence in calling on Jesus, so to speak, to attend on it. (Note, Col. 3: 16, 17. v. 16.)—We ought not in any thing to affect superstitious austerity, nor need we scruple to feast with our friends on proper occasions; yet every social interview should be so conducted, that we might invite the Redeemer to join with us, if He were now on earth. He will at all times be present invisibly, to approve or condemn our conduct, and all levity, luxury and excess must be offensive to Him.—If we would have the comfort of his presence, we must entertain his disciples also; and our conversation should be such as they delight in. In this manner we may 'use hospitality without grudging'; and the Lord Himself will not suffer us to want. Having stated our difficulties to Him, and submitted to his wisdom the season and manner of our supply, we shall not long be left unprovided for.

How ready should we be to relieve our needy brethren, and to minister to their comfort; seeing Jesus Himself wrought a miracle to supply wine, on a joyful occasion, for the refreshment of the company!—If we would have blessings from Him, we must unreservedly and promptly follow his directions, even though some of them should seem unnecessary or unreasonable.—What He gives in a special manner to his disciples, is always the best, and his ways are not only unlike those of men, but far superior to them. (Note, Isa. 55: 8, 9.)—Those whom the world feasts have their best wine first; and even while they live, every enjoyment grows more and more insipid; their mirth is soon damped, and death at length removes them to misery and despair: (Note, Luke 16: 24-26.) but they whom Christ entertains at his marriage-supper, have indeed many present comforts, which increase here; but their best wine is kept to the last, and they shall drink it forever new in the kingdom of their Father. In all these things He manifests his glory, and his disciples, who believe in his name, will be excited more and more to honor and obey Him. SCOTT.

Verse 12.
[Marg. Ref.] This preceded John's imprisonment. Our Lord on this occasion visited Capernaum, and continued a few days there, with his disciples and brethren, before He ascended to Jerusalem to keep the approaching passover; but after John was imprisoned, He went to reside at Capernaum.

Capernaum. * * * * * on the western shore of the sea of Galilee, on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali, and in which our Savior principally dwelt during the three years of his public ministry. It is from nine to twelve miles toward the north-east from Tiberias.

13 ¶ And the Jews' passover was at hand; and Jesus went up to Jerusalem,

14 And found in the temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting:

15 And when he had made a scourge of small cords, he drove them all out of the temple, and the sheep and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;

16 And said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not my Father's house an house of merchandise.

2 Num. 5:1, 6:5. 11:55. Ex. 12:6-14. Num. 28:15-25. Deut. 16:1-8, 16:1. Luke 2:41. Deut. 14:22-26. Matt. 21:12. Mark 11:15. Luke 19:45, 46. 1. 19:8. Zach. 4:8. 3 Cor. 10:4. 1. Is. 56:5-11. Jer. 7:11. Hos. 12:7, 8. Mark 21:13. Mark 11:17. Acts 19:24-27. 1 Tim. 6:5. 2 Pet. 2:3, 14, 15. 5:17, 18. 5:19. 10:29, 30. 20:17. Mark 2:46.

John Baptist so that this was the time, and the temple the place, when, and where, the Messiah was to be expected.

The first work he found Him at in the temple, was the *purging* of it; for so it was foretold, (Mal. 3: 2, 3.) *He shall sit as a Refiner, and purify the sons of Levi.* Now was come the *time of reformation.* Christ came, to be the great Reformer; and, according to the method of the reforming kings of Judah, he first *purged* out what was amiss, (and that used to be passover-work too, as in Hezekiah's time, 2 Chron. 30: 14, 15, and Josiah's, 2 Kings 23: 4, &c.) and then taught them to do well. *First purge out the old leaven, and then keep the feast.* Christ came to reform the world; and all who come to Him, should reform their hearts and lives, Gen. 35: 2. This He has taught us by purging the temple.

See what corruptions were purged out. He found a market in one of the courts of the temple, the *court of the Gentiles.* There, *First,* They sold oxen, and sheep, and doves, for sacrifice; we will suppose, not for common use, but for the convenience of those who came out of the country, and could not bring their sacrifices with them; see Deut. 14: 24-26. This market perhaps had been kept by the pool of Bethesda, (ch. 5: 2.) but was admitted into the temple by the chief priests, for filthy lucre; no doubt, the rents, and the fees for searching the beasts sold there, and certifying that they were *without blemish*, were a considerable revenue to them. Great corruptions in the church owe their rise to the love of money, 1 Tim. 6: 5, 10. *Secondly,* They changed money, for the convenience of those that were to pay a half-shekel *in specie* every year by way of poll, for the service of the tabernacle; (Exod. 30: 12.) and, no doubt, they gained by it.

Our Lord had seen these corruptions in the temple formerly, when in a private station; but never went about to drive them out till now, when He had taken upon Him the public character of a Prophet. He did not complain to

Verse 13.

The Jews' passover. [Pascha, a passing over,] a name given to the festival established in commemoration of the coming forth out of Egypt, (Ex. ch. 12.) because the night before their departure, the destroying angel, who slew the first-born of the Egyptians, *passed over* the houses of the Hebrews without entering them, they being marked with the blood of the lamb, which, for this reason, was called the *paschal lamb.* The modern Jews continue to observe the passover. With those who live in Palestine the feast continues a week; but the Jews out of Palestine extend it to eight days. CALMET.

The passover made a great market. 'No less than two hundred fifty-six thousand, and five hundred victims,' observes Josephus, 'were offered at one passover.'

From Wulfen, (cited by Lampe) it appears that much extortion was practised in the sale of the sacrificial victims, and that a great part of the profit thence arising came into the hands of the priests, who sold the license to vend commodities there at a very dear rate.

BLOOMFIELD.

As the evangelists have not expressly determined the number of passovers which happened between the baptism and death of Christ, or during the course of his public ministry, learned men have been much divided in their opinion about them. By far the greatest part

follow their opportunities, and go where their work led them. We do not now find Christ in the synagogues, but He privately instructed his friends, and thus entered upon his work by degrees. Young ministers should accustom themselves to pious discourse in private, that they may, with the better preparation, approach their work. The passover was at hand, and He must attend it at Jerusalem; for every thing is beautiful in its season. The less good must give way to the greater, and all the dwellings of Jacob veil to the gates of Zion.

This passover is the *first* after his baptism, and the evangelist takes notice of all the passovers He kept henceforward, which were four in all, the *fourth*, that at which He suffered, (three years after this,) and half a year was now past since his baptism. Christ, being made *under the law*, observed the passover at Jerusalem; see Exod. 23: 17. Thus He taught us by his example a strict observance of divine institutions, and a diligent attendance on religious assemblies. He went up to Jerusalem when the *passover was at hand*, that He might be there *with the first.* It is called the *Jews' passover*, because it was peculiar to them; now shortly God will no longer own it for his. Christ kept the passover at Jerusalem yearly, since He was twelve years old, in obedience to the law; but now that He is entered upon his public ministry, we may expect something more from Him than before.

The first place we find Him in at Jerusalem, was the temple, and it would seem, He did not make any public appearance till He came thither; for his presence and preaching there, were that glory of the latter house, which was to exceed the glory of the former, Hag. 2: 9. It was foretold, (Mal. 3: 1.) *I will send my messenger, John Baptist; He never preached in the temple, but the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, suddenly after the appearing of*

the chief priests, for He knew they countenanced those corruptions. But He Himself drove the sheep and the oxen, and those that sold them, out of the temple. He never drove any into the temple, but only drove those out that profaned it. He did not seize the sheep and oxen for Himself, nor impound them, though actual trespassers upon his Father's ground; He only drove them out, and their owners with them. He made a scourge of small cords, which, probably, they had led their sheep and oxen with, and thrown them away upon the ground. Sinners prepare the scourges with which they themselves will be driven out from the temple of the Lord. He did not make a scourge to chastise the offenders, (his punishments are of another nature,) but only to drive out the cattle; He aimed no further than at reformation. See Rom. 13: 3, 4. 2 Cor. 10: 9.

In pouring out the money, He showed his contempt of it; He threw it to the earth, as it was, Eccl. 12: 7. In overthrowing the tables, He showed his displeasure against those that make religion a matter of worldly gain. Money-changers in the temple are the scandal of it. Note, in reformation, it is good to make thorough work; He drove them all out; and not only threw out the money, but the trade too.

He said to them that sold doves, (sacrifices for the poor,) *Take these things hence.* The doves, though a less nuisance than oxen and sheep, yet must not be allowed there. The sparrows and swallows were welcome, that were left to God's providence, (Ps. 84: 3.) but not the doves, that were appropriated to man's profit. But see Christ's prudence in his zeal. When He drove out the sheep and oxen, the owners might follow them; when He poured out the money, they might gather it again; but if He had turned the doves flying, perhaps they could not have been retrieved; therefore He said, *Take these things hence.* Note, Discretion must always govern our zeal, that we do nothing unbecoming, or mischievous to others.

He gave them a good reason for what He did; *Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise.* Reason for conviction should accompany correction.

A reason why they should not profane the temple, was, it was the *house of God*, and not to be made a house of merchandise. Merchandise is a good thing in the exchange, but not in the temple. This was *sacrilege*; it was robbing God. It was to debase that which was solemn and awful, and make it mean. It was to disturb those services in which men ought to be most solemn, and intent. It was particularly an affront to the *sons of the stranger*, in their worship to be forced to herd themselves with sheep and oxen, and to be distracted in worship by their noise; for this market was kept in the court of the Gentiles. It was to make the business of religion subservient to secular interest; the holiness of the place advanced the market, and promoted the sale of their commodities. Those make God's house a house of merchandise, [1.] Whose minds are filled with cares about worldly business, when they are attending on religious exercises, Amos 8: 8. Ezek. 33: 31. [2.] Who perform divine offices

have supposed there were four; reckoning this the first; the feast mentioned John 5: 1. the second; the passover spoken of, John 6: 4. as the third; and that at which Christ suffered the fourth."

DODDIDGE.

Verses 14-17.

This was evidently a distinct transaction from that which has before been considered: (Notes, Matt. 21: 12, 13. Mark 11: 15-21.) for it took place on the first passover, after Jesus entered on his public ministry. Considering the immense number of sacrifices used at the feast of the passover, it must have been a very large market, which was there held, and a great multitude of people must have been assembled and employed: yet Jesus appearing as a poor man, at that time but little known, without human authority, without attendants or arms, except a scourge made of the small cords which were used in fastening the parts of the pens, or folds, or in other ways confining the cattle, drove them all before Him; overturning the tables of those who exchanged foreign for current coin, and clearing the place of them; though it must be supposed that pride, avarice, resentment, and every corrupt passion, would have disposed them to resistance, if they had not been overawed and overpowered. (14.) *Oxen.* No oxen, in the strict meaning of the word, were offered in sacrifice - but bulls, or cows only. (Note, Lev. 22: 18-21.)

COTT.

17 And his disciples remembered that it was written, 'The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.'

18 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him 'What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things?'

19 Jesus answered and said unto them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.'

Ps. 119: 119, 134.
Matt. 11: 24, 16: 1-4. Mark 8: 11.
Luke 11: 29.
Matt. 21: 13. Mark 11: 27, 28.
Luke 9: 13. Acts 4: 7, 5: 28.
1 Th. 2: 16, 3: 10. Mark 14: 58.
1 Cor. 12: 10. 27, 40.
1 Tim. 3: 15.
2 Tim. 3: 15.
1 Pet. 2: 18.

ners' own consciences are reformers' best friends; yet that was not all, there was a divine power put forth herein, and in the non-resistance of theirs that scripture was fulfilled, (Mal. 2: 2, 3.) *Who shall stand when He appears?*

His disciples remembered that it was written, *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up.* They were somewhat surprised at first, to see Him whom they were directed to as the *Lamb of God*, whom they believed to be *King of Israel*, take so little state upon Him as to do this Himself; but one scripture came to their thoughts, which taught them to reconcile it with the meekness of the *Lamb of God*, and with the majesty of the *King of Israel*; for David, speaking of the Messiah, takes notice of his zeal for God's house, as so great, that it ate Him up, made Him forget himself. Ps. 69: 9.

The disciples understood the meaning of what Christ did, by remembering the Scriptures; *They remembered that it was written.* Note, The Word of God and the works of God illustrate each other. Dark scriptures are expounded by providence, and difficult providences are made easy by comparing them with the Scriptures. See of what use it is to be ready and mighty in the Scriptures, and to have the memory stored with scripture-truths, furnished for every good work.

The scripture they remembered was very apposite; *The zeal of thine house has eaten me up.* David was in this a type of Christ, that he was zealous for God's house, Ps. 132: 2, 3. What he did for it, was *with all his might*; see 1 Chron. 29: 2. The latter part of Ps. 69: 9, is applied to Christ, (Rom. 15: 3,) as the former part of it here. All the graces of the Old Testament saints were in Christ, and particularly this zeal for the house of God, and in them, they were types of Him. Jesus Christ was zealously affected to the house of God, his church, loved it, and was always jealous for its welfare. This zeal did even eat Him up; it made Him humble, and spend, and expose himself. *My zeal has consumed me.* Ps. 119: 139. Zeal for the house of God forbids us to consult our own credit and safety, when in competition with duty and Christ's service, and sometimes our bodies cannot keep pace with our souls, and we are as deaf as our Master was to those who suggested, *Spare thyself.* These grievances might seem small, and such as should have been connived at; but such was Christ's zeal, that He could not hear even them that sold and bought in the temple. Saith St. Austin, *If He had found drunkards in the temple, how much more would He have been displeased!*

Christ, having purged the temple, gave a sign to those who demanded it, to prove his authority.

Then answered the Jews, that is, the multitude of the people, with their leaders. Being Jews, they should rather have assisted Him to vindicate the honor of their temple; instead of that, they objected against it. Note, They who are earnest in the work of reform, must expect opposition. When they could object nothing against the thing itself, they questioned his authority to do it; 'What sign shonest thou unto us, to prove thyself authorized to do these things?' It was indeed a good work to purge the temple; but what right had He to undertake it, who was in no office there? They looked upon it as an act of jurisdiction, and that He must prove himself a prophet, yea, more

for filthy lucre, and sell the gifts of the Holy Ghost, Acts 8: 18.

The reason why He purged it, was, *It is my Father's house.* (1.) He had authority to purge it, for He was faithful, as a Son, over his own house, Heb. 3: 5, 6. In calling God his Father, He intimates that He was the Messiah, of whom it was said, *He shall build a house for my name, and I will be his Father,* 2 Sam. 7: 12, 13. (2.) Therefore He had a zeal for the purging of it; 'It is my Father's house, and therefore I cannot bear to see it profaned, and Him dishonored.' Note, If God be our Father, and we desire that his name may be sanctified, it cannot but be our grief to see it polluted.

Christ's purging the temple may justly be reckoned among his wonderful works. *Of all Christ's wonderful works, this appears to me the most wonderful.* JEROME. [1.] He did it without the assistance of his friends; it had been no hard matter to raise the mob, who had a great veneration for the temple; but Christ never countenanced tumult or disorder. There was none to uphold, but his own arm did it. [2.] He did it without the resistance of his enemies, either the people themselves, or the chief priests that gave them their licenses, and had the temple force at their command. But the corruption was too plain to be justified; sin-

ners' own consciences are reformers' best friends; yet that was not all, there was a divine power put forth herein, and in the non-resistance of theirs that scripture was fulfilled, (Mal. 2: 2, 3.) *Who shall stand when He appears?*

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than a prophet. But was not the thing itself a sign enough? His ability to drive so many from their posts, without opposition, was a proof of his authority; He that was armed with divine power, was surely armed with a divine commission. What ailed these buyers and sellers, that they fled, that they were driven back? Surely it was at the presence of the Lord, Ps. 114: 5, 6.

Christ does not immediately work a miracle to convince them, but gives them a sign as something to come, the truth of which must appear by the event, according to Deut. 18: 21.

The sign He gives them is his own death and resurrection. He refers them to that which would be, *First, His last sign.* If they would not be convinced by what they saw and heard, let them wait. Secondly, *The great sign* to prove Him to be the Messiah; for, concerning Him it was foretold that He should be bruised, (Isa. 53: 5,) cut off, (Dan. 9: 26,) and yet that He should not see corruption, Ps. 16: 10. These things were fulfilled in Jesus, and therefore, *truly He was the Son of God*, and had authority in his Father's house.

He foretells his death and resurrection, not in plain terms, as often to his disciples, but in figurative expressions; as afterward, when He gave this for a sign, He called it the sign of the prophet Jonas, so here, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.* Thus spake He to them who were willingly ignorant, in parables, that they might not perceive, Matt. 13: 13.

They that will not see, shall not see. This figurative speech used here, proved such a stumbling-block to them, that it was produced against Him, at his trial, Matt. 26: 60, 61. Had they humbly asked Him the meaning of what He said, He would have told them, and it had been a savor of life unto life to them; but they were resolved to cavil, and it proved a savor of death unto death. They that would not be convinced, were hardened, and the manner of the expression of this prediction occasioned its accomplishment.

He foretells his death by the Jews' malice, in these words, *Destroy ye this temple*; that is, 'Ye will destroy it, I know. I will permit you to destroy it.' Note, Christ, even at the beginning of his ministry, had a clear foresight of his sufferings, and yet went on cheerfully in it. It is good, at setting out, to expect the worst.

He foretells his resurrection by his own power; *In three days I will raise it up.* There were others that were raised, but Christ raised himself.

He chose to express this by *destroying* and *re-edifying* the temple. 1. To justify his purging the temple: as if He had said, 'You that defile one temple, will destroy another; I will prove my authority to purge what you have defiled, by raising what you will destroy.' To profane the temple is to destroy it, and its reformation is its resurrection. 2. Because the death of Christ was the destruction of the Jewish temple, and his resurrection was the raising up of another temple, the gospel-church, Zech. 6: 12. The ruins of their place and nation, (Ch. 11: 43,) were the riches of the world. See Amos 9: 11. Acts 15: 16.

They cavil at this answer; (n. 20.) 'Forty and six years was this temple in building. Temple-work was always slow work, and canst thou make such quick work of it?' Here they show some knowledge; they could tell how long the temple was in building. Dr. Lightfoot computes that it was just forty-six years from the

(17.) *The zeal of thine house.* 'See Ps. 69: 9. Zeal to promote thy glory, and to keep thy worship pure.' Dr. A. CLARKE. 'A regard for the honor of thy sanctuary, like a secret flame glowing in his bosom, preys upon his spirits, and would have consumed me, had I not given it vent.' DODDRIDGE.

Verses 18-22.

We can scarcely conceive of a more incontestable evidence of a divine energy, than the driving of the traders from the temple: yet the Jews demanded of Jesus some sign or attestation from heaven to his mission. Some think that He pointed to his body at the time; but, as his disciples did not understand Him till long afterwards, this is not likely. His opponents treated his assertion with derision: forty-six years had elapsed from the time that Herod had begun to rebuild the temple, and, though a very great number had at times been employed, it was not yet completed: and would He alone presume to rebuild

it, if destroyed, in the short space of 'three days?' The explanation of the evangelist contains two direct proofs of the Deity of Christ: his body was, in an especial sense, 'a Temple,' in which God dwelt, and in which He displayed his glory: (Notes, Col. 1: 18-20. 2: 8, 9.) and He declared that He would raise his body from the dead by his own power; yet doubtless 'God raised Him from the dead.' (Marg. Ref. k.—Notes. 10: 14-18, v. 17, 18. Acts 10: 36-43, v. 40. Heb. 13: 20, 21. 1 Pet. 1: 3-5, v. 3: 17, 18, v. 18.) His enemies rebelled at these words some years after, and, by misquoting them, bare false witness against Him. (Note, Matt. 26: 57-62.)

(19.) *This temple.* Properly, the sanctuary, that part from the courts; and so Jesus meant; but the application of it by the Jews must be understood with some latitude; for a very large proportion of that which Herod caused to be done, was about the out-buildings of the sanctuary.

20 Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days?

21 But ^{the} spake of the temple of his body

22 When therefore he was risen from the dead, ^{his} disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said.

23 ¶ Now when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast-day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did.

24 But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men,

25 And needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man.

1 i. 14. Gr. Col. 1:19. 29. Heb. 8:2. 1 i. 14. Gr. Col. 3:16. 6:19. 2 Cor. 6:16. Eph. 2:20-22. 1 Pet. 2:4. 2. 17. 12:16. 14:26. 18:4. Luke 24: 7, 8, 41. Act. 1:16. 1. 20:9, 9. 2. 32. 6:14. 7:31. 8:30, 31. 12:42, 43. Mark 13:31, 32. Mark 4:16, 17. Luke 8:13. Gal. 5:6. Eph. 3:16, 17. Jam. 2:19, 20. 2. 15. Matt. 10:18, 17. 1. 14:2, 46, 47. 4:42. 6:54. 16:30, 31. 17. 1 Sam. 16:7. 1 Chr. 28:9. 29:17. Jer. 17:9, 10. Matt. 9:4. Mark 2:8. Act. 1:24. Heb. 4:15. Rev. 2:23.

Christ's meaning, for they were as yet but babes in knowledge; but they laid it up in their hearts, and afterward it became both intelligible and useful. Note, It is good to *hear for time to come*, Isa. 42: 23. Juniors should treasure up those truths of which they do not well understand either the meaning or use, for they will be serviceable when they come to greater proficiency. It was said of the scholars of Pythagoras, that his precepts seemed to freeze in them till they were forty years old, and then they began to thaw; so this saying of Christ revived in the memories of his disciples, *when He was risen from the dead*; and why then? First, Because then the Spirit brought things to their remembrance, which Christ had said to them, and made them both easy and ready to them, ch. 14: 26. That very day that Christ rose from the dead, He opened their understandings, Luke 24: 45. Secondly, Because then this saying of Christ was fulfilled, when the temple of his body had been destroyed, and was raised again, and that upon the third day, when they remembered this among other words which Christ had said to this purport. Note, It contributes much to the understanding of the Scripture, to observe the fulfilling of the Scripture. The event will expound the prophecy.

They believed the scripture, and the word that Jesus had said; their belief of these was confirmed, and received fresh support and vigor. They were slow of heart to believe, (Luke 24: 25.) but they were sure. The scripture and the word of Christ are here put together, not because

founding of Zerubbabel's temple, in the second year of Cyrus, to the complete settlement of the temple-service, in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes; and also, that from Herod's beginning to build this temple, in the eighteenth year of his reign, to this very time, when the Jews said that this was just forty-six years. They show ignorance of the meaning of Christ's words. Note, Men often run into gross mistakes by understanding that literally which is figurative. What mischief has been done by interpreting, *This is my body*, after a corporal and carnal manner! Had they known that this was He who built all things in six days, they would not have made it such an absurdity, that He should build a temple in three days.

The difficulty is soon solved by explaining the terms; *He spake of the temple of his body*, v. 21. The holiness of the temple for which He was so jealous, was but typical, and leads us to consider another temple, which that was but a shadow of, the substance being Christ, Heb. 9: 9. Col. 2: 17. Some think, when He said, Destroy this temple, He pointed to his own body, or laid his hand upon it; however, it is certain that *He spake of the temple of his body*. Note, The body of Christ is the true temple, of which that at Jerusalem was a type. [1.] Like the temple, it was built by immediate divine direction; '*A body hast thou prepared me*,' 1 Chron. 23: 19. [2.] It was a holy house; it is called that *holy thing*. [3.] It was the habitation of God's glory; there the eternal Word dwelt, the true Shechinah. He is *Emmanuel—God with us*. [4.] The temple was the place of intercourse between God and Israel. Thus by Christ God speaks to us, and we speak to Him. Worshipers looked toward that house, 1 Kings 8: 30, 35. So we must worship God with an eye to Christ.

When He was risen from the dead, some years after, his disciples remembered that He had said this. We found them, (v. 17.) remembering what had been written before Him, and here remembering what they had heard from Him. Note, The memories of Christ's disciples should, like the treasure of the good householder, furnish things both new and old, Matt. 13: 52. Now observe,

When He was risen from the dead. It seems, they did not at this time fully understand Christ's meaning, for they were as yet but babes in knowledge; but they laid it up in their hearts, and afterward it became both intelligible and useful. Note, It is good to *hear for time to come*, Isa. 42: 23. Juniors should treasure up those truths of which they do not well understand either the meaning or use, for they will be serviceable when they come to greater proficiency. It was said of the scholars of Pythagoras, that his precepts seemed to freeze in them till they were forty years old, and then they began to thaw; so this saying of Christ revived in the memories of his disciples, *when He was risen from the dead*; and why then? First, Because then the Spirit brought things to their remembrance, which Christ had said to them, and made them both easy and ready to them, ch. 14: 26. That very day that Christ rose from the dead, He opened their understandings, Luke 24: 45. Secondly, Because then this saying of Christ was fulfilled, when the temple of his body had been destroyed, and was raised again, and that upon the third day, when they remembered this among other words which Christ had said to this purport. Note, It contributes much to the understanding of the Scripture, to observe the fulfilling of the Scripture. The event will expound the prophecy.

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(20) Forty and six years was this temple in building.] 'This is not saying that Herod had employed forty-six years in building it; for Josephus assures us, that he finished it in nine years and an half. But, after the time of this prince, they still continued to make additions to it, and the same Josephus tells us that they continued working on it, till the beginning of the Jewish war.' 'Herod finished the main work in nine and an half years, yet some additional buildings or repairs were constantly carried on for many years afterwards. He began the work sixteen years before the birth of our Lord, and this conversation was in the thirtieth year of our Lord, which make the term exactly forty-six years.' Dr. A. CLARKE. 'The edifice was not completed until the reign of Agrippa.'

BLOOMFIELD.

Forty.] 'Solomon's temple was built in seven years. The second temple, though with more than one interruption, occupied the space of twenty years. The temple here meant is therefore the edifice which, though originally built by Zerobabel, was restored, repaired, and enlarged by Herod. Although, however, Herod had (which Josephus asserts) rebuilt the second from the foundation; yet, since he used the old materials, and did not pull down the whole temple, but by parts, according as any portion was to be removed and renewed, so

they concur, but because they illustrate and strengthen each other. When the disciples saw both what they had read in the Old Testament, and what they had heard from Christ's own mouth, fulfilled in his death and resurrection, they were the more confirmed in their belief of both.

V. 23—25. We have here an account of the poor success of Christ's preaching and miracles at Jerusalem, while He kept the passover. Observe,

I. Our Lord Jesus, when at Jerusalem at the passover, did preach and work miracles. People's believing on Him, implied that He preached; and it is expressly said, *They saw the miracles He did*. He was now in the holy city, whence the word of the Lord was to go forth; his residence was mostly in Galilee, and therefore, when He was in Jerusalem, He was very busy. The time was holy time, the feast day, appointed for the service of God; at the passover the Levites taught the good knowledge of the Lord, (2 Chron. 30: 22.) and Christ took that opportunity of preaching, when the concourse of people was great, and thus honored the divine institution.

II. Hereby many were brought to believe in his name, to acknowledge him a Teacher come from God, and probably, some of those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem, believed Him to be the Messiah promised, so ready were they to welcome the first appearance of that bright and morning Star.

III. Yet Jesus did not commit Himself unto them; He did not trust Himself with them. It is the same word that is used for believing in Him. So that to believe in Christ, is to commit ourselves to Him, and to his guidance. Christ did not see cause to repose any confidence in these new converts at Jerusalem, where He had many enemies that sought to destroy Him; either, 1. Because they were false, at least, some of them, and would betray Him, if they had an opportunity, or were strongly tempted to it. He had more disciples that He could trust among the Galileans, than at Jerusalem. In dangerous times and places, it is wisdom to take heed whom you confide in. Or, 2. Because they were weak, and I would hope that this was the worst of it; not that they were treacherous, and designed mischief; but, (1.) They were *timorous*, and wanted zeal, and might be frightened to do wrong. In times of difficulty and danger, cowards are not to be trusted. Or, (2.) they were *tumultuous*, and wanted discretion. These in Jerusalem perhaps had their expectations more raised than others of the temporal reign of the Messiah, and, in that expectation, would be ready to assail the government, if Christ would have committed Himself to them, and put Himself at the head of them: but his kingdom is not of this world. We should be shy of turbulent, unquiet people, as our Master was, though they profess to believe in Christ as these did.

IV. The reason why He did not commit Himself to them, was, because He knew them, (v. 25.) the wickedness of some and the weakness of others. The evangelist asserts Christ's omniscience.

1. He knew all men, their nature, dispositions, affections, designs; we do not know any man,

the building was still regarded as Zerobabel's. Hence the Jews called Zerobabel's temple, the second temple; though we no where read of a third. So Josephus says that the temple was twice destroyed; first, by the Chaldeans; secondly, by Titus.' BLOOMFIELD.

VERBA.

They seem to have had no proper knowledge of the spiritual redemption which He came to effect, nor any due sense of their need of his salvation.

SCOTT.

He knew what was in man.] 'Because He made all things, (ch. 1: 3.) and because He was the all-wise God, v. 1. Because He searches the heart, and tries the reins. He knows who are sincere and who are hypocritical. He knows those in whom He can confide, and those in whom He can neither trust Himself nor his gifts. Reader, He knows thee; thy cares, fears, perplexities, temptations, afflictions, desires and hopes; thy helps and hinderances; the progress thou hast made in the divine life, or thy declensions from it. If He knew thee, be hypocritical or iniquitous, He looks upon thee with abhorrence; if He know thee to be of a meek and broken spirit, He looks on thee with pity, complacency and delight. While thine eye and heart are simple, He will love thee, and thy whole soul shall be full of light. To Him be glory and dominion forever.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

CHAP. III.

Nicodemus comes to Jesus by night, 1. Jesus shows him the indispensability of being born again, 2-11. He shows the difference between earthly and heavenly things, 12, 13, and speaks of his own death, and of faith in Him, 14, 15. The great love of God, in giving his only-begotten Son to redeem the world, 16, 17. Unbelief is the great cause of men's condemnation, 18-21. Jesus baptizes in Judaea, and John at Bethany, 22-24. John instructs his disciples, who were jealous for his honor, concerning the glory of Christ, the salvation of those who believe in Him, and the wrath of God abiding on unbelievers, 25-36.

THERE was a man ^a of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews :

2 The same ^b came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, ^c Rabbi, ^d we know that thou art a Teacher come from God : ^e for no man can do those miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

3 Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, ^f Except a

scarcely ourselves. He knows all men; his hand made them all, his piercing eye sees into them. He knows his subtle enemies, and all their projects; his false friends, and their true characters; what they really are, whatever they pretend to be. He knows them that are truly his, their integrity, and their infirmity. He knows their frame.

2. He needed not that any should testify of man. His knowledge was not by information, but by his infallible intuition. It is the infelicity of earthly princes, that they must see with other men's eyes, and hear with other men's ears; but Christ goes purely on his own knowledge. Angels are his messengers, but not his spies, for his own eyes run to and fro through the earth, 2 Chron. 16: 9. This may comfort us in reference to Satan's accusations, that Christ will not take men's characters from him.

3. He knew what was in man. We know what is done by men; Christ knows what is in them; tries the heart and the reins. This is the prerogative of that essential, eternal Word, Heb. 4: 12, 13. We invade his prerogative, if we presume to judge men's hearts. How fit is Christ to be the Saviour of men, and their Physician, who has such perfect knowledge of the patient's state and case, temper and distemper; knows what is in him! How fit also to be the Judge of all! For the judgment of Him who knows all men, all in men, must needs be according to truth.

This is all the success of Christ's preaching and miracles at Jerusalem, in this journey. The Lord comes to his temple, and none come to Him, but a parcel of weak, simple people, that He can neither have credit from, nor put confidence in; yet He shall at length see of the travail of his soul.

CHAP. III. v. 1-20. Few were brought to Christ at Jerusalem, yet here was one; it is worth while to go a great way for the salvation of one soul.

Not many mighty and noble are called, yet

here was one. Not many of the rulers, or of the Pharisees; yet, 1. This was a man of the Pharisees, a scholar. Let it not be said that all Christ's followers are unlearned and ignorant men. The principles of the Pharisees were contrary to the spirit of Christianity; yet there were some in whom those high thoughts were brought into obedience to Christ. Grace is able to subdue the greatest opposition. 2. He was a ruler of the Jews, a member of the great sanhedrim, a man of authority. Bad as things were, there were some rulers well inclined, who could do little good, because the stream was strong against them; they were yoked with the corrupt, so that the good which they would, they could not; yet Nicodemus continued in his place, and did what he could, when he could not do what he would.

He came to Jesus by night.

He made a private and particular address to Christ, did not think it enough to hear his public discourses. He resolved to talk with Him by Himself, where he might be free. Personal converse with ministers about our souls would be of great use to us, Mal. 2: 7.

His address by night may be considered an act of prudence and discretion. Christ was engaged all day in public work, and he would not interrupt Him then, but waited on Him when at leisure. Note, Private advantages must give way to those that are of general use. Christ had many enemies, and if the chief priests had known that Nicodemus came, they would have been the more enraged against Christ. Or it was an act of zeal and forwardness. Nicodemus could not spare time all day, and therefore would rather take time from the diversions of the evening, or the rest of the night, than not converse with Christ. When others were sleeping, he was getting knowledge, Ps. 63: 6, and 119: 148. Probably, it was the night after he saw Christ's miracles, and he would not slip the first opportunity of pursuing his convictions. He knew not how soon Christ might leave the town, nor what might happen betwixt that and another feast, and therefore would lose no time.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 12-25. Where the presence and doctrine of Christ are not valued, they will not long be continued: but He always is present with those who copy his example, by attending on the ordinances of God. His secret influence upon the minds of men extirpates corruptions from our hearts, and from his church, and constitutes the chief part of his severity. His hand now holds the scourge, not the avenging sword; nor will He ever destroy those who are willing to be cleansed. Zeal for the honor of the ordinances of God still engrosses his mind: his indignation is daily excited by those who make 'his Father's house an house of merchandise'; and, unless they repent, He will at length 'make them as a fiery oven in the day of his wrath.' They who questioned his authority, were at length enraged by his rebukes to put Him to death; but He raised up the sacred temple of his body by his own power, that in it, 'all the fulness of the Godhead might dwell.' He speedily took vengeance on the Jews for their impiety; and all who despise his authority, or hate his Gospel, shall also perish;

but his disciples will reverence his words, when they do not fully understand them; they will treasure them up; and wait till the event explains them; thus their faith will be strengthened by further evidence of his truth.—Let us beware of a dead faith, or a formal profession; as carnal believers are often the most treacherous enemies. However men may impose on others, or on themselves, they cannot impose on their Judge.

SCOTT.

V. 24. Jesus did not commit Himself unto them.] 'Let us learn, also, from the caution which Jesus used, not rashly to put ourselves and our usefulness into the power of others; but to study a wise and happy medium between that universal prejudice and suspicion, which, while it wrongs the best and the most worthy characters, would deprive us of all the pleasures of an intimate friendship, and that undistinguishing easiness and openness of temper, which might make us the property of every hypocritical pretender to kindness and respect.'

DODDRIEGE.

NOTES.

CHAP. III. v. 1, 2. Came by night.] "The Jewish traditions recommended a nocturnal study of the law and theology." Lightfoot. But that Nicodemus, among other motives, was influenced by fear of exciting the hatred of his colleagues, (which Jesus had already drawn upon Himself, by casting out the traffickers from the temple) may be collected from 12: 42. On any other hypothesis the words at ch. 19: 39. would have no emphasis.

BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 3.

It has been already observed, that the word Verily, implies a strong asseveration, and in the beginning of a sentence it is peculiar to Christ. (Note, Matt. 6: 5.) St. John generally mentions the affirmation as doubled, which adds a still greater energy to it. (Marg. Ref.—See on 1: 52.) We are therefore sure, that something of peculiar importance, and liable to be overlooked, is here intended. If it be allowed that the expression, 'born again,' is figurative, yet surely the figure should be regarded as appropriate and significant. Some argue that 'to be born again' means no more than to be baptized, and they quote the ancient fathers in proof of it. But will any man say, that no one can 'see,' or 'enter into,' the kingdom of God that is, understand the nature of true religion, or inherit the happiness of heaven, without the baptism of water? Others understand it of reformation: but outward reformation may be mere hypocrisy, or the result of selfish motives, or corrupted by pride. Nay, a man may change or be kind of sin for another, or one creed or sect for another, and yet remain very far from the kingdom of God: in short, if reformation here mean only reformation of life, our Lord instead

of making any new discovery, has thrown a great deal of obscurity on 'what was before plain and known, not only to the Jews, but to wise heathens. And indeed this is the main article in dispute among many.' 'Some think, all these things in Scripture are expressed in condescension to our capacities, so that there is still to be conceived in many of them an inexpressible grandeur: whilst on the other hand, others suppose, that under the pomp and grandeur of the most hyperbolical expressions, 'things of a low and ordinary sense are to be understood.' Orren. It may here be expedient to elucidate the propriety of the metaphor. When a child is born, 'a new creature' is produced; and all its capacities, senses, and limbs are new, and suited to that new life on which it has entered. Thus when the grace of God changes the heart, the person indeed is the same; but he becomes a new man, possessed of new perceptions, affections and dispositions, and is prepared to make a new use of all his faculties; he enters the spiritual world, to which he was before an utter stranger. (Notes, Eph. 2: 4-10, v. 10. 2 Cor. 5: 17.) When an infant is born, it has all the parts of a man; but they are in a feeble state, and need nourishment and time, to grow to their proper size, and to perform their appropriate functions. Thus the regenerated sinner has the substance of right principles and dispositions communicated to his soul; but they are in an infantile state, and must grow up gradually, nourishment is provided, and 'the new-born babe,' in the spiritual as well as in the natural world, desires and thrives upon it. (Note, 2 Pet. 2: 1-3.) No man can comprehend how the infant is formed, nor can any man know how God effects the change in the sinner's heart. He works by means and instruments in both cases; and in each of them a real creation is effected by his omnipotence. The birth of the infant

man be born *again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

4 Nicodemus saith unto him, 'How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?'
 * Or, from above. Jam. 1:17. 3:17.
 1. 15. 12:40. Deut. 29:4. Jer. 5:21. Matt. 13:11-16. 16:17. 2 Cor. 3:4.
 2. 4:11, 12. 8:55, 60. 1 Cor. 1:18. 2:14.

yet afterward, when there was occasion, he owned Christ publicly, ch. 7: 50. 15: 39. The grace which is at first but a grain of mustard-seed, may grow to be a great tree.

He did not come to talk with Christ about state affairs, (though he was a ruler,) but about his own soul, and begins without circumlocution: he calls Christ *Rabbi*, which signifies a great man; see Isa. 19: 23. *He shall send them a Savior, and a great one, a Savior and a Rabbi;* so the word is. There are hopes of those who think and speak honorably of Christ. He tells Christ how far he had attained; we know that *Thou art a Teacher*.

Thou art a Teacher come from God; not drained by men, but supported with divine inspiration and authority. He that was to be the sovereign Ruler, came first to be a *Teacher*; for He would rule with reason, not with rigor; by the power of truth, not of the sword. The world lay in ignorance and mistake; the Jewish teachers were corrupt, and caused them to err; it is time for the Lord to work. He came a *Teacher from God, the Father of mercies*, in pity to a dark, deceived world; from God, the *Father of lights, and Fountain of truth*; all the light and truth which we may venture our souls upon.

We know, not only I, but others; the thing being so plain and self-evident. Perhaps he knew that there were Pharisees and rulers that were under the same convictions, but had not grace to own it. Or, we may suppose that he brought with him one or more of his friends and pupils; 'Master,' saith he, 'we come with a desire to be thy scholars, for we are fully satisfied that Thou art a divine Teacher.'

The ground of this assurance; *No man can do these miracles which Thou doest, except God be with him.*

Here we are assured of the truth of Christ's miracles; they were not counterfeit. Nicodemus, a judicious, sensible, inquisitive man, one that had all the reason and opportunity imaginable to examine them, was so fully satisfied that they were real miracles, that he was wrought upon to go contrary to his interest, and to those of his own rank who were prejudiced against Christ.

We are directed what inference to draw from Christ's miracles; we are to receive Him as a *Teacher come from God*. His miracles were his credentials. The course of nature could not be altered but by the power of the God of nature, who, we are sure, is the God of truth and goodness, and would never set his seal to a lie or a cheat.

Four things our Savior here discourses of.

I. *The necessity and nature of regeneration, and the new birth, v. 3-8.*

Jesus answered, v. 3. This answer was perhaps to rebuke what He saw defective in the address of Nicodemus. 'It was not enough for him to admire Christ's miracles, and acknowledge his mission; he must be born again. It is plain that he expected the kingdom of heaven shortly to appear; and, according to the common notion of the Jews, expects it in external pomp and power; he doubts not but Jesus is either the Messiah, or his Prophet, and therefore makes his court to Him, and so hopes to secure a

In the night, his converse with Christ would be more free, and less liable to disturbance. Or, it was an act of fear and cowardice. He was afraid or ashamed to be seen with Christ, and therefore came in the night. When religion is out of fashion, there are many Nicodemites, especially among the rulers, who have a better affection to Christ and religion than they would be known to have. But observe, First, Though he came by night, Christ bid him welcome, accepted his integrity and pardoned his infirmity; He considered his temper, which perhaps was timorous, and the temptation he was in from his place and office; and hereby taught his ministers to become all things to all men, and to encourage good beginnings, though weak. *Paul preached privately to them of reputation*, Gal. 2: 2. Secondly, Though now he came by night, there was occasion, he owned Christ publicly, ch. 7: 50.

share of the advantages of that kingdom. But Christ tells him that he can have no benefit by that change of the state, unless there be a change of the spirit, of the principles and dispositions equivalent to a new birth. Nicodemus came by night; 'But this will not do,' saith Christ. His religion must be owned before men. When Nicodemus owned Christ as a *Teacher from God*, intrusted with a revelation from heaven, he plainly intimated a desire to know what it was, and a readiness to receive it; and Christ gives it him.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee; I, the Amen, the Amen, say it; so it may be read: 'I, the faithful and true Witness.' The matter is settled, that except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. 'I say it to thee, though a Pharisee, a master in Israel.' Observe,

What it is that is required; to be born again; that is, we must live a new life. Birth is the beginning of life; to be born again, is to begin anew. We must not think to patch up the old building, but begin from the foundation. We must have a new nature, new principles, affections, aims. The word signifies both again and from above. First, We must be born anew; so the word is taken, (Gal. 4: 9.) and from the beginning, Luke 1: 3. By our first birth we were shapen in sin and iniquity; therefore our souls must be fashioned anew. Secondly, We must be born from above, (so the word is used by the evangelist, ch. 3: 31. 19: 11.) and I take it to be especially intended here, not excluding the other; for to be born from above, supposes being born again. But this new birth has its rise from heaven, ch. 1: 13; and its tendency to heaven: it is to be born to a divine and heavenly life, a life of communion with God and the upper world, and, in order to this, it is to partake of a divine nature, and bear the image of the heavenly.

See the indispensable necessity of this. Except a man (any one that partakes of the human nature,) be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of the Messiah begun in grace and perfected in glory. Except we be born from above, we cannot see this. That is, [1.] We cannot understand the nature of it. Such is the nature of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, that the soul must be new-modelled; the natural man must become a spiritual man, before he is capable of receiving as I understanding them, 1 Cor. 2: 14. [2.] We cannot receive the comfort of it; cannot expect any benefit by Christ and his Gospel, here, &c. hereafter. Considering what we are by nature, how corrupt and sinful; what God is, in whom alone we can be happy, and what heaven is, to which the perfection of our happiness is reserved; it will appear in the nature of the thing, that we must be born again; because it is impossible that we should be happy, if we be not holy; see 2 Cor. 6: 11, 12.

precedes the exercise of its senses, and is the introduction to all the actions of life; so the new birth must precede all the actions of the spiritual life: till that has taken place, the man can, in a spiritual manner, do nothing. But as, when a living child is born, it will certainly move and act; so when the sinner is 'born again,' he will act accordingly. Whatever be a man's natural abilities, attainments, or profession, 'he cannot see the kingdom of God;' neither discern its spiritual nature, nor enjoy its blessings. (Note, Matt. 3: 2.) This unalterable appointment of God has also its foundation in the nature of things. God is perfect in holiness, all things relating to true religion are holy and spiritual; but man by nature is unholy, and cannot relish or even discern that excellency. God and the nature of holiness and happiness are unchangeable: therefore man must change, or he can never be conformed to them, or happy in them. (Notes, Rom. 8: 5-9. 1 Cor. 2: 14-16, v. 14.) Every revelation of God requires of man the deepest humiliation; but man is a self-justifying, self-sufficient creature; he must therefore be inwardly changed, before he can understand the Gospel. Without this, he can see no excellency in the holiness of God, no goodness or justice in the precepts and sanction of the law, no hatefulness in himself, no malignity deserving damnation in his sins; no preciousness and glory in salvation by Christ, no beauty in conformity to his character. Consequently, he can neither submit, love, nor obey, but must remain a rebel, and a despiser of the Gospel; he cannot therefore be a true Christian, nor be meet for heaven. He may participate in the animal life; but must remain spiritually dead, and incapable of such satisfactions as are enjoyed in heaven, and as pious men experience on earth: even as a watch, constructed with three distinct parts, may move on regularly as to two of them, when the third is incapable of motion. (Note, Gen. 2: 16, 17.) Some render the words 'born again,' born from above; and no

doubt they admit of that meaning; but it is evident that Nicodemus did not thus understand them.

SCOTT. Jesus, knowing the prejudices Nicodemus labored under both as a Jew and a Pharisee, judged it necessary immediately to acquaint him with the absolute necessity of a thorough change, by divine grace, both in heart and life: a change so great as might appear like coming into a new world, and would bring the greatest and most learned man to the simplicity of little children. He therefore said to him, 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again,' &c.

DODDRIDGE. 'No stronger expression could have been chosen to signify a great and remarkable change of state and character. We must be entirely different from what we were before, as that which begins to be at any time, is not, and cannot be the same with what did formerly exist.'

WITHERSPON. 'The great moral change, of which our Lord chiefly speaks in this conversation, and which is repeatedly inculcated through the scriptures, is the commencement of that holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. It is a spiritual frame or temper in the mind of fallen man, imparted by the Holy Spirit, the infusion of a new life into the heart, before dead in trespasses and sins. It is not a change of the essence of the soul, or the conferring of any new faculties, but a change in the direction and use of those faculties which sin had corrupted, the re-impressing on man that holy image of God, which he lost by the original transgression. When, therefore, the graces and duties, which are the inseparable effects of this change, begin to appear, even in the smallest measure, we hope the transformation under review is commenced; when they attain some consistency, we say in the judgment of charity that it has actually taken place; and as it shows itself in growing sanctification, we hesitate not on the question of the real operation of the Holy Spirit in the change of heart.' D. WILSON.

5 Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be 'born of water, and of the Spirit,' he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

[Practical Observations.]
6 That which is 'born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7 'Marvel not that I said unto thee, 'Ye must be born again.

8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound

1. 3. Ia. 44:3, 4. Ez. 39:25-27. Matt. 3:11. Eph. 5:26. Tit. 3:7. 1 Pt. 1:12. 2 Pt. 1:1. John 5:8-9. 1 John 3:11. Rom. 8:2. 1 Cor. 6:11. 1 John 1:29. 5:1.
2. Matt. 5:29. 18:3. 28:19. Luke 13:35. 24. Acts 2:38. 3:19. Rom. 14:17. 2 Cor. 5:17, 18. Gal. 6:15. Eph. 2:4-10. 2 Thes. 2:13, 14.
3. Gen. 6:3. 6:5, 12. Job 14:4. 15:14. 16:9. 28:4. Ps. 51:10. 51:10. 7:3. 18:25. 81:1, 5-9, 13. Gal. 5:16-21. 24. Eph. 2:8. Col. 2:11.
4. E. 1:19, 20. 35:26, 27. Rom. 8:5, 9. Ez. 3:17. Gal. 5:17. 1 John 3:9.
5. P. 12. 4:28. 6:51-53.
6. Job 15:14. Matt. 13:35-35. Rom. 8:19. 12:2. 12:12. 2. Eph. 4:22-24. 1 Cor. 1:12. Heb. 12:14. 1 Pt. 1:14-16, 22, 23. Rev. 21:27.
7. Or, *from above*.
8. Job 13:13-16, 17, 21-23. Ps. 107:25, 26. Ez. 11:5. Ez. 37:9. Acts 2:2. 4:51. 1 Cor. 2:11. 12:11.

This great truth of the necessity of regeneration being thus solemnly laid down,

It is objected against by Nicodemus, (v. 4.) *How can a man be born when he is old?* Herein appears his weakness in knowledge; what Christ spake spiritually, he seems to have understood after a corporal manner, as if there were no other way of new-moulding a soul, than by new-framing the body, and bringing that back to the rock, out of which it was hewn: as if there were such a connection between the soul and the body, that there could be no fashioning the heart anew but by forming the bones anew. Nicodemus, as the other Jews, valued himself, no doubt, very much on his first birth; the place of it, the holy land, perhaps the holy city; his parentage, such as that which Paul could have gloried in, Phil. 3: 5. And therefore it is a great surprise to him to hear of being born again. Could he be better bred and born, than bred and born an Israelite, or by any other birth stand fairer for the kingdom of the Messiah? Indeed they looked upon a proselyted Gentile to be as one born again, or born anew; he could not imagine how a Jew, a Pharisee, could ever better himself by being born again; he therefore thinks if he must be born again, it must be of her that bare him first. They that are proud of their first birth, are hardly brought to a new birth. But he does not turn his back upon Christ because of this hard saying, but ingeniously acknowledges his ignorance, which implies a desire to be better informed; and so I take this, rather than that he had such notions of the new birth Christ spake of: 'Lord, make me to understand this, for it is a riddle to me; I know no other way for a man to be born.' When we meet with that in the things of God, which is dark, and hard to be understood, we must with humility and industry con-

tinue our attendance upon the means of knowledge, till God shall reveal even that unto us.

Our Lord takes occasion to repeat and confirm what He had said; (v. 6.) 'Verily, verily I say unto thee, the very same that I said before.' Note, The word of Christ is not vain and nay, but yea and amen; what He hath said, He will abide by, whoever saith against it; nor will He retract any of his sayings for the ignorance and mistakes of men. Though Nicodemus understood not the mystery of regeneration, yet Christ asserts the necessity of it as positively as before. Note, It is folly to think of evading the obligation of evangelical precepts by pleading that they are unintelligible, Rom. 3: 3, 4.

He further shows,
(1.) The Author of this blessed change, and who it is that works it. To be born again, is to be born of the Spirit, v. 5-8. It is not by any wisdom or power of our own, but by the power and influence of the Spirit. It is the sanctification of the Spirit, (1 Pet. 1: 2.) and renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. 3: 5. The word He works by, is his inspiration, and the heart to be wrought on, He has access to.

(2.) The nature of this change; that which is wrought, is spirit, v. 6. Those that are regenerated are made spiritual, refined from sensuality. The dictates and interests of the soul have retrieved the dominion over the flesh. The Pharisees placed their religion in external purity and performances, and it would be with them no less than a new birth, to become spiritual.

(3.) The necessity of this change.
That which is born of the flesh is flesh. Here is our malady, and the causes of it, which are such as speak plain that there is no remedy but we must be born again.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-5. Numbers are convinced concerning the doctrines of Christianity, and of the piety and faithfulness of its ministers, but they dare not avow their sentiments in the face of the world, or among despisers of the Gospel: and, though we must not excuse such as are afraid or ashamed to associate with those whom they believe to be 'sent of God,' yet we must not 'quench the smoking flax' for by proper instruction and encouragement, they may at length be more decided.—True religion consists in the right state of the heart: and since, 'except a man be born again, he cannot see,' or 'enter into, the kingdom of God,' it becomes every one seriously to inquire into the meaning of this declaration, and to beseech the Lord to direct him. In this way, a man may meditate and pray, for a considerable time, before he clearly enters into the meaning; yet he will gradually and certainly obtain experimental knowledge of it. But it is the most absurd presumption to expect future happiness without either knowing what it is to be 'born again,' or inquiring about it; as if we could enter heaven in defiance of Christ, and by so doing prove his most solemn de-

claration a falsehood! Nor is it safer or wiser so to interpret it as to leave a man proud, and an enemy of God and holiness, as he was before; neither evidencing his title to the kingdom, nor giving him a meetness for its employments. But 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him.' To evade conviction, it is common for man to put an absurd construction on the words of those, who speak according to the oracles of God; to draw ridiculous conclusions from them; and then to inquire, whether this be not very foolish. Whereas the folly lies in the misconception, not in the doctrine itself, which appears reasonable to every teachable inquirer.—The Lord will explain his declarations, but will not retract them, nor alter the rules of admission into his kingdom, to humor the prejudices of any set of men; and the true baptism is not 'that which is outward in the flesh, but that which is inward, even that of the heart,' by the work of the Holy Spirit, 'whose praise is not of men, but of God.'

SCOTT.

Verse 5.

By 'the kingdom of God' He doubtless primarily meant the kingdom of the Messiah; but as admission into this is necessary, in order to 'enter into the kingdom of God' in heaven, both may be included. 'Elsewhere the Spirit and fire are joined, but the order is reversed. "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Water 'in the sacrament of baptism, is an outward sign and seal of the spiritual and divine energy, which inwardly cleanses us. But fire, when joined to the Spirit, cannot be understood otherwise than metaphorically. In this place, 'the Spirit' being added to 'water' is a declaration of the external sacramental baptism; in the other the fire is mentioned as an explanation of the divine energy, taken from a corporal thing.' Beza. (Note, Matt. 3: 11, 12.) If baptism and being born again be the same, or the one invariably accompanies the other, so that all who are rightly baptized are regenerate, and none else; then all who die unbaptized, even infants, are shut out of heaven! A proposition far more dreadful than any held by the most unfeeling Calvinists.

SCOTT.

Though our Lord, in this account of regeneration, joins water and Spirit together, he does not, in contrasting it with natural generation, verse 6th, mention the water at all, but opposes simply the Spirit to the flesh. And, in what he says, verse 8th, of the manner wherein this change is effected, the regenerate are distinguished solely by the words, 'born of the Spirit.'

It is not necessary that by water and the Spirit (in this place) we should understand two different things: it is probably only an elliptical form of speech, for the Holy Spirit under the similitude of water; as in Matt. 3: 3, the Holy Ghost and fire, do not mean two things, but one, viz. the Holy Ghost under the similitude of fire, refining and purifying the whole.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 6.

To understand by 'the flesh,' in the first clause, the body exclusive-

ly, would destroy all connection between the two parts of the verse. And where would be the need of regeneration, or to be renewed 'in the spirit of our mind,' if the soul were in itself spiritual, and only the body carnal? In fact, the soul, or heart, is the more immediate seat and source of sin, and the body only or mainly its instrument. (Notes, Prov 4: 23. Jer. 17: 9, 10. Matt. 15: 15-20.) 'It appears to me 'impossible, to clear up either the beauty of the antithesis, or the truth of the assertion, on any other interpretation.' Doddridge in Scott's

Verse 7, 8.

Marvel not, &c.] 'Since the degeneracy of human nature is of a universal extent as to be common to you all. Nor have you any cause to be surprised if there be some things in this doctrine of regeneration which are of an obscure and unsearchable nature, for even to the natural world many things are so: The triad, for instance, bloweth where it will, and is not subject to the direction or command of man; and though thou hearest the sound thereof, and feelest its sensible and powerful effects, yet thou canst not exactly tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth. So it is with every one that is born of the Spirit. You are so far from being capable of accounting for it, that it is easy to be seen there is a sovereign freedom in that Divine agency, which makes it oftentimes impossible to say, why it is imparted to one rather than to another; and there is a secret in the manner of its operation on the mind, which it is neither necessary to know nor possible to explain.'

DODDRIIDGE.

'The Spirit Himself, the great Agent, is invisible, his manner of operating is beyond our discovery: but the reality of his operation is perceived by the effects produced in the disposition and life of the regenerate.'

CAMPBELL.

(8.) As the same word signifies both spirit and the wind, in the original languages, the similitude has a peculiar propriety; if 'being born again' be interpreted of the communication of divine life to the dead in sin.' But if understood of baptism exclusively, or what al-

thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: 'so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

9 Nicodemus answered and said unto him, 'How can these things be?

10 Jesus answered and said unto him, 'Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?

11 Verily, I verily, I say unto thee, 'We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

[Practical Observations.]

1:13. Is. 55:9-13. Mark 4:26-29. Luke 6:43-44. 1 John 3:29. 3:9. 4. 6:32-39. Prov. 4:18. Is. 42:16. Mark 8:24, 25. Luke 1:34. Is. 9:16. 29:10-12. 59:10. Jer. 8:9. Matt. 11:25. 15:14. 22:29. 23:34. Deut. 10:16. 30:6. Chr. 29:19. Ps. 51:9, 10. 73:1. Is. 11:9-9. 65:7-9. Jer. 31:33. 32:39, 40. Ez. 11:19. 18:31, 32. 26:25-27. 37:23. 24. Rom. 2:28, 29. Phil. 3:3. Col. 2:11. 7:8. 13:32-34. 1:18. 7:16. 8:14, 28, 29. 18:1. 49. Is. 55:4. Matt. 11:27. Luke 10:22. 1 John 5:6-12. Rev. 1:5. 3:14. 13:11. 5:21-40, 43. 12:37, 38. Is. 50:2. 53:1. 65:2. Matt. 23:37. Acts 22:18. 23:23-27. 2 Cor. 4:4.

Himself never did, nor ever will, unsay it, so all the world cannot gainsay it. The great *Luogiber*, whose will is a law; the great Mediator of the new covenant, who has full power to settle the terms of our reconciliation to God, the great Physician of souls, who knows their case, and what is necessary to their cure, hath said, *Ye must be born again*. 'I said unto thee that which all are concerned in, *Ye must all be born again*; not only the common people, but the *masters in Israel*.' We are not to marvel at this, for, when we consider the holiness of the God with whom we have to do, the design of our redemption, the depravity of our nature, and the nature of the happiness set before us, we shall not think it strange that so much stress is laid upon this as the one thing needful, that *we must be born again*.

This change is illustrated by two comparisons.

[1.] The regenerating work of the Spirit is compared to *water*, v. 5. To

First, We are flesh, not only *corporeal*, but *corrupt*, Gen. 6:3. The soul is still a spiritual substance, but so wedded to the flesh, so captivated by the flesh, so in love with the delights of the flesh, so employed in making provision for the flesh, that it is justly called *flesh*; it is carnal. And what communion can there be between God, who is a *Spirit*, and a soul in this condition?

Secondly, We came to be so, by being *born of the flesh*. It is a corruption that is bred in the bone with us, and therefore we must be *born again*. The corrupt nature, which is *flesh*, takes rise from our *first birth*; therefore the new nature which is *Spirit*, must take rise from a second birth. Nicodemus spake of the natural birth being repeated; but, to what purpose? If he were born a hundred times, still that which is *born of the flesh, is flesh*; a clean thing cannot be brought out of an unclean. He must be born of the Spirit, or he cannot become spiritual. The spiritual part of man has so much the dominion over his corporeal part that he was denominated a *living soul*; (Gen. 2:7.) but by indulging the appetite of the flesh, in eating forbidden fruit, he prostituted the soul to the tyranny of sensual lust, and became no longer a *living soul*, but *flesh*; *Dust thou art*. The living soul became inactive; thus in the day he sinned, he surely died. In this degenerate state, he beget a son in *his own likeness*, transmitted the human nature, which had been deposited in his hands, thus corrupted and depraved; and in the same plight it is still propagated. Corruption and sin are woven into our nature; we are *shaped in iniquity*, which makes it necessary that the nature be changed. It is not enough to put on a new coat, or a new face, but we must put on the *new man*, we must be *new creatures*.

Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. Christ hath said it, and as He

be born again, is to be *born of water*, and of the Spirit, that is, of the Spirit working like water; (as Matt. 3:11.) with the *Holy Ghost and with fire*, means, with the Holy Ghost as with fire.

That which is primarily intended here, is to show that the Spirit, in sanctifying a soul 1. *Cleanses* and purifies it; takes away that by which it was unfit for the kingdom of God. It is the *washing of regeneration*, Tit. 3:5. *Ye are washed*, 1 Cor. 6:11. See Ezek. 36:25. 2. *Cools* and refreshes it, as water doth the hunted hart and the weary traveller. The Spirit is compared to water, Isa. 44:3. *ch. 7*, 33, 39. In the first creation, the fruits of heaven were *born of water*, (Gen. 1:20.) in allusion to which, perhaps, they that are born from above, are born of water.

It is probable that Christ had an eye to baptism, which John had used, and He Himself had begun to use. Regeneration by the Spirit would be signified by washing with water, as the visible sign of spiritual grace: not that all they, and they only, that are baptized, are saved; but without that new birth which is wrought by the Spirit, and signified by baptism, none shall be looked upon as the *protected, privileged subjects of the kingdom of heaven*. The Jews cannot partake of the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom they had so long looked for, unless they quit all expectations of being justified by the works of the law, and submit to the *baptism of repentance*, the great gospel-duty, for the remission of sins, the great gospel-privilege.

[2.] It is also compared to *wind*; *The wind bloweth where it listeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit*. The same word signifies both the wind and spirit. The Spirit came upon the apostles in a *rushing mighty wind*, Acts 2:2. His strong influences on the hearts of sinners are compared to the *breathing of the wind*, (Ezek. 37:9.) and his *sweet influences* on the souls of saints, to the north and south wind, Cant. 4:16. This comparison is here used to show,

First, That the Spirit of regeneration works at will, and as a free Agent. *The wind bloweth where it listeth*, nor is it subject to our command; God directs it, it fulfils his word, Ps. 148:8. The Spirit dispenses his influences where, and when, on whom, and in what measure and degree, He pleases; *giving to every man, severally as He will*, 1 Cor. 12:11.

Secondly, He works *powerfully*, and with evident effects: *Thou hearest the sound thereof*;

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 6-11. Without regeneration, we cannot come to God, or spiritually worship Him. 'The carnal mind,' which belongs to us all as 'born of the flesh,' is 'enmity against God,' so that 'they who are in the flesh cannot please Him.' Happy are they who are 'born of the Spirit,' and made spiritually minded: they can discern the things of God; religion becomes their element; they are made subjects of that kingdom which is in righteousness, peace, and joy.' Let it not then be marvelled at, that Jesus has said, 'Ye must be born again'; it is enough that the Author, the nature, the necessity, and the effects of this work are manifest, though the manner and rule of it be not known. Can we indeed understand fully how the most ordinary effects in nature are produced? Can we comprehend all that relates to our natural birth? Or can we change the

course which God has established? One ship is wafted into port, and another dashed upon the rocks by the wind, as it pleases God. The sailors can neither comprehend, he reasons of it, nor repel its effects; but yet they may use means, and employ their skill to avail themselves of a wind, or to retire from a tempest; and we may also use means, and expect the blessing of God on them. There are many 'teachers in Israel,' professed ministers of Christianity, of great repute, who say, 'How can these things be?' Nay, they positively declare that they cannot be; and that all are enthusiasts or hypocrites, who profess them. In an inferior sense, however, we may say with humble confidence, 'We testify that which we have seen,' by experience, whether men receive or reject our testimony.

SCOTT.

Verses 9-11.

ways accompanies it when rightly administered, there seems nothing appropriate in it. The administration of baptism is evident and public. Every thing relating to it depends on 'the will of man,' of the baptized person in adults, of parents and sponsors in infants, and of the officiating minister in both cases.

SCOTT.

'Divine Providence is accustomed, by hidden modes and inconspicuous methods, to bring about the most important events.' See Gen. 24, 35. The passage may be thus paraphrased: 'You stumble on my very estate, and that of my disciples, and inquire *who and whence I am*? See 8:14. 9:29. 19:9. Since my person is obscure, you feel confident, that nothing great will be effected by Me or my disciples; but the event will be contrary to your expectations. 1 Cor. 1:26-29. Idolatry will be abolished, and the temple of Jerusalem destroyed. There will be a mighty and incredible change of affairs. The Gospel will be propagated, not by the eloquence of the learned, not by the wealth of the rich, nor the power of princes; but will be introduced, and prevail, in spite of the learned, the eloquent, the rich, and the great; and multitudes innumerable will receive it with their whole hearts and minds: not attracted by the hope of riches, honor, and pleasures, but influenced solely by the promise of the benefits of a future life, even a heaven.' *Wolstein*

BLOOMFIELD.

12 If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?

13 And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, which is in heaven.

b 3:5, 9. 1 Cor. 2:1, 2. Heb. 5:11, 12. 1 Pet. 2:1-3.
c 13-17, 31-35. 1:1-14. 1 Cor. 2:7-9. 1:18. 6:46. Deut. 30:12. Prov. 30:1. Acts 2:34. Rom. 10:5, 7. Eph. 4:10.
d 24, 28, 51, 62. 8:42. 13:3. 16:23-30. 17:5. 1 Cor. 15:47.
e 1:18. Matt. 28:20. Mark 16:19, 20. Acts 20:28. Eph. 1:43. 4:10.

will neither believe the truths of Christianity, nor submit to the laws of it, further than they please. Christ shall be their Teacher, provided they may choose their lesson.

Nicodemus owns himself ignorant of Christ's meaning, after all; '*How can these things be?*' They are things I do not understand. Thus the things of the Spirit of God are foolishness to the natural man. He is not only estranged from them, but prejudiced against them, and thus they are foolishness to him.

Because this doctrine was unintelligible to him, he questions the truth of it; as if, because it was a paradox to him, it was a chimera in itself. Many have such an opinion of their own capacity, as to think that that cannot be proved, which they cannot believe; by wisdom they knew not Christ.

Christ reproved him for his dulness and ignorance. *Art thou a master in Israel?*—a teacher; one who sits in Moses' chair, and yet not only unacquainted with the doctrine of regeneration, but incapable of understanding it? This word is a reproof, (1.) To those that undertake to teach others, and yet are ignorant and unskillful themselves. (2.) To those that spend their time in teaching notions and ceremonies in religion, niceties and criticisms in the Scripture, and neglect that which is practical, and tends to reform the heart and life. Two words in the reproof are very emphatic: [1.] The place where he is lost was cast; in *Israel*, where there was great plenty of the means of knowledge, where divine revelation was. He might have learned this out of the Old Testament. [2.] The things he was thus ignorant in; these things, these necessary things, these divine things; had he never read Ps. 50:5, 10. Ezek. 18:13. 36:25, 26.

II. Christ discoursed hereupon, of the certainty and sublimity of gospel-truths; (v. 11-13.) to show the folly of those who make strange of these things, and to recommend them to our search.

The truths Christ taught, were very certain, and what we may venture upon; (v. 11.) *We speak that we do know*; whom does He mean beside Himself? Some understand it of those that bore witness to Him on earth, the prophets and John Baptist; they spoke what they knew, and had seen, and were themselves abundantly satisfied in: divine revelation carries its own proof along with it. Others, of those that bore witness from heaven, the Father and the Holy Ghost; the Father was with Him, the Spirit of the Lord was upon Him; therefore He speaks in the plural number, as ch. 14:23. *We will come unto him*. Observe [1.] The truths of Christ are of undoubted certainty. We have all the reason in the world to be assured, that the sayings of Christ are such as we may venture our souls upon; for He is not only a credi-

Verses 12, 13.
No creature can find satisfaction, without capacities of enjoyment suited to his situation. Pleasure cannot be experienced without appetite and relish, as well as the means of gratification. Every animal must be in its element, in order to be easy and comfortable. The fish could not enjoy life on dry ground, unless its nature should be changed. Holiness and spirituality are not the sinner's element: submission to God, and communion with Him, are not his desired enjoyments; he has a revealed enmity against them. Yet happiness is impossible to a rational creature without holiness, and holiness cannot be so much as begun without 'being born again.' So that this truth, which men are so apt to deny, and treat as enthusiasm, has as evident a ground in reason, as in Scripture. Let it be granted, that God is perfectly holy; that happiness consists in his favor, presence, image, and service; and that man by nature has no relish for this kind of happiness: and from these premises (which any one must be very hardy to deny,) it follows that 'except a man be born again,' he could not enjoy happiness, were he admitted into heaven; but for that reason, among others, he never can enter thither. If men will not therefore believe this doctrine, of which we 'that are of the earth, and earthly,' can reason so plainly, and illustrate by the nature of animals, and the grafting of trees, and various other apt similitudes; (Note, Is. 11: 6-9.) and which is actually witnessed in its effects, whenever sinners are converted; how shall they believe what Jesus testifies to them concerning 'heavenly things?' namely: such as relate to the mysteries of the Trinity, to his own eternal Deity, to his incarnation, and redemption by his blood? which could never have been thought of, had not God revealed them, and which must rest wholly on the testimony of Revelation. Our Lord says, 'the Son of man which is in heaven,' when He was here on earth, because One with the eternal Word and Son of God. (Notes. 1: 1-2, 14, 18. Acts 20: 28.) This language seems

Me, but a competent Witness, who could not Himself be deceived; *We testify that we have seen*. He spake not upon hearsay, but upon the clearest evidence, and therefore with the greatest assurance. What He spake of God, of the invisible worlds, of the divine will concerning us, and the counsels of peace, was what He knew and had seen, for He was by Him as one brought up with Him. Prov. 8: 30. What ever Christ spake, He spake of his own knowledge. [2.] The unbelief of sinners is greatly aggravated by the infallible certainty of the truths of Christ. The things are thus sure thus clear, and yet ye receive not our witness. Multitudes seem to be unbelievers of that, which yet (so cogent are the motives of credibility) they cannot disbelieve!

The truths Christ taught, though the language and expressions were borrowed from common and earthly things, yet in their own nature were more sublime and heavenly; this is intimated, (v. 12.) '*If I have told them earthly things, the great things of God in similitudes taken from earthly things, to make them intelligible, as that of the new birth and the wind, if I have thus accommodated myself to your capacities and language, and cannot make you to understand my doctrine, what would you do if I should accommodate myself to the nature of the things, and speak with that language which mortals cannot utter? If such familiar expressions be stumbling-blocks, what would abstract ideas be, and spiritual things, painted proper?*' We may learn hence, [1.] To admire the height and depth of the doctrine of Christ; it is a great mystery of godliness. The things of the Gospel are heavenly things, out of the road of the inquiries of human reason, and much more out of the reach of its discoveries. [2.] We should acknowledge with thankfulness the condescension of Christ, that He is pleased to suit the manner of the revelation to our capacities; to speak to us as to children. He considers our frame, that we are of the earth, and our place, that we are on the earth, and therefore makes things sensible the vehicle of things spiritual, to make them the more easy and familiar. Thus He has done both in parables and in sacraments. [3.] We should lament the corruption of our nature, and our great unappetence to receive the truths of Christ. Earthly things are despised because they are vulgar, and heavenly things because they are abstruse; and so, whatever method is taken, still some fault is found with it; (Matt. 11: 17.) but Wisdom is justified of her children.

Our Lord Jesus alone was fit to reveal such a doctrine; (v. 13.) *No man besides hath ascended up into heaven*.

None but Christ was able to reveal the will of God for our salvation. Nicodemus addressed Christ as a Prophet; but He is greater than all the Old-Testament prophets, for none of

incapable of any other interpretation; and to worst it to agree with any other doctrine, makes our Lord to speak in the most unintelligible manner. Doubtless this was intended as a specimen of those 'heavenly things' which He had before mentioned.

Scott.
(13.) 'The Hebrews used to call "heavenly" not only those things which are hidden from men, and are known to God only, but used to say of those who thoroughly understood things obscure and commonly unknown, "they have been in heaven, have ascended to heaven, and fetched their knowledge from thence." The sense is, And no one has ever ascended to heaven, to bring down this information, nor can any one, except the Son of man (the Messiah), reveal the councils of God for the salvation of man; that is, no one knoweth the councils of God, but I who came down from Him.'

Bloomfield.
'Came down from heaven.' 'The divine legation is not alone meant, since the expression is no where used by the prophets, and Christ declares Himself superior to the prophets. It undoubtedly involves at once the celestial origin and pre-existence of Christ; as is plain from ch. 6: 62. 7: 7. And that John himself understood this formula is clear from ch. 1. and infra, v. 31.'

Keinoel.
'Regeneration, or the new birth, brought to view in the preceding verses, is a subject to which the world is very averse; it is, however, the one subject, in which all others meet—the grand inquiry, in comparison with which every thing else, how excellent soever, is but a conscious trifling. What does it signify, though we have food in plenty, and variety of raiment, if we are not born again? If, after a few mornings and evenings spent in unthinking mirth and sensuality, we die in our sins, and lie down in sorrow? What does it signify, though we are accomplished to act well our parts in life, in every other respect, if at last repulsed from the supreme Judge with "Depart from Me, I know you not, ye workers of iniquity?"

WITHERSPOON.

14 ¶ And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up;

15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

16 For as God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

¶ Num. 21:7-9. 2 Kings 18:4.
5:28. 12:32-33. Ps. 22:16. Matt. 6:54. Luke 18:31-33. 9:29, 36, 37, 44-45. Acts 2:23. 4:27, 28. 16:36. 1:12. 6:40, 47. 11:25, 26. 12:44-46. 20:31. 15:45, 22. Mark 16:10. Acts 8:37. 16:30, 31. Rom. 5:12. 10:9-14. Gal. 2:18, 20. Heb. 10:39. 1 John 5:11, 12.
¶ 5:24. 10:28-30. Matt. 18:11. Luke 19:10. Acts 13:41. 1 Cor. 1:18. 2 Cor. 4:3.
1. 17:3. 3 John 5:21. 6:22, 23. 1 John 2:25. 5:13, 20.
m. Luke 2:14. Rom. 5:1. 2 Cor. 5:19-21. Tit. 3:4. 1 John 4:19, 10, 19. n. 1:14, 19. Gen. 22:12. Mark 12:6. Rom. 5:10. 8:32.
o. 15. Matt. 9:13. 1 Tim. 1:15, 16.

more than a mere man; He is the *Lord from heaven*, 1 Cor. 15: 47. He had intimate acquaintance with the divine counsels; for, coming from heaven, He had been from eternity conversant with them. This speaks *God manifest*. Under the Old Testament, God's favors to his people are expressed by his *hearing from heaven*, (2 Chron. 7:14.) *looking from heaven*, (Ps. 80: 4.) *speaking from heaven*, (Neh. 9:13.) *sending from heaven*, Ps. 57: 3. But the New Testament shows us *God coming down from heaven*. That He thus *descended*, is an admirable mystery; for the Godhead cannot change places, nor die. He brings his body from heaven; but that He thus *condescended* for our redemption, is a more admirable mercy; herein He commended his love.

2. He is the *Son of man*, spoken of by Daniel, (7: 13.) by which the Jews always understood the Messiah. Christ, in calling Himself the *Son of man*, shows that He is the *second Adam*, for the first Adam was the *father of man*. And of all the titles of the Messiah, He chose to make use of this, because it was most expressive of his *humility* and his present state of *humiliation*.

3. He is *in heaven*. Now when He is talking with Nicodemus, on earth, yet, as God, He is *in heaven*; the *Son of man*, as such, was not in heaven till his ascension; but He that was the Son of man by his divine nature, was now every where present, and particularly in heaven. Thus the Lord of glory, as such, could not be crucified, nor could God, as such, shed his blood; yet that person, who was the Lord of glory, was crucified, (1 Cor. 2: 8.) and God purchased the church with his *own blood*, Acts 20: 28. So close is the union of the two natures in one person, that there is a communication of properties.

III. Christ here discourses of the *great design of his own coming into the world*; and the *happiness of those that believe in Him*, v. 14-18. Here we have the marrow of the whole Gospel; that *faithful saying*, (1 Tim. 1: 15.) that Jesus Christ came to seek and to save men from death, and recover them to life. Sinners are *dead men*, 1. As one that is mortally wounded, or sick of an incurable disease, is said to be a *dead man*; for he is dying; and so Christ came to save us, by *healing* us, as the brazen serpent healed the Israelites, v. 14, 15. 2. As one that is justly condemned to die for an unpardonable crime, is a *dead man*, he is *dead in law*; and in reference to this part of our danger, Christ came to save as a Prince or Judge, publishing an act of general pardon, under certain provisos; this saving here is opposed to condemning, v. 16-18.

Verse 14.

¶ Jesus proceeds to illustrate by an example what He had said in v. 12, explaining what kind of person the Messiah would be; i. e. not the avenger of Jewish wrongs, or the restorer of their liberty, not an earthly monarch, such as they now expected, but the Author, not of temporal, but of eternal salvation, produced by the sacrifice of the death of Christ. He instances these things as "heavenly" counsels, known to none but Himself, and thus hints that if He should discover such "heavenly things," the Jews would repose no faith in Him. Indeed, the doctrine of a suffering and dying Messiah was so contrary to their expectations, that, had Jesus pronounced this at the commencement of his ministry, no one would have followed Him; nay, even the apostles, though they had the advantage of long, constant attention, and unreserved instruction, could not have endured this truth. Therefore, to Nicodemus also, tempered as he was with prejudices, Jesus speaks of his death figuratively and obscurely. And though Nicodemus did not *John perceive*; Christ's meaning, yet was he thoroughly prepared for the *v. 16*, which were to follow.

BLOOMFIELD.

Jesus Christ came to save us by *healing* us, as the children of Israel, stung with fiery serpents, were cured and *lived* by looking up to the brazen serpent; Num. 21. e. 9. It was the last miracle that passed through the hand of Moses before his death.

In this type of Christ we may observe, [1.] The *deadly and destructive nature of sin*, implied here. Guilt is like the *pain* of the biting of a fiery serpent; the power of corruption is like the *venom* diffused thereby. The devil is the old serpent, subtle at first, (Gen. 3: 1.) but ever since *fiery*, and his temptations *fiery darts*; his assaults terrifying, his victories destroying. Ask awakened consciences, ask damned sinners, and they will tell you, how charming soever the allurements of sin are, *at the last it bites like a serpent*. Prov. 23: 30-22. God's wrath against us for sin is as those fiery serpents which God sent among the people, to punish them for their murmurings. The curses of the law are as fiery serpents, so are all the tokens of divine wrath.

The case of poor sinners is deplorable; but it is desperate? Thanks be to God, it is not; there is balm in Gilead. The *Son of man is lifted up*, as the *serpent of brass* by Moses, which cured the Israelites. It was a *serpent of brass*, that cured them. Brass is *bright*; we read of Christ's feet *shining like brass*, Rev. 1: 19. It is *divine*, Christ is the same. It was made in the shape of a *fiery serpent*, and yet had no poison, no sting; fitly representing Christ, who was made *Sin for us*, and yet knew no sin. The serpent was a cursed creature, Christ was made a *Curse*. That which cured them, reminded them of their plague; so in Christ sin is set before us, most terrific. Secondly, It was lifted up upon a pole, and so must the Son of man be lifted up; thus it *behooved Him*, Luke 24: 26, 46. No remedy now. Christ is lifted up upon the cross. His death is called his being *lifted up*; ch. 12: 32, 33. He was lifted up as a spectacle, as a mark between heaven and earth, as if unworthy of either, and abandoned by both. In his *exaltation*, he was lifted up to the Father's right hand, to give repentance and remission; He was lifted up to the cross, to be further lifted up to the crown also, in the *publishing and preaching* of his everlasting Gospel, Rev. 14: 6. The serpent was lifted up, that all the thousands of Israel might see it. Christ in the Gospel is exhibited to us, evidently set forth; Christ is *lifted up* as an *Engage*, Isa. 11: 19. Thirdly, The serpent was lifted up by Moses. Christ was made under the law of Moses, and Moses testified of Him. Fourthly, Being thus lifted up, it was appointed for the cure of those that were bitten by fiery serpents; He that sent the plague provided the remedy; none could redeem and save us, but He whose justice had condemned us. It was God Himself that *found the ransom*, and the efficacy of it depends upon his appointment. The *fiery serpents* were sent to punish them for their *tempting Christ*; (so the apostle saith, 1 Cor. 10: 9.) and yet they were healed by virtue derived from Him. He whom we have offended, is our *Peace*.

The way of *applying* 'tis remedy, is by *believing*; which plainly alludes to the Israelites *looking up* to the brazen serpent, in order to be healed. If any stung Israelite were either so

Verse 15.

¶ From these words of our Lord we may learn, 1. That as the serpent was lifted up on the pole, or *ensign*, so Jesus Christ was lifted up on the cross. 2. That as the Israelites were healed by looking up to the brazen serpent, so sinners must look to Christ for salvation. 3. That as God provided no other remedy, than this *looking*, for the wounded Israelites, so He has provided no other way of salvation than *faith* in the blood of his Son. 4. That as he who looked at the brazen serpent, was cured and *did live*, so he that believeth on the Lord Jesus Christ shall not *perish*, but have *eternal life*. 5. That as neither the *serpent*, nor *looking at it*, but the invisible power of God healed the people, so neither the *cross of Christ*, nor his merely being *crucified*, but the pardon He has bought by his blood, communicated by the *powerful energy of his Spirit*, saves the souls of men.

Verse 16.

The love of God to the world could not be *approximate*, n. *compassion*; for He judged them deserving of his indignation. I was therefore *good-will, compassion, benevolence*. (Mat. g. Ref. m.) SCOTT.

17 For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.

p 545. 8:15, 16, 12:47, 48. Luke 9:56, 1:29, 6:40. 1. 45:21-22 49:8, 7, 12:10-12. Zech. 9:9. Matt. 1:23 18:11. Luke 2:10, 11, 19:10. 1 Tim. 2:6, 6. 1 John 2:2, 4, 14.

r 38. 3:24, 6:40, 47, 20:31. Rom. 5:1, 8:1, 34. 1 John 5:12.

Mark 16:16. Heb. 2:13, 12:25, 1 John 5:10.

little sensible of his pain and peril, or had so little confidence in Moses, as not to look up to the brazen serpent, justly did he die of his wound; but every one that looked up, did well.

Numb. 21: 9. If any so far slight either their disease by sin, or the method of cure by Christ, as not to embrace Christ, upon his own terms, their blood is upon their own head. He hath said, *Look and be saved*, (Isa. 45: 22,) look and live. We must take a complacency in, and give consent to, the methods which Infinite Wisdom has taken of saving a guilty world, by the mediation of Jesus Christ, as the great Sacrifice and Intercessor.

Great encouragements are given us by faith to look to Him. *First*, For this end He was lifted up, that his followers might be saved: and He will pursue his end. *Secondly*, The offer of salvation by Him, is general; that whosoever believes in Him, without exception, might have benefit by Him. *Thirdly*, The salvation offered is complete. 1. *They shall not perish*, by their wounds; though they may be pained and frightened, iniquity shall not be their ruin. But that is not all. 2. *They shall have eternal life*. They shall not only not die of their wounds in the wilderness, but they shall reach Canaan, (which the Israelites were then just ready to enter) the promised rest.

Christ came to save us by pardoning us, that we might not die by the sentence of the law, v. 16, 17. Here is gospel indeed, good news, the best that ever came from heaven. Here is much, here is all in a little; the word of reconciliation in miniature.

First, Here we have the great gospel-mystery revealed; God so loved the world, that He gave his only-begotten Son. The love of the Father is the original of our regeneration by the Spirit, and our reconciliation by the lifting up of the Son. Note, Christ is the only-begotten Son of God. This magnifies his love in giving Him for us; now know we that He loves us, when He has given his only-begotten Son for us, which speaks not only his dignity in Himself, but his dearness to his Father; He was always his delight. In order to the redemption and salvation of man, it pleased God to give his only-begotten Son. He not only gave or sent Him into the world with full power to negotiate a peace between heaven and earth, but He gave Him up as the great expiatory Sacrifice. It comes in here as a reason why He must be lifted up; for so it was determined and designed by the Father, who gave Him for this purpose, and prepared Him a body in order to it. His enemies could not have taken Him, if his Father had not given Him. Though He was not yet crucified, yet in the determinate counsel of God He was given up, Acts 2: 23. Nay, further, God has given Him, that is, made an offer of Him, to all true believers, to all the intents and purposes of the new covenant. He has given Him to be our Prophet, a Witness to the people; the High-Priest of our profession; our Peace; the Head of the Church, and Head over all things to the church; to be to us all we need. Herein God has commended his love to the world; God so loved the world; so really, so richly. His creatures shall see that He loves them, and wishes them well. He so loved the world of fallen man, as He did not love that of fallen angels; see Rom. 5: 8. 1 John 4: 10. Behold, and wonder, that the great God should love such a worthless world. That the holy God should love such a wicked world with a love of good will, when He could not look upon it with any complacency! This was a time of love indeed, Ezek. 16: 7, 8. The Jews vainly conceived that the Messiah should be sent only to their nation, and to advance that upon the sins of their neighbors; but Christ tells them that He came in love to the whole world, Gentiles as well as Jews, 1 John 2: 2. Though many of the world of mankind perish, yet God's giving his only-begotten Son was an instance of his love to the whole world, because through Him there is a general offer of life and salvation to all. It is love to the revolted province, to issue a proclamation of pardon to all that will come in, plead it upon their knees, and return to their allegiance. So far God loved the apostate world, that He sent his Son with this proposal, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish. Salvation has been of the Jews, but now Christ is known as a common Salvation.

Secondly, Here is the great gospel-duty, to believe in Jesus Christ, whom God hath thus given; to accept the gift, and answer the intention of the Giver. We must give an unfeigned consent to the record God hath given concerning His Son. God having given Him to be our Prophet, Priest, and King, we must give up ourselves to be ruled, and taught, and saved, by Him.

Thirdly, Here is the great gospel benefit, That whosoever believes in Christ shall not perish. This He said before, and here repeats it. It is the unspeakable happiness of all true believers, for which they are eternally indebted to Christ, that they are saved from the miseries of hell, from going down to the pit; God has taken away their sin, they shall not die. They are entitled to the joys of heaven: they shall have everlasting life. The

convicted traitor is not only pardoned, but proffered, and treated as one whom the King of kings delights to honor. Out of prison, he cometh to reign. Eccl. 4: 14. If believers, then children; and if children, then heirs.

Here is God's design in sending his Son into the world; that the world through Him might be saved. He came into the world with salvation in his eye, with salvation in his hand. Therefore the afore-mentioned offer of life and salvation is sincere, and shall be made good to all that by faith accept it; (v. 17.) God sent his Son into this apostate world, as his Ambassador; nor as sometimes He had sent angels into the world, as visitants, but as resident. Even since man sinned, he has dreaded the appearance of any special messenger from heaven, as being conscious of guilt, and looking for judgment; We shall surely die, for we have seen God. If therefore the Son of God Himself come, we are concerned to inquire on what errand He comes; Is it peace? Or, as they asked Samuel trembling, Comest thou peaceably? And this Scripture returns the answer, Peaceably.

First, He did not come to condemn the world. We had reason enough to expect that He would, for it is convicted, and what cause can be shown why judgment should not be given according to law? That one blood of which all men are made, (Acts 17: 26,) is not only tainted with a hereditary disease, like Gehazi's leprosy, but that it is tainted with a hereditary guilt, like that of the Amalekites, with whom God had war from generation to generation; and justly may such a world be condemned; and if God would have sent to condemn it, He had angels at command, to pour out the vials of his wrath; cherubim with flaming sword. If the Lord had been pleased to kill us, He would not have sent his Son among us. He came with full power indeed to execute judgment, (ch. 5: 22, 27,) but did not begin with a judgment of condemnation, nor take advantage against us for the breach of the covenant of innocence; but put us upon a new trial before a throne of grace.

Secondly, He came that the world through Him might be saved; that a door of salvation might be opened, and whoever would might enter in. God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, and so saving it. An act of indemnity is published, a remedial law made; and mankind dealt with, not according to the rigors of the first covenant, but according to the riches of the second; that the world through Him might be saved; it could never be saved but through Him; there is salvation in no other. This is good news to a convinced conscience, healing to broken bones and bleeding wounds, that Christ, our Judge, came not to condemn, but to save.

From all this is inferred the happiness of true believers; (v. 18.) He that believeth on Him, is not condemned. Though a great sinner, and convicted by his own confession, yet, upon his believing, judgment is arrested, and he is not condemned. This speaks more than a reprieve; he is not condemned, that is, he is acquitted; and if not condemned, he is discharged—he is not judged, not dealt with in strict justice according to his sins. He is accused, and he cannot plead not guilty, but he can plead in bar to the indictment, as Paul does, Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died. He is afflicted, chastened of God, persecuted by the world; but not condemned. The cross perhaps lies heavy upon him, but he is saved from the curse: condemned by the world, it may be, but not with the world, Rom. 8: 1. 1 Cor. 11: 32.

IV. Christ, in the close, discourses concerning the deplorable condition of those that

Veres 16, 17.

Man's redemption originated in the love of God to 'the whole world, trying in wickedness,' or 'the wicked one.' 1 John 5: 19. The expedient adopted, exposed the desert of their sin more, than would the eternal punishment of the whole race. The world, or the race of men, (not merely Israel, as the Jews supposed,) is therefore borne with, as under a dispensation of mercy; sinners in general are called on to believe in Christ, and partake of the blessing; believers without exception are saved. Scott.

(17.) To condemn.] 'That He should judge' 18. 12: 47, 49

18: 11. 1 Cor. 11: 31, 32. As 'to judge' unpardoned sinners would be 'to condemn' them, the translation here does not at all affect the meaning. Scott.

Verse 18.

In the name, &c.] 'Though the name of a person be often put for 'the person himself, yet I think it further intimated in this expression, that the person spoken of is great and magnificent; and therefore 'is generally used to express either God the Father, or our Lord Jesus Christ.' Doddridge.

19 And 'this is the condemnation, that Light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, ' because their deeds were evil.

20 For 'every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be 'reproved.

21 But 'he that doeth truth cometh to the light, ' that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

[Practical Observations.]

14.9-11. 9:12, 9:39-41, 15:22-26. Mat. 11:20-24, Luke 10:11-16. 12:4, Rom. 1:32, 2 Cor. 2:15, 16, 2 Thes. 2:12, Heb. 3:12, 13. 5:44, 7:17, 8:44, 45, 10:26, 27, 12:13. Is. 30:9-12, Luke 16:14, 15. Acta 24:2-26, Rom. 2:8, 1 Pet. 2:8, 2 Pet. 2:3. 7:7, 1 Kings 22:3, Job 24:13-17. Ps. 50:17, Prov. 1:29, 5:12, 15:12, Am. 5:10, 11, Luke 11:45, Jam. 1:23-25. Or, discovered. Eph. 5:13. 1:17, 5:39, Ps. 11:3, 119:80, 105, 139:23, 24, Is. 8:20, Acta 17:11, 12. 15:15, Is. 26:12, Rom. 14:8, 1 Cor. 15:10, 2 Cor. 1:12, Gal. 5:22, 23, 6:8, Eph. 5:9, Phil. 1:11, 2:13, Col. 1:29, Heb. 12:21, 1 Pet. 1:22, 2 Pet. 1:5-10, 1 John 2:27-29, 4, 12:13, 15, 16, Rev. 3:12, 15.

proves its divine original. Light is discovering, and truly sweet, and rejoices the heart. It is a light shining in a dark place, and a dark place indeed the world would be without it. It is come into all the world, (Col. 1: 6.) and not confined, as the Old Testament light was. It is the

persist in unbelief and wilful ignorance, v. 18-21.

Observe, (1.) How great the sin of unbelievers; it is aggravated from the dignity of the Person they slight; they believe not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God, who is infinitely true, and deserves to be believed; infinitely good, and deserves to be embraced. God sent One to save us, that was dearest to Himself; and shall not He be dearest to us? Shall we not believe on Him, who has a name above every name? (2.) How great the misery of unbelievers; they are condemned already; which speaks, [1.] A certain condemnation. They are as sure to be condemned in the judgment of the great day, as if they were condemned already. [2.] A present condemnation. The curse, the wrath of God, now fastens upon them. They are condemned already, for their own hearts condemn them. [3.] Condemnation is grounded upon their former guilt. He is condemned already, lies open to the law for all his sins; the obligation of the law is in full force against him, because he is not by faith interested in the Gospel; he is condemned already, because he has not believed. Unbelief may truly be called the great damning sin; it leaves us under the guilt of all our other sins; it is a sin against the remedy; against our appeal.

Read also the doom of those that would not so much as know Him, v. 19. Many inquisitive people had knowledge of Christ, his doctrine and miracles, but were prejudiced and would not believe, while the generality were sotsitly careless and stupid, and would not know Him. This is the condemnation, the sin that ruined them, that light is come into the world, and they loved darkness rather. The Gospel is light, and while the gospel came, light came into the world. Light is self-evidencing, so is the Gospel, it

unpeakable folly of most men, that they love darkness rather than this light. The Jews loved the shadows of their law, and the instructions of their blind guides, rather than the doctrine of Christ. The Gentiles loved the superstitious services of an unknown God, ignorantly worshipped, rather than the reasonable service which the Gospel enjoins. Sinners, wedded to their lusts, love their ignorance which supports them in their sin: *safer* than the truths of Christ, who would part them from their sins. Man's apostasy began in forbidden knowledge, but is kept up by forbidden ignorance. Wretched man is in love with his sickness, his slavery, and will not be made free nor whole. The true reason why men love darkness rather than light is, *their deeds are evil*. They love darkness because they think it is an excuse for their evil deeds; they hate the light, because it robs them of the good opinion they had of themselves, by showing them their sinfulness and misery. Their case is sad; and, because they will not mend it, they will not see it. Wilful ignorance is so far from excusing sin, that it will aggravate the condemnation; This is the condemnation that ruins souls, they shut their eyes against the light, and will not so much as parley with Christ and his Gospel; they set God so much at defiance, that they desire not the knowledge of his ways, Job 21: 14. We must account in the judgment, not only for the knowledge we had, and used not, but for the knowledge we might have had, and would not; not only for the knowledge we sinned against, but for the knowledge we sinned away.

According as men's hearts and lives are good or bad, they stand affected to the light of Christ.

It is not strange, if those that do evil, and resolve to persist in it, hate the light of Christ's Gospel; for it is a common observation, that every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, v. 20. Evil-doers seek concealment, out of shame, and fear of punishment; see Job 24: 13, &c. Sinful

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 12-21. If more obvious truths be rejected, we need not wonder, that the mysteries of redemption are controverted; for how can men believe that the Creator of all worlds atoned for the sins of his enemies by his death; when they are not sensible, that their hearts must be changed before they can delight in the joys of heaven? If they do not believe that, which is as capable of illustration and comprehension, as earthly things in general; how can they believe that the Son of man was so 'One with the Father,' that He was in heaven when teaching here on earth; and that He actually is present with his people, now that 'he ever liveth to appear in the presence of God for them?' These are 'heavenly things,' and out of the reach of all, 'no judge of God by carnal sense or blind reason: yet in their is contained the great plan of God for 'destroying the works of the devil,' and the healing of those who have been wounded with the venom of the serpent. However infidels may deride or revile; still Christ crucified, beheld with the eye of faith, brings salvation to perishing sinners; and there is no other way of escaping everlasting misery. But if we so look to Him as to be saved from wrath, we shall also be delivered from the power of sin, restored gradually to spiritual health, and transformed into the image of Christ.—Words can never express the love of God to a sinful world, in 'giving His only-begotten Son' to be the 'propitiation for our sins.' Did it ever enter into the heart of an earthly prince to give his only son, to suffer death, in order that he might honorably save the lives of traitors? Yet even this would be little and mean, com-

pared with the love of God to rebellious man. But though God is so ready to pardon all who 'believe in the name of his Son,' yet his infinite love will lead to the deeper condemnation of all, who 'neglect so great salvation.' The believer 'is not condemned,' and 'shall not come into condemnation;' but the unbeliever 'is condemned already;' the wrath of God abideth on him; and he is continually under a load, which is sufficient to sink him to everlasting misery. Nor is this unbelief a light matter: it springs from enmity against God, and from love of sin. 'Men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil;' but this would not have been so fully proved, if 'Light had not come into the world,' and been hated by them. And is it proper that men should hate God, and love wickedness and Satan's service, with impunity? They may shelter themselves under some plausible pretext, or varnish it over with specious appearances; but they have a secret hatred of the truth, because it opposes their favorite iniquities; they wish to disbelieve, and then seek for arguments to satisfy themselves in infidelity. Let us remember it: The Judge has declared, that unbelief springs from this source, and that 'every one who doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God.' Let us judge ourselves, and bring our characters and conduct to his Word; let us beseech Him to discover to us our motives, and to prevent our being deceived by Satan and our own hearts, and so lead us in the way to everlasting life. Scott.

Verses 19-21.

Unbelief is not a mere speculative mistake, into which an honest mind may be led; it originates from the wickedness and enmity of the heart to God. Men left to themselves, love ignorance, delusion, superstition, or infidelity, in preference to his light because more congenial to the pride, and rebellion of their hearts, and the secret or open wickedness of their lives. For every one, who habitually loves and practises evil, hates and shuns that which exposes it: thus men keep aloof from the true Gospel, and run into various perversions of it: lest it should unsettle their consciences, interfere with their sin, or detect their presumptuous confidence. (Notes, Job 24: 13-17. Eph. 5: 8-14.) But he, who acts uprightly and conscientiously, and desires to know and do the will of God, is glad to bring his creed, his character, and private spirit and conduct to the Light, that he may be directed; and that it may be made manifest that 'his works are wrought in God,' by virtue of union with Him, and grace derived from Him. These are important truths of general application: yet they were spoken with peculiar reference to the Pharisees; and it was thus declared, that the opposition, which would be made by them, to Jesus and his doctrine, arose from the wickedness of their hearts and lives, which could not endure [630]

the light of his spiritual ministry. Nicodemus, therefore, and those to whom he might report the result of this conference, were warned not to 'reject the counsel of God against themselves.' Some think that the conduct of Nicodemus, in coming to Jesus by night, as if he 'loved darkness rather than light,' is gently reprov'd. Scott.

(19.) Condemnation.] 'From the context it is plain, that by the word translated condemnation is meant the cause of eternal condemnation, or the manner in which men incur eternal condemnation. So Chrysostom, Beza, Piscator, Kuinoel, Rosenm., Schoettgen, &c.' BLOOMFIELD.

(21.) Doeth truth.] "Properly speaking," says Schoettgen, "we cannot do the truth, but tell it. Therefore the idea of truth here and in some other passages of the N. T. is right, *see* 2. 1. 1. phrase, *he that practices truth*, often occurs as the character of a good man; comp. Ps. 119: 30. Is. 26: 2. 1 Pet. 1: 23. 1 John 1: 6, and 2 John c. 4. and it is used with great propriety, *see* there is really a truth or falsehood in actions as in words. (Of the same kind, the beautiful opposition, is the phrase, "maketh" or "practiseth" a lie, used more than once by St. John. And *see* Rev. 11: 7. 22: 15." L. CAMPBELL.

22 ¶ After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them,^a and baptized.

23 And John also was baptizing in Ænon,^b near to Salim, because there was much water there: and they came, and were baptized.

works are works of darkness, Job 31: 53. The light shakes the wicked, Job 33: 12, 13. Thus the Gospel is a terror to the wicked world; *They come not to this light, but keep as far off as they can, lest their deeds should be reprov'd.* Note, First, The light of the Gospel is sent into the world, to reprove the evil deeds of sinners; (Eph. 6: 13.) to show people their transgressions; to show that to be sin, which was not thought to be so; and to show them the evil of their transgressions, that sin by the new commandment might appear exceeding sinful. The Gospel has its convictions, to make way for its consolations. Secondly, It is for this reason that evil-doers hate the light of the Gospel. There were those who had done evil, and were sorry for it, who bade this light welcome, as the publicans and harlots. But he that doeth evil, and resolves to go on in it, hateth the light, cannot bear to be told of his faults. All that opposition which the Gospel of Christ has met with in the world, comes from the wicked heart, in Christ is hated because sin is loved. Thirdly, They who do not come to the light, thereby evidence a secret hatred of the light. If they had not an antipathy to knowledge, they would not sit down so contentedly in damning ignorance.

On the other hand, upright hearts, that approve themselves to God, bid this light welcome; (p. 21.) *He that doeth truth, cometh to the light.* Though the Gospel had many enemies, it had some friends. It is a common observation, that truth seeks no corners. They who are honest dread not a scrutiny, but desire it; so it is applicable to the gospel-light; as it convinces and terrifies evil-doers, so it confirms and comforts those that walk in their integrity. Observe here,

First, The character of a good man. 1. He is one that doeth truth; that is, acteth truly and sincerely in all he doeth. Though sometimes he come short of doing the good he would, yet he doeth truth; he has his infirmities, but holds fast his integrity; as Gaius, that did faithfully; (3 John 5.) as Paul, (2 Cor. 1: 12.) as Nathanael, (ch. 1: 47.) as Asa, 1 Kings 16: 14. 2. He is one that cometh to the light. He is ready to receive and entertain divine revelation, as far as it appears to him to be so, what uneasiness soever it may create him. He that doeth truth, is willing to know the truth by himself, and to have his deeds made manifest. A good man is much in trying himself, and desirous that God would try him, Ps. 26: 2. He is solicitous to know what the will of God is, and resolves to do it, though ever so contrary to his own will.

Secondly, The character of a good work is, it is wrought in God, in union with Him by a covenanting faith, and in communion with Him by devout affections. Our works are good, and will bear the test, when the will of God is the rule, and the glory of God the end of them; when they are done in his strength, and for his sake, to Him, and not to men; and if by the light of the Gospel it be manifest to us that our works are thus wrought, then shall we have rejoicing, Gal. 6: 4. 2 Cor. 1: 1, 2.

Thus far we have Christ's discourse with Nicodemus; it is probable that much more passed between them, and it had a good effect, for we find (ch. 19: 39.) that Nicodemus, though puzzled at first, afterwards became a faithful disciple of Christ.

Verses 22-24.

It is remarkable, that we read nothing of the apostles or disciples baptizing, before our Lord's ascension, except in those few passages of John's gospel. Yet the disciples of Jesus are expressly distinguished from those of John: and at this time He made and baptized more disciples than John. (4: 1.) It must then be supposed, that the disciples of Jesus were baptized in his name: and that this baptism discriminated them, not only from those Jews who had been baptized, but also from those who had been baptized by John as his disciples, yet had not become the professed disciples of Jesus, and received his baptism. But Christian baptism, 'into the name of our Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' was at this time not instituted: and as circumcision still continued in force, as the initiatory sacrament of the Abrahamic and Mosaic covenants, the baptism of Jesus was doubtless of adults alone. It appears then to me, that all, who at this time or afterwards, during our Lord's personal ministry, who by means of John's testimony, or in other ways, professed themselves the disciples of Jesus, as the Messiah, the Son of God, in an intelligent manner, were baptized in the name of Jesus: and whether He personally baptized any individuals or not, (for the language may only mean, that, in general He did not baptize, but his disciples,) all those above described were thus baptized, though we do not further read of it. Among these we may number the one hundred and twenty, who met at Jerusalem after the day of Pentecost, and most of the five hundred brethren to whom He appeared at Galilee, to that time the institution of Christian baptism, just before our Lord's ascension, those who had thus been baptized in his name, were not re-baptized. Nor were they considered as unbaptized persons; neither should they be adjudged, as a precedent for unbaptized persons being employed in preaching the Gospel, and baptizing others, or receiving and administering the Lord's supper. Whether either John, or Jesus during his personal ministry, baptized women, is no where expressly said: and the argument about the subjects and mode of baptism has no immediate connection with the subject: for that rests exclusively on those scriptures which relate to baptism, as superseding circumcision, in becoming the true sign and seal of the covenant. The evangelist here speaks of 25 Bartol's imprisonment, as well known; but no where mentions further particulars, either of that, or of his being put to death by Herod. Had he not been satisfied, that these important facts

remov'd often, as the patriarchs in their journeys. As it was a good part of his humiliation, that He had no certain dwelling-place, but was in journeys often, so it was an instance of his unwearied industry in his work that He went about in prosecution of it; many a weary step He took to do good to souls. The Sun of righteousness took a large circuit to diffuse his light and heat, Ps. 19: 6.

He was not wont to stay long at Jerusalem; though He went frequently thither, yet He soon returned into the country; after He had had this discourse with Nicodemus, He came into the land of Judea; not so much for greater privacy, (though mean and obscure places best suited his humble state,) but for greater usefulness; his preaching and miracles, perhaps, made most noise at Jerusalem, the fountain-head of news, but did least good there, where the most considerable men of the Jewish church had so much the ascendancy.

When He came into the land of Judea, his disciples came with Him; for these were they that continued with Him in his temptations. Many that flocked to Him at Jerusalem, would not follow Him into the country, they had no business there; but his disciples attended Him. If the ark remove, it is better to remove and go after it (as they did, Josh. 3: 3.) than sit still without it, though it be in Jerusalem itself.

There He tarried with them, conversed with them. He did not retire into the country for his pleasure, but for more free conversation with his followers. See Cant. 7: 11, 12. Note, Those that are ready to go with Christ, shall find Him as ready to stay with them. It is supposed that He staid five or six months in this country.

There He baptized such as believed in Him, and had more honesty and courage than those at Jerusalem, ch. 2: 24. John began to baptize in the land of Judea, (Matt. 3: 1.) therefore Christ began there, for John had said, *There comes one after me.* He baptized not with his own hand, but his disciples by his order and directions; as appears, ch. 4: 2. His disciples' baptizing was his baptizing. Holy ordinances are Christ's, though administered by weak men.

John continued in his work, as long as his opportunities lasted, v. 23, 24.

1. John was baptizing. Christ's baptism was, for substance, the same with John's, for he bore witness to Christ, and therefore they did not interfere. But Christ began to preach and

had been recorded by other divinely inspired writers, he would hardly have passed them over in this manner, after having so particularly insisted on the ministry and testimony of John. This confirms the opinion, that he intended his gospel, as a kind of supplement to the three other gospels, which had before been published.

(22.) And baptized, [Not in his own person, but by his disciples, See John 4: 2.]

(23.) In Ænon. [A place eight miles southward from Scythopolis, between Salim and Jordan.] There was much water. [This was equally necessary, where such multitudes were baptized, whether the ceremony were performed either by dipping or sprinkling. But as the Jewish custom required the persons to stand in the water, and having been instructed, and entered into a covenant to renounce all idolatry, and take the God of Israel for their God, then plunge themselves under the water; it is probable that the rite was thus performed at Ænon.] But could a northern climate admit of this dipping with safety at least a great part of the year? We may rest assured that it would not. And may we not presume, that, if John had opened his commission in the north, for many months of the year, he would have dipped neither man nor woman, unless he could have procured a tepid bath? Those who are dipped or immersed in water, in the name of the Holy Trinity, I believe to be evangelically baptized. Those who are washed or sprinkled with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I believe to be equally so; and the repetition of such a baptism I believe to be profane. Others have a right to the contrary, if they see good. After all, it is the thing signified, and not the mode, which is the essential part of the sacrament. Dr. A. CLARKE.

Much water. [Beza and Piscator, not observing the Hebrews, have rendered this, many rivers. Grotius, Lampe, Rosenm., and Kuinoel, however, rightly explain plenty of water; and such, indeed, would be required by the mode of baptism then generally (though, as Lightfoot proves, not universally) adopted, namely, by immersion. In this sense the word translated 'waters' often occurs in the Apocalypse. So also it was taken by Nonnus.]

I cannot avoid the belief, that the original phrase, as Beza says, to designate "many streams," or "rivers." John chose a place abounding in these, when he removed from the banks of Jordan in order that the multitude who flocked to him might be accommodated.

Prof. Stuart

24 For John was not yet cast into prison.

25 Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying.

26 And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, ^bhe that was with thee beyond Jordan, ^cto whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, ^dand all men come to him.

27 John answered and said, ^aA man can *receive nothing, except it be given him ⁱⁿ from heaven.

28 Ye yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, ^ebut that I am sent before him.

29 He that ^fhath the bride is the bridegroom: but ^gthe friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. ^hThis my joy therefore is fulfilled:

Matt. 4:12, 14-13. Mark 6:17, Luke 9:19-20, 9:7-9.

26. Matt. 3:11. Mark 7:2-5, 8:12, 9:10, 13:14, 15:1. 1 Pet. 3:21.

27. Num. 11:25-29. Ec. 4:4. Cor. 3:3-5. Gal. 5:20-21, 6:12, 13. Jam. 3:14-18, 4:5, 6.

17:15, 26-36.

17:9. 11:48. 12:19. Acts 19:26, 27. Num. 16:9-11. 17:5. 1 Chr. 28:4, 5.

Jer. 1:5. 17:18. Am. 7:15. Matt. 5:515. Mark 13:24. Rom. 1:5, 12.

6. 1 Cor. 1:1. 3:5. 4:7. 12:11. 15:10. Gal. 1:1. Eph. 1:1. 3:7, 8.

1 Tim. 2:7. Jam. 1:17. 1 Pet. 4:10, 11.

Or, take unto himself. Heb. 5:4, 5.

Matt. 21:25. Mark 11:30, 31.

12:20, 27.

12:3. Mat. 3:1. 4:4, 5. Matt. 3:3, 11, 12. Mark 1:2, 3. Luke 1:16, 17, 76. 34-6.

Pa. 45:9-17. Cant. 3:11. 4:10. Ja. 5:8. 62:4, 5. Hos. 2:19, 20. Matt. 22:2. 2 Cor. 11:2. Eph. 5:23-27.

Rev. 19:7-9. 21:9.

1 Judg. 14:10, 11. Ex. 45:14. Cant. 5:1. Matt. 9:15.

1. Is. 66:11. Luke 21:10-14. 15:5.

2. The matter in dispute was about purifying, or religious washing. (1.)

We may suppose that John's disciples cried up his baptism, as superior to all others, and gave it the preference, as perfecting and superseding all the purifications of the Jews; they were in the right; but young converts are too apt to boast of their attainments; whereas he that has found the treasure, should

hale it till he is sure that he has it, and not talk of it too much at first. (2.)

No doubt the Jews applauded the purifications that were instituted by Moses, and those that were imposed by the tradition of the elders; for the former they had a divine warrant, and for the latter the usage of the church. It is

very likely that the Jews, in this dispute, when they could not deny the excellent nature of John's baptism, raised an objection against it from

'his baptism, which gave occasion for the complaint that follows; v. 26.

'Here is John baptizing in one place, and Jesus in another; and therefore John's baptism is dangerous to peace; for it opens a door to endless parties. Now that John has begun, we shall have every little teacher

set up for a baptist presently.' Or, 'At the best, it is imperfect. If John's

baptize before John laid it down, that He might be ready to receive John's disciples when he should be taken off, and so the wheels might be kept going. It is a comfort to useful men, when they are going off the stage, to see those rising up, who are likely to fill their place. John continued to preach and baptize, though Christ had taken it up; for he would still, according to the measure given to him, advance the interests of God's kingdom. There was still work for John to do, for Christ was not yet generally known, nor the minds of people thoroughly prepared for Him by repentance. From heaven John had received his command, and he would go on till he received his countermand, and would have his dismission from the same hand that commissioned him. He does not come in to Christ, lest it should look like a combination between them; but he goes on with his work, till Providence lays him aside. The greater gifts of some do not render the labors of others needless; there is work enough for all. They are sullen, that will do nothing, when they see themselves outshone. Though we have but one talent, we must account for that; and when we see ourselves going off, must yet go on to the last.

2. He baptized in Enon near Salim, places no where else mentioned; and therefore we are at a loss where to find them; wherever it was, it seems that John removed from place to place; he did not think that there was any virtue in Jordan, because Jesus was baptized there; but as he saw cause, removed to other waters. Ministers must follow their opportunities; and he chose a place where there were many waters, that is, many streams of water; so that wherever he met with any that were willing to submit to his baptism, water was at hand to baptize them; shallow, perhaps, as is usual where there are many brooks, but such as would serve his purpose. And in that country, plenty of water was a valuable thing.

3. Though people did not come in such crowds, as when he first appeared, yet he was not without encouragement; there were still those that attended and owned him. Some refer this both to John and to Jesus: They came, and were baptized; that is, some came to John, some to Jesus; and, as their baptism was one, so were their hearts.

4. It is noted, (v. 24.) that John was not yet cast into prison, to clear the order of the story, and to show that these passages (ch. 2. and 3.) are to come in before Matt. 4:12. John never desisted from his work as long as he had his liberty; nay, he seems to have been the more industrious, because he foresaw his time was short; he was not yet cast into prison, but he expected it, ch. 9:4.

A contest between John's disciples and the Jews, about purifying, v. 25. The gospel of Christ came not to send peace upon earth, but division.

The disputants were some of John's disciples, and the Jews who had not submitted to his baptism of repentance. Penitents and impenitents divide this sinful world. In this contest, it would seem, John's disciples were the aggressors, and gave the challenge; they were novices, who had more zeal than discretion. The truths of God have often suffered by the rashness of some that have undertaken to defend them before they were able.

2. The matter in dispute was about purifying, or religious washing. (1.) We may suppose that John's disciples cried up his baptism, as superior to all others, and gave it the preference, as perfecting and superseding all the purifications of the Jews; they were in the right; but young converts are too apt to boast of their attainments; whereas he that has found the treasure, should hale it till he is sure that he has it, and not talk of it too much at first. (2.) No doubt the Jews applauded the purifications that were instituted by Moses, and those that were imposed by the tradition of the elders; for the former they had a divine warrant, and for the latter the usage of the church. It is very likely that the Jews, in this dispute, when they could not deny the excellent nature of John's baptism, raised an objection against it from 'his baptism, which gave occasion for the complaint that follows; v. 26. 'Here is John baptizing in one place, and Jesus in another; and therefore John's baptism is dangerous to peace; for it opens a door to endless parties. Now that John has begun, we shall have every little teacher set up for a baptist presently.' Or, 'At the best, it is imperfect. If John's

baptism, which you cry up thus, have any good in it, the baptism of Jesus goes beyond it, so that you are shaded already by a greater light, and your baptism is gone out of request.' Thus objections are made against the Gospel, from the advancement and improvement of gospel-light as if childhood and marriage were contrary to each other, and the superstructure were against the foundation. There was no reason to object Christ's baptism against John's, for they consisted very well.

John's disciples made complaint to their master concerning Christ and his baptizing, v. 26. They, being non-plussed by the fore-mentioned objection, and probably ruffled by it, come to their master, and tell him, 'Rabbi, he that was with thee, and was baptized of thee, is now set up for himself; He baptizeth, and all men come to Him; and wilt thou suffer it?' Their love for disputing occasioned this. It is common for men, when they find themselves run around in disputation, to fall upon those that do no harm. If these disciples of John had not undertaken to dispute about purifying, before they understood the doctrine of baptism, they might have answered the objection without passion. In their complaint, they speak respectfully to their own master, Rabbi; but speak very slightly of our Savior, though they do not name Him.

They suggest that Christ's setting up a baptism of his own was presumption, very unaccountable; as if John, having first set up this rite, must have the monopoly of it, and, as it were, a patent for the invention; 'He that was with thee beyond Jordan, as a disciple, behold the same baptizes, and takes thy work out of thy hand.' Thus the voluntary condescensions of the Lord Jesus, as that of his being baptized by John, are often unjustly turned to his reproach.

They suggest that it was a piece of ingratitude to John. He to whom thou bearest witness, baptizes; as if Jesus owed his reputation to John, and yet had very unworthily improved it to the prejudice of John. But Christ needed not John's testimony, ch. 5:36. He reflected more honor upon John than He received from him; yet thus it is incident to us to think that others are more indebted to us than really they are. Christ's baptism was not an impeachment, but the greatest improvement, of John's baptism; which was but to lead the way to Christ's. John was just to Christ, in bearing witness to Him; and Christ, answering to his testimony, did rather enrich than impoverish John's ministry.

They conclude that it would be a total eclipse to John's baptism; 'All men come to Him; they that used to follow with us, now flock after Him, it is therefore time to look about us.' It was not indeed strange that all men came to Him. As far as Christ is manifested, He will be magnified; but why should John's disciples grieve? Note, Aiming at the monopoly of honor and respect, has been in all ages the bane of the church, and the shame of its members and ministers; as also a rying of interests, and a jealousy of rivalry and competition. We mistake if we think that the gifts and usefulness of one, are a disparagement to another that has obtained mercy to be faithful; for the Spirit dispenses to every one severally as He will. Paul rejoiced in the usefulness even of those that opposed him, Phil. 1:8. We must leave it to God to choose and honor his own instruments as He pleaseth, and not covet to be placed alone.

John's disciples expected that he would resent this matter, as they did; but Christ's manifestation to Israel was no surprise to John, but what he looked for; it was no disturbance to him, but what he wished for. He therefore checked the complaint, as Moses, Enraged thou for my sake? and took this occasion to confirm the testimonies he had formerly borne to Christ, cheerfully consigning to Him all the in-

Verse 29.
Bride.] The church. Bridegroom. The Head of the church.
The friend of the Bridegroom, The person whom the Greeks called
[632,

the paronymph. There were two at each wedding, one waited on the bride, the other on the bridegroom; their business was to serve them.
14. A. CLARKE.

30 He "must increase but I must decrease.

31 He "that cometh from above" is above all: "he that is of the earth is earthly, and speaketh of the earth: "he that cometh from heaven is above all.

32 And "what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony.

Pa. 12:17-19. Is. 9:7. 53:2,3,12. 2:34,35,44,45. Matt. 13:31-33. Rev. 1:13.
Acta. 13:36,37. 1 Cor. 3:5. 2 Cor. 3:7-11. Col. 1:18. Heb. 3:2-6.
U. 13:40. Eph. 4:8-10.
1:15:27,30. 5:21-28. Matt. 23:18. Acta. 10:36. Phil. 1:21. Phil. 2:9-11. 1 Pet. 3:22. Rev. 19:16.
V. 13. 1 Cor. 15:47,48. Heb. 9:1,9,10.
2:63,51. 15:27,30.
a. 11. 5:20. 8:26. 15:15.
b. 23,39. 1:11. Is. 50:2. 53:1. Rom. 1:16-21. 11:2-6.

The Spirit without measure, (p. 34.) shall they gudge at it? The same reason will hold as to others. If God is pleased to give to others more ability and success than to us, shall we be displeased at it, and reflect upon Him as unjust and partial? see Matt. 20: 15. We should not be *discontented*, though inferior to others in gifts and usefulness, and eclipsed by their excellences. John was ready to own that it was the free gift of heaven, that made him a preacher, a prophet, a Baptist: it was God that gave him the interest he had in the love and esteem of the people, and if now his interest decline, God's will be done! He that gives, may take. What we receive from heaven, we must take as it is given. John never received a commission for a perpetual, but only for a temporary office, which must soon expire; and therefore, when he has fulfilled his ministry, he can contentedly see it go out of date. Some give quite another sense of these words; John had taken pains with his disciples, to teach them that Christ should be preferred before him; and yet they dote upon John, and grudge this preference of Christ above him; Well, saith John, I see a man can receive, that is, perceive, nothing, except it be given him from heaven. The labor of ministers is lost labor, unless the grace of God make it effectual. Men do not understand that which is made most plain, nor believe that which is made most evident, unless it be given them from heaven to understand and believe it.

John appeals to the testimony he had formerly given concerning Christ; (p. 18.) You can bear me witness, that I said, *I am not the Christ, but I am sent before Him*. John was, in his testimony to Christ, not as a reed shaken with the wind; neither the frowns of the chief priests, nor the flatteries of his own disciples, could make him change. This serves here as a conviction to his disciples, of the unreasonableness of their complaint. They had spoken of the witness which their master bore to Jesus; v. 26. 'Now,' saith John, 'do not you remember what the testimony was that I bore? Call that to mind, and you will see your cavil answered. Did I not say, *I am not the Christ*? Why then do you set me up as a rival with Him? Did I not say, *I am sent before Him*? Why then does it seem strange to you that I should give way to Him?' It is a comfort to himself, that he had never given his disciples any occasion thus to set him up in competition with Christ: but, on the contrary, had particularly cautioned them against this mistake. It is a satisfaction to faithful ministers, if they have done what they could to prevent extravagances that their people ran into. John had not only not encouraged them to hope that he was the Messiah, but had plainly told them the contrary; which was now a satisfaction to him. It is a common excuse for those who have undue honor paid them, *If the people will be deceived, let them*; but that is an ill maxim for those whose business is to undeceive people. *The lip of truth shall be established.*

John was so far from regretting the advancement of Christ and his interest, as his disciples did, that he rejoiced in it. This he expresses, (v. 29.) by an elegant simile. [1.] He compares our Savior to the bridegroom; 'He that has the bride, is the bridegroom. Do all men come to Him?' It is well; whither else should they go? Has He the throne in men's affections? Who else should have it. It is his right; to whom should the bride be brought out to the bridegroom? Christ was prophesied of as a Bridegroom, Ps. 45. 'The Word was made flesh, that the disparity of nature might not be a bar to the union. Provision is made for purifying the church, that sin might be no bar. Christ espouses his church to Himself; He has the bride,

for He has her love; the church is subject to Christ. As far as particular souls are devoted to Him in faith and love, so far the Bridegroom has the bride. He compares himself to the friend of the bridegroom, who attends upon him, to do him honor and service, uses his interest on his behalf, rejoices when the point is gained, and he has the bride. All that John had done in preaching and baptizing was to introduce Him; now that He was come he had what he wished for; *The friend of the Bridegroom stands, and hears Him*: expecting and waiting for Him; rejoices with joy because of the Bridegroom's voice, because He is come to the marriage long expected. Note, First, Faithful ministers are friends of the Bridegroom, to recommend Him to the children of men; to bring messages from Him; and herein they must be faithful to Him. Secondly, The friends of the Bridegroom must stand, and hear the Bridegroom's voice; must receive and attend his orders; must desire to have proofs of Christ's speaking in them, and with them; (2 Cor. 13: 8.) that is the Bridegroom's voice. Thirdly, The espousing of souls to Christ in faith and love, is the fulfilling of the duty of every good minister. If the day of Christ's espousals be the day of the gladness of his heart, (Cant. 3:11.) it cannot but be theirs, too, who love Him, and wish well to his kingdom. Surely they have no greater joy.

He owns that the reputation and interest of Christ should be advanced, and his own diminished; (v. 30.) *He must increase, and I must decrease*. If they grieve at the growing greatness of Jesus, they will have more and more occasion to grieve, as they have, that indulge themselves in envy and emulation. John speaks of Christ's increase, and of his own decrease, not only as unavoidable, but as highly just and agreeable. He was well pleased to see the kingdom of Christ getting ground; 'He must increase. You think He has gained, but it is nothing to what He will gain.' Note, The kingdom of Christ is, and will be, a growing kingdom, like the light of the morning, like the grain of mustard-seed. He was not at all displeased at the diminishing of his own interest; *I must decrease*. Created excellencies must decrease; *I have seen an end of all perfection*. Note, First, The shining forth of the glory of Christ eclipses the lustre of all other glory. The glory that stands in competition with Christ, that of the world and the flesh, loses ground in the soul, as the knowledge and love of Christ increase; but it is here spoken of that which is subservient to Him. As the light of the morning increases, that of the morning-star decreases. Secondly, If our abasement may in the least contribute to advance Christ's name, we must cheerfully submit and be content to be any thing, or nothing, so that Christ may be all.

John Baptist advances Christ, and instructs his disciples concerning Him, that instead of grieving that so many come to Him, they might come themselves.

He that cometh from above, is above all. He came from heaven; which speaks not only his divine extraction, but his divine nature. He had, before his conception, a heavenly being. None but He that came from heaven, was fit to show us the will of heaven, or the way to heaven. When God would save man, He sent from above. Hence his sovereign authority; He is above all things and all persons, God over all, blessed forevermore. It is daring presumption to dispute precedence with Him. When we come to speak of the honors of the Lord Jesus, we find they transcend all conception and ex-

Verses 29, 30.

'The voice of the bridegroom and bride frequently mean in the O. T. (Jer. 7: 34. 16: 9. 25: 10. 33: 11.) the festivity and expressions of joy at a wedding. Thus the nuptial benediction still usual among the Jews is, "Praised be Thou, our Lord God, King of the world, who hast created joy and cheerfulness, the bride of the world, singing, delight, love, relationship, peace, and friendship!" Soon ... let there be heard ... the voice of joy and of mirth, ... the voice of the rejoicing couple under the nuptial canopy, and of the youths whose music is heard at the entertainment.' "The bridegroom himself," says Boetius, "is, besides, obliged to sing in honor of the bride before the

wedding feast." The office of the bride-man, to whom John compares himself, lasted only seven days; but the bridegroom became the husband. He must increase, but I must decrease. RICHMOND.

Verse 32.

No man. "The phrase must be taken with limitation, denoting few or none. Such hyperboles are closely connected in the high-wrought pathos, such as that which breathes in this beautiful passage; they are also especially employed by those who speak under the influence of anger, envy or any of the stronger passions, as in v. 26. "all men come to Him;" [Also 4: 39.] BLOOMFIELD.

33 He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true.

34 For ^{the} whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

35 The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.

36 He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

c Rom. 3:4, 4:18-21, 2 Cor. 1:18, Tit. 1:1, Heb. 6:17, 1 John 6:9, 10.

d 7:16, 8:26-28, 40, 47.

e 17, 1:18, 5:26, 7:37-39, 15:26,

16:7, Num. 11:25, 2 Kings 2:9, Ps.

45:7, Is. 11:2-5, 59:21, 62:1-3, Rom.

8:2, Eph. 3:5, 4:7-13, Col. 1:19, 2:10,

Rev. 2:15, 22:1, 16, 17, f 5:20, 22:23, 15:9, 17:23, 24:26, Prov.

3:30, Is. 42:1, Matt. 3:17, 17:5,

g 13:3, 17:2, Gen. 41:43, Ps. 2:8,

Is. 9:7, Matt. 11:27, 23:18, Luke

11:22, 1 Cor. 15:27, Eph. 1:22, Phil.

2:9-11, Heb. 1:2, 2:8, 9, 1 Pet.

h 15:16, 5:24, 6:47-54, 10:28, Hab.

2:4, Rom. 1:17, 8:1, 1 John 3:14, 5,

5:11-13.

i 2:8, 5:1, Num. 32:21, Job 32:28,

P. 35:9, 49:19, 106:4-5, Luke 2:

30, 35, Rom. 8:24-25, Rev. 21:8, 2:

P. 2:12, Rom. 1:18, 4:15, 5:9, Gal.

3:10, Eph. 5:1, 1 Thes. 1:10, 5:9,

Heb. 2:3, 10:29, Rev. 6:16, 17,

and heard, that He testifieth.

fieth nothing but what He had seen and heard, what He was thoroughly acquainted with. What He discovered of the divine nature and of the invisible world, was what He had seen; what He revealed of the mind of God, He had heard immediately from Him. The prophets testified what was made known to them in dreams, by the mediation of angels, but not what they had seen and heard. John was the *crier's voice*, that said, 'Make room for the witness, and keep silence while the charge is given,' but then leaves it to the witness to give in his testimony, and the judge to give the charge. The Gospel of Christ is not a doubtful opinion, like a new notion in philosophy, which every one is at liberty to believe or not; but it is a revelation of the mind of God; *eternal truth* in itself, and of *infinite concern* to us. See his divine grace and goodness: that which He had seen and heard, because He knew it nearly concerned us, He was pleased to make known to us. What Paul had seen and heard in the third heavens, he could not testify; (2 Cor. 12:4.) but Christ knew how to utter what He had seen and heard. Christ's preaching is here called his *testifying*; to denote, (1.) *The convincing evidence* of it; it was not reported as by hearsay, but was testified as evidence in court, with great caution and assurance. (2.) *The affectionate earnestness* of the delivery of it; it was testified with concern and importunity, as Acts 18:5.

From the certainty of Christ's doctrine, John takes occasion to lament the infidelity of men; though He testifies what is infallibly true, yet very few, comparatively, receive it. This He speaks of, not only as matter of wonder, (Who hath believed our report? How stupid and foolish are the greatest part of mankind; what enemies to themselves!) but as matter of grief: John's disciples grieved that *all men came to Christ*; (v. 26.) they thought his followers too many. But John grieves that *no man came to Him*; he thought them too few. Note, The unbelief of sinners is the grief of saints. It was for this that St. Paul had great heaviness, Rom. 9:2. *He that hath received his testimony*, (such there were, though very few,) *hath set to his seal that God is true*. God is true, though we do not set our seal to it; his truth needs not our faith to support it, but we do ourselves honor and justice by subscribing to his truth, and hereby God reckons Himself honored. God's promises are all *yea and ay*; by faith we put our *amen* to them, as Rev. 22:20. Observe, He that receives the testimony of Christ, subscribes not only to the truth of Christ, but to the truth of God, for his name is the *word of God*; the commandments of God, and the testimony of Christ are put together, Rev. 12:17. By believing in Christ we set to our seal, *First*, That God is true to all the promises which He has made concerning Christ, by the mouth of all his holy prophets; what He *swore to our fathers*, is all accomplished, Luke 1:70., &c. Acts 13:32, 33. *Secondly*, That He is true to all the promises He has made in Christ; we venture our souls upon God's veracity, satisfied that He is true; we are willing to deal with Him upon trust, and to quit all in this world for a happi-

ness in reversion and out of sight. By this we greatly honor God's faithfulness. Whom we credit, we honor.

pression, and we can say but this, *He is above all*. It was said of John Baptist, *There is not a greater among them that are born of women*. But the descent of Christ from heaven put a dignity on Him of which He was not divested by being made Flesh; still He was above all. This He further illustrates by the meanness of those who stood in competition with Him; *He that is of the earth, is earthly*; he that has his original of the earth, has his food out of the earth, his converse with earthly things, and his concern is for them. Note, *First*, Man has his rise out of the earth; not only Adam at first, but we also still are *formed out of the clay*, Job 33:6. Look to the rock whence we were hewn. *Secondly*, Man's constitution is therefore *earthly*; not only his body, but his soul, corrupt and carnal, and his bias strong towards earthly things. The prophets and apostles were of the same mould with other men; they were but *earthen vessels*, though a rich treasure was lodged in them; and shall these be set up for rivals with Christ? *Let the potsherds strive with the potsherds of the earth*; but let them not cope with Him that came from heaven.

John's disciples were displeased that Christ's preaching was attended upon, more than his; but He tells them there was reason for it.

He, for his part, *spake of the earth*, and so do all those that are of the earth. The prophets were men, and spake like men; of themselves they could not speak but of the earth, 2 Cor. 3:5. The preaching of the prophets and of John was but low and flat, compared with Christ's preaching; as heaven is high above the earth, so were his thoughts above theirs. By them God spake on earth, but in Christ He spake *thru heaven*.

But He that cometh from heaven, is not only in person, but in doctrine, above all the prophets that ever lived; none teacheth like Him. The doctrine of Christ is here recommended to us as infallibly sure and certain, and to be entertained accordingly; (v. 32.) *What He hath seen*.

See here Christ's divine knowledge; He testifies what He had seen and heard, what He was thoroughly acquainted with. What He discovered of the divine nature and of the invisible world, was what He had seen; what He revealed of the mind of God, He had heard immediately from Him. The prophets testified what was made known to them in dreams, by the mediation of angels, but not what they had seen and heard. John was the *crier's voice*, that said, 'Make room for the witness, and keep silence while the charge is given,' but then leaves it to the witness to give in his testimony, and the judge to give the charge. The Gospel of Christ is not a doubtful opinion, like a new notion in philosophy, which every one is at liberty to believe or not; but it is a revelation of the mind of God; *eternal truth* in itself, and of *infinite concern* to us. See his divine grace and goodness: that which He had seen and heard, because He knew it nearly concerned us, He was pleased to make known to us. What Paul had seen and heard in the third heavens, he could not testify; (2 Cor. 12:4.) but Christ knew how to utter what He had seen and heard. Christ's preaching is here called his *testifying*; to denote, (1.) *The convincing evidence* of it; it was not reported as by hearsay, but was testified as evidence in court, with great caution and assurance. (2.) *The affectionate earnestness* of the delivery of it; it was testified with concern and importunity, as Acts 18:5.

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ness in reversion and out of sight. By this we greatly honor God's faithfulness. Whom we credit, we honor.

For He whom God hath sent, speaketh the words of God, for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him. The prophets were messengers that brought letters from heaven, but Christ came under the character of an Ambassador, and treats with us as such; for He spake the words of God, and nothing He said was of human infirmity; both substance and language were divine. He proved Himself sent of God, (ch. 3:2.) and therefore his words are to be received as the words of God. By this rule we may try the spirits; those that speak as the oracles of God, and prophesy according to the proportion of faith, are to be received as sent of God. He spake so as no other prophet did; for God giveth not the Spirit by measure to Him. None can speak the words of God, without the Spirit of God, 1 Cor. 2:10, 11. The Old-Testament prophets had the Spirit, and in different degrees, 2 Kings 2:9, 10. But whereas God gave them the Spirit by measure, (1 Cor. 12:4.) He gave Him to Christ without measure; all fulness dwelt in Him, the fulness of the Godhead, unmeasurable. The Spirit was not in Christ as in a vessel, but as in a bottomless ocean. 'The prophets that had the Spirit in a limited manner, only with respect to some particular revelation, sometimes spake of themselves; but He that had the Spirit always residing in Him, always spake the words of God.'

Concerning the power and authority He is invested with.

He is the beloved Son of the Father; (v. 35.) The Father loveth the Son. The prophets were employed as servants, but Christ was beloved as a Son, always his *Delight*, Prov. 8:30. The Father was well pleased in Him; not only He did love Him, but He doth love Him; He continued his love to Him even in his estate of humiliation, loved Him never the less for his poverty and sufferings.

He is Lord of all. The Father, as an evidence of his love to Him, hath given all things into his hand. Love is generous. The Father took such complacency, and had such confidence in Him, that He constituted Him the great Trustee for mankind. Having given Him the Spirit without measure, He was thereby qualified to be Master of all. Note, It is the honor of Christ, and the unspeakable comfort of all Christians, that the Father hath given all things into the hands of the Mediator. *First*, All power; Matt. 28:18. All the works of creation being put under his feet, all the affairs of redemption are put into his hand; He is Lord of all. Angels are his servants, devils his captives. He has power over all flesh; the heathen are given Him for his inheritance. The kingdom of providence is committed to his administration. He has power to settle the terms of the covenant of peace as the Plenipotentiary, to govern his church as the Lawgiver, to dispense favors as the Almoner, and call to account as the Judge. Both the golden sceptre and the iron rod are in his hand. *Secondly*, All grace is given into his hand as the channel of conveyance; all those good things which God intended to give to the children of men; *eternal life*, and all its preliminaries. We are unworthy that the Father should give those things into our hands, for we have made ourselves the children of his wrath; therefore the things He intended for us He gives into his hands, who is worthy, and has merited both honors for Himself, and favors for us, to be given into ours. This is a great encouragement to faith, that the riches of the new covenant are deposited in so sure, so kind, so good a hand, that of Him who is able to keep all that which both God and believers have agreed to commit to Him.

He is the Object of faith, the great condition of eternal happiness, and herein has pre-eminence. (v. 36.) He that believeth on the Son, hath life. We have here the application of

Verse 33.

Hath set to his seal that God is true.] 'As sealing was employed for vouching the authenticity of writs, to seal came, by a natural and

easy transition, to signify to vouch, to attest. Our acceptance of God's message by his Son, through an unshaken faith, vouches for our part the faithfulness of God, and the truth of his promises.' CAMPBELL.

CHAP. IV.

Jesus leaves Judea, 1-3. In the absence of his disciples. He discourses with a Samaritan woman concerning the value of life, 4-15; brings her to be the Messiah, 16-18; shows her the nature of acceptable worship, 20-24; and declares himself to be the Messiah, 25, 26. The disciples return, and are surprised to see Him thus employed, 27. The woman goes to inform her neighbors, and induces them to come and hear Him, 28-30. Jesus shows his disciples his delight in the Father's work, and the blessed harvest about to be reaped by them, with reference to the Samaritans coming to Him, 31-38. The Samaritans believe in Him, and He continues among them for two days, 39-42. He returns to Cana; and heals a nobleman's son, who lay sick at Capernaum, 43-54.

WHEN, therefore, the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,

2 (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)

3 He left Judea, and departed again into Galilee.

4 And he must needs go through Samaria.

5 Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

6 Luke 1:76. 2:11. 19:31, 34. Acts 10:38. 1 Cor. 2:9. 15:47. 2 Cor. 4:6. 1 Jan. 21. Rev. 19:15.

7 Acts 10:48. 1 Cor. 1:13-17. 3:22. 10:40. 11:54. Matt. 10:23. Mark 3:7. 14:3.

8 Matt. 10:5-6. Luke 9:51, 52. 17:11. Gen. 33:19. 49:22. Josh. 24:32.

ed; new ones are added: something is done every day to fill the measure, and nothing to empty it. Thus the wrath of God abides; it is treasured up against the day of wrath.

CHAP. IV. v. 1-3. It is computed that Christ staid in Judea about six months, to build upon the foundation of John.

I. He made disciples; prevailed with many to embrace his doctrine, and follow Him.—His ministry was successful, notwithstanding opposition, Ps. 110: 2, 3. Note, It is Christ's prerogative to make disciples; first to bring them to his feet, and then to force them to his will. The Christian is made, not born. Tertullian.

II. He baptized those whom He made disciples, by the ministry of his disciples, v. 2. He would put a difference between his baptism and that of John, who baptized all himself; for he baptized as a servant, Christ as a Master. He would apply himself more to preaching; 1 Cor. 1: 17. He would honor his disciples, by employing them, and so train them to further service. If He had baptized some Himself, they would have been apt to value themselves upon it, and despise others, 1 Cor. 1: 13, 14. He would reserve himself for the honor of baptizing with the Holy Ghost, Acts 1: 5. He would

what he had said concerning Christ and his doctrine; it is the conclusion of the whole matter. If God has honored the Son, we must by faith give honor to Him. As God offers and conveys good things to us by the testimony of Christ, whose word is the vehicle of divine favors, so we receive and partake of those favors, by believing the testimony, and entertaining that word as true and good; this way of receiving fitly answers that way of giving. We have here the sum of that Gospel which is to be preached to every creature, Mark 16: 16. Learn,

First, The blessed state of all true Christians; He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life. Note, 1. It is the character of every true Christian, that he believes on the Son of God; not only believes Him, but believes on Him, consents to, and confides in Him. The benefit of true Christianity is everlasting life: Christ came to purchase it for us, and confer it upon us; it can be no less than the happiness of an immortal soul in an immortal God. 2. True believers, even now, have everlasting life; not only they shall have it hereafter, but they have it now. For they have good security for it. The deed is sealed, and delivered to them, and so they have it, though not yet in possession. They have the Son of God, and in Him they have life; and the Spirit of God, the Earnest of this life. They have foretastes of it, in present communion with God and the tokens of his love. Grace is glory begun. Learn,

Secondly, The wretched condition of unbelievers; He that believeth not the Son, is undone. The words include both incredulity and disobedience. An unbeliever is one that gives not credit to the doctrine of Christ, nor is in subjection to the government of Christ. Now those that will neither be taught nor ruled by Christ, cannot be happy in this world, or that to come; He shall not see that life which Christ came to bestow. He shall not enjoy it, he shall not have any prospect of it, except to aggravate his loss. They cannot but be miserable; the wrath of God abides upon an unbeliever. He is not only under the wrath of God, which is as surely the soul's death, as his favor is its life; but it abides upon Him. The wrath of the law, if not removed by the Gospel, is bound upon him. God's wrath for his daily actual transgressions, lies upon him. Old scores lie undischarged; new ones are added: something is done every day to fill the measure, and nothing to empty it. Thus the wrath of God abides; it is treasured up against the day of wrath.

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teach us that the efficacy of sacraments depends not upon the hand that administers them, as also, that what is done by ministers according to his direction, He owns as done by Himself.

III. He made and baptized more disciples than John; not only more than John did at this time, but at any time. Christ's converse was more winning than John's. His miracles were convincing, and the cures He wrought, inviting.

IV. The Pharisees were informed of this; they heard what multitudes He baptized, by their spies who gave them notice concerning Him. When the Pharisees thought they were rid of John, and were pleasing themselves with that, Jesus appears, who was a greater vexation to them than John. The witnesses will rise again. That which grieved them was, that Christ made so many disciples. The success of the Gospel exasperates its enemies, and it is a sign that it is getting ground, when the powers of darkness are enraged against it.

V. Our Lord Jesus knew very well what transformations were given against Him to the Pharisees. The informers perhaps were willing to have their names concealed, and the Pharisees loath to have their designs known; but none can hide their counsels from the Lord, (Isa. 29: 15.) and Christ is here called the Lord. He knew what was told the Pharisees, and how it exceeded the truth; for it is not likely that Jesus had yet baptized more than John; but so the thing was represented, to make Him appear more formidable; see 2 Kings 6: 12.

Hereupon, our Lord left Judea.

1. Because He was likely to be persecuted there to death; such was the rage of the Pharisees, and such their impious politics. To escape their designs, Christ quitted the country, and went thither, where what He did would be less provoking. For, his hour was not yet come, (ch. 7: 30.) the time fixed in the counsels of God, and the prophecies, for Messiah's being cut off. He had not finished his testimony, and therefore would not surrender or expose Himself. The disciples He had gathered in Judea, were not able to bear hardships, and therefore He would not expose them. Hereby He gave an example to his own rule; When they persecute you in one city, flee to another. We are not called to suffer, while we may avoid it without sin; and therefore, though we may not, for our own preservation, change our religion, yet we may change our place. Christ secured himself, not by miracles, but in a way common to men, for the direction and encouragement of his suffering people.

2. He departed into Galilee, because He had work to do there, and many friends and fewer enemies. He went to Galilee now, (1.) Because John's ministry had made way for Him there, for Galilee, which was under Herod's jurisdiction, was the last scene of John's baptism. (2.) Because John's imprisonment had now made room for Him there. The minds of the people would not be divided between him and Christ. The liberties and restraints of good ministers are for the furtherance of the Gospel, Phil. 1: 12.

V. 4-26. The Samaritans, in blood and religion, were mongrel Jews; the posterity of

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 22-36. The same state of heart and mind, which leads to bigotry and formality in religion, produces also ambition, and jealousy of those who outshine us: but true excellency and sanctifying grace are combined with humility, submission to God, and a willing dependence on Him. As a man can receive nothing except it be given him from heaven, let us seek all our blessings from thence; give God all the glory of whatever we have or do; occupy with our talents as we are able; rejoice in the honor and service of Christ, the Bridegroom of his church; stand and hear his voice; and seek our happiness in his favor. And should we be laid aside from usefulness, and see others increase while we decrease, and are obscured by their superior talent and success; let us pray to be enabled to hear it meekly, yea, thankfully, that Christ may be honored; and that numbers of such burning and shining lights may be

sent forth into every part of the earth, when we are neglected or forgotten, as laid aside, and become as a broken vessel. Let us attend to Him, 'who cometh from above, and is above all,' that we may simply receive heavenly things from Him, and neither call any one father or master, nor lean to our own understanding; 'as all men being of the earth are earthly, and speak of the earth.' And though few indeed thus set to their seal that God is true, let us seek so to honor his Word, that He may seal his salvation to us, by the Spirit of his Son 'shedding abroad his love in our hearts.' This is the only way of everlasting life, through faith in the Son of God, whom the Father loveth, and into whose hand all things are given; for there is no salvation for sinners in any other: and 'he that believeth not shall perish.'

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. IV. v. 5 [Sychar.] Or Sycher, anciently Sychem, changed to Sychar by the Jews, to stigmatize the drunkenness of its inhabitants,

and with a reference to Is. 28: 1. So Lightfoot and Scott. L' Enfant, in Doddridge, observes that the word signifies in the Syriac language, both a drunkard and a liar. 'Reland thinks it

6 Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

7 There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink.

8 (For his disciples went one away into the city to buy meat.)

9 Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? For the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.

Matt. 4:2. 9:24. Heb. 2:17. 4:15. Luke 2:7. 9:8. 2 Cor. 8:9. 11:9. Matt. 27:45. 10: 19:28. Gen. 24:43. 2 Sam. 23: 15-17. 1 Kings 17:30. Matt. 10:42. 6:5-7. Luke 9:13. 7:27. 8:48. Luke 10:33. 17:16-19. 2 Kings 17:24, 28. Ezra 4: Neh. 4:12. Luke 9:52-55. Acts 1:8.

sought and saved. This was work his heart was upon, and therefore He must needs go this way. It was happy for Samaria, that it lay in Christ's way, which gave Him an opportunity of calling on them. When I passed by thee, I said unto thee, Live, Ezek. 16: 6.

2. His resting place happened to be a city of Samaria.

It was called *Sychar*; probably *Sichem*, or *Shechem*. Names of places are commonly corrupted by time. Shechem yielded the first proselytes to the church of Israel (Gen. 34); and now it is the first place where the gospel is preached out of Israel; the valley of *Achor*, which was given for a door of hope, to the Gentiles, ran along by this city, Hos. 2: 15. Abimelech was made king here; it was Jeroboam's royal seat; but the evangelist, when he would give us the antiquities of the place, takes notice of Jacob's interest there, which was more honor to it than crowned heads. Here lay the parcel of ground which Jacob gave to his son Joseph, whose bones were buried in it, Gen. 48: 22. Josh. 24: 32. Probably Christ, when He reposed himself here, took occasion to meditate on the good report which the elders by faith obtained. Jerome chose to live in Canaan, that the sight of the places might affect him the more with scripture-stories. Here was Jacob's well which he digged, or at least used, for himself and family. We find no mention of this well in the Old Testament; but the tradition was, it was Jacob's well.

Our Lord was wearied with his journey. Though it was but the sixth hour, and He had performed but half his day's journey, yet He was weary; or, He was weary because it was the sixth hour, the time of the heat of the day. Here we see, First, That He was a Man, subject to the infirmities of human nature. Toil came with sin, (Gen. 3: 19.) and therefore Christ, having made himself a Curse for us, submitted to it. Secondly, He was a poor Man, else He might have travelled in a chariot. To this He humbled Himself for us, that He went all his journeys on foot. When servants were

those colonies which the king of Assyria planted after the captivity of the ten tribes, with whom the poor of the land that were left behind, and many other Jews afterwards, incorporated themselves. They worshipped the God of Israel only, and erected a temple on mount Gerizim, in competition with that at Jerusalem. There was great enmity between them and the Jews; the Samaritans would not admit Christ, when they saw He was going to Jerusalem, Luke 9: 53. The Jews thought they could not give Him a worse name than to say, He is a Samaritan. When the Jews were in prosperity, the Samaritans claimed kindred to them, (Ezra 4: 2.) but when they were in distress, they were Medes and Persians.

Christ charged the disciples not to enter into any city of the Samaritans, (Matt. 10: 5.) to preach, or work miracles; nor did He here preach publicly, or work any miracle, his eye being to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. His kindness here was accidental; it was only a crumb that fell from the master's table.

1. His road from Judea to Galilee lay through Samaria. There was no other way, unless on the other side Jordan. The wicked are at present so intermixed with Israel, that, unless we go out of the world, we cannot avoid going through their company, 1 Cor. 5: 10. We therefore need the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, that we may neither give provocation, nor contract pollution. We should not go into places of temptation, but when we needs must; and then should hasten through them. Some think that Christ must needs go through Samaria, because a poor woman was to be converted, a lost sheep to be sought.

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on horses, princes walked as servants on the earth, Eccl. 10: 7. When we are carried easily, let us think on the weariness of our Master. Thirdly, It would seem, He was not of a robust constitution; his disciples were not tired, for they went into the town without any difficulty. Bodies of the finest mould are more sensible of fatigue, and can worst bear it.

Being wearied, He sat on the well, an uneasy place, cold and hard; He had no couch to repose Himself in, but took that to teach us not to be curious in the conveniences of life, but content with mean things. Secondly, He sat thus, in an uneasy posture; or, so as people wearied with travelling are accustomed to sit.

His discourse with a Samaritan woman is here recorded at large, while his dispute with the doctors, and his discourse with Moses and Elias on the mount, are buried in silence.

There comes a woman of Samaria to draw water. This intimates her poverty, she had no servant; and her industry, she would do it herself. God approves of honest, humble diligence in our places. Christ was made known to the shepherds, when they were keeping their flock. Divine Providence brings about glorious purposes by events which seem to us accidental. This woman's meeting with Christ at the well, may remind us of the stories of Rebekah, Rachel, and Jethro's daughter, who all met with good husbands, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses, when they came to the wells for water. The preventing grace of God sometimes brings people unexpectedly under the means of conversion and salvation. He is found of them that sought Him not.

His disciples were gone away into the city to buy meat. Hence learn a lesson, 1. Of justice and honesty. The meat Christ ate, He paid for, as Paul, 2 Thess. 3: 8. 2. Of daily dependence upon Providence; Take no thought for the morrow. Christ did not go into the city to eat, but sent his disciples to fetch his meat thither. (1.) Because He had a good work to do at that well, which might be done while they were trading. It is wisdom to fill up vacant minutes with good, that the fragments of time may not be lost. Peter, while his dinner was getting ready, fell into a trance, Acts 10: 10. (2.) Because it was more retired, cheap and homely, to have his dinner brought Him thither, than to go into the town for it. Perhaps his purse was low, and He would teach us good husbandry; to spend according to what we have, and not go beyond it. However, He would teach us not to affect great things. Christ could eat his dinner as well upon a draw well, as in the best inn in the town. Let us comport with our circumstances.

This gave Christ an opportunity of discoursing with this woman about spiritual concerns. He often preached to multitudes, yet here He condescends to teach a poor woman, a Samaritan, to teach his ministers to do likewise; a glorious achievement it is to help save one soul from death.

refers to their idolatry, the word denoting both a lie and an idol. The place was afterwards called Neapolis, and is now the village Naplosa. Bloomfield. The Arabic version of Gen. 37: 13, made about A. D. 940, translates Sychem or 'Shechem' by 'Nablosa.' Ed. 'It was ten miles from Shiloh, forty from Jerusalem, and fifty-two from Jericho.'

The sacred story of events transacted in the fields of Sychem, is remembered from our earliest years, with delight. The principal object of veneration is Jacob's well, situated a small distance from the town. In the road to Jerusalem, and has been visited by pilgrims of all ages; but particularly since the Christian era, as the place where our Savior revealed Himself to the woman of Samaria. The spot is so distinctly marked by the evangelist, and so little liable to uncertainty, from the circumstance of the well itself, and the features of the country, that, if no tradition existed for its identity, the site of it would hardly be mistaken. Perhaps no Christian scholar ever attentively read the fourth chapter of John, without being struck with the numerous internal evidences of truth which crowd upon the mind in its perusal. Within so small a compass, it is impossible to find in other writings so many sources of reflection and interest. Independently of its importance as a theological document, it concentrates so much information, that a volume might be filled with the illustration it reflects on the history of the Jews, and on the geography of their country. All that can be gathered on these subjects from Josephus, seems but as a comment to illustrate this chapter. The journey of our Lord from Judea into Galilee; the cause of it; his passage through the territory of Samaria; his approach to the metropolis of this country; its name; his arrival at the Amorite field, which terminates the narrow valley of Sychem; the ancient custom of halting at a well; the female employment of drawing

water; the disciples sent into the city for food, by which its situation out of town is obviously implied; the question of the woman, referring to existing prejudices which separated the Jews from the Samaritans; the depth of the well; the oriental allusion contained in the expression 'living water'; the history of the well, and the customs thereby illustrated; the worship on mount Gerizim—all these occur within the space of twenty verses; and if to these be added what has already been referred to in the remainder of the same chapter, we shall perhaps consider it as a record, which, in the words of Him who sent it, 'we may lift up our eyes, and look upon, for it is white, already, to harvest.'

Dr. E. D. CLARKE.

Verse 6.

Over Jacob's well, the empress Helena is said to have built a church in the form of a cross, of which nothing but a few foundations remained in the time of Maundrell. He says the well is dug in the firm rock, and is about three yards in diameter, and thirty-five in depth, containing five feet of water.

Verse 9.

Dealings.] 'Rather friendly intercourse.' Doddridge. Campbell. 'The original word signifies to have familiar intercourse with.' Bloomfield. 'By the traditions of the Pharisees, the Jews taught buy of them, and therefore Christ's disciples do not scruple at this' (8.); but they were not to borrow of them, or receive kindness from them, or drink of their water 'eat of their morsels'; they held this as 'had as eating swine's flesh. But Christ, despising such traditions as 'had no foundation, either in the law of God, or in equity, and tended to 'impair the laws of common friendship or humanity, asks drink of this Samaritan woman, and eats with them.' Whitby. (Notes, 2 Kings 17: 41. Neh. 13: 23-30.)

Scott.

10 Jesus answered and said unto her, 'If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.'

11 The woman saith unto him, Sir, 'thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?'

12 Art "thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?'

13 Jesus answered and said unto her, 'Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

p 3:16, 1a. 9:6. 42:6. 49:5-8. 1 Luke 11:13. Rom. 8:32. 1 Cor. 13:9. 2 Cor. 9:15.

q 25:38. 9:35-38. 16:3. 17:3. 1 John 5:20. 2 Chr. 33:12, 13, 18, 19. Ps. 104:7. 1a. 35:8-9. Luke 11:8-10. 18:13, 14. 24:43. Acts 9:11. Rev. 3:17, 14. 14. 6:33, 51. 7:37-39. Ex. 17:6. Ps. 38:9, 49:4. 1a. 12:3. 35:5. 41:17, 18. 43:20. 49:10. 55:1-3. Jer. 2:15. Ez. 47:1-9, 12. Zech. 14:8. 1 Cor. 6:4. Rev. 7:17. 21:6. 28:2, 1.

r 3:4. 1 Cor. 2:14. s 9:33. 1a. 33:23. Matt. 12:42. Heb. 2:27, 49. 1a. 65:15, 14. 1a. 16:24.

that He was born of the Jewish nation, which was *now* not only in an *ill* state, subject to the Romans, but in an *ill* name. With disdain Pilate asks, *Am I a Jew?* Thus He made himself not only of *no* reputation, but of *ill* reputation; herein He has set us an example of swimming against the stream of common corruptions. We must, like our Master, put on *kindness*, though our country, or party, be morose and ill-natured. It is unjust to charge upon every individual the common faults of the community: every rule has some exceptions. 2. She wonders that He should expect to receive kindness from her that was a Samaritan; 'You Jews could deny it to one of our nation, and why should we grant it to one of yours?' Quarrels are endless through revenge and retaliation.

If thou knewest the Gift of God, thou wouldst have asked. He waves her objection. Some differences are best healed by being slighted, and by avoiding occasions of dispute. Christ will convert this woman, not by showing her that the Samaritan worship was *schismatical*, but by showing her her own immoralities, and need of a Savior. He tells her that she had now a fairer opportunity than she was aware of, of gaining unspeakable advantage; this was the day of her visitation.

If thou knewest the Gift of God, that is, as the next words explain it, *who it is that saith, Give me to drink.* If thou knewest *who I am.* She saw Him to be a Jew, a weary traveller; but He would have her know something more concerning Him. Note, Jesus Christ is the Gift of God, the richest Token, and the richest Treasure: a Gift, not a debt which we could demand from God; not a loan, which He will demand from us again, but a free Gift, ch. 3:16. It is an unspeakable privilege to have this gift offered us; to have an opportunity of embracing it; 'He who is the Gift of God addresses thee; it is He that saith, Give me to drink.' Though Christ is set before us, and sues to us by His Gospel, yet there are multitudes that *know Him not.* They know not who it is that speaks to them; they perceive not that it is the Lord.

Verse 10.
'There seems to be intended here, a contrast between the munificence of God, which extends to those of all religions and denominations upon the earth, and the contracted spirit of man, who is ingenious in devising pretexes for confining the divine liberality to as few objects as possible.'

CANONELL.
Living water. 'The grace of the Holy Spirit. For as the well, which descends from heaven, nourishes and vivifies, and though it be of one kind, operates in various ways, is snow-white in the lily, but sable in the narcissus, blushes in the rose, is purple in the violet, is sweet in the fig, but bitter in the wormwood: so also the Divine Spirit, which descends from heaven, nourishes and vivifies the soul, and though of one kind, exerts its power and efficacy in various ways.'

Chrysostom in BLOOMFIELD.

Jesus begins with a request for a draught of water; Give me to drink. He that for our sakes became poor, becomes a beggar, that they who want, and cannot dig, may not be ashamed to beg. Christ asked for it, not only because He needed it, but to draw on further discourse with her, and teach us to be willing to be beholden to the meanest when there is occasion. Christ is still begging in his poor members, and a cup of cold water, given to them in his name, shall not lose its reward.

The woman, though she does not deny his request, quarrels with Him because he did not carry the humor of his nation; (v. 9.) *How is it?*

Observe, What a mortal feud there was between the Jews and the Samaritans; *The Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans.* The Samaritans were the adversaries of Judah, (Ezra 4: 1.) and upon all occasions mischievous to them. The Jews were extremely malicious against them, 'looked upon them as having no part in the resurrection; excommunicated and cursed them by the name of God, with this law, That no Israelite eat of any thing that is a Samaritan's, for it is as if he eat swine's flesh.' Note, Quarrels about religion are usually the most implacable. Men were made to have dealings one with another; but if men, because one worships at one temple, and another at another, will deny the offices of humanity and common civility, will be morose, scornful and censorious, and this under color of zeal for religion, they plainly show that however their religion may be true, they are not truly religious.

The woman upbraided Christ with the haughtiness and ill nature of the Jewish nation; *How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me?* By his stress or dialect, or both, she knew Him to be a Jew, and thinks it strange that He runs not to the same excess of riot against the Samaritans with other Jews. Note, Moderate men of all sides are, like Joshua and his fellows, (Zech. 3: 8.) men wondered at. Two things this woman wonders at, 1. That He should ask this kindness; for the Jews would endure any hardship rather than be beholden to a Samaritan. It was part of Christ's humiliation, that He was born of the Jewish nation, which was *now* not only in an *ill* state, subject to the Romans, but in an *ill* name. With disdain Pilate asks, *Am I a Jew?* Thus He made himself not only of *no* reputation, but of *ill* reputation; herein He has set us an example of swimming against the stream of common corruptions. We must, like our Master, put on *kindness*, though our country, or party, be morose and ill-natured. It is unjust to charge upon every individual the common faults of the community: every rule has some exceptions. 2. She wonders that He should expect to receive kindness from her that was a Samaritan; 'You Jews could deny it to one of our nation, and why should we grant it to one of yours?' Quarrels are endless through revenge and retaliation.

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Chrysostom in BLOOMFIELD.

If she had known Him, she would not have given Him such an uncivil answer; she would have been so far from affronting Him, that she would have made her addresses to Him; *Thou wouldst have asked.* Note, (1.) Those that would have any benefit by Christ, must be earnest in prayer to God for it. (2.) Those that have a right knowledge of Christ, will seek to Him; if we do not, it is a sign that we know Him not, Ps. 9: 10. (3.) Christ knows what they that want the means of knowledge, would have done, if they had had them, Matt. 11: 21.

If she had applied to Him, 'He would have given thee (not upbraided thee, as thou dost me) living water.' By this is meant the Spirit, who is not like the water in the well, but like living or running water, much more valuable. Note, (1.) The Spirit of grace is as *living water*, see ch. 7: 33. Under this similitude are the blessings of the Messiah promised in the Old Testament, Isa. 12: 3. 35: 7. 44: 3. 55: 1. Zech. 14: 8. The graces of the Spirit, and his comforts, satisfy the soul, that knows its necessity. (2.) Jesus Christ can and will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him; for He received, that He might give.

The woman cavils at the intimation which Christ gave her; *Thou hast nothing to draw with*; and besides, *Art Thou greater than our father Jacob?* What He spake figuratively, she took literally; Nicodemus did so too. What confused notions they have of spiritual things, who are wholly taken up with the things of sense! Some respect she pays to his person, in calling him *Sir*, or *Lord*; but little to what He said.

She does not think Him capable of furnishing her with any water, nor, not this in the well. *Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep.* He who causeth the vapors to ascend from the ends of the earth, needs nothing to draw. Some will trust Christ no farther than they can see Him, and will not believe his promise, unless the means of the performance of it be visible; as if He were tied to our methods, and could not draw water without our buckets. She asks scornfully, 'Whence hast Thou this living water?' Note, The springs of the living water which Christ has for those that come to Him, are secret. The fountain of life is hid with Christ. Christ has enough for us, though we see not whence He has it.

She does not think any water better than this which she could come at, but He could not; *Art thou greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well?*

We will suppose the tradition true, that Jacob himself, and his children, and cattle, did drink of this well. Observe, (1.) The power and providence of God in the continuance of the fountains, by the constant circulation of the rivers, like the blood in the body, (Ecl. 1: 7.) to which circulation perhaps the flux and reflux of the sea, like the pulses of the heart, contribute. (2.) The plainness of Jacob; his drink was water; he and his children drank of the same well with his cattle.

Allowing that to be true, she was out in several things; (1.) In calling Jacob father. The Samaritans were descended from that mixt multitude which the king of Assyria had placed in the cities of Samaria; what have they to do with Jacob? They were the invaders of Israel's rights, and the unjust possessors of Israel's lands; were they therefore the inheritors of Israel's blood and honor? How absurd were those pretensions! (2.) Jacob no more gave this

Verse 11.
Nothing, &c. 'Travellers provide themselves with small leathern buckets, because the wells in those parts are furnished with no apparatus for drawing.'
'Rather, no bucket, as the original word properly signifies.'

DR. A. CLARKE. BLOOMFIELD.
Verse 12.
Children. 'By this term is meant his family, including the servants. Kuinoel compares Gen. 45: 11, where the word translated "household" is rendered in the Septuagint by the Greek word here used. This extended sense of the term children is a striking relic of ancient simplicity of manners, by which there was scarce any distinction made between the children and servants, both being considered as equally appertaining to the same family.'

BLOOMFIELD.

14 But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

15 The woman saith unto him, Sir, 'give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

[Practical Observations.]

7:6-53, 58 11:25, 12:49-19, Rev. 7:16.
7:58-59, 10:10, 14:16-19, Rom. 5:21, 8:16, 17, 2 Cor. 1:22, Eph. 1:13, 14, 4:30, 1 Pet. 1:22, 23, 1 John 5:20.
8:25, 34, Ps. 4:5, Rom. 8:5, 1 Cor. 2:14, Jam. 4:3.

shall thirst again. Yesterday's meat and drink will not do to-day's work.

The living waters He would give, would yield a lasting satisfaction. Christ's gifts appear most valuable, compared with the things of this world; there is no comparison between them. Whoever partakes of the Spirit of grace, and the comforts of the everlasting Gospel, shall never thirst; never want that which will abundantly satisfy his soul's desires; they long, but not languish. A desiring thirst he has for more and more of God; but not a despairing thirst. This water that Christ gives, shall be in him a well of water. He can never be reduced to extremity, that has in himself a fountain of supply. It shall be in him. The principle of grace in him, is the spring of his comfort; see ch. 7: 38. A good man is satisfied from himself, for Christ dwells in his heart. The anointing abides in him; he needs not the world for comfort; the work and witness of the Spirit furnish him with a firm hope, and an overflowing fountain of joy. It shall be in him a well of water. Believers have in them a well of water, ever flowing. The principles and affections which religion forms in the soul are this well of water. It is springing up, ever in motion, which speaks the actings of grace. If truths stagnate in our souls, they do not answer their end. If there be a good treasure in the heart, we must bring forth good things. It springs up to everlasting life. A sanctified soul has its eye on heaven; does all for that, will take up with nothing short of that. Spiritual life springs up towards perfection in eternal life. It will continue springing up till it come to perfection. The crown of them is eternal life at last. The living water rises from heaven, and therefore rises toward heaven; see Eccl. 1: 7. And now, is not this water better than that of Jacob's well?

The woman (whether in jest or earnest it is hard to say) says, Give me this water, that I thirst not. Some think that she speaks tauntingly; and, in derision, not desires but challenges Him to give her some of this water:

A rare invention! it will save me a great deal of pain if I thirst not, and a deal of pains if I never come hither to draw.' Others think that it was a well-meant, but weak and ignorant desire. She apprehended that He meant something very useful, and therefore saith Amen, at a venture. Whatever it be, let me have it; who will show me any good? Ease, or saving of labor, is

well, than Moses gave the manna, ch. 6: 32. We are apt to call the messengers of God's gifts the donors; and to look so much at the hands they pass through, as to forget the hand they come from. Jacob gave it to his sons, not to them. Thus the church's enemies not only usurp, but monopolize, the church's privileges. (3.) She speaks of Christ as not worthy to be compared with Jacob. A fond veneration for antiquity makes God's graces, in the good people of our own day, to be slighted.

Though she spake perversely, Christ did not cast her off, but instructed her.

The water of Jacob's well yielded but a transient satisfaction: 'Whoso drinketh of this water, shall thirst again. It is no better than other water; the thirst will return, and in a few hours a man will have as much need and desire of water as ever.' This speaks, 1. The infirmities of our bodies; they are ever craving. Life is a fire, a lamp, which will go out, without continual supplies. The natural heat preys upon itself. 2. Our comforts in this world are not lasting, nor our satisfaction in them remaining. Whatever waters of comfort we drink of, we

a valuable good to poor laboring people. Note, 1. Even those that are weak and ignorant may yet have faint desires towards Christ and his gifts, and some good wishes. 2. Carnal hearts, in their best wishes, look no higher than carnal ends. 'Give it me,' saith she, 'not that I may have everlasting life,' but that I come no farther to draw.'

The next subject of discourse is concerning her husband, v. 16-18. It was not to let fall the discourse of the water of life, that Christ started this, as many who will bring in any impertinence, that they may drop a serious subject; but it was with a gracious design. What He had said concerning grace and eternal life, had made little impression, because she had not been convinced of sin; therefore, waving the discourse about the living water, He sets himself to awaken her conscience, to open the wound of guilt, and then she would more easily apprehend the remedy by grace. This is the method of dealing with souls; they must first be made weary and heavy-laden, then brought to Christ for rest; first pricked to the heart, and then healed. This is the course of spiritual physic; and if we proceed not in this order, we begin at the wrong end.

Observe, How discreetly Christ introduces this discourse; (v. 16.) Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The order had a very good color; 'Call thy husband, that he may teach thee.' The wives that will learn, must ask their husbands, (1 Cor. 14: 35;) who must dwell with them, as men of knowledge, 1 Pet. 3: 7. 'Call thy husband, that he may learn with thee; that then ye may be heirs together of the grace of life. Call thy husband, that he may be witness to what passes between us.' Christ would thus teach us to provide things honest in the sight of all men, and to study that which is of good report. As it had a good color, so it had a good design; for from hence He would take occasion to call her sin to remembrance. There is need, in giving reproof, to fetch a compass, as the woman of Tekoa, 2 Sam. 14: 20.

The woman seeks to evade conviction, and yet convicts herself, and owns her fault; she said, I have no husband. She did not care to have her husband spoken of, lest, in further discourse, the truth of the matter should come out, to her shame; and therefore, 'Pray, talk of something else, I have no husband.' The carnal mind is ingenious to keep convictions from fastening; careful to cover the sin.

Our Lord brings home conviction to her conscience. He said more than is recorded, for He told her all that over she did. Thou hast had five husbands. Doubtless, it was not her afflic-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-15. The success of the Gospel always exasperates unbelievers, especially Pharisees, and formal rulers in the church, however prudent its ministers: but it is best in general to give way to violence as far as consists with faithful usefulness.—In all our journeys we should copy our Lord's example: into whatever place we come, we should endeavor to be useful; and always to subordinate personal accommodation to that object.—We should frequently meditate on his 'weariness,' and his exposed and inconvenient situation, when 'He sat thus at the well;' few would be cheerfully satisfied to journey, rest, and fare as He did. This consideration may teach the poor, contentment; and the rich, self-denial, simplicity, and liberality.—But let us observe where and what the 'lost sheep' of Christ are, when He comes 'to seek and save them;' and how He meets them frequently, when they are not thinking of Him. If we now believe in his name, after a careful review of our character and plans, when He first made himself known to us; we shall be constrained to confess, that we were as unworthy and unlikely, as much prejudiced against Him, as this poor Samaritan woman. This illustrates his grace, and should excite our humble gratitude. (Note, Is. 65: 1, 2. P. O. 1-10.)—Bigotry and controversy are inimical to piety and charity: they indispose men to communicate good, or to receive it from others: thus when they should pray together, or edify one another, they are separated by antipathy. Those who are agreed in the most important matters, and only differ

about subordinate points, are often most vehement. But, if we 'know the Gift of God' and the excellency of Christ, we shall ask of Him, and He will give us the blessings of salvation. If we are wise in the things of God, we shall gladly take a hint from a stranger, or one of another sect: and they who are like Jesus will readily counsel or help the meanest, or the most prejudiced. Blessed be God, for 'the wells of salvation,' and 'the water of life;' and that we are assured that God will 'give his Holy Spirit to all who ask Him.' Men in general do not value these blessings: they thirst for sensual pleasures, honors, wealth, or splendor; and how largely soever they drink of these streams, they thirst again, and will thirst for ever, unless they now drink the waters of life. Happy are they, who 'thirst for the living God,' for his image and favor! (Notes, Ps. 42: 1-3. 63: 1-4. 84: 1, 2.) The trifles of this world will no more quiet them, than toys will content a hungry child; they will importune for the blessings which Jesus bestows, and the more they perceive that 'the well is deep,' the more earnestly will they beseech God for his Holy Spirit. When they experience his consolations, their thirst after sinful pleasures abates; the world appears worthless; an abiding change is manifested in their souls; He, who began the good work, carries it on; holy affections spring up in the heart, earnest desires and foretastes of everlasting life, and will terminate and be perfected in it. (P. O. 7: 37-53. Rev. 7: 9-17.) SCOTT.

Verse 14.

Shall never thirst.] 'The force and truth of our Lord's assertion seems to be in this, that the most impatient and restless desires of the [638]

soul being satisfied, when it is fixed on God as its supreme happiness, other thirst is not worth being mentioned; see John 8: 51, 52. 11: 26. 13: 10.' DODDRIE.

16 Jesus saith unto her, 'Go, call thy husband, and come hither.'

17 The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband.'

18 For thou hast had five husbands, and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

19 The Samaritan saith unto him, Sir, 'I perceive that thou art a prophet.'

20 Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

b 18. 1: 12, 47, 48, 224, 25. 21: 17. Heb. 4: 13. 1: 27. 223.
c. 20: 3. 34: 2, 7, 8, 31. Num. 5: 29. Ruth 4: 11. Jer. 3: 20. Ez. 16: 32. Mark 10: 2. Rom. 7: 3. 1 Cor. 7: 10, 11. He. 13: 4.
d 29. 14: 9. 2 Kings 5: 26. 6: 12. Luke 7: 39. 1 Cor. 14: 24.
e 6: 14. 7: 40. 9: 17. Luke 7: 16. 24: 19. f. Gen. 12: 8. 33: 19-20. Dent. 27: 12. Josh. 8: 33-35. Judg. 9: 8, 7. 2 Kings 17: 29-33.
g. Dent. 12: 5, 11. 1 Kings 9: 3. 2 Kings 21: 24. 22: 1. 2 Cor. 6: 8. 7: 12, 16. Ps. 78: 63, 69. 87: 1, 2. 132: 13, 14.

faithfully with us. Christ gave her no ill language, and then she gave Him none. She acknowledges Him to be a prophet; one that had correspondence with Heaven. Note, Christ searching the heart, and convincing of secret sins, is a great proof of his divine authority, 1 Cor. 14: 24, 25. Many that are not angry at their reprovers, yet are afraid of them, and keep out of their way; but this woman was willing to have some more instructive discourse with Him that told her of her faults.

The case that she propounded was concerning the place of religious worship. Some think that she started this, to turn off further discourse concerning her sin. Controversies in religion often prejudice godliness; but, it would seem, she proposed it with a good design: knowing she must worship God, she desired to do it aright; and therefore, meeting with a prophet, begs his direction. Note, It is wise to improve all opportunities of knowledge in the things of God. When we are in company with those that are fit to teach, let us be forward to learn; and have a good question ready for those who are able to give a good answer.

The Jews and the Samaritans agreed that God is to be worshipped: (even fools that worship false gods, were not such brutes as to worship none;) and that religious worship is an affair of great importance: men would not contend about it, if they were not concerned about it. But the question was, where they should worship God.

The Samaritans worshipped in this mountain, near adjoining to this city, and this well; there the Samaritan temple was built by Sanballat; in favor of which she insinuates, [1.] That, whatever the temple was, the place was holy: it was mount Gerizim, on which the blessings were pronounced; and, some think, the same on which Abraham built his altar, (Gen. 12: 6, 7.) and Jacob his, Gen. 33: 18. [2.] Our fathers worshipped here. She thinks they have antiquity and tradition on their side. A vain conversation often supports itself with this, it was received by tradition from our fathers. But she had little reason to boast of their fathers; for, when Antiochus persecuted the

tion, (the burying of so many husbands,) but her sin, that Christ intended to upbraid her with; either she had run away from her husbands, and married others, or by her undutiful conduct had provoked them to divorce her, or had, contrary to law, divorced them. Those who make light of such scandalous practices, as if the guilt were over as soon as the talk, should remember that Christ keeps account of all. He whom thou now hast, is not thy husband. She was never married to him, or he had some other wife; or, which is most probable, her former husband or husbands were living; so that, in short, she lived in adultery. Observe how mildly Christ tells her of it; He with whom thou livest, is not thy husband: and leaves it to her conscience to say the rest. Note, Reproofs are ordinarily most profitable when least provoking. He puts a better construction than it would well bear, upon what she said by way of evasion; Thou hast well said, I have no husband; and again, In that saidst thou truly. What she intended as a denial of the fact, (that she had none with whom she lived as a husband,) He turned upon her as a confession of the fault. Note, Those who would win souls should make the best of them, and work upon their good-nature; for if they make the worst of them, they certainly exasperate their ill-nature.

The next subject is a case of conscience proposed to Christ concerning the place of worship.

Observe, Why she put this case; Sir, I perceive that Thou art a Prophet. She does not deny the truth, but by silence owns the justice of the reproof; nor is she in a passion, as many are when touched in a sore place; does not impute his censure to the general disgust the Jews had to the Samaritans; but (which is a rare thing) can bear to be told of a fault. She goes further, she speaks respectfully to Him, calls Him Sir. We should honor those that deal

faithfully with us. Christ gave her no ill language, and then she gave Him none. She acknowledges Him to be a prophet; one that had correspondence with Heaven. Note, Christ searching the heart, and convincing of secret sins, is a great proof of his divine authority, 1 Cor. 14: 24, 25. Many that are not angry at their reprovers, yet are afraid of them, and keep out of their way; but this woman was willing to have some more instructive discourse with Him that told her of her faults.

The case that she propounded was concerning the place of religious worship. Some think that she started this, to turn off further discourse concerning her sin. Controversies in religion often prejudice godliness; but, it would seem, she proposed it with a good design: knowing she must worship God, she desired to do it aright; and therefore, meeting with a prophet, begs his direction. Note, It is wise to improve all opportunities of knowledge in the things of God. When we are in company with those that are fit to teach, let us be forward to learn; and have a good question ready for those who are able to give a good answer.

The Jews and the Samaritans agreed that God is to be worshipped: (even fools that worship false gods, were not such brutes as to worship none;) and that religious worship is an affair of great importance: men would not contend about it, if they were not concerned about it. But the question was, where they should worship God.

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Jews, the Samaritans, for fear of sharing in their sufferings, not only renounced all relation to the Jews, but surrendered their temple to Antiochus, with a request that it might be dedicated to Jupiter Olympinus, and called by his name.

The Jews say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. The Samaritans governed themselves by the five books of Moses, and (some think) received them only as canonical. The place God would choose, they did not find named there; they saw the temple at Jerusalem stripped of its ancient glories, and therefore think themselves at liberty to set up another place.

Those that apply themselves to Christ for instruction, shall find Him meek, to teach the meek his way.

He puts a slight upon the question; 'Woman, believe Me, and mark what I say. Thou art expecting the hour, when, by revelation, or some signal providence, this matter shall be decided in favor either of Jerusalem or of mount Gerizim; but the hour is at hand, when that shall be set aside as a thing indifferent.' Note, It should cool us in our contests, to think that those things which we make such a noise about, will shortly be no more; The hour comes when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. The object of worship will continue the same.—God, as a Father; under 'hath' notion the heathen worshipped God, the Jews did so, and, probably, the Samaritans. But a period shall be put to all differences about the place of worship. The dissolution of the Jewish economy, and the erecting of the evangelical state, shall lay all in common, so that it shall be a thing indifferent, where men worship God. Note, The worship of God is not now appropriated to any place, as it was under the law; it is God's will that men pray every where, 1 Tim. 2: 8. Mal. 1: 11. Our reason teaches us to consult decency and convenience in the places of worship; but religion gives no preference to one place above another, in respect of holiness and acceptableness to God. They who prefer any worship merely for the sake of the house in which it is performed, forget that the hour is come, when there shall be no difference put in God's account; no, not between Jerusalem, so famous for sanctity, and the mountain of Samaria, so infamous for impiety.

When He made so light of the place of worship, He did not intend to lessen our concern about the thing itself.

He determines against the Samaritan worship, and in favor of the Jews.

The Samaritans are certainly in the wrong; not merely because they worshipped in this mountain, though, while Jerusalem was the chosen place, that was sinful; but because of the Object of their worship; if the worship itself had been as it should be, its separation from Jerusalem might have been connived at as the high places were in the best reigns; But ye worship ye know not what, or that which ye do not know; they worshipped the God of Israel; (Ezra 4: 2. 2 Kings 17: 32.) but were sunk into gross ignorance; they worshipped him as the God of that land, (2 Kings 17: 27, 33.) as a local Deity, like the gods of the nations, whereas God must be served as the universal Cause and

Verses 16—18.

It is probable, she lived with a man to whom she had never been married according to custom. This shows, that a recognition before witnesses, duly authenticated, is necessary to marriage, and distinguishes it from fornication. (Marg. Ref.—Notes, Ruth 4: 11, 12. Matt. 19: 3—9.) 'Five husbands from whom thou hast been divorced' for thy adulteries. Whittby. This is neither said, nor hinted at, in the narrative: neither is it at all probable. The adulteress was punishable by death, according to the Mosaic law: (Notes, 8: 3—11, v. 2.) and it is likely, that the Samaritans so far regarded that law, as not to suffer a woman five times convicted of adultery, and divorced for it, to escape with impunity.

Verse 20.

Abraham and Jacob erected altars at Shechem, which was very near to Gerizim; and from that mountain God ordered the blessings to be pronounced, while the curses were spoken from mount Ebal. (Marg. Ref. f.—Notes, Deut. 11: 26—30. 27: 1—13. Josh. 8: 30—35.) From these and similar premises, the Samaritans inferred, that Gerizim was the place where the temple of God ought to have been built, and his sacrifices offered; and that the Jews were schismatics and sectari-

ans; and they rejected the greatest part of the Old Testament, perhaps because it so expressly and continually declared, that Zion was the place which God had chosen for his residence. (Marg. Ref. g.) Indeed there was no temple on mount Gerizim, till Sanballat built one there, after the days of Nehemiah. (Notes, 2 Kings 17: 24—41. Ezra 4: 1—6, 17—24. Neh. 13: 23—30, v. 22.) This had been destroyed by John Hyrcanus, about one hundred and thirty-one years before Christ; but probably it had been rebuilt, though with less magnificence. The Samaritans, however, thought the example of the patriarchs in their favor; and it is woman, notwithstanding her immorality, was eager in the controversy.

Some few Samaritans remain at the present day, who occasionally celebrate divine worship on mount Gerizim. BLOOMFIELD. In this mountain. In the Hebrew Pentateuch, (Deut. 27: 4, 7, &c.) where the Israelites are commanded to build an altar on mount Ebal, and offer sacrifices, &c. the Samaritan Pentateuch has Gerizim instead of Ebal. [This name the Samaritans accuse the Jews of substituting MAUNDRELL.] Dr. Kennicott strongly contends that Gerizim is the genuine reading. Dr. A. CLARKE. De Rossi, however, (Var. Lect. in 1.) is of a different opinion, and defends the present text.

21 Jesus^b saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem,

22 Ye worship¹ ye know not what:^m we know what we worship; for Salvation is of the Jews.

23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth.

b Ex. 14:3, 20:3.
i Mat. 1:11, Luke 21:5, 6, 24. Acts 6: 14. 1 Tim. 2:8.
23. 14:6. Matt. 28:19. Eph. 2:18, 3:14. 1 Pet. 1:17.
12 Kings 17:27-29, 41. Ezra 4:2, 3. Acts 17:23, 30.
m 2 Chr. 18:10-12. Ps. 147:19. Rom. 3:2, 9:5.
n Gen. 49:10. Ps. 69:20. Is. 12:2, 6, 46:13. Zeph. 3:15, 17. Zech. 9:5, Heb. 7:14.
o Ps. 103:1, 103:3.
p Is. 1:10-15. 26:9, 9. 29:13. Jer. 4:1, 2. 8:2-14. 6:12, 12. Jer. 7:7-12. Matt. 15:7-9. Luke 18:11-13.
q Rom. 1:9, 8:15, 26. Gal. 4:6. Eph. 6:18. Phil. 3:3. Jude 20, 21.
r Josh. 24:14. 1 Sam. 12:24. 1 Chr. 29:17. Ps. 17:1. 32:2. 51:6. Is. 40:20. Jer. 8:10, 42:30.
s Ps. 147:11. Prov. 15:8. Cant. 2:14. Is. 43:31. Eccl. 22:3. 1 Pet. 2:5, 10.
t 2 Cor. 8:17. 1 Tim. 1:17.
u 1 Sam. 16:7. Ps. 50:13-15, 33. 51:7. 65:18, 19. Is. 57:15. Matt. 15: 8, 9. 2 Cor. 1:12.

worship in the Spirit, one would think, would not strive whether He should be worshipped here or there. Christ had justly preferred the Jewish worship before the Samaritan, yet here He intimates the imperfection of that. The worship was ceremonial, Heb. 9: 1, 10. The worshippers were generally carnal, and strangers to the inward part of divine worship. Note, It is possible that we may be better than our neighbors, and yet not as good as we should be. It concerns us to be right, not only in the Object of our worship, but in the manner of it. Observe the revolution which would introduce this change; *The hour cometh, and now is.* The time of its appearance is fixed to an hour, so exact are the divine counsels; the time of its continuance is limited to an hour, so close and pressing is the opportunity of divine grace, 2 Cor. 6: 2. This hour is coming in its full strength and perfection, it now is in infancy. *The perfect day is coming, and now it dawns.* In gospel-times, the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth. As creatures, we worship the Father of all: as Christians, we worship the Father of our Lord Jesus. The change will be,

First, In the nature of the worship. Christians shall worship God in spiritual ordinances, consisting less in bodily exercise, and with more of divine power. The way of worship which Christ has instituted, is refined from those external ceremonies with which the Old-Testament worship was both clouded and clogged. This is called true worship; that was typical. The legal services were figures of the true, Heb. 9: 9, 24. They that revolted from Christianity to Judaism, are said to begin in the spirit, and end in the flesh, Gal. 3: 3. Such was the difference between Old-Testament and New-Testament institutions.

Secondly, In the temper and disposition of the worshippers; and so the true worshippers are distinguished from hypocrites; all should, and they will, worship God in spirit and in truth. It is spoken of, (p. 23.) as their character, and, (p. 24.) as their duty. Note, It is required of all that worship God, that they worship him in spirit and in truth. We must worship God in spirit, Phil. 3: 3. We must depend upon God's Spirit for assistance, laying our souls under his operations: we must devote our own spirits to, and employ them in, the service of God; (Rom. 1: 9.) must worship Him with fixedness of thought,

Lord. Note, Ignorance is so far from being the mother of devotion, that it is the murderer of it. Those that worship God ignorantly, offer the blind for sacrifice, and it is the sacrifice of fools.

The Jews were certainly in the right. For, First, 'We know what we worship.' We go upon sure grounds, for our people are trained up in the knowledge of God, as He has revealed Himself in the Scripture.' Note, Those who by the Scriptures have obtained some knowledge of God, may worship Him comfortably to themselves, and acceptably to Him, for they know what they worship. Christ elsewhere condemns the corruptions of the Jews' worship, (Matt. 15: 9.) and yet here defends the worship itself; the worship may be true, where yet it is not pure and entire. Observe, Our Lord was pleased to reckon Himself among the worshippers of God; *We worship. Though He were a Son, yet learned He this obedience,* in the days of his humiliation. Let not the greatest of men think the worship of God below them, when the Son of God Himself did not.

Secondly, *Salvation is of the Jews;* and therefore they know what ground they go upon in their worship. Not that all the Jews were saved, or that it was not possible but that many Gentiles and Samaritans might be saved; for in every nation he that fears God, and works righteousness, is accepted of Him; but, 1. The Author of eternal salvation comes of the Jews, (Rom. 9: 8.) and is sent first to bless them. 2. The means of eternal salvation are afforded to them. The word of Salvation (Acts 13: 26.) was of the Jews. It was delivered through them to other nations. This was a sure guide to them in their devotions, and therefore they knew what they worshipped. To them were committed the Oracles of God, (Rom. 3: 2.) and the service of God, Rom. 9: 4. The Jews therefore being thus privileged, it was presumption for the Samaritans to vie with them.

Having showed that the place is indifferent, He shows what is necessary and essential—that we worship God in spirit and in truth, p. 23, 24. The stress is not to be laid upon the place where we worship God, but with what mind we worship Him. Note, The most effectual way to make up differences in less matters, is to be more zealous in the greater. They who daily

and affection, with all that is within us. Spirit is sometimes put for the new nature, in opposition to the flesh, which is the corrupt nature; and so to worship God with our spirit, is to worship Him with our graces, Heb. 12: 28. In truth, is in sincerity; God requires not only the inward part, but truth in the inward parts, Ps. 61: 6. We must mind the power more than the form; aim at God's glory, and not to be seen of men; draw near with a true heart, Heb. 10: 22.

The reason why God must be thus worshipped. In gospel-times they, and they only, are accounted the true worshippers. The Gospel erects a spiritual way of worship, so that the professors of the Gospel are not true in their professions, do not live up to gospel-light and laws, if they do not worship God in spirit and in truth.

The Father seeketh such worshippers. This intimates, First, That such worshippers are very rare, and seldom met with, Jer. 30: 21. The gate of spiritual worshipping is strait. Secondly, That such worship is what the God of heaven insists upon. When God comes to inquire for worshippers, the question will not be, 'Who worshipped at Jerusalem?' but, 'Who worshipped in spirit?' Thirdly, God is well pleased with, and graciously accepts of such worshippers. I have desired it, Ps. 132: 13, 14. Cant. 2: 14. Fourthly, There has been, and will be to the end, a remnant of such worshippers; his seeking of such, implies his making of them such. God is in all ages gathering to Himself a generation of spiritual worshippers.

God is a Spirit. Christ came to declare God to us, ch. 1: 18. And this He declared concerning Him, to this poor Samaritan woman, for the meanest are concerned to know God; and to rectify her mistakes concerning worship, to which nothing contributes more than the right knowledge of God. Note, God is a Spirit, an infinite and eternal Mind; incorporeal, invisible, and incorruptible. It is easier to say what God is not, than what He is; a spirit has not flesh and bones, but who knows the way of a spirit? If God were not a Spirit, He could not be perfect, nor infinite, nor independent, nor the Father of spirits. Secondly, The spirituality of the divine nature is a reason for the spirituality of divine worship. If we do not worship God, who is a Spirit, in the spirit, we neither give Him the glory due to his name, and so do not perform the act of worship; nor can we hope to obtain his acceptance, and so we miss of the end of worship, Matt. 15: 8, 9.

The last subject of discourse with this woman is, concerning the Messiah, p. 25, 26.

The woman expected the Messiah; I know that Messiah cometh—and He will tell us all things. She had nothing to object against what Christ had said; but thinks it best to suspend her belief. Thus many have no heart to the prize in their hand, (Prov. 17: 16.) because they think they have a better in their eye, and deceive themselves with a promise that they will learn that hereafter, which they neglect now.

I know that Messiah cometh. The Jews and Samaritans, though so much at variance, agreed in the expectation of the Messiah. The Samaritans received the writings of Moses, and were no strangers to the prophets, nor to the hopes of the Jews; those who knew least, knew this, that Messiah was to come; the expectation of Him, at this time, was more raised than ever; (the sceptre was departed from Judah; Daniel's weeks were near expiring;) so that she concludes not only, He will come, but 'He comes'; is just at hand.' The evangelist, though he retains the Hebrew word *Messias*, yet, writing for the use of the Gentiles, takes care to render it by a Greek word of the same signification—*Christ, Anointed*; giving an example to the

Verases 21—26.

Schoettgen, to prove that the Jews, even then, knew that, in the time of the Messiah, divine worship would be confined to no certain place, quotes a passage of Sohar, where it is said of the Messiah, 'At that time the prayers of the Israelites shall ascend to God in whatever place they may come into his holy presence.' Bloomfield.

The recollection of this, if it were so, may have led the woman to mention the Messiah, p. 25.
(23, 24.) *Worship the Father in spirit and in truth.* 'Truth' elsewhere opposed to types and ceremonies. John 1: 14, 17. Heb. 8: 2, 9: 24.

25 The woman saith unto him, I know that — Messias cometh, (which is called Christ:) when he is come, he will tell us all things.

26 Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.

[Practical Observations.]

27 ¶ And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?

242. 141, 42, 43. Dan. 9:24—26.

243. 30. Matt. 13:15—18.

9:37. Matt. 16:20. 20:15. Luke 13:

30. Rom. 10:20, 21.

9. Luke 7:39.

He did here to this poor Samaritan, and to the blind man; (ch. 9: 37.) not to John Baptist, when he sent to Him; (Matt. 11: 4, 5.) not to the Jews, when they challenged Him to tell them whether He was the Christ, ch. 10: 24. But Christ would honor such as were poor and despised, Jam. 2: 6. This woman, for aught we know, had never had an opportunity of seeing Christ's miracles, which were then the ordinary method of conviction. Note, To those who have not the advantage of the external means of knowledge and grace, God hath secret ways of making up the want of them; we must therefore judge charitably concerning such; God can make the light of grace shine into the heart, even where He doth not make the light of the Gospel shine in the face. This woman was better prepared to receive such a discovery than others were; she expected the Messiah, and was ready to receive instruction from Him. Christ will manifest Himself to those who with an honest, humble heart desire to be acquainted with Him; *I that speak to thee am He*. How near Christ was to her, when she knew not who He was, Gen. 23: 16. Many are lamenting Christ's absence, and longing for his presence, when at the same time He is speaking to them. Christ makes Himself known to us by speaking to us; *I that speak unto thee so convincingly*, with such assurance, with such authority, *am He*.

V. 27—42. It is probable that in this discourse much more was said than is recorded; but just when Christ had made Himself known to her as the true Messiah, then came the disciples. The daughters of Jerusalem shall not stir up,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16—26. In vain do we enlarge on the privileges of the new covenant; in vain do we represent Christ to the unregenerate sinner. He can 'see no beauty in Him,' no desirableness in his salvation, no need of it; and will not apply for healing before he feels sickness, nor for the binding up of his heart, till it be broken by a sense of guilt and danger. (Notes, 3: 3—6. Matt. 5: 3.) We should therefore open the law as 'the ministration of condemnation,' and endeavor to put men in remembrance of their crimes, that 'their mouths may be stopped,' and their thoughts turned from other objects to their own hearts and lives. When the Word of God is faithfully opened, and skillfully divided, it often reaches the case at one stroke; thus it produces a conviction of sin in the outward conduct, and a discovery of the evil concealed within. (P. O. 1 Cor. 14: 12—25, v. 24, 25.) The sinner, thus attacked, often employs means to shift off the conviction; and even religious controversy is frequently had recourse to for evasion. When those subjects are started, which detect men's sensuality, or ambition, they will, as it were, say, 'Let us talk of something else.' What think you of this or the other doctrine? Of this 'sect, book, sermon, or this preacher?' They appear to be religiously disposed, but it is in order plausibly to escape conviction; and in fact they say, 'any subject but Herodias,' or

nor awake my Love till he please. They wondered at Christ's converse with this woman; marvelled that He talked thus earnestly (as perhaps they observed at a distance) with a strange woman, alone; He used to be more reserved; especially with a Samaritan woman not of the lost sheep of the house of Israel, they thought their Master should be as shy of the Samaritans as the other Jews were; at least, that He should not preach the Gospel to them. They wondered He should condescend to talk with such a poor, contemptible woman, forgetting what despicable men they themselves were when Christ first called them into fellowship. Yet they acquiesced in it; they knew it was for some good reason, which He was not bound to give, and therefore none of them asked, *What seekest thou? or, Why talkest Thou with her?* Thus when particular difficulties occur in the word and providence of God, it is good to satisfy ourselves with this, that all is well which Christ saith and doeth. Perhaps there was something amiss in their marvelling that Christ talked with the woman, and that it was something like the Pharisees being offended at his eating with publicans and sinners. But, whatever they thought, they said nothing: *If thou hast thought evil at any time, lay thy hand upon thy mouth*, to keep it from turning into an evil word, Prov. 30: 32. Ps. 39: 1—3.

The woman forgot her errand to the well, v. 28. Because the disciples were come, and broke up the discourse, and perhaps she observed they were not pleased with it, she went her way. She withdrew, in civility to Christ, that He might have leisure to eat. She delighted in his discourse, but would not be rude; every thing is beautiful in its season. She supposed that Jesus when He had dined, would go forward in his journey, and therefore hastened to tell her neighbors, that they might come quickly; *Yet a little while is the light with you*. She improved time; when one good work was done, she applied herself to another. When opportunities of getting good cease, we should seek opportunities of doing good; when we have done hearing the word, then is a time to be speaking of it.

Notice is taken of her leaving her water-pot.

(25.) Which is called Christ.] This is evidently the evangelist's remark, to his readers, who understood Greek, and not Hebrew; and not the words of the woman, who doubtless spake in the language of the country, which was Syriac, or a dialect of the Hebrew.

SCOTT.

(26.) 'The Samaritans seem to have formed just notions of the Messiah's character. For his kingly dignity being chiefly described in the prophetic books, which they rejected, they considered Him only as a Savior' (v. 42.) and a Teacher, according to Moses' description of Him, Gen. 22: 18. To the latter description Nehemiah refers (7: 65.) when, speaking of the Messiah, he calls Him a priest with Urin and Tammim, a priest under the immediate influence of inspiration. Hence the woman speaking of the Messiah, says, *He will tell us all things*. And therefore while our Lord industriously avoided the title of Messiah among the Jews, He without scruple discovered Himself now to the Samaritans, because He could do it with success and safety, the meanness of his condition being no ways inconsistent with the prophetic character.'

N. T. VOL. I.

'The majestic, yet simple dignity of this address of Christ—"I that speak to thee am He," is similar to the so much admired "I will be thou healed," (Mark 4: 39.) "Peace—be still," and many others.'

BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 27.

Marvelled.] 'This need not surprise us, for so great (however absurd and illfounded) was the pride of the Jewish literal, that they imagined that to hold discourse with women, on any serious and important matter, would but ill suit the dignity and gravity which ought to be uniformly maintained by a rabbi, or doctor of their law. That the disciples were not, in any thing, superior to the prejudices of the age, is manifest from the whole of their history. That the woman was a Samaritan, doubtless made the matter more astonishing.'

Among the Bramins and Romanists, we find this same absurd pride, leading to similar results, which seem to be one bad effect of national church establishments, creating a privileged order.

ED.

28 The woman then left her water-pot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,

29 'Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

30 Then they went out of the city, and came unto him.

31 In the mean while his disciples prayed him, saying, 'Master, eat.

32 But he said unto them, 'I have meat to eat: that ye know not of.

33 Therefore he said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him ought to eat?

b 7. Matt. 28:8. Mark 16:8-10. Luke 24:9, 10, 33, 34.

c 17, 18. 141-49. 1 Cor. 14:24, 25. Rev. 22:17.

d Is. 60:8. Matt. 2:1-3. 8:11, 12. 11:20-24. 12:40-42. 20:16. Luke 17:16-18. Acts 9:5-5. 10:33. 13:42. 28:28. Rom. 5:20.

e Gen. 24:33. Acts 16:30-34.

f Ps. 34. 132. Ps. 63:5. 119:103. Prov. 18:20. Is. 53:11. Jer. 15:16. Eccl. 2:25.

g Ps. 25:14. Prov. 14:10. Rev. 2:17. b Matt. 16:5-11. Luke 9:45.

others; nor can we do ourselves a greater honor. This woman becomes an apostle. She who went forth, a specimen of impurity, returns, a teacher of evangelical truth, saith one. Christ had bid her call her husband, which she thought was warrant enough to call every body. She went into the city, where she dwelt among her kinsfolks and acquaintance. Though every man is my neighbor, that I have opportunity of doing good to, yet I have most opportunity, and therefore lie under the most obligations, to do good to those that live near me. Where the tree falls, there let it be made useful.

She tells them, He has told me all things that ever I did. No more is recorded than what He told her of her husbands; but it is not improbable that He had told her more of her faults. Or, his telling her that which she knew He could not by any ordinary means know, convinced her that He could have told her all that ever she did. If He has divine knowledge, it must be omniscience. He told her that which none knew but God and her own conscience. We ourselves cannot tell all that ever we did; but Christ knows all the thoughts, words, and actions of all men; see Heb. 4:13. He hath said, I know thy works. The power of his word made a great impression upon her; He had told her her secret sins with such unaccountable power that, being told of one, she is convinced and judged of all. She does not say, 'Come, see a man that has decided the controversy between this mountain and Jerusalem, call him the Messiah; but 'Come, see a man that has told me of my sins.' That part of Christ's discourse, one would think, she would have been shy of repeating; but experimental proofs of the power of Christ's word and Spirit are most cogent; and that knowledge of Christ into which we are led by conviction of sin and humiliation, is most likely to be sound and saving. 'Come and see Him.' Not barely, 'Come, and look upon Him,' (she does not invite them to a show,) but, 'come and converse with Him; hear his wisdom.' She would not undertake to repeat the arguments which had convinced her; all that see the evidence of truth themselves, are not able to make others see it; but, 'Come, and talk with Him, and you will find a power in his word above all other evidence.' Note, Those who can do little else toward the conversion of others, may, and should, bring them to those means which they themselves have found effectual. Jesus was now at the town's end; 'Now come.' When opportunities of getting knowledge are brought to our doors, we are inexcusable if we neglect them; shall we not go over the threshold to see Him, whose day prophets and kings desired to see?

She appeals to themselves; Is not this the Christ? She does not peremptorily say, 'He is the Messiah,' how clear soever she was in her own mind; and yet she prudently mentions Him, whom otherwise they would not have thought of; she will not impose her faith upon them, but only propose it to them. By such fair, but forcible appeals, men's judgments and consciences are sometimes taken hold of ere they are aware.

They went out of the city and came to Him. Though it might seem improbable that a woman of so small a figure, and so ill a character, should

She left it in kindness to Christ, that He might have to drink; and water was his drink; He turned water into wine for others, but not for Himself. Compare this with Rebecca's civility to Abraham's servant, (Gen. 24:18.) and see that promise, Matt. 10:42. She left it that she might make the more haste into the city, to carry good tidings. Those whose business it is to publish the name of Christ, must not encumber themselves. When the disciples were to be made fishers of men, they must forsake all. She left her water-pot as careless of it; being wholly taken up with better things. Note, Those who are brought to the knowledge of Christ, will show it by a holy contempt of this world. And those who are newly acquainted with the things of God, must be excused, if at first they be so taken up with that new world into which they are brought, that the things of this world seem to be for a time neglected. This verse may be made to justify those who leave their worldly business on week days to hear sermons.

She minded her errand to the town, for her heart was upon it; she went into the city, and said to the men, probably the men in authority, whom she found met together upon some public business; or to every man she met in the streets; she proclaimed it in the chief places of concourse; Come, see a man which told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?

How solicitous was she to bring her friends and neighbors acquainted with Christ. When she had found that treasure, she called together her friends and neighbors, (as Luke 15:9.) not only to rejoice with her, but to share with her; knowing there was enough to enrich herself and all. Note, They that have been with Jesus, and found comfort in Him, should do all they can to bring others to Him. Has He done us the honor to make Himself known to us? Let us do Him the honor to make Him known to others.

This woman becomes an apostle. She who went forth, a specimen of impurity, returns, a teacher of evangelical truth, saith one. Christ had bid her call her husband, which she thought was warrant enough to call every body. She went into the city, where she dwelt among her kinsfolks and acquaintance. Though every man is my neighbor, that I have opportunity of doing good to, yet I have most opportunity, and therefore lie under the most obligations, to do good to those that live near me. Where the tree falls, there let it be made useful.

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They went out of the city and came to Him. Though it might seem improbable that a woman of so small a figure, and so ill a character, should

have the honor of the first discovery of the Messiah among the Samaritans; yet it pleased God to incline their hearts to take notice of her report. Time was when repara were the first that brought tidings to Samaria of a great deliverance, 2 Kings 7:3, &c. They came unto Him; did not send for Him; but, in token of their respect, and the earnestness of their desire to see Him, they went out to Him. Those that would know Christ, must meet Him where He records his name.

Christ discoursed with his disciples, while the woman was absent, v. 31-34. Our Lord redeemed time. When the disciples were gone into the town, He discoursed with the woman; when she was gone, He discoursed with them; it were well if we could thus gather up the fragments of time, that none of it be lost.

Christ expresses the delight which He had in his work. His work was to seek and save that which was lost, to go about doing good. This work we here find Him wholly taken up with. He neglected his meat and drink for his work. When He sat down upon the well, He needed refreshment; but this opportunity of saving souls made Him forget his weariness and hunger. And He minded his food so little, that his disciples were forced to invite Him to it; They prayed Him, saying, Master, eat. It was an instance of their love to Him, lest He should be faint for want of support; it was a greater instance of his love to souls, that He needed invitation; let us learn hence a holy indifference even to the needful supports of life, in comparison with spiritual things. He minded it so little, that they suspected He had meat brought Him in their absence; He had so little appetite to his dinner. They that make religion their business, will prefer it before their food: Abraham's servant would not eat till he had told his errand, (Gen. 24:33.) and Samuel would not sit down till David was anointed, 1 Sam. 16:11.

He made his work his meat and drink. The work He had done in instructing the woman; the work He had to do among the Samaritans; the prospect He now had of doing good to many, was meat and drink to Him; the greatest satisfaction imaginable. Never did a hungry man expect a plentiful feast with so much desire, nor feed with so much delight, as our Lord expected and improved an opportunity of doing good. Concerning this He saith, it was such meat as the disciples knew not of. They did not imagine that He had any design of planting his Gospel among the Samaritans. Note, Christ by his Gospel and Spirit does more good to the souls of men than his own disciples know or expect. This may be said of Christians, who live by faith, that they have meat to eat which others know not of; joy which a stranger does not intermeddle with. This made them ask, Has any man brought Him ought to eat? So apt were even his own disciples to understand Him after a carnal manner. The reason why his work was his meat and drink was, it was his Father's work and will; (v. 34.) My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me. Note, The salvation of sinners is the will of God, and the instruction of them in order thereunto is his work. See 1 Tim. 2:4. There is a chosen remnant whose salvation is in a particular manner his will. Christ was sent into the world on this errand, to bring people to know God, and to be happy in Him. He made this work his business and delight. Nothing could be more grateful to Him than doing good; when He was invited to meat, He went, that He might do good, for that was his meat always. He was not only ready upon all occasions to go to his work, but was earnest and in care to go through it, and to finish his work in all parts of it. He resolved never to quit it, or lay it down, till he could say, It is finished. Many have zeal to carry them out at first, but not zeal to carry them on to the last; but our Lord was

Water-pot.] Probably this vessel was used for drawing as well as carrying water. Scott.

Verses 33-38.

The occasion of this discourse of Christ is the question of the disciples, v. 33. The proposition is, You ought not to think so much [642]

of food, and things that concern the body, as of enlarging the kingdom of God. This is not said expressly, but hinted at in v. 35. The arguments are, 1. Because I set you an example of it, v. 34. 2. Because now is the time, v. 35. 3. Because ye may confidently hope to be rewarded for your labors, v. 36. 4. Because God will afford you his aid, v. 37, 38.

But not to them.

34 Jesus saith unto them, 'My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, * and to finish his work.'

35 Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; 'for they are white already to harvest.'

36 And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth, and he that reapeth, may rejoice together.

82. 6:30. Ps. 40:5. Is. 61:1-3. Luke 13:4-6, 10. 19:10. Acts 20:35. 1:538. 17:4. 19:30. Heb 12:2. 1:80. Matt. 9:37-38. Luke 10:2. 10: Prov. 11:30. Dan. 12:3. Rom. 1:13. 1 Cor. 9:19-22. Phil. 2:15-16. 1 Thess. 2:19-20. 1 Tim. 4:16. 2 Tim. 4:7, 8. Jam. 5:19, 20. n 1 Cor. 3:5-9.

ment of the sower at seed-time, it will be but four months to the harvest.' Or, 'Particularly now, at this time, you reckon it will be four months to next harvest, according to the ordinary course of Providence.' The Jews' harvest began at the passover, about easter; by which it appears that this journey of Christ was about the end of November, for He travelled *all weathers*, to do good. God has not only promised us a harvest every year, but has appointed the weeks of harvest; so that we know when to expect it, and take our measures accordingly. Christ's heart was as much upon the fruits of His Gospel as the hearts of others were upon the fruits of the earth, and to that He would lead the thoughts of His disciples: *Look, the fields are already white.*

In this place where they now were, there was harvest-work for Him to do. They would have Him eat, p. 31. 'Eat!' saith He, 'I have other work more useful; look what crowds of Samaritans are coming out of the town over the fields, ready to receive the Gospel;' probably, there were many now in view. People's forwardness to hear the word, is a great excitement to ministers' diligence and liveliness in preaching it.

In other places, all the country over, there was harvest-work. 'Consider the regions; and you will find there are multitudes as ready to receive the Gospel as a field of corn fully ripe, is ready to be reaped.' Now was the time when the gathering of the people should be to Christ, (Gen. 44: 10.) when great accessions should be made to the church, and the bounds of it should be enlarged, and therefore it was time for them to be busy. It is a great encouragement to engage in any work for God, if we understand by the signs of the times that this is the proper season for that work, for then it will prosper. John Baptist has made ready a people prepared for the Lord, Luke 1: 17. Since he began to preach the kingdom of God, every man pressed into it, Luke 16: 16. This therefore was a time for the preachers of the Gospel to apply themselves with the utmost vigor; to thrust in their sickle, Rev. 14: 15. It was necessary to work now; pity that such a season should slip. If the corn be not reaped, it will shed, and the fowls will pick it up. If souls that are under convictions, be not helped now, their beginnings will come to nothing, and they will be a prey to pretenders. It was also easy to work now; when the people's hearts are prepared, the work will be done suddenly, 2 Chron. 29: 36. It quickens ministers to preach, when they observe that people take pleasure in hearing it.

It was profitable and advantageous work, which they themselves would gain by; (c. 36.) 'He that reapeth, receiveth wages.' Christ pays those well whom He employs in his work; He will never do as Jehoiakim did, who used his neighbor's service without wages, (Jer. 22: 13.) or those who by fraud kept back the hire of those who reaped down their corn-fields, Jam. 5: 4. Christ's reapers, though they cry to Him day and night, shall never have cause to cry against Him, nor to say that they served a hard Master. He that reapeth, not

only shall receive wages, but doth receive it. There is a present reward in the service of Christ, and his work is its own wages.

Christ's reapers have fruit; He gathereth fruit unto life eternal; he shall both save Himself and those that hear Him, 1 Tim. 4: 16. If the reaper save his own soul, that is fruit gathered to life eternal. And if he be instrumental to save the souls of others, there is fruit gathered; souls gathered to Christ are the fruit that Christ seeks for, Rom. 1: 13. Cant. 8: 11, 12. This is the comfort of faithful ministers, that their work has a tendency to the eternal salvation of souls.

They have joy; that he that sows, and they that reap, may rejoice together. The minister who is the happy instrument of beginning a good work, is he that sows, as John Baptist was; he that is employed to carry it on, is he that reaps; and both shall rejoice together. Note, Though God is to have all the glory of the success of the Gospel, yet faithful ministers may take the comfort of it. The reapers share in the joy of harvest, though the profits belong to the master, 1 Thess. 2: 19. Those ministers who are variously gifted and employed, should be so far from envying one another, that they should rather rejoice in each other's success. Though all Christ's ministers are not alike serviceable, nor successful, yet, if they have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful, they shall all enter together into the joy of their Lord.

It was easy work, half done to their hands by those that went before them; (c. 37, 38.) One soweth, and another reapeth. This sometimes speaks a grievous judgment upon him that sows, Mic. 6: 15. Deut. 28: 30. Thou shalt sow, and another shall reap; as Deut. 6: 11. Houses full of all good things which thou filledst not. Moses and the prophets and John Baptist had sown the good seed of which the New-Testament ministers did in effect but gather the fruit. I send you to reap that whereon ye bestowed, in comparison, no labor, Isa. 40: 3-5.

This speaks two things concerning the Old-Testament ministry. First, That it was very much short of the New-Testament ministry. Moses and the prophets sowed, but little did they see of the fruit of their labors. Their writings have done much more good since they left us than ever their preaching did. Yet it was very much serviceable to the New Testament ministry; the writings of the prophets which were read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day, raised people's expectations of the Messiah, and prepared them to bid Him welcome. Had it not been for the seed sown by the prophets, this Samaritan woman could not have said, We know that the Messiah cometh. The writings of the Old Testament are in some respects more useful to us than they could be to those to whom they were first written, because better understood by the accomplishment of them. See 1 Pet. 1:12. Heb. 4:2. Rom. 16:25, 26.

This also speaks two things concerning the ministry of the apostles. First, That it was a fruitful ministry; they were reapers that gathered in a great harvest of souls to Christ, and did more in seven years towards the setting up of the kingdom of God, than the prophets of the Old Testament had done in twice so many ages.

Secondly, It was much facilitated among the Jews, by the writings of the prophets. The prophets sowed in tears, crying out, We have labored in vain; the apostles reaped in joy, saying, Thanks be to God who always causeth us to

(35) The clause, 'There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest,' seems to have been meant of the fact, and not as a proverb; but how far it may be made use of to settle the chronology of our Lord's life, must be determined by those, whose studies have been more immediately directed to that object; which, after all, seems to be of very subordinate consequence. 'In your common harvest, you usually say, after your seed is sown, four months hence will come the harvest. But in this spiritual harvest it is otherwise; for the seed of the word is sown in the heart of the woman of Samaria, in your absence, hath made the Samaritans already ripe for the harvest.' Whitby. Scorr.

Say not ye, 'There are yet four months?' This appears to have been said, to intimate to the disciples that the time for preaching to the Samaritans was much nearer than they thought, who perhaps supposed that all Israel was first to be converted; although at a subsequent period, when they might have followed the present example of their

Master, they were inhibited from preaching to them, as yet. Comp. Matt. 10: 5. and Acts 8: 5-8.

'I choose, with Sir Isaac Newton, to take these words in their plainest sense, as an intimation that it was then four months to the beginning of harvest.'

'After all that learned men have said on this passage, it does not appear that our Lord meant any thing by it, more than an illustration of his present subject. Though there were ordinarily four months from seed-time to harvest, and that a man, after he had sowed his seed, must wait patiently till the regular harvest came; yet it was not the case now—the seed of life which He had just sown, had already brought forth much fruit; therefore He says, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, over which it is likely the Samaritans were then coming in troops, guided by the woman, who had already received the Gospel.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

27 And herein is that saying true, 'One sowing, and, another reaping.'

38 I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labor: other men labored, and ye are entered into their labors.

39 ¶ And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

40 So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.

41 And many more believed, because of his own word;

o Judg. 5:3. Mic. 6:15. Luke 19:21.
p Acts 2:41. 4:4,32. 5:14. 6:7. 8:4
—8,14—17.
q 1st. 2 Chr. 36:15. Jer. 44:4. Matt.
3:1—6. 4:23. 11:3—15. Acts 10:37.
38,49,43. 1 Pet. 1:11,12.
r 10:41. 12. 11:45.
s 29:42.
t Gen. 39:26. Prov. 4:13. Cant. 3:4.
Jer 14:8. Luke 8:38. 10:39. 24:29.
Acts 16:15.
u Luke 19:9—10. 2 Cor. 5:1,2. Rev.
3:20.
v Gen. 49:10. Acts 1:8. 8:12,35.
15:3.
y 6:52. 7:48. Matt. 7:28,29. Luke 4:
22. 1 Cor. 2:4,5. Heb. 4:13.

rected a great prince to Elisha, 2 Kings 5: 2. Secondly, How great a matter a little fire kindles. Our Savior, by instructing one poor woman, spread instruction to a whole town. Let not ministers be either careless in their preaching, or discouraged in it, because their hearers are few and mean; for, by doing good to them, good may be conveyed to more, and those that are more considerable. If they teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, a great number may learn at second hand. Philip preached the Gospel to a man in his chariot upon the road, and he not only received it himself, but carried it into his country, and propagated it there. Thirdly, See how good it is to speak experimentally of Christ and the things of God. This woman could say little of Christ, but what she did say she spake feelingly; He told me all that ever I did. Those are most likely to do good, that can tell what God has done for their souls, Ps. 66: 16.

When they were come to him, they besought him that he would tarry with them. Upon the woman's report, they believed him to be a prophet, and came to him; when they saw him, the poverty of his outward condition did not lessen their esteem of him, but still they respected him as a prophet. Note, There are hopes of those who are got over the vulgar prejudices that men have against true worth in a low estate. Blessed are they that are not offended in Christ at the first sight. They begged he would tarry with them; [1.] That they might testify their respect, and treat him with the honor and kindness due to his character. God's prophets and ministers are welcome guests to all who sincerely embrace the Gospel; as to Lydia, Acts 16: 15. [2.] That they might receive instruction from him. Those that are taught of God, are truly desirous to learn more, and to be better acquainted with Christ. Many would have flocked to one that would tell them their fortune, but these flocked to one that would tell them their faults. The historian seems to lay emphasis upon their being Samaritans; as, Luke 10: 33. 17: 16. The Samaritans had not that reputation for religion that the Jews had; yet the Jews, who saw Christ's miracles, drove him from them, while the Samaritans, who saw not his miracles, nor shared in his favors, invited him to them. The proof of the Gospel's success is not always according to the probability, nor what is experienced according to what is expected. The Samaritans were taught to be shy of the Jews. There were Samaritans that refused to let Christ go through their town, (Luke 9: 62.) yet these begged him to tarry with them. Note, It adds much to our love to Christ, if it conquers prejudices, and sets light by the censures of men.

Verse 40.

Two days.] 'This was a proper medium between entirely neglecting them, and giving them so much of his time and company as would have broken in upon the design of his journey into Galilee, or might have given umbrage to the Jews.'

He abode there so long, that He might not condemn persons desirous to learn of him; he staid no longer, that He might not neglect the Jews, or them to prefer the Samaritans before them; and He com-

triumph. Note, From the labors of ministers that are dead, much fruit may be reaped by the people that survive, and the ministers that succeed them. John Baptist, and those that assisted him had labored, and the disciples of Christ entered into their labors. What reason we have to bless God for those that are gone before us; for their preaching and writing; for what they did and suffered, for we are entered into their labors; their studies and services have made our work the easier. When the ancient and modern laborers, those that came at the third hour, and those that came at the eleventh, meet, they will be so far from envying one another the honor of their respective services, that both they that sowed and they that reaped shall rejoice together; and the great Lord of the harvest shall have the glory of all.

The woman's testimony concerning Christ, though a single testimony, and of one of no good report, and no more than this, He told me all that ever I did, yet had a good influence upon many. One would have thought that his telling the woman her secret sins, would have made them afraid of coming to him, lest he should tell them of their faults; but they will venture that, rather than not be acquainted with one that they had reason to think was a prophet.

Many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman. So far they believed on him, that they took him for a prophet, and were desirous to know the mind of God from him; this is favorably interpreted a believing on him.

They that believed were Samaritans, who were not of the house of Israel. Their faith not only aggravated the unbelief of the Jews, from whom better might have been expected, but was an earnest of the faith of the Gentiles, who would welcome that which the Jews rejected.

They believed for the saying of the woman. See here, First, How God is sometimes pleased to use very unlikely instruments for a good work. A little maid directed a great prince to Elisha, 2 Kings 5: 2.

Secondly, How great a matter a little fire kindles. Our Savior, by instructing one poor woman, spread instruction to a whole town. Let not ministers be either careless in their preaching, or discouraged in it, because their hearers are few and mean; for, by doing good to them, good may be conveyed to more, and those that are more considerable. If they teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, a great number may learn at second hand. Philip preached the Gospel to a man in his chariot upon the road, and he not only received it himself, but carried it into his country, and propagated it there. Thirdly, See how good it is to speak experimentally of Christ and the things of God. This woman could say little of Christ, but what she did say she spake feelingly; He told me all that ever I did. Those are most likely to do good, that can tell what God has done for their souls, Ps. 66: 16.

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He abode there. Though it was a city of the Samaritans near their temple, yet, when He was invited, He tarried there; though upon a journey, yet, when He had an opportunity of doing good, He abode there. That is no real hindrance, which will further our account. He abode there but two days, because He had other places to visit and other work to do, and two days were as many as came to the share of this city, out of the few days of our Savior's sojourning upon earth.

We are told what impressions were made upon them by Christ's own word, and his personal converse with them. The labors of a minister are best told by the good fruit of them. Their hearing of him had a good effect, but now their eyes see him; and the effect of that was,

Many more believed; many that would not be persuaded to go out of the town to him, were yet wrought upon when He came among them. Note, It is comfortable to see the number of believers; and sometimes the zeal and forwardness of some may be a means to provoke many to a holy emulation, Rom. 11: 14.

Those who had been wrought upon by the report of the woman, now saw cause to say, Now we believe, not for thy saying, v. 42.

Upon the testimony of the woman, they believed him to be a prophet, or some extraordinary messenger from heaven; but now that they have conversed with him, they believe that He is the Christ; and that being the Christ, He is the Savior of the world; for He was anointed, to save his people from their sins. They believed him to be the Savior not only of the Jews, but of the world, which they hoped would take them in, though Samaritans, for it was promised that He should be Salvation to the ends of the earth, Isa. 49: 6.

Their faith now grew up to a full assurance; We know that this is indeed the Christ; not a pretended Christ, but a real one; not a typical Savior, as many under the Old Testament, but truly one. Such an assurance we should labor after; not only, We think it probable, and are willing to suppose that Jesus may be the Christ, but, We know that He is indeed the Christ.

The ground of it was experience; 'We have heard him ourselves. They had before believed for her saying; but now they find further and much firmer footing for their faith; We have heard ourselves, such truths, accompanied with such power, that we are sure this is the Christ.' This is like what the queen of Sheba said of Solomon; (1 Kings 10: 6, 7.) The half was not told me. The Samaritans, who believed for the woman's saying, now gained further light; for to him that hath said be given; he that is faithful in a little shall be trusted with more.

In this instance see how faith comes by hearing. [1.] Faith comes to the birth by hearing the report of men. These Samaritans, for the sake of the woman's saying, believed so far as to come and see. The instructions of parents and preachers, and the testimony of the church incline us to entertain the doctrine of Christ as highly probable. But, [2.] Faith comes to its maturity, by hearing the testimony of Christ himself; and this goes further, and obliges us to believe it as certain. We were induced to look into the Scriptures, by the saying of those who told us that in them they had found eternal life; but when we ourselves have experienced the convincing, regenerating, comforting power of the Word, we believe, not for their saying, we have searched them ourselves; our faith stands not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God, 1 Cor. 2: 5. 1 John 5: 9, 10.

Thus was the seed of the Gospel sown in Samaria. Four or five years after, when Philip preached the Gospel in Samaria, he found such remains of this good work that the people with-

manded his apostles, (Matt. 10: 5.) not to go to any city of Samaria, as the Gospel was first to be preached to the Jews.' Whithy in Scott.

Verse 41.

And many more believed.] 'This was the more extraordinary; as they not only had a national prejudice against him as a Jew, out, living near mount Gerizim, had a particular interest in maintaining the usual worship there, which must be very advantageous to the neighborhood.'

Whithy in Scott.

42 And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: *for we have heard ^{him} ourselves, *and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.

[Practical Observations.]

43 ¶ Now ^b after two days, he departed thence, *and went into Galilee;

44 For Jesus himself testified, ^d that a prophet hath no honor in his own country.

45 Then when he was come into Galilee, *the Galileans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: *for they also went unto the feast.

46 So Jesus came again into ^b Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain * nobleman, ⁱ whose son was sick at Capernaum,

47 When ^k he heard that Jesus was come

1:45-49, 17:8. Acts 17:1, 12.
1:49, 12:29, 3:14-18, 6:58, 8:11;
27, 15, 45:22, 52:10, Luke 2:10, 11, 22, Acts 4:12, Rom. 10:11-13, 2
Cor. 5:19, 1 John 4:14.
b Matt. 15:21-24, Mark 7:27, 28, Rom. 1:5, 8.
c 4:43, 1:43, Matt. 4:13.
d Matt. 13:57, Mark 6:4, Luke 4:24.
e Matt. 4:23, 24, Luke 8:40.
f 2:13-18, 3:2.
g Deut. 18:16, Luke 9:42-44, 9:53.
h 9:11-11, 21:2, Josh. 19:28.
i Or, courtier, or, ruler.
j Ps. 50:15, 79:34, Hos. 5:15, Matt. 9:13, 15:22, 17:14, 15, Luke 7:2, 8:12.
k Mark 2:1-3, 6:55, 56, 10:47.

V. 27-42. Even wise and good men are incompetent judges of what it becomes the Lord to do: but reverence will impose silence on them, even when perplexed with difficulties; and they will abhor such blasphemies as unbelievers often utter, concerning 'things which they understand not.'—When the heart is engaged after 'the Pearl of great price,' outward concerns will sometimes be neglected: and when our affections are greatly excited, we shall be led to call on others to seek those blessings, which we see to be beyond all comparison. Thus, the greatest sinners witness for Christ; and from their own experience, declare his truth. But no trembling sinner can be more earnest to hear the words of life, than some zealous ministers are (and than all ministers should be) to preach them.—When we consider Jesus, counting his rugged path, and his whole work on earth, till He 'finished' it on the cross, (Note, 9: 21-30,) as more pleasant to Him than necessary food; and when we remember that his love and zeal are unabated, while the exercise of them is attended with no suffering; we may confidently seek to Him for all the blessings of salvation. But we should also consider Him as our example; and, in our inferior services and lighter trials, it should be our 'meat to do 'he will of God, and to finish his work.' This mind of Christ should be in all his disciples, in his ministers especially. When the harvest is ripe, the husbandmen endure hardship to reap it, and when sinners are disposed to hear the Gospel, we should deem the 'fields already white for harvest,' and disregard personal inconvenience to improve the precious occasion. On the other hand, the husbandman, having sown his seed,

waits patiently till 'the appointed weeks of harvest;' and so should we, when we have sown the good seed of the Word, though we do not presently see the fruit of our labors. Indeed comparatively small success will render this the most gainful employment in the world. Every soul converted will be the minister's everlasting crown, and be forever happy with him. Let us then cheerfully endure 'the heat and burden of the day;' for as prophets, apostles, and martyrs have labored and suffered in sowing that seed, of which we now reap the harvest without their toil and tribulation; so others may reap the crop of what we now sow, weeping because perhaps it seems to be thrown away. Faithful ministers often labor long, and with little encouragement, but the seed is not lost; for others enter into their labors, and gather many souls to Christ: and in that world, where ambition and envy are no more, they will all unite in rejoicing over that success, to which they have been instrumental. In the mean time let us labor, (whether sowing or reaping,) in faith and patience.—The chief usefulness of ministers is sometimes found among those, who previously bore the worst characters, and were counted the most hopeless persons. Such are often the instruments of exciting others, by carrying a report of what they have heard and experienced; and the effects of 'the quick and powerful word' of Christ, in detecting their hearts, and bringing to remembrance past sins, are the general means by which men are brought to believe. Those who receive the word of God, 'have the witness in themselves;' and shall know that 'Jesus is the Christ, the Savior of the world.' (Notes, 1 John 5: 9-13. Scott.)

one accord gave heed to those things which Philip spake, Acts 8: 5, 6, 8. But as some were p'able to good, so were others to evil, whom Simon Magus bewitched with his sorceries, v. 9, 10.

V. 43-54. Though Christ was as welcome among the Samaritans as He could be any where, and had better success, yet after two days He left them; not because He might confirm those in their prejudices against Him, who said, *He is a Samaritan*, (ch. 8: 43.) but because *He must preach to other cities*, Luke 4: 43. *He went into Galilee*, for there He spent much of his time.

Christ went into the country of Galilee, but not to Nazareth, which was strictly *his own country*; He went among the villages, but declined going to Nazareth for a reason which *Jesus himself testified*, who knew the hearts of all men, and the experiences of all prophets. *A prophet has no honor in his own country*. Note, Prophets ought to have honor, because God has put honor upon them, and we do or may receive benefit by them. The honor due the Lord's prophets has very often been denied them, and contempt put upon them. This due honor is most frequently denied them in their own country; see Luke 4: 24. Matt. 13: 57. Not that it is universally true, (no rule but has some exceptions,) but it holds for the most part. Joseph, when he began to be a prophet, was most hated by his brethren; David was disdained by his brother; (1 Sam. 17: 28.) Jeremiah was malign'd by the men of Anathoth, (Jer. 11: 21.) Paul by his countrymen the Jews; and Christ's near kinsmen spake most slightly of Him, ch. 7: 5. Men's pride and envy make them scorn to be instructed by those who once were their school-fellows and play-fellows. Desire of novelty, and of that which is far-fetched, makes them despise persons and things to which they have been long used and of which they know the rise. It is a great discouragement to a minister to go among a people that have no value for him. Christ would not go to Nazareth, because He knew how little respect He should have there. It is just with God to deny his Gospel to those that despise the ministers of it. They that mock the messengers, forfeit the benefit of the message. Matt. 21: 35, 41.

The Galileans in the country received Him, and cheerfully attended on his doctrine. Christ and his Gospel are not sent in vain; if they had not honor with some, they shall have with others. The reason given why these Galileans were so ready to receive Christ, is, they had seen the miracles He did at Jerusalem, v. 45.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

They went up to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. The Galileans lay very remote from Jerusalem, and their way thither lay through the country of the Samaritans; yet, in obedience to God's command, they went up to the feast, and there they became acquainted with Christ. Note, They that are diligent in attending on public ordinances, some time or other meet with more spiritual benefit than they expect. At Jerusalem they saw Christ's miracles, which commended Him and his doctrine to their faith and affections. The miracles were wrought for the benefit of Jerusalem; yet the Galileans, who were accidentally there, had more advantage by them than they for whom they were chiefly designed. Thus the word preached to a mixed multitude may perhaps edify occasional more than the constant hearers. When He would go to a city, He chose to go to Cana of Galilee, where He had made the water wine; (v. 46.) thither He went, to see if there were any fruits of that miracle remaining; and, if there were, to water what He had planted. The evangelist mentions this miracle, to teach us to keep the works of Christ in remembrance. There was a certain nobleman; a little king; so called, either for the largeness of his estate, or the extent of his power. Some understand it as bespeaking his preferment, he was in some office about the king; others, as bespeaking his party, he was a Herodian, a royalist. Perhaps it was Chuzza, Herod's steward, (Luke 8: 3.) or Manaen, Herod's foster-brother, Acts 13: 1. There were saints in Caesar's household. The father a nobleman, and yet the son sick; dignities and titles of honor will be no security from the assaults of sickness and death. It was fifteen miles from where this nobleman lived to where Christ now was; yet this affliction in his family sent him to Christ. Having heard that Jesus was come out of Judea to Galilee, and finding that He did not come toward Capernaum, he went to Him himself, and besought Him to come and heal his son, v. 47. See here, (1.) His tender affection to his son, he would spare no pains to get help for him. (2.) His great respect to our Lord; he would come himself, when he might have sent a servant; and he besought Him, when, as a man in authority, some would think he might have ordered his attendance. The greatest men, when they come to God, must become beggars. We may observe a mixture in his faith. There was sincerity in it; he did believe that Christ could heal his son, though his disease

went thither, because He foresaw that the Galileans would receive Him now more readily than before, on account of the miracles they had seen at the feast. Bloomfield.

out of Judea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

48 Then said Jesus unto him, "Except ye see signs and wonders ye will not believe."

49 The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

50 Jesus saith unto him, "Go thy way; thy son liveth." And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

51 And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, "Thy son liveth."

52 Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.

53 So the father knew that it was at the same hour in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

54 This is again the second miracle that Jesus did, when he was come out of Judea into Galilee.

11:21,32. Ps. 46:1. Luke 7:6-8.
8:41. Acts 9:29.
11:42. 2:18. 12:37. 15:24. 20:29.
Num. 14:11. Matt. 16:1. 27:42.
Luke 10:11. 16:31. Acts 2:22. 1 Cor. 1:22.
n. Ps. 40:17. 88:10-12. Mark 5:23, 35,36.
e. 11:40. 1 Kings 17:12-15. Math. 8:16. Mark 7:29-30. 9:23,24. 1 John 17:14. Acts 14:9,10. Rom. 4:20,21. Heb. 11:19.
p. 50,53. 1 Kings 17:23.
q. Ps. 39:9. 107:20. Matt. 8:9,13.
r. Luke 19:9. Acts 2:39. 16:15,34. 18:8.
s. 2:1-11.

make it for a denial, but still continued to wrestle till he prevailed. He might argue thus, 'If Christ heal my soul, surely He will heal my son; if He cure my unbelief, He will cure his fever.' This is the method Christ takes, first to work upon us, and then to work for us; 'here is hope, if we find Him entering upon this method.'

He seems, however, to take no notice of the reproof Christ gave him, says nothing to it, by way either of confession or excuse, for he is so wholly taken up with concern about his child, that he can mind nothing else. Note, The sorrow of the world is a great prejudice to our profiting by the word of Christ. Inordinate care and grief are thorns that choke the good seed; see Exod. 6:2. He still discovered the weakness of his faith in the power of Christ.

was dangerous. It is probable that physicians had given him over; but he believed that Christ could cure when the case seemed deplorable. Yet there was infirmity in his faith; he believed that Christ could heal his son, but as it would seem, he thought He could not at a distance, and therefore he besought Him that He would come down, expecting, as Naaman did, that He would come and strike his hand over the patient. We are apt to limit the Holy One of Israel. The centurion, a Gentile, was so strong in faith, as to say, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof, Matt. 8:8. This nobleman, a Jew, must have Christ come down, though it was a good day's journey, and despairs of a cure unless He come down, as if He must teach Christ how to work. We are encouraged to pray, but we are not allowed to prescribe; 'Lord, heal me; but whether with a word or a touch, thy will be done.'

Jesus said to him, 'Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe; the Samaritans did, though they saw no signs and wonders; I must work miracles among you.' Though he was a nobleman, Christ gives him a reproof; men's dignity in the world shall not exempt them from the rebukes of the Word or Providence; for Christ reproves not after the hearing of his ears, but with equity, Isa. 11:3. Observe, Christ first shows him his sin and weakness, to prepare him for mercy, and then grants him his request. Christ humbles those first with his frowns, whom He intends to honor with his favors. The Comforter shall first convince. Herod longed to see some miracle, (Luke 23:8.) and this courtier was of the same mind.

That which is blamed, is, that whereas they had heard by incontestable report of the miracles He had wrought in other places, they would not believe except they saw them with their own eyes, Luke 4:23. They must be honored, and humored; or they will not be convinced. Their country must be graced, their curiosity gratified, or else they will not believe; like Thomas, they will yield to no method of conviction but what they shall prescribe. They had seen miracles, which they could not gainsay, which sufficiently proved Christ a Teacher come from God, and should have applied themselves to Him, for instruction which would have led them on, in believing, to spiritual perfection; instead of this, they would go no further in believing than they were driven by signs and wonders. The spiritual power of the Word did not attract them, but only the sensible power of miracles, which were for them who believed not, while prophesying was for them that believe, 1 Cor. 14:22. Those that admire miracles only, and despise prophesying, rank themselves with unbelievers.

He still continued to importune: Sir, come down ere my child die.

He took the reproof patiently, spake to Christ respectfully; though he wore soft clothing, he could bear reproof. It is none of the privileges of peerage to be above the reproofs of Christ; but it is a sign of a good disposition in men, especially in great men, when they can be told of their faults, and not be angry. And as he did not take the reproof for an affront, so he did not

He must have Christ come down, thinking that else He could do the child no kindness. It is hard to persuade ourselves that distance of time and place are no obstructions to Jesus; He sees afar off, his eyes run to and fro; He acts afar off, for the word of his power runs very swiftly. He believes that Christ could heal a sick child, but not raise a dead child, and therefore, Come down, ere my child die: as if then it would be too late; whereas Christ has the same power over death that He has over diseases. He forgot that Elijah and Elisha had raised dead children; and is Christ's power inferior to theirs? Observe what haste he is in; Come down ere my child die. He that believeth, doth doth not make haste, but refers himself to Christ: 'Lord, what, and when, and how thou pleasest.'

The answer of peace which Christ gave was, Go thy way, thy son liveth. Christ here gives us a proof that He not only could heal, but with so much ease. Nothing is said, nothing done, nothing ordered to be done, and yet the cure wrought; Thy son liveth. The healing beams of the Sun of righteousness dispense influences from one end of heaven to another; there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. Though Christ is now in heaven, and his church on earth, He can send from above. This nobleman would have Christ come down and heal his son; Christ will heal his son, and not come down. Thus the cure is the sooner wrought the nobleman's mistake rectified, and his faith confirmed; so that the thing was better done in Christ's way. When He denies what we ask, He gives what is much more to our advantage; we ask for ease, He gives patience. Observe, His power was exerted by his word. In saying, Thy son lives, He showed that He has life in Himself, and power to quicken whom He will. Christ's saying, Thy soul lives, makes it alive.

He observed the nobleman to be in pain about his son; and therefore Christ dropped the reproof, and gave him assurance of the recovery of his child; for He knows how a father pities his children.

The nobleman believed and went away. Though Christ did not gratify him so far as to go down with him, he is satisfied with the method Christ took. How easily is that which is lacking in our faith, perfected by the word of Christ. Now he sees no sign or wonder, and yet believes the wonder done.

Christ said, Thy son liveth, and the man believed Him; not only believed the omniscience of Christ, but the omnipotence of Christ, that the cure was effected by his word. He left him dying; yet, when Christ said, he lives, like the father of the faithful, against hope, he believed in hope, and staggered not through unbelief.

Christ said, Go thy way; and, as an evidence of the sincerity of his faith, he went his way. He did not press Christ to come down, did not say, 'If he do recover, yet a visit will be acceptable;' he seems no further solicitous, but, like Hannah, goes his way, and his countenance is no more sad. As one entirely satisfied, and did not hurry home that night, but returned leisurely, perfectly easy in his mind.

His servants met him with news of the child's recovery, v. 51. Probably they met him not far from his own house, and, knowing their master's care, were willing, as soon as they could, to make him easy. David's servants were loath to tell him, when the child was dead. Christ said, Thy son liveth; and now the servants say the same. Good news will meet those that hope in God's word.

He inquired what hour the child began to re-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

v. 43-54. Pride, prejudices, and worldly prosperity concur in keeping men from the Savior; and those are happy afflictions which induce any to inquire after Him. The rich and honorable seldom come to Him; till trial shows them the vanity of their distinctions, and that they need other help than man or wealth can purchase. (P. O. Matt. 9: 13-26.) This conviction, and a heart broken for sin, prepare the mind to see the sorefulness of Christ and his salvation to their wants and desires, that signs and wonders are no longer needful, in

order to belief and humble trust in Him. We must submit to his rebukes, and renew our applications with increasing importunity; we must credit his words and follow his directions, if we would have the blessing from Him. Then experience will strengthen our faith; and we shall find that every event accords with his declarations, and that all things in heaven and earth obey Him. In this way, the knowledge of Christ spreads through families, and men find salvation. These miracles never cease; may we and all our's seek and experience them. Scott

CHAP. V.

comes again up to Jerusalem; and at the pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath-day, heals one who had been diseased thirty-eight years; and orders him to carry his bed, 1-9. The Jews demand of the man, who ordered him to carry his bed: Jesus answers him at the temple, and warns him to sin no more; and he informs the Jews that Jesus had healed him, 10-15. They persecute Jesus, 16. He defends Himself, asserting his personal and mediatorial dignity and authority, in the most explicit and energetic language, 17-22, appealing to the testimony of John, 18: 3-5; to his own miracles, 36; to the testimony of God by a voice from heaven, 37, 38, and to the scriptures, 39-40. He exposes their unbelief, ambition, and ungodliness; and shews, that in dishonouring him, they dishonoured Moses also, 41-47.

AFTER this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

2 Now there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market, a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda; having five porches.

a 2:13. Ex. 23:14-17. 34:23. Lev. 23:21. Deut. 16:16. Matt. 3:15. Gal. 4:4.

b Or, gate. Neh. 3:1. 12:39.

c Is. 29:11.

the very time when it is prayed for, as Peter's deliverances, Acts 12:12. In men's works, distance of place is the delay of time, and the retarding of business; not so in the works of Christ. The peace and spiritual healing, which He speaks in heaven, is, if He pleases, at the same time effected; and when these two come to be compared in the great day, Christ will be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.

The bringing of the cure to the family brought salvation to it.

The nobleman himself believed. He had before believed, with reference to this particular occasion; but now he believed in Christ as the Messiah, and became one of his disciples. Thus the particular experience of the power and efficacy of one word of Christ, may settle the whole authority of Christ's dominion in the soul. Christ has many ways of gaining the heart, and, by the grant of a temporal mercy, may make way for better things.

His whole house believed likewise. The miracle preserved the blossom and hopes of the family; this affected them all, and endeared Christ to them. A master of a family cannot give faith to those under his charge, nor force them to believe, but he may be instrumental to remove external prejudices, and then the work is more than half done. Abraham was famous for this, (Gen. 18: 19.) and Joshua, ch. 24: 15. This was a nobleman, and, probably, he had a great household; but when he comes into Christ's school, he brings them all with him. What a blessed change was here in this house, occasioned by the sickness of the child! This should reconcile us to afflictions, we know not what good may follow from them. Probably, the conversion of this nobleman and his family at Capernaum might invite Christ to come afterward, and settle at Capernaum, as his head-quarters in Galilee. When great men receive the Gospel, they may be instrumental to bring it to the places where they live.

NOTES.

CHAP. V. v. 1. This is generally supposed to have been the feast of the passover: (Marg. Ref.) yet perhaps none of the evangelists mention all the passovers, which occurred during our Lord's ministry. But subsequent to what was related in the former chapter, several things, recorded by the other evangelists, are supposed to have taken place, before Jesus went up to Jerusalem. He had called several disciples to a stated attendance on Him, wrought many miracles, and probably delivered the sermon on the mount. (Notes, Matt. 4: 12-25. Luke 4: 16-44. 5: 1-11.) He refused not communion with a church, which had clogged these festivals with human traditions; though perhaps He performed only the rites required by the law. Wistly.

Verses 2-4.

As the evangelist uses the present tense, saying, 'There is at Jerusalem, &c.' it has been conjectured, that he wrote his gospel before the conversion of that city; but the pool might remain, even though the porches were in ruins, and the spot on which the city stood was called Jerusalem, long after the temples and buildings were destroyed by Titus; and indeed it is so to this day. Thus our Lord says, 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.' (Luke 21: 24.) If 'the troubling of the water' took place so regularly, that the time might be certainly foreknown, it does not appear that the diseased persons would have had any occasion previously to wait by the pool, as it would have sufficed for them to come at the appointed seasons. The hypothesis of Dr. Hammond, (though supported by the sanction of some of the ancient fathers,) which supposes, that the washing of the numerous sacrifices and the entrails in this pool, had given it a salutary virtue; and that the angel was no other than a messenger, sent by the priests or rulers, to stir up the water, that this efficacy might be more powerfully exerted, is so unscriptural and irrational,

cover, not as if he doubted the influence of Christ's word upon the child, but he desired to have his faith confirmed, to satisfy any to whom he should relate it; for it was a material circumstance. Note, It is good to furnish ourselves with corroborating proofs, to strengthen our faith in the word of Christ, that it may grow up to a full assurance. Show me a token for good. The diligent comparing of the works of Christ with his word, will be of great use to confirm our faith. That was the course this nobleman took; He inquired of the servants the hour when he began to amend; they told him, Yesterday, at the seventh hour, the fever left him: not only he began to amend, but he was perfectly well on a sudden; so the father knew that it was at the same hour, when Jesus said to him, Thy son liveth. As the Word of God, well studied, will help us to understand his providences; so the Providence of God, well observed, will help us to understand his word, for God is every day fulfilling the Scripture. Two things would help to confirm his faith. The child's recovery was sudden, and not gradual. They name the precise time to an hour; not about, but at, the seventh hour, the fever left him; not, it began to decrease, but left him in an instant. The word of Christ did not, like physic, require time. It was just at the same time that Christ spake to him; at that very hour. The coincidence of events adds very much to the beauty and harmony of Providence. Observe the time, and the thing itself will be more illustrious, for every thing is beautiful in its time; at the very time when it is promised, as Israel's deliverance, (Exod. 12: 14.) at the

The evangelist's remark upon this cure is, This is the second miracle; referring to ca. 2: 11. That was soon after his first return out of Judea, this soon after the second. In Judea He had wrought many miracles, ch. 3: 2; 4: 45. They had the first offer; but, being driven thence, He wrought miracles in Galilee. Somewhere or other, Christ will find a welcome. People may if they please, shut the sun out of their own houses, but cannot shut it out of the world. This is noted to be the second miracle, 1. To remind us of the first, wrought in the same place some months before. Fresh mercies should revive the remembrance of former mercies, as former mercies should encourage our hopes of further mercies. Christ keeps account of his favors, whether we do or no. 2. To let us know that this cure was before those many cures which the other evangelists mention to be wrought in Galilee, Matt. 4: 23. Mark 1: 34. Luke 4: 40. Probably, this cure, (the patient being a person of quality) was the more talked of for that reason, and sent Him crowds of patients; when this nobleman applied himself to Christ, multitudes followed. What abundance of good may great men do, if they be good men!

CHAP. V. v. 1-16. The other evangelists confine themselves mostly to the miracles wrought in Galilee, but John relates those wrought at Jerusalem.

The time when this cure was wrought, was at a feast of the Jews, the passover, for that was the most celebrated feast. Christ, though residing in Galilee, went up to Jerusalem at the feast, v. 1.

1. Because it was an ordinance of God, which He would observe, being made under the law; though, as a Son, He might have pleaded an exemption. Thus He teaches us to attend religious assemblies, Heb. 10: 25.

2. Because it was an opportunity of good. There were great numbers gathered there, at that time, at least, of serious people from all parts of the country, beside proselytes from other nations; and wisdom must cry in the places of concourse, Prov. 1: 21. It was to be hoped that they were in a good frame, for they came together to worship God, and for religious exercises. A mind inclined to devotion, and secluded itself to exercises of piety, lies open to further discoveries of divine light, and Christ will be acceptable to it.

The place was the pool of Bethesda, which had a healing virtue in it, and it is here particularly described.

It was situated at Jerusalem by the sheep-market; it might be rendered, the sheep-cote, where the sheep were kept; or the sheep-gate, which we read of, (Neh. 3: 1.) through which the sheep were brought; as the sheep-market, where they were sold. Some think it was near

al, that it is wonderful it should ever have been thought of a second time, by any one to whose imagination it might once occur. To mention nothing else, what were the brazen sea, and the lavers, in the courts of the temple provided for, and always replenished with abundance of water, but that the sacrifices (as well as the priests and Levites,) might be washed upon the spot, and not carried out of the holy place, to a distant pool for that purpose? It is probable, that this miracle was not wrought for any length of time, and perhaps it ceased on this occasion. This may account for the surprising silence of Josephus in a story which made so much for the honor of his nation. He was himself not born when it happened; and though he might have heard the report of it, he would perhaps (in the modern way) oppose speculation and hypothesis to fact. Or, if he secretly suspected 'it to be true, his dread of the marvellous, and fear of disgusting his pagan readers, might as well lead him to suppress this, as to disguise the passage through the Red sea, and the divine voice from mount Sinai, in so mean and foolish a manner, as it is known he does. And the relation in which this fact stood to the history of Jesus, would render him peculiarly cautious in touching on it.' Doddridge. This miraculous effect seems to have been an emblem of the healing of men's souls by the Gospel, and by washing in 'the Fountain opened for sin and uncleanness'; and compared with the multiplied and continual miracles wrought by our Lord, 'not at distant periods of time, but by him only performed a single cure, but heard of by whole multitudes that resorted to Him' (Doddridge,) it might also denote the efficacy of divine grace under the old dispensation, as distinguished from its more extensive effects under the ordinances of the New Testament.

(2-4.) By the sheep market' [Or, according to some, 'by the sheep gate,' Neh. 3: 1. 'Market' is not in the original Having five porches.] It seems that [y the pool there was a building called

3 In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water.

4 For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

^c Matt. 15:30-31. Luke 7:22.
^d 2 Kings 18:4. Zech. 11:17. Mark 5:4.
^e Prov. 8:34. Lam. 3:26. Rom. 8:25. Jam. 5:7.
^f 2:19-50. Prov. 5:4,5. Ec. 9:10. Hos. 13:33. Matt. 6:33. Luke 13:21-28. 16:16.
^g 2 Kings 5:10-14. Ec. 4:7,8,9. Zech. 14:1. 14:8. 1 Cor. 6:11. 1 John 1:7.

These are mentioned, because, being least able to help themselves into the water, they lay longest in the porches. Those that were sick of bodily diseases, took the pains to come far, and had the patience to wait long, for a cure; any of us would have done the same; but O! that men were as solicitous to get their spiritual diseases healed! We are all by nature impotent in spiritual things, blind, halt, and withered; but effectual provision is made for our cure, if we will but observe orders.

An angel went down, and troubled the water; and whoso first stepped in was made whole. That this strange virtue in the pool was natural, or artificial rather, and was the effect of the washing of the sacrifices, which impregnated the water with healing virtue even for blind people; and that this angel was a common person, sent down to stir the water, is altogether groundless; there was a room in the temple on purpose to wash the sacrifice in. Expositors generally agree, that the virtue this pool had, was supernatural. It is true, the Jewish writers who are not sparing in praise of Jerusalem, do none of them mention this pool; of which perhaps this was the reason, that it was taken for a presage of the approach of the Messiah, and therefore, they who denied Him to be come, industriously concealed such an indication of his coming.

An angel went down into the pool, and stirred the water. Angels are God's servants, and friends to man; and perhaps are more active in the removing of diseases, (as evil angels in the inflicting of them,) than we are aware. Raphael, the apocryphal name of an angel, signifies, God's physician. See what mean offices the angels condescend to, for the good of men. If we would do the will of God as the angels, we must think nothing below us but sin. The troubling of the water was the signal of the descent of the angel; as the going upon the top of the mulberry trees was to David, and then they must bestir themselves. The waters of the sanctuary are healing, when they are put in

the temple, and if so, it yielded a melancholy, but profitable, spectacle to those that went up to the temple to pray.

It was a pool, (or bath,) which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda—The house of mercy; for therein appeareth the mercy of God to the sick and diseased. In a world of such misery as this, it is well that there are some Bethshas—houses of mercy, that the scene is not all melancholy. Lightfoot's conjecture is, that this was the upper pool, (Isa. 7:3.) and the old pool; (Isa. 22:11.) that it had been used for washing from ceremonial pollutions, for convenience of which, the porches were built to dress and undress in, but it was lately become medicinal.

It had five porches, piazzas, or roofed walks, in which the sick lay. Thus the charity of men concurred with the mercy of God for the relief of the distressed. Nature has provided remedies, but men must provide hospitals.

It was frequented with sick and cripples: In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk. How many are the afflictions in this world! How full of complaints, and what multitudes of impotent folks! It may do us good to visit hospitals, that we may take occasion to thank God for our comforts. The evangelist specifies three sorts of diseased people, blind, halt, and withered, or sineo-shrunk, either in one particular part, as the man with the withered hand, or all over paralytic.

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motion. Ministers must stir up the gift that is in them. When they are cold and dull in their ministrations, the waters settle, and are not apt to heal. The angel descended to stir the water, not daily, but at a certain season; some think, at the three feasts, to grace those solemnities; or, now and then, as Infinite Wisdom saw fit God is a free Agent in dispensing his favors.

Whosoever first stepped in, was made whole. Here is a miraculous extent of the virtue; what disease soever it was, this water cured it. Natural and artificial baths are as hurtful in some cases as they are useful in others, but this was a remedy for every malady. The power of miracles succeeds, where the power of nature succumbs. He that first stepped in, had the benefit; not those that lingered and came in after. This teaches us to observe and improve our opportunities, and to look about us, that we slip not a season which may never return. The angel stirred the waters, but left the disease on themselves to get in. God has put virtue in the Scriptures and ordinances, for He would have us healed; but if we do not make a use; improvement of them, it is because we would not be healed.

This is the only account we have of standing miracles; it is uncertain when it began, and when it ceased. Some conjecture it began when Eliashib the high priest began the wall about Jerusalem, and sanctified it with prayer; and that God testified his acceptance, by putting this virtue into the adjoining pool. Some think it began at Christ's birth; others at his baptism. Dr. Lightfoot, finding in Josephus, (Antiq. lib. 15. cap. 7.) mention of a great earthquake in the seventh year of Herod, thirty years before Christ's birth, supposed, since there used to be earthquakes at the descent of angels, that then the angel first descended. Some think it ceased with this miracle, others at Christ's death; however, it is certain that it had a gracious signification.

It was a token of God's good will to that people, and an indication, that though they had been long without prophets and miracles God had not cast them off; though they were now an oppressed people, and many were ready to say, Where are all the wonders that our fathers told us of? God hereby let them know, that He had still a kindness for the city of their solemnities.

We may from hence take occasion to acknowledge with thankfulness God's goodness in the mineral waters, that contribute so much to the health of mankind, for God made the fountain of water, Rev. 14: 7.

Bethesda, or "the house of mercy," having five porches, or separate divisions for the sick.

I choose to retain the common translation of sheep market rather than gate; because, if the report of the best travellers is to be credited, the place shown for the pool of Bethesda is much nearer the temple than the sheep gate could be. Compare Neh. 3: 1. and 12: 39.

That which they now call the pool of Bethesda, is about one hundred and twenty paces long, and forty broad, and at least eight deep, but void of water; at its west end were some old arches which were shown as the remains of the five porches here mentioned; but instead of five, there were only three of them.

(3.) Waiting for the moving of the waters. This clause, and the whole of the fourth verse, are wanting in some MSS. and versions, but I think there is no sufficient evidence against their authenticity. Eriechab seems to be of the same opinion; for though he has marked the whole passage with the notes of doubtfulness, yet he has left it in his text.

The sanative property of this pool has been supposed by some to have been communicated by the blood of the sacrifices, and others have referred it to the mineral properties of the water. But 1. The beasts for sacrifice were not washed here, but in a laver in the temple. 2. No natural property could cure all manner of diseases. 3. The cure only extended to the first who entered. 4. It took place only at one particular time—after the troubling of the water. 5. A healing was effected by immersion, it must have been instantaneous, and it was never failing in its effects. All which not being observed in medicinal waters, determine the cures to have been miraculous, as expressly stated in this text.

(4.) A healing. "Of the Lord." is added by AKL about twenty others, the Ethiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, Vulgate, Anglo-Saxon, and six copies of the Zala: Cyril and Ambrose have also this reading. If this reading be genuine, and the authorities which support it are both ancient and respectable, it destroys Dr. Hammond's conjecture that "by an angel a messenger only, sent from the sanhedrim, is meant, and that these cures were all performed in a natural way." Many deny the influence of God's Spirit, merely because they never felt them.

This is to make any man's experience the rule by which the whole Word of God is to be interpreted, and consequently to leave no more divinity in the Bible than is found in the heart of him who professes to explain it.

An angel. As we must wholly rely on Scripture accounts, we shall do well to examine the language of Scripture in reference to angels, and their nature, and ascertain its import. Taken impersonally, the word angel implies, that agent which executes the will of another; and, as the great natural agents of the world around us are wholly beyond the direction of man, and, therefore, are esteemed as exclusively obedient to God, it imports something of power, or commission, to execute his will. Now, though all the powers of nature are, in this sense, angels of God, as acting for Him—extraordinary effects or operations of Providence are principally noticed among men, as being most evidently his agents; and, though accomplished by natural means, are thus considered in Scripture. So the Psalmist observes, (104: 4.) that God can, if He please, "make winds his angels," to conduct his dispensations; and "flames of fire his ministers," or servants, to perform his pleasure. We may trace a gradation in the use of the word angel, which it may be proper to exhibit in connection:—1. Human messengers; i. e. agents for others. 2 Sam. 2: 5. Prov. 13: 17. Matt. 11: 10. &c. 2. Divine messengers, yet human persons; i. e. agents for God:—as prophets, (Hag. 1: 13.) and priests, (Mal. 2: 7. Eccl. 5: 6. 3. Officers, or bishops of the churches. Rev. 2: 1. 3: 1. &c. So Prideaux. 4. Providence, i. e. the agency of divine dispensations, conducting natural causes, apparent on remarkable occasions. (Ps. 104: 4.) [and, as some think, 2 Kings 19: 35. and 2 Sam. 24: 16.] 5. Created intelligences; i. e. agents of a nature superior to man; performing the divine commands, in relation to mankind. Matt. 25: 31. 1 King 22: 19. Gen. 22: 11. Heb. 1: 14. &c. 6. The great Angel between God and man; i. e. the deputed Agent of God, eminently so. Gal. 4: 14. Not to extend this very delicate subject too far, I is sufficient, if this mode of representing it excite the reader's consideration. We should be cautious of intruding into things not seen. C. TAYLOR.

Whosoever then first stepped in. This circumstance is only shown that the healing quality of the water was not natural, but one with which it was miraculously endowed.

5 And a certain man was there, which had an infirmity ^a thirty and eight years.

6 When Jesus saw him lie, ^b and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, he saith unto him, ^c Will thou be made whole?

7 The impotent man answered him, Sir, ^d I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool; but while I am coming another step-peth down ^e before me.

8 Jesus saith unto him, ^f Rise, take up thy bed, and walk.

9 And ^g immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: ^h and on the same day was the sabbath.

h 14, 9:1-21, Mark 9:21, Luke 8:43, 13:16, Acts 3:2, 4:22, 9:33, 14:8, 17:17, Heb. 4:13-15, 10:1, 11:1, 12:1, Jer. 13:27, Luke 18:41, 19:41, 22:36, Ps. 72:12, 142:4, 2 Cor. 1:8-10, 4:1, 1 Cor. 9:24, 11 Matt. 9:6-7, Mark 2:11-12, Luke 5:24-25, Acts 9:34, 14 Matt. 1:21-42, 5:29-41, 12:10, 52, Acts 3:7-8, 13 Matt. 12:7-23, 9:14, Matt. 12:10-13, Mark 3:2-4, Luke 13:10-16,

and tender compassion: and the world, which was to seek and save the sick and wounded. There was a great multitude of cripples at Bethesda, but Christ singled out this man from the rest, because he was *senior* of the house, and in a more deplorable condition than the rest; Christ delights to help the helpless; and hath mercy on *whom He will have mercy*. Perhaps his companions insulted him, because he had been often disappointed of a cure, therefore Christ took him for his patient: it is his honor to side with the weakest, and bear up those whom He sees run down.

He knew how long he had lain in this condition. Those that have been long in affliction, may comfort themselves with this, that God keeps account *how long, and knows our frame*.

He asked him, *Will thou be made whole?* A strange question to be asked one that had been so long ill. Some would not be made whole, because their sores serve them to beg by, and for an excuse for idleness; but this man was as unable to *go begging* as to *work*, yet Christ expressed thus his own pity and concern. Christ is tenderly inquisitive concerning the desires of those that are in affliction, and is willing to know their *petition*; 'What shall I do for you?' He tried him whether he would be beholden to Him for a cure, whom ^a he great were so prejudiced against. He would teach him to value the mercy, ^b which excites in Him desires after it. People are not willing to be cured of their sins, and are loath to part with them. If this point were but gained, the work were half done, for Christ is willing; Matt. 8:3.

The poor man renews his complaint, and sets forth the misery of his case, which makes his cure the more illustrious; (p. 7.) *Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool.* He seems to take Christ's question as an imputation of carelessness; 'If thou hadst had a mind to be healed, thou wouldst have got into the healing waters long before now.' 'No, Master,' saith he, 'it is not for want of a good will, but of a good friend; I have done what I could to help myself, but in vain; for no one will help me.'

He does not think of any other way of being cured than by these waters, and desires to be helped into them; therefore, when Christ cured him, his imagination could not contribute to it, for he thought of no such thing.

He complains for want of friends; *I have no man to do me that kindness.* One would think that some who had been healed, would have lent him a hand; but it is common for the poor to be destitute of friends; *no man careth for thy soul*. To the sick and impotent, it is as true a piece of charity to work for them, as to relieve them: thus the poor are capable of being charitable to one another, though we seldom find that they are so; I speak it to their shame.

It was a type of the Messiah, who is the Fountain opened; and was intended to raise people's expectations of the *Sun of righteousness*, that rises with healing under his wings. These waters had formerly been used for purifying, now for healing, to signify both the *cleansing and curing* virtue of the blood of Christ, which *heals all our diseases*. The waters of Siloam, which filled this pool, signified the kingdom of David, and of Christ the Son of David; (Isa. 9: 6.) fitly, therefore, have they this *sovereign* virtue. Regeneration is to us as Bethesda's pool, healing our spiritual diseases; not at certain seasons, but at all times. *Whoever will, let them come*.

The patient on whom this cure was wrought, had been infirm thirty-eight years.

His disease was grievous; he had lost the use of his limbs, at least on one side, as is usual in palsies. It is sad to have the body so disabled, that, instead of being the soul's instrument, it is become, even in the affairs of this life, its burden. What reason have we to thank God for bodily strength, to use it for Him, and to pity those who are his prisoners!

The duration of it was tedious, thirty-eight years: he was lame longer than most live. Many are so long disabled, that, as the Psalmist complains, they seem to be made in vain; for suffering, not for service; born to be always dying. Shall we complain of one wearisome night, or one ill fit, who perhaps for many years have scarcely known what it has been to be a day sick, when many others, better than we, have scarcely known what it has been to be a day well? Mr. Baxter's note on this passage is very affecting:—'How great a mercy was it, to live thirty-eight years under God's wholesome discipline. Oh my God, I thank Thee for the like discipline of fifty-eight years; how safe a life is this, in comparison of full prosperity and pleasure!'

Jesus saw him lie. When Christ came to Jerusalem, He visited not the palaces, but the hospitals, which is an instance of his humility

and an indication of his design in coming into it as he had been *disused*. He, who this minute was able to carry his bed, the next minute was able to turn in his bed, the next minute was able to carry his bed. The man sick of the palsy (Matt. 9: 6.) was bid *go to his house*, but probably this man had no house; the hospital was his home; therefore he is bidden to *rise, and walk*. This also proclaimed the cure; for, being the Sabbath, every one would inquire what was the meaning of it; thereby the notice of the miracle would spread, to the honor of God. Christ would thus witness against the elders, who had stretched the law of the sabbath beyond its intention; and would likewise show that He was *Lord of the sabbath*, and had power to alter and overrule the law. Joshua, and the host of Israel, marched about Jericho on the sabbath, when God commanded them; so did this man carry his bed, in obedience to a command. It may become a work of necessity or mercy, to carry a bed on the sabbath; but here it was a work of piety, being designed purely for the glory of God. He would hereby try the faith of his patient. By carrying his bed publicly, he exposed himself to censure, and was liable to be *scourged in the synagogue*. Now will he run the venture, in obedience to Christ? Yes, Those that have been healed by Christ's word, should be ruled by his word, whatever it cost them.

Immediately he was made whole, took up his bed, and walked. He felt the power of Christ's word healing him; *Immediately he was made whole*. What a joyful surprise was this to find himself suddenly so strong, so able to help himself; what a new world was he in, in an instant! Nothing is too hard for Christ. He obeyed Christ's word. He took up his bed *and walked*, and did not care who blamed or threat-

He bewails his infelicity, that often when he was coming, another stepped in before him. But a step between him and a cure, and yet he continues impotent. Note—had the charity to say, 'Your case is worse than mine, do you go now, I will stay till the next time.' Every one for himself. Having been so often disappointed, he begins to despair, and now is Christ's time to come to his relief; He delights to help in desperate cases. Observe, this man speaks of the unkindness of those about him, without any peevish reflections. As we should be thankful, for kindness, so we should be patient under the greatest contempts; and, let our resentments be ever so just, our expressions should ever be calm. And further, to his praise, though he had waited so long, still he continued lying by the pool-side, hoping that help would come, Hab. 2: 3.

He is bidden to *rise and walk*; a strange command to an *impotent* man, long disabled; but this word was the vehicle of a divine power; it commanded the disease to be gone, nature to be strong; but is expressed as a command to him to *bestir himself*. He must *rise and walk*, that is, attempt it, and in the essay he should receive strength. The conversion of a sinner is the cure of a chronic disease; this is ordinarily done by a word of command; *Turn and live; make ye a new heart*; which no more supposes a power in us to do it, without the grace of God, than this supposed such a power in the impotent man. But if he had not attempted to help himself, he had not been cured, and must have borne the blame; it does not therefore follow, that, when he did rise and walk, it was by his own strength; no, it was by the power of Christ, and He must have all the glory. Christ did not bid him go into the waters, but *rise and walk*. Christ did that for us, which the law could not do, and set that aside.

He is bidden to *take up his bed*, to make it appear that it was a perfect cure, and miraculous; for he did not recover by degrees, but from extreme impotency stepped into the highest bodily strength; he was able to carry as great a load as any porter that had been as long used to it as he had been *disused*. He, who this minute was not able to turn in his bed, the next minute was able to carry his bed. The man sick of the palsy (Matt. 9: 6.) was bid *go to his house*, but probably this man had no house; the hospital was his home; therefore he is bidden to *rise, and walk*. This also proclaimed the cure; for, being the Sabbath, every one would inquire what was the meaning of it; thereby the notice of the miracle would spread, to the honor of God. Christ would thus witness against the elders, who had stretched the law of the sabbath beyond its intention; and would likewise show that He was *Lord of the sabbath*, and had power to alter and overrule the law. Joshua, and the host of Israel, marched about Jericho on the sabbath, when God commanded them; so did this man carry his bed, in obedience to a command. It may become a work of necessity or mercy, to carry a bed on the sabbath; but here it was a work of piety, being designed purely for the glory of God. He would hereby try the faith of his patient. By carrying his bed publicly, he exposed himself to censure, and was liable to be *scourged in the synagogue*. Now will he run the venture, in obedience to Christ? Yes, Those that have been healed by Christ's word, should be ruled by his word, whatever it cost them.

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Verse 5.
[And had an infirmity thirty and eight years.] 'What it was, the inspired writer does not say—probably it was a palsy: his case was deplorable—he was not able to go into the pool himself, and he had no man to help him. The length of the time he had been afflicted, makes the miracle of his cure the greater. There could have been no col-

lusion in this case; as his affliction had lasted thirty-eight years, he must have been known to multitudes: therefore he could not be a person prepared for the occasion. All Christ's miracles have been wrought in such a way, and on such persons and occasions, as absolutely to preclude all possibility of the suspicion of imposture.'

Dr. A. Clarke

0 The Jews there-
fore said unto him that
was cured, It is the
sabbath-day: it is not
lawful for thee to carry
thy bed.

11 He answered
them, He that made
me whole, the same
said unto me, Take up
thy bed, and walk.

12 Then asked they
him, What man is that,
which said unto thee,
Take up thy bed, and
walk?

13 And he that was
healed wist not who it
was: for Jesus had
conveyed himself a-
way, * a multitude be-
ing in that place.

14 Afterward Jesus
findeth him in the
temple, and said unto
him, Behold, thou art
made whole: sin no
more, lest a worse
thing come unto thee.
[Practical Observations.]

Ex. 20-8-11. 31:12-17. Neh. 13:
15-21. 1a. 58:13. Jer. 17:21, 27.
Mark 2:24. Luke 2:28. 23:56.
9:16-17. Mark 2:9-11.
a. Judg. 6:29-30. 1 Sam. 14:38-39.
Matt. 21:23. Rom. 10:2.
9:58. Luke 4:30. 24:51.
Or, from the multitude that was in,
a. Lev. 7:12. Ps. 9:13-14. 27:5. 66:
13-15. 107:20-22. 116:12-19. 118:
18, 19. 1a. 58:20-22. Neh. 9:23. 1
Pet. 4:3.
y. 5. Lxx 26:23, 24, 27, 28. 2 Chr. 28:
22. Matt. 12:45. Rev. 2:21-23.

ened him. The proof of our spiritual cure is our
rising and walking. Hath Christ healed our
spiritual diseases? Let us go where He sends
us, and take up whatever He lays upon us, and
walk before Him.

The Jews saw him carry his bed on the sab-
bath; and it was the sabbath that fell within
the passover-week, and therefore a high day,
ch. 19: 31. Christ needed not make any differ-
ence between sabbath-days and other days, for
He was always about his Father's business;
but He wrought many cures on that day,
perhaps to encourage his church to expect spiritual
favours from Him on the Christian sabbath.

Now here,
The Jews tell him that it was not lawful, v.
10. It does not appear whether they were
magistrates, who had power to punish, or com-
mon people who could only inform against
him; but thus far was commendable, that,
while they knew not by what authority he did
it, they were jealous for the honor of the Sab-
bath, and could not unconcernedly see it profan-
ed; like Nehemiah, ch. 13: 17.

The man justifies himself by a good warrant,
v. 11. 'I do it not in contempt of the Sabbath,
but in obedience to One, who, by making me
whole, hath given proof that He is greater. He
that could make me whole, no doubt might com-
mand me to carry my bed; He that could over-
rule the powers of nature, no doubt might over-
rule a positive law. He that was so kind as to
make me whole, would not be so unkind as to
bid me do what is sinful.' Christ, by curing
another paralytic, proved his power to forgive
sin, here to give law; if his pardons are valid,
his edicts are so, and his miracles prove both.

The Jews inquire further, What man is that?
How industriously they overlooked that which
might be a ground of their faith in Christ.
They inquire not, 'Who made thee whole?'
While they caught at that which might reflect
upon Christ; (What man is that who said unto
thee, Take up thy bed?) they would have the
patient witness against the Physician, and be
his betrayer. In their question, they resolve to
look upon Christ as a mere man. For though

He gave such convincing proofs, they were
resolved that they would never own Him to be
the Son of God. They resolved to look upon
Him as a bad man. He who bid this man carry
his bed, whatever divine commission He might
produce, was certainly a delinquent, and as such,
they resolve to prosecute Him. What man is
that who durst give such orders?

The poor man was unable to give them any
account of Him; He wist not who He was.

Christ was unknown to him, when He healed
him. Probably he had heard of Jesus, but had
never seen Him, and therefore could not tell
that this was He. Note, Christ doth man-
y a good turn for those that know Him not,
Isa. 45: 4, 5. He enlightens, quickens, com-
forts us, and we wist not who He is; nor are
we aware how much we receive daily by his
mediation. This man, being unacquainted with
Christ, could not actually believe in Him for a
cure: but Christ knew the dispositions of his
soul, and suited his favors to them, as to the
blind man in a like case, ch. 9: 36. Our cove-
nant with God takes rise, not so much from our
knowledge of Him, as from his knowledge of
us. We know God, or rather, are known of
Him, Gal. 4: 9.

For the present, He kept Himself unknown;
for as soon as He had wrought the cure, He
conveyed himself away. He made himself un-
known; (so some read it;) a multitude being in
that place. This is mentioned, to show, First,
How Christ conveyed Himself away—by retir-
ing into the crowd, so as not to be distinguish-
ed. He that was the Chief of ten thousand,
often made Himself one of the throng. It is
sometimes the lot of those who have by their
services signalized themselves, to be levelled
with the multitude, and overlooked. Or, Sec-
ondly, Why He conveyed Himself away: be-
cause there was a multitude there, and He in-
dustriously avoided both the applause of those
who admired the miracle, and the censure of
those who would censure Him as a sabbath-
breaker. Those that are active for God must
expect evil report and good report; it is wise to
keep out of the hearing of both; lest by the one

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-14. The earth appears to a considerate mind, as a
'Bethesda,' a great hospital, full of those whom sin has made
miserable, and to whom the compassion of God affords the
means of relief. As therefore 'his mercies are over all his
works,' and even those, who most deserve misery, experience
his goodness during their continuance here; the mercy of man
should also coincide, and we should endeavor to alleviate the
sufferings of the vilest, and do them whatever good we can.
Medicines are created by our offended God, to relieve diseases
which all originate from sin: and we should attempt to render
the poor partakers of this benefit. In this view every hospital,
or dispensary, is a 'Bethesda,' and would more completely
deserve that name, if proper means were diligently employed,
or doing good to the soul, as well as of healing the body. Yet
how few, who in this manner obtain relief, are found in the
house of God, offering the sacrifice of thanksgiving! How
few of them live thenceforth to his glory! How few take
warning to 'sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto them!'
But the place, where the Gospel is preached, is the true 'Be-
thesda': thither the poor and helpless should repair, and hope
and wait for a cure, whatever their spiritual maladies be, or
however inveterate. Though the miracles of converting grace,
which better ages witnessed, are not generally vouchsafed
among us; yet we still see instances of such as, by washing
in 'the Fountain' which God hath opened, are made whole of
the most desperate maladies. All the power indeed is of God;
yet those who would have the benefit must be watchful, ear-
nest, and patient; (Note, Luke 13: 22-30, v. 24.) they must
not be dilatory, but make haste to be clean; and then they

should endeavor in their turn to assist others. Yet, if any
meet disappointments, they should still seek; not neglecting
the means of grace, or ceasing to labor and pray for the bless-
ing: for sometimes they, whose case seems most hopeless, and
who are ready to give up all for lost, are made partakers of
mercy and spiritual health, when they least expected them.—
The Savior perfectly knows both how long men have been con-
tracting habits of sin, and how long seeking the help and joy of
his salvation: and He continually attends in his houses of mer-
cy, to inquire of sinners, whether they will be made whole. Yet
it is a common case, for men to go thither, who are in love with
their disease, and only desire to excuse the loathsomeness of
it! But if we earnestly desire to be healed and saved in his
way, we shall certainly at length obtain that blessing.—When
He speaks, power attends his word; and the ability of believ-
ers to perform such duties as are impracticable to others, and
once were so to them, will best evidence their cure, and recom-
mend their Physician. Though scribes and Pharisees object
and revile, yet redeemed sinners must honor their Benefactor;
and follow his directions. By attending on the ordinances of
God, they obtain further acquaintance with Him; but without
deliverance from sin, there can be no well-grounded hopes of
escaping 'the wrath to come.'—Even in this life, how many
days, nay, years of pain, do some wicked men endure, through
their momentary unlawful indulgences! And if such afflic-
tions are heavy and tedious, whilst year after year men are con-
fined to their beds, and made a burden to themselves and
others; how dreadful, beyond all conception, will be the ever-
lasting punishment of the wicked!

SCOTT.

Verse 10.

Th. It was forbidden to carry even a bundle on the Sabbath, is plain
from Jer. 17: 21. What sort of "burdens" those mentioned in that text
were, may be learnt from Neh. 13: 15, seq. Now the Jewish doctors
too superstitiously interpreted this law, so as to prohibit the carrying of
the lightest weight. But it appears from the Jewish writers, that there
were cases in which it was permitted to carry burdens on the Sabbath.
Our Lord indeed felt no desire to impugn their rigid observance of the
law; but He testified, both by words and deeds, his disapprobation
of their idle superstition, so destructive of all solid and real virtue.

BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 11.

The Jews maintained, that by the command of a prophet, the sab-
bath might be broken, appealing to the example of those, who, by the
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orders of Joshua, stormed Jericho. So the Jewish rabbins. "Certainly
if a prophet shall say unto thee, Transgress the words of the law,
hear him, except in a matter which involves idolatry." This opinion
the man seems to have had in view.

KUNOEL.

Verse 12.

'Only fixing on what seemed liable to exception.' They do not
ask, Who is it that has made thee well? but, Who is it that bade
thee to take up thy couch upon the sabbath-day? though he had just
told them it was the author of his cure that gave him that command;
for all that they proposed was, not to hear of any good that had been
done, to engage their admiration and applause, but to lay hold of some
occasion to find fault, to gratify the pride and malice of a censorious
temper. I am obliged to Grotius for this delicate remark, which will
illustrate their partiality and malignity.

DOVERIDGE.

5 The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus which had made him whole.

16 And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay him, because he had done these things on the sabbath-day.

17 But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

18 Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God.

z 4:29, 9:11, 12, Mark 1:45.
a 12, 9:15, 25, 30, 34.
b 15:20, Acts 9:4, 5.
c 13, 7:19, 22, 25, 10:23, Matt. 12:13,
14, Mark 3:8, Luke 6:11.
d 9:4, N. 10, Gen. 2:1, 2, Ps. 65:5,
Is. 40:26, Matt. 10:29, Acts 14:17,
17, 1 Cor. 15:2, 7, Col. 1:16, 17,
Heb. 1:3.
e 7:22, 23, Matt. 12:5.
f 23, 8:54, 58, 10:30, 33, 14:9, 23,
Zach. 13:7, Phil. 2:6, Rev. 2:22,
23, 22:1, 3.

sin; whether of some remarkable sin, or only of sin in general, we cannot tell; we know that sin is the cause of sickness, Ps. 107:17, 18. Some observe that Christ did not mention sin to any of his patients but this man, and one other, in like manner diseased, Mark 2:5. While those chronic diseases lasted, they prevented the outward acts of many sins, and now that the disability was removed, they had the more need to be watchful. Christ intimates to him, that those who are eased of the sensible punishment of sin, are in danger of returning to sin, unless divine grace dry up the fountain. When the trouble which damned up the current is over, the waters will return to their old course;

Verses 15, 16.

When the man had discovered to whom he owed his cure, he went and told the Jews, 'partly out of gratitude to own the author of his cure, and partly to excuse himself, as only doing this at the command of so great a prophet.' Wholly. It is likely that Jesus was brought before the sanhedrim, and spoke what follows before that assembly. (Marg. Ref. 33.—Note, 1: 19—23.) This view of the subject makes the discourse peculiarly interesting, and there is a dignity in it which indeed is inexpressible.

Verses 17, 18.

God finished the work of creation in six days, and rested on the seventh. (Notes. Gen. 2: 2, 3. Ex. 20: 8—10.) But He incessantly works in upholding the universe, and in continuing the course of nature. In this work the Son concurs, by a union of will and operation, 'upholding all things by the word of his power.' (Note, Heb. 1: 3, 4. His work also as Mediator was to be conducted by the same unremitted action, as that of sustaining the universe: this miracle was a part of the work well suited to the Sabbath; and He claimed the prerogative of carrying it forward on that day, as well as on others, even as the Father conducts his providential operations on every day alike. (Marg. Ref. d.) Unless we suppose this, or something to this purpose, to have been the Lord's meaning, there could be no argument in his plea; for the example of the Creator in 'working hitherto' can be no reason why a creature, a servant, a mere man, should do as he pleased on the Sabbath-day; nor did any of the prophets ever advance a claim of that kind. The divine power of the miracle proved Jesus to be 'the Son of God'; and He insisted on the prerogative of working with and like unto his Father, as He saw good, without giving any account of his conduct. (Matt. 12: 8.) These ancient enemies of Christ plainly understood Him, (though modern opposers of his Deity cannot) and were thus rendered more violent in their prosecution, not only charging Him with sabbath-breaking, but with blasphemy, in calling God his own Father, and making Himself equal with God in perfection and operation. 'If God my Father, working on the Sabbath, doth not violate the Sabbath, neither do I, when I work on the Sabbath, violate the Sabbath. This conclusion cannot stand, unless the quality of the persons of the Father and of the Son be determined. 'Making Himself equal with God.' These are the words of the evangelist, not only repeating, out approving what the Jews rightly collected from the words of Christ. Beza. 'The whole nation of the Jews thought God their Father, (8: 41.) and they could not have accounted it blasphemy to have used that phrase, had they not interpreted it in so high and appropriating a sense.' Doddridge. (Marg. Ref. e. f.—Notes, 10: 25—33.)

(17.) 'This way of arguing from his Father's working to his own, plainly intimates that He speaks of Himself as one with his Father in

we be exalted, and by the other depressed. Christ left the miracle to commend itself, and the man on whom it was wrought, to justify it.

At their next interview, Christ found him in the temple, the place of public worship; in our attendance on public worship, we may expect to meet Christ, and improve our acquaintance with Him. Observe, Christ went to the temple; though He had many enemies, yet He appeared in public, because there He bore testimony to divine institutions, and had opportunity of doing good. [2.] The man that was cured, went to the temple; there Christ found him the same day, as it would seem; thither he straightway went, because he had, by his infirmity, been so long detained thence: perhaps he had not been there for thirty-eight years, and therefore as soon as ever the embargo is off, his first visit shall be to the temple, as Hezekiah intimates his shall be; Isa. 38: 22. He had, by his recovery, a good errand thither; he went to return thanks. When God has restored us our health, we ought to attend Him with solemn praises; (Ps. 116: 18, 19.) and the sooner the better, while the sense of the mercy is fresh. He had, by carrying his bed, seemed to condemn the Sabbath; he would thus honor it, and made conscience of sabbath-sanctification. Works of necessity and mercy are allowed; but when they are over, we must go to the temple.

When Christ has cured us, He has not done with us; He now applies Himself to the healing of his soul, and this by the word.

Behold, thou art made whole. He found himself made whole, yet Christ calls his attention to it. Consider it seriously; how strange, how cheap, how easy the cure; behold and wonder: let the impressions of it never be lost, Isa. 63: 9.

Being made whole, sin no more. This implies that his disease was the punishment of

nature and operation; otherwise the argument loses its force and beauty: for if a mere creature who only receives a commission from God, as for instance, a prophet or an apostle, were to say, God does whatever He pleases, and therefore, I have a right to do whatever I please likewise, on the Sabbath-day, who would not see the reasoning to be inconclusive and absurd? But understanding our Lord to speak of Himself as one in nature and operation with the Father, in all his works, the argument is irresistible; and it is evident from the following verse, that the Jews understood Him in this peculiar and exalted sense.

GYUSE.

'The words of Christ from their brevity are not a little obscure; inasmuch that Rosenm. thinks our evangelist has not recorded the whole of the answer. For it is not to be supposed (says Schoetigen) that Christ delivered so abrupt an answer. The occasion (continues he) of the words was the Sabbath. Hence Christ says, "As my Father on the Sabbath-day perpetually worketh in the reign of his power, so also do I in the reign of grace." The first is plain, and God could not, by the Jewish traditions, be held guilty of the violation of the Sabbath: hence neither could Christ. Of this whole conference Schoetigen gives the following analytical scheme: Occasion, v. 18. Proposition: I am the Son of God; which, though not expressed, is implied in each of the verses. And this is proved, 1. From my works, and that, 1st. in general, Because I do the work of my Father, v. 19, 20. 2dly, in specie, Because I exercise judgment, (v. 21, 22,) and raise the dead, v. 25—30. Use or application of this first part; Therefore worship ye the Son, and hear his words, v. 23, 24. II. From the testimony of my Father, (v. 31, 32, 36—38.) and this is amplified from a comparison with that of John the Baptist, v. 33—35. Use or application of this part: 1st. Examine the Scriptures, and especially Moses, in order that ye may believe on me, v. 39—42, 46, 47. 2dly. Beware of false Christs, v. 43. 3dly. Seek the glory of God, and not your own, v. 44. 4thly. Account me not as your enemy, v. 45.'

BLOOMFIELD.

(18.) 'The Jews themselves often called God their Father, and would never have found fault with, much less charged blasphemy upon any, that came to them under the character of a prophet, for using the same style; and therefore they must be supposed to understand our Lord, as speaking of God as his Father, in a sense superior to any covenant or office-relation, and in a sense so peculiar to Himself as to estimate his partaking of the same nature and perfections with Him, or else there would have been no room for their imagining or suggesting, that, by his claim of relation to God as his Father, He made Himself equal with God.'

GYUSE.

'Called God his own Father This is the plain and literal sense of the original.'

19 Then answered Jesus, and said unto them, ^aVerily, verily, I say unto you, ^bThe Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: ^cfor what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

20 For ^kthe Father loveth the Son, ^land sheweth him all things that himself doeth: and he will shew him ^mgreater works than these, that ye may marvel.

21 For ⁿas the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; ^oeven so the Son quickeneth whom he will.

when arraigned before them; whether on the same day, or after, does not appear.

He answered them. This supposes that He had something laid to his charge: *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.* In answer to the like charge, He had pleaded the example of David's eating the shew-bread, of the priest's slaying the sacrifices, and of the people's watering their cattle, on the Sabbath; but here He goes higher, and alleges the example of his Father and his divine authority, waving all other pleas, and abides by what He had mentioned, Matt. 12: 8. *The Son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath.* He here enlarges on it.

He pleads that He was the *Son of God*, in calling God his Father; and if so, his holiness was unquestionable, and his sovereignty uncontested, and He might make what alterations He pleased of the divine law. *Surely they will reverence the Son.*

My Father worketh hitherto. The example of God's resting on the seventh day, is made the ground of observing it as a sabbath. God rested only from such work as He had done the six days before; otherwise He *worketh hitherto*. He is every day working, sabbath-days and week-days; upholding and governing all creatures; therefore, when we are appointed to rest on the Sabbath, we are not restrained from doing that which has a direct tendency to the glory of God; as the man's carrying his bed had.

I work; not only therefore *I may work, like Him*, but *I also work with Him*. As God created all things by Christ, so He supports and governs all by Him, Heb. 1: 3. This sets what He does, above all exception; he that is so great a Worker, must needs be an uncontrollable Governor; He that does all, is Lord of all, and therefore *Lord of the Sabbath*: which particular branch of his authority He was shortly to show further, in the change of the day from the seventh to the first.

The Jews sought the more to kill Him. His defence was made his offence, as if by justifying himself He had made bad worse. Note, Those that will not be enlightened by the word of Christ, will be exasperated by it; and nothing more vexes the enemies of Christ, than his asserting his authority; see Ps. 2: 3-5. They sought to kill Him.

Because He had broken the Sabbath: for let Him say what He would, they are resolved to find Him guilty of sabbath-breaking. When malice and envy sit upon the bench, reason and justice may be silent at the bar, for whatever they can say, will be overruled.

He had said also, *That God was his Father.* They pretend a jealousy for God's honor, as for the Sabbath, and charge Christ with it as a heinous crime, that He made himself equal with God; and a heinous crime it had been, if He had not really been so. It was the sin of Lucifer, *I will be like the Most High.*

This was justly inferred from what He said. He had said that He worked with his Father, by the same authority and power; and, hereby, He made himself equal with God. Behold, the Jews understand what the Ariens do not.

Yet it was unjustly imputed to Him as an offence, for He is God, equal with the Father; (Phil. 2: 6.) and therefore Christ, in answer to this charge,

Verse 19.

The Son can do nothing of Himself. ^aBecause of his inseparable Union with the Father; nor can the Father do any thing of Himself, because of his unity with the Son. *What things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son.* God does nothing but what Christ does. What God does is the work of God, and proper to no creature.—Jesus does whatsoever God does, and therefore is no created being. The conclusion from the argument is, "If I have broken the Sabbath, so may God also, for I can do nothing but what I see Him doing."

Dr. A. CLARKE.

^bWhen Moses says, *God rested on the seventh day from all his works*, (Gen. 2: 2.) and Jesus says, (v. 17.) *My Father worketh hitherto*, there is no opposition or contradiction, for Moses is speaking of the works of creation, and Jesus of the works of providence.

Verse 20.

Sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth. ^cIt refers to the ample and comprehensive knowledge which the Son has, of the whole plan of the Father's counsels, in their mutual relations and dependence; whereas the prophets, and apostles too, had, in comparison of this, but limited and contracted views. Compare Is. 40: 10. where it is said, (as we have no room to doubt,) of Christ, and probably in this sense—his *work is before Him*. DODDGE.

Verses 21-23.

(21.) *Whom He will.* Thus it is also said of the Holy Spirit, "Dividing to every man severally as He will." 1 Cor. 12: 11. Is anything in the least degree like this spoken in Scripture, of prophets, apostles, angels, or archangels? (Notes, 11: 20-27, v. 28. Deut. 32: 37-38, v. 39. 1 Sam. 2: 4-8, v. 6.)

^dIs there not here an equality of power and honor ascribed to the [52]

does not except against the imputed as strained or forced, but makes out his claim, and proves that He is equal with God in power and glory.

Christ in these verses explains, and afterwards confirms, his commission, as Mediator and Plenipotentiary between God and man. And as the honors He is hereby entitled to, are such as it is not fit for any creature to receive, so the work He is intrusted with, it is not possible for any creature to go through with, and therefore He is God equal with the Father.

He is one with the Father in all He does as Mediator; there was a perfect understanding between them in the whole matter. it is ushered in with a solemn preface, *Verily, verily, I say unto you.* This speaks what is said to be, (1.) Very awful and great, and such as commands the most serious attention. (2.) Very sure, and such as commands an unfeigned assent. (3.) It intimates that the matters are purely of divine revelation; things which Christ has told us, and which we could not otherwise know.

The Son conforms to the Father; He Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do, for these things does the Son. The Lord Jesus, as Mediator, is obedient to his Father's will; so that He can do nothing of Himself, in the same sense as it is said, *God cannot lie, cannot deny Himself*, which speaks the perfection of his truth, not any imperfection in his strength; so Christ was so entirely devoted to his Father's will, that it was impossible for Him in any thing to act separately. He is obedient of his Father's counsel; He can, He will, do nothing but what He sees the Father do. No man can find out the work of God, but the only-begotten Son, who sees what He does, is intimately acquainted with his purposes, and has the plan of them ever before Him. What He did as Mediator, was the exact transcript of what the Father designed when He formed the plan of our redemption, and settled those measures which never could need to be altered; it was the copy of that great original; Christ as Moses, did all according to the pattern shewed Him in the mount. This is expressed in the present tense, what He sees the Father do, for the same reason, that, when He was upon earth, it was said, He is in heaven, and is in the bosom of the Father; as He was even then by his divine nature present in heaven, so the things done in heaven were present to his knowledge. What the Father did in his counsels, the Son still had his eye upon, as David in spirit spoke of Him, *I have seen the Lord always before me*, Ps. 16: 8. Further; Yet He is equal with the Father in working, for what things soever the Father does, these also does the Son likewise; He did not such things, but the same things; and He did them in the same manner, with the same authority, wisdom, energy. Does the Father enact, repeal, and alter, positive laws?

Father and Son? It is perfectly plain, that, so far as the "committing of judgment to the Son" is concerned, it must be to the mediatorial Person; to one who, in respect to office, is subordinate to God. But, so far as qualifications, requisite to perform the duties that commitment requires, are concerned, the Savior is divine, and the honor to be claimed by Him, the same with that which the Divinity claims. Multitudes of prophets, as commissioned by God, have borne his messages of mercy and judgment to his people; but to whom among them all, did He grant the privilege of being honored, as Himself? I cannot well conceive how our Savior could have used the words above cited, without exposing Himself to renewed and just accusations of the Jews for blaspheming, unless He were really divine. The Jews had accused Him of violating the Sabbath, because He had on that day healed the impotent man. The reply of Christ to them was, "*My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*" which, if I understand the argument, must mean, *My Father has never ceased to work on the Sabbath*, in carrying on all the operations of the natural and moral world; He supercedes the law of the Sabbath. I have the same right. "*The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath.*" The Jews then sought to slay Him, because, as they affirmed, He had violated the Sabbath, and said that God was his Father, making Himself equal with God. In reply to their bitter accusations, Jesus made use of the language above cited; telling them He did whatever the Father did, and was entitled to the same honor. Was this relinquishing his claim to the equality with God, which the Jews had charged Him with assuming? Or was it speaking out plainly, that He wrought on the Sabbath by the same right that the Father did, and was entitled to the same defence? Can his words, interpreted without regard to any preconceived theory, be made to signify less than this? Phil. St. AUST.

22 For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son:

23 That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father which hath sent him.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.

p 27. Ps. 97-98. 50:3-6. 96:13. 98: 9. Ec. 11:9. 12:14. Matt. 16:27. 25:1-46. 28:18. Acts 10:42. 17: 31. Rom. 2:16. 14:10-12. 2 Cor. 1:10. 2 Thes. 1:7-10. 2 Tim. 4:1. 1 Pet. 4:5. Rev. 20:11, 12.

q 16:1. Ps. 146:3-5. Jer. 17:5-7. Matt. 12:21. Rom. 15:12. 2 Cor. 1:9. Eph. 1:12, 13. 2 Tim. 1:12. 2 Pet. 3:18. Rev. 5:8-14. Matt. 10:37. 22:37. 1 Cor. 16:22. Eph. 6:24. Luke 12:8, 9. Rom. 6: 22. 14:7-9. 1 Cor. 6:19. 10:31. 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. Tit. 2:14-15. 4:8. 11. 49:15, 21. Zech. 9:9. Tit. 2:13. 3:4-5. 2 Pet. 1:1.

r 15:23, 24. 16:14, 15. 17:10. Matt. 12:27. Rom. 9:9. 1 John 2:23. 2 John 2.

s 3:16, 18, 38. 6:40, 47. 8:51. 11:26. 12:44. 20:31. Mark 16:16. Rom. 10:11-13. 1 Pet. 1:21. 1 John 5:1, 11-13.

t 10:7-30. Rom. 8:1, 16, 17, 28-30, 33. 35. 1 Thes. 5:9. 2 Thes. 2:13, 14. 1 Pet. 1:3.

u 1 John 3:14.

they will prove that Christ said not amiss, when He made Himself equal with God.

Observe what is said concerning the Mediator's power to raise the dead, and give life.

As the Father raiseth up the dead, so the Son quickeneth whom He will.

It is God's prerogative to raise the dead, and give life: He first breathed into man the breath of life, and made him a living soul; see Deut. 32:39. *Sam.* 2:6. Ps. 68:20. Rom. 4:17.

This God had done by the prophets Elijah and Elisha, to confirm their mission. A resurrection from the dead never lay in common nature, nor ever fell within the thought of those that studied only nature's power, one of whose received axioms was point-blank against it; *Existence, once extinguished, cannot be rekindled.* It was therefore ridiculed at Athens as absurd, Acts 17:32. It is purely the work of divine power, and the knowledge of it purely by divine revelation. This the Jews would own.

The Mediator is invested with this prerogative; *He quickens whom He will*; raises whom He will to life, and when He pleases. He does not enliven things by natural necessity, as the sun whose beams revive of course; but acts as a free Agent, has the dispensing of his power in his own hand, and is never either constrained, or restrained, in the use of it. As He has the power, so He has the wisdom and sovereignty, of a God; *the keys of the grave and of death*, (Rev. 1:18.) not as a servant, to open and shut as he is bidden; He has the *key of David*, which He is Master of, Rev. 3:7. An absolute price is described by this; (Dan. 6:19.) *Whom he would he slew, or kept alive*; it is strictly true of Christ.

His ability to do it. Therefore He has power to quicken whom He will, because He has life in Himself, as the Father has, v. 26.

Verses 24-27.

It is not conceivable that a mere creature can 'have life in himself.' In the same sense, as the eternal self-existent Father has, and for the purpose of communicating it to others, as it is here evidently meant; but that the Son of God (being, according to his divine nature, self-existent, eternal, and One with the Father,) should, as Mediator, have been given to Him by covenant, on the condition of his humiliation and expiatory sufferings, 'to have life in Himself,' for the benefit of those, who had forfeited life, who were dead in sin, and doomed to eternal death by the law, and whose Surety He was become, that they might be quickened, pardoned, and saved, consistently with the honor of divine justice and holiness; is very intelligible and important; for this was, to have life 'in Himself,' for other purposes and in another manner, than His had as 'God over all blessed for evermore.' (Notes, 3:

Does He overrule the course of nature, know men's hearts? So does the Son. The power of the Mediator is a divine power.

The Father loveth the Son; He declared, *This is my beloved Son.* He had not only a good will to the undertaking, but infinite complacency in the Undertaker. Christ was hated of men, one whom the nation abhorred; (Isa. 49:7.) but He comforted himself with this, that his Father loved Him. He shows it,

In what He does communicate to Him; *He sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth.* The Father's measures in making and ruling the world are shewed to the Son, that He may take the same measures in framing and governing the church, which was to be a duplicate of the work of creation and providence, and is therefore called *the world to come.* He shows Him all things which He does, that is, which the Son does, so it might be construed; all that the Son does, is by direction from the Father; *He shews Him.*

He will show Him, that is, appoint and direct Him to do, greater works than these. Works of greater power than the curing of the impotent man; for He should raise the dead, and should Himself rise from the dead. By the use of means, a disease may possibly in time be cured; but nature can never, by the use of any means, raise the dead. Works of greater authority than warranting a man to carry his bed on the Sabbath. They thought that a daring attempt; but what was that to his abrogating the whole ceremonial law, and instituting new ordinances, which He would shortly do; *that ye may marvel.* Now they looked upon his works with indignation, but He will shortly do that which they will look upon with amazement, Luke 7:16. Many are brought to marvel at Christ's works, whereby He has the honor of them, who are not brought to believe, by which they would have the benefit of them.

He proves his equality with the Father, by specifying works which He does, that are the peculiar works of God. (1.) He does that which is the peculiar work of God's almighty power—*raising the dead, and giving life.* (2.) He does and shall do, the peculiar work of God's sovereign dominion,—*judge, and execute judgment.* These two are nearly connected; and what is said once, is repeated; put both together, and they said not amiss, when He made Himself equal with God.

It is certain that the Father has life in Himself. Not only He is self-existent, does not derive from, or depend upon, any other, (Exod. 3:14.) but a sovereign Giver of life; has the disposal of life and of all good; (for so life sometimes signifies;) He is to his creatures the Fountain of life, and all good; Author of their being and well-being; the living God, and the God of all living.

It is as certain that He has given to the Son to have life in Himself. As the Father is the Original of life, being the great Creator, so the Son, as Redeemer, is the Original of all spiritual life and good; is that to the church, that the Father is to the world; see 1 Cor. 8:6. Col. 1:19. The kingdom of grace, and all the life in that kingdom, are in the hand of the Redeemer, as the kingdom of providence is in the hand of the Creator; and as God, who gives being to all things, has his being of Himself, so Christ, who gives life, raised Himself to life by his own power, ch. 10:19. Having life in Himself, and being authorized to quicken whom He will, by virtue hereof there are, accordingly, two resurrections performed by his powerful word; both which are here spoken of.

1. A resurrection that *now is*, from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, by the power of Christ's grace. *The hour is coming, and now is.* It is a resurrection begun already, and to be carried on; *when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God.* This is plainly distinguished from the resurrection at the end of time, v. 28. This says nothing, as that does, of the dead in their graves, of all of them, and their coming forth. Some think this was fulfilled in Jairus's daughter, the widow's son, and Lazarus; and it is observable, that all whom Christ raised, were spoken to; *damsel, arise; Young man, arise; Lazarus, come forth;* whereas, those raised under the Old Testament, were raised not by a word, but other applications, 1 Kings 17:21. 2 Kings 4:34. 13:21. Some understand it of the souls of saints that rose with Christ; but we do not read of the *voice of the Son of God* calling them. I rather understand it of the power of the doctrine of Christ, for the quickening of the dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. 2:1. *The hour was coming, when dead souls should be made alive by the preaching of the Gospel, and a spirit of life from God accompanying it; it then was, while Christ was upon earth.* It may refer especially to the calling of the Gentiles, which is said to be as life from the dead, and some think, was prefigured by Ezekiel's vision, (ch. 37:1.) and foretold, Isa. 26:19. *They that were dead shall live.* But it is to be applied to all the success of the Gospel, among both Jews and Gentiles; an hour which still is, and is still coming, till all the elect be effectually called. Note, Sinners are destitute of spiritual life, dead to God, neither sensible of their misery, nor able to help themselves out of it. The conversion of a soul to God is its resurrection; when it begins to live to God, to breathe after, and move toward Him. It is by the *voice of the Son of God* that souls are raised to life; it is wrought by his power, and that power communicated by his word; *The dead shall be made to hear, to understand, and believe the voice of the Son of God.* The voice of Christ must be heard by us, that we may live by it. They that hear, and attend to what they hear, shall live. *Hear, and your soul shall live,* Isa. 55:3.

A resurrection yet to come, is spoken of, v. 28, 29. *Marvel not at this,* which I have said

27-26, v. 35, 36. Matt. 28:18.) In respect of the same undertaking, the Father had also given Him 'authority to execute judgment,' for the punishment of all his enemies, and the salvation of his people; because He, the Son of God, was also become 'the Son of man.' *Marg. Ref. b. c.—Notes, Rom. 14:7-9. Phil. 2:9-11.* It is evident that the office of 'Judge of all men' must require omniscience, omnipotence, infinite justice, truth, and perfection: these are absolutely incommunicable to any mere creature; and 'the Son of man' cannot be conceived capable of having this work absolutely committed to Him, and of properly executing it, but upon the supposition that He is 'the Son of God,' and equal with the Father. (Notes. 28-30. Matt. 25:34-46. 1 Cor. 4:3-5, v. 5. 2 Cor. 5:9-12, v. 10. 2 Thess. 1:5-10. Acts. 2:11-15.)

Storr.

25 Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^x The hour is coming, and now is, ^y when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.

26 For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself:

27 And ^b hath given him authority to execute judgment also, ^c because he is the Son of man.

28 ^d Marvel not at this: ^e for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice,

^x 4:23, 13:1, 17:1.
^y 1. Luke 9:60. 15:24, 32. Rom. 6:4. Eph. 2:1, 5. 5:14. Col. 2:13. Rev. 3:1.
^z Ex. 3:14. Ps. 36:9. 90:2. Jer. 10:10. Acts 17:25. 1 Tim. 1:17. 6:16.
^a 14. 4:10. 7:37, 38. 8:51. 11:26. 14:6, 19. 17:2, 3. 1 Cor. 15:45. Col. 3:3, 1. 1 John 1:1-3. Rev. 7:17. 2:6. 22:17.
^b See on 22. Ps. 2:6-9. 110:1, 2, 6. 1 Cor. 15:25. Eph. 1:20-23. 1 Pet. 3:22.
^c Dan. 7:13, 14. Phil. 2:7-11. Heb. 7:9-12.
^d 50. 37. Acts 3:12. 6:39, 40. 11:25. Job 19:25, 26. 18:19. Ec. 3:7, 10. Hos. 13:14. 1 Cor. 15:22, 42-54. Phil. 3:21. 1 Thes. 4:14-17. Rev. 20:12.

at the resurrection of men we find three voices spoken of, 1 Thess. 4: 16. The Lord shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the archangel; either Christ himself, the prince of the angels, or the commander-in-chief, under Him, of the heavenly hosts; and with the trumpet of God: the soldier's trumpet sounding the alarm of war, the Judge's trumpet publishing the summons to the court.

The effect of it; *They shall come forth* out of their graves; they shall arise out of the dust, and shake themselves from it; see Isa. 52: 1, 2, 11. But that is not all; they shall appear before Christ's tribunal; shall come forth as those that are to be tried; *come forth* to the bar, publicly to receive their doom.

They shall be raised to a state of happiness or misery, according to their character; according to what they did in the state of probation.

They that have done good, shall come forth to the resurrection of life; they shall live forever. Note, Whatever name men are called by, or whatever plausible profession they make, it will be well in the great day with those only, that have *done good*; have done that which is pleasing to God, and profitable to others. The resurrection will be a resurrection of life to those only, that have been sincere and constant in *doing good*. They shall not only be publicly acquitted, as we say a pardoned criminal has his life; but they shall be admitted into the presence of God, and that is better than life. To live is to be happy, and they shall be advanced above the fear of death; that is life indeed, in which mortality is swallowed up.

They that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation; they shall live again, to be forever dying. The Pharisees thought that the resurrection pertained only to the just, but Christ rectifies that mistake. Note, *Evil doers*, whatever they pretend, will be treated in the day of judgment as *evil men*. The resurrection will be to evil doers, who did not by repentance undo what they had done amiss, a resurrection of damnation. They shall come forth to be publicly convicted of rebellion against God, and publicly condemned to everlasting punishment; to be sentenced and sent to it without reprieve. Such will the resurrection be.

Concerning the Mediator's authority to execute judgment; as He has an almighty power, so He has a sovereign jurisdiction; and who so fit to preside in the great affairs of the other life, as He who is the Father and Fountain of life?

Christ's commission to the office of Judge, is twice spoken of here; (v. 22.) *He hath committed all judgment to the Son*: and again, (v. 27.) *He hath given Him authority*.

The Father judges no man; not that the Father has resigned the government, but is pleased to govern by Christ; so that man is not under the terror of dealing with God immediately, but has the comfort of access to Him by

a Mediator. The Father judges no man; He does not rule us by the mere right of creation, but by covenant, and by a Mediator. He has made us, He may do what He pleases with us, as the potter with the clay; but He does not do so, He draws us with the cords of a man. He does not determine our everlasting condition by the covenant of innocence, nor take the advantage He has against us for the violation of that covenant; the Mediator having undertaken to make a vicarious satisfaction, upon which the matter is referred to Him, and God is willing to enter upon a new treaty; not under the laws of the Creator, but the grace of the Redeemer.

He has committed all judgment to the Son, constituted Him Lord of all, (Acts 10: 36. Rom. 14: 9.) as Joseph in Egypt, Gen. 41: 40. This was prophesied of, Ps. 72: 1. Isa. 11: 2, 4. Jer. 23: 5. Mic. 5: 1-4. Ps. 67: 4-9; 13: 98: 9. All judgment is committed to our Lord; for He is intrusted with the providential kingdom; is Head over all things, (Eph. 1: 22.) Head of every man, 1 Cor. 11: 3. All things consist by Him, Col. 1: 17. He is empowered to make laws to bind conscience. I say unto you, is the form in which the statutes of the kingdom of heaven run; *Be it enacted by the Lord Jesus, and by his authority*. All the acts now in force are touched with his sceptre. He is authorized to settle the terms of the new covenant, to draw up the articles of peace between God and man; it is God in Christ that reconciles the world, and He has power to confer eternal life. The book of life is the Lamb's book; by his award we must stand or fall. He is commissioned to complete the war with the powers of darkness; to cast out and give judgment against the prince of this world, ch. 12: 31. He is commissioned not only to judge, but to make war, Rev. 19: 11. All that will fight for God against Satan, must enlist themselves under his banner. He is constituted sole Manager of the judgment of the great day. The ancients generally understood these words of that crowning act of his judicial power. The final and universal judgment is committed to the Son; it is the judgment-seat of Christ; the retinue is his, his mighty angels; He will try the causes, and pass the sentence, Acts 17: 31.

He has given Him authority to execute judgment also, v. 27. An authority to execute judgment; He has not only a legislative and judicial, but an executive power. The phrase here is used particularly for the judgment of condemnation, Jude 15. To execute judgment upon all; the same with taking vengeance, 2 Thess. 1: 8. The ruin of impenitent sinners comes from Christ; He that executes judgment upon them, is the same that would have wrought salvation for them; and there is no relief against the sentence of the Redeemer; salvation itself cannot save those whom the Savior condemns. That authority, the Father gave Him. Christ's authority as Mediator is delegated. He acts as the Father's Vicegerent, as the Lord's Anointed, the Lord's Christ.

All this redounds to the honor of Christ, acquitting Him from the guilt of blasphemy, in making Himself equal with God; and very much to the comfort of believers, who may with the greatest assurance venture their all in such hands.

Here are the reasons for which this commission was given Him

He is the Son of man; which speaks his humiliation and condescension. Man is a worm, the son of man a worm; yet this was the nature, this the character, which the Redeemer assumed, in pursuance of the counsels of love; to this low estate He stooped, and submitted to all the mortifications attending it, because it was his Father's will; in recompense therefore of this wonderful obedience, God did thus dignify Him. Because He condescended to be the

Verses 25, 29.
'Hereafter all mankind shall hear his voice at once, and be raised out of their graves, and stand before his judgment-seat. Let us then, in this our day, suffer these considerations to have their proper efficacy, in exciting us to a due preparation for that decisive hour. Let it

influence every thought, word, and action of our lives, to remember that the Judge standeth at the door; that the day approacheth when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and come forth to judgment.'

Rosa aka

22 And shal 'come forth; they that have 'done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.

[Practical Observations.]

30 I 'can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just: 'because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.

f Dan. 12:3, 3. Matt. 27:51—46. Acts 2:15

g Luke 14:14. Rom. 2:6—10. Gal. 6: 8—10. 1 Tim. 6:18, 19. Heb. 13:16. 1 Pet. 3:11. 1 Th. 5:19. 2 Cor. 9:10. 10: 1. 10:16. Gen. 18:25. Ps. 66:13. Is. 11:3, 4. Rom. 12:5. k 4:34. 6:38. 9:30. 17:4. 18:11. Pa. 4:68. Matt. 26:59. Rom. 15:3. Heb. 10:7—10.

the duty of all those to honor Him, to whom He is made known.

We must honor the Son, must look upon Him as to be honored, both upon account of his perfections and of his relations to us, we must confess that He is Lord, and worship Him; must honor Him who was dishonored for us.

Even as they honor the Father. This supposes it our duty to honor the Father; for revealed religion is founded upon natural religion, and directs us to honor the Son with divine honor; we must honor the Redeemer with the honor of the Creator. So far was it from blasphemy, that He made Himself equal with God, that it is the highest injury that can be done to us to make Him otherwise. The truths and laws of the Christian religion are as sacred and honorable as those of natural religion, and to be equally had in estimation; for we lie under the same obligations to Christ, the Author of our well-being, that we lie under to the Author of our being; and have as necessary a dependence upon the Redeemer's grace, as upon the Creator's providence, which is a sufficient ground for this law—to honor the Son as we honor the Father.

To enforce this law, it is added, He that honors not the Son, honors not the Father, who has sent Him. Some pretend a reverence for the Creator, and speak honorably of Him, who make light of their Redeemer, and speak contemptibly of Him; but the honors and interests of the Father and Son are so interwoven, that the Father never reckons Himself honored by any that dishonor the Son. Note, First, Indignities done to the Lord Jesus reflect upon God Himself, and will so be construed in the court of heaven. The Son having so far espoused the Father's honors to take to Himself the reproaches cast on Him, (Rom. 15: 3.) the Father does no less espouse the Son's honor. Secondly, The reason of this is, the Son is sent and commissioned by the Father; it is the Father who hath sent Him. Affronts to an ambassador are justly resented by the prince that sends him. And, by this rule, those who truly honor the Son, honor the Father also; see Philip. 2: 11.

He that heareth and believeth, hath everlasting life. Here we have the substance of the Gospel; the preface commands attention to a thing most weighty, and assent to a thing most certain; 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, I, to whom all judgment is committed, I, in whose lips is a divine sentence; take from Me the Christian's character and charter.

1. The character of a Christian; He heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me. To be a Christian indeed is (1.) To hear the word of Christ. It is not enough to be within hearing of it, but we must attend on it as on the instructions of teachers; and attend to it, as servants to the commands of their masters; we must hear and abide by the Gospel of Christ,

Son of man, his Father made Him Lord of all, Philip. 2: 8, 9. The Father has committed the government of the children of men to Him, because, being the Son of man, He is of the same nature with those whom He is set over, and therefore the more unexceptionable; as a Judge. Their government shall proceed from the midst of them, Jer. 30: 21. Of this that law was typical; One of thy brethren shall thou set King over thee, Deut. 17: 15. In that famous vision of his kingdom and glory, (Dan. 7: 13, 14.) He is called the Son of man; and, Ps. 8: 4—6. Thou hast made the Son of man have dominion over the works of thy hands. He is the Messiah, and therefore is invested with this power. The Jews usually called the Christ the Son of David; but Christ usually called Himself the Son of man, the more humble title, which speaks Him a Prince and Savior, not to the Jewish nation only, but to the race.

That all men should honor the Son, v. 23. The honoring of Christ is here spoken of, (1.) As God's great design. The Son intended to glorify the Father, and therefore the Father intended to glorify the Son, ch. 13: 32. (2.) As man's great duty, in compliance with that design. If God will have the Son honored, it is the duty of all those to honor Him, to whom He is made known.

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Even as they honor the Father. This supposes it our duty to honor the Father; for revealed religion is founded upon natural religion, and directs us to honor the Son with divine honor; we must honor the Redeemer with the honor of the Creator. So far was it from blasphemy, that He made Himself equal with God, that it is the highest injury that can be done to us to make Him otherwise. The truths and laws of the Christian religion are as sacred and honorable as those of natural religion, and to be equally had in estimation; for we lie under the same obligations to Christ, the Author of our well-being, that we lie under to the Author of our being; and have as necessary a dependence upon the Redeemer's grace, as upon the Creator's providence, which is a sufficient ground for this law—to honor the Son as we honor the Father.

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as the rule of faith and practice. (2.) To believe on Him that sent Him; for Christ's design is to bring us to God; and as He is the Original of grace, so is He the Object of faith. Christ is our Way, God our Rest. We must believe on God as having sent Christ, and recommended Himself to us, by manifesting his glory in the face of Christ, 2 Cor. 4: 6.

2. The charter of a Christian. See what we get by Christ: (1.) A charter of pardon; He shall not come into condemnation. The grace of the Gospel is a full discharge from the curse of the law. A believer shall not only not lie under condemnation eternally, but not come into the danger of it, (Rom. 8: 1.) not be so much as arraigned. (2.) A charter of privileges; he is passed out of death to life, invested in a present happiness in spiritual life, and entitled to future happiness. The tenor of the first covenant was, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Now this proves Christ equal with the Father, that He has power to propose the same benefit to the hearers of his word, that had been proposed to the keepers of the old law, that is, life; Hear and live, believe and live, is what we may venture our souls upon, when we are disabled to do and live; see ch. 17: 2.

All judgment being committed to Him, we cannot but ask how He manages it. Here He answers, My judgment is just. Christ's acts, both legislative and judicial, are agreeable to the rules of equity; see Prov. 8: 8. There can lie no exceptions against any of His determinations of the Redeemer; and therefore as there shall be no repeal of any of his statutes, so there can be no appeal from any of his sentences.

His judgments are just, for they are directed.

By the Father's wisdom; I can of my own self do nothing, nothing without the Father, but as I hear, I judge, as He had said before, v. 19. The Son can do nothing but what He sees the Father do; so here, nothing but what He hears the Father say. As I hear, from the secret eternal counsels of the Father, so I judge. Would we know what we may depend upon in dealing with God? Hear the Word of Christ. We need not dive into the divine counsels, but attend to the dictates of Christ's government and judgment, and those will furnish us with an unerring guide; for what Christ has adjudged, is an exact counterpart of what the Father has decreed. Christ, in all the execution of his undertaking, had an eye to the Scripture, and made it his business to conform to and fulfill that: as it was written in the volume of the book. Thus He taught us to do nothing of ourselves, but as we hear from the word of God.

My judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but his who sent me. Not as if the will of Christ were contrary to the will of the Father, but Christ had, as Man, the sense of pain and pleasure, an inclination to life, an aversion to death; yet He pleased not himself, did not consult these, when He was to go on in his un-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15—29. We are still called to trust in Him, whom Pharisees and infidels despise. As 'the Father worketh hitherto, so does his co-equal Son, especially in carrying on and sustaining his new creation. May those declarations of his eternal power and Godhead, which engage his enemies, fill our hearts with confidence and gratitude! Nor ought we at all to regard those, who accuse us of giving the glory of God to another: such do not understand 'the mystery of the Father and of the Son,' or perceive that a union of essence, will, and operation, renders it forever impossible, to honor the one without honoring the other also.—The eternal Son is the adequate and infinite Object of the Father's love: He possesses all his perfections, and performs all his works, creates or destroys, raises from the dead and quickens whom He will; 'our life is hid in Him,' future judgment is committed to Him; and, as dwelling in human nature, He exercises all power and authority throughout the universe, that 'all men might honor Him, even as they honor the Father.' Unless therefore we can honor the Father too much, we need not fear honoring the Son more than we ought. Here is no danger of excess, but much of defect; and

the adoration and worship, rendered to the Son, is directed to the glory of God the Father; (Note, Phil. 2: 8—11.) and they 'who honor not the Son' will be condemned, as enemies and despisers of the Father. May we then hear his voice, and believe his testimony, as He reveals God to man, and invites us to 'come to Him, and learn of Him, and take his yoke upon us,' with promises, that in this way 'He will give us rest for our souls.' (Notes, Matt. 11: 25—30.) Thus 'our faith and hope will be in God;' we shall 'have everlasting life, and not come into condemnation;' for in so doing we shall 'pass from death to life.' May his voice reach the hearts of those, who are dead in sin, that they may arise from the dead, 'repent,' and do works meet for repentance; 'and thus prepare for the day of retribution! For the hour will soon arrive, 'in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.' May we now live, as those who desire and hope then to be found 'a people prepared for the Lord!'

SCOTT.

(655) Of damnation, 1. 'Judgment,' 22, 27, 30, 12: 31. 'Condemnation,' 24, 3: 19. 'Damnation,' Matt. 23: 33. Certainly 'judgment' will be 'damnation,' to those 'who have done evil.'

31 ¶ If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true.

32 There ^{is} another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true.

33 Ye ^o sent unto John, and ^h he bare witness unto the truth.

34 But ^I receive not testimony from man; but these things I say, ^t that ye might be saved.

35 He ^{was} a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light.

1:8,13,14,54. Prov. 27:2.
m 35:37. 1:33. 8:17,18. 12:28-30.
Matt. 3:17. 17:5. Mark 1:11. Luke 3:22.
n 12:50.
o 1:19-27.
p 1:6-8,15-18,29-34. 3:26-36.
q 4:1. 8:54.
r 20:31. Luke 13:34. 19:10,41,42.
24:47. Rom. 10:1,21. 12:21. 1 Cor. 9:22. 1 Tim. 2:3,4. 4:16.
s 17:8. Matt. 11:11. Luke 1:15-17. 7:37. 7:28. 2 Pet. 1:10.
t 6:46. Ez. 33:31. Matt. 3:5-7. 11:7-9. 13:20,21. Mark 6:30. Gal. 4:15,16.

36. *I bear witness of myself, and the Father beareth witness of me.* Observe the seal which the Father put to his commission. He beareth witness of me, not only hath done so by a voice from heaven, but still doth so by the tokens of his presence. They to whom God bears witness, are, [1.] Those whom He *sends and employs*; where He gives commissions, He gives credentials. [2.] Those who *bear witness* to Him; so Christ did. God will own and honor those that own and honor Him. [3.] Those who *decline bearing witness of themselves*; so Christ did. God will take care that those who humble and abase themselves, and seek not their own glory, shall not lose by it.

The satisfaction Christ had in this testimony; *'I know that the witness which He witnesseth of me, is true.* I am assured that I have a divine mission, and do not in the least hesitate concerning it; thus He had the witness in himself. The devil tempted Him to question his being the Son of God, but He never yielded.

John Baptist witnessed to Christ, v. 33, &c. John came to bear witness of the light; (ch. 1:7.) his business was to prepare his way, and direct people to Him; Behold the Lamb of God. The testimony of John was solemn and public testimony; 'Ye sent an embassy of priests and Levites to John, which gave Him an opportunity of publishing what he had to say; it was a true testimony; He bore witness to the truth, as a witness ought to do. Christ doth not say, He bore witness to me, (though every one knew he did,) but like an honest man, to the truth. John was confessedly such a holy man, so mortified to the world, and so conversant with divine things, that it could not be imagined he would say what he did concerning Christ, if he had not been sure of it. John's was testimony, in fact, more than he needed to vouch; (v. 34.) *I receive not testimony from man.* Though Christ quoted John's testimony, it is with a protestation that it shall not be construed so as to prejudice his self-sufficiency. Christ needs no letters of commendation, or certificates, but his own worth; why then did Christ here urge the testimony of John? *That ye might be saved.* This He aimed at in all this discourse, to save not his own life, but the souls of others; He produced John's testimony, because, being one of themselves, it was to be hoped they would hearken to it. Note, Christ desires and designs the salvation even of his enemies and persecutors. The word of Christ is the ordinary means of salvation. Christ in His Word considers our infirmities, and condescends to our capacities; consulting not so much what it befits so great a Prince to say, as what we can bear, and what it will be most likely to do us good.

John Baptist was one for whom they had a respect. He was a burning and a shining light. Christ often spake honorably of John; he was now in prison under a cloud, yet Christ gives him his due praise, which we must be ready to do to all that faithfully serve God. He was a light, not light, (Christ was the Light,) but a luminary, a subordinate light. His office was to enlighten a dark world with notices of the Messiah's approach, to whom he was the morning star. He was a burning light, which denotes sincerity; painted fire may be made to shine, but that which burns, is true fire. It denotes also his activity, and burning love to God and men; fire is always working on itself or something else, so is a good minister. He was a shining light, which denotes either his exemplary conversation, (Matt. 5:16.) or an eminent

diffusive influence. He was illustrious in the sight of others; though he affected obscurity and retirement, and was in the deserts, yet such were his doctrine, his baptism, his life, that he became remarkable, and attracted the eyes of the nation.

Ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. It was a transport that they were in, upon the appearing of John; 'ye were very proud that ye had such a man among you, the honor of your country; ye were willing—will ing to dance, and make a noise about this light.' It was but transient. 'Ye were fond of him for an hour, as little children are of a new thing, but soon grew weary of him and his ministry, and said that he had a devil, and now you have him in prison.' Note, Many that seem to be affected and pleased with the Gospel at first, afterward despise and reject it; it is common for forward and noisy professors to cool and fall off. These rejoiced in John's light, but never walked in it; they were like the stony ground. While Herod was a friend to John, the people caressed him; when he fell under Herod's frowns, he lost their favors; 'Ye were willing to countenance John for temporal ends' (so some take it); 'ye were in hopes to make a tool of him, and under the umbrage of his name, shake off the Roman yoke, and recover civil liberty and honor.' Christ mentions their respect to John, to condemn them for their opposition to Him—to whom John bore witness. If they had continued their veneration for John, they would have embraced Christ. He mentions the passing away of their respect, to justify God in depriving them, as He had now done, of John's ministry.

Christ's own works witnessed to Him; (v. 36.) *I have a testimony greater than that of John; for if ye believe the witness of men, sent of God, the witness of John is not, though the ministry of men, is greater.* 1 John 5:9. Though the witness of John was a less considerable witness, yet our Lord was pleased to make use of it. We must be glad of all the supports that offer themselves for the confirmation of our faith, though they may not amount to a demonstration; and we must not invalidate any, under pretence that there are others more conclusive.

This greater witness was, the works which his Father had given Him to finish.

The whole course of his life and ministry—his revealing of God to us, setting up his kingdom, reforming the world, destroying Satan's kingdom, restoring fallen man to purity, and shedding abroad in men's hearts the love of God and one another—all that work, of which He said, *It is finished*, was all from first to last, a work worthy of God; all He said and did, was holy and heavenly, and a divine power and grace shone in it, and proved abundantly that He was sent of God.

The miracles He wrought, witnessed of Him. It is here said that these works were given him by the Father, that is, He was both appointed and empowered to work them; for, as Mediator, He derived both commission and strength from his Father. They were given him to finish; He must do all which the counsel and foreknowledge of God had before determined to be done; and his finishing of them proves a divine power; for, as for God, his work is perfect. These works did bear witness that He was sent of God, and that what He said concerning Himself, was true; see Heb. 2:4. Acts 2:22. The Father had sent Him as a father sends his son to take possession for himself; if God had not sent Him, He would not have sealed Him, as He did by the works He gave Him to do; for the world's Creator will never be its deciver.

The Father that sent me, hath borne witness of me. The prince is not accustomed to follow his ambassador himself, to confirm his commission by speaking; but God was pleased to bear witness of his Son, by a voice from heaven, (Matt. 3:17.) This is my Ambassador, my be-

Verse 35.

A burning and a shining light.] It was a mode of expression familiar to the Jews, to denote the ministry of the Word by lamps

or candles; (Zech. 4:2, 3, 14. Rev. 1:12. 11:4.) and they designated any person who was distinguished for his knowledge, or other good qualities.

LIGHTHOOD

36 But ^a I have greater witness than that of John: ^b for ^c the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

37 And the Father himself which hath sent me, hath ^d borne witness of me. ^e Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape.

38 And ^f ye have not his word abiding in you; ^g for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not.

[Practical Observations.]

a 32. 1 John 5:9, 11, 12
b 32. 9:30—33. 10:25, 37, 38. 11:37, 38. 14:10, 11. 15:24. Matt. 11:4, 5.
c 27. 8:18. Matt. 3:17. See *on* 20.
d See *on* 1:18. 14:9. 15:24. Ex. 20:29. Deut. 4:12. 1 Tim. 6:16. 1 John 1:1, 2. 4:12, 20.
e 42, 46, 47. 8:37, 45, 47. 15:7. Deut. 6:5—9. Josh. 1:8. Ps. 119:11. Prov. 2:1, 2. 7:1, 2. Col. 3:16. Jam. 1:24.
f 12. 1 John 2:14.
g 13. 1:11. 8:18—21. 12:44—48. 18. 49:7. 53:1—3.

enigmas in the Christian entertain it. Some give this sense of it: 'The Father bore witness of me by a voice, and the descent of a dove, which is such an extraordinary thing, that you never saw or heard the like; and yet for my sake there was such a voice and appearance, or shape; you might have heard that voice, you might have seen that appearance, as others did, if you had closely attended the ministry of John; but by slighting it, you missed of that testimony.'

[2] Because they were not affected with the ordinary ways by which God had revealed Himself to them; (v. 38.) *Ye have not his Word abiding in you.* They had the Old Testament; might they not then be disposed to receive Christ? Yes, if it had had its due influence upon them. But *First*, The Word of God was not in them; it was *among them*, in their country, in their hands, but not in their hearts, not ruling in their souls, but only shining in their eyes, and sounding in their ears. What did it avail them that they had the oracles of God committed to them, (Rom. 3:2.) when they had not these oracles commanding in them? If they had, they would readily have embraced Christ. *Secondly*, It did not abide. Many have the Word of God coming into them, and making some impressions for a while, but it does not abide with them, as a *way-faring man*. If the Word abide in us, by frequent meditation, if we conform to it in our conversation, we shall readily receive the witness of the Father concerning Christ; see *ch.* 7: 17.

ut how did it appear that they had not the word of God abiding in them?

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 30—33. Let none treat the things above stated as uncertain speculations; for they are authenticated by divine testimonies; and are published, that sinners may believe, and be saved. To the Redeemer all the servants of God bear witness; but He cannot derive from them any addition to his essential glory; 'From his fulness they have all received;' (Note, 1: 16.) if they be 'burning and shining lights,' they glow with his love, and shine by his splendor: He honors them, and they reflect a little of his glory.—Many are willing to hear teachers who are entitled to this character, and are pleased with their gifts or doctrine; but they do not obey the word,

'they have no root in themselves, and so in time of temptation fall away.' Not only the works which Christ finished on earth bore witness to Him, as the Son of God; but those also that He has wrought since his ascension, in the success of the Gospel, demonstrate the same truths; and the voice of God, accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost, and made effectual to the conversion of sinners, still proclaims, that this is 'the beloved Son in whom the Father is well pleased,' and that all who would be saved must hear and obey Him, as the 'Author of eternal salvation.'

SCOTT.

Verse 36.
The works.] Alluding to his miracles, and other works of his ministry.

Verse 37, 38.
'Or Lord here refers them to the testimony given of Him at his baptism, when the Holy Spirit descended on Him in a visible form, and when G. I. with an audible voice, declared Him to be his beloved Son and our saviour, whom we ought to hear and obey.' CAMPBELL.
Campbell gives the following version: 'Did ye never hear his voice or see his form? Or have ye forgotten his declaration, that ye believe not Him whom He hath commissioned?' He adds: 'The sacred writers do not scruple to call the visible symbol which God, on any occasion, employs for impressing men more strongly with a sense of his presence, by a word, which I have rendered his form. Thus Luke says, (ch. 3: 22.) in relating the transaction here alluded to, that the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in a *bodily form*. The same word is applied to the appearances God made to men, under the Mosaic dispensation, Ex. 24: 17. Num. 12: 8. (Sept.)—'In the language of Scripture, there is a manifest difference between *seeing* God, which no man ever did, He being in Himself a pure Spirit, and *seeing his form*

the appearance which, at any time, in condescension to the weakness of his creatures, He pleases to assume. Another evidence in favor of the above rendering is, that there seems, from the connection, no intention to express the invisibility of the divine nature. *Ye have neither, &c.* Some think that this different sentence is to be understood as a repetition of the objections the Jews are supposed to make in denying that they have the 'witness of the Father,' (spoken of in the first clause of the verse,) and therefore read as if it were, *Ye answer me, 'We have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape,' true, but, &c.?* So Markland. Kuinoel understands the verse thus: 'The Father Himself hath borne witness of Me, sufficiently clear is his testimony, although ye have neither heard his voice, nor seen his form; i. e. although He has not appeared to you in a visible form, and borne a *vera voce* testimony concerning Me. (So Doddridge.) But you understand not his declaration; this you evince by the very circumstance, that you repose not faith in Him whom He hath sent.' Doddridge, in his paraphrase, connects this verse with v. 33. thus: 'and after all that He has said, it is evident you have not his word cordially abiding in you, for, &c.'

EO.

39 Search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me.

40 And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.

41 I receive not honor from men.

42 But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.

43 I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.

f 46. 7:52. Deut. 11:18-20. 17:13. 19. Josh. 1:8 Ps. 1:2. 119:11-37. 59. Prov. 8:33, 34. Is. 8:20. 34:16 Jer. 8:3 Matt. 22:29 Mark 12:10. Luke 16:29, 31. Act. 8:35-35. 17:11. Rom. 3:2. Col. 3:16. 2 Tim. 3:14-17. 2 Pet. 1:19-21. J. Deut. 32:47. Ps. 16:11. 21:4. 9. 135:3. Dan. 12:2. Matt. 19:16-20. Luke 10:23-29. Heb. 11:16-35. 52:36. 145. Acts 26:22, 23, 27. Rom. 12:1. 1 Pet. 1:11. Rev. 19:10. See on Luke 24:27, 44. f 44. 1:11. 3:19. 8:45, 46. 12:37-41. Ps. 91:11. Is. 40:50, 52. 53:3-3. Matt. 22:3. 23:37. (ev. 22:17. f 62:37, 40. 68:69. 7. 7:28. 11:25. 26. Rom. 6:23. 1 John 5:11-13. 34. 6:15. 7:18. 8:50, 54. 1 Thes. 2:8. 1 Pet. 2:21. 2 Pet. 1:17. i 1:7-49. 2:25. 21:17. Luke 16:15. Hrb. 4:12, 13. Rev. 2:23. f 44. 8:42, 47, 57. 15:23. 22. Rom. 8:7. 1 John 2:15. 3:17. 4:20. i 3:16. 6:38. 8:28, 29. 10:25. 12:28. 17:4-6. Ex. 33:21. Heb. 54:5. m Matt. 21:54. Act. 5:28, 37. 21:38.

Me; and yet ye will not come to me, to whom they direct you.' Their estrangement from Christ was the fault, not so much of their understandings, as of their wills. This is expressed as a complaint; Christ offered life, and it would not be accepted. Note, There is life to be had with Christ; we may have the life of pardon and grace, and comfort, and glory: life is the perfection of our being, and inclusive of all happiness; and Christ is our Life. Those that would have this life, must come to Christ; we may have it for coming. It supposes an assent of the understanding to the doctrine of Christ, and the record concerning Him; it lies in the consent of the will to his government and grace, and produces an answerable compliance in the affections and actions. The only reason why sinners die, is they will not come to Christ: it is not because they cannot, but because they will not. They will neither accept the life offered, because spiritual and divine; nor agree to the terms, nor use the appointed means; they will not be cured, for they will not observe the methods of cure. The wilfulness and obstinacy of sinners are a great grief to Jesus.

Those words, (v. 41.) I receive not honor from men, come in a parenthesis, to obviate an objection against Him, as if He sought his own glory, and made Himself the head of a party, in obliging all to come to Him. Note, He did not covet or court the applause of men, nor affect that worldly pomp and splendor in which the Jews expected the Messiah to appear. He charged those He cured, not to make Him known, and withdrew from those that would make Him king. He had not the applause of men. Instead of receiving honor from men, He received dishonor and disgrace; for He made Himself of no reputation. He needed not the applause of men; it was no addition to his glory, whom all the angels of God worship, nor was He otherwise pleased with it, than as it was according to his Father's will, and for the happiness of those who, in giving honor to Him, receive greater honor from Him.

Verse 39.

In them ye think, &c.] This is a most decided testimony, that the Jews considered eternal life to be revealed and promised in their Scriptures; and that so far they thought right; whatever paradoxes modern learned men may endeavor to support on the subject. (Notes, 1 John 5:11, 12.) 'If the Jews did truly think the doctrine of life eternal was contained there, and that they by searching might find it there, it must be to them a sufficient rule of faith; if in this they erred, it behoved Christ to correct in them an error so pernicious.' Whist. This is worthy the serious consideration of all, whether Papists or Protestants, who oppose the circulation of the Scriptures without note or comment.

[Search the Scriptures.] Doddridge and Campbell prefer the indicative mood. Ye search the Scriptures. Says Campbell, 'It is entirely suitable to say, Ye search, because ye think thereby to obtain. Ye act thus in conformity to a fixed opinion. But if the words be understood as a command, it is not a cogent argument.' Ed.

Verses 40-44.

40. Ye will not. Ye are not willing. 6: 21. (44.) How can.]

think ye have eternal life. The Scripture assures us of an eternal state, and offers us eternal life in that state; it contains the chart that describes it, the charter that conveys it, direction in the way that leads to it, and the foundation upon which the hope of it is built. But to the Jews, Christ saith only, Ye think ye have eternal life in the Scriptures; because, though they did retain the belief and hope of eternal life, and grounded their expectations of it upon the Scriptures, yet they looked for it by the bare reading and studying of the Scripture. It was a comma, but corrupt saying among them, He that has the words of the law, has eternal life; they thought they were sure of heaven, if they could say, by rote, such passages of Scripture as were directed by the tradition of the elders; as they thought all the vulgar cursed because they did not thus know the law, (ch. 7: 49.) so they concluded all the learned undoubtedly blessed.

2. We must search the Scriptures for Christ, as the new and living Way, that leads to this end. Those are the principal witnesses that testify of me. Note, The Scriptures, even of the Old Testament, testify of Christ, and by them God bears witness to Him. The Spirit of Christ in the prophets testified beforehand of Him, (1 Pet. 1: 11.) the purposes and promises of God concerning Him, and the previous notices of Him. The Jews knew very well that the Old Testament testified of the Messiah, and were critical in their remarks upon the passages that looked that way; and yet were careless in the application of them. Therefore we must search the Scriptures, and may hope to find eternal life in that search, because they testify of Christ; for this is life eternal to know Him; see 1 John 5: 11. Christ is the Treasure hid in the field of the Scriptures, the Water in their wells.

'Ye will not come to me that ye might have life. Ye search the Scriptures, ye believe the prophets, which ye cannot but see, testify of

'I know you, that you have not the love of God in you. Why should I wonder that you do not come to me, when you want even the first principle of natural religion, the love of God?' Note, The reason why people slight Christ is, they do not love God; for if we did indeed love God, we should love his express Image, and hasten to Him, by whom only we may be restored to the favor of God. He hath charged them, (p. 37.) with ignorance of God, and here, with want of love to Him: therefore men have not the love of God, because they ignore not the knowledge of Him.

Observe, The crime charged upon them; You have not the love of God in you. They pretended a great love to God, and thought they proved it by their zeal for the law, the temple and the Sabbath; yet they were really without the love of God. Note, There are many who make great profession of religion, who yet show they want the love of God by their neglect of Christ and contempt of his commandments; they hate his holiness, and undervalue his goodness. Observe, It is the love of God in us, seated in the heart, a living acting principle that God will accept; the love shed abroad there, Rom. 5: 5.

The proof of this charge is, the personal knowledge of Christ, who searches the heart, (Rev. 2: 23.) and knows what is in man; I know you. Christ sees through all our disguises, and can say to each of us, I know thee. Christ knows men better than their neighbors know them. The people thought that the scribes and Pharisees were very devout, good men, but Christ knew that they had not the love of God in them. Christ knows men better than they know themselves. These Jews had a very good opinion of themselves; we may deceive ourselves, but we cannot deceive Him. Christ knows men who do not, and will not, know Him; He looks on those who industriously look off Him, and calls by their true name, those who have not known Him.

Another crime charged upon them is, their readiness to entertain false christs and false prophets, while they obstinately opposed the true Messiah; (p. 43.) I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive. Be astonished, O heavens, at this; (Jer. 2: 12, 13.) for my people have committed two evils. First, They have forsaken the Fountain of living waters, for they would not receive Christ, who came in his Father's name, had his commission from his Father, and did all for his glory. Secondly, They have heaved out broken cisterns, they hearken to every one that will set up in his own name. They forsake their own mercies, for lying vanities. Observe here Those are false prophets who come in their own name, run without being sent, and set up for themselves only. It is just with God to suffer those to be deceived with false prophets, who receive not the truth in the love of it, 2 Thess. 2: 10, 11. The errors of antichrist are the just punishment of those who obey not the doctrine of Christ. They that shut their eyes against the true light, are by the judgment of God given up to wander endlessly after false lights. It is the gross folly of many, that while they nauseate ancient truths, they are fond of upstart errors; they loathe manna, and at the same

'The impossibility was moral, not natural; the want of inclination, or a right state of heart; not the want of natural ability. SCOTT.

(41.) 'I say not this to complain of your refusal to admit my pretensions. I seek not the praises of men, nor is it my aim to obtain fame and influence from the number of my disciples.' Bloomfield. So also Doddridge.

(41-43.) I do not desire, &c.] 'My aim is, not to receive applause, or gain esteem by flattering your prejudices, no; I know, and tell you honestly, that, under a profession of piety, ye have not the love of God in you; for if you had, you would receive me as sent by Him, with credentials so clear, that they cannot be reasonably questioned. Yet if an impostor come, and promise you temporal things, him ye will receive. Our Lord refers to what afterwards actually occurred.' BOOTHROYD.

(43.) 'By name is here (as often) meant authority. The blon, says Schoettgen, originated from this, that no one among the Jews was tured to bring forward any thing without the authority of some famous rabbi.' BLOOMFIELD.

44 How can ye believe, which receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor that cometh from God only?

45 Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust.

46 For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me.

47 But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?

n 2:20, 8:43, 12:43. Jer. 13:23.
Rom. 8:7,8. Heb. 3:12.
e Matt. 23:5. Gal. 5:19-21. Phil. 2:4.
p 1 Sam. 2:20. 2 Chr. 6:8. Matt. 25:21-23. Luke 19:17. Rom. 2:7,29.
1 Cor. 4:5. 2 Cor. 10:18. Jam. 2:11.
1 Pet. 1:7.
q 7:19. 8:5,9. Rom. 2:12,17, &c. 3:19,30. 7:9-14. 2 Cor. 3:7-11. Gal. 3:10.
r 8:5,8. 9:28,29. Matt. 19:7,8. Rom. 10:5-10.
s Gal. 2:19. 13:10,13,24. 4:21-31.
t Gen. 3:15. 12:3. 22:18. 28:14. 49:10. Num. 21:8,9. 24:17,18. Deut. 18:18,19. Acts 26:22. Rom. 10:3.
u Hei. 7:10.
v Luke 16:29,31.

He gives grace. This honor that comes from God, we must seek, aim at, and set for it, and take up with nothing short of it; (Rom. 2:29.) we must account it our reward, as the Pharisees accounted the praise of men. Those that will not come to Christ, and those that are ambitious of worldly honor, make it appear that they seek not the honor that comes from God, and it is their folly and ruin. See the influence it had on their infidelity; *How can ye believe?* The difficulty of believing arises from our own corruption; we make our work hard to ourselves, and then complain it is impracticable. The ambition of worldly honor is a great hindrance to faith. How can they believe, who make the praise of men their idol? When the profession and practice of godliness are unfashionable, and every where spoken against, when Christ and his followers are men wondered at, and to be a Christian, is to be like a speckled bird, how can they believe, the top of whose ambition is, to make a fair show in the flesh?

The last witness here called, is Moses. The Jews had a great veneration for Moses, and valued themselves upon being his disciples, and pretended to

time feed upon ashes. After the Jews had rejected Christ and his Gospel, they were continually haunted with spectres, with false christis and false prophets, (Matt. 24: 24.) and their proneness to follow such, occasioned those distractions and seditions that hastened their ruin.

They are here charged with pride and vain-glory, and unbelief, the effect of it, v. 44. Having sharply reproved their unbelief, like a wise physician, He here searches into the cause. They therefore slighted and undervalued Christ, because they admired and overvalued themselves.

They were ambitious of worldly honor. Christ despised it, v. 41. They set their hearts upon it; *Ye receive honor one of another*; that is, 'Ye look for a Messiah in outward pomp, and promise yourselves worldly honor by Him.' *Ye receive honor*; 'Ye desire to receive it, and aim at that in all you do. Ye give honor to others, and applaud them, only that they may return it, and applaud you.' It is the proud man's art to throw honor upon others only that it may rebound upon himself. 'Ye are very careful to keep all the honors to yourselves, as if ye had the monopoly of that which is honorable. What respect is showed you, ye receive yourselves, and do not transmit it to God, as Herod.' Idolizing men and their sentiments, and affecting to be idolized by them, are idolatry.

Spiritual honor is called here the honor that comes from God only; this they sought not. Come, True honor, that which comes from God only, is real and lasting honor; those are honorable indeed, whom He takes into covenant and communion with Himself. *This honor have all the saints.* All that believe in Christ, through Him, receive the honor that comes from God. He is not partial, but will give glory wherever

V. 39-47. When the hearts of men are occupied by pride, ambition, and the love of the world, there is no room for the Word of God to abide in them.—Thus many profess to believe that 'in the Scriptures they have eternal life'; yet they bestow little pains to understand these sacred oracles; others search them with a proud, curious, or prejudiced mind, and so cannot see that they 'testify of Christ'; others admit this as a doctrine, yet they 'are not willing to come to Him, that they may have life.' Being destitute of the love of God, they are careless about spiritual and eternal blessings; or they imagine they shall be able to obtain them in some other way; or they are proud of their knowledge; they 'seek honor one of another'; and are glad to follow carnal, self-sufficient teachers, who come in their own name, coincide with their views, flatter their pride, connive at their sins, and seek their own ends. How many trust in their attachment to some form of doctrine, or to some renowned head of a party; who no more enter into the real meaning

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of those doctrines, or into the views of the persons whose names they bear, than the Jews believed the words of Moses, or entered into his views of the predicted Messiah. Thus the creeds and formularies of many sects will suffice for the condemnation of immense multitudes, who glory in belonging to them, as members, as ministers, nay, as rulers! and it is well if the sermons many preach, and the books which they publish, do not appear in judgment against them, to accuse them of not believing or practising what they preached or printed. Let us then most diligently search and fervently pray over the Scriptures, as men intent on finding eternal life; let us observe that Christ is the grand Subject of them, and daily apply to Him for that life which He bestows: let us seek 'that honor, which cometh from God only,' and 'not fear the reproach of men'; and thus 'by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory honor, and immortality.'

adhere to Moses in their opposition to Christ but Christ here shows them,

That Moses was a witness against them, and accused them to the Father: *There is one that accuses you, even Moses.* This may be understood either, [1.] As showing the difference between the law and the Gospel. Moses, that is, the law, accuses you, for by the law is the knowledge of sin; it condemns you, it is a ministration of death; but it is not the design of Christ's Gospel to accuse us; *Think not that I will accuse you.* Christ did not come into the world to find fault with every body, or as a spy upon the actions of men; He came to be an Advocate, not an Accuser; to reconcile God and man, and not to set them more at variance; what fools were they then that adhered to Moses against Christ, and desired to be under the law! Gal. 4: 21. Or, [2.] It shows the unreasonableness of their infidelity; 'Think not that I will appeal from your bar to God's, and challenge you to answer there for what you do against Me, as injured innocence usually does; you are already accused in the court of heaven; Moses himself convicts and condemns you for your unbelief.' Let them not mistake concerning Christ; though He was a Prophet, He did not improve his interest in heaven against those that persecuted Him; did not, as Elias, make intercession against Israel, (Rom. 11: 2.) or, as Jeremiah, desire to see God's vengeance on them, Jer. 20: 12. Instead of accusing his crucifiers to his Father, He prayed, *Father, forgive them.* Nor let them mistake concerning Moses, as if he would stand by them, in rejecting Christ; no, *There is one that accuses you, even Moses in whom ye trust.* Note, External privileges are commonly the vain confidence of those who reject Christ and his grace. The Jews trusted in Moses, and thought their having his laws and ordinances would save them. Those that confide in their privileges, and do not improve them, will find not only that their confidence is disappointed, but that those very privileges will witness against them.

Moses was a witness for Christ, and to his doctrine; (v. 46, 47.) *He wrote of me.* Moses did particularly prophesy of Christ, as the Seed of the woman, the Seed of Abraham, the Shiloh, the great Prophet; the ceremonies of the law of Moses were figures of Him that was to come. The Jews made Moses the patron of their opposition to Christ; but Christ here shows them that Moses, so far from writing against Christ, wrote for Him and of Him. But,

of those doctrines, or into the views of the persons whose names they bear, than the Jews believed the words of Moses, or entered into his views of the predicted Messiah. Thus the creeds and formularies of many sects will suffice for the condemnation of immense multitudes, who glory in belonging to them, as members, as ministers, nay, as rulers! and it is well if the sermons many preach, and the books which they publish, do not appear in judgment against them, to accuse them of not believing or practising what they preached or printed. Let us then most diligently search and fervently pray over the Scriptures, as men intent on finding eternal life; let us observe that Christ is the grand Subject of them, and daily apply to Him for that life which He bestows: let us seek 'that honor, which cometh from God only,' and 'not fear the reproach of men'; and thus 'by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory honor, and immortality.'

SCOTT.

Verse 45.

'It is not necessary that I accuse you, for, even now, Moses, in whom ye trust, your great lawgiver and patron, is, as it were, your accuser before God, and charges you with being regardless of him as well as of Me.' One of the most expressive passages we can imagine; in which Moses, their great lawgiver, is represented looking down with indignation upon these elders, who gloried in being the most distinguished of his disciples; and seeing how injuriously they treated Jesus, the great Prophet, turning himself to God with a severe accusation against them, urging his own predictions as an aggravation of their inexcusable infidelity. For he wrote of Me. Christ might perhaps intend to refer to what Moses had written of the seed of the woman, (Gen. 3: 15.) of the seed of Abraham, in which all nations should be blessed, (Gen. 22: 18.) of the Shiloh who should come to gather the people, (Gen. 49: 10.) and of the Prophet whom God should raise up unto them from their brethren; (Deut. 18: 15.) as well as to the many ceremonial institutions which had their final accomplishment in Him.

DODDRIEGE.

'It appears that our Lord's discourse effectually confounded the Jews, for they went away without replying—a proof that they had nothing to say. But when a man, through prejudice, bigotry, or malevolence, is determined to disbelieve, evidence and demonstration are lost on him; he is incapable of conviction, because determined not to yield.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 47.

This whole passage is peculiarly suited to show us, in what light to consider the writings of Moses, and the prophets, or the Old Testament, nearly, if not entirely, as we have it. Our Lord certainly sanctioned the general opinion of the Jews, not only that these books were authentic, or genuine; but also that they were divinely inspired, and as such worthy of the most implicit credence and confidence. And, in particular, he has given his full attestation to the books of Moses, not as compiled from his records, but as written in their present form by Moses himself.

SCOTT.

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CHAP. VI.

eat: *five* (five thousand men, with five oxen and two fishes, 1-14. He will draw from the multitude, with purpose to make Him King, 15. His disciples put to sea without Him, and meet with a storm; but He comes to them walking on the sea, 16-21. Being followed to Capernaum by multitudes, He reproves their carnal motives even in their diligence about religion; and requires faith in Him, 22-29. They demand a sign, like that of the manna; and He speaks copiously of Himself as the Bread of life, and of living by faith in Him, 30-59. Many are offended, and forsake Him, 60-66. Peter, in the name of the twelve, professes steadfast faith in Him, as 'the Son of God'; but Jesus pronounces one of them to be a devil, 67-71.

AFTER these things Jesus went out of the sea of Galilee, which is the sea of Tiberias.

2 And a great multitude followed him, because they saw his miracles which he did on them that were diseased.

3 And Jesus went up into a mountain, and there he sat with his disciples.

4 And the passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

5 When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

6 (And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.)

a Matt. 14:13. Mark 6:31, 32. Luke 9:10-12.
b Num. 34:11. Josh. 12:3. See on Matt. 4:18.—15:29. Luke 5:1.
c 23. 21:1.
d Matt. 4:24, 25. 8:1. 12:15. 13:2. 14:14. 15:30-31. Mark 6:33.
e 15. Matt. 14:23. 15:29. Luke 6:12. 13. 9:28.
f 2:13. 5:1. 11:55. 12:1. 13:1. Ex. 12:6, &c.
g 4:33. Matt. 14:15. Mark 6:34, 35. Luke 9:12.
h Matt. 15:33. Mark 8:2-4. Luke 9:13.
i Gen. 22:1. Deut. 8:1, 16. 13:3. 33:8. Jer. Ch. 32:31.

might go by land; for Christ

a great multitude followed Him, because they saw his miracles, v. 2. Note, Our Lord, while He went about doing good, lived continually in a crowd, which gave Him more trouble than honor. Useful men must not complain of a hurry of business, when they are serving God and their generation; it will be time enough to enjoy ourselves, when we come where we shall enjoy God. Christ's miracles drew many after Him, that were not drawn to Him. They had their curiosity gratified, who had not their consciences convinced.

He went up into a mountain, and there sat with his disciples, the more conveniently to be seen and heard; this was a natural pulpit, not, like Ezra's, made for the purpose. Christ was now driven to be a Field-preacher; but his word was not the less acceptable, to those who knew how to value it, who followed Him, not only when He went out to a desert place, but when He went up to a mountain, though up-hill be against heart. He sat there, as teachers do, in the chair of instruction; He did not sit at ease, nor in

Christ here charges it on the Jews, that they did not believe Moses. He had said, (v. 45.) that they trusted in Moses, and yet here undertakes to make out that they did not believe Moses; they trusted to his name, but they did not receive his doctrine in its true meaning; they did not rightly understand, nor credit the writings of Moses concerning the Messiah.

He proves this charge from their disbelief of Him; Had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me. Note, The surest trial of faith is by the effects it produces; many say that they believe, whose actions give their words the lie, for had they believed the Scriptures, they would have done otherwise. Those who rightly believe one part of Scripture, will receive every part. The prophecies of the Old Testament were so fully accomplished in Christ, that who rejected Christ, did in effect deny those prophecies, and set them aside.

From their disbelief of Moses, He infers that it was not strange that they rejected Him: If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words? First, 'If ye do not believe sacred writings, how shall ye believe my words?' words being usually less regarded. Secondly, 'If ye do not believe Moses, for whom ye have such a profound veneration, how is it likely that ye should believe Me, whom ye look upon with so much contempt?' See Exod. 6:12. Thirdly, 'If ye believe not what Moses spake and wrote of Me, which is a strong testimony for Me, how shall ye believe Me and my mission?' If we admit not the premises, how shall we admit the conclusion? The truth of the Christian religion being a matter purely of divine revelation, depends upon a divine authority of the Scripture; if therefore we believe not the inspiration of those writings, how shall we receive the doctrine of Christ?

Thus ends Christ's plea for Himself, in answer to the charge exhibited against Him; what effect it had, we know not; it would seem that their mouths were stopped for the present, and they could not for shame but drop the prosecution; yet their hearts were hardened.

CHAP. VI. v. 1-14. This miracle is the only passage of Christ's life recorded by all the evangelists. John, who does not usually relate what had been recorded before, relates this, because of the reference the following discourse has to it.

The place and time where and when this miracle was wrought, are noted for the greater evidence of the truth of the story; it is not said that it was done once upon a time, nobody knows where, but the circumstances are specified, that the fact might be inquired into.

He went over the sea of Galilee, called elsewhere the lake of Genesareth, here the sea of Tiberias, from a city adjoining, which Herod had lately enlarged, and called so in honor of Tiberius the emperor, and, probably, had made his metropolis. Christ did not directly cross this inland sea, but made a coasting voyage to another place on the same side. It is not tempting God, to go by water when there is convenience for it, even to those places whither we never tempted the Lord his God, Matt. 4:7.

a great multitude followed Him, because they saw his miracles, v. 2. Note, Our Lord, while He went about doing good, lived continually in a crowd, which gave Him more trouble than honor. Useful men must not complain of a hurry of business, when they are serving God and their generation; it will be time enough to enjoy ourselves, when we come where we shall enjoy God. Christ's miracles drew many after Him, that were not drawn to Him. They had their curiosity gratified, who had not their consciences convinced.

NOTES.

CHAP. VI. v. 1. After these things. [That is, on having heard of the death of John.]

Verse 4.

Passover, a feast of the Jews. [Almost all who have compiled harangues of the gospels, have concluded that this was at least the third passover of our Lord's public ministry. The hypothesis, that it was the feast of Pentecost has no authority, all the old manuscripts {660}]

state, yet as one having authority; ready to receive addresses; whoever would, might come, and find Him there. He sat with his disciples; condescended to take them to sit with Him, to put a reputation upon them; before the people, and give them an earnest of the glory in which they should shortly sit with Him. We are said to sit with Him, Eph. 2:6.

The first words, After those things, do not signify that this immediately followed what was related in the foregoing chapter, but, in process of time; we are told, (v. 4.) that it was when the passover was nigh; which is well noted, (1.) Because, perhaps, that had brought in the apostles, (who were sent as itinerant preachers,) to attend their Master to Jerusalem, to keep the feast. (2.) Because it was a custom with the Jews, religiously to observe the approach of the passover thirty days, with some sort of solemnity; they repaired the roads and bridges, if there was occasion, and discoursed of the passover. (3.) Perhaps the approach of the passover, when every one knew Christ would go up to Jerusalem, and be absent for some time, made the multitude attend the more diligently on Him. Note, The prospect of losing our opportunities should quicken us to diligence; and when solemn ordinances are approaching, it is good to prepare for them by conversing with the Word of Christ.

He lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come to Him, poor, ordinary people, no doubt, in such remote corners of the country; yet Christ showed Himself pleased with their attendance, and concerned for their welfare; to teach us to condescend to them of low estate, and not to set those with the dogs of our flock, whom Christ hath set with the lambs of his. The souls of the poor are as precious to Christ, as those of the rich.

He directed Himself to Philip, who had seen all his miracles, particularly that of his turning water into wine, and therefore it might be expected that he would say, 'Lord, if Thou wilt, it is easy to Thee to feed them all;' those that have been witnesses of Christ's works, and have shared in them, are inexcusable if they say, Can He furnish a table in the wilderness? Philip was of Bethsaida, in the neighborhood of which Christ now was, and therefore he was most likely to help them to provision; and, probably, much of the company was known to him, and he was concerned for them. Now Christ asked, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? He takes all to eat with Him. When He had taught and healed them, He had done his part; and now they should treat Him and his disciples; (for some of the people, it is likely, were rich;) and we are sure that Christ and his disciples were poor; yet He is solicitous to entertain them. Those that will accept Christ's gifts, instead of paying for them, shall be paid for their acceptance of them. Christ, having fed their souls, feeds their bodies with food convenient, to show that the Lord is for the body, and to encourage us to pray for our daily bread; and to set us an example of compassion to the poor, James 2:15. His inquiry is, Whence shall we buy bread? One would think, that He would rather have asked, Where shall we have money to buy? But He will rather lay out all He has than they shall want. He will buy to give, and we must labor, that we may give, Eph. 4:28.

This inquiry was only to try the faith of Philip, for He Himself knew what He would do, v. 6. Note, Our Lord is never at a loss in his counsels; but, how difficult soever the case is, He knows what He has to do, and what course He will take, Acts 15:18. He knows the thoughts He has toward his people, (Jer. 26:11.) and is never at uncertainty; when we know not, He Himself knows what He will do. When Christ is pleased to puzzle his people, it is only with a design to

and versions agreeing with the received reading, which therefore should not be changed without urgent necessity; whereas there is none in this place, because such things are expressly said to have happened, as could not be crowded into the narrow compass assigned them of this scheme.

The passover was nigh. [This happened about ten or twelve days before the third passover which Christ celebrated, after his baptism.]

CALMET.

7 Philip answered him, 'Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little.

8 One of his disciples, ^m Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him,

9 There is a lad here, which hath five ^o barley-loaves, and two small fishes: ^p but what are they among so many?

10 And Jesus said, 'Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand.

11 And Jesus took the loaves; and when he had given thanks, he distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would.

12 When they were filled, he said unto his disciples, Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.

13 Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley-loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten.

prove them. The question put Philip to a non-plus, yet Christ proposed it, to try whether he would say, 'Lord, if Thou wilt exert thy power for them, we need not buy bread.'

Philip's answer to this question; 'Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient. It is to no purpose to talk of buying bread for them, for neither will the country afford so much bread, nor can we lay out so much money.' Two hundred pence of their money amount to about six pounds of ours, and if they lay out that, it will exhaust their fund, and they must starve. Grotius computes, that two hundred pennyworth of bread would scarcely reach to two thousand; but Philip would have every one take a little; and nature, we say, is content with a little. Philip, as if the Master of the family had been an ordinary person, looked for supply only in an ordinary way. Christ might have said to him, as afterward, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? Or, as God to Moses in a like case, Is the Lord's hand waxen short? We are apt to distrust God's power when visible means fail; that is, to trust Him no further than we can see Him.

Andrew is here said to be Simon Peter's brother; though he was senior to Peter in discipleship, and instrumental to bring Peter to Christ, yet Peter afterward so far outshone him, that he is described by his relation to Peter: he acquainted Christ with what they had at hand; and herein we may see the strength of his love, in that he was willing to bring out all they had, though any one would have said, Charity begins at home. He did not conceal it, under pretence of being a better husband of their provision than the Master, but honestly gives account of all they had. There is a lad here, probably one that used to follow this company, as suiters the camp, with provisions to sell, and the disciples had bespoken what he had for themselves; and it was five barley-loaves, and two small fishes. The provision was coarse and ordinary. Canaan was a land of wheat, (Deut. 8: 8.) its inhabitants were commonly fed with the finest wheat, (Ps. 91: 16. Deut. 32: 14.) yet Christ and his disciples were glad of barley-bread. It does not follow, that we should tie ourselves to coarse fare, and place religion in it: (when God brings finer to our hands, receive it, and be thankful:) but it does follow, that we must not desire dainties, (Prov. 23: 5.) nor murmur if reduced to coarse fare, but be thankful, and reconciled to it; barley-bread is better than we deserve: nor let us despise the mean provision of the poor, remembering how Christ was provided for. There were but five loaves, and those so small, that one little lad carried them all; and we find, (2 Kings 4: 42, 43.) that twenty barley-loaves, with some other provision to help out, would not dine a hundred men without a miracle. There were but two fishes, and those small; I take the fish to have been cured, for they had not fire to dress them. The provision of bread was little, but that of fish was less, so that many a bit of dry bread they must eat before they could make a meal of this provision. Bread is meat for hunger; but of them that murmured for flesh, it is said, They asked meat for their lusts, Ps. 78: 18. Well, Andrew was willing that the people should have this, as far as it would go. Note, A distrustful fear of wanting ourselves, should not hinder us from needful charity to others. See the weakness of his faith, 'But what are they among so many?' To offer that to such a multitude, is but to mock them.' Philip and he had not considered the power of Christ, (which they had largely experienced.) Who fed the camp of Israel in the wilderness? He that could make one man chase a thousand, could make one loaf feed a thousand.

14 Make the men sit down, though ye have nothing, and trust Me.' This was like going to buy without money; Christ would thus try their obedience. Observe, The furniture of the dining-room; there was much grass in that place, though a desert place; see how beautiful nature is, it makes grass grow upon the mountains, Ps. 147: 8. The grass was uneaten; God

gives not only enough, but more than enough. Here was this plenty of grass where Christ was preaching; the Gospel brings other blessings along with it, Then shall the earth yield her increase, Ps. 67: 6. This plenty of grass made the place the more commodious, and served them for cushions, or beds; (as they called what they sat on at meat, Esth. 1: 6.) and considering what Christ says of the grass of the field, (Matt. 6: 29, 30.) these beds excelled those of Ahasuerus; nature's pomp is the most glorious. The number of the guests, about five thousand; a great entertainment, representing that of the Gospel, which is a feast for all nations, Isa. 25: 6.

The distribution of the provision was done with thanksgiving; He gave thanks. Note We ought to give thanks for our food, for we have it from the hand of God, and must receive it with thanksgiving, 1 Tim. 4: 4, 5. And this is the sweetness of our creature-comforts, that they will furnish us with matter, and give us occasion, for thanksgiving. Though our provision be coarse and scanty, though we have neither plenty nor plenty, we must give God thanks.

It was distributed from the hand of Christ by the hands of his disciples. Note, All our comforts come to us originally from the hand of Christ; whoever brings them, it is He that sends them. In distributing the bread of life to those that follow Him, He is pleased to make use of his disciples; they are the servants at Christ's table, or rather rulers in his household, to give to every one their portion of meat in due season.

It was done to universal satisfaction. They did not every one take a little, but all had as much as they would; and, considering how long they had fasted, with what an appetite they sat down, how agreeable this food may be supposed to be, above common food, it was not a little that served them, when they ate as much as they would, and on free cost. Those whom Christ feeds with the bread of life, He does not stint, Ps. 81: 10. There were but two small fishes, and yet they had of them too, as much as they would. He did not reserve them for the better sort of the guests, and put off the poor with dry bread, but treated them all alike, for they were alike welcome. They who call feeding upon fish fasting, reproach the entertainment Christ here made, which was a full feast.

When they were filled, and every man had a witness to the truth of the miracle, Christ said to his disciples, Gather up the fragments. Note, We must always take care that we make no waste of any of God's creatures; for the grant we have of them, though large and full, is with this proviso, willful waste only excepted. It is just with God to bring us to the want of that which we waste. The Jews were very careful not to lose any bread, or let it be trodden upon. He who despises bread, falls into the depth of poverty, was a saying among them. Though Christ could command supplies, yet He would have the fragments gathered up. When we are filled, we must remember that others want, and we may want. Those that would be charitable must be provident. Had this broken meat been left upon the grass, the beasts and fowls would have gathered it up; but that which is fit for men, is wasted if it be thrown to the brute. Christ did not order the broken meat to be gathered up, till all were filled; we must not begin to hoard, till all is laid out that ought to be, for that is withholding more than is meet. Mr. Baxter notes here, 'How much less should we lose God's Word, or our time, or such greater mercies!'

They filled twelve baskets with the fragments, an evidence not only of the truth of the miracle, that they were fed with real food, but of the greatness of it; they were not only filled, but there was all this over and above. How large the divine bounty! it not only fills the cup, but makes it run over; bread enough, and to spare

Verse 7.

Two hundred penny worth. [This sum, rating the denarius at seven and a half pence, would amount to six pounds and five shillings English money.] Much grass.] 'This circumstance is plainly the remark of an eye-witness.'

GREENFIELD.

Verse 10.

This circumstance is plainly the remark of an

PALEY

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14 Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said "This is a truth that Prophet that should come into the world."

15 When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come, and take him by force to make him a King, he departed again into a mountain himself alone.

16 And when even was now come, his disciples went down unto the sea,

17 And entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum: and it was now dark; and Jesus was not come to them.

18 And the sea arose, by reason of a great wind that blew.

19 So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid.

20 But he saith unto them, "It is I; be not afraid."

x 1:21. 4:19,25,42. 7:40. Gen. 9:10. Deut. 18:15-18. Matt. 21:11. Luke 7:16. 35:19. Acts 3:22-24. 7:37. y 2:24,25. Heb. 4:13. z 2:34. 12:12,13. Mark 11:9,10. Luke 19:38. a 14:1. 18:38. Matt. 14:22,23. Mark 6:46,47. b 24:25. 2:12. 4:46. Mark 6:45. c Pa. 107:25. 135:7. Matt. 14:24. d 27:26. John 1:13. Mark 6:47,48. e 11:18. Luke 24:13. Rev. 14:20. 21:16. f 16:13. Job 9:3. Ps. 29:10. 93:4. Matt. 14:25,26. Mark 6:49. Luke 24:30-39. g Ia. 41:1,14. 43:1,2. 44:8. Matt. 14:27-31. Mark 6:50. 16:8. Rev. 1:17,18.

without their toil, and save them from eating their bread in the sweat of their face. They hoped this might be an opportunity of shaking off the Roman yoke, which they were weary of. If they had one to head them, who could victual an army cheaper than another could provide for a family, they could not fail of success, and the recovery of their liberties. Thus is religion often prostituted to a secular interest, and Christ is served, only to serve a turn, Rom. 16: 18. Jesus is usually sought after for something else, not for his own sake. Augustine. It was a seditious attempt, a disturbance of the public peace; it would make the country a seat of war, and expose it to the resentments of the Roman power. It was contrary to the mind of our Lord Himself; for they would take Him by force, whether He would or no. Note, Those who force honors upon Christ, which He has not required at their hands, displease Him, and do Him the greatest dishonor. They that say, I am of Christ, in opposition to those that are of Apollus and Cephas, (so making Christ the Head of a party,) take Him by force, to make Him a King.

Here is an instance of the humility and self-denial of Jesus, that, when they would have made Him a King, He departed; so far was He from countenancing the design. Herein He has left a testimony, [1.] Against ambition of worldly honor, to which He was perfectly mortified. Had they come to take Him by force, and make Him prisoner, He could not have been more industrious to abscond, than when they would make Him King. Let us not then covet to be the idols of a crowd, nor be desirous of vain-glory. [2.] Against faction, and rebellion, and whatever tends to disturb the peace of kings and provinces. By this it appears that He was no enemy to Caesar, nor would have his followers so, but he the quiet in the land; He would have his ministers decline every thing that looks like sedition, and improve their interest only for their work's sake.

in our Father's house. The fragments filled twelve baskets, one for each disciple; they were thus repaid for their willingness to part with what they had for public service; see 2 Chron. 31:10. The Jews, when they have eaten a meal, leave a piece of bread upon the table, upon which the blessing after meat may rest, for it is a curse upon the wicked man, (Job 20:21.) there shall none of his meal be left.

Here is the influence of this miracle; They said, This is of a truth that Prophet. Note, Even the vulgar Jews with great assurance expected the Messiah to come into the world, and to be a great Prophet. They speak here with assurance of his coming. The Pharisees despised them as not knowing the law; but, it would seem, they knew more of Him, the End of the law, than they did. The miracles which Christ wrought, did clearly demonstrate that He was the Messiah, a Teacher come from God, the great Prophet, and could not but convince the amazed spectators that this was He that should come. There were many who were convinced that He was that Prophet which should come into the world, who yet did not cordially receive his doctrine, for they did not continue in it. Such wretched inconsistency there is between the faculties of the corrupt, unsanctified soul, that it is possible for men to acknowledge that Christ is that Prophet, and yet turn a deaf ear to Him.

V. 15-21. Christ retired from the multitude, because He perceived that they who acknowledged Him to be that Prophet that should come into the world, would come, and take Him by force, to make Him a King, v. 15. Here we have an instance of the irregular zeal of some of Christ's followers.

This was an act of zeal for the honor of Christ, and against the contempt which the ruling part of the Jewish church put upon Him.

They were concerned to see so great a Benefactor to the world so little esteemed; and therefore, since royal titles are the most illustrious, they would make Him a King, knowing that the Messiah was to be a King, and if a Prophet, like Moses, then a sovereign Prince and Lawgiver; and if they cannot set Him up upon the holy hill of Zion, a mountain in Galilee shall serve for the present. Those whom Christ has feasted with the dainties of heaven, should make Him their King, set Him upon the throne in their souls; let Him that has fed us, rule us. But it was an irregular zeal; for it was grounded upon a mistake concerning the nature of Christ's kingdom, as if He must appear with outward pomp; which was as great a disparagement to his glory, as it would be to lacker gold, or paint a ruby. Right notions of Christ's kingdom would keep us to right methods for advancing it. It was excited by the love of the flesh; they would make Him their King, who could feed them

He departed again into a mountain, the mountain, where He had preached, v. 3.) when He came down into the plain, to feed the people, and then returned to it alone, to be private. Christ, though so useful in the places of concourse, chose sometimes to be alone, to teach us to sequester ourselves from the world now and then, for free converse with God and our souls; and never less alone, says the serious Christian, than when alone. Public services must not jostle out private devotions.

Here is the disciples' distress at sea. They that go down to the sea in ships, see the works of the Lord, for He raiseth the stormy wind, Ps. 107:23.

When even was come, and they had done their work, it was time to look homeward, and therefore they set sail for Capernaum. This they did by particular direction from their Master, with design (as it would seem) to get them out of the way of countenancing those that would have made Him a King.

Here is the stormy wind arising, and fulfilling the word of God. They were Christ's disciples, and were now in the way of their duty, and Christ was in the mount praying for them; yet they were in this distress. The perils and afflictions of this present time may very well consist with our interest in Christ and his intercession. They had lately been feasted at Christ's table; but after the sunshine of comfort expect a storm. It was now dark; this made the storm more dangerous. Sometimes the people of God are in trouble, and cannot see their way out; in the dark concerning the cause of their trouble, the design of it, and what the issue will be, Jesus was not come to them. When they were in that storm, (Matt. 8:21.) Jesus was with them; but now their Beloved was gone. The absence of Christ is the great aggravation of troubles. The sea arose, by reason of a great wind. It was calm and fair when they put to sea, (they were not so presumptuous as to launch out in a storm,) but it arose when they were at sea. In times of tranquility we must prepare for trouble, for it may arise when we little think of it. Let it comfort good people, when they happen to be in storms at sea, that the disciples of Christ were so; and let the promises of a gracious God balance the threats of an angry sea; though in a storm, and in the dark, they are no worse off than Christ's disciples. Clouds and darkness sometimes surround the children of the light, and of the day.

Christ seasonably approaches when they were in this peril, v. 19. They had rowed, (being forced by the wind to betake themselves to their oars,) about twenty-five or thirty furlongs. The Holy Spirit that indited this, could have ascertained the number of furlongs precisely, but that, being only circumstantial, is left to be expressed according to the conjecture of the penman. And when they were a good way at sea, they see Jesus walking on the sea. See here, the power Christ has over the laws of nature. It is natural for heavy bodies to sink, but Christ walked upon the water as upon dry land, which was more than Moses' dividing, and walking through, the water.

He drew nigh to the ship; for therefore He walked upon the water, as He rides upon the heavens, for the help of his people, Deut. 33:26. He will not leave them comfortless, when tossed with tempests, and not comforted. When banished, as John, into remote places, or shut up as Paul and Silas, in close places, He will be nigh them. They were more afraid of an apparition (for so they supposed Him to be) than of the winds and waves. It is more terrible to wrestle with the rulers of the darkness of this world, than with a tempestuous sea. When they thought a demon haunted them, and perhaps was instrumental to raise the storm, they were more terrified than while they saw nothing in it but what was natural. Note, Our real distresses are often much increased by our imaginary ones, the creatures of fancy. Even the approach of comfort and deliverance is often so misconstrued as to occasion fear and perplexity. We are often not only worse frightened than hurt, but most frightened when ready to be

21 'her. 'they willingly received him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went.

[Practical Observations.]

22 ¶ The day following, when the people, which stood on the other side of the sea, saw that there was none other boat there, save that one whereinto his disciples were entered, and that Jesus went not with his disciples into the boat, but that his disciples were gone away alone;

23 (Howbeit there came other boats from Tiberias, nigh unto the place where they did eat bread, after that the Lord had given thanks.)

24 When the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, neither his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus.

25 And when they had found him on the other side of the sea, they said unto him, Rabbi, when camest thou hither?

¶ Ps. 24:7-10. Cant. 3:4. Matt. 14:32, 33. Mark 6:51. Rev. 3:20. 1. 16, 17. Matt. 14:22. Mark 6:45. k 24. l See on 1. m See on 11, 12. n 12:23. o 7:11. 18:4, 5. 20:15. Mark 1:37. Luke 8:40. p See on 1:38, 49.

that would find Christ, must accomplish a diligent search; seek till they find; go from sea to sea, to seek the Word of God, rather than live without it. Those whom Christ has feasted with the bread of life, should have earnest desires toward Him. Much would have more in communion with Christ. They resolve to go to Capernaum in quest of Him; there He usually resided. Thither his disciples were gone, and they knew He would not be long absent from them; they that would find Christ, must go forth by the footsteps of the flock. Providence favored them with an opportunity of going by sea, the speediest way; for there came other boats from Tiberias, that lay further off upon the same shore, nigh, though not so nigh to the place where they did eat bread; and, probably, the boats were bound for Capernaum. Note, Those that in sincerity seek Christ, and opportunities of converse with Him, are commonly assisted by Providence in those pursuits. The evangelist, having occasion to mention their eating the multiplied bread, adds, after that the Lord had given thanks. So much were the disciples affected with this, that they never forgot the impressions made by it, but took pleasure in remembering the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth. That was the grace and beauty of that meal, and made it remarkable: their hearts were within them.

helped. But Christ silenced their fears with a word, (v. 20.) It is I, be not afraid! Nothing is more powerful to convince sinners than that word, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest; nothing more powerful to comfort saints than, I am Jesus whom thou lovest; it is I that love thee, and seek thy good; be not afraid of Me, nor of the storm. When trouble is nigh, Christ is nigh.

They welcomed Christ into the ship; they willingly received Him. Note, Christ's absenting Himself for a time, is but so much the more to endear Himself; at his return, to his disciples, who value his presence above any thing; see Cant. 3:4. Christ landed them safe at the shore; immediately the ship was at the land whither they went. Note, [1.] The church, in which the disciples of Christ have embarked their all, may be shattered and distressed, yet it shall come safe to the harbor at last; tossed at sea, but not lost; cast down, but not destroyed; the hush burning, but not consumed. [2.] The power and presence of the church's King shall expedite her deliverance, and conquer the difficulties which have baffled all her other friends. The disciples had rowed hard, but could not make their point till Christ was in the ship, and then the work was done suddenly. If we have received Christ willingly, though the night be dark, and the wind high, yet we shall be at shore shortly, and nearer to it than we think we are. Many a doubting soul is fetched to heaven by a pleasing surprise, or ever it is aware.

V. 22-27. In these verses the people inquire after Christ, v. 23, 24. They saw the disciples go to sea, they saw Christ retire to the mountain, probably with an intimation that He desired to be private for some time; but, their hearts being set upon it to make Him a King, they way-laid his return.

They were much at a loss for Him; He was gone, and they saw not what was become of Him; they saw there was no other boat there, but that in which the disciples went off, Providence so ordering it for the confirming of the miracle of his walking on the sea, for there was no boat for Him to go in. They observed also, that Jesus did not go with his disciples. Note, Those that would find Christ, must diligently observe his motions, and learn to understand the tokens of his presence and absence, that they may steer accordingly.

They are very industrious in seeking Him. They searched thereabouts, and when they saw that Jesus was not there, nor his disciples, (nor any one that could give tidings of Him,) they resolved to search elsewhere. Note, Those

They also took shipping, and came to Capernaum seeking for Jesus. They did not defer, in hopes to see Him again on this side the water; but, their convictions being strong, and their desires warm, they followed Him presently. Good motions are often crushed for want of being prosecuted in time. They came to Capernaum, and, for aught that appears, these hypocritical followers of Christ had a pleasant passage, while his sincere disciples had a stormy one. It is not strange if it fare worst with the best men in this evil world. They came, seeking Jesus. Note, Those that would find Christ, and find comfort in Him, must be willing to take pains, and, as those here, compass sea and land, to seek and serve Him who came from heaven to earth, to seek and save us.

They found Him on the other side of the sea. Note, Christ will be found of those that seek Him; and it is worth while to cross a sea, nay, to go from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth, if we may but find Him at last. Those people appeared to be unsound, and not actuated by any good principle, and yet were thus zealous. Note, Hypocrites may be very forward in their attendance on God's ordinances. If men have no more to show for their love to Christ, than their running after sermons and prayers, and their pangs of affection to good preaching, they have reason to suspect themselves no better than this eager crowd. But though these people were no better principled, Christ was willing to be found of them; if we could know the hearts of hypocrites, yet while their profession is plausible, we must not exclude them our communion, much less when we do not know their hearts.

Rabbi, when camest Thou hither? It would seem by v. 59, that they found Him in the synagogue. That was the likeliest place to see Christ in, for it was his custom to attend public worship, Luke 4:16. Note, Christ will be found in congregations of his people, and in the administration of ordinances; public worship Christ owns, and graces with the manifestations of Himself. There they found Him, and all they had to say to Him, was, Rabbi, when camest Thou hither? They saw He would not be made a king, and therefore say no more of that, but call Him Rabbi, Teacher. Their inquiry refers not only to the time, but to the manner, of his conveying Himself thither; not only When, but How, camest Thou hither? for there was no boat for Him to come in. They were curious in asking concerning Christ's motions, but not solicitous to observe their own.

The answer Christ gave them, was not direct to their question. What was it to them, when and how He came?

He discovers the corrupt principle that they acted from; 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, I that search the heart, and know what is in man, (Rev. 3:14, 15.) Ye seek Me; that is well, but not from a good principle.' Christ knows not only what we do, but why we do it. These followed Christ, not for his doctrine's sake; not because ye saw the miracles. The miracles were the confirmation of his doctrine; Nicodemus sought Him, for the sake of them, (John 3:2.) and argued from the power of his works to the truth of his word; but these here were so stupid that they never considered that. But it was because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled; not because He taught them, but because He fed them. He had given them, [1.] A full meal. They did eat, and were filled; and some of them

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. —21. The beneficence of our Lord's miracles concurred with their power, to convince the people that He was sent from God; and the same spirit of love displayed in our conduct, even amidst weakness and poverty, will best adorn the Gospel, evince its divine origin, and conciliate the minds of men. If we copy the example of our Lord, in rendering hearty thanks to the Giver of all our comforts, and in dispensing them to the indigent, our most homely meals will be far more comfortable and blessed, than the most luxurious feasts of ungodly men. (Note, Ps. 37:16, 17.) Moderation and indifference in respect of diet, and a parsimonious care to 'gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost,' form the very basis of Christian

beneficence; and, if, in opulent cities, all that which is wasted or needlessly consumed, were reserved to feed the hungry, how much more comfortably would the poor be maintained! and how much better would it be both for the souls and bodies of the affluent! Christians should be willing to fare as Christ did; to obey his commands, and to encounter difficulties at his word.—When He is not sensibly present with his people, He is pleading for them; and He will come to them through every intervening obstacle, and terminate all their fears and hardships. (P. O. Matt. 14:14—36. Mark 11:30—56. 3. 1—21.)

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26 Jesus answered them, and said, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.

27 *Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed.

28 Then said they unto him, 'What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, 'This is the work of

perhaps were so poor, that they had not known for a long time, what it was to have enough. It is probable that, as the miraculous wine was the best wine, so was the miraculous food more than usually pleasant. It cost them nothing: no reckoning was brought in. Note, Many follow Christ for *loaves*, and not for *love*. Thus they do, who aim at secular advantage, and follow it, because by this they get preferments. *This fable respecting Christ, what a gainful concern we have made of it!* said one of the popes: these people complimented Christ with *Rabbi*, and showed Him respect, yet He told them faithfully of their hypocrisy; his ministers must hence learn not to flatter those that flatter them, nor to be bribed by fair words, but to give faithful reproofs where there is cause for them; nor cry *peace* to all that cry *rabbi* to them.

He directs them to better principles; *Labor for that meat that endureth to everlasting life*. He had discoursed with the woman of Samaria, under the similitude of *water*; here He speaks of the same things under the similitude of *meat*, taking occasion from the loaves they had eaten. His design is, to moderate our worldly pursuits; *Labor not for the meat that perishes*. This does not forbid honest labor for food convenient, 2 Thes. 3: 12. But we must not make the things of this world our chief concern. Note, The things of the world are *meat that perishes*. Worldly wealth, honor, and pleasure are *meat*; they feed the fancy, and many times that is all; men hunger after them as *meat*, and glut themselves; and a carnal heart, as long as they last, may live upon them; but they *perish*, wither of themselves, and are exposed to a thousand accidents; those that have the largest share of them, are not sure to have them while they live, but are sure to lose them when they die. It is therefore folly for us inordinately to labor after them. *First*, We must not labor in religion, nor work the works thereof, for *this perishing meat*; must not make religion subservient to a worldly interest, nor aim at *secular advantages in sacred exercises*. *Secondly*, We must not do all labor for this meat; that is, we must not make these things our *chief good*, nor make our pains about them our *chief business*; nor seek those things *first and most*, Prov. 23: 45. To excite our gracious pursuits, 'Bestow your pains to better purpose, and *labor for that meat which belongs to the soul*.'

This is *unspeakably desirable*; it endures to everlasting life; it will last as long as we must; not only it endures eternally, but will nourish us to everlasting life. The blessings of the new covenant are our preparative for, our preservative to, and the pledge and earnest of, eternal life.

It is *attainable*. Shall the treasures of the world be ransacked, and the fruits of the earth gathered together, to furnish us with provision that will last to eternity? No, *The sea saith, It is not in me, among all the treasures hid in the sand; it cannot be gotten for gold; but it is that which the Son of man shall give*; either which *meat*, or which *life*, the Son of man shall give. Observe here, who gives this meat; *the Son of man*, the great Householder, who is intrusted with the administration of the kingdom of God, and the dispensation of the gifts and comforts of that kingdom, and has power to give eternal life, with all the means of it, and preparations for it. We are bid to *labor for it*, as if it were to be got by our own industry; as the heathen

said, *The gods sell all advantages to the industrious*. But when we have labored ever so much for it, we have not merited it as our hire, but the Son of man *gives it*. And what more free than gift? It is an encouragement, that He who has the giving of it, is the *Son of man*, for then we may hope the *sons of men*, that labor for it, shall not fail to have it. What authority He has to give it: for *He has God the Father sealed*; for *He has God the Father sealed* (and evidenced) to be God; so some read it; *He* has declared Him to be the Son of God with power. He has *sealed Him*, given Him authority as God's Ambassador to man, and man's *Intercessor* with God; and has proved his commission by miracles; having given Him *authority*, He has given us assurance of it; having intrusted Him with *unlimited powers*, He has satisfied us with *undoubted proofs* of them; so that, as He might go on with confidence in his undertaking for us, so may we in our resignations to Him. *God the Father* sealed Him with the Spirit, by the voice from heaven, by the testimony He bore to Him in signs and wonders. Divine revelation is perfected in Him, in Him the *vision and prophecy is sealed up*, (Dan. 9: 24.) to Him all believers *seal* that He is true, (ch. 3: 33.) and in Him they are all *sealed*, 2 Cor. 1: 22.

V. 23-69. Whether this conference was with the Capernatens, or with those who came from the other side, is not material: it is an instance of condescension, that He gave them leave to ask questions, and did not resent the interruption as an affront, no, not from his common hearers, though not his immediate followers. Those that would be apt to teach, must be swift to hear and study to answer. It is the wisdom of teachers, when they are asked even unprofitable questions, to take occasion to answer that which is profitable.

Christ having told them that *they must work for the meat* He spoke of, they inquire what work they must do.

Their inquiry was *pertinent*; *What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?* Some understand it as a pert question; 'What works of God can we do more and better, than those we do in obedience to the law of Moses?' I rather take it as a humble, serious question, speaking them, at least for the present, willing to know their duty; and I take it that they who asked this question, *How and What*, (v. 30.) and made that request, (v. 34.) were not the same persons with those that murmured, (v. 41, 42.) and strove, (v. 52.) for those are expressly called the *Jews*, which came out of Judea (for those were strictly called Jews) to cavil, whereas these were of Galilee, and came to be taught. This question here intimates, that they were convinced, that they who would obtain this everlasting meat, must aim to do something great. They who *look high* in their expectations, and hope to enjoy the *glory of God*, must aim high in their endeavors, and study to do the *works of God*, works which He requires, and will accept of, *works of God* distinguished from worldly

Verses 26, 27

'Though the miracle of the loaves was one of the most astonishing that ever was wrought upon earth, and though this people had by the testimony of all their senses, the most convincing proof of its reality, yet we find many of them paid little attention to it, and regarded the omnipotent hand of God in it, no farther than it went to satisfy the demands of their appetite! Most men are willing to receive temporal good from the hand of God, but there are few, very few, who are willing to receive spiritual blessings.'

Dr. A. CLARKE.

'The argument of our Lord may be thus expressed: "The manna your fathers ate in the wilderness could only preserve a mortal life. That is the true bread of life, which qualifies every one who eats it for everlasting happiness. I call Myself this *Bread*, not only on account of my doctrine, which purifies the soul, and fits it for a state of happiness, but also because I shall give my own life to procure the life of the world."

T. H. HORN.

He hath God the Father sealed. 'It was a custom among nations contiguous to Judea, and particularly among the Egyptians, to set a seal on the victim deemed proper for sacrifice. With this custom the Jews could not be unacquainted, and it is possible that similar precautions were in use among themselves, especially as they were so strictly enjoined to have their sacrifices *without spot or blemish*. To this usage our Lord is here supposed to allude. Infinite justice found Jesus Christ to be without spot or blemish, and therefore, *sealed* pointed out and accorded Him, as a proper sacrifice and atonement for the sin of the whole world. He 9: 13, 14.'

Id.

(27.) *Sealed.* 'The only significations of the word thus translated which suit the context, are, 1. *To approve, and confirm*, as it were by the impress of a seal. So contracts, orders, &c. are sealed. This signification is frequent in the Septuagint. 2. *To mark, distinguish*. This is found in the purest Greek authors. Nor do these significations materially differ; since the marking of certain persons or things involves also a sort of *confirmation*, and is a peculiar evidence that the persons or things are the property of such a master. But the latter sense occurs not only more frequently in the New Testament, but it is even used of the *sealing of persons*, a phrase which seems to have an allusion to slaves or servants, on whom some certain mark, brand, or character was impressed, by means of which they might be distinguished, and the property in them preserved inviolate.'

Lampe, in BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 29.

The submission of the understanding to the teaching of God, of the conscience to his righteousness, and of the heart and will to his method of salvation and to his authority, which are implied in this commandment, render it emphatically *an act of obedience*. It honors God in all his perfections, more than any other good work can do; and though it does not justify, as a good work, but by receiving Christ for our righteousness, yet without it no other good work can be accepted. So that faith in Christ may especially be called 'the work of God'; and it was that act of obedience, to which the Jews were *sealed* in order to obtain the blessing of eternal life. 'They who seek to please God without faith, are diligent to no purpose. Should any one apply to a

God, that ye believe on Him whom he hath sent.
[*Practical Observations.*]

¶ They said therefore unto him, 'What sign shewest thou that, that we may see, and believe thee? what dost thou work?'

¶ Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat.'

¶ Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true Bread from heaven.'

¶ For the Bread of God is he, which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.

a. 2:18. 4:48. Ex. 4:8. 1 Kings 19:3.
5. Is. 7:11-14. Matt. 12:38, 39.
16:1-4. Mark 8:12. Luke 11:29.
80. Acts 1:30. 1 Cor. 1:22. Heb. 2:4.
b. 38. 10:38. 12:37. 20:25-29. Is. 5:19. Mark 15:32.
c. 49. Ex. 16:4-15. Num. 11:6-9.
Deut. 8:3. Josh. 5:12. Neh. 9:20. Ps. 105:40.
d. Neh. 9:15. Ps. 78:24, 25. 1 Cor. 10:3. Rev. 2:17.
e. Ex. 16:4, 8, 15. Ps. 78:23.
f. 33:31, 41, 50, 55, 58. 1:9. 15:1. 1 John 5:20.
g. 38, 48, 51. 3:13. 8:42. 13:3. 16:28. 17:3. 1 Tim. 1:15, 16. 1 John 1:1, 2.

miraculous feeding of Israel in the wilderness before all the miracles Christ wrought; *Our fathers did eat manna in the desert*; and to strengthen the objection, they quote a Scripture for it; *He gave them bread from heaven*; (taken from Ps. 78: 24.) *He gave them of the corn of heaven*. What good use might be made of this story! It was a memorable instance of God's power and goodness, often mentioned to the glory of God; (Neh. 9: 20, 21.) yet see how these people perverted it, and made an ill use of it.

Christ reproved them for their fondness of the miraculous bread, and bid them not set their hearts upon *meat which perisheth*. 'Why,' say they, '*meat* was the great good thing that God gave to our fathers in the desert; and why should not we then labor for that meat? If God made much of them, why should not we be for those that will make much of us?'

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V 22-29. If Jesus were to appear on earth, feeding and healing men by miracle, He would again be followed by admiring multitudes, who might even desire to have Him for their King, in hopes of secular advantages; and indeed many profess his truths and attend on his ordinances, nay, minister in holy things, who seek nothing more than 'the loaves and fishes.' They call Him Rabbi, but will not be taught by Him; speak of Him as their Savior, but do not rely on Him for salvation; they say, 'Lord, Lord, but will not do the things which He says.' And though He exhorts all men 'to labor, not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life,' yet most, even of those 'who profess and call themselves Christians,' labor incessantly, anxiously, and wholly, for perishing vanities, till death convinces them of their folly; others succeed them, and copy the example of their infatuation. (Note, Ps. 49: 13.) But, to rational, immortal souls, nothing is worthy of the chief regard, which will not 'endure unto everlasting life,' and secure the possessor from final misery. 'This enduring portion 'the Son of man' is authorized to bestow on whom He pleases. Let us then direct all our ear-

Christ had fed five thousand men with five loaves, and had given them that as one sign, to prove Him *sent of God*; but, under color of *magnifying* the miracles of Moses, they tacitly *undervalue* that miracle of Christ. Christ fed his thousands; but Moses his hundred thousands; Christ fed them but once, and then reproved those who followed Him in hope to be still fed, and put them off with a discourse of spiritual food; but Moses fed his followers forty years, and miracles were their daily bread; Christ fed them with bread out of the earth, and fishes out of the sea; but Moses fed Israel with bread from heaven, angels' food. Thus boastingly did these Jews talk of the manna which their fathers did eat; but their fathers had slighted it, as much as they did now the barley-loaves, and called it *light bread*, Num. 21: 5. Thus apt are we to slight the appearances of God's power and grace in our own times, while we pretend to admire the wonders which our fathers told us of. Suppose this miracle of Christ was outdone by that of Moses, yet other miracles of Christ outshone his; and besides, all true miracles prove a divine doctrine, though not equally illustrious; they were diversified according as occasion required. As manna excelled the barley-loaves, much more did the doctrine of Christ excel the law of Moses, and his heavenly institutions the carnal ordinances of that dispensation.

Christ rectifies their mistake concerning the typical manna. It was true, their fathers did eat manna in the desert. But it was not Moses that gave it: he was the instrument and they must look beyond him to God. We do not find that Moses did so much as pray for the manna; and he spake unadvisedly, *Must we fetch water out of the rock?* Moses gave them not either that bread, or that water. It was not given them, as they imagined, from heaven, but only from the clouds, and therefore not so much excelling that which had its rise from the earth, as they thought. Because the Scripture saith, He gave them bread from heaven, it does not follow that it was heavenly bread, or was intended to nourish souls. Misunderstanding Scripture-language occasions mistakes in the things of God.

He informs them concerning the true Manna, of which that was a type; *But my Father giveth you the true Bread from heaven*; that which is truly the Bread from heaven, of which that was but a figure, is now given, not to your fathers, who are dead, but to you, for whom the better things were reserved: He is now giving you that Bread from heaven, which is truly so called. As much as the

physician, and ask him for what sum of money he would undertake to cure him, and the physician should answer in these words: All the money which I require is, that thou wilt confide in me, and be fully assured, that I seek nothing but thy recovery and established health: who would, from such an answer, conclude, that this confidence was a fact money, which the physician demanded from the sick man, that he might follow his salutary counsels? They are, therefore, evidently ridiculous, who, from this passage, infer that faith is a work, and that we are justified by our works.' Beza.

— Verses 30, 31.

Erasmus, Doddridge and Kuinoel think, that the same persons are not intended by the evangelist as speaking throughout this whole conversa-

tion; 'as,' says Kuinoel, 'is evident from v. 31. For those whom Jesus had addressed at v. 36, and who had, with no bad intent, proposed the question, (v. 29.) could not have sought from Him at that time a miracle to prove his Messiahship, (as the persons do at v. 30.) for they had themselves beheld a most remarkable one, and had, on that very account, declared Jesus to be the Messiah. See v. 14. These last were then probably the chief persons of the Jews then present in the synagogue: who, when Jesus had (v. 27) called Himself the Legate and Interpreter of the divine will, required of Him (as did the Pharisees and lawyers, Matt. 12: 38. 16: 1.) a miracle, as a proof of his divine mission. Indeed, their whole language plainly marks their ill will.'

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34 Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

35 And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

[Practical Observations.]

36 But I said unto you that ye also have seen me, and believe not.

37 All that the Father giveth me shall come to me: and him

J. 25. 4:15. Ps. 1:6.
1:18—38. 1 Cor. 10:16—18. 11: 23—39.
J. 37:44, 45, 65. 5:40. 7:37. Is. 55:1—3. Matt. 11:28. Rev. 22:17.
1:43, 14. Is. 49:10. Luke 6:25. Rev. 7:16.
m. 30:10, 64. 1:37. 15:24. Luke 16: 31. 1 Pet. 1:8, 9.
n. 38. 17:2, 6, 9, 11, 24.
o. 4:65. 10:33, 35. Ps. 110:3. Eph. 2:4—10. Phil. 1:29. 2 Thes. 2:13, 14. 2 Tim. 2:19. Tit. 3:3—7.

throne of God is above the clouds, so much doth the everlasting Gospel excel the *manna*. In calling God his *Father*, He speaks Himself greater than Moses; for Moses was faithful but as a servant, Christ as a Son, Heb. 3:5.

This objection concerning the *manna*, gave occasion to Christ to discourse of Himself under the similitude of bread, and of believing under the similitude of eating and drinking. Christ is Bread; is that to the soul, which bread is to the body; it is the *staff of life*. The doctrine of the Gospel concerning Christ; that He is the Mediator, our Peace, our Righteousness, our Redeemer; by these things do men live. Our bodies could better live without food, than our souls without Christ. *Bread-corn is bruised*; (Isa. 28:28.) so was Christ; He was born at Bethlehem, the house of bread, and typified by the sheaf-bread.

He is the Bread of God, divine Bread; it is He that is of God; (v. 46.) Bread which my Father gives, (v. 32.) which He has made to be the Food of our souls; his children's Bread. The Levitical sacrifices are called the bread of God, (Lev. 21:21, 22.) and Christ is the great Sacrifice; Christ, in his words and ordinances, the Feast upon the sacrifice.

He is the Bread of life, (v. 35. and again, v. 48.) that Bread of life, alluding to the tree of life in the midst of Eden, which was to Adam the seal of that part of the covenant, *Do this and live*, of which he might eat, and live. Christ is the Fruit of the tree of life.

He is the *living Bread*; (so He explains Himself, v. 51.) *I am the living Bread*. Bread is itself a dead thing, and nourishes not but by the help of the faculties of a living body; but Christ is Himself *living Bread*, and nourishes by his own power. *Manna* was a dead thing; if kept but one night, it bred worms; but Christ is everliving Bread, that never waxes old. The doctrine of Christ crucified, is now as strengthening and comforting to a believer as ever, and his mediation still of as much value and efficacy as ever. He gives unto the world, (v. 33.) spiritual and eternal life; the life of the soul in communion with God here, and in the fruition of Him hereafter; a life that includes in it all happiness. The *manna* did not preserve life, much less restore it; but Christ gives life to those that were dead in sin. The *manna* was ordained only for the Israelites, but Christ is given for the life of the world; none are excluded but such as exclude themselves. Christ came to put life into the minds of men; principles productive of acceptable performances.

He is the Bread which came down from heaven; this is often repeated here, v. 33, 50, 51, 58. This denotes the divinity of Christ's person. As God, He had a being in heaven, whence He came to take our nature upon Him; I came down from heaven; whence we may infer his antiquity, He was in the beginning with God; his ability, for heaven is the firmament of power; and his authority, He came

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 30—35. Blessed be God, that He has given us the 'true Bread from heaven.' May He create in us an appetite for it; that we may intelligently and cordially say, 'Lord, evermore give us this Bread!' But, when we look around us, we see men in general hungering after and feeding on husks or ashes: they 'spend their money for that which is not bread, and their labor for that which satisfieth not.' (Note, Is. 55:1—3.) Some feed on airy speculations, and 'philosophy falsely so called;' some aim to satisfy their minds with gold, fame, or power; some feed on sensual pleasure; and numbers attempt to allay their cravings after happiness, by dissipated mirth, or the pride of life. All these are like 'a hungry man, who dreameth that he eateth, but he awaketh and his soul is empty:' for at length death comes, and their unsatisfied desires prove their eternal tormentors. Nay, many, pretending to religion, take pleasure in superstitions, enthusiasm, notions, forms, controversies, or revilings: these also 'feed upon ashes; a deceived heart hath

turned them aside, that they cannot deliver their souls, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?' (Note, Is. 44:19, 20.) But 'the flesh of Christ is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed:' here the soul, which hungers and thirsts for righteousness and true felicity, and is made sensible of its wants, finds suitable and abundant provision. Here pardon, hope, communion with God, and whatever can calm the conscience, cheer the heart, or promote holiness, is comprised in one glorious Object, a mighty Redeemer, 'God manifest in the flesh,' shedding his blood to atone for the sins of his rebellious creatures! This is that 'living Bread, which came down from heaven, that we might eat and live forever.' How adorable, how stupendous, is this love of our divine Redeemer! May this 'love of Christ constrain us ... to live no longer to ourselves, but to Him who died for us, and rose again.' (Note, 2 Cor. 5:13—15.)

SCOTT.

Verses 34, 35.

The address is such, that we cannot understand it as used in a deriding manner. 'It is very usual with the sacred writers to represent divine instructions, as the food of the soul; (Ps. 19:10. 119:103. Prov. 9:5. Job 23:12. Jer. 15:16. Heb. 5:12, 14.) yet I can recollect no instance, in which the instructor himself, is called food, or any are said to eat him; much less, in which they are exhorted to 'eat his flesh and drink his blood.' So that Dr. Clarke's criticism on this passage, is far from being satisfactory; and, however clear it may be of any such design, I fear it has misled many to a neglect of that great doctrine, the atonement of Christ, to which there seems in the context so express a reference.' Doddridge. The whole of this discourse has such an inseparable connection with the atonement of our Lord's death, and the life of faith in Him and in that atonement, that, if these subjects be kept out of sight, it is impossible to give any clear and satisfactory exposition of the passage. And this is a most conclusive proof of the doctrine, to all who revere the words of Christ: according to that form of reasoning, which is called *reductio ad absurdum*;—reducing an opponent to an absurdity, to escape the conclusive 'force of an argument.' (31.) *As it is written, &c.* Neh. 9:15. Ps. 78:24.

SCOTT.

(34.) Give us, &c.] 'These words seem not said by the same persons who had required a sign, but by others more ignorant, and of the common people: who understood Jesus to speak of corporal aliment.' Kiriakos. Doddridge understands the words as spoken by the wiser and better Jews.

ED.

Verses 36—40.

Our Lord next plainly told the Jews, that though they had seen Him and his miracles, and seemed to be his zealous followers, yet they did not truly believe in Him. But, if they forsook Him, He should not be without disciples; for all 'whom the Father had given Him, would come to Him.' In this, the Father's will, which the Son came down from heaven to perform, perfectly concurs; it is his will, that not one of those 'given to the Son' should be rejected or lost by Him, in life or death; but that every one of them should be raised up to eternal felicity, 'at the last day.' And it is equally his will, that every one, 'who beareth the Son,' who so contemplates his character and work, and discovers the glory and suitableness of his salvation, as to believe in Him, and to trust his soul in his hands, should have everlasting life, notwithstanding all possible hindrances and objections. (Marg. Ref. p.—Notes, 41—46. v. 44, 45. Heb. 6:5—6. v. 65. 10:26—31. 28:29. 17:11, 12. Ps. 40:6—8. v. 80—5—10.) These two views of the divine will, God's secret will concerning those whom He has 'chosen to salvation,' and his revealed will concerning the actual sal-

vation of every believer, are perfectly coincident; for no one will thus to come, till divine grace has subdued, and in part changed his heart, and therefore no one who comes will ever be cast out. When an awakened sinner is willing to come to Christ, if he finds the doctrines of the divine decrees too dazzling for his feeble eyes, he should look off from them to the general invitations and promises of the Gospel; but when he can bear to look at the former, he may find in them the source and reason of his willingness, and be encouraged to hope for the completion of that work which grace has begun in his soul. But let every one beware of blaspheming or perverting these doctrines, which are so evidently contained in Scripture; and which indeed cannot be separated from our ideas of the divine sovereignty and perfections, or from a proper understanding of the entirely free grace of God, in the salvation of his people from their state of sin and death, by regeneration, conversion, faith, justification by grace, and adoption into the family of God. (37.) Give us, &c.] This expression is used by none but our Lord Himself, and only in this chapter (v. 33.) in the twenty-ninth verse of the tenth chapter, and in the seventeenth chapter of this Gospel; so that any diligent inquirer, by comparing the several verses in which it is found, may form a judgment of its real import. 'All that the Father has graciously chosen to Himself, and whom He giveth to Me in consequence of a peculiar covenant, to be sanctified and saved by Me, will certainly at length come unto Me. I have given that sense of this important text, which, on serious, and I hope, impartial consideration, appeared to me most agreeable to the words themselves, and to the general tenor of Scripture.' Mr. Le Clerc's gloss upon them 'appears to me unnatural, and Dr. Whitby's frivolous.' Doddridge. I own myself perfectly unable to understand, what the latter writer means, in his long note on this text; unless he be, that all who believe in Christ will come to Him; I, a all who come will come! Envy keeps some, covetousness others, and love of the praise of men others, from believing. And generally the unbelieving heart is an evil heart, and a reprobate mind, and a hard heart, and a foolish and slow heart. Meanwhile the better dispositions and preparations of the hearts of these here, are to be looked upon, as effects wrought by the preventing grace of God, and in that respect they are said to be drawn by the Father.' Hammond. (Note, 41—46.) It is not meant, that this learned divine maintains the same views with the author. It is well known, that he contends earnestly for the contrary system. Yet he has here, without perhaps being aware of it, expressed himself in language, suited to the views of all sober Calvinists; and has made a concession of too much importance, to be passed over in the argument; a concession, which it will be difficult, for any man, to prove either unscriptural or irrational.

PS.

that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.

32 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

39 And "this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, *but should raise it up again at the last day.

40 And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one, which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.

41 ¶ The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the Bread which came down from heaven.

p 334. 1a: 118, 19. 41:9. 42:3. 55:7. Luke 22:40-43. Rom. 5:20. 1 Tim. 1:16. Eph. 4:15, 16. 7:25. Rev. 22:17.

q 33. 313, 31. Eph. 4:19. r 434. 5:30. Ps. 40:7, 8. Is. 53:10. Matt. 20:28. 26:39-42. Rom. 15:3. 28:17, 18. Heb. 5:9. 10:7-9.

s 40. Luke 12:32. Rom. 8:28-31. 2 Thes. 2:13, 14. t 350. 37. u 1027-30. 17:12. 18:9. 1 Sam. 25:29. Col. 3:3, 4. 1 Pet. 1:5. Jude 1:40, 44, 54. 5:28-29. 11:24-25. 12:45. Rom. 8:11. Phil. 3:20, 21. 28. 1:14. 8:56. Is. 45:21, 22. 59:10. 53:2. Luke 2:30. 2 Cor. 4:6. Heb. 11:1, 27. 1 Pet. 1:8. 1 John 1:1-3.

v 27, 35, 54. 3:16-18. 5:24. 10:28. 12:50. 17:3. Mark 16:16. Rom. 5:21. 6:23. 1 John 2:25. 5:11-13. 1:16, 21. x 43, 50, 66. 7:12. Luke 5:30. 15:2. 19:7. 1 Cor. 10:10. Jude 16. b 33, 49, 51, 53.

affairs between the great Creator, and the whole creation. When in the world, He did not carry on any private design, nor had any separate interest, distinct from theirs for whom He acted. The scope of his life was to glorify God, and do good to men; He therefore never consulted his own safety, or quiet; but, when He was to lay down his life, though human nature started at it, He set aside the consideration of that, and resolved his will as Man into the will of God; *Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.*

He here declares the decree, the instructions He was to pursue.

He should be sure to save all the chosen remnant; and this is the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son; (v. 38.) *'This is the Father's will, who hath sent Me; this is the charge I am intrusted with, that of all which He had given Me, I should lose none.'*

Note, There is a certain number given to Christ, to be his care, and so to be to Him for a name and a praise; given Him for an inheritance. Let Him do all for them, which their case requires; teach them, and heal them, pay their debt, and plead their cause, prepare them for, and preserve them to, eternal life. The Father might dispose of them as He pleased; as creatures, their lives and beings were derived from Him; as sinners, they were forfeited to Him; He might, for the satisfaction of his justice, have delivered them to the tormentors; but He pitched upon them to be monuments of his mercy, and delivered them to the Savior. Those whom God chose to be the objects of his special love, He lodged as a trust in the hands of Christ.

Christ has undertaken that He will lose none of those that were thus given Him. The many sons whom He was to bring to glory, shall all be forthcoming, and none of them missing, Matt. 18: 14. None of them shall be lost for want of a price to purchase them, or grace to sanctify them. *If I bring him not unto Thee, and so him before Thee, let Me bear the blame forever,* Gen. 43: 9.

Christ's undertaking extends to the resurrection of their bodies; *I will raise it up again at the last day;* this is to crown the undertaking; the body is a part of the man, and therefore a part of Christ's purchase and charge; it per-

with a divine commission. He is the divine Original of all that good which flows to us through Him. Not only that came down, (v. 51.) but that comes down; denoting a constant communication from God to believers through Christ, as the manna descended daily; see Eph. 1: 3.

He is that Bread of which the manna was a type and figure, v. 58. As the Rock that they drank of, was Christ, so was the Manna they ate of, spiritual Bread, 1 Cor. 10: 3, 4. Manna was given to Israel; so Christ to the spiritual Israel. There was manna enough for all; so in Christ a fulness of grace for all believers; he that gathers much of this manna, will have none to spare, when he comes to use it; and he that gathers little, when his grace comes to be perfected in glory, shall find, that he has no lack. Manna was to be gathered in the morning; and those that would find Christ, must seek Him early. Manna was sweet, and, as the author of the Wisdom of Solomon tells us, (ch. 16: 20,) was agreeable to every palate; and to them that believe Christ is precious. Israel lived upon manna till they came to Canaan; and Christ is our Life. There was a memorial of the manna preserved in the ark; so of Christ in the Lord's supper, as the Food of souls.

He here shows what was his errand into the world. Laying aside the metaphor, He speaks plainly, and speaks no proverb, giving us an account of his business among men, v. 38-40.

He assures us, in general, that He came from heaven upon his Father's business; (v. 38.) not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent Him. He came from heaven, which speaks Him an intelligent, active Being, who descended into this world, a great step downward, considering the glories He came from, and the calamities He came to. 'What moved Him to such an expedition?' He tells us He came to do, not his own will, but the will of his Father, not that He had any will that stood in competition with the will of his Father, but they to whom He spake, suspected He might; 'No,' saith He, 'my own will is not the spring I act from, nor the rule I go by, but I am come to do the will of Him that sent Me.' That is, Christ did not come as a private person, that acts for himself only, but as an Ambassador, by a public commission; He came as God's Agent, and the world's Physician. He came to settle

tains to the promises, and therefore shall not be lost. The undertaking is not only that He shall lose none, no person, but that He shall lose nothing, no part of the person. Christ's undertaking will never be accomplished till the resurrection, when the souls and bodies of the saints shall be re-united and gathered to Christ that He may present them to the Father; *Be hold I and the children that Thou hast given Me,* Heb. 2: 13. 2 Tim. 1: 12.

The original of all this, is the sovereign will of God; the counsels of his will, according to which He works all this. This was the commandment He gave his Son, when He sent Him into the world, and to which the Son always had an eye.

Public instructions were to be given to the children of men, in what way, and upon what terms, they might obtain salvation by Christ; and this is the covenant of grace between God and man. Who the particular persons were, that were given to Christ, is a secret; *(the Lord knows them that are his; but, though their names are concealed, their characters are published.* An offer is made of life and happiness upon gospel-terms, that by it those that were given to Christ might be brought to Him, and others left inexcusable, (v. 40.) *'This is the will, the revealed will, of Him that sent Me; the method agreed upon, on which to proceed with men, that every one, Jew or Gentile, that sees the Son, and believes on Him, may have everlasting life, and I will raise him up.'* This is the Gospel, indeed, good news.

Is it not reviving to hear this? *Eternal life* may be had, if it be not our own fault; whereas upon the sin of the first Adam, the way of the tree of life was blocked up, by the grace of the second Adam it is laid open. The crown of glory is set before us, as the prize of our high calling, which we may run for and obtain. Every one may have it. This Gospel is to be preached, this offer made to all, and none can say, 'It belongs not to me,' Rev. 22: 17. This life is sure to all who believe in Christ, and to them only. He that sees the Son and believes on Him, shall be saved. Some understand this as a limitation of this condition of salvation to those that have the revelation of Christ made to them. Every one that has the opportunity and believes in Him, shall have everlasting life, so that none shall be condemned for unbelief, (however they may be for other sins,) but those who, like these Jews, have seen, and yet have not believed; have known Christ, and yet not trusted in Him. But I rather understand seeing here to mean the same thing with believing, for it signifies not so much the sight of the eye, as the contemplation of the mind. Every one that sees, that is, believes on Him, sees Him with an eye of faith. It is to look upon Him, as the stung Israelites upon the brazen serpent. It is not a blind faith that Christ requires, to have our eyes put out, and then follow Him, but to see Him, and see what ground we go upon in our faith. It is right, when it is not taken up upon hear-say, (believing as the church believes,) but the result of due consideration of, and insight into, the motives of credibility; *Now mine eye sees Thee; we have heard Him ourselves.* Those who believe in Christ, shall be raised up at the last day. He had it in charge, as his Father's will, (v. 39.) and here He solemnly makes it his own undertaking, *I will raise him up,* which signifies the putting of the whole man into possession of eternal life.

When his hearers heard of the Bread of God, which gives life, they prayed for it; *Lord, evermore give us this Bread.* I cannot think that this is spoken in derision, 'Give us such bread as this, if Thou canst; let us be fed with it; not for one meal, as with the five loaves, but evermore!' as if this were no better a prayer

(37.) *I will in no wise cast out.* 'The original expression here is extremely beautiful and emphatic. It represents an humble suppliant as coming into the house of some prince, or other great person, to assist himself at his feet, and to commit himself to his protection and care. He might fear that his petition might be rejected, and he thrust out of doors; but our Lord assures him to the contrary. His house and heart are large enough to receive, shelter and supply all the indigent

and distressed. God only knows, how many thousand souls have been sensibly supported by these gracious words.'

The double negative is expressed in the translation by the words, 'in no wise,' which strengthens the negation. The words imply more than mere exclusion in the first instance: they rather presuppose admission, and imply the idea of subsequent expulsion, which is as expressly guarded against.

42 And they said, ^c Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

43 Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, ^d Murmur not among yourselves.

44 No man can come to me, ^fexcept the Father which hath sent me ^gdraw him: ^hand I will raise him up at the last day.

45 It is ⁱwritten in
the prophets, ^kAnd
they shall be all taught
of God. ⁱEvery man
therefore that hath
heard, and hath learn-
ed of the Father, com-
eth unto me.

7:27. Matt. 13:55-56. Mark 6:3
 Luke 4:22. Rom. 1:3,4. 9:5. 1:
 Cor. 15:47. Gal. 4:4.
 d 64 16:19. Matt. 16:3. Mark 9:3:
 Heb. 4:13.
 65 4:4. 8:43. 12:37-40. 1s. 44:
 18-20. Jer. 13:23. Matt. 12:34.
 Rom. 8:7-8.
 f 45:65. 3:7. 13:23. Matt. 11:25-27. 16:
 17. Eph. 2:4-10. Phil. 1:29. Col.
 2:12. Tit. 3:3-5
 16:32. Cant. 1s. 4. Jer. 31:3. Hos.
 11:4.
 b 39.40.
 i Mark 1:2. Luke 1:70. 18:31.
 1s. 2:3. 54:13. Jer. 31:33,34. Mic.
 4:2. Eph. 4:21-22. 1 Thees. 4:9.
 Heb. 8:10-11. 10:16.
 8:15. 16:5. 18:27. 16:14. 15:
 Matt. 17:5. Eph. 1:17. 1 John 4:
 1-3.

That which offended them was, Christ's asserting his original to be *from heaven*. How is it that He saith, *I came down from heaven*? They had heard of angels coming *from heaven*, but never of a man; overlooking the proofs He had given them of his being more than a man.

That which they thought justified them herein was, they knew his extraction. *Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?* They took it amiss, that He should say that He came from heaven, when He was one of them. They speak slightly of his name, *Jesus; Is not this Jesus?* They take it for granted that Joseph was really his father, though he was only *reputed* to be so. Note, Mistakes concerning Christ, as if He were a mere man, occasion the offence that is taken at his doctrine and offices. Those who set Him on a level with the other sons of men, whose father and mother we know, no wonder if they derogate from the honor of his satisfaction, and the mysteries of his undertaking, and, like the Jews here, murmur at his promise to *raise us up at the last day*.

Christ, having spoken of faith as the great work of God, shows what it is to believe in Christ.

To believe in Christ, is to come to Christ; he that comes to Me, is the same with him that believes in Me; (v. 35. and v. 37.) so v. 44, 45. Repentance toward God is coming to Him, (Jer. 3: 22.) as our chief God and highest End; so faith towards Christ is coming to Him as our Savior, and our Way to the Father. It denotes the outgoings of our affection toward Him; it is to come off from all things that stand in opposition to Him, or competition with Him, and to come up to his terms of salvation. When He was on earth, it was more than barely coming where He was; so it is now, more than coming to his Word and ordinances.

It is to *feed upon Christ*; (v. 51.) *If any man eat of this Bread*; the former denotes applying to Christ, this denotes applying Christ to ourselves, with appetite, that we may receive life and strength from Him. To feed on Him as the Israelites on the manna, having quitted the *flesh-pots of Egypt*, and living purely on the bread given them from heaven.

than that of the impatient thief, *If Thou be the Christ, save Thyself and us.* But I take this request, though ignorantly made, yet to be well meant; for they call Him *Lord*, and desire a share in what He *gives*, whatever He means by it. Confused notions of divine things produce in carnal hearts some kind of desires toward them; like Balaam's wish, to die the death of the righteous. Those who see the things of God, as trees walking, make, as I may call them, *inarticulate* prayers for spiritual blessings. They think the favor of God a *good thing*, and heaven a *fine place*, while they have no value or desire for that holiness, which is necessary both to the one and to the other. Let this be the desire of our souls; have we tasted that the Lord is gracious, been feasted with the Word of God, and Christ in the Word; let us say, '*Lord, evermore give us this bread*; let the Bread of life be our daily Bread, the heavenly Manna our continual Feast.'

But when they understood, that by this *Bread* of life Jesus meant *Himself*, they despised it. Whether they were the same persons that had prayed for it, or some others, does not appear: it seems to be some others, for they are called *Jews*. It is said, (v. 41.) *They murmured at Him*. This comes in immediately after the declaration which Christ had made of God's will, and his own undertaking, which certainly were some of his most weighty and gracious words, the most faithful, and worthy of all acceptance; one would think that, like Israel in Egypt, when they heard that God had thus *visited* them, they should have *bowed their heads, and worshipped*; but, on the contrary, they *murmured*, quarrelled with what Christ said; and though they did not openly contradict it, they privately whisped in contempt of it, and instilled into one another's minds prejudices against it. Many that will not professedly contradict the doctrine of Christ, (their cavils are so weak and groundless, that they are either ashamed to own them, or are afraid to have them silenced,) yet say in their heart, *They do not like it*.

That which offended them was, Christ's ascent into heaven. How is it that He saith, *I came down* instead of *up*, and heard of angels coming *from heaven*, but never of His coming down? If He had given them of his being more than a

justified them herein was, they knew his extraction of Joseph, *whose father and mother we know* ? He should say that He came from heaven, when He took slightly of his name, *Jesus* ; *Is not this Jesus* ? At Joseph was really his father, though he was false. Mistakes concerning Christ, as if He were once that is taken at his doctrine and offices. Deal with the other sons of men, whose father and if they derogate from the honor of his satisfaction undertaking, and, like the Jews here, murmur *at the last day*.

faith as the great *work of God*, shows what it

come to Christ; he that comes to Me, is the same (v. 35, and v. 37.) so v. 44, 45. Repentance (v. 39, and v. 40.) as our chief Good and highest blessing (Jer. 3: 22.) as our chief Good and highest blessing, it is coming to Him as our Savior, and our Way to the Father, and our outgoings of our affection toward Him; it is to stand in opposition to Him, or competition with Him, in terms of salvation. When He was on earth, it was where He was; so it is now, more than coming

(v. 51.) *If any man eat of this Bread; the* Christ, this denotes applying Christ to ourselves, receive life and strength from Him. To feed on manna, having quitted the *flesh-pots* of Egypt, and given them from heaven.

He shows what is to be got by believing in Christ. What shall we be the better, if we feed upon Him? *Want and death are the chief things we dread; may we be but assured of the comforts of our being, and the continuance of it, we have enough; now those two are here secured to true believers.*

They shall never want, *never hunger, never thirst*, v. 35. Desires they have, but these so abundantly satisfied, that they cannot be called uneasy and painful. Those that did eat manna and drank of the rock, hungered and thirsted afterwards. Manna surfeited them, water out of the rock failed them, but there is such *overflowing fulness* in Christ as can never be *exhausted*, and such *overflowing communications* as can never be interrupted.

They shall never die eternally; for, he that believes on Christ, *has everlasting life*, (v. 47.) he has the assurance of it, the earnest of it; the promise and first-fruits. Union with Christ and communion with God in Christ, are *everlasting life* begun. Whereas they that did eat manna died, Christ is such Bread as a man may eat of, and never die, v. 49, 50.

Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. Much good use may be made of the death of our fathers; their graves speak to us, and their monuments are our memorials, particularly of this, that the greatest *plenty* of the most *dainty* food will neither prolong life, nor put by the stroke of death. Those that did eat manna, died like other men. There could be nothing amiss in their diet, to shorten their days, nor could their deaths be hastened by the toils and fatigues of life; (for they neither sowed nor reaped;) and yet *they died*. Many of them died by the immediate stroke of God's vengeance for their unbelief and murmurings; for, *though they did eat that spiritual meat, yet with many of them God was not well pleased, but they were overthrown in the wilderness*, 1 Cor. 10: 3-5. Their manna was no security to them from the *wrath of God*, as believing in Christ is to us. The rest of them died in a course of nature, and their carcasses fell, under a divine sentence, in that wilderness where they did eat manna. In that very age when miracles were daily *bred*, was the life of man reduced to its present measure, as appears, Ps. 90: 10. Let them not boast so much of *manna* then.

This is the Bread that cometh down from heaven, truly divine Food; a man may eat thereof, and not die; not fall under the wrath of God; not die the second death; no, nor the first death irrecoverably; not perish, nor come short of the heavenly Canaan, as the Israelites did of the earthly, for want of faith, though they had manna.

This is further explained in the next words, *If any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever*, v. 53. Though he go down to death, he shall pass through it to that world where there shall be *no more death*. To live forever, is not to be forever, (the damned in hell shall be forever,) but to be happy forever. And because the body must needs die, and be as water spilt upon the ground, Christ here undertakes to gather it up, and even that shall live forever.

Christ here speaks of some who *had seen Him, and yet believed not*, v. 36. They saw his miracles, heard Him preach, and yet did not believe in Him. Faith is not always the effect of sight; the soldiers were eye-witnesses of his resurrection, and yet, instead of *believing* in Him, *belied* Him; so that it is a difficult thing to bring people to believe in Christ: and by the

Verse 43.

(43.) 'Christ does not *explain* ; perhaps because the subject did not admit of explanation, but must simply be believed on the testimony of miracles.' *Rosenmueller*. 'He does not say, I am not the son of Joseph. nor does He in-struct them in the *nature* of his heavenly origin, but passes by the subject, lest, hy attempting to remove one stumbling block, He should throw another in the way.'

Euthymius, in BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 44.

No man can, &c] 'I know indeed that your prejudices against me are strong, and, without the influences of divine grace, will prove invincible and fatal: for such is the moral blindness and degeneracy of human nature, that *no man* can come to Me, ny a saving faith. unless the Father who has sent Me draw him, by the sweet but powerful

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influences of his Holy Spirit on the heart. This paraphrase seems so natural, from a view of the words themselves, and of their connection, as well as so agreeable to the whole tenor of *Scripture*, that I wonder so many learned and ingenious men should have labored to disguise it by other interpretations. The truth is, *God's drawing* does not exclude our consent to follow, and our activity in doing it; but it *always includes a DIVINE AGENCY*'

DODDRIDGE.

Draw.] 'Proselytes to the Jewish religion were styled *the drawn*,
to which, perhaps, Christ here alludes.' BURDER.
'That is, as Augustine rightly teaches, whom he shall of *unwilling* render *willing*. For it is indeed true that no one believes against his will,¹ but we are willing, because it is given us, that we should be willing. For it is not from man willing, but from God pitying.' (ISA.

46 Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God; for he hath seen the Father.

[Practical Observations.]

47 Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

48 I am that Bread of life.

49 Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

118. 5:37. 8:19. 14:9, 10, 15, 24. Col. 1:15. 1 Tim. 5:16. 1 John 4:12. 7:26. 8:26. Matt. 11:27. Luke 10:22. 40:54. 3:36. 9:34. 14:19. Rom. 5:9, 10. Col. 3:4. 1 John 5:12, 13. 2 Cor. 13:11. 1 Cor. 16:16, 17. 11:24, 25. 3:26. 10:31. Num. 23:65. 1 Cor. 10:3-5. Heb. 3:17-19. Jude 5.

they empty-handed, He will *in no wise cast them out*. But more favor is implied than is expressed; when it is said that He will not cast them out, the meaning is, He will receive and entertain them, and give them all that which they come to Him for. As He will not refuse them at their first coming, so He will not afterward, upon every displeasure, cast them out. His *gifts and callings are without repentance*.

2. The Father will, without fail, bring all to Him in due time, that were given Him. In the transactions between the Father and the Son, relating to man's redemption, as the Son undertook for the justification, sanctification, and salvation of all that should come to Him, so the Father, the Fountain and Original of being, life, and grace, undertook to put into his hand all that were given Him.

He here assures us that this shall be done; (v. 37.) *All that the Father giveth Me, shall come to Me*. Christ had complained (v. 36.) of those, who, though they had seen Him, would not believe; and then He adds this, [1.] For their conviction and awakening, plainly intimating that their not believing on Him, if they persisted in it, would be a certain sign that they did not belong to the election of grace; for how can we think that God gave us to Christ, if we give ourselves to the flesh? 2 Pet. 1:10. [2.] For his own comfort and encouragement; *Though Israel be not gathered, yet shall I be glorious*. The election has obtained, and shall, though multitudes be blinded, Rom. 11:7. Though He lose many of his creatures, yet none of his charge; *All that the Father giveth Him, shall come to Him*, notwithstanding.

All that the Father giveth Me—every thing which the Father giveth to Me; the persons of the elect, and all that belongs to them; their services, their interests; as all that He has, is *theirs*, so all that they have, is *his*; they were given Him in recompense of his undertaking. Not only all persons, but all things, are gathered together in Christ, (Eph. 1:10.) and reconciled, Col. 1:20. The giving of the chosen remnant to Christ is spoken of, (v. 39.) as a thing done; *He hath given them*; here it is spoken of as a thing *in the doing*, *He giveth them*; because, when the *First-begotten* was brought into the world, it would seem, there was a renewal of the grant; see Heb. 10:5, 8c. God was now about to give Him the heathen, for his inheritance, (Ps. 2:8.) to put Him in possession of the desolate heritages, (Isa. 49:8.) to divide Him a portion with the great, Isa. 53:12. And though the Jews, who saw Him, believe not on Him, yet these (saith He) shall come to Me; the other sheep, which are not of this fold, shall be brought, ch. 10:15. See Acts 13:45-48.

They shall come to Me. This is a prediction, that as many as were in the counsel of God ordained to life, shall be brought to life by being brought to Christ. They are scattered among the nations, yet none of them shall be forgotten; not a grain of God's corn shall be lost, Amos 9:9. They are by nature alienated from Christ, yet they shall come. As God's omniscience is engaged to find them out, so is his omnipotence to bring them in. Not, *They shall be driven to Me*, but, *They shall be made willing*.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 36-46. Unhumbled sinners cannot understand spiritual things; (Note, 1 Cor. 2:14-16.) and therefore either object and decide, or rest in outward forms, instead of 'the power of godliness.' He alone who made the provision for our souls, can effectually teach these mysteries, and 'draw us' unto Christ that we may live by faith in Him. 'All that the Father giveth' to the Son, will be thus taught, and will come to Him; and He will surely receive and keep them, and 'raise them up at the last day.' When therefore sinners are convinced of their need of Christ and his salvation, and that they cannot believe in Him, except by the teaching and drawing of the Father; let them attend to his Word, and pray for his

Two things are to be done in order to it.

Their *understandings* shall be *enlightened*. It is written in the prophets, who speak of these things before, *And they shall be all taught of God*; Isa. 54:13, and Jer. 41:34. *They shall all know Me*. Note, In order to our believing in Christ, it is necessary that we be *taught of God*; that is, that there be a *divine revelation made to us*, of what we are to believe concerning Christ, and why we are to believe it. There are some things which *even nature teaches*, but to bring us to Christ there is need of a higher light. Secondly, That there be a *divine work wrought in us*, enabling us to receive these truths, and the evidence of them. God, in giving us reason, teaches us more than the *benefits of the earth*; but in giving us faith, teaches us more than the *natural man*. Thus all the church's children, that are *genuine*, are *taught of God*; He hath undertaken their education.

It follows, that *every man that has heard and learned of the Father, comes to Christ*, v. 45. It is here implied that none will come to Christ, but those that have *learned of the Father*. We shall never be brought to Christ, except God by his grace enlighten our minds, inform our judgments, and rectify our mistakes; and not only tell us, but teach us, the truth as it is in Jesus. This *divine teaching* does so necessarily produce the *faith of God's elect*, we may conclude that those who do not come to Christ, have never *learned of the Father*, or doubtless they would have come to Christ. God teaches no other lesson, Gal. 1:8, 9. God deals with men as reasonable creatures, draws them with the *cords of a man*, opens the understanding, and then by that influences the inferior faculties; thus He comes in 'by the door, but Satan, as a robber, climbs up another way.'

But lest any should dream of a visible appearance of God the Father to men, He adds, (v. 46.) *Not that any man hath seen the Father*; or can see Him, with bodily eyes, or learn of Him as Moses did, *face to face*; but in a spiritual way. The Father of spirits hath access to men's spirits, undiscerned. Those that have not seen his face, have felt his power. Yet there is one intimately acquainted with the Father; *He who is of God*, Christ Himself, hath seen the Father, ch. 1:18. Note, Jesus Christ is of God in a peculiar manner. God, of God, Light of Light; not only sent of God, but begotten of God before all worlds. It is the prerogative of Christ to have seen the Father, perfectly to know Him and his counsels. Even that illumination which is preparative to faith, is conveyed to us through Christ. Those that learn of the Father, so far as they cannot see Him themselves, must learn of Christ, who alone hath seen Him. As all divine discoveries are made through Christ, so through Him all divine powers are exerted.

Their *will* shall be *moved*. If the soul of man had its original rectitude, there needed no more to influence the will, than the illumination of the understanding; but in the soul of fallen man there is a rebellion of the will against the right dictates of the understanding; a *corrupt mind*, enmity itself to the divine light and law; it is therefore requisite that there be a work of grace wrought upon the will, which is here called *drawing*; *No man can come to me, except*

Spirit, and in this way expect his blessing on their souls. For every one, who willingly comes to Christ, will be made welcome, and will on no account whatever be cast out. He has spoken the word, and will make it good: it is his will, and 'the will of the Father who sent Him,' and it cannot be invalidated. Let sinners then apply with confidence; 'let the hearts of them rejoice who seek the Lord,' let them be thankful that they have discovered their danger and remedy; and let them seek further instruction, that they may enjoy the comfort, and bring forth the fruits, of 'the life of faith' in the incarnate Son of God; and so expect 'the last day,' in joyful assurance of a resurrection unto eternal life and glory.

Scott.

Verses 47-51.

The Jews had insinuated, that feeding a few thousands with the five loaves was an inconsiderable thing, when compared with what Moses did, when he fed the whole camp of Israel; but our Lord here

'declares the purposes of his grace and bounty to be far more extensive, as reaching to the whole world, and giving immortal life to all that should believe in Him.'

Doddridge, in Scott.

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50 This is 'the Bread which cometh down from heaven, 'that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

51 I am the "living Bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live forever; and the Bread that I will give is 'my flesh, which I will give for 'the life of the world.

52 The Jews therefore 'strove among themselves, saying, 'How can this 'man give us his flesh to eat?

53 Then Jesus said unto them, 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'Except ye 'eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.

33. 42, 54. 3:13.
58. 551. 11:25, 26. Rom. 8:10.
4:10, 11. 7:38. 1 Pet. 2:4.
52-57. Matt. 20:28. Luke 22:19.
Eph. 5:2, 25. Tit. 2:14. Heb. 10:5
12:20.
53. 1:29. 2 Cor. 5:19, 21. 1 John
2:2. 4:14.
4:1. 7:40-43. 9:10. 10:19.
34:9. 4:11. Acts 17:32. 1 Cor.
3:14.
26:47. See on 3:3. Matt. 5:18.
3:3, 5. 13:8. 15:4. Matt. 18:3. Luke
13:3, 5.
d. 52. 3:33. Matt. 26:25-28. 1 John
5:12. Rev. 2:17.

bring them to Him, and so give Him possession of those to whom He had given Him a right. God, having by promise given the kingdom of Israel to David, did at length draw the hearts of the people to Him; so having sent Christ to save souls, He sends souls to Him to be saved.

Fourthly, The crown and perfection of this work; and *I will raise him up at the last day*. This is four times mentioned in this discourse, and doubtless it includes all the intermediate and preparatory work of grace. When He raises them up at the last day, He will bring forth the top-stone. If He undertake this, surely He can and will, do every thing, that is necessary in order to it. Let our expectations be towards a happiness reserved for the last day, when all the years of time shall be ended.

Christ, having thus spoken of Himself as the *Bread of life*, and of faith as the work of God, shows what of Himself is this Bread, namely, his flesh; and that to believe, is to eat of it.

the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him. The Jews murmured at the doctrine of Christ; not only would not receive it themselves, but were angry that others did; Christ overheard their whisperings, and said, 'Murmur not among yourselves; lay not the fault of your dislike of my doctrine one upon another, as if it is because you find it generally distasteful; it is owing to your own corrupt dispositions, which amount to a moral impotency; your antipathies to the truths of God and prejudices against them are so strong, that nothing less than divine power can conquer them.' This is the case of all mankind; 'No man can persuade himself to come up to the terms of the Gospel, except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him.'

Observe, First, The nature of the work; it is drawing; which speaks not a force put upon the will, but a change wrought in it, and a new bias given to the soul, by which it inclines to God. This seems to be more than moral suasion, for that is in the power of man; yet it is not a physical impulse, for it lies out of the road of nature; but He that formed a spirit of man within Him, and fashions the hearts of men by his influence, knows how to new-mould the soul, and alter its bent and temper, without doing any wrong to its natural liberty. It is such a drawing as works not only a compliance, but a cheerful compliance; Draw us, and we will run after thee.

Secondly, The necessity of it; no man, in this weak and helpless state, can come to Christ without it. As we cannot do any natural action without the concurrence of common providence, so we cannot do any action, morally good, without the influence of special grace, in which the new man lives, and moves, and has its being, as much as the mere man has in divine providence.

Thirdly, The Author of it; the Father, who hath sent Me. The Father, having sent Christ, will succeed Him; for He would not send Him on a fruitless errand. Christ having undertaken to bring souls to glory, God promised to

The bread that I will give is my flesh; (v. 51.) the flesh of the Son of man, and his blood, v. 53. His flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed, v. 55.

We must eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, (v. 53.) and again, (v. 54.) Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood: and the same words, (v. 56, 57.) he that eateth Me. This is certainly a parable, or figurative discourse, wherein the actings of the soul upon things spiritual, are represented by bodily actions, which made the truths of Christ more intelligible to some, and less so to others, M. v. 4: 12.

This discourse of Christ was liable to misconstruction, that men might see, and not perceive.

It was misconstrued by the Jews, to whom it was first delivered; v. 52. They strove among themselves; they whispered in dissatisfaction; How can this man give us his flesh to eat? Christ spake of giving his flesh for us, to suffer and die; but they, without due consideration, understood it of his giving it to us, to be eaten; which gave occasion to Christ to tell them, that, however what He said was 'otherwise intended, yet even eating his flesh was no such absurd thing (if rightly understood.)

The church of Rome, by its monstrous doctrine of transubstantiation, gives the lie to our senses, contradicts the nature of a sacrament, and overthrows all convincing evidence. They, like these Jews, understand it of a corporal and carnal eating of Christ's body, like Nicodemus, ch. 3: 4. The Lord's supper was not yet instituted, and therefore it could have no reference to that; it is a spiritual eating and drinking that is here spoken of, not a sacramental.

It is misunderstood by many ignorant, carnal people, who infer that, if they take the sacrament when they die, they shall certainly go to heaven; which, as it makes many that are weak causelessly uneasy if they want it, so it makes many that are wicked causelessly easy if they have it. Let us see therefore,

What is meant by the flesh and blood of Christ. It is called, (v. 53.) The flesh of the Son of man, and his blood, his as Messiah and Mediator; which He assumed in his incarnation, (Heb. 2: 14.) and which He gave up in his death and sufferings; my flesh which I will give to be crucified and slain. It is said to be given for the life of the world, that is, instead of the life of the world, which was forfeited by sin. Christ was our Bail, and therefore his life n. 23 go for ours, that ours may be spared. Here am I, let these go their way. [2.] In order to the life of the world, to purchase a general offer of eternal life to all the world, and the special

(51.) 'From the rabbinical illustrations of Lightfoot, it is plain that the metaphors employed in this discourse must have been familiar to most of the hearers, as being in frequent use among the Jewish doctors. I need only instance the following example: "Every mention of eating and drinking found in Ecclesiastes, is said of the law and good works."'

BLOOMFIELD.

Verses 52-58.

The Lord's supper was not at this time instituted: and can any one seriously think, that every man continues 'dead in sin,' and under condemnation, till he has received that sacrament? (which would absolutely and without exception, exclude from salvation all who lived previously to its institution, all infants and young persons dying at that age, and an immense majority of adult professed Christians;) or imagine, that Christ dwells in, and will save, all those who partake of that ordinance, however hypocritical? No doubt, it is the general duty of all real Christians, frequently to commemorate the death of Christ at his table; but this is merely the 'outward sign' of the blessing here intended; and those who rest in it will have only the shadow of salvation. It is also remarkable, that the church, which of all others has most exalted, and even idolized, the Lord's supper, has refused the cup, the emblem of 'the blood of Christ,' to the laity; as if they would not allow them to have even the sign of salvation! Our Lord, however, must be supposed to refer to that sacred ordinance, which He intended to appoint, as the 'memorial of his body broken and his blood shed, for the life of our souls.' and as the outward sign of the manner, in which we 'feed on Him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving;' as a public profession of our inwardly receiving his atonement, and as a pledge to all true believers of everlasting life. (Note, Matt. 26: 26-29.) Those who suppose, that our Lord meant merely 'the sacramental eating of his flesh and blood;' whether they graft on this construction, transubstantiation, consubstantiation, or any blessing inseparably connected with the act of receiving, independent of the faith or unbelief of the receiver, doubtless pervert the words of Christ, to establish idolatry, superstition, formality, and self-righteousness.

(52.) [Strive.] 'On this dispute, it may be observed, that the principal versets, from their better education, had probably found no [670]

difficulty in the metaphors employed by Jesus; they and understood them figuratively, and in the sense intended by Christ. But since they held Him in contempt, rejected his pretensions, and could not bring themselves to believe that the Messiah would die; (see ch. 2: 34.) some, in derision, misrepresented his words, took them in the literal sense, and pronounced them absurd. Others maintained that they had some sense, but were arrogant, and deserving nought but rejection. Wherefore, Jesus seeing that He was sufficiently understood, and that it was not comprehension, but candor, which they needed, was pleased not to enter into any further explanation, but (as before, at r. 44.) gravely repeats, with stronger asseveration, what He had before said.

ROSENK. and KUINOEL.

(53.) 'However you may ensure it as unintelligible and absurd, yet verily, verily, I say unto you, there is no truth more certain, or more important to you; for unless by a cordial dependence on the atonement I shall make, and by the powerful influences of divine grace upon your hearts, you eat, as it were, the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no principle of spiritual life in you, and can have no claim to heaven. These words, Eat the flesh, &c. express a lively and habitual regard to Christ, as the great author of the spiritual life. The mention of his blood naturally leads to the thought of his atonement, as we are told, We have redemption through his blood, Eph. 1: 7. Heb. 10: 19.'

* DODDRIDGE.

Except ye eat the flesh, &c.] This figurative mode of speech was naturally suggested by the occasion. The multitude had followed Christ for the sake of the loaves, expecting to be fed again, as they had been the day preceding, and being disappointed, they affect to despise the miracle, and extol Moses for having wrought a greater, in bringing bread from heaven. Our Lord then asserts his own superiority, invites them to eat, not such temporary, perishable food as the manna, but the true, living, that is, everlasting, bread from heaven, describing under that name, belief in Him, and obedience to his doctrine, as being spiritual food and nourishment to the soul. And this is the meaning of this strong figure which is contained through this whole discourse; but the conceptions of the Jews were too gross to understand it in a true sense.

Bp. Ma. 26.

54 Whoso ^a eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, ^b hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day.

55 For my flesh is ^c meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed.

56 He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, ^d dwelleth in me, and I in him.

57 As ^e the living Father hath sent me, and ^f I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, ^g even he shall live by me.

58 This is ^h that Bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this Bread shall live forever.

59 These things said he ⁱ in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

[Practical Observations.]

- e 4:14. Ps. 22:26. Prov. 9:4-6. Is. 55:1-3. Gal. 2:20. Phil. 3:7-10.
f See on 39, 40, 47.
g 32. 1:9, 47. 8:31, 36. 15:1. Heb. 1:12. 1 John 5:20.
h 14:21, 23. 15:4, 5. 17:21-23. Ps. 20:1. 91:1-9. 2 Cor. 9:16. Eph. 3:17. 1 John 3:24. 4:12, 15, 16. Rev. 2:20.
i Ps. 18:46. Jer. 10:10. 1 Thes. 1:9. Heb. 9:14.
j 1:25. 17:21.
k 1:25. 25. 14:8, 19. 2 Cor. 13:4. Gal. 2:20. Col. 3:3, 4. 1 John 4:9.
l See on 32, 34, 41, 47-51.
m 24. 18:20. Ps. 40:9, 10. Prov. 1:20. 2:23. 8:1-3. Luke 4:31.

delights of nature. [4.] A derivation of nourishment from Him, and a dependence upon Him for the support and comfort of our spiritual life, and the growth and vigor of the new man. To feed upon Christ is to do all in union with Him, and by virtue drawn from Him; it is to live upon Him as we do upon our meat. How our bodies are nourished by our food, we cannot describe, but that they are, we know; so with this spiritual nourishment. Our Savior was so well pleased with this metaphor, (as very expressive,) that, when afterward He instituted some outward sensible signs, by which to repre-

assurances of it to believers. So that the *flesh and blood* of the Son of man denote the Redeemer incarnate and dying; Christ and *Him crucified*, and redemption by Him, with all the benefits of redemption; pardon of sin, acceptance with God, adoption, access to the throne of grace, promises, and eternal life; these are called the *flesh and blood* of Christ. They are purchased by the breaking of his body, and the shedding of his blood. Well may the purchased privileges be denominated from the price that was paid for them, for it puts a value upon them; write upon them the price of blood. They are meat and drink to our souls. *Flesh with the blood* was prohibited; (Gen. 9: 4.) but the privileges of the Gospel are as flesh and blood to us, for the nourishment of our souls. He had before compared Himself to bread, which is necessary food; here to *flesh*, which is delicious. It is a *feast of fat things*, Isa. 25: 6. The soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, Ps. 63: 5. It is *meat indeed and drink indeed*; truly so, that is, spiritually; Christ is called the true Vine, or truly Meat, in opposition to the shadows with which the world shams those that feed upon it. In Christ and his Gospel is solid satisfaction; that is *meat indeed*, and *drink indeed*, which satiates and replenishes, Jer. 31: 25, 26.

What is meant by *eating this flesh*, and *drinking this blood*? It is certain that it means believing in Christ. As we partake of meat and drink by eating and drinking, so we partake of Christ and his benefits by faith: and believing in Christ includes these four things, which *eating and drinking* do. [1.] It implies an appetite to Christ, *hungering and thirsting*, (Matt. 5: 6.) earnest and importunate, not willing to take up with any thing short of an interest in Him; 'Give me Christ, or else I die.' [2.] An application of Christ to ourselves. Meat looked upon will not nourish us, but meat fed upon, and so made our own, and one with us. We must so accept of Christ as to appropriate Him to ourselves; *my Lord and my God*, ch. 20: 28. [3.] A delight in Christ and his salvation. The doctrine of Christ crucified must be *meat and drink* to us, most pleasant and delightful. We must take as great a complacency in the methods which infinite wisdom has taken to redeem and save us, as ever we did in the most needful supplies or grateful

sent our communicating of the benefits of his death. He chose those of *eating and drinking* and made them sacramental actions.

Except ye eat of the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. That is, 'It is a certain sign that you have no spiritual life in you, if you have no desire toward Christ, nor delight in Him.' If the soul does not *hunger and thirst*, it does not *live*; it is a sign that we are dead indeed, if we are dead to such meat and drink as this. 'It is certain that you can have no spiritual life, unless you derive it from Christ by faith; separated from Him you can do nothing.' Faith in Christ is the *first living principle* of grace; without it we have not the truth of spiritual life, nor any title to eternal life; our bodies may as well live without meat, as our souls without Christ.

The benefit and advantage of it are in two things.

1. We shall be one with Christ, as our bodies are with our food; (v. 56.) *He that eats my flesh, and drinks my blood*, or lives by faith in Christ crucified, (it is spoken of as a continued act,) *dwelleth in Me, and I in him*. By faith we have intimate union with Christ; He is *in us*, and we in *Him*, ch. 17: 21-23. 1 John 4: 21. Believers dwell in Christ as their strong hold or city of refuge; Christ dwells in them as the Master of the house, to rule it, and provide for it. Such is the union between Christ and believers, that He shares in their griefs, and they share in his graces and joys; *He sups with them upon their bitter herbs, and they with Him upon his rich dainties*. It is an inseparable union, Rom. 8: 35. 1 John 4: 13.

2. We shall live, eternally, by Him, as our bodies live by our food. As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. God, as the living Father, hath life in and of himself. I am that I am, is his name forever. Jesus Christ, as Mediator, lives by the Father; He has life in Himself, (ch. 5: 26.) but He has it of the Father; He that sent Him, not only qualified Him with that life which was necessary to so great an undertaking, but constituted Him the Treasury of divine life to us; he breathed into the second Adam the breath of spiritual lives, as into the first Adam the breath of natural lives. True believers receive this divine life by virtue of their union with Christ, which is inferred from the union between the Father and the Son, as it is compared to it, ch. 17: 21. *He that eateth Me, or feeds on Me, even he shall live by Me*; those that live upon Christ, shall live by Him. The life of believers is had from Christ; (ch. 1: 16.) it is *hail with Christ*; (Col. 3: 4.) we live by Him as the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 47-59. The Jews could not, at the time when the Lord spake to them, know his meaning; but we may know how Jesus can 'give us his flesh to eat.' The humble believer can rest in no outward emblem; but, through the sacramental bread and wine, sees the body and blood of Christ, as truly appropriated by the faith of all acceptable communicants, for every saving purpose. He is convinced, that 'except he eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood,' he has no spiritual life, nor any good hope of eternal life; and therefore his great fear is, lest he should be deceived in a matter of such importance. He is often ready to faint and be weary, through inward conflicts and outward troubles: but by again receiving Christ, as the Life and Salvation of his soul, he finds his hopes revive, his fears vanish, his strength return, and his graces invigorated; and thus he feeds daily on Christ, and proceeds in

his work and warfare with patient alacrity. He finds, that meditation on the cross of Christ, and the glorious truths connected with it, give life and vigor to his repentance, faith, love, and gratitude; his heart is thus weaned from the world, and fixed on heavenly things; he is enabled to rejoice in the Lord; he 'dwells in Christ, and Christ in him,' and he learns to live by his Savior, in some measure as He lived by the Father that sent Him, and to his glory. This is the Christian's life: in proportion as he thus lives upon Christ, and thirsts and applies for the blessings procured for us by his blood, he copies more and more closely his example, and obeys his commandments, and may rejoice, under all trials, and at the approach of death, 'in the hope of the glory of God.' (Notes, Rom. 5: 3-11. Gal. 2: 17-21. 6: 11-14, v. 14. 1 Pet. 4: 1, 2.)

SCOTT.

(58.) *He that eateth of this bread shall live forever.* 'All that are saved owe their salvation to the atonement of Christ, and their partaking thereof, which is feeding upon his flesh and blood, is their life. Our Lord's general doctrine in this chapter seems to resolve itself into this, that, whether in the sacraments or out of the sacraments, whether before Christ or since, whether here or hereafter, no man ever was or will be accepted, but in and through the grand propitiation made by the death and blood of Christ. This appears to be the main doctrine taught by our Lord in this chapter, which He delivers so earnestly, and inculcates so strongly. Eating and drinking, by a very common figure, means receiving; and here what is the thing to be received? Christ Himself in his whole person; *I am the bread of life, he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me*. But more particularly, He is to be considered as giving us his body to be broken, and his blood to be shed for our atonement. His passion is our redemption, and by his death we

live. It is right to apply the general doctrine of this chapter to the particular case of the Lord's supper, because the spiritual feeding here mentioned is the thing signified and effected in the Lord's supper; but such application does not amount to interpreting this chapter of the holy sacrament. For examples, the words, *Except ye eat the flesh, &c.*—*ye have no life in you*, do not mean directly, *ye have no life without the Lord's supper*, but, *ye have no life without participating in our Lord's passion*. Nevertheless, since the Lord's supper is one way of participating in his passion, and a very important one, (a memorial of, or showing forth his death) it is very pertinent and proper, to urge the doctrine of this chapter, both for the clearer understanding of the beneficial nature of the Lord's supper, and for exciting Christians to a frequent and devout reception of it. Such is the use which some of the early fathers made of this chapter, and which the church very justly makes of it at this day.'

DR. WATZLAND.

50 ¶ Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, 'This is an hard saying; who can hear it?'

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, 'Poth this offend you?'

62 What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

63 It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

64 But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning, who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.

• 66. 8:31.
p 41, 42. 8:43. Matt. 11:8. Heb. 5: 1. 2 Pet. 3:16
q 64. 2:24, 25. 21:17. Heb. 4:13. Rev. 2:23
r 64. 16:28. 17:4, 5, 11. Mark 16: 13. Luke 24:51. Acts 1:9. Eph. 4: 8. 1 Pet. 3:22.
s Gen. 2:7. Rom. 8:2. 1 Cor. 15:45. 2 Cor. 3:8. Gal. 5:22. 1 Pet. 3:18. Rom. 2:23. 8:12. 1 Cor. 11:27-29. (Gal.) 5:8. 6:15. 1 Tim. 4:8. Heb. 8:9. 1 Pet. 3:21.
t 63. 12:49, 50. Deut. 32:47. Ps. 19: 7-10. 119:50, 83, 130. Rom. 10:8-10. 17. 1 Cor. 2:9-14. 2 Cor. 3:8-13. 1 Thes. 2:13. Heb. 4:12. Jam. 1:18. 1 Pet. 1:23.
u 36:81. 6:42. 8:23, 38-47, 55. 10:26. 13:10, 18-21.
v 70:71. 2:24, 25. Ps. 139:2-4. Acts 15:18. Heb. 4:13.

them. (2.) They think it impossible that any one else should like it; 'Who can hear it? Surely none.' Thus scoffers at religion are ready to undertake that all the intelligent part of mankind concur with them; they conclude with great assurance that no man of sense will admit the doctrine of Christ, nor any man of spirit submit to his laws; because they cannot bear to be so tied up themselves, they think none else can; 'Who can hear it? Thanks be to God, thousands have heard these sayings of Christ, and have found them not only easy, but pleasant, as their necessary food.'

Christ knew their murmurings, v. 61. Their cavils were secret in their own breasts, or whispered among themselves in a corner. Note, Christ takes notice not only of the bold and open defiance that are done to his name by daring sinners, but of the secret slights that are put upon his doctrine by carnal professors; He knows what the fool saith in his heart, and cannot for shame speak out; He observes how his doctrine is received by those to whom it is preached; who rejoice in it, and who murmur at it; who are reconciled to it, and how before it, and who quarrel with it, and rebel against it, though secretly. He knew it in Himself; not by information given Him, or any external indication of the thing, but by his own divine omniscience. He knew it, not by the prophets, by divine revelation, (that which the prophets desired to know was sometimes hid from them, as 2 Kings 4: 27.) but by a divine knowledge in Him. He is that essential Word that discerns the thoughts of the heart, Heb. 4: 12, 13. Thoughts are words to Christ; we should therefore take heed not only what we say and do, but what we think.

He knew how to answer them; 'Doth this offend you? Is this a stumbling-block to you? People by their wilful mistakes create offences to themselves; they take offence where there is none given, and make it where there is nothing to make it of. Note, We may justly wonder that so much offence should be taken at the doctrine of Christ, for so little cause. Christ speaks of it here with wonder: 'Doth this offend you? How unreasonable are your quarrels.' In answer to those who condemned his doctrine as obscure, (saying, -If you are unwilling to be understood, you ought to be neglected,) He gives them a hint of his ascension into heaven, as that which would give irresistible evidence of the truth of his doctrine; What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where He was before? 'If I should tell you of

members by the head, the branches by the root; because He lives, we shall live also. We shall live eternally by Him; Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; He hath it now, as v. 40. He hath that in Him, which is eternal life begun; the earnest and foretaste of it, and the hope of it; He shall live forever, v. 54. His happiness shall run parallel with eternity.

The historian concludes with an account where Christ had this discourse with the Jews, (v. 59.) In the synagogue as He taught; implying that He taught them many other things beside these, but this was new. He adds this, that He said these things in the synagogue, to show, [1.] The credit of Christ's doctrine. His truths sought no corners, but were publicly preached, as able to abide the most severe test. Christ pleaded this upon his trial; (ch. 18: 20.) I coar taught in the synagogue. [2.] To assure you that the discourse was fairly represented, He appeals to the synagogue at Capernaum, where it might be examined.

V. 60-71. By Christ's discourse, some were offended, and others edified, some driven from Him, and others brought nearer to Him.

To some it was a savor of death unto death; not only to the Jews, who were enemies to Him and his doctrine, but even to many of such as were disciples at large, who were his frequent hearers, and followed Him in public; a mixed multitude, like those among Israel, that began all the discontents.

Not a few, but many of them were offended. Of the grounds that received the seed, only one in four brought forth fruit. See what they say to it; 'This is a hard saying, who can hear it? They do not like it themselves. 'What is this? Eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man! If it be understood figuratively, it is not intelligible; if literally, not practicable. What! must we turn cannibals? Can we not be religious, but we must be barbarous?' Said Averroes, -If Christians adore what they eat, my mind shall continue with the philosophers. If they had humbly begged Christ to declare unto them this parable, He would have opened it, and their understandings too, for the meek will He teach his way; but they were not willing to have Christ's sayings explained, because they would not lose this pretence for rejecting

that, it would much more offend you, and you would think my pretensions too high indeed. If this be so hard a saying, how will I digest it when I tell you of my returning to heaven? See ch. 3: 12. Those who stumble at smaller difficulties, should consider how they will get over greater. This will much more offend you, for then my body will be less capable of being eaten by you in that gross sense wherein you now understand it; so Dr. Whitty. Or, 'When you see that, or hear it from those that shall see it, surely then you will be satisfied. You think I take too much upon Me, when I say, I came down from heaven; for that you quarrelled with; (v. 42.) but will you think so when you see Me return to heaven? If He ascended, certainly He descended, Eph. 4: 9, 10. Christ did often refer Himself thus to subsequent proofs, as ch. 1: 50, 51. 2: 14. Matt. 12: 40. 26: 64. Let us wait, till the mystery of God shall be finished, and then we shall see that there was no reason to be offended at any of Christ's sayings.

He gives them a key to this, and all such discourses, teaching them that they are to be understood spiritually; It is the spirit that quickens, the flesh profiteth nothing. As in the natural body, the animal spirits quicken and enliven, and without these the most nourishing food would profit nothing; (what would the body be the better for bread, if it were not quickened and animated by the spirit?) so with the soul. The bare participation of ordinances, unless the Spirit of God work with them, and quicken the soul by them, profits nothing; the word and ordinances, if the Spirit work with them, are as food to a living man, if not, they are as food to a dead man. Even the flesh of Christ, the Sacrifice for sin, will avail us nothing, unless the Spirit quicken our souls by the influences of his death, till we by his grace are planted together in the likeness of it. The doctrine of eating Christ's flesh, and drinking his blood, if it be understood literally, profits nothing, but rather leads us into mistakes and prejudices; but the spiritual sense and meaning of it quicken the soul, make it alive and lively; so it follows, The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. To eat the flesh of Christ is a hard saying, but to believe that Christ died for me, and to derive from that doctrine strength and comfort in my approaches to God, opposition of sin, and preparations for a future state; this is the spirit and life of that saying. The reason why men mistake Christ's sayings is, they mistake them. The literal sense of a parable does us no good, but the spiritual meaning is instructive. The flesh, that is, those that are in the flesh, (so some understand it,) profit nothing by Christ's discourses; but the Spirit, that is, those that are spiritual, are quickened and enlivened by them; for they are received, so as to correspond with the state of the receiver's mind. They found fault with Christ's sayings, whereas the fault was in themselves; it is only to sensual minds that spiritual things are senseless and sapless; spiritual minds relish them; see 1 Cor. 2: 14, 15.

He gives them an intimation, that He had expected no better from them, though they called themselves his disciples, v. 64, 65. Now was fulfilled Isa. 53: 1. Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?

They did not believe his report; 'There are some of you, who say you would leave all to follow Me, who yet believe not; and this was the reason why the word preached did not profit them, it was not mixed with faith, Heb. 4: 2. They did not believe Him to be the Messiah, else they had acquiesced in the doctrine He preached, and not have quarrelled with it, though there were some things in it dark and hard to be understood. Young beginners in learning must take things upon their teacher's

Verse 63.

'The sense of this is. "You ought to bid adieu to your prejudiced notions; for nothing but a more exalted manner of thought and expectation, bringeth salvation. The low and grovelling mode, to which

many of you are so wedded, contributes nothing to the attainment of true felicity. That better mode of thinking and acting, and the felicity consequent upon it, my doctrines alone can confer."'

KUING.

65 And he said, Therefore said I unto you, 'That no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.'

66 ¶ From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.

67 Then said Jesus unto the twelve, 'Will ye also go away?'

68 Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, 'to whom shall we go? 'thou hast the words of eternal life.

v 37, 44, 45. 10:16, 26, 27. 12:37-41. Eph. 2:8, 9. Phil. 1:9. 1 Tim. 1:1. 2 Tim. 2:25. Tit. 2:3-7. Heb. 12:2. Jam. 1:16-18. 20. 8:4. Matt. 12:40-45. 13:20. 21. 32-33. 21:8-11. 27:20-25. Luke 9:22. 2 Tim. 1:15, 4:10. Heb. 10: 8, 39. 2 Pet. 2:9-12. 1 John 2:19. 1. 10:1. 21:15-22. 1 John 1:1-18. 2. 8:20. 15:19, 20. Luke 14:21. 33. 2. c. Pe. 7:25. d 40, 93. 5:24, 39, 40. Acts 4: 1. 5:20. 1 John 5:11-13.

see cause to change our sentiments of them: but this we are sure of, that Christ knows all men, and his judgment is according to truth.

The reason why they did not believe his report was, the arm of the Lord was not revealed unto them; (v. 65.) Therefore said I unto you, No man can come to Me, except it were given unto him of my Father; referring to v. 44. Christ could not but know who believed, and who did not, because faith is the gift of God; and all his Father's gifts and works passed through his hands. There He said that none could come to Him, except the Father draw him; here He saith, Except it were given him of my Father: which shows that God draws souls by giving them a heart to come; without which, such is the moral in potency of man in his fallen state that he cannot come.

From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. When we at mit into our minds had thoughts of Christ, conceive a secret dislike, and be willing to hear insinuations tending to reproach, we are then entering into temptation; it is as the letting forth of water, it is looking back, which if infinite mercy prevent not, will end in drawing back; therefore take heed of the beginnings of apostasy.

Many of them went back to their houses and callings, which they had left for a time to follow Him; went back, one to his farm, and another to his merchandise; went back, as Orpah did, to their people, and to their gods, Ruth 1: 15. They had entered themselves in Christ's school, but they did not only play truant for once, but took leave of Him, and his doctrine forever. Note, The apostasy of Christ's disciples from Him, though really a strange thing, yet has been such a common thing, that we need not think strange of it. Here were many that went back. It is often so; when some backslide, they take occasion with them; the disease is infectious.

The occasion of this backsliding; from that time, when Christ preached that He is the Bread of life, and that those who by faith feed upon Him, shall live by Him, which, one would think, should have engaged them to cleave more closely to Him; from that time they withdrew. Note, The heart of man often makes that an occasion of offence, which is matter of the greatest comfort. Christ foresaw that they would take offence at what He said, and yet He said it. That which is the undoubted word and truth of Christ, must be faithfully delivered, whoever are offended at it. Men's humors must be capitulated to God's Word, and not that accommodated to men's humors.

The degree of their apostasy; They walked no more with Him, returned no more to Him, and attended no more upon his ministry. It is hard for those who have been once enlightened, and have tasted the good Word of God, if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, Heb. 6: 4-6.

This discourse was to others a savor of life unto life. Many went back, but, thanks be to God, not all: even then the twelve stuck to Him. Though the faith of some be overthrown, the foundation of God stands sure. Observe the affectionate question which Christ put to the twelve; (v. 67.) Will ye also go away? He saith nothing to them who went back. If the unbelieving depart, let them depart; it was no great loss of those whom He never had; light

come, might go; but He takes this occasion to speak to the twelve, to confirm them, and, by trying their steadfastness, the more to fix them. Will ye also go away? (1.) 'It is at your choice whether ye will or no; if ye will forsake Me now is the time when so many do: it is an hour of temptation; if you will go back, go now.' Note, Christ will detain none against their wills; his soldiers are volunteers, not pressed men. The twelve had had time to try how they liked Christ and his doctrine, and, that none of them might afterward say that they were trapped into discipleship, and, if it were to do again, they would not do it. He here leaves them at their liberty; as Josh. 24: 15. Ruth 1: 16. (2.) 'It is at your peril, if you do go away.' 'Think not that ye may go away as easily as they can. They have not been so intimate with Me, nor received so many favors from Me; they are gone, but will ye go? Remember your character, and say, Whatever others do, we will never go away. Should such a man as I flee?' Neh. 6: 11. Note, The nearer we have been to Christ, and the longer we have been with Him, the more mercies we have received from Him, and the more engagements we have laid ourselves under to Him, the greater will be our sin if we desert Him. (3.) 'I have reason to think you will not. Will ye go away? No, I have faster hold of you; I hope better things of you; (Heb. 6: 9.) for ye are they that have continued with Me,' Luke 22: 32. When the apostasy of some is a grief to us Lord Jesus, the constancy of others is so much the more his honor, and He is pleased with it accordingly. Christ and believers know one another too well to part upon every displeasure.

Christ put the question to them, as Joshua put Israel to their choice whom they should serve, with design to draw out from them a promise to adhere to him; and it had the like effect. Nay, but we will serve the Lord. Peter was upon all occasions the mouth of the rest, not so much because he had more of his Master's ear than they, but because he had more tongue of his own; and what he said was sometimes approved, and sometimes reprimanded; (Matt. 16: 17, 23.) the common lot of those who are swift to speak. This was here said admirably well, and, probably, by the direction, and with the express assent of his fellow-disciples; at least, he knew their mind, and spake the sense of them all, and did not except Judas, for we must hope the best.

Here is a good resolution to adhere to Christ, and expressed so as to intimate that they would not entertain the least thought of leaving Him; 'Lord, to whom shall we go? It were folly, unless we knew where to mend ourselves; we like our choice too well to change.' Note, Those who leave Christ, would do well to consider to whom they will go, and whether they can expect to find rest and peace any where but in Him. See Ps. 73: 27, 28. Hos. 2: 9. 'Whither shall we go? Shall we make our court to the world? It will certainly deceive us. Shall we return to sin? It will certainly destroy us. Shall we leave the Fountain of living waters for broken cisterns?' The disciples resolve to continue their pursuit of life and happiness, and will have a Guide to it, and will adhere to Christ as their Guide, for they can never have a better. 'Shall we go to the heathen philosophers? They are become vain in their imaginations, and professing themselves to be wise in other things, are become fools in religion. Shall we go to the scribes and Pharisees? They have made void the commandments of God by

Verse 65.

Therefore said I unto you.] 'For this reason I told you, (v. 44.) That no man can come unto Me, except it be given him of my Father, because I know that the prejudices of corrupt nature lie strongly against such a doctrine as I publish, and that nothing but divine grace will subdue them. Except it be given him of my Father—to be drawn by the Father, and to have faith given him by the Father, are evidently synonymous terms which plainly vindicates the interpretation given above.'

DODDRIIDGE.

Verse 66.

From this time many who had borne the name of his disciples, abusing and misrepresenting what He had now delivered, as if it had

been either absurd, or utterly unintelligible, went back, and walked no more with Him; plainly perceiving that their true character was now discovered, as well as that their secular views were disappointed.'

DODDRIIDGE.

'Sinners hate the doctrine contained in the two preceding verses. They see how it throws them into the hands of God. It is because they see it in a light that disturbs their sins and their hopes, that they hate it, and oppose it when it is preached. This was the case when it was preached by our Savior. On one occasion, when He preached it with great clearness and power, many of them who had for a considerable time followed Him, went back, and walked no more with Him.'

DR. SPRING.

69 And *we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

70 Jesus answered them, *Have not I chosen you twelve, *and one of you is *a devil?

71 He spake of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon: *for he it was that should betray him, *being one of the twelve.

1:41-45, 49, 11:37, 20:28, 31. Matt. 16. Mark 8:29. Luke 22:34. Acts 8:37. Rom. 1:3-4. 1 John 5:1, 20. See on 57. Luke 13:18, 17:12. Matt. 10:1-4. Luke 6:15-16, Acts 1:17. 8:44, 13:21-27, Acts 13:10. 1 John 3:8. Rev. 3:9, 10. *Tim. 3:11. Tit. 2:3, Gr. Ps. 109:8-9. Acts 1:16-20, 2:23, Jude 4. 19:4-6, Ps. 41:3, 55:13, 14. Matt. 26:4-16, 27:3-5.

others fastened upon the *hard sayings*, and therefore forsook Him. Though we cannot account for every mystery in Christ's doctrine, we know, in the general, that it is the Word of eternal life, and therefore must live and die by it: for if we forsake Christ, we forsake our own mercies.

We know, and are sure, that *Thou art that Christ*. If He be the promised Messiah, He must bring in an everlasting righteousness, (Dan. 9:24.) and therefore has the words of eternal life, for righteousness reigns to eternal life, Rom. 5:21. Observe, *First*, The doctrine they believed; that this Jesus was the Messiah promised to the fathers, and expected by them, and that He was not a mere man, but the Son of the living God, *Thou art my Son*, Ps. 2:7. In times of temptation to apostasy, it is good to have recourse to our first principles, and if we faithfully abide by that which is *past dispute*, we shall be the better able both to find and to keep the truth in doubtful matters. *Secondly*, Their faith rose to a full assurance; *We are sure*. We have known it by experience; the best knowledge. We should take occasion from others' wavering to be so much the more established, especially in that which is the present truth. When we have so strong a faith in the Gospel of Christ, as boldly to venture our souls upon it, knowing whom we have believed, then, and not till then, we shall be willing to venture every thing else for it.

The melancholy remark which our Lord Jesus made upon this reply of Peter; *Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?* And the evangelist tells us whom He meant; *He spake of Judas Iscariot*. Peter had undertaken for them all, that they would be true to their Master. Now Christ does not condemn his charity, (it is always good to hope the best,) but tacitly corrects his confidence. We must not be too sure concerning any. God knows them that are his, we do not. Observe here,

Hypocrites and betrayers of Christ are no better than devils. Judas not only had a devil, but he was a devil. One of you is a false accuser: so it sometimes signifies; (1 Tim. 3:11.) and it is probable that Judas, when

their traditions. Shall we go to Moses? He will send us back to Thee. Therefore, if ever we find the way to happiness, it must be in following Thee.' Note, Christ's religion appears to great advantage, when compared with other institutions, for then it will be seen how far it excels them all. Let them who find fault with this religion, before they quit it, find a better. A divine Teacher we must have; can we find a better than Christ? A divine revelation we cannot be without; if the Scripture be not such, where else may we look for it?

Here is a good reason for this resolution. *Thou hast the words of eternal life*. They did not fully understand Christ's discourse, for as yet the doctrine of the cross was a riddle to them; but in the general, they were satisfied that *He had the words of eternal life*, that is, *First*, That the word of his doctrine showed the way to eternal life, and directed us what to do, that we might inherit it. *Secondly*, That the word of his doom and determination must confer eternal life. His having the words of eternal life, is the same with his having power to give eternal life to as many as were given Him, ch. 17:2. He had in the foregoing discourse assured eternal life to his followers; these disciples fastened upon that saying, and therefore resolved to stick to Him, when the

he sold his Master to the chief priests, represented Him to them as a bad man, to justify himself in what he did. But I rather take it as we read it, *he is a devil incarnate*; a fallen apostle, as the devil a fallen angel. He is Satan, an adversary, an enemy to Christ. He is Abaddon, and Apollyon, a son of perdition. He was of his father the devil, and his lusts, was in his interests; as Cain, 1 John 3:12. Those whose bodies were possessed by the devil, are never called devils, but *demoniacs*; but Judas, into whose heart Satan entered, and filled it, is called a devil.

Many that are seeming saints, are real devils. Judas had as fair an outside as many of the apostles; his venom was, like that of the serpent, covered with a fine skin. He cast out devils, and appeared an enemy to the devil a kingdom, and yet himself a devil all the while. Not only he will be one shortly, but is one now. It is strange, and to be wondered at: Christ speaks of it with wonder: *Have not I? It is sad*, and to be lamented, that ever Christianity should be made a cloak to diabolism.

The disguises of hypocrites, however they may deceive men, cannot deceive Christ. He can call those devils, that call themselves Christians, like the prophet's greeting to Jeroboam's wife, when she came to him in disguise; (1 Kings 14:6.) *Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam*. Christ's divine sight, far better than any double sight, can see spirits.

There are those who are chosen by Christ to special services, who yet prove false to Him; *I have chosen you to the apostleship*, for it is expressly said, Judas was not chosen to eternal life, (ch. 13:18.) and yet one of you is a devil. Note, Advancement to places of honor and trust in the church, is no certain evidence of saving grace. *We have prophesied in thy name*.

In the most select societies on this side heaven, it is no new thing to meet with those that are corrupt. Of the twelve that were chosen to an intimate conversation with an incarnate Devil, as great an honor and privilege as ever men were chosen to, one was an incarnate devil. The historian lays an emphasis upon this, that Judas was one of the twelve that were so dignified and distinguished. Let us not therefore reject and unchurch the twelve, because one of them is a devil, nor say that they are all cheats and hypocrites, because one of them was so; let those that are so, hear the blame, and not those who, while they are undiscovered, incorporate with them. There is a society within the veil, into which no unclean thing shall enter; a church of first-born, in which are no false brethren.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 60-71. Many, who are called disciples, dispute the words of Christ: many attend to the general doctrines of the Gospel; but when ministers apply them to their consciences and experience, are ready to exclaim, 'It is a hard saying, who can hear it?' They form gross conceptions of spiritual things, and argue against their own mistakes and misrepresentations: so that those preachers, who imitate their Master, need not wonder, if their faithful doctrine drives away numbers who for a time seemed zealously attached to them. We must, however, speak the words of Christ, 'which are spirit and life,' and not like the dead notions of moralists and speculators: (Notes, Jer. 23. 28, 29. Matt. 7. 28, 29. Heb. 4: 12, 13.) and we must leave it to Him, to 'quicken whom He will' by His Spirit, and to determine who are, and who are not, true believers.—Our main business is with ourselves: when many turn back, and walk no more with Christ. He seems to say to us, 'Will ye go away also?' But the truly broken-hearted, who can rest satisfied with nothing short of eternal life, will answer, 'Lord, to whom

shall I go?' Even when discouraged, and harassed with doubts and fears, he still knows it is vain to think of returning to the world, of seeking salvation by 'the works of the law,' of resting in forms and notions, or of going after false teachers; and still believes, and desires to be fully assured, that Jesus has 'the words of eternal life.' This faith, in its feeblest exercise, is essentially different from that of the most specious hypocrite, who ever followed the steps of the traitor Judas: such are often near to Christ in external profession and office, yet like Satan in the temper of their hearts and secret conduct, but they are known and will be detected by the heart-searching Judge, however they may impose upon their brethren. May we then be now searched and proved by Him; may our hearts be made sound in his statutes; as those, whom He has chosen unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and the belief of his truth.' (Notes, Ps. 119: 80. 139: 23, 24. 2 Thes. 2: 13, 14.)

SCOTT.

Verse 70.

Devil.] 'Rather, a disaffected person, a betrayer. So also Anthony, Bloomfield. A spy. Campbell Hostile. Kuinoel. According to Mr Locke, our Lord intimates that this was the reason why He had not more plainly declared Himself to be the Messiah, because He knew Judas would have accused Him of rebellion against the Romans. (For the word translated devil does sometimes signify a false accuser; see 1 Tim. 3: 11. 2 Tim. 3: 3. and Tit. 2: 3.) But I can see no proof that Judas from the beginning, intended to betray Christ. It is more probable, he at first engaged with Him in expectation of secular advantage; and finding those views disappointed, he

might now begin to form that detestable scheme which he afterwards executed. If this was the occasion, (as I think probable) one would imagine that such an intimation of his secret wickedness must have struck him to the heart.'

DODDRIDGE.

Verse 71.

He it was that should betray Him.] 'For it was he who at that time began to harbor this execrable purpose, and had then thoughts of betraying Him, though one of the twelve. The words may properly, though not necessarily, import thus much; and I think, had not this been actually the case, Christ would not have said, *he is a devil*, but rather that he would become one.'

ID.

CHAP. VII.

Jesus, when counselled by a unbelieving brethren to shew Himself at Jerusalem at the feast of tabernacles, assigning his reason, refuses to accompany them; but afterwards goes up privately, 1-10. The Jews seek Him, and form different opinions of Him, 11-43. He teaches in the temple; declares that his doctrine is of God, and answers objections, 44-52. Some seek to take Him; others believe; and the Pharisees send officers to apprehend Him, 50-52. He foretells his departure to the Father, when the Jews would in vain seek Him, 53-54. He invites those who are thirsty, to come to Him and drink; referring to the Holy Spirit, which would be given to believers, 37-39. Divergent opinions of Him, 40-44. The officers, struck with his discourse, return without Him, 45, 46. The Pharisees scornfully reproach them, and the common people, and Nicodemus who took his part, 47-52. They are unconvinced, and separate, 53.

AFTER these things, Jesus ^awalked in Galilee: for he would not walk in Jewry, ^bbecause the Jews sought to kill him.

² Now the Jews' ^cfeast of tabernacles was at hand.

³ His ^dbrethren therefore said unto him, ^eDepart hence, and go into Judea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest.

^a 4:3, 52. 10:39, 40. 11:54. Luke 13: 43, 52. Acts 10:38. ^b 19:25. 5:16-18. Matt. 10:23. 21:38. ^c Num. 23:16, 17. Lev. 23:34-43. ^d Ex. 23:12-38. Deut. 16:13-16. ^e Kings 2:2-65. 2 Chr. 7:9, 10. Ezra 3:4. Neh. 8:14-19. Zech. 14:18-19. ^f 4:5. Matt. 12:46-47. Mark 3:21. ^g 4:45-8:19. Acts 1:14. ^h 14: 37-5. 11:30. Sam. 17:28. ⁱ Job. 12:9. Matt. 22:16, 17.

certain, (but they were such as pretended to have an interest in Him,) interposed to advise Him in Him to make a more public appearance, 'Depart hence, and go into Judea, where Thou wilt make a better figure than here.' Two reasons they give for this advice.

(1.) It would encourage those in and about Jerusalem, who had a respect for Him; for expecting his temporal kingdom, the royal seat of which they concluded must be at Jerusalem, they would have disciples there particularly countenanced, and thought the time wasted, and his miracles turning to no account, unless they at Jerusalem saw them. Or, 'that thy disciples, all of them in general, who will be gathered at Jerusalem to keep the feast, may see thy works, and not, as here, a few at one time, and a few at another.'

(2.) That it would be for the advancing of his own name; *There is no man that does any thing in secret, if he himself seeks to be known openly.* They take it for granted, that Christ sought to make Himself known, and therefore thought it absurd for Him to conceal his miracles; *'If Thou do these things, if Thou be so well able to gain applause by thy miracles, venture abroad, and shew Thyself to the world.'* Supported by these, Thou canst not fail of acceptance; therefore it is time to set up for an interest, and think of being great.

Now one would not think there were any harm in this, yet the evangelist notes it as an evidence of their infidelity, for neither did his brethren believe in Him; (p. 5.) if they had, they would not have said this. Observe, [1.] To be of the kindred of Christ, was no saving honor; they that hear his Word, and keep it, are the kindred He values. Grace runs in no blood in the world, if not in that of Christ's family. [2.] It was a sign that Christ did not aim at

CHAP. VII. v. 1-13. I. The reason given why Christ spent more of his time in Galilee than in Judea was, the Jews, the people in Judea and Jerusalem, sought to kill Him, for curing the impotent man on the sabbath-day, ch. 5: 17. They thought either of a popular tumult, or a legal prosecution; in consideration of this, He kept at a distance, very much out of the lines of Jerusalem's communication. It is not said, *He durst not, but, He would not walk in Jewry;* it was not through fear, but in prudence, because his hour was not yet come.

Note, 1. Gospel-light is justly taken away from those that endeavor to blow it out. Christ will withdraw from those that drive Him from them, and hide his face from those that spit in it, and justly shut up his bowels from those that spurn at him. In times of imminent peril, it is not only allowable, but advisable, to withdraw for safety, and to choose service in those places which are least perilous, Matt. 16: 23. Then, and not till then, we are called to expose our lives, when we cannot save them without sin. 2. If the providence of God casts persons of merit into places of obscurity, it must not be thought strange; it was the lot of our Master Himself; He who was fit to have sat in the highest of Moses' seats, willingly walked in Galilee among ordinary people. Observe, He did not sit still in Galilee, nor bury Himself alive there, but walked; went about doing good. When we cannot do what and where we would, we must do what and where we can.

II. The feast of tabernacles was one of the three solemnities which called all the males to Jerusalem. (See Lev. 23: 34, &c. and the revival of it after a long disuse, Neh. 8: 14.) It was intended to be a memorial of the tabernacle-state of Israel in the wilderness, and a figure of the tabernacle-state of God's spiritual Israel in this world. This feast, instituted so many hundred years before, was still religiously observed. Note, Divine institutions are never antiquated, nor go out of date; nor must wilderness-mercies ever be forgotten. But it is called the Jews' feast, because it was now shortly to be abolished, as a mere Jewish thing, and left to them that served the tabernacle.

III. Christ's brethren, or his kindred, whether his mother or his supposed father, is not

mentioned to have an interest in Him,) his conduct. Observe their ambition in urging Him to make a more public appearance, 'Depart hence, and go into Judea, where Thou wilt make a better figure than here.' Two reasons they give for this advice.

(1.) It would encourage those in and about Jerusalem, who had a respect for Him; for expecting his temporal kingdom, the royal seat of which they concluded must be at Jerusalem, they would have disciples there particularly countenanced, and thought the time wasted, and his miracles turning to no account, unless they at Jerusalem saw them. Or, 'that thy disciples, all of them in general, who will be gathered at Jerusalem to keep the feast, may see thy works, and not, as here, a few at one time, and a few at another.'

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any secular interest, for then his kindred would have struck in with Him, and He would have secured them first. [3.] There were those who were akin to Christ according to the flesh, who did believe in Him, (three of the twelve were his brethren,) and yet others, as nearly allied to Him as they, did not believe on Him. Many that have the same advantages, do not make the same use of them.

But what was there amiss in this advice? 1. It was presumption for them to prescribe to Christ; it was a sign that they did not believe Him able to guide them, when they did not think Him sufficient to guide Himself. 2. They discovered a great carelessness of his safety, when they would have Him go where they knew the Jews sought to kill Him. They that believed in Him, and loved Him, dissuaded Him from Judea, ch. 11: 8. 3. Some think they hoped that if his miracles were wrought at Jerusalem, the rulers would try them, and discover some cheat in them, which would justify their unbelief. So Dr. Whitby. 4. Perhaps they were weary of his company in Galilee, (for are not all these that speak, Galileans?) and this was, in effect, a desire that He would depart out of their coasts. 5. They causelessly insinuate that He neglected his disciples, and denied them such a sight of his works as was necessary to the support of their faith. 6. They tacitly reproach Him as mean-spirited, that He durst not enter the lists with great men, nor trust Himself upon the stage of public action, which, if He had any thing of courage and a great soul He would do; thus Christ's humility, and the small figure which his religion has usually made in the world, have often been turned to the reproach of Him and it. 7. They seem to question the truth of the miracles He wrought. If they will bear the test of a public scrutiny in the courts above, produce them there. 8. They think Christ altogether such as themselves, subject as they to the politics of the world, and as desirous to make a fair show in the flesh; whereas He sought not honor from men. 9. Self was at the bottom of all; they hoped, if He would make Himself as great as He might, they, being his kinsmen, should share in his honor, and have respect paid them for his sake. Note, 1. Many go to public ordinances, worship at the feast, only to show themselves, and all their care is to make a good appearance to the world. 2. Many that seem to seek Christ's honor, do really seek their own, and make it serve a turn for themselves.

The prudence and humility of our Lord appeared in his answer to the advice his brethren gave Him. Though there were many base insinuations in it, He answered them mildly. Note, Even that which is said without reason, should be answered without passion; we should learn of our Master to reply with meekness even to that which is most impertinent and impertinent; and where it is easy to find much amiss, to seem not to see it, and wink at the affront.

They expected Christ's company with them to the feast, perhaps hoping He would bear their charges.

He shows the difference between Himself and them, in two things.

[1.] His time was set, not theirs. *My time is not yet come, but your time is always ready.* It was an indifferent thing to them when they went, for they had nothing of moment to do,

to God for the fruits of the vine, as well as of other trees, which were gathered about this time, and also to implore his blessing upon those of the ensuing year.

T. H. HORN.

Verse 3.

His brethren.] The Hebrews gave the name of brethren to all the relatives of a particular family. See Gen. 31: 32, 46. Ed.

It is astonishing that these near relatives of Christ, who must have had so many opportunities of seeing the glories both of his character and miracles, (which last they here expressly acknowledge,) should continue in unbelief. But they unhappily laid it down as a first principle, that the Messiah must be a temporal Prince; and finding this mark of his mission wanting, and seeing (more strongly than others) not so intimately conversant with Him could do) his mission to be such a scheme, they would yield to no other proofs, and are, I fear, or the fatal list of those who perished, as thousands now do, by opposing hypothesis to fact.

DODDIDGE.

[675]

NOTES.

CHAP. VII. v. 1. 'For the narration of the remarkable, various and important discourses spoken by our Lord in this his fifth journey, we are solely indebted to John, who has dwelt so much more upon it than the other evangelists, and has used so much the greater diligence in describing it; since it was, beyond all the rest, suited to his purpose, and exhibited the clearest indication how anxiously Jesus, in the days of his flesh, sought to convince the Jews of the sublime excellence and supreme dignity of his person and office.'

Jenny.] 'Or Judea, as distinguished from Galilee and Samaria, constituting the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Simeon, and Dan, having Jerusalem in its centre.'

Verse 2.

Feast of tabernacles.] 'This feast, like that of Pentecost, continued for a week. It is likewise called the feast of ingatherings. Ex. 23: 16. 34: 22. Further, the design of this feast was to return thanks

4 For *'there is no man that doeth any thing in secret, and he himself seeketh to be known openly: if thou do these things, shew thyself to the world.*

5 For *'neither did his brethren believe in him.*

6 Then Jesus said unto them, *'My time is not yet come; but your time is always ready.*

7 The *'world cannot hate you; but me it hateth; because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil.*

8 Go ye up unto this feast: *'I go not up yet unto this feast; for my time is not yet full come.*

9 When he had said these words unto them, he abode *still* in Galilee.

f Prov. 18:1, 2. Matt. 6:1, 2, 5, 16. 23: Luke 9:45. g 18:20. 1 Kings 22:18. Matt. 4:6. Acts 2:4—12. h 1:11—12. Mic. 7:5. 6. Mark 3:21. i 1:13. 2:4. 9:39. 13:1. 17:1. Ps. 102:13. Ec. 3:1. Ec. Acts 1:7. k 15:19. Luke 6:26. Jam. 4:4. l John 4:5. m 15:18, 19, 23—25. 17:14. Prov. 8:36. Is. 49:7. Zech. 11:8. Rom. 8:7. l John 3:12, 13. n 1 Kings 21:20. 22:8. Prov. 9:7, 8. 15:3. Is. 29:1. Jer. 20:8. Am. 7:7—13. Mal. 3:5. Luke 11:39—54. Acts 5:28—31. 7:51—64. Gal. 4:16. Rev. 11:5—11. o 6:30. 8:20. 11:6, 7. 1 Cor. 2:15, 16.

evil had He done? Had He, like Alexander, under color of conquering it, laid it waste? *'I testify of it, that the works of it are evil.'* Note, *First*, The works of an evil world are *evil works*; as the tree is, so are the fruits; it is a dark world, and apostate, and its works works of darkness and rebellion. *Secondly*, Our Lord Jesus, by Himself and by his ministers, did and will discover and testify against the evil works of this wicked world. *Thirdly*, It is a great provocation to the world to be convicted of the evil of its works. It is for the honor of piety, that those who are impious and vicious, do not care for hearing of it, for their own consciences make them ashamed for the turpitude, and afraid of the punishment of sin. *Fourthly*, Whatever is *pretended*, the real cause of the world's enmity to the Gospel is, the testimony it bears against sinners. Christ's witnesses *torment* them that dwell on the earth, and therefore are treated barbarously, Rev. 11: 10. But it is better to incur the world's hatred by testifying against its wickedness, than gain its good will by going down the stream with it.

He dismissed them with a design to stay behind in Galilee; (v. 8.) *Go ye up to this feast, I go not up yet.* [1.] He allows their going to the feast, though carnal and hypocritical. Note, even those who go not to holy ordinances with right affections and intentions, must not be discouraged from going; who knows but they may be wrought upon there? [2.] He denies them his company, because they were carnal and hypocritical. Those who go to ordinances for ostentation, for some secular purpose, go without Christ. How sad the condition of that man, though he reckon himself akin to Christ, to whom He saith, 'Go hear the Word, go receive the sacrament, and I go not up with thee. Go thou and appear before God, but I will not appear for thee,' as Exod. 33: 1, 3. But if the presence of Christ go not with us, to what purpose should we go up? *Go ye up, I go not up.* When we are going to, and coming from, ordinances, it concerns us to be careful what company we have, less the coal of good affections be quenched by corrupt communication. He does not say, I will not go up at all, but not yet. There may be reason for deferring a particular duty, which yet must not be wholly omitted. See Num. 9: 11. The reason is, *My time is not yet full come.* Note, Our Lord Jesus is very exact in knowing and keeping his time,

either where they were, to detain them there, or where they were going, to hasten them thither; but every minute of Christ's time was precious, and its own business allotted to it. He had some work to be done in Galilee; in the Harmony of the Gospels, betwixt this motion by his kindred and his going up to this feast, comes in his sending forth his seventy disciples; (Luke 10: 1, &c.) his time is not yet, for that must be done first. Those who live useless lives have their time always ready, they can come and go when they please; but those whose time is filled up with duty, will often find themselves *straitened*, and they have not yet time for that which others can do at any time. Those who are made the servants of God, as all men are, and have made themselves the servants of all, as useful men have, must not expect to be *masters of their own time*. The confinement of business is a thousand times better than the liberty of idleness. Or, it may be meant of the time of his appearing at Jerusalem; Christ knew that the best time for it would be about the middle of the feast. We, who are short-sighted, are apt to prescribe to Him, and to think He should deliver his people, and show Himself now, just now; the present time is our time, but He is fittest to judge; it may be, *his time is not yet come*; his people are not yet ready for deliverance, nor his enemies ripe for ruin; let us therefore wait with patience for his time, for all He doeth will be most glorious in its season.

[2.] His life was sought, not theirs, v. 7. They, in showing themselves to the world, did not expose themselves; *'The world cannot hate you, for ye are of the world, and in with its interests; the world will love its own.'* Unholy souls, whom the holy God cannot love, the world in wickedness cannot hate; but He, in showing Himself to the world, laid Himself open to danger; for *Me it hateth*. Christ was not only *sought*, (the world knew Him not,) but *hated*, as if He had been hurtful; thus was He requited for his love to the world: reigning sin is a rooted antipathy and enmity to Christ.

But why did the world hate Christ? What

had He done? Had He, like Alexander, under color of conquering it,

laid it waste? *'I testify of it, that the works of it are evil.'* Note, *First*, The works of an evil world are *evil works*; as the tree is, so are the fruits; it is a dark world, and apostate, and its works works of darkness and rebellion. *Secondly*, Our Lord Jesus, by Himself and by his ministers, did and will discover and testify against the evil works of this wicked world. *Thirdly*, It is a great provocation to the world to be convicted of the evil of its works. It is for the honor of piety, that those who are impious and vicious, do not care for hearing of it, for their own consciences make them ashamed for the turpitude, and afraid of the punishment of sin. *Fourthly*, Whatever is *pretended*, the real cause of the world's enmity to the Gospel is, the testimony it bears against sinners. Christ's witnesses *torment* them that dwell on the earth, and therefore are treated barbarously, Rev. 11: 10. But it is better to incur the world's hatred by testifying against its wickedness, than gain its good will by going down the stream with it.

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Verse 4.

'They seem to have said, "It is too little to employ Thyself in working in Galilee, in the country, and in small villages, among an ignorant, and credulous people, from whom Thou canst not get much credit; go to Jerusalem, the capital, and among the learned doctors, in the presence of the whole nation assembled at this feast, work thy miracles, and get Thyself a name."'

Verse 7.

To the world. (8: 23, 26. 9: 39. 15: 18, 19. 17: 6, 9, 11, 14.) In these, and many other places, 'the world' especially means, unholy professed worshippers of God, and in particular marks out the chief priests, scribes, and Pharisees. And are not nominal Christians, of the

and as it was the time fixed, so it was the best time.

He, saying these things to them, abode still in Galilee; for, (1.) He would not be influenced by those who advised Him to seek honor from men, nor go along with them; He would not seem to countenance the temptation. (2.) He would not depart from his own purpose. He had said, upon a clear foresight, that He would not go up yet, and therefore abode still in Galilee. It becomes the followers of Christ thus to be steady, and not to use lightness.

1. He would not go up with his brethren, lest they should make a noise and disturbance, under pretence of showing Him to the world; whereas it agreed both with the predication and with his spirit, not to strive or cry or let his voice be heard in the streets, Iss. 42: 2. But He went up after them. We may join in religious worship with those whom yet we should decline an intimate acquaintance with; for the blessing of ordinances depends upon the grace of God, and not upon the grace of our fellow-worshippers. His carnal brethren went up first, and then He went. Note, In the performances of religion, it is possible that formal hypocrites may get the start of those that are sincere. Many come first to the temple, who are brought thither by vain glory, and go thence unjustified, as Luke 10: 10. It is not who comes first, that will be the question, but, Who comes fittest? If we bring our hearts with us, it is no matter who gets before us.

(2.) How He went; as if He were hiding Himself; not openly, but as it were in secret, rather for fear of giving offence, than of receiving injury. He went, because it was an opportunity of honoring God and doing good; but in secret, because He would not provoke the government. Note, Provided the work of God be done effectually, it is best done when done with least noise. The kingdom of God needs not come with observation, Luke 17: 20. We may do the work of God privately, and yet not do it deceitfully.

There was great expectation of Him at Jerusalem, v. 11—13. Having formerly come to the feasts, and signalized Himself by miracles, He had made Himself the subject of much discourse.

The Jews sought Him at the feast, and said, Where is He? [1.] The common people longed to see Him, that they might have their curiosity gratified with the sight of his person and miracles. They did not think it worth while to go to Him into Galilee, though, if they had, they would not have lost their labor, but they hope the feast will bring Him to Jerusalem. If an opportunity of acquaintance with Christ come to their door, they like it well enough. They sought Him at the feast. When we attend upon God in his holy ordinances, we should seek Christ in them. Those who would see Christ at a feast, must seek Him there. Or, [2.] Perhaps it was his enemies waiting an opportunity to seize Him, and, if possible, stop his progress. They said, Where is He? Where is that fellow? Thus scornfully do they speak of Him. Or it intimates how full their hearts were with thoughts of Him, and their town with talk of Him; they needed not name Him. When they should have welcomed the feast as an opportunity of serving God, they were glad of it as an opportunity of persecuting Christ. Thus Saul hoped to slay David at the new moon, 1 Sam. 20: 27. Those who seek opportunity to sin in solemn assemblies for religious worship, profane God's ordinances to the last degree, and defy Him upon his own

same character, 'the world,' at this day, as much as either Jews, Gentiles, or Mohammedans? SCOTT.

'By this verse is meant a sort of universal hatred, such as that encountered by Christ, and for a long time by the Christians; and merely to be attributed to the delivering of doctrines and precepts which will not square with the inclinations of most men.' GROTIIUS. 'You have no reason to fear any injury or assault, as the world can not hate you, because it is on principles of carnal wisdom that you act and so exhibit nothing that may draw upon you any particular opposition; but Me it hates, not on account of any ill action I have committed, but because, from zeal for truth, and a desire of its reformation, I leave my testimony concerning it, that its deeds are evil.' DODGE.

10 But when his brethren were gone up, *then went he also up unto the feast, ^{not} openly, but as it were in secret.

[Practical Observations.]

11 Then *the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he?

12 And there was much *murmuring among the people concerning him: for *some said, He 'is a good man: others said, Nay; but he *deceiveth the people.

13 Howbeit, no man *spake openly of him, for fear of the Jews.

14 ¶ Now about *the midst of the feast, Jesus went up into *the temple and taught.

• Ps 25:8, 40:8, Matt. 3:15, Gal. 4:1
• 11:54, Is. 42:2,3, Am. 5:13, Matt. 10:16, 17.
• 11:56.
• 32, Phil. 2:14.
• 2:37-40, 4:3, 6:14, 9:16, 17, 10:19-21, Matt. 10:25, 16:13-16, Luke 7:16.
• Luke 6:45, 18:19, 23:47, 50, Acts 11:54, Rom. 5:7.
• 47:52, Matt. 27:63.
• 2:32, 9:22, 34, 12:42, 43, 19:38, 20:19, Prov. 29:25, Gal. 2:12, 13, 2 Tim. 2:9-13, Rev. 2:13.
• 2:37, Num. 29:12, 13, 17, 20, 23, &c.
• 5:14, 8:2, 18:20, Hag. 2:7-9, Mat. 3:1, Matt. 21:12, Luke 19:47.

Others said, Nay, but He deceiveth the people; if that had been true, He had been a very bad man. The doctrine He preached, was sound; his miracles real; his conversation manifestly holy and good; and yet it must be taken for granted, notwithstanding, that there is some cheat at the bottom, because it is the interest of the chief priests to run Him down. Such murmuring as there was among the Jews concerning Christ, there is still among us: the Socinians say, He is a good Man, and further they say not; the Deists will not allow this, but say, He deceived the people. Thus some diminish Him; others abuse Him, but great is the truth.

They were frightened by their superiors from speaking much of Him; (v. 13.) No man spake openly of Him, for fear of the Jews. Either, First, They durst not openly speak well of Him. While any one was at liberty to reproach Him, none durst vindicate Him. Or, Secondly, They durst not speak at all of Him openly. Because nothing could justly be said against Him, they would not suffer any thing to be said of Him. It was a crime to name Him. Thus many have aimed to suppress truth, under color of silencing disputes about it, and would have all talk of religion hushed, in hopes thereby to bury in oblivion religion itself.

V. 14-36. Christ went up into the temple, and taught, according to his custom when at Jerusalem. His business was to preach the Gospel, and He did it in every place of concourse. His sermon is not recorded, because, probably, it was to the same purport with the sermons in Galilee, which were recorded by the other evangelists. The Gospel is the same to the plain and to the polite. That which is observable here is, **■** was about the middle of the feast; the fourth or fifth day of the eight.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-10. No external evidences can overcome the obstruc-
tion of the human heart, or secure the sinner's conversion: we need not then be disconcerted by the opposition of our relations, when we remember that the brethren of Jesus 'did not believe in Him.'—Worldly men commonly judge of others by themselves; and so ascribe their most unexceptionable actions to ostentation, or some selfish motive; knowing that their own most specious conduct springs from no higher principles. They often attempt to give friendly counsel to those who are employed in the service of God: yet they can only propose such things, as apparently conduce to their present advantage, and really tend to their injury. (Note, 1 Kings 22: 13, 14.) But the spiritual man sees a variety of reasons for his conduct, and for the time and manner of his proceedings, of which others

ground; it is like striking within the verge of the court.

The people differed much in their sentiments concerning Him; There was much murmuring among the people concerning Him. The enmity of the rulers against Christ, and their inquiries after Him, made Him so much the more talked of among the people. This the Gospel of Christ has got by opposition, it has been more inquired into; and by being every where spoken against, has come to be every where spoken of, and by that means has been spread the further, and the merits of his cause have been the more searched into. This murmuring was not against Christ, but concerning Him; some murmured at the rulers, because they did not encourage Him; others, because they did not silence Him. Some murmured that He had so great an interest in Galilee; others, that He had so little in Jerusalem. Note, Christ and his religion have been, and will be, the subject of much controversy, Luke 12: 51, 52. If all would agree to entertain Christ as they ought, there would be perfect peace; but when some receive the light, and others resolve against it, there will be murmuring. The bones in the valley, while they were dead and dry, lay quiet; but when it was said unto them, Live, there was a noise and a shaking, Ezek. 37: 7. But the noise and encounter of liberty and business are preferable, surely, to the silence and agreement of a prison.

The sentiments of the people concerning Him.

Some said, He is a good Man. This was a truth, but far short of being the whole truth. He was not only a good Man, He was the Son of God. Many who have no ill thoughts of Christ, have yet low thoughts of Him, and scarcely honor Him, even when they speak well of Him, because they do not say enough; yet indeed it was his honor, and the reproach of those who persecuted Him, that even they who would not believe Him to be the Messiah, could not but own He was a good Man.

Others said, He deceiveth the people; if that had been true, He had been a very bad man. The doctrine He preached, was sound; his miracles real; his conversation manifestly holy and good; and yet it must be taken for granted, notwithstanding, that there is some cheat at the bottom, because it is the interest of the chief priests to run Him down. Such murmuring as there was among the Jews concerning Christ, there is still among us: the Socinians say, He is a good Man, and further they say not; the Deists will not allow this, but say, He deceived the people. Thus some diminish Him; others abuse Him, but great is the truth.

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Whether He did not come till the middle of the feast, or whether He came at the beginning, but kept private, is not certain. But, Query, Why did He not go to the temple sooner, to preach? Answer, 1. Because the people would have more leisure to hear Him, and, it might be hoped, would be better disposed, when they had spent some days in their booths, as they did at the feast of tabernacles. 2. Because He would choose to appear, when his friends and his enemies had done looking for Him; and so give a specimen of his method of coming at midnight, Matt. 25: 6. But why did He appear thus publicly now? To shame his persecutors, the chief priests and elders, (1.) By showing that, though they were bitter against Him, yet He did not fear their power. See Isa. 50: 7, 3. (2.) By taking their work out of their hands. Their office was to teach the people in the temple, and particularly at the feast of tabernacles, Neh. 8: 17, 18. But they either did not teach them at all, or taught for doctrines the commandments of men, and therefore He goes up to the temple, and teaches the people. When the shepherds of Israel made a prey of the flock, it was time for the chief Shepherd to appear, as was promised, Ezek. 34: 22, 23. Mal. 3: 1.

Concerning his doctrine.

The Jews admired it; (v. 15.) They marvelled, saying, How knows this man letters, having never learned? Our Lord Jesus was not educated in the schools of the prophets, or at the feet of the rabbins; not only did not travel for learning, as the philosophers did, but did not make any use of the academies in his own country. Moses was taught the learning of the Egyptians, but Christ was not taught so much as the learning of the Jews; having received the Spirit without measure, He needed not receive any knowledge from man, or by man. At the time of Christ's appearing, learning flourished in the Roman empire, and in the Jewish church, more than in any age before or since, and in such a time of inquiry Christ chose to establish his religion, not in an illiterate age, lest it should look like a design to impose upon the world; yet He Himself studied not the learning then in vogue. Christ had letters, though He had never learned them; was mighty in the Scriptures, though He never had a doctor of the law for his tutor. It is necessary that Christ's ministers should have learning; and since they cannot expect to have it as He had it, by inspiration, they must take pains to get it in an ordinary way. Christ's having learning, though He had not been taught it, made Him great and wonderful; the Jews speak of it here with wonder. Some, it is likely, took notice of it to his honor; He that had no human learning, and yet so far excelled all that had, certainly must be endued with a divine knowledge. Others, probably, mentioned it in diminution and contempt of Him; Whatever He seems to have, He cannot really have any true learning, for He was never at the university. And some perhaps suggested that He had got his learning by magic arts, or some unlawful means; since they know not how He could be a scholar, they will think Him a conjuror.

have no capacity to judge. (Note, 1 Cor. 2: 14-16.) He knows himself to be surrounded with enemies, who hate him, in proportion as his conversation, or more public testimony exposes the wickedness of men; protests against the corrupt maxims, and fashions of the world; and shows the evil even of their boasted morality. He is therefore aware that he needs 'the wisdom of the serpent,' as well as 'the harmlessness of the dove;' he consults the Word of God, and prays for the teaching of his Spirit; is decided against carnal advice, and leaves worldly counsellors to possess that 'friendship of the world which is enmity against God;' that he may follow the dictates of heavenly wisdom, and the counsel of an enlightened conscience. Scott.

'his people, to keep the whole law most perfectly. Yet for the same cause, (that above assigned.) He did not openly enter the temple, till the middle of the feast; that He might, in his Father's house, perform the office committed to Him by his Father.' Beza in Scott.

Verse 10.
'It is not to be doubted, but that Jesus arrived in time, in order to observe that feast of seven days most accurately, and indeed without omitting so much as one title of the law; as bound for the sake of

15 And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?

16 Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me.

17 If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.

18 He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

[Practical Observations.]

19 Did not Moses

45. Matt. 7:28, 29. 22:22, 33. Luke 2:47.
 Matt. 13:23, 24. Mark 6:2, 3. Luke 4:2.
 Act. 2:7, 8. 4:11, 12.
 Dr. Leary. Am. 7:14, 15.
 3:11, 31, 32. 8:28. 12:49, 50. 14:10.
 21. 17:3, 14. Rev. 1:1.
 3:23, 24, 30. 6:38—40, 44.
 1:46—49. 8:31, 32, 47. Ps. 25:8, 9, 12.
 119:101, 102. Is. 55:8. Jer. 31:33.
 32. Hos. 6:3. Mic. 4:2. Mal. 4:2.
 Matt. 6:22. Luke 8:15. Acts 10:1—6.
 11:13, 14. 17:11. Phil. 3:15, 16.
 8:41. 8:49, 50. 1 Cor. 10:31—33.
 6:12. 6:12—14. Phil. 3:15—5. 1 Thes. 2:6. 1 Pet. 4:11.
 3:26—30. 11:4. 12:28. 13:31, 32.
 17:4, 5. Eccl. 32:10—13. Num. 11:29.
 Matt. 6:9.
 1:17. 5:45. 9:28, 29. Ex. 24:2, 3.
 Deut. 33:4. Act. 7:38. Heb. 3:3—5.

My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent Me. They were offended, because He undertook to teach, though He had never learned. In answer, He tells them, that his doctrine was such as was not to be learned, for it was not the product of human thought, but was a divine revelation. As God equal with the Father, He might truly have said, My doctrine is mine, and his that sent Me; but being now in his estate of humiliation, Mediator, God's Servant, it was more congruous to say, My doctrine is not mine, originally, as Man and Mediator, but his that sent Me; it does not lead ultimately to Myself, but to Him that sent Me. God had promised concerning the great Prophet, that He would put his words into his mouth, (Deut. 18:18), to which Christ seems here to refer. Note, It is the comfort of those who embrace Christ's doctrine, and the condemnation of those who reject it, that it is divine; of God, and not of man.

The most competent judges of the truth and divine authority of Christ's doctrine are those that with an upright heart endeavor to do the will of God; (v. 17.) If any man be willing to do the will of God, have his will melted into the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or, whether I speak of Myself. Observe here,

The question concerning the doctrine of Christ, is, whether it be of God, or no; a divine revelation, or an imposture. Christ Himself was willing to have his doctrine inquired into, much more should his ministers; and we are concerned to examine what grounds we go upon, for if we be deceived, we are miserably deceived.

They are likely to succeed in this search, that do the will of God, at least are desirous to do it. Now see, 1. Who they are, that will do the will of God; they are impartial in their inquiries concerning the will of God, not biassed by any lust or interest; and such as are resolved, when they find out what the will of God is, to conform to it. They are such as have an

honest principle of regard to God, and are truly desirous to please Him. 2. Whence it is that such a one shall know of the truth of Christ's doctrine. Christ has promised to give knowledge to such; He hath said, He shall know and He can give understanding. Those who improve the light they have, shall be secured from destructive mistakes. They are prepared to receive that knowledge. He that is inclined to submit to the rules of the divine law, is disposed to admit the rays of divine light. To him that has shall be given; those have a good understanding, that do his commandments, Ps. 111:10. Those who resemble God, are most likely to understand Him.

It appeared that Christ, as a Teacher, did not speak of Himself, because He did not seek Himself, v. 18.

See here the character of a deceiver; He seeketh his own glory, which is a sign that He speaks of Himself, as the false christs and false prophets did. They speak of themselves, and have no commission from God; no warrant but their own will, no inspiration but their own imagination, their own politics and artifice. Ambassadors speak not of themselves; those ministers disclaim that character, who glory in this, that they speak of themselves. By this, their pretensions are disproved, they consult purely their own glory; self-seekers are self-speakers. They who speak from God, will speak for God; they who aim at their own preferment and interest, make it appear that they had no commission from God.

See the contrary character Christ gives of Himself and his doctrine; He that seeks his glory that sent Him, as I do, makes it to appear that He is true. He was sent of God. Those teachers only, who are sent of God, are to be received by us. Those who bring a divine message, must prove a divine mission. He sought the glory of God. It was both the tendency of his doctrine, and the tenor of his whole conversation, to glorify God. This was a proof that He was true, and that there was no un-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11—18. The servants of Christ must follow Him 'through evil report and good report.' The most faithful preachers must be content to be called 'deceivers of the people;' though others will allow them to be good men; and some perhaps think better of them than they deserve, which none ever could do of their Lord and Master. But in general they, who count them deceivers, will speak openly their sentiments; while many who favor them will be afraid of reproach, by avowing their regard.—Any plausible objection, the result of ignorance and indolent mistake, will often more than counterbalance the fullest proof of a man's being employed by God; for the partial judges will only hear evidence on one side of the question. Some prejudice, concerning the family, country, or education of the faithful teacher, is employed by Satan, to stop the ears of his servants against the truth: and the charge of ignorant and illiterate is adjoined, against the most scriptural preachers, by such as have not yet learned 'the first principles of the oracles of God;' however accomplished they may be, in that 'wisdom of the world which is foolishness with Him.' But every faithful minister, wherever educated, may humbly adopt the words of Christ. His doctrine is not his own invention, nor does it spring, either from his learning or his ignorance: it is from God, from his Word through the teaching of His Spirit; who commands it to be preached for the glory of

his name. All therefore, who presume to engage in this work, should daily study and pray over the Scriptures, in order to possess a well-grounded confidence, that the subjects of their instructions are agreeable to 'the oracles of God.' They ought likewise to 'take heed to themselves, as well as to their doctrine;' that they may always have 'rejoicing in the testimony of their consciences,' as not seeking their own glory, the applause of hearers, or any filthy lucre, (as all do, who speak of themselves,) but the glory of God. The it will appear, that 'there is no unrighteousness in them,' nor any reason to suspect them of bad motives, in their ministry. But, amidst the various opinions and controversies about religion; which agitate the world, what a blessed encouragement it is to remember, that 'if any man,' of any nation, 'will do he will of God, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether men speak of themselves!' The Word of the Lord is passed, and cannot be recalled; and all, who desire, and seek diligently to know the will of God, in order to reduce it to practice, shall be guided through every uncertainty, and just every precipice of error, into the ways of truth and peace; and they only shall be given up to strong delusions, 'who hate the truth because they have pleasure in unrighteousness.' (Note, 2 Thes. 2:8—12.)

SCOTT.

Verse 15.

'No one, (says Kypke) will rashly venture to affirm that Christ was never under the instruction of any Master, nor imbued with any literature whatsoever. For this would be contrary to the sure oracles of sacred writ, and to the custom of the Jews; from which we can scarcely suppose his parents would have deviated, or have omitted to put their son under the instruction of some one.'

BLOOMF.

'There is no reason to believe that our Lord adorned his discourse with quotations from, or references to, the writers most celebrated for their learning, or showed any extraordinary acquisitions in history, antiquities, &c. The evangelists have given us no specimen of this kind; and it is certain that foreign literature was then in great contempt among the Jews, the words undoubtedly refer to our Lord's thorough acquaintance with the Scriptures, and the judicious and masterly manner in which He taught the people out of them, with far greater majesty, and nobler eloquence than the scribes could attain by a learned education.'

Verse 17.

He shall know of the doctrine, &c. 'This sentence clearly shows us, that they best understand the will of God, who are most careful to practice it; so likewise that the best way to know what God is, is

transcribe his perfections in our lives and action; to be holy, just, good and merciful, as He is; also that a hearty desire and endeavor to do the will of God is the best security and preservative against dangerous errors and mistakes in matters of religion.'

TILLOTSON.

'A sincere desire to know the truth, with an honest disposition to conform our wills to it when known, is the best preservative against error in religion, and carries with it a well-grounded assurance of the divine aid, to assist persons so disposed in their inquiries after truth.'

GREEN.

Or, as Doddridge paraphrases it, 'The evidence is plain to an honest mind, and the correspondence which a truly good man will find between the whole system of my doctrine, and his own inward experience, will be to him instead of a thousand speculative arguments.'

EP.

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine. 'This seems an express declaration, that every upright man, to whom the Gospel is proposed, will see and own the evidence of its divine authority; which, indeed, might reasonably have been concluded from the awful judgment pronounced on those who presume to reject it.'

DODDRIIDGE.

'God enlightens those, who do not attempt to justify their own ways.

GRANT.

give you the law, and yet none of you keepeth the law? Why go ye about to kill me?

20 The people answered and said, 'Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill thee?'

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, 'I have done one work, and ye all marvel.'

22 Moses therefore gave unto you ^a circumcision, (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers,) and ye on the sabbath-day circumsise a man.

23 If a man on the sabbath-day receive circumcision, *that the law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at me, because I have ^amade a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day?

24 Judge not ^aaccording to the appearance, but judge righteously.

Matt. 23:2-4, Rom. 2:12, 13, 17-29, 3:18-22 Gal. 6:13
 25: 5:16, 18, 10:21, 22, 29, 11:53, Ps. 2:1-6, Matt. 12:14, 21:28, Mat. 23:4, 6
 1:8, 18, 52, 10:29, Matt. 10:25, 11:19, 19, 12:24, Mark 3:21, 22, 30, Acts 28:24
 5:9-11, Gen. 17:10-14 Lev. 12:3, Rom. 4:9-11, Gal. 3:17, Or, without breaking the law of Moses, Matt. 12:5, 5:8, 9, 14-16, 8:15, Deut. 1:16, 17, 16:18, 19, Ps. 58:2, 82:2, 94:20, 21, Prov. 17:15, 24:23, 16:5, 23, 11:3, 4, Jam. 2:1, 4, 9.

a clearer light and better law; why then do you aim to kill Me for introducing it?

Here the people rudely interrupted Him, and contradicted what He said; *Thou hast a devil; who goes about to kill Thee?* This speaks. [1.] *The good opinion* they had of their rulers, who, they think, would never attempt so atrocious a thing as to kill Him; such a veneration they had for their elders and chief priests, that they would swear for them they would do no harm to an innocent man. Probably, the rulers had their emissaries among the people, who suggested this to them; many deny that wickedness which at the same time they are contriving. [2.] *The ill opinion* they had of our Lord. *'Thou hast a devil, art possessed with a lying spirit, and art a bad man for saying so;'* or rather, *'Thou art melancholy, and a weak man;'* frightenest Thyself with causeless fears. Not only open frenzies, but silent melancholies, were then commonly imputed to the power of Satan. *'Thou art crazed, hast a distempered brain.'* Let us not think it strange if the best men be put under the worst characters.

To this calumny, our Savior returns no direct answer, but seems as if He took no notice of it. Note, Those who would be like Christ, must put up with affronts, and pass by indignities done them; must not regard them, much less resent them, and least of all revenge them. *I, as a deaf man, heard not.* When Christ was reviled, He reviled not again.

He appeals to their own sentiments of this miracle; (v. 21.) *'I have done one work, and ye all marvel.* Ye cannot but marvel at it as altogether supernatural.' Or, *'Though I have done but one work that you have any color to find fault with, yet you marvel, as if I had been guilty of some enormous crime.'*

He appeals to their own practice in other instances; *'I have done one work on the Sabbath, with a word's speaking, and ye all make strange of it, that a religious man should dare to do such a thing, whereas ye yourselves many a time do a more servile work on the Sabbath, in the case of circumcision; if it be lawful for you, nay, your duty, to circumcise a child on the Sabbath; when it happens to be the eighth day, as, no doubt, it is, much more was it lawful and good for me to heal a diseased man on that day.'* Observe,

The origin of circumcision; *Moses gave you circumcision, the law concerning it.* Here, circumcision is said to be given, and they are said to receive it; it was not imposed upon them as a yoke, but conferred as a favor. Note, The ordinances of God, particularly those which ^aare seals of the covenant,

righteousness in Him. False teachers are most unrighteous; unjust to God whose name they abuse, and unjust to the souls of men whom they impose upon. There cannot be a greater piece of unrighteousness than this. But Christ made it appear that He was true, that He was really what He said He was; that there was no falsehood in his doctrine, or fraud in his dealings with us.

They discourse concerning the crime that was laid to his charge for curing the impotent man, and bidding him carry his bed on the sabbath-day, for which they had formerly persecuted Him; and which was still the pretence of their enmity.

He argues against them by way of recrimination, convicting them of far worse practices. How could they censure Him for a breach of the law of Moses, when they themselves were such notorious breakers of it? *Did not Moses give you the law?* It was their privilege that they had the law; no nation had such a law; but it was their wickedness that they rebelled against it. Many that have the law given them, do not keep it. Their neglect of the law was universal; *None of you keepeth it*; neither those in *posts of honor*, nor those who were in *posts of subjection*, who should have been most obedient. They boasted of the law, pretended a zeal for it, were enraged at Christ for seeming to transgress it, yet none of them kept it; like those who say that they are for the church, and yet never go to church. It aggravated their wickedness in persecuting Christ for breaking the law, that they themselves did not keep it; *'None of you keepeth the law, why then go ye about to kill Me for not keeping it?'* Note, Those are commonly most censorious of others, who are most faulty themselves. Hypocrites, who are forward to pull a mote out of their brother's eye, are not aware of a beam in their own.

Why go ye about to kill Me? Some make this to be the instance of their not keeping the law; *'Ye keep not the law; if ye did, ye would not go about to kill Me.'* Those that support themselves and their interest by persecution and violence, whatever they pretend, are not keepers of the law of God. Some understand this as a reason why it is time to supersede the law of Moses by the Gospel, because the law was found insufficient to restrain sin; *'Moses gave you the law, but you are not kept by it from the greatest wickedness; there is therefore need of*

are gifts, and are to be received as such. 2 Moses is said to give it, because it was a part of that law given by Moses; yet as Christ said of the manna, (ch. 6: 32.) Moses did not give it them, but God; nay, and it was not of Moses first, but of the fathers, v. 22. Though it was incorporated into the Mosaic institution, yet it was ordained long before, for it was a seal of the righteousness of faith, and therefore commenced with the promise, four hundred and thirty years before, Gal. 3: 17. The church-membership of believers and their seed was not of Moses or his law, and therefore did not fall with it; but was of the patriarchal church, a part of that blessing of Abraham, which was to come upon the Gentiles, Gal. 3: 14. Observe,

Secondly, The respect to the law of circumcision above that of the Sabbath, in the Jewish church. The Jewish casuists frequently notice it.—*Circumcision and its cure drive away the Sabbath;* so that if a child was born one sabbath-day, it was without fail circumcised the next. If then, when the sabbath-rest was more strictly insisted on, yet those works were allowed which were to keep up religion, much more are they allowed now under the Gospel, when the stress is laid more upon the sabbath-work.

The inference Christ draws from hence in justification of Himself, and of what He had done. *A man-child on the sabbath-day receives circumcision, that the law of circumcision might not be broken;* or, as the margin reads it, *without breaking the law*, namely, of the Sabbath. Divine commands must be construed so as to agree with each other. 'Now, if this be allowed, how unreasonable are ye, who are angry with Me because I have made a man every whit whole on the sabbath-day!' (The etymon of the word translated angry means gall.) They were angry at Him with the greatest indignation; it was anger with gall in it. Note, It is very absurd and unreasonable for us to condemn others for that which we justify ourselves in. Observe the comparison between their *circumcising a child, and his healing a man on the sabbath-day.* 1. Circumcision was but a ceremonial institution; it was of the fathers indeed, but not from the beginning; but Christ did a good work by the law of nature, a more excellent law than that which made circumcision a good work. 2. Circumcision was a bloody ordinance, and made sore; but what Christ did, made whole. The law works pain, and if that work may be done on the sabbath-day, much more a gospel-work, which works peace. 3. When they had circumcised a child, their care was only to heal up that part which was circumcised, which might be done, and yet the child remain under other illnesses; Christ had made this man every whit whole.—*I have made the whole man healthful and sound. The whole body was healed, for the disease affected the whole body; and the cure left no relics of the disease behind; nay, Christ not only healed his body, but his soul too, by that admonition, Go and sin no more, and so in fact made the whole man sound.* Circumcision indeed was intended for the good of the soul, but they had perverted it, and turned it into a carnal ordinance; but Christ accompanied his outward cures with inward grace, and so made them sacramental, and healed the whole man.

He concludes the argument with this rule, *Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgement.* This may be applied, in particular, to this work. Be not partial in your judgment; judge not, knowing faces, as the Hebrew phrase is, Deut. 1: 17. It is contrary to the law of justice, as well as charity, to censure those who differ in opinion from us, in taking that liberty which yet in those of our own party, we allow of; as it is to commend that in some as necessary strictness, which in others we condemn as persecution. Or, (2.) In general, to Christ's person and preaching, which they were prejudiced against. Those things that are designed to impose upon men, commonly ^aappear best, when judged of according to the outward appearance; they appear

25 Then said some of them ° of Jerusalem, 'Is not this he whom they seek to kill?'

26 But, lo, 'he speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto him. 'Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?'

27 Howbeit, 'we know this man whence he is; but when Christ cometh, 'no man knoweth whence he is.

28 Then cried Jesus in the temple, as he taught, saying, 'Ye both know me, and ye know whence I am: 'and I am not come of myself, but he that sent me 'is

pear most plausible at the first glance. This gained the Pharisees such a reputation, that they appeared right unto men; (Matt. 23: 27, 28.) and men judged of them by that appearance, and so were sadly mistaken in them. 'But,' saith Christ, 'be not too confident that all are real saints, who are seeming ones.' With reference to Himself, his outward appearance was far short of his real dignity, for He took upon Him the form of a servant, (Phil. 2: 7.) was in the likeness of sinful flesh, (Rom. 8: 3.) had no form or comeliness, Isa. 53: 2. So that they who undertook to judge Him by his outward appearance, were not likely to judge righteous judgment. The Jews expected the outward appearance of the Messiah to be attended with secular grandeur; and judging of Christ by that rule, their judgment was a continual mistake, for his kingdom was not to be of this world, nor with observation. If a divine power accompanied Him, and God bare Him witness, and the Scriptures were fulfilled in Him, they ought to receive Him. See Isa. 11: 3. and 1 Sam. 16: 7. Christ and his doctrine desire nothing but righteous judgment; if truth and justice may pass the sentence, Christ and his cause will carry the day. We must not judge any by outward appearance, their titles, their figure, and show, but by their intrinsic worth, and the gifts and graces of God's Spirit.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem seem to have been most prejudiced against Him, v. 25. One would think that they who lived at the fountain-head of knowledge and religion, would have been most ready to receive the Messiah; but it proved quite contrary; those that have the means of knowledge and grace, if not made better by them, are commonly made worse; and our Lord has often met with the least welcome from those, from whom one would expect the best. It was not without some just cause, that it came into a proverb, The nearer

10 11.
20.
94. 40:9,10. 71:15,16. Prov. 28:1.
Is. 42:4. 50:7,8. Matt. 22:16. Acta
4:13. Eph. 6:19,20. Phil. 1:14. 2
Tim. 1:7,8.
1 Th. 1:5.
8:22. 11:47-53. 12:42. Luke
7:36.
15. 6:42. Matt. 13:54-57. Mark
6:3. Luke 4:22.
41:42. Is. 11:1. 53:8. Jer. 23:5.
30:21. Mic. 5:2. Matt. 2:5,6. Acta
8:33.
y 146. 8:14. Matt. 2:23. Luke 2:4,
11:39,51.
32. 5:43. 8:16,42. 10:36. 12:49.
3:33. 5:32. 9:26. 2 Cor. 1:18. Tit.
1:2. Heb. 6:18. 1 John 5:10.

the church, the further from God.

These people of Jerusalem showed their ill-will to Christ, by reflecting on the rulers, because they let Him alone; Is not this He whom they seek to kill? The people that came out of the country to the feast, did not suspect any design against Him, and therefore said, Who goes about to kill Thee? v. 20. But they of Jerusalem knew the plot, and irritated their rulers to put it in execution. 'Is not this He whom they seek to kill? Why do they not do it? Who hinders them? They say that they have a mind to get Him out of the way, and yet, lo, He speaketh boldly, and they say nothing to Him; do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ?' v. 26. Here they slyly insinuate two things, to exasperate the rulers against Christ, when indeed they needed no spur. 1. That by conniving at his preaching, they brought their authority into contempt. 'Must a man that is condemned by the sanhedrim, be permitted to speak boldly, without a check? This makes their sentence but a vain menace; if our rulers will suffer themselves to be thus trampled upon, they may thank themselves if none stand in awe of them and their laws.' Note, The worst persecutions have been carried on under color of the support of authority and government. 2. That hereby they brought their judgment into suspicion; Do they know that this is the Christ? It is ironical. 'How came they to change their mind? What new discovery have they made? They give people occasion to think that they believe Him to be the Christ, and should act vigorously against Him, to clear themselves from the suspicion.' Thus the rulers, who had made the people enemies to Christ, made them seven times more the children of hell than themselves, Matt. 23: 15. When the profession of Christ's name is out of fashion, and consequently out of repute, many are strongly tempted to persecute and oppose, only that they may not be thought to incline to religion. For this reason apostates, and the degenerate offspring of good parents, have been sometimes worse than others, to wipe off the stain of their profession. It was strange that the rulers, thus irritated, did not seize Christ; but his hour was not yet come; and God can tie men's hands, though He do not turn their hearts.

In their exception against his being the Christ, there appeared more malice than matter, v. 27. 'If the rulers think Him to be the Christ, we neither can nor will believe Him to be so, for we know this Man, whence He is; but when Christ comes, no man knows whence He is.' Here is a fallacy in the argument, for the propositions are not both adapted to the same

view of the subject. 1. If they speak of his divine nature, it is true, that when Christ comes, no man knows whence He is, for He is a Priest after the order of Melchizedek, without descent, and his goings forth have been of old from everlasting, Mic. 5: 2. But then it was not true, that as for this Man they knew whence He was, for they knew not his divine nature, nor how the Word was made flesh. 2. If they speak of his human nature, it was true that they knew whence He was, who was his mother, and where He was bred up; but then it was false, that ever it was said of the Messiah, that none should know whence He was, for 'was known before where He should be born Matt. 2: 4, 5. Observe, How they despised Him, because they knew whence He was. Familiarity breeds contempt, and we are apt to disdain the use of those of whom we know the rise. Christ's own received Him not, because He was their own, for which very reason they should the rather have loved Him, and been thankful that they were honored with his appearance. (2.) They endeavored to fasten true ground of their prejudice upon the Scriptures. Therefore people err concerning Christ, because they know not the Scripture.

Christ's answer to this objection. He spake freely and boldly, cried in the temple, as He taught; He spake thus louder than the rest of his discourse. First, To express his earnestness, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts; there may be vehemency in contending for the truth, where yet there is no intemperate passion. We may instruct gainsayers with warmth, and yet with meekness. Secondly, The priests, and those that were prejudiced against Him, did not come near enough to hear his preaching, and therefore He must speak louder what He will have them to hear. Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear this.

Christ's answer to their cavil, is, 1. By way of concession; granting that 'ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am. Ye know I am of yourselves.' It is no disparagement to the doctrine of Christ, that it is level to the capacities of the meanest; plain truths discovered even by nature's light, of which we may say, 'We know whence they are.' 'Ye know Me, ye think ye know Me; but ye are mistaken; ye take Me to be the carpenter's son, and born at Nazareth; but it is not so.'

2. By way of negation, denying that what they did see in Him, and know of Him, was all that was to be known; and therefore if they looked no further than that, they judged by the outward appearance only. They knew whence He came perhaps, but He will tell them from whom He came. (1.) He did not come of Himself; not as a private person, but with a public character. (2.) That He was sent of his Father; this is twice mentioned, He hath sent Me. And again, 'He hath sent Me, to say what I say, and do what I do.' This He was well assured of, and knew that his Father would bear Him out; and if we are assured of it too, we may with confidence go to God by Him. (3.) He was from his Father, not only from Him as a servant from his master, but by eternal generation, as a son from his father, by essential emanation, as the beams from the sun. (4.) That the Father who sent Him is true; He had promised to give the Messiah, and though the Jews had forfeited the promise, yet He has performed it; He had promised that the Messiah should be successful in his undertaking; and though the generality of the Jews reject Him and his Gospel, yet He is true, and will fulfil the promise in the calling of the Gentiles. (5.) These unbelieving Jews did not know the

Verse 26.
The word "indeed," is not recognised by the greater part of the MSS. of different recensions; nor is it found in the citations of the fathers. It seems to have been added by the grammarians. KINOEL.

Verse 27.
No man knoweth whence He is, i. e. 'They spake this from the vain traditions of the rabbies, who owned indeed that their Messiah was to be born in Bethlehem, but imagined that He was so to be conveyed thence, and concealed till Elias came to anoint Him. (Whitby.) or perhaps from a mistaken sense of Is. 63: 8. "Who shall declare his generation?" Pounce. C from the similitude of Christ to Melchizedek, who was acknowledged to be a type of Him, and is described as being without father or mother, Heb. 7: 3.'

zedeek, who was acknowledged to be a type of Him, and is described as being without father or mother, Heb. 7: 3.'

For I am from Him, &c. i. e. 'Our Lord takes them up on their own professions, and argues thence, Since you have so much information concerning Me, add this to it, viz. that I am not come of myself, am no self-created, or self-authorized prophet: I came from God; and thus have an original, of which ye know not.'

(28.) Ye both know Me, &c. i. e. 'Rather, Do ye indeed know Me, and whence I am? No, ye are ignorant of both. I came down from

true, ^b whom ye know not.

29 But ^c I know him; ^d for I am from him, and he hath sent me.

30 Then ^e they sought to take him; but no man laid hands on him, because his hour was not yet come.

31 And many of the people ^f believed on him, and said, ^g When Christ cometh, will he do more miracles than these which this man hath done?

32 The ^h Pharisees heard that the people murmured such things concerning him; and the Pharisees and the chief priests ⁱ sent officers to take him.

b 9:19, 54, 55. 16:3. 17:3, 25. 1 Sam. 2:12. Ps. 9:10. Prov. 2:3-5. Jer. 2:6. 31:34. Hos. 4:1. 5:4. 6:3-6. Matt. 11:27. Luke 10:22. Acts 17:23. Rom. 1:28. 2 Cor. 4:6. 1 John 2:3, 4. 1:18. 8:55. 10:15. 17:25, 26. c 3:16, 17. 13:3. 16:27, 28. 17:18. 1 John 1:2. 4:9, 14. d 3:32. 8:27, 28. 10:31, 33. 11:57. 1 John 19:47, 48. 20:19. e 6:8, 44-46. 8:20. 9:4. 11:9, 10. Ps. 76:10. 16. 46:10. Luke 13:32. 22:53. 23:21. 6:14, 15. 8:20-22. 12:42. Luke 8:13. Acts 8:13. Rom. 2:26. h 3:2. 6:2. 9:16. 10:41, 42. Matt. 13:3-5. i 4:7-53. 11:47-48. 12:19. Matt. 12:23, 24. 23:13. j 45, 46. 18:3. Luke 22:52, 53. Acts 8:26.

4. Christ's discourse had, of his hearers; *Many of the people believed on Him.* As He was set for the fall of some, so for the rising of others. Even where the Gospel meets with opposition, there may be great good done, 1 Thess. 2:2.

They that believed, were not a few, but more than one would have expected, when the stream ran so strong the other way. But these *many* were of the people, the rabble some would have called them. We must not measure the prosperity of the Gospel by its success among the great; nor must ministers say that they labor in vain, though none but the poor receive the Gospel, 1 Cor. 1:26.

Secondly, The *miracles which He did*, induced them to believe. They were not only the accomplishment of the Old-Testament prophecies, (Isa. 35:5, 6,) but an argument of a divine power. He that had an ability to do what none but God can do, an ability to overrule the powers of nature, no doubt had authority to enact what none but God can enact, a law that shall bind conscience, and a covenant that shall give life.

How weak their faith was; they do not positively assert, as the Samaritans did, *This is indeed the Christ*, but they only argue, *When Christ comes, will He do more miracles than these?* They take it for granted that Christ will come, and when He comes, will do many miracles. 'Is not this He then? In Him we see, though not all the worldly pomp we have fancied, yet all the divine power of the Messiah; and therefore why may not this be He?' They believe it, but have not courage to own it. Note, Even weak faith may be true faith, and so accepted by the Lord Jesus, who despises not the day of small things.

The Pharisees and chief priests had information brought them by their spies, that the people murmured such things concerning Him; that there were many who had a respect for Him. Though the people did but whisper these things, yet the Pharisees were enraged at it. The equity of that government is justly suspected by others, which is a suspicious of itself, as to take notice of, or be influenced by, the secret and uncertain mutterings of the common people. The Pharisees valued themselves upon the respect of the people, and were sensible that if Christ did thus increase, they must decrease.

The project they laid hereupon was, to take Him into custody; *They sent officers to take Him*, not to take up those who murmured concerning Him, and frighten them; the most effectual way to disperse the flock, is to smite the shepherd. The Pharisees seem to have been the ringleaders, but they had no power, and therefore got the chief priests, the judges of the ecclesiastical court, to join with them. The Pharisees were the great pretenders to learning, and the chief priests to sanctity. As the world by wisdom knew not God, but the greatest philosophers were guilty of the greatest blunders in natural religion; so the Jewish church by their wisdom knew not Christ, but

their greatest rabbins were the greatest fools concerning Him, nay, his most inveterate enemies. Those wicked rulers had church-officers, whom they employed to take Christ, and who were ready to go on their ill errand. If Saul's footmen will not go, he has a herdsman that will turn and fall upon the priests of the Lord, 1 Sam. 22:18.

The discourse of our Lord Jesus hereupon; *Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go to Him that sent Me; ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come.* These words, like the pillar of cloud and fire, have a bright and a dark side.

They have a bright side towards our Lord Himself, and speak abundance of comfort to Him and all his followers, that are exposed to dangers, for his sake. Three things Christ here comforted Himself with.

1. That He had but a little time to continue in this troublesome world. He sees that He is never likely to have quiet among them; but his warfare will shortly be accomplished, and then He shall be no more in this world, ch. 17:11. Whosoever we are with in this world, friends or foes, it is but for a little while. And it is matter of comfort to those who are in the world, but not of it, and therefore are hated by it and sick of it, that they shall not be in it long. We must be a while with those that are briars and thorns; but it is but a little while. Our days being evil, it is well they are few.

2. When He should quit this troublesome world, He should go to Him that sent Him, *I go*; not, *'I am driven away by force'*, but, *'I voluntarily go'*; having finished my embassy, I return to Him on whose errand I came. When I have done my work with you, and not till then, I go to Him that sent, and will receive Me, as ambassadors are when they return. Their rage would not only hinder Him from, but would hasten Him to, the glory and joy that were set before Him. Let those who suffer for Christ, comfort themselves with this, that they have a God, and are going to be forever with Him.

3. Though they persecuted Him here, wherever He went, none of their persecutions could follow Him to heaven; *Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me.* It appears by their enmity to his followers when He was gone, that, if they could, they would have persecuted Him; 'But ye cannot come into that temple, as into this.' Where I am, that is, where I then shall be; but He expresses it thus, because even when He was on earth, by his divine nature and affections He was in heaven, ch. 3:13. Or it denotes, that He shall be so soon there, that He was as good as there already. Note, It adds to the happiness of glorified saints, that they are out of the reach of the devil and all his instruments.

Thirdly, These words have a dark side toward the Jews that hated and persecuted Christ. They now longed to be rid of Him, *Away with Him from the earth*; but,

1. According to their choice, so should their doom be. They were industrious to drive Him from them; their sin shall be their punishment; He will not trouble them long, yet a little while, and He will depart. It is just with God to forsake those that think his presence a burthen. They that are weary of Christ, need no more to make them miserable, than to have their wish.

2. They would certainly repent their choice when too late. (1.) They should in vain seek the Messiah; *'Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me.'* Ye shall expect the Christ to come, but your eyes shall fail with looking for Him. They who rejected the true Messiah, were justly abandoned to a miserable and endless expectation of one that never should come. Or, it may refer to the final rejection of sinners at the great day: those who now seek Christ, shall find Him; but the day is coming, when those who now refuse Him, shall seek Him, and shall not find Him. See Prov. 1:28. They will in

33 Then said Jesus unto them. Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto him that sent me.

34 Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come.

35 Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will he go, that we shall not find him? will he go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles?

36 What manner of saying is this that he said, 'Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me; and where I am, thither ye cannot come?'

[Practical Observations.]

37 ¶ In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, 'If any man thirst, let

vain cry, Lord, Lord, open to us. Perhaps these words might be fulfilled in some of the Jews, who possibly might be convinced, and not converted, who would wish to see Christ, and hear Him preach again; but the day of grace is over; (Luke 17: 22.) yet that is not all. (2.) They should in vain expect a place in heaven; *Where I am, thither ye cannot come.* Not only because they are excluded by the sentence of the Judge, and the sword at every gate to keep the way of the tree of life, but because they are disabled by their own infidelity; *Ye cannot come, because ye will not.* Those that hate to be where Christ is, in his Word and ordinances on earth, are unfit to be where He is in his glory in heaven; for indeed it would be no heaven to them, such are the antipathies of an unsanctified soul to its felicities.

They said among themselves, Whither will He go? See here.

First, Their wilful blindness. He had expressly said whither He would go—to his Father in heaven, yet they ask, *Whither will He go? and what manner of saying is this?* None so blind as those that will not see. Christ's sayings are plain to him that understandeth, and difficult only to those that are minded to quarrel.

Secondly, Their daring contempt of Christ's threatenings. Instead of trembling at that terrible word, *Ye shall seek Me, and not find Me*, which speaks the utmost degree of misery, they banter, and make a jest of it, as those sinners that mock at fear, and are not affrighted, Isa. 5: 19, Amos 5: 18. *Let Him make speed. But be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong.*

Thirdly, Their inveterate rage against Christ. All they dreaded in his departure was, that He would be out of the reach of their power; *'Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him?'* If He be above ground, we will have Him; we will leave no place unsearched; as Ahab in quest of Elijah, 1 Kings 18: 10.

Fourthly, Their proud disdain of the Gentiles; meaning either the Jews that were scattered abroad among the Greeks, (James 1: 1. 1 Pet. 1: 1. will He make an interest among those silly people?) or, the Gentiles dispersed over the world, in distinction from the Jews, who were incorporated into one church and nation; will He make his court to them?

Fifthly, Their jealousy of the least intimation of favor to the Gentiles; 'Will He go and teach the Gentiles?' Perhaps they had heard of some respect showed by Him to the Gentiles,

as in his sermon at Nazareth, and in the case of the centurion, and the woman of Canaan, and there was nothing they dreaded more than the comprehension of the Gentiles. So common is it for those who have lost the power of religion, to be very jealous for the monopoly of the name. They now made a jest of his going to teach the Gentiles; but not long after He did it in good earnest by his apostles and ministers and gathered those dispersed people, sorely to the grief of the Jews, Rom. 10: 19. So true is that of Solomon, *The fear of the wicked it shall come upon him.*

V. 37—44. It is probable that these are only short hints of what He enlarged upon; but they are the substance of the whole Gospel.

He made this invitation on the last day of the feast of tabernacles. The eighth day was a holy convocation, Lev. 23: 36. On this day Christ published this gospel-call. Much people were gathered together, and it might be hoped that some would accept it, Prov. 1: 21. Numerous assemblies give opportunity of doing the more good. The people were now returning to their homes, and He would give them this to carry away with them, as his parting word. When a great congregation is to be dismissed, as here, it is affecting to think, that, if all probability they will never come together again in this world, and therefore if we can say any thing to help them to heaven, that must be the time. It is good to be lively at the close of an ordinance. Christ made this offer on the last day of the feast; [1.] To those who had turned a deaf ear to his preaching on the foregoing days of this week; He will try them once more, and if they will yet hear his voice, they shall live. [2.] To those who perhaps might never have such another offer made them; it would be half a year before there would be another feast, and in that time they would many of them be in their graves. *Behold, now is the accepted time.*

Jesus stood, and cried: which denotes his great earnestness and importunity. His heart was upon it, to bring souls to Himself. The erection of his body, and the elevation of his voice, were indications of the intenseness of his mind. Love to souls will make preachers lively. *He stood, and cried,* that He might the better be heard; for this is what every one that hath ears, is concerned to hear. Gospel-truth seeks no corners, because it fears no trials. The heathen oracles were delivered by them that peeped and muttered; but the oracles of the Gospel were proclaimed by One that stood, and cried. How sad the case of man, that he

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 19—36. Unbelievers may be very zealous for their own views of religion, and vehemently persecute those who dissent from them; while they are acting in opposition to the precepts of Scripture, and indulging the most diabolical tempers; and when the least check is given them, they revile others, as if all, not of their party, were unworthy of regard. Such men, in their zeal for doctrines, (perhaps true in themselves, though held in a perverted manner,) overlook the genuine tendency of them; and are full of pride and rage, in disputing for the most humiliating and conciliatory truths! If external ordinances be their idol, they pervert them to purposes opposite to their true intention; and they condemn, in others, things of the same nature with those which they allow in themselves, or undeniably better. It behoves us to consider matters more candidly and impartially; that we may not judge according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment. We should also guard against the folly of opposing our preconceived opinions to such instructions as appear to be from God.

Verse 34.

Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me. [Not as if the Jews would seek Jesus, as their helper after the destruction of Jerusalem, (according to Chrysostom, Theophylact and Euthymius,) or as if they should be brought to repentance by the miracles wrought by the apostles, (according to Augustine and Bede,) or as if it were indicated that the Jews would in vain endeavor to seek Jesus for the purpose of destroying Him after his resurrection, (according to Rupertus,) but because they would seek the Messiah in their own way, according to their own conceptions; which implies the same as to seek Jesus; since besides Him no other Messiah was to be expected. They would seek Him by the scrutiny of the times, by a vain expectation, animating them to bear the utmost extremities of the siege, since they supposed that the temple was not to be destroyed before the Lord of the temple should come, and by following after false Christs. But by all these

attempts they would not find Him; not in word, because the veil of Moses was upon their hearts; not by vain confidence, since they could not escape the destined destruction; not by seeking after false Christs, since they would be miserably deceived by them.] Lampe. So Flaccius, Heumann and Kuinoel.

Verse 35.

The dispersed among the Gentiles. [Grotius, Wetstein, Rosenmueller and Kuinoel understand the Jews dispersed among the Gentiles, as in 2 Macc. 1: 27. That the Jews were at that time dispersed over the whole world, is well known, especially from Philo Judæus and Josephus. These foreign Jews (says Kuinoel) are mentioned in contempt for the Jews of Palestine, and especially Jerusalem, used to arrogate an infinite superiority over them; from their own residence in the holy land, the sacred city, and their consequent more accurate knowledge and observance of the law.]

him come unto me and drink.

38 He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, ^a out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.

39 (But ^a this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: ^a for the Holy Ghost was not yet ^b given; because that Jesus was not yet ^b glorified.)

40 Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, ^a Of a truth this is the Prophet.

x 6:53. Cant. 5:1. Zech. 9:15, 1 Cor. 10:4, 21. 11:25. 12:13. Eph. 5:18.
y 4:14. Job 32:18, 19. Prov. 10:11. 19:4. Isa. 44:3. 58:11. 59:21. Ez. 47:12. Zech. 14:8. Gal. 5:22, 23. Eph. 5:9.
z 14:16, 17, 28. Prov. 1:23. Isa. 12:3. 32:15. 44:3. Joel 2:23. Luke 3:16. 24:49. Acts 1:4-5. 2:4, 17, 33, 38. 4:31, 32. Rom. 8:9. Eph. 1:13, 14. 4:30.
a 16:7. Ps. 69:19. Isa. 32:15. Acts 2: 17, 33. 2 Cor. 3:8.
b 12:16. 13:31, 32. 14:13. 17:5. Acts 8:13.
c 1:1. 12:25. 6:14. Deut. 18:15-18. Matt. 16:14. 21:11. Luke 7:16. Acts 3:22, 23.

To come to Christ, is to believe on Him, as the Scripture hath said; to receive and entertain Him as offered to us in the Gospel. We must not frame a Christ according to our fancy, but believe in a Christ according to the Scripture.

See how thirsty souls, that come to Christ, shall be made to drink. Israel, that believed Moses, drank of the rock that followed them, the streams followed; but believers drink of a Rock, Christ in them; He is in them a Well of living water, ch. 4: 14. Provision is made for their continual, perpetual comfort. Running water the Hebrew language calls living, because still in motion. The graces and comforts of the Spirit are compared to it, because they are the quickening principles of spiritual life, and the earnest and beginnings of eternal life. See Jer. 2: 13. Rivers of living water, denote both plenty and constancy. The comfort flows plentifully and constantly as a river; strong as a stream, to bear down the oppositions of doubts and fears. There is a fulness in Christ of grace for grace. These flow out of his heart and soul. That is the subject of the Spirit's working, and the seat of his government. There gracious principles are planted; and out of the heart, in which the Spirit dwells, flow the issues of life, Prov. 4: 23. There divine comforts are lodged, and the joy that a stranger doth not intermeddle with. He that believeth hath the witness in himself, 1 John 5: 10.

Where there are springs of grace and comfort in the soul, they will send forth streams. Out of his belly shall flow rivers. First, Grace and comfort will evidence themselves. Good affections will produce good actions, and a holy heart will be seen in a holy life; the tree is known by its fruits, the fountain by its streams. Secondly, They will communicate themselves for the benefit of others; a good man is a common good. His mouth is a well of life, Prov. 10: 11. It is not enough that we drink waters out of our own cistern, we must let our fountains be dispersed abroad, Prov. 5: 15, 16.

Those words, as the Scripture hath said, seem to refer to some promise in the Old Testament to this purport, and there are many; as that God would pour out his Spirit, (Prov. 1: 23. Joel 2: 28. Isa. 44: 3. Zech. 12: 10.) that the dry land should become springs of water, (Isa. 41: 18.) that there should be rivers in the desert, (Isa. 43: 19.) that gracious souls should be like a spring of water, (Isa. 58: 11.) and the church a well of living waters, Cant. 4: 15. And here may be an allusion to the waters issuing out of Ezekiel's temple, Ezek. 47: 1. Compare Rev. 22: 1. and see Zech. 14: 8. The Jews, on the last day of the feast of tabernacles, had a solemnity, which they called the pouring out of water. They fetched a golden vessel of water from the pool of Siloam, brought it into the temple with sound of trumpet and other ceremonies, and, upon the ascent to the altar, poured it out before the Lord with all possible expressions of joy. Some of their writers make the water to signify the law, and refer to Isa. 12: 3. 55: 1. Others, the Holy Spirit. Our Savior might here allude to this custom. Believers shall have the comfort, not of a vessel of water from a pool, but of a river flowing from themselves. The joy of the law, and the pouring out of the water, which signified that, are not to be compared with the joy of the Gospel in the wells of salvation.

Thus spake He of the Spirit; not of any outward advantages accruing to

must be importuned to be happy, and how wonderful the grace of Christ, that He will importune him! *Ho every-one*, Isa. 55: 1.

The invitation itself is, (1.) Very general; if any man thirst, high or low, rich or poor, young or old, bond or free, Jew or Gentile. (2.) Very gracious; *'If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink.'* If any man desires to be eternally happy, let him apply himself to Me, and I will make him so.

The persons invited are such as thirst, which may be understood as regarding, First, The indigence of their cases; either as to their outward condition; if any man be destitute of the comforts of this life, or fatigued with the crosses of it, let his afflictions draw him to Christ, for that peace which the world can neither give nor take away; or, as to their inward state; if any man want spiritual blessings, he may be supplied with Me.' Or, Secondly, If any man hunger and thirst after righteousness, that is, truly desire the good will and the good work of God.

Let him come to Me, not to the ceremonial law, which would neither pacify the conscience nor purify it, and therefore could not make the comers thereunto perfect, Heb. 10: 1. Nor let him go to the heathen philosophy, that does but lead men into a wood, and leave them there; but let him go to Christ, admit his doctrine, submit to his discipline, believe in Him; come to Him as the Fountain of living waters, the Giver of all comfort.

Let him come and drink, he shall have what he comes for, and more; shall have that which will not only refresh, but replenish, a soul that desires to be happy.

He that believeth on Me, out of his belly shall flow—is a gracious promise!

believers, (as perhaps some misunderstood Him,) but of the gifts and comforts of the Spirit. Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture.

It is promised to all that believe on Christ, that they shall receive the Holy Ghost. Some received miraculous gifts; (Mark 16: 17, 18.) all his sanctifying graces. The gift of the Holy Ghost is one of the great blessings promised in the new covenant, (Acts 2: 39.) and, if promised, no doubt performed.

The Spirit dwelling and working in believers, is as a fountain of running water, out of which streams flow, cooling and cleansing as water, mollifying and moistening as water, making them fruitful, and others joyful; see ch. 3: 5. When the apostles spake so fluently of the things of God, as the Spirit gave them utterance, (Acts 2: 4.) and afterward preached and wrote the Gospel of Christ with such a flood of divine eloquence, this was fulfilled, *Out of his belly shall flow rivers.*

This effusion of the Spirit was yet the matter of promise; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Jesus was not yet glorified. It was certain that He should be glorified, and He was ever worthy of all honor; but He was as yet in a state of humiliation. He had never forfeited the glory He had before all worlds, nay, He had merited further glory, and beside his hereditary honors, might claim the achievement of a mediatorial crown; and yet all this is in reversion. Jesus is now upheld, (Isa. 42: 1.) is now satisfied, (Isa. 53: 11.) is now justified, (1 Tim. 5. 16.) but He is not yet glorified. If Christ must wait for his glory, let not us think [it] much to wait for ours.

The Holy Ghost was not yet given:—for the Holy Ghost was not yet. The Spirit of God was from eternity; in the beginning He moved upon the face of the waters. He was in the Old-Testament prophets and saints; and Zachary and Elisabeth were both filled with the Holy Ghost. This therefore must be understood of that general effusion of the Spirit promised, Joel 2: 28, and accomplished, Acts 2: 1. The Holy Ghost was not yet given in that visible manner. If we compare the clear knowledge and strong grace of the disciples of Christ themselves, after that day of Pentecost, with their darkness and weakness before, we shall understand in what sense the Holy Ghost was not yet given: the earnest and first-fruits of the Spirit were given, but the harvest was not yet come. The dispensation of the Spirit did not yet commence. The Holy Ghost was not yet given in such ways as should water even the Gentile world; not in the gifts of tongues, to which perhaps this promise principally refers.

The reason why the Holy Ghost was not yet given, was, Jesus was not yet glorified. The death of Christ is sometimes called his glorification; (ch. 13: 31.) for in his cross He conquered and triumphed. Now the gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased by the blood of Christ; and therefore till the price was paid, (though many other gifts were bestowed upon its being secured to be paid,) the Holy Ghost was not given. There was not so much need of the Spirit while Christ was Himself here upon earth, as when He was gone. The giving of the Holy Ghost was to be both an answer to Christ's intercession, (ch. 14: 16.) and an act of his dominion; and therefore till He enters upon both these, the Holy Ghost is not given. The conversion of the Gentiles was the glorifying of Jesus. When certain Greeks began to inquire after Christ, He said, Now is the Son of man glorified, ch. 12: 23. The time was not yet come, when the Gospel should be propagated in the nations, and therefore there was as yet no occasion for the gift of tongues, that river of living water. But observe, though the Holy Ghost was not yet given, He was promised, it was the great promise of the Father, Acts 1: 4.

Verse 38.

As the Scripture hath said. [Two passages seem especially referred to, 1s. 55: 1. and 58: 11. Belly.] The original word denotes the mind's heart or rather by synecdoche, the whole man, and therefore

the phrase is equivalent to "from him." The metaphor, however strong, was probably well understood by those to whom it was addressed, since it is found in the Jewish writings. Nor is it unknown to the classical writers.

ROBINSON

41 Others said, ^a This is the Christ. But some said, ^e Shall Christ come out of Galilee?

42 Hath ^a not the scripture said, that Christ cometh of the seed of David, and out of the town of Bethlehem, ^e where David was?

43 So ^b there was a division among the people because of him.

44 And some of them would have taken him; ⁱ but no man laid hands on him.

45 Then came ^k the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees; and they said unto them, Why have ye not brought him?

46 The officers answered, ^l Never man spake like this man.

^d 31. 1:41-49. 4:25, 29, 42. 6:69. Matt. 16:14-16.
^e 52. 1:46.
^f 27. Ps. 132:11. Is. 11:1. Jer. 23:5. Mic. 5:2. Luke 2:4, 11.
^g 1 Sam. 16:1, 11-13, 18. 17:58.
^h 19. 9:16. 10:9. Matt. 10:35. Luke 12:51, 52. Acts 14:4. 23:7-10.
ⁱ 30. 8:20, 15:6. Acts 18:10. 23:11. 27:23-25.
^j 32. Acts 5:21-27.
^k 128. Matt. 7:29. Luke 4:22.

good word, that give Him no more. These said, *This is the prophet, and this is the Christ*, but could not persuade themselves to leave all and follow Him; and so this their testimony to Christ was but a testimony *against themselves*.

Others were *prejudiced against Him*. No sooner was this truth started, that *Jesus is the Christ*, than it was argued against; and his rise and origina. (as they took it for granted) out of Galilee, was thought enough to answer all arguments for his being the Christ. *Shall Christ come out of Galilee?* Has not the Scripture said that Christ comes of the seed of David?

They were so far in the right, that the Messiah was to be a *Rod out of the stem of Jesse*, (Isa. 11: 1.) that out of Bethlehem should arise the Governor, Mic. 5: 2. This even the common people knew by the traditional expositions. Perhaps these people, who had these Scriptures so ready to object against Christ, were not alike knowing in other parts of Holy Writ, but had these put into their mouths by their leaders. Many that espouse some corrupt notions, and spend their zeal in defence of them, seem to be very ready in the Scriptures, when indeed they know little more than those Scriptures which they have been taught to *pervert*.

It was a culpable ignorance of our Lord Jesus, to speak of it as certain and past dispute, that *Jesus was of Galilee*. By inquiring of Himself, or his mother, or his disciples, or by consulting the genealogies of the family of David, or the register at Bethlehem, they might have known, that He was a native of Bethlehem; but this they willingly are ignorant of. Gross falsehoods in matters of fact concerning persons and things, are often taken up by prejudiced and partial men, and great resolves founded upon them, even in the same place and age wherein the persons live, and the things are done, while the truth might easily be found out.

Others were *enraged against Him*, and would have taken Him, *v. 44*. Though what He said was most gracious, they were exasperated against Him for it. Thus did our Master suffer ill for saying and doing well. *They would have taken Him*; they hoped somebody would seize Him, and if they had thought no one else would, they would have done it themselves. But no man laid hands on Him, being restrained by an invincible power, because his hour was not come. As the malice of Christ's enemies is always *unreasonable*, so sometimes the suspension of it is *unaccountable*.

V. 45-53. The chief priests and Pharisees are here in a close cabal, contriving how to suppress Christ; though this was the *great day of the feast*, they attended not the religious services, but left that to the vulgar, to whom it was common to turn over the business of devotion, while they sought themselves better employed in the affairs of church policy. They

Though the gifts of Christ's grace are *long deferred*, they are *well secured*: and while we are waiting for the good promised, we have the promise to live upon, which *shall speak and shall not lie*.

This discourse occasioned differences; *There was a division among the people because of Him*. There was a *schism*; diversities of opinions, managed with heat and contention, and such as set them at *variance*. Think we that Christ came to send peace, that all would unanimously embrace his Gospel? No, the effect of the preaching of his Gospel would be *division*; while some are *gathered to it*, others will be *gathered against it*; and this will put things into a *ferment*, as here; but this is no more the fault of the Gospel, than it is the fault of a wholesome medicine, that it stirs up the *peccant humors* in the body, in order to discharge them.

Some were well affected to Him; *Many of the people, when they heard this saying, heard Him* with such compassion and kindness invite sinners, and with such authority engage to make them happy, could not but think highly of Him. Some of them said, *Of a truth this is that Prophet which Moses spake of to the fathers, who should be like unto him*: or, *This is the prophet*, who, according to the received notions of the Jewish church, is to be the forerunner of the Messiah; or, *This is truly a prophet*, divinely inspired and sent of God. Others went further, and said, *This is the Christ*, not the prophet of the Messiah, but the Messiah Himself. The Jews had at this time a more than ordinary expectation of the Messiah, which made them ready to say upon every occasion, *Lo, here is Christ*, or, *Lo, He is there*; and this seems to be only the effect of some such confused and floating notions, which caught at the first appearance, for we do not find that these people became his disciples; a good opinion of Christ is far short of lively faith: many give Christ a

sat in the council-chamber, expecting Christ to be brought a prisoner to them having issued warrants for his apprehension. Here we are told,

Their officers returned without Him.

1. They reproved the officers for not executing the warrant; *Why have ye not brought Him?* He appeared publicly, the people were many of them disgusted, and would have assisted them in taking Him; this was the *last day of the feast*, and they would not have such another opportunity; 'Why then did you neglect your duty?' It vexed them that their own creatures, who depended on them, and on whom they depended, into whose minds they had instilled prejudices against Christ, should thus disappoint them. Note, Mischievous men first that they cannot do the mischief they would. Ps. 112: 10. Neh. 6: 16.

2. The reason which the officers gave, *Never man spake like this Man*. This was a very great truth, that *never any man spake with that wisdom, power, that convincing clearness, and that charming sweetness, wherewith Christ spake*; none of the prophets, not Moses himself. The very officers that were sent to take Him, were taken with Him. Though it is probable that they had no quick sense of reason or eloquence, and, it is certain, had no inclination to think well of Jesus, yet so much *self-evidence* was there in what Christ said, that they could not but prefer Him before all those that sat in Moses' seat. Thus Christ was preserved, by the power God has upon the consciences even of bad men. Their masters could not endure to hear any thing that tended to the honor of Christ, and yet could not avoid hearing this. Providence ordered it, that this should be said to them, that it might be a vexation in their sin, and an aggravation of it. Their own officers are witnesses against them, who could not be suspected to be biased in favor of Christ. This testimony should have made them reflect; 'Do we know what we are doing, when hating and persecuting one that speaks so admirably well?'

The Pharisees endeavor to secure their officers to their interest, and to prejudice them against Christ, to whom they saw them begin to be well affected; to prevent which, they suggest two things:

(1.) That if they embrace the Gospel of Christ, they will *deceive themselves*; *Are ye also deceived?* Christianity has, from its first rise, been represented to the world as a great cheat, and they that embrace it as men *deceived*, when they began to be *undecided*. They that looked for a Messiah in external pomp, thought them deceived who believed in a Messiah that appeared in poverty and disgrace; but the event declares, that none were ever more shamefully deceived, or put a greater cheat upon themselves, than those who promised themselves wealth and secular dominion with the Messiah. Observe the *compliment* the Pharisees put upon these officers; 'Are ye also deceived?' What! men of your sense! men that know better than to be imposed upon by every pretender and upstart teacher? They endeavor to prejudice them against Christ, by persuading them to think well of themselves.

(2.) Most men, even in religion, are willing to be governed by the example of those of the *first rank*; these officers, therefore, are desired to consider, that if they become disciples of Christ, they go contrary to those who were persons of quality and reputation; 'Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on Him?' You know they have not, and you ought to be bound by their judgment, and to *believe* and do in religion according to the will of your superiors; will you be wiser than they? Some of the rulers did embrace Christ, (Matt. 9: 18. ch. 4: 53.) and more believed in Him, but wanted

Verse 41.

'Probably it was but little known at Jerusalem, at that juncture, that Jesus was born at Bethlehem. The length of time; the Magi going some another way, not through Jerusalem; the slaughter of the children at Bethlehem, in which it might be thought that Jesus Himself had perished, and his private manner of living from his birth to his ministry, had all contributed to obliterate or weaken the memory of that remarkable event; so that it is probable there were few or none

then living at Jerusalem who had charged their memories with so obscure a fact as Jesus' being born there, and his mother entering among the descendants of David.'

Verse 42.

Hath not the Scripture said? 'Here there was a reference to several passages of Scripture, which they explained of the Messiah and his birth. See Is. 11: 1. Jer. 23: 5. Mic. 5: 2. Ps. 89: 36'

MARKLAND.

KILNOR.

47 Then answered them the Pharisees, 'Are ye also deceived?

48 Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him?

49 But this people, who knoweth not the law, are cursed.

50 Nicodemus saith unto him, (he that came to Jesus by night, being one of them,)

51 Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?

52 They answered and said unto him, 'Art thou also of Galilee?' Search, and look: for out of Galilee ariseth no prophet.

53 And every man went unto his own house.

22. 2. 32-34. 2 Kings 18:29, 32. Marg. 2 Chr. 32:15. Matt. 27:63. 2 Cor. 6:8. 12:42. Matt. 11:25. Acts 6:7. 1 Cor. 1:22-28. 2:8. 9:34, 40, 41. 1s. 5:21. 28:14. 29:14. 1-13. 65:5. 1 Cor. 1:20, 31. 3:18-20. Jam. 3:13-18. 2. 3:1, 2. 19:39. Gr. to him. 2 Cor. 1:17. 17:5. 11. 19:15-19. 9:31. Gen. 19:9. Ex. 21:1. 1 Kings 22:4. Prov. 9:7, 8. 41. 1:48. 1s. 9:1, 2. Matt. 4:15, 16. 1 Job 5:12, 13. Ps. 53:10. 75:5, 10.

ly great. Note, As the wisdom of God has often chosen things which are chosen.

They reproach them as ignorant of the Word of God; *They know not the law*; as if none knew the law but those that knew it from them, and no scripture-knowledge were current but what came out of their mint; and as if none knew the law, but such as observed their canons and traditions. Perhaps many whom they thus despised, *knew the law*, and the prophets too, better than they. Many a plain, unlearned disciple of Christ, by meditation, experience, prayer, and especially obedience, attains to a more clear, and useful knowledge of the Word of God, than some great scholars. Thus David came to understand more than the ancients, and all his teachers, Ps. 119:99, 100. If the common people did not *know the law*, yet the chief priests and Pharisees, of all men, should not have upbraided them with it: for whose fault was it but theirs, who should have taught them better, but instead of that, took away the key of knowledge? Luke 11:52.

How magisterially they pronounce sentence upon them; they are cursed; hateful to God and all wise men: as execrable people. Their saying they were cursed, did not make them so, for the curse *causeless shall not come*. It is a usurpation of God's prerogative, as well as great uncharitableness, to say of any particular persons, much more of any body of people, that they are reprobates. We are unable to try, and therefore unfit to condemn, and our rule is,

Verse 48. *Reproach*. 'The sanhedrim, whose duty it was to take care that no false doctrines should be promulgated, and to hold inquiry concerning those who were making innovations in the church.' *Kunsel*. 'Thus they argue from the two-fold authorities, both judicial and magistral.' *Grotius*. 'Instead of arguments, they bring forward the authority of those who have the reputation of learning, as men who impugn the truth usually do.'

Verse 49. *This people*. 'Rather, this rabble. It expresses the Hebrew phrase, "son of the earth," common among the rabbins, who, to the question, Who is a "son of the earth," a plebeian? answer variously. He that doth not repeat the Kischma morning and evening, together with his other prayers. He who wears not phylacteries. He who wears no fringes on his garments. He who hath children, but doth not bring them up in the study of the law. [That is, the Jewish scriptures, including the oral traditions, and the interpretations of the doctors.] He who, although he study the law, yet doth not minister unto the learned. In such contempt were these "sons of the earth" held by the wise, that they gave them the appellation of dogs, would not eat with them, and excluded them from all the more honorable offices of life. This arrogance may be compared with the contempt so decidedly shown by the Gentiles towards those, who had not been initiated into their mysteries.' *Lampe*. 'How forcible, in this light, is the message of our Lord to John, giving a distinctive mark of his dispensation. The poor have the Gospel preached to them.'

Ed.

Bless, and curse not. Some think they mean more than, they are apt to be deceived, and made fools of; but they use this odious word, *cursed*, to express their own indignation, and to frighten their officers; thus the language of hell calls every thing that is displeasing, *cursed, and damned*. For aught that appears, those officers had their convictions stifled by these suggestions, and never inquire further after Christ; one word from a ruler or Pharisee will sway more with many than reason, and the interests of the soul.

Even in their corrupt sanhedrim, God left not Himself quite without witness: nor was the vote against Christ unanimous.

He that appeared against them was Nicodemus, that came to Jesus by night, being one of them, v. 50. Though he had been with Jesus, and taken Him for a Teacher, yet he retained his place in the council. Some impute this to his weakness and cowardice, and think it was his fault that he did not quit his place; but Christ had never said to him, *Follow Me*, else he would have left all to follow Him; it seems rather to have been his wisdom not to throw up his place; because there he might serve Christ and his interest, and stem the tide of the Jewish rage, which perhaps he did more than we are aware of. He might there be as Hushai among Absalom's counsellors, instrumental to turn their counsels into foolishness. Though we must in no case deny our Master, yet we may wait for an opportunity of confessing Him to the best advantage. God has his remnant among all sorts; and many times finds, or puts, or makes, some good in the worst places. There was Daniel in Nebuchadnezzar's court, and Nehemiah in Artaxerxes's. Though at first he came to Jesus by night, for fear of being known; yet, when there was occasion, he boldly appeared in defence of Christ, and opposed the whole council that were set against Him. Thus many believers, who at first were ready to flee at the shaking of a leaf, have at length, by divine grace, grown courageous, and able to laugh at the shaking of a spear. Let none justify the disguising of their faith by the example of Nicodemus, unless, like him, they be ready, upon the first occasion, openly to appear in the cause of Christ, though they stand alone, for so Nicodemus did here, and ch. 19:39.

He alleged against their proceedings, (v. 51.) *Doth our law judge any man before it hear him, and know what he doeth?* No, nor Joth the law of any civilized nation all w it. [1.] He argues from the principles of their own law, and an incontestable rule of justice. Had he urged the excellency of Christ's doctrine, or the evidence of his miracles, or repeated to them his discourse with Joth, (ch. 3:) it had been but to cast pearls before swine, who would trample them under their feet, and would turn again, and rend him; therefore he waives them.

[2.] Whereas they had reproached the people, especially the followers of Christ, as ignorant of the law, he here tacitly retorts the

Verse 52. 'Many still lose their souls nearly in the same way. They suffer themselves to be led away by common report; and, getting prejudiced against the truth, refuse to give it a fair hearing, or to examine for themselves. It is on this ground that delusion and irreligion have established themselves, and still maintain their posts.' Dr. A. CLARKE.

Out of Galilee ariseth no prophet. Now Galilee had produced four, or, perhaps, five great prophets, as Jonas, (2 Kings 14:25.) Nahum, Habakkuk, Amos, and, as some indeed maintain, Elisha. In view of these facts, Doddridge, and Campbell attribute this false assertion to the ignorance or forgetfulness of the priests, or the hurry of anger. Perhaps, says Bloomfield, we may suppose them speaking of what had been usually the case at a comparatively recent date, (as the prophets of the Old Testament had all lived from four to eight hundred years before) namely, since the country had borne the name of Galilee. But see Isa. 9:1.

Eo.

Verse 53. *And every man, &c.* 'By this it seems to be hinted, says Lampe, that the meeting was broken up, without any thing being concluded upon: probably on account of the evening sacrifice. For at the time of evening sacrifice, says Lightfoot, it was usual to break up all meetings, and adjourn all business. So Cocceius informs us, that the greater council sat only to the sixth hour of the day, yet the great sanhedrim sat to the time of the evening sacrifice.' BLOOMFIELD.

[683.]

CHAP. VIII.

Jesus teaches at the temple, 1, 2. The Pharisees lay a snare for Him, in respect of a woman taken in adultery; but He turns it to their confusion, and warns the woman to sin no more, 3-11. He declares Himself to be the Light of the world, 12; justifies his doctrine, shews that his Father bore witness to Him, and predicts the doom of unbelievers, 13-28. Many believe, whom He exhorts 'to continue in his word,' promising them liberty by the knowledge of the truth, 30-32. He refutes the cavils, and detects the vain confidence of the Jews who opposed Him; shewing that they are the slaves of sin, and the children of the devil, 33-47. Being reviled, as a Samaritan and possessed, He refutes the charge, promises life to believers, asserts his dignity, and adds, 'Before Abraham was, I AM,' 48-58. He withdraws from those who attempt to stone Him, 59.

JESUS *went unto the mount of Olives.

a. Matt. 21:1. Mark 11:1. 13:3. Luke 19:37.

must be known in judgment; and the scale of justice be used before the sword of justice.

Now we may suppose that the motion Nicodemus made was, that Jesus should be desired to give them an account of Himself and his doctrine, and that they should favor Him with an impartial hearing; but, though none of them could gainsay his maxim, none of them would second his motion.

What was said to this objection. Here is no direct reply given; but, when they could not resist the force of his argument, they fell foul upon him, and what was to seek in *reason*, they made up in railing and reproach. Note, It is a sign of a bad cause, when men cannot bear to *hear reason*, and take it as an affront to be minded of its maxims. Whoever are *against reason*, give cause to suspect that *reason is against them*. See how they taunt him; *Art thou also of Galilee?* v. 52. Some think he was well enough served for continuing among them, and for his speaking no more on the behalf of Christ, than what he might have said on behalf of the greatest criminal—that he should not be condemned unheard. Had he said, 'As for this Jesus, I have heard Him myself, and know He is a *Teacher from God*, and you, in opposing Him, fight against God,' as he ought to have said, he could not have been worse abused, than he was for this feeble effort of his tenderness for Christ.

How *false* the grounds of their arguing are, for, [1.] They suppose that Christ was of Galilee, which was false, and, if they would have inquired, they might have found it so. [2.] They suppose that because most of his disciples were Galileans, all were; whereas He had abundance of disciples in Judea. [3.] They suppose that out of Galilee no prophet had *risen*, and for this appeal to Nicodemus; this was false too; Jonah was of Gath-hepher, Nahum an Elkoshite, both of Galilee. Thus do they *make lies their refuge*.

Their arguings upon these grounds were a shame to rulers and Pharisees. Is a man of worth and virtue ever the worse for the obscurity of his country? The Galileans were the seed of Abraham; barbarians and Scythians are

charge upon themselves, and shows how ignorant they were of some of the first principles of the law; so unfit were they to give law to others.

[3.] The law is here said to *judge*, and *hear*, and *know*, when magistrates that govern, and are governed by it, *judge*, and *hear*, and *know*; for they are the *mouth of the law*.

[4.] It is highly fit that none should come under the sentence of the law, till they have first by a fair trial undergone its *scrutiny*. Judges, when they receive the complaints of the accuser, must always reserve in their minds room for the defence of the accused, for they have two ears to remind them to hear both sides; this is said to be the manner of the Romans, Acts 25: 16. The method of our law is *Oyer* and *Terminer*, first to *hear*, and then to *determine*.

[5.] Persons are to be judged, not by what is said of them, but by what they *do*; our law will not ask what men's opinions are of *law*, or outcries against them, but, What have they done? What *overt acts* can they be convicted of? Sentence must be given, according to what is *alleged and proved*. Facts, and not faces, and the scale of justice be used before the sword

the seed of Adam; and have we not all one Father? Supposing no prophet had risen east of Galilee, yet it is not impossible that any should arise thence. If Elijah was the first prophet of Gilead, (as perhaps he was,) and if the Gileadites were called *fugitives*, must it therefore be questioned whether he were a prophet or no?

Hereupon they broke up the assembly in confusion, and every man went to his own house. They met to take counsel together against the Lord and his Anointed, but imagined a vain thing; all the politics of the cabal were broken to pieces with one plain, honest word. They were not willing to hear Nicodemus, because they could not answer him. As soon as they perceived they had one such man among them, they saw it was to no purpose to go on with their design, and therefore put off the debate to a more convenient season, when he was absent. Thus the counsel of the Lord is made to stand in spite of the devices of men.

CHAP. VIII. v. 1-11. Though Christ was abused in the foregoing chapter, both by rulers and people, He is still at Jerusalem, in the temple; how often would He have gathered them!

He went unto the mount of Olives; whether to some friend's house, or to some booth pitched there, now at the feast of tabernacles, is not certain; whether He rested there, or continued all night in prayer to God, we are not told. But He went out of Jerusalem, perhaps, because He had no friend that had either kindness or courage to give Him a night's lodging; while his persecutors had houses of their own, (ch. 7: 53.) He could not so much as borrow a place to lay his head on, but must go a mile or two out of town. He retired, (as some think,) because He would not expose himself to the peril of a popular tumult in the night. It is prudence to go out of the way of danger, whenever we can without going out of the way of duty. In the day-time, when He had work to do in the temple, He willingly exposed Himself, and was under special protection, Isa. 49: 2. But in the night, when He had not work to do, He withdrew into the country.

What a diligent preacher Christ was; Early in the morning He came again and taught. Though He had been teaching the day before, He taught again to-day. Christ was a constant Preacher, in season and out of season. Three things are taken notice of concerning Christ's

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 37-53. Still the divine Redeemer proclaims aloud to every man, 'Let him, who is athirst, come to Me, and drink.' Happy then is he, whom nothing can satisfy, except the enjoyment of God! Let him come unto Jesus, that this thirst may be allayed, and let him not fear a repulse.—From our smitten Rock the waters of life flow abundantly, to follow the true Israelites through this wilderness. The miraculous operations of the Spirit we do not now expect; but for his more ordinary and valuable sanctifying influences we may confidently pray: these will not only be 'in us a well of water springing up into everlasting life,' but they will flow forth in our words and works, to refresh our fellow-pilgrims in the desert, and be the means of quickening such as were dead in sin. (Notes, P. O. Ez. 47: 1-12).—From our Redeemer these holy streams have flowed, through apostles, evangelists, and a succession of believers, down to this distant age, and this remote corner of the earth! may we communicate them to those around us, and to such as shall succeed us, till the whole world be replenished.—But alas! how few are athirst! Even they, who are for a time impressed, and who speak highly of the words of Jesus,

as more excellent than those of all other teachers, 'speaking as never man spake,' often speedily lose their convictions, and go on in their sins; while infidels and Pharisees consider all as deluded, who coincide not with them in opinion. Frequently they revile, as ignorant enthusiasts, or nypocrites, such as are far more serious, and impartial in searching for the truth, than themselves, and whose words and works are scriptural and exemplary: but it seems enough for them to answer, 'Have any of the rulers and Pharisees believed in Him?' Whereas the opinions of men of this description have more generally been a criterion of error, than the test of truth. But if a few of their own description are convinced of the truth, and dare avow it, they likewise are treated with obloquy, as weak, deluded persons, who have suffered themselves to become dupes. Thus the wicked from age to age proceed in precisely the same track: yet the Lord gradually brings forward the weak and timid disciples, and makes use of them to disconcert the designs of his enemies; for 'his counsel shall stand, and He will do all his pleasure.'

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. VIII. v. 1, 2. It is probable that our Lord went every evening to Bethany, to the house of Martha, where He was more retired than He could have been in the city.

SCOTT.

(11-12.) The genuineness of the first eleven verses of this chapter is much controverted, as it is wanting in several MSS. and ancient versions, and is found in considerable variations in those in which it is retained. It is found, however, in the greater part of the MSS. extant, of various recensions; and the learned Mr. Nolan has shown it to be probable, that it was omitted for certain reasons by Eusebius, in that edition of the Greek Testament which he was commanded by Constantine to prepare for public use; and likewise in subsequent editions, under the influence of his name and authority. The subject of the story, says that eminent critic, forms as convincing a proof in support

of its genuineness, as it does in the subversion of the contrary notion, that it is an interpolation. There could be no possible inducement for fabricating such a passage, while there is an obvious motive for removing it from the canon. It has, besides, internal evidence of authenticity, in the testimony of the Vulgate, in which it is uniformly found, and external, in the express acknowledgment of its genuineness by Chrysostom, Jerome, Augustine, and Ambrose; and Augustine has specified the reason of its having been withdrawn from the text of the evangelist. Add to this, that the plain and simple style is that of the evangelist, and that every circumstance is completely in character, exactly what might be expected from the scribes and Pharisees, and from our Lord: while his answer, though perfectly suited to the purpose, would scarcely have ever been thought of by human ingenuity.

SCOTT.

2 And ^{early} in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came unto him: and he sat down, and taught them.

3 And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; and, when they had set her in the midst,

4 They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act.

5 Now ⁴ Moses in the law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?

b 4:34. Ec. 9:10. Jer. 25:3,4. 44:4. Luke 21:37. 8.
c Matt. 5:1,2. 23:55. Luke 4:20. 5:9.
d Lev. 24:10. Deut. 22:21-24. Ez. 16:38-40. 23:47.
e Matt. 5:17. 19:5-8. 22:16-18.

perhaps taken, during the time of the feast of tabernacles, when, it may be, their dwelling in booths, and their feasting, might, by wicked minds, which corrupt the best things, be made occasions of sin. Those that were taken in adultery were, by the Jewish law, to be put to death, which the Roman powers allowed, and therefore she was brought before the ecclesiastical court. Observe, She was taken in her adultery. Those that promise themselves secrecy in sin, deceive themselves. The scribes and Pharisees set her in the midst of the assembly, as if they would leave her wholly to the judgment of Christ, He having *sat down*, as a Judge upon the bench.

They prefer an indictment against her; (v. 4.) *Master, this woman was taken in adultery.* Here they call him *Master*, whom but the day before they called a *deceiver*; in hopes with their flatteries to insnare him, as Luke 20: 20. But though men may be imposed upon with compliments, He that searches the heart, cannot.

A *buttery*, even in the patriarchal age, before Moses, was looked upon as an *iniquity* to be punished by the judges, Job 31: 9, 11. Gen. 38: 24. The Pharisees, by their prosecution of this offender, seemed to have great zeal against the sin, when it appeared afterward that they themselves were not free from it; *ay, they were full of all uncleanness*, Matt. 23: 27, 28. Note, It is common for those that are indulgent to their own sin, to be severe against the sins of others.

The proof of the crime was, she was taken in the act, so that there was no room left to plead not guilty; had she not been taken in this act, she might have gone on till her heart had been perfectly hardened; but it is a mercy to sinners, to have their sin brought to light, that they may do no more presumptuously. Better our sin should shame than damn us; and be set in order for our conviction, than for our condemnation.

They produce the statute in this case made and provided, and upon which she was indicted, v. 5. Moses commanded that such should be stoned. Moses commanded that they should be put to death, (Lev. 20: 10. Deut. 22: 22.) but not stoned, unless the adulteress was espoused, not married, or was a priest's daughter, Deut. 22: 21. Note, Adultery is an exceeding sinful sin; it is the rebellion of a vile lust, not only against the command, but against the covenant of God. It is the violation of a divine institution in innocency, by the indulgence of one of the basest lusts of man in his degeneracy.

They pray his judgment in the case; 'But what sayest Thou, who pretendest to be a Teacher come from God, to repeal old laws and enact new?' If they had asked this question in a sincere desire to know his mind, it had been very commendable. Administrators of justice should look up to Christ for direction; but this they said tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him, v. 6. If He should confirm the sentence of the law, they would censure Him as inconsistent with Himself, (He having received publicans and harlots,) and with the character of the Messiah, who should be meek, and proclaim a year of release; and perhaps would accuse Him to the Romans for countenancing the Jews in the exercise of judicial power. But, [2.] If He should acquit her, and give his opinion that the sentence should not be executed,

(1.) The time; *early in the morning*. Though He lodged out of town, and perhaps had spent much of the night in prayer, yet He came early. When a day's work is to be done for God and souls, it is good to begin betimes. (2.) The place; *in the temple*; not so much because it was a consecrated place, (for then He would have chosen it at other times,) as because it was now a place of concourse. And He would hereby countenance assemblies for religious worship, and encourage people to come to the temple, for He had not yet left it desolate. (3.) His posture; *He sat down*, and taught, as one having authority, and as one that intended to abide by it for some time.

All the people came unto Him; and perhaps many of them were country-people, who were this day to return home from the feast, and were desirous to hear one sermon more from Christ. They came to Him, though He came early. They that seek Him early shall find Him. Though the rulers were displeased at those that came to hear Him, yet they would come; and He taught them, though they were angry at Him too. Though there were few or none among them that were persons of figure, Christ bid them welcome.

The scribes and Pharisees would not only not hear Christ patiently themselves, but disturbed Him when the people were attending on Him, and contrived to pick a quarrel with Him, to bring Him into a snare, v. 3-6.

They brought Him a woman taken in adultery; perhaps taken, during the time of the feast of tabernacles, when, it may be, their dwelling in booths, and their feasting, might, by wicked minds, which corrupt the best things, be made occasions of sin. Those that were taken in adultery were, by the Jewish law, to be put to death, which the Roman powers allowed, and therefore she was brought before the ecclesiastical court. Observe, She was taken in her adultery. Those that promise themselves secrecy in sin, deceive themselves. The scribes and Pharisees set her in the midst of the assembly, as if they would leave her wholly to the judgment of Christ, He having *sat down*, as a Judge upon the bench.

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(3-11.) Our Lord did not mean, that no man ought to act as judge or witness in a criminal cause, who is not wholly exempt from sin in his own conduct; because that would dissuail civil government, which is the ordinance of God. But He knew the concealed iniquities of these men; and by thus appealing to conscience in respect of themselves, He made them sensible of the impropriety of their taking an active part in this prosecution. There is no decisive proof that she was a true penitent; for our Lord, in saying, 'Neither do I condemn thee,' spoke only of condemnation to death according to the judicial law; (Marg. Ref. 1.-o.-Notes, 18: 33-36. Luke 12: 13, 14.) and the expression 'Sin no more,' was a direct and strong condemnation of

ed, (as they expected He would,) they would represent Him, First, As an enemy to the law of Moses, and as one that usurped an authority over it, and would confirm that prejudice against Him, which his enemies were so industrious to propagate, that He came to destroy the law and the prophets. Secondly, As a friend to sinners, and, consequently, a favorer of sin; if He should seem to connive at wickedness, and let it go unpunished, they would represent Him as being a patron of offences, if He were a protector of offenders; than which no reflection could be more invidious upon One that professed the strictness, purity, and business of a prophet.

He seemed to turn a deaf ear; He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. It is impossible to tell what He wrote; but it is the only mention made in the gospels of Christ's writings; Eusebius indeed speaks of his writing to Abgarus, king of Edessa. Grotius says, It was some weighty saying, and that it was usual for wise men, when they were very thoughtful, to do so. Jerome and Ambrose suppose He wrote, *Let the names of these wicked men be written in the dust.* Others this, *The earth accuses the earth, but the judgment is mine.* Christ by this teaches us to be slow to speak, when difficult cases are proposed, not quickly to shoot our bolt; and when provocations are given us, or we are bantered, to pause and consider before we reply; think twice before we speak once; *The heart of the wise studies to answer.* Some Greek copies give this account of the reason of his writing on the ground, *as though He heard them not.* He did, as it were, look another way, to show that He was not willing to take notice of their address, saying in effect, *Who made Me a judge or a divider?* It is safe, in many cases, to be deaf to that which it is not safe to answer, Ps. 38: 13. Christ would not have his ministers be entangled in secular affairs; let them rather employ themselves in lawful studies, and fill up their time with writing on the ground, (which nobody will heed,) than busy themselves in that which does not belong to them. But when Christ seemed as though He heard them not, He made it appear that He not only heard their words, but knew their thoughts.

When they importunately or rather impertinently pressed Him, He turned the conviction of the prisoner upon the prosecutors.

They continued asking Him, and his seeming not to take notice of them, made them the more vehement, for they thought they had run Him aground, and that He could not avoid contradicting either the law of Moses, if He should acquit the prisoner, or his own doctrine of mercy, if He should condemn her; and therefore they pushed their appeal with vigor; where as they should have construed his disregard of them as a check to their design, and an intimation to them to desist, as they tendered their own reputation.

At last, He put them all to shame and silence with one word; He lifted up Himself, awaking as one out of sleep, (Ps. 78: 65.) and said unto them, *He that is without sin among you, let Him first cast a stone at her.*

Christ avoided the snare which they had laid for Him, and saved his own reputation. He neither reflected upon the law, nor excused the prisoner's guilt; nor did He on the other hand encourage the prosecution, or countenance their heat; see the good effect of consideration. When we cannot make our point by steering a direct course, it is good to fetch a compass.

In the net which they spread is their own foot

her conduct.' (Marg. Ref. p.-Note, 5: 10-14.) No conclusive argument can hence be drawn, concerning the punishment of adultery under the Christian dispensation; and doubtless it is absurd, that this crime should escape almost without legal sentence, when theft in many cases is punished with disproportionate severity. (3.) *In adultery.* (Matt. 5: 27, 28. 19: 18. Mark 10: 19. Luke 16: 18. 18: 20. Rom. 2: 22. Jam. 2: 11. Rev. 2: 22.) Where the law of Moses is referred to, the word always signifies the woman to be the wife of another man; and never denotes the case of a married man lying with a woman neither married nor betrothed to another. But the New Testament rule considers this also as adultery.

6 This they said, tempting him, that they might have to accuse him. But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, ^a as though he heard them not.

7 So when they continued asking him, he lifted up himself, and said unto them, ^b He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her.

8 And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground.

9 And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, ^c went out one by one, beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left ^d alone, and the woman standing in the midst.

f Num. 14:22. Matt. 19:3. Luke 10: 25. 11:53. 54. 20:20-23. 1 Cor. 10:9. 2. Gen. 49:9. Jer. 17:13. Dan. 5:5. Ps. 38:12-14. 39:1. Prov. 28:17. 55:37. Am. 5:10,15. Matt. 10:16. 15:23. 26:63.

i 7:43. Prov. 12:18. 26:4,5. Jer. 23: 2. 2. 1 Cor. 14:24,25. 1 Col. 4:6. Heb. 4:12,13. Rev. 1:16. 2:18. 19:15. Deut. 17:6,7. Ps. 50:16-20. Matt. 7:1-5. 23:23-28. Rom. 2:1-3. 9:25.

g Gen. 42:21,22. 1 Kings 2:44. 17:19. Ps. 50:21. Ec. 7:22. Mark 6:14-16. Luke 12:1-3. Rom. 2:15. 1 John 3:20.

h Job 5:12,13. 20:5,7. Ps. 9:15,16. 40:14,15. 71:13. Luke 13:17. n 4:10,12.

brought this woman to Christ. It was a received opinion among the Jews, that if the husband who brought his wife to that trial, had himself been at any time guilty of adultery, the bitter water had no effect upon the wife. 'According to your own tradition will I judge you; if you are without sin, stand to the charge, and let the adulteress be executed; but if not, though she be guilty, while you that present her are equally so, according to your own rule she shall be free.'

In this He attended to the great work which He came into the world about, and that was to bring sinners to repentance; not to destroy, but to save. He aimed to bring not only the prisoner to repentance, by showing her his mercy, but the prosecutors, too, by showing them their sins; they thought to insnare Him, He sought to convince and convert them. Thus the blood-thirsty hate the upright, but the just seek his soul.

taken. They came with a design to accuse Him, but were forced to accuse themselves. Christ owns it was fit the prisoner should be prosecuted, but appeals to their consciences, whether they were fit to be the prosecutors.

He refers to that rule which the law of Moses prescribed, in the execution of criminals, that the hand of the witnesses must be first upon them, (Deut. 17:7,) as in the stoning of Stephen, Acts 7:58. The scribes and Pharisees were the witnesses against this woman. Christ puts it to them, whether, according to their own law, they would dare to be the executioners. Durst they take away that life with their hands, which they were now taking away with their tongues; would not their own consciences fly in their faces if they did?

He builds upon an uncontested maxim in morality, that it is absurd for men to be zealous in punishing others, while they are as guilty themselves, and they are not better than self-condemned, who judge others, and yet themselves do the same thing; 'If there be any of you that has not some time or other been guilty of fornication or adultery, let him cast the first stone at her.' Not that magistrates, who are conscious of guilt themselves, should therefore connive at others' guilt. But, (1.) Whenever we find fault with others, we ought to reflect upon ourselves, and to be more severe against sin in ourselves than in others. (2.) We ought to be favorable, though not to the sins, yet to the persons, of those that offend, and to restore them with a spirit of meekness, considering ourselves, and our own corrupt nature. We either are, or have been, or may be, what he is.

Let this restrain us from throwing stones at our brethren, and proclaiming their fault. Let him that is without sin, begin such discourse as that, and then those that are truly humbled for their own sins, will blush at it, and be glad to let it fall. (3.) Those that are any way obliged to admonish upon the faults of others, are concerned to look well to themselves, and keep themselves pure, Matt. 7:5. The snuffers of the tabernacle were of pure gold.

Perhaps He refers to the trial of the suspected wife by the husband, with the waters of jealousy. The man was to bring her to the priest, (Num. 5:15.) as the scribes and Pharisees

Having given them this startling word, He left them to consider of it, and again stooped down and wrote on the ground, v. 8. As when they made their address, He seemed to slight their question, so now that He had given them an answer, He slighted their resentment of it; not caring what they said to it; the matter was lodged in their own breasts, let them make the best of it there. Or, He would not seem to wait for an answer, lest they should on a sudden justify themselves, and think themselves bound in honor to persist; but gives them time to pause, and to commune with their own hearts. God saith, I hearkened and heard, Jer. 8:6. Some Greek copies here read, He wrote on the ground, the sins of every one of them; this He could do, for He sets our iniquities before Him; and this He will do, for He will set them in order before us too; He seals up our transgressions, Job 14:17. But He does not write men's sins in the sand; they are written as with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond, (Jer. 17:1.) never to be forgotten till forgiven.

The scribes and Pharisees were thunderstruck with the words of Christ; they let fall their persecution of Christ, whom they durst no further tempt; and their prosecution of the woman, whom they durst no longer accuse; They went out one by one. Perhaps his writing on the ground frightened them, as the handwriting on the wall frightened Belshazzar. They concluded He was writing bitter things against them, writing their doom. Happy they who have no reason to be afraid of Christ's writing! What He said frightened them; by sending them to their own consciences; He had shewn them to themselves, and they were afraid, if they should stay till He lifted up Himself again, his next word would show them and shame them before men, and therefore they thought it best to withdraw. They went out one by one, that they might go out softly, and not disturb Christ; they got them away by stealth, as people being ashamed steal away when they flee in battle, 2 Sam. 19:3. The order of their departure is taken notice of, beginning at the eldest, either because they were most guilty, or first aware of the danger they were in of being put to the blush. And if the eldest retreat ingloriously, no marvel if the younger follow them.

They which heard it were convicted by their own consciences. Conscience is God's deputy in the soul, and one word from Him will set it on work, Heb. 4:12. Those that had been old in adulteries, and long fixed in a proud opinion of themselves, were startled by the word of Christ; even scribes and Pharisees, who were most conceited of themselves, by the power of Christ's word are made to retire with shame.

The folly of sinners under convictions, appears in these scribes and Pharisees. It is folly for those that are under convictions, to make it

(6.) But Jesus stooped down, &c.] 'By this posture, Jesus intended to signify, that He was little attentive to the business which these crafty persons were bringing forward, and that He did not care to answer their questions, because they were proposed with an insidious intent; and since He saw that the discussion of the subject would little tend to edification. Thus Euripides says, Silence is the answer of the wise. It plainly appears, that Christ traced no significant characters; yet this action was pregnant with meaning. For writing on the earth importeth to undertake a useless labor. Christ therefore meant to hint that fully to answer their question, and change their opinions, would be as useless a labor as that of writing with his finger on the floor.' Kypke, in Bloomfield. Doddridge thinks there was 'language in the action.' It is hardly necessary to remark, how common this mode of expressing one's self is, at the present day, among the imaginative people of the East; especially where despotic power makes other language dangerous.

As to what Jesus wrote, Doddridge says, 'To be willing to be ignorant of what our great Master has thought fit to conceal, is no inconsiderable part of Christian learning.'

'Schottgen observes it was customary with the Jews, when any iniquitous inquiry was brought forward, (to which they did not choose to answer) to write something down, and thus seem to be otherwise employed.'

(7.) Without sin.] 'Not free from all sin, but from enormous sin; such as adultery, or any similar offence: for the Pharisees, &c., were undoubtedly guilty of gross immorality, and the whole land of Judea was defiled with such crimes. It is not unreasonable to suppose that the judges were more or less involved in immorality. See the passages cited from the Talmudists to prove the lasciviousness of several eminent rabbins. Josephus, too, bears ample testimony to the vices of

his generation, which, says he, equalled those of Sodom. This corruption of the priests had been prophesied by Mal. 2:14-17. 3:15. and from various passages of the New Testament we find how exactly the prediction was accomplished.'

(8.) And again He stooped, &c.] 'That He might thereby give them an opportunity of withdrawing with less confusion.' JEROME

(9.) Conscience.] 'The original word, like the Latin, *conscientia*, is generally employed to denote the innate light of reason, by which any man possesses in himself the seeds and the rule of truth and falsehood, is conscious of his own essence, essence, relation, &c. But it is used more especially by the philosophers, and by the sacred writers, to denote the faculty consequent upon it, by which a man may exercise right judgment on the virtue or vice of his actions, and the happiness or misery thence resulting. Hence the office of reproach, rebuke, conviction, is well attributed to it.' Lampe. Some think 'there is an innate faculty which views all actions in the point of right or wrong, and indicates determinate actions as being just or unjust; which disposes mankind to look and to wish for justice, and which receives positive civil or religious legislation.' This faculty they call 'conscientiousness' &c.

Ed. Beginning from the eldest, &c.] 'That is, as it may be more strictly translated, from the more honorable to the lowest in dignity. So the word translated last means at Mark 9:35. and 1 Cor. 4:9. Whether, however, it be explained senior in age, or superior in station, or both, I see no reason why the phrase should be interpreted so rigorously as to induce the supposition that each particular person went out according to seniority. It merely denotes that all (her accusers) went out, one after another, from the first to the last, of every age and station.' So Markland and Doddridge.

BLOOMFIELD.

10 When Jesus had lifted up himself, and saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?

11 She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more.

[Practical Observations.]

e. 11:11, 12.
p. 13. 3:17. 18:36. Deut. 16:18. 17:9. Luke 9:56. 12:13, 14. Rom. 13:4. 1 Cor. 5:12.
q. 5:11. Jon. 34:31, 32. Prov. 28:13. Isa. 1:16-18. 55:6, 7. Ec. 18:30-32. Matt. 1:22-31. Luke 5:29. 13:3. 5. 18:7, 10, 32. Rom. 2:4. 5:20, 21. 1 Th. 1:15, 16. 2 Pet. 3:13. Rev. 2:21, 22.

tions, and the woman standing in the midst of the assembly that were attending on Christ's preaching, where they set her, v. 3. She did not seek to escape, though she had opportunity for it; but her prosecutors had appealed to Jesus, and to Him she would go, on Him would wait for her doom. Note, Those whose cause is brought before our Lord Jesus, will never have occasion to remove it into any other court, for He is the refuge of penitents. The law which accuses us, and calls for judgment against us, is by the Gospel made to withdraw, its demands are answered, its clamors silenced, by the blood of Jesus. Our cause is lodged in the gospel-court; we are left with Jesus alone, for to Him all judgment is committed; let us therefore secure our interest in Him, and we are made forever. Let his Gospel rule us, and it will infallibly save us.

Here is the conclusion of the trial, and the issue it was brought to; (v. 10, 11.) Jesus lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman. Though Christ may seem to take no notice of what is said and done, but leave it to the contending sons of men to deal it among themselves, yet, when the hour of his judgment is come, He will no longer keep silence. When David had appealed to God, he prayed, *Lift up Thyself*, Ps. 7: 6. and 94: 2. The woman, it is likely, stood trembling at the bar, as one doubtful of the issue. Christ was without sin and might cast the first stone; but though none more severe than He against sin, for He is infinitely just and holy, none more compassionate than He to sinners, for He is infinitely gracious and merciful,

their principal care to avoid shame, as Judah, (Gen. 38: 23.) *lest we be ashamed*. Our care should be more to save our souls, than to save our credit. Saul evidenced his hypocrisy, when he said, *I have sinned, yet now honor me, I pray thee*. There is no way to get the honor and comfort of penitents, but by taking the shame of penitents. It is folly for those that are under conviction, to contrive how to get rid of it. The scribes and Pharisees had the wound opened, and now they should have been desirous to have it searched, and then it might have been healed; but that they dreaded. It is folly for those that are under convictions to get away from Christ, for He is the only one that can heal the wounds of conscience, and speak peace to us. Those that are convicted by their consciences, will be condemned by their Judge, if they be not justified by their Redeemer; and will they then go from Him? To whom will they go?

When the self-conceited prosecutors fled, the self-condemning prisoner stood her ground, with a resolution to abide by the judgment of Jesus; Jesus was left alone, free from their molestations,

and this malefactor finds Him so, now that she stands upon her deliverance.

Here is the method of the courts of judicature observed:

First, The prosecutors are called; *Where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?* Christ knew where they were, but He asked, that He might shame them, and encourage her. St. Paul's challenge is like this, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?* Where are these their accusers? The accusers of the brethren shall be cast out, and all indictments quashed.

Secondly, They do not appear when the question was asked; *Hath no man condemned thee?* She said, *No man, Lord*. She speaks respectfully to Christ, calls Him Lord, but says nothing in answer to that question which concerned them, *Where are those thine accusers?* She does not insult over them as witnesses against themselves, not against her. If we hope to be forgiven by our Judge, we must forgive our accusers; and if their accusations, how invidious soever, were the happy occasion of awakening our consciences, we may easily forgive them this wrong. True penitents find it enough to give account of themselves to God, and will not undertake to give account of other people.

Thirdly, The prisoner is therefore discharged; *Neither do I condemn thee; go, and sin no more*. 1. Consider this, as her discharge from the temporal punishment; 'If they do not condemn thee to be stoned to death, neither do I.' Not that Christ came to disarm the magistrate of his sword of justice, or that it is his will that capital punishments should not be inflicted; so far from that, public justice is established by the Gospel, and made subservient to Christ's kingdom; *By Me kings reign*. But Christ would not condemn this woman, (1.) Because it was none of his business; He was no judge or divider, and therefore would not intermeddle in secular affairs. His kingdom was not of this world. (2.) Because she was prosecuted by those that were more guilty than she, and could not for shame insist upon their demand against

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

7. -11. In the conduct of our Lord we see an example of strict attention to retired devotion, connected with the greatest diligence in public usefulness: but we must be very careful in redeeming our time, and moderate in animal recreation, if we would tread in his steps; and not allow these distinct, and too often detached, parts of our duty, to entrench on each other.—Even Jesus Himself could scarcely be more active in doing good, than his enemies were, and always have been, in devising evil; for malice will convert any thing into an occasion of mischief. The ministers of the Gospel, therefore, want divine wisdom; for they will be encountered by subtle, as well as powerful opponents; yet their enemies are seldom more dangerous, than when they assume the appearance of friendship; and, in the language of respect, attempt to inveigle them to meddle with matters not belonging to them, or to interfere in the concerns of rulers. (*P. O. Matt. 22: 15-22*).—Adultery most certainly merits far severer punishment than it generally meets with; and we may sometimes state the law of God respecting these things: but we should not leave our employment to direct magistrates, unless called to that service. If any persuade us openly to intermeddle out of our line of duty, we should look upon it as a temptation, that they may accuse us, either as unobedient men, enemies to civil liberty, or as turbulent innovators, disaffected to the authority which God has placed over us. We should, therefore, generally act as though we heard them not; and answer repeated solicitations by some serious address to conscience; thus 'studying to be quiet, and mind our own business.'—The prosecution of criminals is in itself a good work: yet it is frequently conducted by such persons and from such motives, that the accusers are, in the sight of God, the most atrocious. From regard to society they cannot be wholly excluded: nor should we require too much of those, who concur in the necessary but painful employment, of bringing offenders to justice: yet he, who prosecutes another

for a capital offence, and is himself living in the practice of habitual wickedness, has need to tremble at the prospect of more terrible vengeance from God, than that which he calls for upon a fellow-criminal from human justice. He should therefore pause, and prepare for his awful employment, by self-examination, prayer, and amendment of life: lest he bring upon himself swift destruction. Were such barriers placed around our courts of justice, were such rules proclaimed in them, and adhered to, how would they be thinned! While many, convicted by conscience, would go out one by one, perhaps beginning at the eldest and greatest persons, the prosecution might be left unfinished, and the criminals escape. Nay, if solemn religious ordinances could be fenced against those, who are habitually practising secret iniquity, it is to be feared that the small number of our communicants would often be diminished. These reflections may convince us, what little reason men have to object to the doctrine of free salvation: they only, who have sinless obedience, ought to cast a stone at the preachers of unmerited forgiveness, and eternal life the free gift of God, through faith in Christ: all else should thankfully receive their message. The same considerations may also show us the readiest way of dealing with objectors: address their consciences, call their sins to remembrance; it may render those silent, from fear of detection and recollection of guilt, whom no arguments can reach. Though we must not excuse crimes, nor object to merited punishment, yet we should hence learn to be gentle and compassionate, even in performing the severest offices; and ever to show a disposition to forgive, and be kind to the vilest, as we hope for mercy from God to our own souls. We should, however, strongly urge the admonition, 'Sin no more!' otherwise an escape from temporal punishment can only give an opportunity of 'treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath.'

SCOTT.

(11.) 'We are not to suppose that our Lord meant to excuse guilt, or to find fault with the law of Moses, which was the law of God. By that law, adultery was to be punished with death. But the sentence could not be passed without accusers and witnesses, who were all fled. Proper magistrates must pass it; and, had they done so, Christ would not have interposed to hinder the execution of justice. But they not having condescended her, whose proper office it was, no more would Christ, whose office it was not. With respect to the law, He left all as it was;

He neither condemned nor absolved the woman. But, as the Publisher of the Gospel, and the Author of salvation, He directed her how to obtain the pardon of Heaven, and eternal life; namely, by her truly repenting of her sin, as never to return to it again.' HORSB.
'The above story is admirably suited to the scope and intent of the evangelist, since it contains various criteria of the true Messiah. See Ps. 82, 1, 4, 8. Mal. 3: 5. Ps. 35: 4.'

LAMPE.

12 ¶ Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.

13 The Pharisees therefore said unto him, 'Thou bearest record of thyself; thy record is not true.

14 Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of myself, yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go.

r 14-9. 9:5. 12:35, 36. Is. 9:2. 42: 6, 7. 49:6. 60:1-3. Hos 6:3. Mal. 4:2. Matt. 4:14-16. Luke 1:76, 79. 2:32. Acts 13:47, 48. 26:22. u 12:46. Ps. 18:28. 97:11. Is. 50:10. 2 Pet. 2:4, 17. Jude 6, 13. r 17. 14:6. Job 32:28. Ps. 49:19. Rev. 21:24. u 5:31-47. z Num. 12:3. Neh. 5:14-19. 2 Cor. 11:31. 12:11, 19. y 42. 7:29. 10:15, 36. 13:3. 14:10. 16:28. 17:8. z 7:27, 28. 9:29.

15 Go to go and sin no more, Rom. 6: 1, 2. Will not Christ condemn thee? Go to them and sin no more

V. 12-20. That these disputes were the same day that the adulteress was discharged, is probable, for the evangelist mentions no other day, and takes notice (v. 2.) how early Christ began that day's work. The Pharisees that accused the woman were absconded, yet there were others (v. 13.) to confront Christ, who had impudence enough to keep them in countenance, though some of their party were put to a shameful retreat; nay, perhaps that made them the more industrious to quarrel with Him, to retrieve, if possible, the reputation of their party.

In these verses, the doctrine is, that Christ is the Light of the world; (v. 12.) Then spake Jesus again unto them; though He had spoken a great deal unto them, and what He had said was opposed, yet He speaketh once, yea, twice. He spake again to them, saying, I am the Light of the world. Note, Jesus Christ is the Light of the world. One of the rabbies saith, Light is the name of the Messiah, as it is written, (Dan. 2:22.) And light dwelleth with Him. God is Light, and Christ is the Image of the invisible God. He was expected to be a Light to lighten the Gentiles, (Luke 2:32.) and so the Light of the world, not of the Jewish church only. The visible light of the world is the sun, and Christ is the Sun of righteousness. One sun enlightens the whole world, so does one Christ. Christ's being the Light, speaks, (1.) What He is in Himself—most excellent and glorious. (2.) What He is to the world—the Fountain of light. What a dungeon would the world be without the sun? So would it be without Christ, by whom light came into the world, ch. 3: 19.

The inference is, he that followeth Me, as a traveller follows the light in a dark night, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. If Christ be the Light, then,

(1.) It is our duty to follow Him, and in every thing take directions from Him, in the way to happiness. Many follow false lights, that lead them to destruction; Christ is the true Light. It is not enough to look at and gaze upon

her. This law appointed the witnesses to be first upon the criminal, and afterward all the people, so that if they do not condemn her, the prosecution drops. The justice of God, in temporal judgments, sometimes takes notice of a comparative righteousness, and spares those who are otherwise obnoxious, when the punishing of them would gratify those that are worse, Deut. 32: 26, 27. Christ dismissed her with this caution, Go, and sin no more. Impunity emboldens malefactors, and therefore those who have found means to escape the law, need to double their watch, lest Satan get advantage; for, the fairer the escape, the fairer the warning to go and sin no more. They who help to save the life of a criminal, should, as Christ here, help to save the soul.

2. As her discharge from eternal punishment. For Christ to say, I do not condemn thee, is to say, I do forgive thee; and the Son of man had power on earth to forgive sins, and could upon good grounds give this absolution; for as He knew the hearts of the prosecutors, and therefore said that which would confound them, so He knew the repentance of the prisoner, and therefore said that which would comfort her, as He did to that women who was likewise looked upon with disdain by a Pharisee; (Luke 7: 48.) Thy sins are forgiven thee, go in peace. So here, Neither do I condemn thee. Note, (1.) They are truly happy, whom Christ doth not condemn, for his discharge is a sufficient answer to all other challenges. (2.) Christ will not condemn those, who, though they have sinned, will go and sin no more, Ps. 85: 8. Isa. 55: 7. He will not take advantage against us for former rebellions, if we will return to our allegiance. (3.) Christ's favor in the remission of the sins that are past, should prevail with us to go and sin no more, Rom. 6: 1, 2. Will not Christ condemn thee?

it, we must follow it, believe in it, and walk in it, for it is a light to our feet, not our eyes only.

(2.) Those who follow Christ, shall not walk in darkness. They shall not be left destitute of those instructions which are necessary to keep them from destroying error, and those directions which are necessary to keep them from damning sin. They shall have the light of life, that knowledge and enjoyment of God, which will be to them the light of spiritual life in this world, and of everlasting life in the other. Follow Christ, and we shall undoubtedly be happy in both worlds. Follow Christ, and we shall follow Him to heaven.

The objection which the Pharisees made against this doctrine, was very frivolous; (v. 13.) Thou bearest record of thyself, thy record is not true. Self commendation is commonly concluded to be the language of self-love, such as we are all ready to condemn in others, but few are willing to own in themselves. But in this case the objection was unjust, for, 1. They made that his crime, and a diminution to the credibility of his doctrine, which, in the case of one who introduced a divine revelation, was necessary. Did not Moses and all the prophets bear witness of themselves; when they avouched themselves to be God's messengers? Did not the Pharisees ask John Baptist, What sayest thou of thyself? 2. They overlooked the testimony of all other witnesses, which corroborated the testimony He bore of Himself. Had He only borne record of Himself, his testimony had indeed been suspicious; and the belief of it might have been suspended; but his doctrine was attested by more than two or three credible witnesses.

Christ does not retort upon them, as He might, ('You profess yourselves to be devout and good men, but your witness is not true;') but plainly vindicates Himself, and though He had waived his own testimony, (ch. 5: 31.) yet here He abides by it, that it did not derogate from his other proofs, but was necessary to show the force of them. He is the Light of the world, and it is the property of light to be self-evidencing. First principles prove themselves.

He urges three things, to prove that his testimony, though of Himself, was true and cogent.

1. That He was conscious of his own authority, and satisfied in Himself concerning it. He did not speak in uncertainty, nor propose a disputable notion, which He Himself hesitated about, but declared a decree, and gave such an account of Himself as He would abide by; I know whence I come, and whither I go. He was fully apprized of his own undertaking from first to last; knew what his success would be; knew what He was before his manifestation to the world, and what He should be after; that He came from the Father, and was going to Him, (ch. 16: 28.) came from glory, and was going to glory, ch. 17: 5. This is the satisfaction of all good Christians, that though the world know them not, yet they know whence their spiritual life comes, and whither it tends.

2. That they were very incompetent judges of Him, and of his doctrine.

(1.) They were willingly and resolutely ig-

Verse 12.

After this interruption, our Lord proceeded to instruct the multitudes; and the sun being perhaps at this time just risen, he thence took occasion to declare Himself to be 'the Light of the world.' (Marg. Ref. r.—1. 4-9. 12: 34-36, 44-50. Mal. 4: 2, 3.)

SCOTT. I am the Light. 'He who followeth my commandments shall not live in darkness, ignorance, and vice, and the misery consequent upon it; but he shall enjoy the light of knowledge and happiness.' Nor is it unusual with the Hebrews to designate eternal life by the word *light*! Schoettgen, in Bloomfield.

'The Messiah is often represented as the Light of the world. Is. 42: 49-6. Mal. 4: 2. Compare Luke 2: 32. John 1: 4-9. 3: 19. 9: 5. 6. 12: 46.'

Verses 13-18.

THOR. harras' witness of Thyself, &c. 'Therefore, by thine own confession, (ch. 8: 31.) thy testimony is not to be admitted as true. Jesus answered, I know, &c. I speak from my own certain knowledge, and have already shown that I come with a divine commission; and therefore you ought to admit my testimony; for the most evident demonstrations of my divine origin have been given you, both in the nature of my doctrine, and in the miracles which I have wrought among you; but you are so perverse, that as often as I have hinted or

declared it, you know not yet from whence I come, and whither I am going; which is not to be ascribed to the want of sufficient evidence, but merely to the force of your own prejudices; for you judge according to the maxims of the flesh and sense, and will believe nothing in opposition to these principles, which you have so rashly imbibed. (The same carnal prejudices still prevail in the minds of the Jews, and prevent their reception of Christ; they laying it down as a first principle, that he is to be a great temporal Prince and Deliverer. And the admission of false principles, which are constantly taken for granted, and never examined, will, I fear, be attended with fatal consequences to thousands more.) But if I should judge, the Savior continues, my judgment is true and right; for I am not alone, (do not bear witness alone of myself) in what I say, but I and my Father, that sent Me, as we are in other respects inseparably united, do evidently concur together in the testimony that I give. And it is written in your own law, that the testimony of two men is true, and must be admitted. (Deut. 17: 6. and 19: 15.) Now I am (one) who bear this witness of Myself, in a fact, the truth of which I cannot but certainly know, and the Father who sent Me is another, who also bears his testimony to Me; thereby asserting the truth of every doctrine I teach. But the sentence I might pass.

DODDGE.

15 Ye ^ajudge after the flesh; ^bI judge no man

16 And ^ayet if I judge, my judgment is true: ^afor I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent me.

17 It is ^aalso written in your law, ^aThat the testimony of two men is true.

18 I am ^aone that bear witness of myself, ^aand the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.

19 Then said they unto Him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, ^aI ye neither know me nor my Father: ^aif ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also.

^a 7:24, 1 Sam. 16:7, Ps. 58:1, 2, 94:20, 21, Am. 5:7, 6:12, Hab. 1:4, Rom. 2:1, 1 Cor. 2:15, 4:3-5, Jam. 2:4.

^a 11: 3:17, 12:47, 13:36, Luke 12:14, 5:22-30, Ps. 45:6, 7, 72:1, 98:9, 98:10, 97: 1, 10:2-5, 22:12, Jer. 23:6, 8, Zech. 9:9, Acts 17:31, Rev. 19:11, 29, 16:32.

^a 10:34, 15:25, Gal. 3:24, 4:21, Deut. 17:7, 19:15, 1 Kings 21:10, Matt. 9:16, 2 Cor. 13:1, Heb. 10:23, 1 John 5:9, Rev. 11:3, 12:25, 15:51, 52, 10:9, 11:14, 30, 11: 25, 14:8, Rev. 13:17, 18:2.

^a See on 1:31-40, Heb. 2:4, 1 John 5:8-12, 21: 10, 7:28, 10:14, 15: 15, 21: 16:3, Jer. 22:16, 24:7, 1 Cor. 15:34, Gal. 4:9, Col. 1:10, 1 John 5:20, 5:30.

^a 1:18, 14:6-9, 17:3, 25:28, Matt. 11:23, 14:1, 10:21, 22, 2 Cor. 4:4-6, Eph. 1:17, 1:10, 1:15, Heb. 1:3, 2 John 9.

That which makes his judgment unexceptionable is,

[1.] His Father's concurrence with Him; *I am not alone, but I and the Father.* He had the Father's concurring counsels to direct; as He was with Him in the world, in executing those counsels, Isa. 11: 2. All the counsels of peace (and of war too) were between them both, Zech. 6: 13. He had also the Father's concurring power to confirm what He did; see Ps. 89: 21, &c. Isa. 42: 1. He did not act separately, but in his own name and his Father's, ch. 6: 17, and 14: 9, 10.

[2.] His Father's commission to Him; *'It is the Father that sent Me.'* Note, God will go along with them that He sends; see Exod. 3: 10, 12. Come, and I will send thee, and certainly, I will be with thee. Now, if Christ had a commission from the Father, and the Father's presence with Him, in all his administrations, no doubt his judgment was true and valid; no exception lay against it, no appeal lay from it.

Look upon Him as a Witness, and now He appeared no otherwise, (having not as yet taken the throne of judgment,) and as such his testimony was true: this He shows, v. 17, 18.

(15.) *Flesh.* ^aYe judge from passion and prejudice.

^a This word in the New Testament is frequently used to denote the inferior powers of the soul, the passions and appetites; and it is in this meaning opposed to *'spirit,'* which denotes the superior faculties of reason and conscience. CAMPBELL.

I judge no man. ^aOn the connection of this clause with the preceding, commentators are not agreed; and from its extreme brevity, it is impossible to determine it with certainty. Lampe understands, *'I as yet judge,'* &c. Kuinoel explains, *'I judge no man thus, i. e. after the flesh and outward appearance; and therefore ought not to be so judged by you.'* So Morus and Rosenm.

^a (16.) *I am not alone in my testimony, for my Father and I have such a mutual in-being, as to be inseparable one from the other; so that I am never alone.* His Father is in Him, and He is in the Father; (ch. 14: 10, 11,) and so the Father is no more alone without the Son, than the Son is without the Father. (Prov. 8: 22, 23, 30, and John 1: 2.) His Father and He were not one and another God, but one in Godhead, though distinct persons, and therefore inseparable from each other; and though the Son came from the Father in a certain dispensation, for the assumption of human nature, and acting in office upon earth, as God is sometimes said to come from heaven for particular manifestations of Himself; yet Christ did not leave the Father, or the Father leave Him, any more than God leaves heaven when He is said to come down to this earth; and that our Lord here speaks of Himself,

norant; Ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. To what purpose is it to talk with those who know nothing, nor desire to know? He had told them of his coming from heaven and returning to heaven, but it was foolishness to them, they received it not. They took upon them to judge of that which they did not understand. They that despise Christ's dignities, speak evil of what they know not, Jude 8, 10.

(2.) They were partial, (v. 15.) ye judge after the flesh. When fleshly wisdom gives the rule of judgment, and outward appearances only are given in evidence, men judge after the flesh; and when secular interest turns the scale in spiritual matters, when we judge in favor of the carnal mind, and a carnal world, we judge after the flesh; and the judgment cannot be right, when the rule is wrong. The Jews judged of Christ and his Gospel by outward appearances, and because He appeared so mean, thought it impossible He should be the Light of the world; as if the sun, under a cloud, were no sun.

(3.) They were unjust and unfair toward Him, intimated in this, *'I judge no man;'* I neither make nor meddle with your political affairs, nor does my doctrine or practice at all interfere with your civil rights or powers; He thus judged no man; now if He did not rear after the flesh, it was unreasonable to judge Him after the flesh; and to treat Him as an offender against the government. Or, *'I judge no man;'* that is, 'not now in my first coming, that is deferred till I come again,' ch. 3: 17. The first coming of Christ was for the purpose of administering, not justice, but medicine.

His testimony of Himself was sufficiently supported by the testimony of his Father, with Him, &c. for Him, (v. 16.) And if I judge, my judgment is true. He did in his doctrine judge, (ch. 9: 39,) though not politically.

As a Judge, his own judgment was valid; if I, who have authority to execute judgments, I to whom all things are delivered, I who am the Son of God, and have the Spirit of God, if I judge, my judgment is of incontestable rectitude and authority, (Rom. 2: 2.) and then you would be condemned; but the judgment-day is not yet come, you are not yet to be condemned, but spared, and therefore now I judge no man.

First, He quotes a maxim of the Jewish law (v. 17.) that the testimony of two men is true. Not as if it were always true in itself, for many a time had been joined in hand to bear false testimony, 1 Kings 21: 10. But it is allowed as sufficient evidence, upon which to ground a verdict, and if nothing appear to the contrary, it is taken for granted to be true. Reference is here had to that law, (Deut. 17: 6.) At the mouth of two witnesses shall he that is worthy of death, be put to death. And see Deut. 19: 15. Num. 35: 30. It is in favor of life that, in capital causes two witnesses were required, as with us in case of treason. See Heb. 6: 18.

Secondly, He applies this to the case in hand, (v. 18.) I am one that bear witness of Myself; and the Father that sent Me bears witness of Me. Though in human courts, where two witnesses are required, the criminal is not admitted to be a witness for himself; yet in a matter purely divine, which can be proved only by divine testimony, and God Himself must be the Witness, if the formality of two or three witnesses be insisted on, there can be no other than the eternal Father, the eternal Son, and the eternal Spirit. Now, if the testimony of two distinct persons, that may deceive, or be deceived, is conclusive, much more ought the testimony of the Son of God concerning Himself, backed with the testimony of his Father concerning Him, to command assent; see 1 John 5: 7, 9-11. This proves, not only that the Father and the Son are two distinct Persons, (for their respective testimonies are here spoken of as the testimonies of two several Persons,) but these two are one, not only in their testimony, but in power and glory, and therefore the same in substance. St. Austin here takes occasion to caution his hearers against Sabellianism on the one hand, which confounded the Persons in the Godhead, and Arianism on the other, which denied the Godhead of the Son and Spirit. The Son is one Person, and the Father another; they do not, however, constitute two Beings, but the Father is the same Being that the Son is, that is, the only true God.

Christ here speaks of Himself and the Father as Witnesses to the world, giving evidence to the reason and conscience of men. These Witnesses to the world now, will be Witnesses against those that perish in unbelief, and their word will judge men.

This was the sum of the first conference between Christ and these carnal Jews; in the conclusion of which, we are told how their tongues were let loose, and their hands tied.

Though in what He said there appeared nothing of human artifice, but a divine security, yet they set themselves to cross questions with Him. None so incurably blind, as those that will not see.

They evaded conviction with a cavil; Then said they unto Him, Where is thy Father? They might easily have understood, by this and his other discourses, that when He spoke of his Father, He meant no other than God; yet they pretend to understand Him, of a common person; and since He appealed to his testimony,

as not being alone, with regard to his divine nature, seems evident; because, in the next foregoing verse but one, He had spoke of Himself, in that high consideration of Him, saying, I know whence I came, but ye cannot tell whence I came; whereas, with respect to his human nature, He had before allowed that they knew whence He was. (Ch. 7: 28.) GUYSE.

Verse 19.

Where is thy Father? ^aSome of the ancients thought it a sarcasm on the birth of Christ. Others think they were not ignorant that Jesus treated of his heavenly Father, (as in 27:) maliciously dissembling their knowledge; and that they wished, by his more explicit declaration, to convict Him of blasphemy. They asked Him, says Kuinoel, jeeringly, Where is this father, that we may interrogate him? We do not see this other witness. To which Jesus indignantly replies, 'Your very question betrays the malignity of your hearts, and shows that you neither know, nor care to know, either Me or my Father. If you would know Me as a Teacher sent from heaven, you would know that it is God who beareth witness of Me, though not in a visible way, yet by miracles.' Thus, says Lampe, He skillfully casts back their stigma.

Here our Lord plainly intimates that his Father and He were distinct persons, as they were two witnesses, and yet were one in essence and divine perfections, as the knowledge of Him includes the knowledge of the Father. GUYSE.

20 These words spake Jesus in the treasury, as he taught in the temple: and no man laid hands on him; for his hour was not yet come.

21 ¶ Then said Jesus unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.

22 Then said the Jews, Will he kill himself? because he saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come.

I 1 Chr. 9:36. Matt. 27:6. Mark 12:43.
m 59. 7:8,30,44. 10:39. 11:9,10.
Luke 13:31-38. 20:19.
n 7:24. 12:35. 1 Kings 18:10. 2 Kings 2:16,17. Matt. 23:39. 24:32,24.
o 24:35,20:11. Ps. 78:19,20. Prov. 11:7. 14:32. Ec. 3:18,19. Luke 16:22-26. 1 Cor. 15:17,18.
p 7:34. 13:33. Matt. 25:41,46. 48:52. 7:20. 10:20. Ps. 136:1. 31:18. 12:34. Heb. 12:35. 13:12.

Christosom proved hence the Godhead of Christ, and his equality with his Father. We cannot say, 'He that knows a man, knows an angel,' or, 'He that knows a creature, knows the Creator;' but we may say, 'He that knows Christ, knows the Father.' Secondly, By Him we shall be instructed in the knowledge of God, and introduced into an acquaintance with Him. If we knew Christ better, we should know the Father better; but where the Christian religion is slighted, natural religion will soon be laid aside. Deism makes way for atheism. Those become vain in their imaginations concerning God, that will not learn of Christ.

Their hands were tied, though their tongues were thus let loose; such was the power of Heaven to restrain the malice of hell. These words spake Jesus, bold words, words of conviction and reproof, in the treasury, an apartment of the temple, where, to be sure, the chief priests, whose gain was their godliness, were mostly resident, attending the business of the revenue. Christ taught in the temple, sometimes in one part, sometimes in another, as He saw occasion. Now the priests, who had so great a concern in the temple, and looked upon it as their demesne, might easily, with the assistance of their janizaries that were at their beck, either have seized Him, and exposed Him to the rage of the mob, and that punishment which they called the *beating of the rebels*; or, at least have silenced Him, as Amos, though tolerated in the land of Judah, was forbidden to prophesy in the king's chapel, Amos 7:12,13. Yet even in the temple, where they had Him in their reach, No man laid hands on Him, for his hour was not yet come. See here, (1.) The restraint laid upon his persecutors by an invisible power. God can set bounds to the wrath of men, as He does to the waves of the sea; let us not therefore fear danger in the way of duty. God hath Satan and all his instruments in a chain. (2.) The reason of this restraint; His hour was not yet come. The frequent mention of this, intimates how much the time of our departure out of the world depends upon the decree of God. It will come, it is not yet come, but is at hand. Our enemies cannot hasten it any sooner, nor our friends delay it any longer, than the time appointed of the Father; which is very comfortable to every good man, who can say with pleasure, My times are in thy hands; and better there than in our own. His hour was not yet come, because his work was not done, nor his testimony finished. To all God's purposes there is a time.

V. 21-30. Christ here warns the unbelieving Jews, to consider what would be the consequence of their infidelity, before it was too late; for He spake words of terror as well as words of grace. Observe here,

Jesus said again unto them that which might be likely to do them good. He continued to teach, in kindness to those few who received his doctrine, which is an example to ministers to go on with their work, notwithstanding opposition, because a remnant shall be saved. Here Christ changes his voice; He had *poured* to them in the offers of his grace, and they had not danced; now He *murmurs* to them in the denunciations of his wrath, to try if they would lament. He said, I go my way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins. Whither I go, ye cannot come. Every word is terrible, and speaks spiritual judgments, the sorest of all; worse than war, pestilence, and captivity, which the Old-Testament prophets denounced.

Four things are here threatened against the Jews:

1. Christ's departure from them; I go my way, that is, 'It shall not be long before I go.' They said to Him, Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways; and He takes them at their word; but woe to those

they had Him call his witness. Where is thy Father? Thus, as Christ said to them, (v. 15.) they judge after the flesh. Perhaps they hereby intend a reflection upon the meanness and obscurity of his family; Where is thy father, that he should be fit to give evidence in such a case as this? Thus they turn it off with a taunt, when they could not resist the wisdom and spirit with which He spake.

He evaded the cavil with a further conviction; He did not tell them where his Father was; but charged them with wilful ignorance; 'Ye neither know Me, nor my Father. It is to no purpose to discourse to you about divine things, who talk of them as blind men do of colors. Poor creatures! ye know nothing of the matter.'

He charges them with ignorance of God; Ye know not my Father. In Judah was God known, (Ps. 76:1.) they had some knowledge of Him as the God that made the world, but their eyes were darkened that they could not see the light of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ. The little children of the Christian church know Him as a Father; (1 John 2:13.) but these rulers of the Jews did not, because they would not.

He shows them the cause of their ignorance of God; If ye had known Me, ye should have known my Father also. The reason why men are ignorant of God is, they are unacquainted with Christ. Did we know Christ, First, In knowing Him we should know the Father, of whose Person He is the express image, ch. 14:9.

Secondly, By knowing Him we should know the Father, of whose Person He is the express image, ch. 14:9.

Thirdly, By knowing Him we should know the Father, of whose Person He is the express image, ch. 14:9.

Fourthly, By knowing Him we should know the Father, of whose Person He is the express image, ch. 14:9.

From whom Christ departs. The glory, our defence, is departed, when Christ goes. John frequently warned them of his departure before He left them; He bid often farewell, as you loath to depart, who would have them stir up themselves to take hold on Him.

2. Their enmity to the true Messiah, and their insatiable inquiries after another Messiah, when He was gone, which were both their sins and their punishments; Ye shall seek Me, which speaks either, (1.) Their enmity to the true Christ; 'Ye shall seek to ruin my interest, by persecuting my followers.' This was a continual vexation and torment, and made them incurably ill-natured, and brought wrath upon them to the uttermost. Or, (2.) 'Ye shall continue your expectations of the Messiah, and be the self-perplexing seekers of a Christ to come when He is already come;' like the Sodomites who, being struck with blindness, wearied themselves to find the door, Rom. 9:31,32.

3. Their final impenitency; Ye shall die in your sins. All the Greek copies have it in the singular number,—in your sin, so all the Latin versions; and Calvin has a note upon it, that here it is meant especially of the sin of unbelief,—in this sin of yours. Note, Those are forever undone, who die in unbelief. Or it may be understood in general, Ye shall die in your iniquity, as Ezek. 3:19, and 33:9. Many that have long lived in sin, by a timely repentance, through grace, are saved from dying in sin; but for those who go out of this world under the guilt of sin unpardoned, and the power of sin unbroken, there remaineth no relief; Job 20:11. Ezek. 32:27.

4. Their eternal separation from Christ and all happiness in Him; Whither I go, ye cannot come. When Christ left the world, He went to a state of perfect happiness; He went to paradise, and took the penitent thief with Him, that did not die in his sins; but the impenitent not only shall not come to Him, but they cannot; it is morally impossible, for heaven would not be heaven to those that die unsanctified, and unmeet for it. Ye cannot come, because ye have no right to enter into that Jerusalem, Rev. 22:14. Whither I go, ye cannot come, to fetch me thence, so Whither; and the same is the comfort of all Christians, that, when in heaven, they will be out of the reach of their enemies' malice.

Instead of trembling at this word, they turned it into ridicule; (v. 22.) Will He kill Himself? See here, 1. What slight thoughts they had of Christ's threatenings; they could make themselves merry with them, as those that mocked the messengers of the Lord, and turned the burden of the word of the Lord into a by-word, and precept upon precept, line upon line, into a merry song, Isa. 31:13. But be ye not mockers, lest your bands be made strong. 2. What ill thoughts they had of Christ's meaning, as if He had a design upon his own life, to avoid the indignities done Him, like Saul. This is indeed (say they) to go whither we cannot follow Him, for we will never kill ourselves. Thus they make Him not only such a one as themselves, but worse; yet in the calamities brought by the Romans upon the Jews, many of them in despair did kill themselves. They had put a much more favorable construction upon this word of his; (ch. 7:34,35.) Will He go to the dispersed Gentiles? Indulged malice grows more and more malicious.

1. He had said, Whither I go, ye cannot come, and here He gives a reason; (v. 23.) Ye are from beneath, I am from above; ye are of this world, I am not of this world. Ye are of those things which are beneath; noting, not so much their rise from beneath, as their affection to these lower things; 'Ye are in with these things; how can ye come where I go, when your spirit and disposition are so directly contrary to mine? The Spirit of Jesus was—not

themselves by suicide from tyranny and persecution, yet by the far greater part, and the better instructed, it was thought highly criminal. The Pharisees maintained that the darkest corner of Hades, or Orcus, was assigned to suicides.'

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Verse 22.

Will He kill Himself? The principal persons, perverting the words of Jesus, say this to one another, in the hearing of the people, to cast a suspicion of criminality upon Jesus. For, though some Jews had so imbibed Gentile opinions as to regard it lawful to withdraw

23 And he said unto them, "Ye are from beneath; I am from above: "Ye are of this world; I am not of this world.

24 I said therefore unto you, That ye shall die, in your sins: 'for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.

25 Then said they unto him, "Who art thou? And Jesus saith unto them, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.

26 I have many things to say and to judge of you: "but he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him.

r 1:14, 3:13, 31. Ps 17:14. Rom. 8: 7,8. 1 Cor. 15:47,48. Phil. 3:19-21. Jam. 3:15-17. 1 John 2:15, 16. 15:18, 19. 17:14. 1 Jan. 4:4. 1 John 2:15, 16. 4:5,6. 5:19,20. 1:9,10. 3:16. Prov. 8:35. Mark 16:16. Acts 4:12. Heb. 2:3. 10:26-29. 12:25. 1:19,22. 10:24. 19:9. Luke 22:67. x 12. 5:17,8c. 7:16,19. Heb. 5:11, 12. x 16. 5:42,49. 9:38-41. 12:47-50. a 17. 7:8, 2 Cor. 1:18. b 40. 9:32. 7:16. 15:16. 17:8.

gospel-promise, *If we believe that Christ is He, and receive Him, we shall not die in our sins.* The law saith absolutely to all, as Christ said, (v. 21.) "Ye shall die in your sins, for we are all guilty before God; but the curse of the law is annulled to all that submit to the grace of the Gospel; believers die in Christ, in his love, and so are saved from dying in their sins.

(1.) The question which the Jews put to Him; (v. 25.) *Who art Thou?* This they asked tauntingly. He had said, *Ye must believe that I am He.* By his not saying expressly who He was, He plainly intimated that in his person He could not be described by any, and in his office such a one as was expected by all that looked for redemption in Israel; yet this awful manner of speaking, they turned to his reproach, as if He knew not what to say of Himself; "Who art Thou, that we must with implicit faith believe that Thou art some mighty HE; we know not *who*, or *what*; nor are *worthy* to know."

(2.) He refers Himself to *what He had always said*; "Do you ask who I am? *Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning.*" The original here is a little intricate, which some read thus; *I am the Beginning, which also I speak unto you.* Christ is called *the Beginning*; (Col. 1:18. Rev. 1:8. 21:6. 3:14.) and so it agrees with v. 24. *I am He.* Compare Isa. 41:4. *I am the First, I am He.* But most interpreters agree with our version. Do you ask, *who I am?*

1. *I am the same that I said to you from the beginning* of time in the Old Testament, the *Seed of the woman, that should break the serpent's head*, the Mediator of the covenant, and the Faith of the patriarchs.

2. *From the beginning* of my public ministry. He had declared Himself to be the Son of God, (ch. 5:17.) the Christ, (ch. 4:26.) the Bread of life, and had proposed Himself as the Object of that faith which is necessary to salvation, and to this He refers for an answer to their question. Christ is *one with Himself*; what He had said from the beginning, He saith still. His is an everlasting Gospel.

He refers Himself to his Father's judgment, and the instructions He had from Him; (v. 26.) "I have many things more than you think of, to say, and

of this world, but from above. He was dead to wealth, the ease of the body, and the praise of men, and was wholly taken up with heavenly things; and none shall be with Him but those who are born from above, and have their conversation in heaven. How contrary to *their spirit!* "ye are from beneath, and of this world." The Pharisees were of a carnal spirit; and what communion could Christ have with them?

2. He had said, *Ye shall die in your sins*, and here He insists on it; "Therefore I said, *Ye shall die in your sins*, because *ye are from beneath*" and He gives this further reason for it, *If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins*, v. 24. See here, (1.) What we are required to believe, *that I am He, that I am*, which is one of God's names, Exod. 3:14. It was the Son of God that there said, *I will be what I will be*; for the deliverance of Israel was but a figure of good things to come, but now He saith, "I am He; He that should come, the Messias. I do not only call Myself so, but I am He." True faith does not amuse the soul with empty words, but affects it with the doctrine of Christ's mediation, as a real thing that has real effects. (2.) How necessary it is that we believe this; if not, *we shall die in our sins*; for the matter is so settled, that without this faith, we cannot be saved from the power of sin while we live, and therefore shall certainly continue in it to the last. Nothing but the doctrine of Christ's grace and the Spirit of Christ's grace will be powerful enough, to turn us from sin to God; and that Spirit and doctrine is given, to be effectual to those only who believe in Christ: so that if Satan be not by faith dispossessed, He has a lease of the soul for life; if Christ do not cure us, our case is desperate, and we shall die in our sins. Without faith we cannot be saved from the punishment of sin, for the wrath of God remains upon them that believe not, Mark 16:16. Unbelief is the damning sin; it is a sin against the remedy. This implies the great

in them to judge of you. But why should a trouble myself any further with you? I know that *He who sent Me, is true*, and who will sustain Me, for I speak to the world (to which I am sent as an Ambassador) *those things and those only, which I have heard of Him.*" Here,

He suppresses his accusations of them. He had many things to charge them with, but for the present He had said enough. Note, Whatever discoveries of sin are made to us, He that searches the heart, has still more to judge of us, 1 John 3:20. How much soever God reckons with sinners in this world, there is still a further reckoning behind, Deut. 32:34. Let us learn hence not to be forward to say all we can, even against the worst of men; we may have many things to say by way of censure, which yet it is better to leave unsaid, for what is it to us?

He enters his appeal against them to his Father; *He that sent Me.* Here two things comfort Him.

1. That He had been true to his Father. *I speak to the world* (for his Gospel was to be preached to every creature) *those things which I have heard of Him.* Being given for a Witness to the people, (Isa. 55:4.) He was *Amen*, a faithful Witness, Rev. 3:14. He did not conceal his doctrine, but spake it to the world; being of common concern, it was to be of common notice; nor did He alter it, nor vary from the instructions He received.

2. That his Father would be true to Him, that He would make his mouth like a sharp sword; true to his purpose concerning Him which was a decree, (Ps. 2:7.) true to the threatenings of his wrath against those that should reject Him. Though He should not accuse them to his Father, yet the Father, who sent Him, would undoubtedly reckon with them, and would be true to what He had said (Deut. 18:19.) that whosoever would not hearken to that Prophet whom God would raise up, *He would require it of Him.* Christ would not accuse them; "For, He that sent Me is true, and will pass judgment on them." Thus He binds them over to the judgment-day, when it will be too late to dispute what they will not now be persuaded to believe. "I as a deaf man heard not, for Thou wilt hear." Ps. 38:14, 15.

Upon this part of our Savior's discourse, the evangelist has a melancholy remark; (v. 27.) *They understood not that He spake to them of the Father.* See here, 1. The power of Satan to blind the minds of them who believe not. Though Christ spake so plainly of God as his Father in heaven, yet they did not understand whom He meant, but thought He spake of some father He had in Galilee. Thus the plainest things are riddles to those who are resolved to hold fast their prejudices; day and night are alike to the blind. 2. The reason why the threatenings of the Word make so little impression upon the minds of sinners is, they understand not whose the wrath is, that is revealed in them. When Christ told them of the truth of Him that sent Him, as a warning to them to prepare for his judgment, which is according to truth, they slighted the warning, because they understood not whose judgment it was, that they made themselves obnoxious to.

He refers Himself to their own convictions hereafter, v. 28, 29. He finds they will not understand Him, and therefore adjourns the trial till further evidence should come in; they that *will not see, yet shall see*, Isa. 26:11. Now observe here,

Verse 23.

[World.] "The original is used here, as often, for the *profanum vulgus*, the sensual, perverse, disobedient; such as the bulk of the human race has ever been."

KUNOEL.

Verse 24.

Some think that in the expression, "I am He," (the latter word is not in the original,) our Lord meant to avow Himself the great I AM, who spake to Moses. Another passage, indeed, in this chapter, is unequivocal to this purpose; (Note, 54-59, v. 58.) but the expression is sometimes applied to others, exactly as in this place; (9:9. Gr.) and it would weaken the argument to adduce it in proof of the doctrine; like a suspicious witness to a fact, which is otherwise sufficiently attested.

SCOTT.

That *I am He, &c.* "There is evidently an ellipsis here, to be supplied by comparing it with verse 12. Compare John 13:19. Mark 8:6. and Acts 13:25. The repetition of the threatening here, from

verse 21. is a very awful rebuke to the folly of their answer, verse 24. as if our Lord had said, "It very ill becomes you to trifle and amuse yourselves with such silly and spiteful turns, when your life, even the life of your souls, is at stake; and to talk of my killing Myself, when by your unbelief and impenitency you are plunging yourselves into eternal death." Thus do those passages in our Lord's discourses, which, to a careless reader, might seem flat tautologies, appear, on an attentive review, to be animated with a most penetrating spirit, and to be full of divine dignity. A remark which will frequently occur, especially in reading those important discourses of Christ, which John has, through the infinite goodness of God to his church, recorded, after they had been omitted by the other evangelists.

Verse 25.

From the beginning! "Some render the original phrase *"a'logos ther,"* certainly, truly.—A sense not unfrequent in the best writers So Raphael, Doddridge, Eisner, Kunnoel, &c."

BLOOMFIELD.

27 They understood not that he spake to them of the Father.

28 Then said Jesus unto them, ⁴ When ye have lifted up the Son of man, ⁵ then shall ye know that I am he, ⁶ and not I do nothing of myself; ⁷ but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.

29 And ⁸ he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; ⁹ for I do always those things that please him.

[Practical Observations.]

243. 47. Is. 6.9. 42:18-20. 59:10
Rom. 11:7-10. 2 Cor. 4:3, 4.
o. 3:4. 12:32-34. Acts 2:41. 4:4.
Matt. 27:50-54. Acts 2:41. 4:4.
Rom. 1:4. 1 Thes. 2:15, 16.
5:19, 30. 6:58. 11:42. 12:49, 50.
Narn. 16:28-30. Heb. 2:2, 3.
g. 3:11.
e. 16. 14:10, 11. 18:22. Is. 42:1, 6.
49:1-3. 50:1-2. 2 Tim. 4:17, 22.
4:6, 13. 6:39. 14:31. 15:10. 17:13. Is.
49:1-21. Matt. 3:17. 17:5. Heb.
4:15. 5:5, 9. 7:26. 10:5-10. 1 John
2:1.

they that put Him to death, thought thereby forever to have sunk Him, but it proved to be his advancement, ch. 12:24. When the Son of man was crucified, the Son of man was glorified. Christ had called his dying his going away, here his being lifted up; thus the death of the saints, as it is their departure out of this world, so it is their advancement to a better. He speaks of those H: is now talking with, as the instruments of his death; when ye have lifted up the Son of man: not that they were to be the priests to offer Him up, (that was his own act, He offered up Himself,) but they would be his betrayers and murderers; see Acts 2:23. They lifted Him up to the cross, but He lifted up Himself to his Father. With what mildness Christ speaks to those who, He certainly knew, would put Him to death, to teach us not to hate or seek the hurt of any, though they hate us, and seek our hurt!

Christ speaks of his death, as that which would be a powerful conviction of the infidelity of the Jews; When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know this. And why then? 1. Because unthinking people are often taught the worth of mercies by the want of them, Luke 17:22. 2. The guilt of their sin in putting Christ to death, would so awaken their consciences, that they would inquire after a Savior, and then would know that Jesus was He. And so it proved, when, being told that with wicked hands they had crucified and slain the Son of God, they cried out, What shall we do? and were made to know assuredly, that this Jesus was Lord and Christ, Acts 2:

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 12-29. Every action of Jesus, as well as his doctrine, shows Him to us, as 'the Light of the world.' Let us then no longer look to mere philosophy for illumination; let us not implicitly follow any man: on the contrary, let us follow Jesus, that we 'may not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.' If we have begun to attend on Him for instruction, He has already, in some things, 'made darkness light before us,' and our path will shine more and more unto the perfect day. But unbelievers 'know not whence He came, and whither He is gone;' they judge after the flesh: yet they presume to judge Him, before whose righteous tribunal they must shortly stand: whereas, they are incompetent to decide upon the principles and conduct of his meaneft disciple. Such men often oppose precepts to doctrines: yet those precepts, properly explained, condemn their conduct, and bear witness to the doctrines which they oppose: yea, in every way God testifies to his Son, that salvation is by faith in Him alone. Those who know not his glory and grace, know not 'the Father that sent Him:' but, by the knowledge of the Son, believers attain to the knowledge of the Father.—The Redeemer has left this earth, where He was so hated and despised: yet none who truly 'seek Him, shall die in their sins,' or be excluded from that place, 'whither, as our Forerunner He is for us entered:' but those who conti-

Verse 29.

When ye have lifted up.] ⁴ When ye have crucified Me, and thus atoned up the measure of your iniquities, ye shall know that I am the Christ, by the signs that shall follow: and ye shall know that what I spoke is true, by the judgments that shall follow. To be lifted up, is a common mode of expression among the Jewish writers for to die, or to be killed.

Verse 29, 30.

'He is now adduces the reason why the prediction contained in the words of verse 23 will, He trusts, have its fulfilment, 'Is with Me, 'co-operates with Me, assists Me.' Bloomfield The sense is com-

[1.] What they should ere long be convinced of; 'Ye shall know that I am He, that Jesus is the true Messiah. Whether you will own it or no, before men, you shall be made to know it in your consciences, the convictions of which, though you may stifle, you cannot baffle: that I am He, not what you represent me to be, but He that should come!' Two things they should be convinced of, in order to this. First, That He did nothing of Himself, not of Himself as Man, of Himself without the Father, with whom He was one. He does not hereby derogate from his own inherent power, but only denies their charge against Him as a false Prophet, of whom it is said, that they prophesied out of their own hearts. Secondly, That as his Father taught Him, so He spake these things, that He was not self-taught, but taught of God. The doctrine He preached was the counterpart of the counsels of God; I speak those things, not only which He taught me, but as He taught me, with the same divine power and authority.

[2.] When they should be convinced of this; When ye have lifted up the Son of man, upon the cross, as the brazen serpent under the pole, (ch. 3:14.) as the sacrifices under the law, (for Christ is the great Sacrifice,) which, when they were offered, were said to be lifted up; hence the burnt-offerings, the most ancient and honorable of all, were called elevations, and in many other offerings they used the significant ceremony of heaving the sacrifice up, and moving it before the Lord; thus was Christ lifted up. Or it notes that his death was his exaltation;

37. 3. There would be such signs and wonders attending his death and resurrection on, as would give a stronger proof of his being the Messiah than any that had been yet given; and multitudes were hereby brought to believe that Jesus is the Christ, who had before opposed Him. 4. By the death of Christ, the pouring out of the Spirit was purchased, who would convince the world that Jesus is He, ch. 16:7, 8. 5. The judgments which the Jews brought upon them selves, by putting Christ to death, were a sensible conviction to the most hardened among them, that Jesus was He; Christ had often foretold that desolation as the just punishment of their unbelief, and when it came to pass, they could not but know that the great Prophet had been among them, Ezek. 33:33.

What supported our Lord Jesus in the mean time, v. 29. He that sent Me, is with Me, for the Father hath not left Me alone, to manage for Myself, nor deserted the business or Me, in the prosecution of it, for I do always those things that please Him.

Here is, First, The assurance which Christ had of his Father's presence with Him, which includes both a divine power to enable Him for his work, and a divine favor to encourage Him in it. He that sent Me is with Me, Isa. 42:1. Ps. 89:21. This greatly emboldens our faith in Christ, that He had his Father with Him, to confirm the word of his Servant, Isa. 44:26. The King of kings accompanied his Ambassador, to attest his mission, and assist his management, and never left Him solitary or weak; it also aggravated the wickedness of those that opposed Him, and was an intimation to them, that by resisting Him, they were found fighters against God.

Secondly, The ground of this assurance; For I do always those things that please Him. That is, 1. That great affair which our Lord Jesus was continually engaged in, the Father that sent Him was well pleased with. His whole undertaking is called the pleasure of the Lord (Isa. 53:10.) because of the counsels of the eternal Mind about it, and the complacency of the eternal Mind in it. 2. His management of that affair was in nothing displeasing to his Father; in executing his commission He observed all his instructions; no mere man since the fall could say such a word as this, (for in many things we offend all,) but our Lord never offended his Father in any thing, but fulfilled all righteousness; and this was necessary to the validity of the sacrifice He was to offer up; for

nue to deride his warnings, and thus prove themselves 'earthly, sensual, and devilish,' will perish as 'vessels of wrath fitted for destruction.'—But some will say, 'Who is Jesus?' What are 'we to believe concerning Him?' We allow Him to have been a Teacher of most excellent morality, a bright Example; we admit that He was the chief of men, or even of all creatures; and would even grant Him to be something more than a creature, if we could do it without acknowledging Him as "God over all, blessed for evermore;" and will not this suffice? Let Jesus Himself answer this question. Is this to honor Him, even as we honor the Father? Does this answer to his being 'the Light of the world,' 'the Life of men,' 'the Resurrection of the dead,' 'One with the Father,' the everlasting I AM? He, who said such things of Himself in the vale of humiliation, will not retract them on the throne of glory; and they who do not believe in Him, as being all this, and more than words can express, will perish in their sin; whatever they object to the bigotry of those who warn them of their danger. For Jesus has much to say and to judge of them: and all shall know, by their conversion, or in their condemnation, that He always spake and did those things which pleased the Father, even when He claimed the highest honors.

SCOTT.

pounded of the following parts: 1. Unity of essence with the Father, (John 14:10.) 2. Communion with the Spirit of the Father. 3. An internal sense of the Father's favor. 4. The help of the Father, and present experience of his power, by which it appeared that Jehorah was at his right hand. Ps. 16:11.

LAMPE.
(29.) That please Him. (12:3. 1 John 3:22. Rom. 12:1, 2.) Many others have done and do things pleasing to God; but they confess, with one voice, that 'in many things we offend all.' Who, except Jesus, ever did or could truly say, 'I always do the things that please Him.' Of whom else do prophets and apostles speak in such terms? Yet this is their uniform testimony to Jesus.

SCOTT.

30 As he spake these words, many believed on him.

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, 'If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;

32 And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

2:22, 6:14, 7:31, 10:42, 11:45, 6:65-71, 15:1-9, 1 Sam. 12:14, Matt. 24:13, Acts 13:43, 14:22, 20:28, Rom. 2:1, 11:20, Col. 1:23, 1 Tim. 2:15, 4:16, 2 Tim. 3:14, Heb. 3:14, 8:9, 10:38, 29, Jam. 1:25, 1 John 2:19, 34.
2:22, 6:14, 7:31, 10:42, 11:45, 6:65-71, 15:1-9, 1 Sam. 12:14, Matt. 24:13, Acts 13:43, 14:22, 20:28, Rom. 2:1, 11:20, Col. 1:23, 1 Tim. 2:15, 4:16, 2 Tim. 3:14, Heb. 3:14, 8:9, 10:38, 29, Jam. 1:25, 1 John 2:19, 34.

God's ministers to preach the Gospel, though it be with much contention, for they shall not labor in vain. For those endeavors, which are openly cavilled at by men of corrupt minds. Austin has an affectionate ejaculation in his lecture upon these words, *I wish that when I speak, many may believe, not on me, but with me on Him.*

V. 31-37. We have in these verses, a comfortable doctrine laid down concerning the spiritual liberty of Christ's disciples, intended to encourage those Jews which believed. Christ, knowing that his doctrine began to work upon some of his hearers, and perceiving that virtue had gone out of Him, turned his discourse from the Pharisees, and addressed Himself to weak believers; when He had denounced wrath against those that were hardened in unbelief, He spake comfort to those few feeble Jews which believed in Him. See here, 1. How graciously the Lord Jesus looks to those that tremble at his word; He has something to say to those who have hearing ears, and will not pass by those who set themselves in his way, without speaking to them. 2. How carefully He cherishes the beginnings of grace, and meets those that are coming toward Him. These Jews that believed, were yet but weak; but Christ did not therefore cast them off, for He gathers the lambs in his arms.

What He said to them, He saith to all that should at any time believe.

If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. When they believed on Him, as the great Prophet, they gave up themselves to be his disciples. Now, at their entrance into his school, He lays down this rule, that He would own none for his disciples, but those that continued in his word.

It is implied that there are many who profess themselves Christ's disciples, who are his disciples only in name. It highly concerns those that are not strong in faith, to see to it that they be sound in the faith, that, though they be not disciples of the highest form, they be disciples indeed. Those who seem willing to be Christ's disciples, ought to be told that they had as good never come to Him, unless they abide by Him. Let those who have thoughts of covenanting with Christ, have no thoughts of reserving a power of revocation. Children are sent to school, and bound apprentices only for a few years; but these only are Christ's, who are willing to be bound to Him for life. They only that continue in Christ's word, shall be accepted as his disciples, that adhere to his word in every instance without partiality, and abide by it to the end without apostasy. It is to dwell in Christ's word, as a man does at home, his centre, rest, and refuge. Our converse with the Word and conformity to it must be constant. If we continue disciples to the last, then, and not otherwise, we approve ourselves disciples indeed.

Here are two promises made to those who thus approve themselves disciples indeed, v. 32.

[1.] 'Ye shall know the truth, all that is needful and profitable for you to know, and shall be more confirmed in the belief of it.' Note, First, Even true believers and disciples indeed, may be much in the dark concerning many things which they should know. God's children are but children, and understand and speak as children. Did we not need to be taught, we should not need to be disciples. Secondly, It is a very great privilege to know

if He had in any thing displeased the Father, and so had had any sin of his own to answer for, the Father could not have been pleased with Him as a Propitiation for our sins, but such a Priest and such a Sacrifice became us as was spotless. God's servants may expect God's presence with them, when they do those things that please Him, Isa. 56:4, 5.

As He spake these words, many believed on Him. Note, 1. Though multitudes perish in unbelief, there is a remnant according to the election of grace, who believe to the saving of the soul. If the whole body of Israel be not gathered, there are those of them, in whom Christ will be glorious, Isa. 49:5. This the apostle insists upon, to reconcile the Jews' rejection with the promises made to their fathers. There is a remnant, Rom. 11:5. 2. The words of Christ, and particularly his threatening words, are made effectual by the grace of God, to bring souls to believe in Him. When Christ told them that if they believed not, they should die in their sins, and never get to heaven, they thought it was time to look about them, Rom. 1:16, 19. 3. Sometimes there is a wide door opened, and an effectual, even where there are many adversaries. Christ will carry on his work, though the heathen rage. The Gospel gains great victories, sometimes, where it meets with great opposition. Let this encourage

the Gospel, though it be with much contention, for they shall not labor in vain. For those endeavors, which are openly cavilled at by men of corrupt minds. Austin has an affectionate ejaculation in his lecture upon these words, *I wish that when I speak, many may believe, not on me, but with me on Him.*

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the truth; the particular truths which we are to believe, in their mutual dependences and connections, and the grounds and reasons of our belief; to know what is truth, and what proves it to be so. Thirdly, It is a gracious promise of Christ to all who continue in his word, that they shall know the truth as far as is needful and profitable for them. Christ's scholars are sure to be well taught.

[2.] The truth shall make you free. The truth which Christ teaches, tends to make men free, Isa. 61:1. Justification makes us free from the guilt of sin, by which we were bound over to the judgment of God, under amazing fears; sanctification makes us free from the bondage of corruption, by which we are restrained from that service which is perfect freedom, and constrained to that which is perfect slavery. Gospel-truth frees us from the yoke of the ceremonial law, and the more grievous burthens of the traditions of the elders. It makes us free from our spiritual enemies, free in the service of God, free to the privileges of sons, and free of the Jerusalem which is from above. The knowing and believing this truth does actually make us free from prejudices, mistakes, and false notions, than which nothing more enslaves and entangles the soul, free from the dominion of lust and passion; and restores the soul to the government of itself, by reducing it into obedience to its Creator. The mind, by admitting the truth of Christ in light and power, is vastly enlarged, and has scope and compass given it, is raised above things of sense, and never acts with so true a liberty as when it acts under a divine command, 2 Cor. 3:17. The enemies of Christianity pretend to free-thinking, whereas those are the freest reasonings, that are guided by faith, and those are men of free thought, whose thoughts are captivated and brought into obedience to Christ.

The Jews took offence at this doctrine. Though it brought liberty to the captives, yet they cavilled at it, v. 33. The Pharisees, who grudging this comfortable word to them that believed, thought themselves reflected upon and affronted by the gracious charter of liberty granted; and therefore, with much pride and envy, answered Him, 'We Jews are Abraham's seed, therefore free-born, and have not lost our birth-right-freedom, we were never in bondage to any man; how sayest Thou then, to us Jews, Ye shall be made free?'

They were grieved at the *inuendo*, *ye shall be made free*; as if the Jewish nation were in some sort of bondage, which reflected on the Jews in general; and as if all that did not believe in Christ continued in that bondage, which reflected on the Pharisees in particular. Note, The privileges of the faithful are the envy and vexation of unbelievers, Ps. 112:10.

See what it was that they alleged against it; 'We are Abraham's seed, and Abraham was a prince, and a great man.' It is common for a sinking, decaying family to boast of its ancestors, and to borrow honor from that name to which they repay disgrace. But this was not all. Abraham was in covenant with God, and his children by his right, Rom. 11:29. That covenant, no doubt, was a free charter, and invested them in privileges not consistent with a state of slavery, Rom. 9:4. Therefore they think they had no occasion, with so great a sum, as they reckoned faith in Christ to be, to obtain this freedom, when they were thus free-born. Note, It is the common fault and folly of those that have pious parentage and education, to

(30.) Many believed on Him.] 'Believed Him to be the Messiah. Though, as it should seem, their faith was but weak; and, therefore, though their hearts had been strongly impressed, (perhaps most of all on the heavenly temper and holy composure of Christ, unruined by the aims and insults of his enemies;) yet there was need that such impressions should be strengthened, which the wisdom of Christ effected, by turning his discourse especially to them, and addressing them as already of the number of his disciples.'

'The same sun that hardens the clay, softens the wax. This discourse, which proved the savor of death unto death to the obstinate Pharisee, becomes the savor of life unto life, to many of the simple-hearted people.'

'It is observable, that in the series of this discourse, Christ advances no new proof of his mission; so that probably these people were wrought upon by what they observed in the temper and conduct of

Christ; bearing the perverseness of his enemies with so much patience, speaking of an ignominious and painful death with such holy composure, and expressing so genuine and lively a sense of his heavenly Father's approbation, and so sweet a complacency. And, perhaps, would ministers generally allow themselves to open with freedom the native workings of a heart deeply impressed with the Gospel, the secret charm might subdue those, whose subtlety and prejudice might be proof against the most conclusive abstract reasoning.'

Verse 31.

If ye continue in my word. 'Or, in this doctrine of mine. It is not enough to receive God's truth; we must retain, and walk in it. And it is only when we receive the truth, love it, keep it, and walk in it, that we are genuine disciples of Christ.'

DODDRIEDGE.

33 They answered him, ^o We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: now sayest thou, 'Thou shalt be made free?'

34 Jesus answered them, ^v Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^o Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin.

35 And ^v the servant abideth not in the house forever; ^o but the son abideth ever.

p. 39. Matt. 3:9. Luke 16:24-26
q. 19:15. Gen. 15:13. Ex. 1:13, 14.
Judg. 2:18. 8:8. 1:3. Ezra 9:9.
Neh. 5:4-8. 9:27, 28, 37.
r. See on 3:3. Matt. 5:18
s. 1 Kings 21:25. Prov. 5:22. Acts 8:23.
Rom. 6:5, 12, 15, 19, 30. 7:14, 25.
8:21. Eph. 2:2. Tit. 3:2. Pet. 2:19.
1 John 3:8-10
t. Gen. 21:10. Ex. 46:17. Matt. 21:41.
42. Gal. 4:30, 31.
u. 14:19, 20. Rom. 8:15-17, 29, 30. Gal. 4:4-7.
Col. 3:3. Heb. 3:5. 1 Pet. 1:2-5.

Jews, who were very jealous for the honor of their liberty, and of the Romans, who would not be thought to enslave the nations they conquered. How foolish the application. Christ had spoken of a liberty wherewith the truth would make them free, a spiritual liberty, the enfranchising of the mind, and the enlarging of that from the captivity of error and prejudice; and yet they plead against the offer of spiritual liberty, that they never were in corporal thraldom; as if, because they were never in bondage to any man, they were never in bondage to any lust. Note, Carnal hearts are sensible of no other grievances than those that molest the body, and distress their secular affairs. Talk to them of encroachments upon civil liberty and property; tell them of waste committed upon their lands, or damage done to their houses, and they understand you, and can give you a sensible answer; but discourse to them of the bondage of sin, a captivity to Satan, and liberty by Christ; tell them of wrong done to their souls, and the hazard of their eternal welfare, and you bring certain strange things to their ears; they say of it, as those did, (Ezek. 20:49.) *Doth he not speak parables?* This here was much like the blunder Nicodemus made about being born again.

Our Savior shows that, notwithstanding their civil liberties, and their visible church-membership, it was possible that they might be in bondage; (v. 34.) *Whosoever committeth sin, though of Abraham's seed, and never in bondage to any man, is the servant of sin.* Christ does not upbraid them with the falsehood of their plea, or their present bondage, but explains what He had said for their edification. Ministers should with meekness instruct those that oppose them, that they may recover themselves; not with passion provoke them to entangle themselves yet more.

The preface is very solemn; *Verily, verily, I say unto you*; which our Savior often used, to command a reverent attention. The style of the prophets was, *Thus saith the Lord*, for they were faithful as servants; but Christ, being a Son, speaks in his own name, *I say unto you, I the Amen*, the faithful Witness. 'I say it to you, who boast of your relation to Abraham, as if that would save you.'

The truth is of universal concern, though delivered upon a particular occasion; *Whosoever committeth sin, is the servant of sin*, and sadly needs to be made free. A state of sin is a state of bondage.

See who it is on whom this brand is fastened—on him that committeth sin. There is not a just man upon earth, that lives, and sins not; yet every one that sins, is not a servant of sin, for then God would have no servants; but he that makes choice of sin, prefers the way of wickedness before the way of holiness; (Jer. 44:16, 17.) that makes a covenant, a marriage with sin; that makes contrivances of sin, provision for the flesh, and devises iniquity, and that makes a custom of sin, walks after the flesh, and makes a trade of sin.

Verses 35, 36.

And the servant abideth not, &c.] 'And the servant of sin, though the natural seed of Abraham, like Ishmael, shall be cast out of God's house and family, and from all its privileges, as Ishmael was, and as all the carnal, unbelieving Jews shall be: but the Son of God, likewise, by way of eminence, the Seed of Abraham, and the Son of the promise, in whom all nations shall be blessed, continues as the First-born, Lord and Heir of his own house forever; and every one that claims under Him, as Abraham's seed, through faith in Him, according to the promise, shall abide in the family as a son, and inherit the noblest freedom with Him. The sense of the 35th verse, considered as a general maxim, is obvious enough with respect to the privilege of a son above a servant; and yet it is very difficult to fix its determinate meaning, as it stands here in connection with the context; and particularly with the servant of sin, mentioned in the foregoing verse, and with the Son, spoken of in the following verse. But what I have given above seems its most easy and consistent sense: for it keeps up the same idea of the servant of sin, and of the Son, as mentioned in the preceding and following verses, and at the same time shows the difference between the servants of sin; and the true children of God, (who are Abraham's seed, through faith in Christ,) with respect to the bondage of the one and the freedom

of the other; it likewise keeps up the view of Christ's answer to the vain plea of the carnal Jews, that they were Abraham's seed; and agrees with the apostle's representation of Ishmael's being cast out, as the son of the bond-woman, who should not be heir with the son of the free woman; and with his representation of Isaac, as the son of the promise, who was therein a type of Christ, and of all true believers in Him. (Gal. 4:23-31.) And this sense of the word lies in a plain and natural connection with the next verse, (36.) If, therefore, I who am the Son of God, and Lord of mine own house, shall bestow the noble freedom upon you which I speak of, ye shall be eminently free in your own spirits—free from the guilt and dominion of sin; free from the curse of the law; free from the prevailing blindness and prejudices of your own minds and hearts, and from the tyranny of Satan; free in your access to God, communion with Him, and actions for Him, free from the sting of death, and the victory of the grave; and at length from every kind of evil, and in full possession of all the glory of your adoption so that all other freedom is as nothing compared with this, and is mere slavery without it. *Guise.* Dr Doddridge saw the above ingenious and pious paraphrase, and note of Dr. Gr. free is given an excellent illustration of the passages.

See what the brand is, which Christ fastens upon them that thus *committeth sin*—He gives them a mark of servitude. They are *servants of sin*; under an arrest, *concluded under sin*, and are subject to the power of sin. He is a *servant of sin*, he makes himself so, and is so accounted; he has sold himself to work wickedness; his lusts give law to him, he is not his own master. He does the work of sin, supports its interest, and accepts its wages, Rom. 6:16. He shows them that being in a state of bondage, their having a room in the house of God would not entitle them to the inheritance of sons: for (v. 35.) *the servant*, though he be in the house for a while, *abideth not in the house forever*; services (we say,) are no inheritances, they are not for a perpetuity; but the son of the family abideth ever. This points primarily at the rejection of the Jewish church and nation. Israel had been *God's son*, his *first-born*; but they degenerated into a servile disposition, were enslaved to the world and the flesh, and therefore though, by virtue of their birthright, they thought themselves secure of their church-membership, Christ tells them that having thus made themselves servants, they should not abide in the house forever. Jerusalem, by opposing the Gospel of Christ, which proclaimed liberty, and adhering to the Sinai-covenant, which gendered to bondage, came to be in bondage with her children, (Gal. 4:24, 25.) and therefore was unchurched, her charter taken away, and she cast out as the son of the bond-woman, Gen. 21:10. Chrysostom gives this sense of this place, 'Think not to be made free from sin by the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses, for Moses was but a servant, and had not that perpetual authority in the church, which the Son had; but if the Son make you free, it is well,' v. 36. But, it looks further, to the rejection of all that are the *servants of sin*, and receive not the adoption of the sons of God; though those unprofitable servants may be in God's house awhile, as retainers to his family, yet there is a day coming, when the children of the bond-woman and of the free shall be distinguished. True believers only, who are the children of the covenant, are accounted free, and shall abide forever in the house, as Isaac: they shall have a nail in the holy place on earth, (Ezra 9:8.) and mansions in the holy place in heaven, ch. 14:2.

He shows them the way of deliverance out of bondage into the glorious liberty of the children of God, Rom. 8:21. The case of those that are the servants of sin, is sad, but it is not helpless, nor hopeless. As it is the privilege of all the sons of the family, and their dignity above the servants, that they abide in the house forever; so the Son, the First-born among many brethren, the Heir of all things, has a power both of manumission and of adoption; (v. 36.) *If the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.*

Note, Jesus Christ in the Gospel offers us our freedom; He has authority and power to make free. [1.] To discharge prisoners; this He does by making satisfaction for our guilt; on which the gospel-offer is grounded; moreover He makes satisfaction for our debts, for

35 If *the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

[Practical Observations.]

37 I *know that ye are Abraham's seed: *but ye seek to kill me, *because my word hath no place in you.

38 I *speak that which I have seen with my Father; *and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.

z 31,32. Ps. 19:13. 119:32,133. Lr. 9:24,25. 6:11. Zech. 9:11,12. Luke 4:18. Rom. 8:2. 2 Cor. 3:7. Gal. 5:1.
y 33. Act. 13:26. Rom. 9:7.
z 40,53. 5:16-18. 7:1,19,25. 10:31. 11:53.
a 43,45-47. 5:44. 12:38-43. Matt. 13:15,19-22. 1 Cor. 2:14.
b 58. 3:32. 5:19,30. 12:49,50. 14:10,24. 17:8.
c 41,44. Matt. 3:7. 1 John 3:8-10.

ple indeed, but [signifies] really. It notes, [1.] The certainty of the promise; the liberty which the Jews boasted of, was an imaginary liberty, they boasted of a false gift; but the liberty which Christ gives, is certain; it is real, and has real effects; the servants of sin promise themselves liberty, and fancy themselves free, when they have broken religion's bands asunder; but they cheat themselves, none are free indeed but those whom Christ makes free. [2.] It notes the excellency of the freedom; it deserves the name, in comparison with which all other liberties are slavery. It is a glorious liberty. It is substance; (Prov. 8:21.) while the things of the world are shadows, things that are not.

He applies this to the cavilling Jews. In answer to their boasts of relation to Abraham; (v. 37.) 'I know very well that ye are Abraham's seed, but now ye seek to kill me, and therefore have forfeited the honor of relation to Abraham, because my word hath no place in you.'

'I know that ye are Abraham's seed, and it is your honor.' He grants them what was true, and in what they said that was false, (that they were never in bondage to any.) He does not contradict them, for He studied to profit them, and therefore said that which would please them; I know that ye are Abraham's seed. They boasted of their descent from Abraham, as that which aggrandized their names, and made them honorable; whereas really it did but aggravate their crimes, and make them exceeding sinful. Out of their own mouths will He judge vain-glorious hypocrites, who boast of their parentage and education; 'Are you Abraham's seed? Why then did you not tread in the steps of his faith and obedience?'

But ye seek to kill me. They had attempted it several times, and were now designing it, which quickly appeared, (v. 59.) when they took up stones to cast at Him. Christ knows all the wickedness, not only which men do, but which they design, and endeavor to do. To seek to kill any innocent man, is a crime black enough, but to compass and imagine the death of the King of kings, was a crime of which we want words to express the heinousness.

Why were Abraham's seed so inveterate against Abraham's promised Seed,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 30-36. Many profess Christianity without saving faith: when we see men convinced that the doctrines, termed evangelical, are divine truths, we should warn them of the temptations and dangers to which they will be exposed, that they may guard against them.—By 'continuing in the Word' of Christ, with obedient faith, we prove that we are his 'disciples indeed,' and 'have not received the seed in stony ground.' Thus we attain a more satisfactory knowledge of the truth: and this teaches us the nature, Author, and means of liberty; and leads us to pursue, and at length to enjoy, that blessing. But as men impose on themselves, through self-flattery, in respect of their secular concerns, no wonder, if they mistake their character and state, in relation to God and the eternal world. (Note, Jer. 17:9,10.) He 'who committeth sin is the slave of sin;' and many declaim and dispute about liberty of every kind, nay, fight for it, who are themselves slaves to

in whom they and all the families of the earth should be blessed? Our Savior here tells them 'My word hath no place in you, you have no inclination to it, no relish of it, other things are more taking, more pleasing.' Or, 'It does not take hold of you, it makes no impression upon you.' Some of the critics read it, My word does not penetrate into you; it descended as the rain, but it came upon them as the rain upon the rock, which runs off, and did not soak into their hearts, as the rain upon the ploughed ground. The Syriac reads it, 'Because ye do not acquiesce in my word; you are not persuaded of the truth of it, nor pleased with the goodness of it.' Our translation is very significant, It has no place in you. They sought to kill Him, and so effectually to silence Him, not because He had done them harm, but because they could not bear the convincing power of his word. Note, [1.] The words of Christ ought to have in us, the innermost and uppermost place; a dwelling place, not as a stranger or sojourner; a working place, it must have room to operate, to work sin out of us, and to work grace in us; it must have a ruling place, be upon the throne, dwell in us richly. [2.] There are many that make a profession of religion, in whom the Word of Christ has no place; they will not allow it a place, for they do not like it; Satan does all he can to displace it; and other things possess the place it should have in us. [3.] Where the Word of God has no place, no good is to be expected, for room is left there for all wickedness. If the unclean spirit find the heart empty of Christ's Word, he enters in, and dwells there.

V. 38-47. Christ and the Jews are still at issue; He sets Himself to convince and convert them, while they set themselves to contradict Him.

He traces the difference between his sentiments and theirs to a different rise and original; (v. 38.) I speak that which I have seen with my Father, and ye do what ye have seen with your father. Here are two fathers spoken of, God and the devil, and without controversy these are contrary the one to the other.

Christ's doctrine was from heaven, copied out of the counsels of infinite wisdom, and the intentions of eternal love. I speak that which I have seen. The discoveries Christ has made us, are not grounded upon hearsay, but upon ocular inspection; so that He was thoroughly apprized of the nature and truth of all He said. He that is given to be a Witness to the people, is an Eye-witness. It is what I have seen with my Father. The doctrine of Christ is not a plausible hypothesis, supported by probable arguments; but an exact counterpart of

ambition, avarice, lust, anger, or some other groveling or malignant tyrant. How highly soever we value freedom, personal or political, civil or religious; (and when freedom is soberly ascertained, it can scarcely be too highly prized;) we must recollect that it is a mere shadow to the slave of sin and Satan; and we may well weep to see men, laden with heavy chains, glorying in their liberty, till death terminates their delusion, and makes them know they must be slaves forever. From this awful state no philosophy, no inventions of superstition, no ordinances, can deliver any man: nay, God may outwardly be served from slavish fear, or mercenary hope, and no liberty be obtained or enjoyed; but 'if the Son make us free, we shall be free indeed,' and forever. While, therefore, men stand up for freedom, let every one, who would be truly wise, come to Christ for that real liberty, to which He calls us by his Gospel. (Note, Matt. 11:28-30.)

SCOTT.

Verses 37-44.

My word hath no place in you. 'Ye hear the truths of God, but ye do not heed them. The word of life has no influence over you; and now can it, when you seek to kill me, because I proclaim this truth to you? It is a dismal omen, when a person is regardless of the truth of God, it is more so to be provoked against it; but to persecute and endeavor to destroy those who preach it, is the last degree of perverseness and obduracy.' Quesnel, 'From this whole period, it is manifest that the whole tendency of our Savior's discourse is to show the Jews that they are the seed of that serpent, which was to bruise the heel of the Messiah; & see what could that mean, (verse 44.) Ye are of your father the devil.' Lightfoot. And in verse 43, Ye do not understand my speech, because ye cannot hear my word; that is, ye cannot hear my doctrine; it comes too close to you; it

searches your hearts, detects your hypocrisy, and exposes your iniquitous intentions and designs; and as ye are determined not to leave your sins, so ye are purposed not to hear my doctrine.'

DR. A. CLARKE.

'The two sins for which Christ principally reproves the Jews in the 44th verse, are, their attempt to take his life, and their contempt of the truth. By both these He shows that they resemble, or are under the influence of, the evil spirit.' Gratius. Oh, how tremendous a thing it is to have the devil for our father! How careful, therefore, should we be to avoid that which will subject us to this vile relation.'

WHITLY.

(38.) 'The account Josephus gives of the wickedness of the Jews about this time, abundantly vindicates this assertion of our Lord from any appearance of undue severity.'

DONDERDORP.

39 They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, 'If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.'

40 But 'now ye seek to kill me, 'a man that hath told you the truth which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.'

41 Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, 'We be not born of fornication; 'we have one Father, even God.'

42 Jesus said unto

d 37. Matt. 3:9. 5:45. Rom. 2:28, 29. 4:12, 18. 9:7. Gal. 3:29. Jam. 2:22-24.

37. Ps. 137:12-15. Rev. 12:4, 12:13, 17. f 38, 44. e 45. 57:3-7. Fr. 23:45-47. Hos. 1:2-5-6. Mal. 3:11. Ex. 4:22. Deut. 14:1. Is. 63:16. 64:1. Jer. 31:9. 31:20. Ez. 16:20. 21. Mal. 1:6.

of the family,) *thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother a Hittite*, Ezek. 6:3. As it is common for families that are sinking to boast of their pedigree, so churches that are corrupt and depraved, value themselves upon their antiquity, and the eminence of their first planters. They designed to cast an odium upon Christ, as if He reflected upon the patriarch Abraham, as one they had learned evil from. See how they sought an occasion to quarrel with Him.

Christ overthrows this plea, and discovers the vanity of it by a plain and cogent argument; 'Abraham's children will do the works of Abraham, but ye do not his works; therefore ye are not Abraham's children.'

The proposition is plain; 'If ye were Abraham's children, such as could claim an interest in the covenant, then ye would do the works of Abraham, for to those only of Abraham's house, who kept the way of the Lord, as Abraham did, would God perform what He had spoken;' Gen. 18:19. Those only are reckoned the seed of Abraham, who tread in the steps of his faith, Rom. 4:12. Though the Jews had their genealogies exact, they could not but by them make out their relation to Abraham, so as to take the benefit of the old entail, (according to the form of the gift,) unless they walked in the same spirit; good women's relation to Sarah is proved only by this—*whose daughters ye are as long as ye do well*, 1 Pet. 3:6. Note, Those who would approve themselves Abraham's seed must not only be of his faith, but do Abraham's works, (James 2:21, 22,) must, as He did, follow God wherever He leads them, resign their dearest comforts to Him, be strangers and sojourners in this world, keep up the worship of God in their families, and always walk before God in their uprightness, for these were the works of Abraham.

The assumption is evident likewise; *But ye do not do the works of Abraham, for ye seek to kill Me*, v. 40.

He shows them what work they were now about; they sought to kill Him; and three things are intimated, as an aggravation of their intention. 1. They were so *unnatural* as to seek the life of a man, like themselves, bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh, who had given them no provocation. *Ye imagine mischief against a man*, Ps. 62:3. 2. They were so *ungrateful* as to seek the life of one who had told them the truth, had done them the greatest kindness; had not only not imposed upon them with a lie, but had instructed them in the most important truths; *was He therefore become their enemy?* 3. They were so *ungodly* as to seek the life of one who told them the truth, which He had heard from God, who was a Messenger sent from God to them, so that their attempt against Him was an act of malice against God Himself. This was their work, and they persisted in it.

He shows them this did not become the children of Abraham: for this did not Abraham. He was famous for his humanity, witness his rescue of the captives, and for his piety, witness his obedience to the heavenly vision in man's instances, and some tender ones. Abraham believed God, these were obstinate in unbelief; Abraham followed God, these fought against Him; so that he would be ignorant of them, and would not acknowledge them, they were so unlike him. Isa. 63:16. See Jer. 22:15-17. He would not have done thus, if he had lived now, or I had lived then: some read it. We should thus reason ourselves out of any way of wickedness; would Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob have done so? We cannot expect to be ever with them, if we be never like them.

The conclusion follows of course; v. 41. 'Whatever your pretensions be, you are not Abraham's children, but father yourselves upon another family; (v. 41.) there is a father whose deeds you do, whose spirit ye are of, and whom you resemble.' He does not yet say plainly that He means the devil, till they by their cavils forced Him so to explain Himself; which reaches us to treat even bad men with civility, and not to be forward to say that of them, or to them, which, though true sounds harsh. He tried

incontestable truths in the eternal Mind. It was not only what He had heard from his Father, but what He had seen with Him; when the counsel of peace was between them both. Moses spake what he heard from God, but he might not see the face of God; Paul had been in the third heaven, but what he had seen there, he could not, must not, utter; for it was Christ's prerogative to have seen what He spake, and to speak what He had seen.

Their doings were from hell; 'Ye do that which ye have seen with your father.' Ye do, by your own works, father yourselves, for it is evident whom ye resemble, and therefore easy to find out your original.' As a child that is trained up with his father, learns his father's words and fashions, and grows like him, by an affected imitation as well as by natural image, so these Jews, by their malicious opposition to Christ and the Gospel, made themselves as like the devil, as if they had industriously set him before them for their pattern.

He takes off and answers their vain-glorious boasts of relation to Abraham and to God, as their Fathers, and shows the vanity and falsehood of their pretensions.

They said, *Abraham is our father*, v. 39. In this they intended to make themselves look great. They had forgotten the mortification given them by that acknowledgment prescribed them, (Deut. 26:5.) *a Syrian ready to perish was my father*; and the charge exhibited against their degenerate ancestors, (whose steps they trod in, and not those of the first founder

whether their own consciences would infer from what He said, that they were the devil's children; and it is better to hear it now that we are called to repent, to change our father, and our family, by changing our spirit and way, than hear it in the great day from Christ.

So far were they from owning their unworthiness of relation to Abraham, that they pleaded relation to God Himself as their father; 'We are not born of fornication, we are not bastards, but legitimate sons; we have one Father, even God.'

Some understand this literally. They were not the sons of the bond-woman, as the Ishmaelites were; nor begotten in incest, as the Moabites and Ammonites; (Deut. 23:3.) nor were they a spurious brood in Abraham's family, but Hebrews of the Hebrews; and being born in lawful wedlock, might call God Father who instituted that honorable estate in innocence; for a seed, not tainted with divorces or the plurality of wives, is called a seed of God, Mal. 2:15.

Others take it figuratively. They began to be aware now, that Christ spake of a spiritual, not a carnal father, of the father of their religion; and so,

[1.] They deny themselves to be a generation of idolaters; 'We are not the children of idolatrous parents, nor have been bred in idolatrous worship.' Idolatry is often spoken of as spiritual whoredom, and idolaters as children of whoredoms, Hosea 2:4. Isa. 57:3. Now if they mean that they were not the posterity of idolaters, the allegation was false, for no nation was more addicted to idolatry than the Jews before the captivity; if they mean no more than that they themselves were not idolaters, what then? A man may be free from idolatry, and yet perish in another iniquity, and he shut out of Abraham's covenant. *If thou commit no idolatry*, (apply it to this spiritual fornication,) yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the covenant. A rebellious, prodigal son will be disinherited, though he be not born of fornication.

[2.] They boast themselves to be true worshippers of the true God. We have not many fathers, as the heathen had, gods many, and lords many, no, the Lord our God is one Lord and one Father. Note, Those flatter themselves, and put a damning cheat upon their souls, who imagine that their professing true religion, and worshipping the true God, will save them, though they worship not God in spirit and in truth, nor are true to their profession.

Our Savior gives a full answer to this fallacy, (v. 42, 43,) and proves, by two arguments, that they had no right to call God Father.

First, They did not love Christ; *If God were your Father, you would love Me*. He had proved their relation to Abraham, by their going about to kill Him; (v. 40,) but here He disproves their relation to God, by their not loving Him. A man may pass for a child of Abraham, if he do not appear an enemy to Christ by gross sin; but he cannot approve himself a child of God, unless he be a faithful friend and follower of Christ. Note, All that have God for their Father, have a true love to Christ, an esteem of his Person, a grateful sense of his love, sincere affection to his cause and kingdom, complacency in the salvation wrought by Him, in the method and terms of it, and a care to keep his commandments, which is the surest evidence of love to Him. We are here upon trial how we will conduct ourselves to our Maker, and accordingly it will be with us in the state of retribution. God has taken various methods to prove us, and this was one; He sent his Son into the world, with sufficient proofs of his mission, concluding that all that called Him Father, would kiss his Son, and bid Him welcome, see 1 John 5:1. By this our adoption will be proved—Did we love Christ, or no? *If any man do not love him so far from being a child of God, that he is anathema*, 1 Cor. 16:22.

Our Savior proves that if they were God's children, they would love Him, for, saith He, I proceeded forth, and came from God.

1. He was the Son of God; I proceeded forth from God; this means his origin from the

them *If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God: neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

43 Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do: he was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. * When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it.

k 5:28. 15:23,34. 1 Cor. 16:22. 1
Jan 5:1,2.
l 1:14. 16:27,28. 17:9,25. Rev. 22:1.
m 5:43. 7:28,29. 12:49. 14:10. Gal.
C 4. 1 John 1:10,14.
n 27. 5:43. 7:17. 12:39,40. Prov.
28:5. Is. 44:18. Hos. 14:9. Mic. 4:
12. Rom. 3:11.
o 6:40. Jer. 5:10. Acts 7:51. Rom.
8:7,8.
p 38,41. 6:70. Gen. 3:15. Matt. 13:
38. Acts 13:10. 1 John 3:8-10,12.
q 6:1. 3:3-7. 7. King 22:22. 1 Chr.
21:1. Jam. 4:1-7. 1 Pet. 5:8. Rev.
2:10. 9:11. 13:6-8. 20:7-9.
r 2 Pet. 2:4. Jude 6.
s 6:40. 3:4,5. 2 Chr. 18:20-22. Job
1:11. 24-6. Acts 5:3. 13:10. 2
Cor. 11:13,15. 2 Thes. 2:9-11.
Rev. 12:9. 13:14. 20:2,3,10. 21:8.
22:15.

strangers, and rude ones too, ridiculed it.

The reason why they did not understand Christ's speech made the matter much worse: *Ye cannot hear my word*, that is, 'cannot persuade yourselves to hear it attentively, and without prejudice, as it should be heard.' The meaning of this *cannot*, is an obstinate *will not*; as the Jews could not hear Stephen, (Acts 7: 57.) nor Paul, Acts 22: 22. Note, The rooted antipathy of men's hearts to the doctrine of Christ, is the reason of their ignorance and errors. They do not like it nor love it, and therefore will not understand it; like Peter, who pretended he *knew not what the damsel said*, (Matt. 26: 70.) when in truth he knew not what to say to it. *Ye cannot hear my words*, for ye have *stopped your ears*, (Ps. 58: 4, 5.) and God, in a way of righteous judgment, has *made your ears heavy*, Isa. 6: 10.

Having thus disproved their relation to Abraham and to God, He comes next to tell them plainly whose children they were. If they be not God's children, they are the devil's, for God and Satan divide the world; the devil is therefore said to *work in the children of disobedience*, Eph. 2: 2. All wicked people are the devil's children, (2 Cor. 6: 15.) the serpent's seed, (Gen. 3: 15.) children of the wicked one, Matt. 13: 38. They partake of his nature, bear his image, obey his commands, and follow his example. Idolaters said to a stock, *Thou art my father*, Jer. 2: 27.

This is a high charge, and sounds harsh and horrid, that any of the children of men, especially the church's children, should be called *children of the devil*, and therefore our Savior proves it, by a general argument; *The lusts of your father ye will do*. 'You do the lusts which he would have you fulfil; you gratify him, and comply with his temptations, and are led captives by him at his will: you do those lusts which the devil himself fulfils.' Fleshly lusts and worldly lusts the devil tempts men to; but, being a spirit, he cannot fulfil them himself. The peculiar lusts of the devil are *spiritual wickednesses*, the lusts of the intellectual powers, corrupt reasonings, pride and envy, wrath and malice; to good, and enticing others to evil; these are lusts which the devil fulfils, and those who are under the dominion of these lusts, resemble the devil, as the child does the parent. The more of contemplation, and contrivance, and secret complicity in sin, the more it resembles the *lusts of the devil*. (2.) *You will do the devil's lusts*. The more there is of the *will* in these lusts, the more there is of the devil in them. When sin is committed of *choice*, and not by surprise, with *pleasure*, and not with reluctance, when it is persisted in with daring presumption and desperate resolution, like theirs that said, *We have loved strangers, and after them we will go*, then the sinner *will do* the devil's lusts. 'The lusts of your father ye delight to do,' so Dr. Hammond; and they are rolled under the tongue as a sweet morsel.

By particular instances, they manifestly resembled the devil—*murder and lying*. The devil is an enemy to life, because God is the God of life, and

life is the happiness of man; an enemy to truth because God is the God of truth, and truth is the bond of society.

He was a *murderer from the beginning*, not from his own beginning, for he was created an angel of light, but from the beginning of apostasy, which was soon after the creation of man. He was a *man-slayer*; he was a *hater of man*, and so in disposition a murderer of him. He has his name *Satan*, from *Sin*—*hatred*. He maligned God's image upon man, envied his happiness, and desired his ruin, was an avowed enemy to the race. He was man's tempter to that sin which brought death into the world, and so was effectually the murderer of all mankind, which in Adam had but one neck. He was a murderer of souls, deceived them into sin, and by it slew them; (Rom. 7: 11.) poisoned man with forbidden fruit, and made him his murderer. Thus he was not only at the beginning, but from the beginning, which intimates that thus he has been ever since; as he began, so he continues, the murderer of men by his temptations. The great tempter is the great destroyer. The Jews called the devil, the *angel of death*. He was in the first murder that ever was committed. Cain was of that wicked one, and slew his brother, 1 John 3: 12. If the devil had not been very strong in Cain, he could not have killed his own brother. Cain killing his brother by instigation of the devil, the devil is called the *murderer*, which does not speak Cain's personal guilt the less, but the devil's the more, whose torments, we have reason to think, will be the greater when the time comes, for all that wickedness which he has drawn men into. See what reason we have to stand upon our guard against the *woles of the devil*, (for he is a murderer, and aims to do mischief, even when he *speaks fair*.) and to wonder that he, who is the murderer of the children of men, should yet be, by their own consent, so much their master.

These Jews were murderers like him; murderers of souls, which they led blindfold into the ditch, and made the *children of hell*; sworn enemies to Christ, and now ready to be his betrayers and murderers, for the same reason that Cain killed Abel. They were that *seed of the serpent*, that were to *bruise the heel of the Seed of the woman*; *Now ye seek to kill Me*.

He was a *liar*. A lie is opposed to truth, (1 John 2: 21.) and, accordingly, the devil is here described to be an enemy to truth, and therefore to Christ.

First, He is a *deserter from the truth*; he *abode not in the truth*, did not continue in the rectitude of his nature, but left his first state; his apostasy was founded in a lie. The angels were the *hosts of the Lord*; those that fell, were not true to their Sovereign, they were not to be trusted, being charged with folly and defection, Job 4: 18. By the truth here, we may understand the revealed will of God concerning the salvation of man by Christ, the truth of which Christ was now preaching, and the Jews opposed; herein they did like their father the devil, who, seeing the honor put upon the first Adam, and foreseeing the greater honor intended in the second Adam, would not be reconciled to that counsel of God, but, from a spirit of pride and envy, set himself to resist it, and to thwart its designs; and so did these Jews, as his children and agents.

Secondly, He is *destitute of truth*; *There is no truth in him*. His interest in the world is supported by lies, and you can confide in nothing he says or does. The notions he propagates concerning good and evil, are false, his proofs are lying wonders, his temptations cheats; he has great knowledge of the truth, but having no affection to it, but on the contrary, being a sworn enemy to it, he is said to have *no truth in him*.

He is a friend and patron of lying; *When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own*. Three things are here said of the devil, with reference to the sin of lying.

(43.) *Ye cannot hear.* "Canno bea w hear." So the same word is used, 6: 60.

BLOOMFIELD

(44.) *Of his own.* "The phrase is equivalent to, according to his natural disposition." Beza, Grotius, Roscinus. BLOOMFIELD.

45 And 'because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not.

46 Which of you 'convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, 'why do ye not believe me?

47 He that is of God, heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God.

[Practical Observations.]

48 Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, 'Say we not well that 'thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?

48. 3:19, 20, 7:7. Gal. 4:16. 2 Thes. 2:10. 2 Tim. 4:3, 4. 7:14, 20, 15:10, 16:6. 2 Cor. 5:21. Heb. 7:26. 1 Pet. 2:22. 7 Matt. 21:25. Mark 11:31. 37:43, 45. 1:12, 13. 6:45, 46, 55. 10:20, 27. 17:6-8. 1 John 3:10. 4:1-6. 5:1. 2 John 9. 3 John 11. 52. 13:13. Matt. 15:7. Jam. 2:19. 4:19. 7:20. 10:20. 1s. 49:7. 53:3. Matt. 10:25. 12:24, 31. Rom. 15:3. Hebr. 13:3.

their tongues to use deceit, Rom. 3:13. He is the father of lies, who begat them, trained them up in the way of lying, whom they resemble and obey, and with whom all liars shall have their portion forever. Christ having thus proved all murderers and liars to be the devil's children, leaves it to the consciences of his hearers to say, *Thou art the man.*

But He comes in the following verses to assist them in the application of it to themselves; He does not call them liars, but shows them that they were no friends to truth, and therein resembled him who abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

He charges upon them,

That they would not believe the Word of truth. Two ways it may be taken, (1.) 'Though I tell you the truth, yet you will not believe that I do so.' Though He gave abundant proof of his commission from God, and his affection to men, they would not believe that He told the truth. Now was truth fallen in the street, and could not enter, Isa. 59:14, 15. The greatest truths with some gained no credit; for they rebelled against the light, Job 24:13. Or, (2.) *Because I tell you the truth,* (so we read it,) *therefore ye believe Me not.* They would not receive Him as a Prophet, because He told them unpleasing truths, concerning themselves and their own case, showed them their faces in a glass that would not flatter them. Miserable is the case of those to whom the light of divine truth is a torment.

To show them the unreasonableness of their infidelity, He condescends to put the matter to this issue, v. 46. He and they being contrary, either He was in an error, or they were.

[1.] If He were in an error, why did not they convince Him? The falsehood of prebending prophets was discovered either by the ill tendency of their doctrines, (Deut. 13:2.) or by the ill tenor of their conversation; *Ye shall know them by their fruits;* but (saith Christ) *which of you,* of the sanhedrim, who judge of prophets, *convinceth Me of sin?* They accused Him of gluttony, drunkenness, blasphemy, sabbath-breaking, confederacy with Satan, &c. But they were malicious calumnies, and such as every one, that knew Him, knew to be utterly false. When they had done their utmost, by artifice, subornation and perjury, to prove some crime upon Him, the very judge that condemned Him, owned *he found no fault in Him.*

The sin He here challenges them to convict Him of, is, *First*, An inconsistent doctrine. They had heard his testimony; could they show any thing in it absurd or unworthy to be believed, any contradiction, either of Himself or of the Scriptures, or any corruption of truth or manners; *ch. 18:20.* Or, *Secondly*, An incongruous conversation. 'Which of you can justly charge Me with any thing, in word or deed, unbecoming a prophet?' See the conde-

First, That he is a liar; his oracles, his prophecies, and the images in which he was worshipped, were teachers of lies; he tempted our first parents with a downright lie; all his temptations are carried on by lies, calling evil good, and good evil, and promising impunity to sin; he knows them to be lies, and suggests them with an intention to deceive, and so to destroy. When he contradicted the Gospel in the scriptures and Pharisees, it was by lies, and when afterward he corrupted it in the man of sin, it was by strong delusions, and a complicated lie.

Secondly, When he speaks a lie, he speaks of his own. It is an idiom of his own, not of God; his Creator never put it into him. When men speak a lie, Satan fills their hearts to lie; (Acts 5:3.) but when the devil speaks a lie, it is of his own framing, the motives to it are from himself, which speaks the desperate depth of wickedness in it, to which those apostate spirits are sunk; as in their first defection they had no tempter, so their sinfulness is still their own.

Thirdly, That he is the father of it. He is the father of every lie, not only which he himself suggests, but of all lies; when men speak lies, they come originally from him, and bear his image. He is the father of every liar; so it may be understood. God made men with a disposition to truth, it is congruous to reason and natural light, to the order of our faculties, and the laws of society; but the devil has so corrupted the nature of man, that the wicked are said to be estranged from the womb, speaking lies; (Ps. 58:3.) he has taught them with

scension of our Lord, that He demanded not credit any further than the allowed motives of credibility support his demands. See Jer. 2:8. 31. Mic. 6:3. Ministers may from hence learn, 1. To walk so circumspectly, as that it may not be in the power of their most strict observers to convince them of sin, that the ministry be not blamed. The only way to not be convicted of sin is, not to sin. 2. To be willing to admit a scrutiny; though we are confident in many things that we are in the right, yet we should be willing to have it tried. See Job 6:24.

[2.] If they were in error, why were they not convinced by Him? 'If I say the truth, why do you not believe Me?' If you cannot convince Me of error, you must own that I say the truth, and why do you not give Me credit? 'Why will you not deal with Me upon trust?' Note, If men would but inquire into the reason of their infidelity, they would find themselves reduced to such absurdities as they could not but be ashamed of; for it will be found that the reason why we believe not in Christ, is, we are not willing to part with sin, deny ourselves, and serve God; we are not of the Christian religion, because we would not be of any, and unbelief of our Redeemer resolves itself into a downright rebellion against our Creator.

Another thing charged upon them is, they would not hear the words of God; (v. 47.) which further shows how groundless was their claim of relation to God. Here is a doctrine laid down; *He that is of God, heareth God's words;* that is, he is willing and ready to hear them, is desirous to know the mind of God, and cheerfully embraces whatever he knows to be so. God's words have such an authority over, and agreeableness with, all that are born of God, that they meet them, as the child Samuel did, with, *Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.* Let the Word of the Lord come. He apprehends and discerns them, so hears them, as to perceive the voice of God in them, which the natural man does not, 1 Cor. 2:14. He that is of God, is soon aware of the discoveries He makes of Himself, of the nearness of his name; (Ps. 75:1.) as they of the family know the master's tread, and the master's knock, and open to him immediately, (Luke 12:36.) as the sheep know the voice of their shepherd, *ch. 10:4; 5. Cant. 2:8.*

Ye therefore hear Him not; that is, 'Ye heed not, understand not, believe not, the words of God, nor care to hear them, because ye are not of God.' Your being thus deaf and dead to the words of God, is a plain evidence that ye are not of God. It is in his Word that God manifests Himself; we are therefore reckoned to be well or ill affected to God, according as we are well or ill affected to his Word; see 2 Cor. 4:4. 1 John 4:6. Or, their not being of God, was the reason why they did not profitably hear the words of God which Christ spake; they did not understand and believe Him, not because the things themselves were obscure, or wanted evidence, but because the hearers were not of God. If the Word of the kingdom do not bring forth fruit, the blame is to be laid upon the soil, not upon the seed, as appears by the parable of the sower, Matt. 13:13, &c.

V. 48-50. The malice of bell breaks out in the base language which the unbelieving Jews gave to our Lord. Hitherto they had cavilled at his doctrine; but, having showed themselves

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 37-47. Immense numbers boast of being Christians, as absurdly as the Jews did that they were 'Abraham's children;' and they suppose that God is their Father, because they have been baptized, even as the Jews did because of circumcision. But which do they resemble most, the primitive Christians, or those who sought to murder Christ? Are they born again, and made partakers of a divine and holy nature? Do they love all things, love Jesus and his service? If there is nothing of this kind in them, but things of a contrary nature, let them not deceive themselves: they are the children of him whose works they do; and the pride, rebellion, dissimulation, malice and malignity, of numbers called Christians, show them

to be the offspring of the apostate, 'murderer,' and 'liar.' Such affronting applications of evangelical truth induce men to complain that they cannot understand the words of Christ: no evidence can convince them, that those doctrines are true, which reduce them to the alternative of renouncing every sin, or of perishing in hell. The unexceptionable conduct of those, who speak the words of God, will not procure them credit, 'because they tell them the truth;' but if any imprudent report be spread, or new heresy started, the same persons will embrace it with implicit and absurd credulity! The reason is evident, 'they are not of God, and therefore cannot hear his words.'

SCOTT.

Verse 47. He that is of God, &c. 'He who resembles God in holiness and goodness, &c. is disposed to do his will, is ready to receive the doctrine [700]

that comes from Him; and your not receiving his words is an evidence that you do not thus resemble Him, nor bear a filial affection towards Him.'

WHITNEY

49 Jesus answered, ^bI have not a devil: ^cbut I honor my Father, and ye do dishonor me.

50 And ^dI seek not mine own glory: ^ethere is one that seeketh and judgeth.

51 Verily, verily, I say unto you, ^fIf a man ^gkeep my saying, he shall never ^hsee death.

52 Then said the Jews unto him, ⁱNow we know that thou hast a devil. ^jAbraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, ^kIf a man keep my saying, he shall never ^ltaste of death.

^b Prov. 26:4, 5. ^c 1 Pet. 2:23.
^d 29. ^e 11:4. ^f 12:28. ^g 13:31, 32. ^h 14:19.
ⁱ 17:4. ^j Is. 42:21. ^k 49:3. ^l Matt. 3:15.
^m 17. ⁿ Phil. 2:5-7. ^o 5:41. ^p 7:13.
^q 5:20-22, 45. ^r 12:47, 48.
^s 13:15, 16. ^t 24. ^u 6:50. ^v 11:25, 26.
^w 55. ^x 15:20.
^y 12. ^z Ps. 39:48. ^{aa} Luke 2:26.
^{ab} 48. ^{ac} 9:24.
^{ad} Zech. 1:5, 6. ^{ae} Heb. 11:13.
^{af} 1 Heb. 2:9.

in combination with Beelzebub. Or rather, [2.] That He was a *melancholy* man, whose brain was clouded, or a *mad* man, whose brain was heated, and that which He said was no more to be believed than the extravagant rambles of a man in a *delirium*. Thus, ^fdivine revelations of things which are above the discovery of reason, have been often branded with the charge of *enthusiasm*, and the prophet was called a *mad fellow*, 2 Kings 9: 11. Hos. 9: 7. The inspiration of the pagan oracles and prophets was indeed a frenzy, and those that had it were for the time beside themselves, but that which was truly *divine* was not so. *Wisdom is justified of her children*, as wisdom indeed.

They undertook to justify this character, and applied it to the present occasion; *Say we not well that Thou art so?* One would think that his excellent discourses should have altered their opinion of Him; instead of that, their hearts were more hardened, and their prejudices confirmed. They value themselves on their enmity to Christ, as if they had never spoken *better* than when they spake the worst they could of Christ. Those have arrived at the highest pitch of wickedness, who *avow* their impiety, *repeat* what they should *retract*, and *justify* themselves in that, for which they ought to *condemn* themselves. It is bad to say and do ill, but it is worse to *stand to it*. When Christ spake against the sins of great men, and thereby incensed them against Him, they who were sensible of no interest but what is secular and sensual, concluded Him *beside Himself*, for they thought that none but a madman would lose his preferment, and hazard his life, for his religion and conscience. The meekness and mercifulness of Heaven shines in Christ's reply to this calumny, v. 49, 50.

He denies their charge against Him; *I have not a devil*; as Paul, (Acts 26: 25.) *I am not mad*. The imputation is unjust; 'I am neither actuated by a devil, nor in compact with one,' this He evidenced by what He did against the devil's kingdom. He takes no notice of their calling Him a *Samaritan*, because it was a personal reflection, and not worth taking notice of; but saying He had a devil, reflected on his commission, and therefore He answered that. Augustine gives this descent upon his not saying any thing to their calling Him a Samaritan—that He was indeed that good Samaritan spoken of in the parable, Luke 10: 33.

He asserts the sincerity of his intentions; *I honor my Father*. They suggested that He took undue honors to Himself, and derogated from the honor due to God, both which He *denies* here, in saying that He made it his business to honor his Father, and Him only. It also proves that He had not a devil, for, if He had, He would not honor God. Note, They who can truly say that they make it their constant care to honor God, are sufficiently armed against the censures and reproaches of men.

He complains of the wrong they did Him by their calumnies; *Ye do dishonor Me*. By this it appears that, as Man, He had a sense of the indignity done Him; reproach was a sword in his bones; and yet He underwent it for our salvation. It is the will of God, that *all men should honor the Son*, yet there are many that *dishonor Him*; such a contradiction is there in the carnal mind to the will of God. Christ honored his Father as never man did, and yet was Himself dishonored as never man was; for though God has promised that those who honor Him, He will honor, He never promised that men should honor them.

Verse 51.

"The particular scope of Jesus Christ in this passage was, to prove that He was not possessed of an evil spirit, since the keeping of his word would procure eternal life for all who obey Him; while Satan, on the contrary, leads men into sin, whose wages is death, or everlasting perdition. Hence we may infer, that that doctrine which produces

uneasy when He complained (v. 43, 47.) that they would not hear Him, they fall to downright railing, v. 45. They were not the common people, but scribes and Pharisees, men of consequence, who, when they saw themselves convicted of obstinate infidelity, scornfully turned off the conviction with this, *Say we not well, that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?*

(1.) That He was a Samaritan, that is, an enemy to their church and nation, one that they could not endure. Thus they exposed Him to the ill-will of the people, with whom you could not put a man into a worse name, than to call him a *Samaritan*. If He had been a Samaritan, He had been punishable, by the *beating of the rebels*, (as they called it,) for coming into the temple. They had often called Him a *Gallilean—a mean man*; but, as if that were not enough, though it contradicted the other, they will have Him a *Samaritan—a bad man*. The Jews to this day call the Christians, in reproach, *Cuthæi—Samaritans*. Note, Great endeavors have in all ages been used to make good people odious by putting them under black characters, and it is easy to run that down with a crowd and a cry, which is once put into an ill name. Perhaps because Christ inveighed against the pride and tyranny of the priests and elders, they hereby suggest that He aimed at the ruin of their church, in aiming at its reformation, and was *falling away* to the Samaritans.

(2.) That He had a devil. Either, [1.] That He was in *league with the devil*; having reproached his doctrine as tending to Samaritanism, here they reflect upon his miracles as done in combination with Beelzebub. Or rather, [2.] That He was a *melancholy* man, whose brain was clouded, or a *mad* man, whose brain was heated, and that which He said was no more to be believed than the extravagant rambles of a man in a *delirium*. Thus, ^fdivine revelations of things which are above the discovery of reason, have been often branded with the charge of *enthusiasm*, and the prophet was called a *mad fellow*, 2 Kings 9: 11. Hos. 9: 7. The inspiration of the pagan oracles and prophets was indeed a frenzy, and those that had it were for the time beside themselves, but that which was truly *divine* was not so. *Wisdom is justified of her children*, as wisdom indeed.

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See here, his *contempt* of worldly honor; *I seek not mine own glory*. He did not aim at that in what He had said of Himself, or against his persecutors; He did not court applause nor covet preferment, but industriously declined both. He did not seek his *own glory* distant from his Father's, nor had any *separate interest* of his own. For men to search their *own glory* is *not glory* indeed, (Prov. 25: 27.) but their shame, to be so much out in their aim. This comes in here as a reason why Christ made so light of their reproaches; 'You do *dishonor Me*, but cannot disturb, shall not disquiet Me, for I seek not mine own glory.' Note, Those who are dead to men's praise, can safely bear their contempt.

His comfort under worldly dishonor; *There is One that seeketh and judgeth*. In two things Christ made it appear that He sought not his *own glory*: He did not court men's respect, but was indifferent to it, and in reference to this He saith, 'There is One that seeketh my interest in the esteem and affections of the people, while I am in no care about it.' Note, God will seek their honor, that do not seek their *own*; for before honor is humility. He did not *revenge* men's affronts, and in reference to this He saith, 'There is One that judgeth, that will vindicate my honor, and reckon with those that trample upon it.' Probably, He refers here to the judgments that were coming upon the Jews for the indignities they did to the Lord Jesus. See Ps. 38: 13-15. *I heard not, for Thou wilt hear*. If we undertake to judge for ourselves, whatever damage we sustain, our amendments is in our own hands; but if we be, as we ought to be, humble appellants, we shall find, to our comfort, *there is One that judgeth*.

V. 51-59. The doctrine of the immortality of believers, is ushered in with the usual solemn preface, *Verily, verily, I say unto you*.

The character of a believer; he keeps the sayings of Jesus, that *Word of mine* which I have delivered to you; this we must not only receive, but keep. We must keep it in mind and memory, in love and affection, so as in nothing to violate it; keep it *without spot*, (1 Tim. 6: 14.) as a trust committed to us, keep in it as our way, and to it as our rule.

The privilege of a believer; *He shall by no means see death forever*: so the original. Not as if the bodies of believers were secured from death; even the children of the Most High must die like men, and the followers of Christ have been, more than other men, in deaths oft, *killed all the day long*; how then is this promise made good? Ans. (1.) *The property of death* is so altered to them, that they do not see the terror of death, it is quite taken off; their sight does not terminate in death, as theirs who *live by sense*; they look so clearly, so comfortably, through and beyond death, and are so taken up with their state on the other side, that they overlook death, and see it not. (2.) The power of death is so broken, that though there is no remedy, but they must see death, they shall not be always shut up under its arrests, the day will come when death shall be swallowed up in victory. (3.) They shall not be hurt of the second death. That is the death especially meant here, that which is forever, which is opposed to everlasting life; they shall never enter into condemnation; shall have their everlasting lot where they cannot die any more, Luke 20: 36. Though now they cannot avoid seeing and tasting it too, they shall shortly be where it will be seen no more forever, Exod. 14: 13.

The Jews, instead of laying hold on this promise of immortality, lay hold on this occasion to reproach Him that makes them so kind an offer. Observe here,

Their railing; 'Now we know that Thou hast a devil, that Thou ravest, and sayest that Thou knowest not what.' See how these swine trample under foot the pearls of gospel-pro-

such very salutary effects cannot necessarily be false and diabolical." T. H. Horne. Yet the Jews perverted his words, as if He spake of his temporal death; v. 52. Now, they say, it is undeniably plain that words would procure eternal life for all who obey Him; while Satan, on the contrary, leads men into sin, whose wages is death, or everlasting perdition. Hence we may infer, that that doctrine which produces

est, *If a man. &c.* CLAGETT [701]

53 Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom makest thou thyself?

54 Jesus answered, *If I honor myself, my honor is nothing: it is my Father that honoreth me, of whom ye say, That he is your God.

53 4:12. 10:29,30. 12:34. Is. 9:5. Matt. 12:51,42. Rom. 9:5. Heb. 3:2,3. 7:1-7. 5:18. 10:33. 19:7. 50. 20. 11. 5:31,32. 7:19. Prov. 25:27. 2 Cor. 10:18. Heb. 5:4,5. 6:22-29,41. 7:39. 13:31,32. 16:14. 15. 17:1,5. Ps. 2:6-12. 110:1-4. Dan. 7:13,14. Acts 3:13. Eph. 1:20. 20. Phil. 2:9-11. 1 Pet. 1:12,21. 2 Pet. 1:17. 41. Is. 48:1,2. 66:5. Hos. 1:9. Rom. 2:17,32.

thered to his people. It was their honor that they died in faith, but die they must. Why should a good man be afraid to die, when Abraham is dead, and the prophets are dead? They have tracked the way through that dark valley, which should reconcile us to death, and help to take off the terror of it. Now they think Christ talks madly, when He saith, *If a man keep my sayings, he shall never taste death.* Tasting death means the same thing with seeing it; and well may death be represented as grievous to several of the senses, which is the destruction of them all.

[1.] They understood Christ of an immortality in this world. In the sense that Christ spake, it was not true that Abraham and the prophets were dead, for God is still the God of Abraham, and the God of the holy prophets; (Rev. 22: 6.) now God is not the God of the dead, but of the living; therefore Abraham and the prophets are still alive, and, as Christ meant it, they had not tasted death.

[2.] They thought none could be greater than Abraham and the prophets, whereas they could not but know that the Messiah would be greater than Abraham or any of the prophets; nay, they borrowed their greatness from Him. It was the honor of Abraham, that he was the father of the Messiah, and the honor of the prophets, that they testified beforehand concerning Him; so that He obtained a far more excellent name than they. Therefore, instead of inferring from Christ's making Himself greater than Abraham, that He had a devil, they should have inferred from his proving Himself so, (by doing works which neither Abraham nor the prophets ever did,) that He was the Christ; but their eyes were blinded.

They scornfully asked, *Whom makest Thou Thyself?* As if He had been guilty of vain-glory: whereas He was so far from making Himself greater than He was, that He drew a veil over his glory, and made Himself less than He was, and was the greatest Example of humility.

Christ still vouchsafes to reason with them, that every mouth may be stopped. He could have struck them dumb or dead upon the spot, but this was the day of his patience.

In his answer, He insists not upon his own testimony concerning Himself, but weaves it as not sufficient or conclusive; (v. 54.) *My honor is nothing, if I glorify Myself.* Note, Self-honor is no honor; and the affectation of glory is the forfeiture of it; it is not glory, (Prov. 25: 27.) but so great a reproach, that there is no sin which men are more industrious to hide than this; he that most affects praise, would not be thought to do it. Honor of our own creating has nothing in it, and therefore is called *vain-glory*. Self-admirers are self-deceivers. Our Lord Jesus was not one that honored Himself, as they represented Him. He was crowned by Him who is the Fountain of honor, and glorified not Himself to be made a High-Priest, Heb. 5: 4, 5.

But He refers Himself to his Father, God; and to their father, Abraham.

To his Father, God; *It is my Father that honoreth Me.* By this He means, [1.] That He derived from his Father all the honor He now claimed; He had commanded them to believe in Him, to follow Him, and to keep his Word, all which put an honor upon Him, but it was the Father that laid help upon Him, that lodged all fulness in Him, that sanctified and sealed Him, and sent Him into the world: and this justified Him in all demands of respect. [2.] He depended upon his Father for all the honor He further looked for; He courted not, but despised, the applauses of the age; for his eye and heart were upon the glory promised, which He had with the Father before the world was. He aimed at an advancement with which the Father was to exalt Him, a name He was to give Him, Phil. 2: 8, 9. Note, Christ, and all that are his, depend upon God for their honor; and he that is sure of honor where He is known, cares not though he be slighted where he is in disguise.

He here takes occasion to show the reason of their incredulity,—and that was, their unacquaintance with God: 'But why should I talk to you of my Father, when you say of Him that He is your God, yet you have not known Him?'

Ye say that He is the God ye have chosen, and are in covenant with; ye say that ye are Israel; but all are not so indeed, that are of Israel, Rom. 9: 6. Note, Many pretend to have an interest in God, who yet have no just cause to say so. They who called themselves the temple of the Lord, having profaned the temple of Jacob, dia ba, trust in lying words. What will it [702]

mises. If now at last they had evidence to prove Him mad, why did they say, (v. 48.) before they had that proof, *Thou hast a devil?* But this is the method of malice, first to fasten an invidious charge, and then to fish for evidence of it. If He had not abundantly proved Himself a Teacher from God, his promises of immortality to his followers might justly have been ridiculed, and charity itself would have imputed them to a crazed fancy; but his doctrine was evidently divine, his miracles confirmed it, and the Jewish religion taught them to expect such a Prophet; for them therefore thus to reject Him, was to abandon that promise to which their twelve tribes hoped to come, Acts 26: 7.

In short, they looked upon Him as guilty of an insufferable piece of arrogance, in making Himself greater than Abraham and the prophets: Abraham is dead, and the prophets are dead too; very true, for these Jews were the genuine offspring of those that killed them. It is true, Abraham and the prophets were great in the favor of God, and in the esteem of all good men. It is true, they kept God's sayings, and were obedient to them; and yet it is true, they died; every one in his own order was gathered to his people.

avail us to say, He is our God, if we be not his people, nor such as He will own?

Christ mentions their profession of relation to God, as an aggravation of their unbelief. All people will honor those whom their God honors; but these Jews, who said that the Lord was their God, studied how to disgrace one whom their God put honor upon. Note, The profession we make of a covenant relation to God, and an interest in Him, if it be not improved by us, will be improved against us.

Yet ye have not known Him. (1.) Ye know Him not at all. These Pharisees were so taken up with the study of their traditions, that they never minded the most needful and useful knowledge; like the false prophets of old, who caused people to forget God's name by their dreams, Jer. 23: 27. Or, (2.) Ye know Him not aright; and that is as bad as not knowing Him at all, or worse. Men may be able to dispute subtly concerning God, and yet may think Him such a one as themselves, and not know Him. Ye say that He is yours, and it is natural to us to desire to know our own, yet ye know Him not. Note, There are many who claim kindred to God, who yet have no acquaintance with Him. It is only the name of God which they have learned to talk of; but his attributes, perfections, and relations to his creatures, they know nothing of: we speak thus to their shame. 1 Cor. 15: 34. Multitudes satisfy, but deceive themselves, with a titular relation to an unknown God.

This Christ charges upon the Jews here, [1.] To show how groundless their pretensions of relation to God were. 'Ye say that He is yours, but ye give yourselves the lie, for it is plain that you do not know Him;' and a cheat is effectually convicted, if it be found that he is ignorant of the persons he pretends alliance to. [2.] To show the reason why they were not wrought upon by Christ's doctrine and miracles. They knew not God, and therefore perceived not his image nor his voice in Christ. Note, The reason why men receive not the Gospel of Christ, is, they have not the knowledge of God. Men submit not to the righteousness of Christ, because they are ignorant of God's righteousness, Rom. 10: 3. They that know not God, and obey not the Gospel of Christ, are put together, 2 Thess. 1: 8.

He gives them the reason of his assurance, that his Father would honor Him and own Him; But I know Him; and again, I know Him; which speaks not only his acquaintance with Him, but his confidence in Him, to stand by Him, and bear Him out in his whole undertaking; as was prophesied concerning Him; (Isa. 60: 7, 8.) 'I know that I shall not be ashamed, for He is near that justifies;' and as Paul, 'I know whom I have believed,' (2 Tim. 1: 12.) I know Him to be faithful, and powerful, and engaged in the cause which I know to be his own.' Observe,

He professes his knowledge of his Father, with the greatest certainty, as neither afraid, nor ashamed to own it; If I should say I know Him not, I should be a liar like unto you. He would not deny his relation to God, to avoid reproaches, and prevent further trouble; nor retract what He had said, nor confess himself deceived or a deceiver; if He should, He would be found a false witness. Note, They who disown their religion and relation to God, as Peter, are liars, as much as hypocrites are, who pretend to know Him when they do not. See 1 Tim. 6: 13, 14. Mr. Clark observes well upon this, that it is a great sin to deny God's grace in us.

He proves his knowledge of his Father; I know Him, and keep his sayings; or word. Christ, as Man, was obedient to the moral law, and, as Redeemer, to the mediatorial law; and in both He kept his Father's word, and his own word with the Father. Christ requires of us, (v. 51.) that we keep his sayings; and has set before us a copy of obedience, without a blot; well might He who learned obedience, teach it; see Heb. 5: 8, 9. Christ by this evidences that He knew the Father. Note, The best proof of our acquaintance with God is our obedience to Him. Those only know God aright, that keep his

55 Yet ye have not known him *but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying.

56 Your father Abraham *rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.

57 Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?

58 Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, *Before Abraham was, I am.

59 Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.

19: 7:23. 15:21. 16:3. 17:25. Jer. 4:22. 9:3. Hos. 5:4. Acts 17:23. 2 Cor. 4:6.
1:18. 6:45. 7:29. 10:15. Matt. 11:27. Luke 10:22.
1:44. 1 John 2:12. 5:10. Rev. 3:9. 22:51.
Gen 22:18. Luke 2:28-30. 10:24. Gal. 3:7-9. 14-19. Heb. 11:13, 39, 40. 1 Pet. 1:10-12.
34:51.
1:1, 2. 17:5-24. Prov. 8:22-30. Ia. 4:5. Mic. 5:2. Col. 1:17. Heb. 1:10-12. 13:8. Rev. 1:7, 18. 2:8.
Ex. 3:14. Ia. 43:15. 44:5, 8. 46:3. 49:12. Rev. 1:8.
5:8. 10:30-33. 11:8. 18:31. Lev. 24:18. Luke 4:29. Acts 7:57, 58.
5:19. 10:39-40. 11:4. Gen. 19:11. 2 Kings 8:18-20. Luke 4:30. 24:31. Acts 8:39, 40.

pious desire of Abraham; he longed to see Christ's day, and he saw it. Though he saw it not so distinctly as we under the Gospel, yet he saw more afterward than he did at first. Note, To him that has, and to him that asks, shall be given; to him that improves what he has, and that prays for more of the knowledge of Christ, God will give more. But how did Abraham see Christ's day? (1.) Some understand it of the sight he had of it in the other world. The separate soul of Abraham, when the veil of flesh was rent, saw the mysteries of the kingdom of God in heaven. Calvin mentions this sense of it, and does not much disallow it. Note, The longings of gracious souls after Jesus Christ will be fully satisfied when they come to heaven. But, (2.) It is more commonly understood of some sight he had of Christ's day in this world. They that received not the promises, saw them afar off, Heb. 11:13. Balaam saw Christ, but not now, not nigh. There is room to conjecture that Abraham had some vision of Christ and his day, for his own private satisfaction, which, like that of Daniel's, must be shut up, and sealed, unto the time of the end, Dan. 12:4. Christ knew what

Verse 56.

Saw it.] 'Thus, in Heb. 11:13 those who had not received the promises are said to have seen them afar off by faith. Thus likewise, profane writers speak.'

Verse 53.

Before Abraham was, I am.] 'Before Abraham was born, I had a glorious existence with the Father, and am still invariably the same, and one with Him. (Heb. 13:8.) I have long, with Chrysostom and many others, looked on this text as, at least, a strong intimation of the Deity of Christ, nearly parallel to Heb. 1:12. Doddridge, 'Had the existence of our blessed Savior been measured by time, as is that of all created beings, He must have said, Before Abraham was, I was; but his words are, Before Abraham was, I am: thus using the same expression of Himself which the eternal God does, at Exodus 3:14, and hereby demonstrating Himself to be the same God who there said, "I AM THAT I AM."'

What now could tempt our Savior to use and apply this expression to Himself? He knew it had never been applied to any but God, and would have been, in the man so appearing, in the highest degree, committing "the robbery" of making himself equal with God. Besides, they are a mere socialism, and, according to analogy of language, express nothing. No idea belongs to them; for a man cannot in his mind carry the present time back, and make it an antecedent to the time already past; and therefore to say, before such a thing was, I am, is conflicting ideas together, which can have no place in the mind or understanding. If, therefore, we admit the expression to have any

meaning, it is a ruled case, 1 John 2:3. Hereby we know that we know Him, (and do not only fancy it,) if we keep his commandments.

Christ refers them to their father Abraham, to whom they boasted so much of a relation.

Christ asserts Abraham's prospect of Him, and respect to Him; (p. 56.) Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad. And by this He proves that He was not at all out of the way, when He made Himself greater than Abraham.

The ambition he had to see his day; he rejoiced, he leaped at it. The word, though it commonly signifies rejoicing, must here signify a transport of desire rather than of joy, for otherwise the latter part of the verse would be a tautology; he saw it, and was glad. He reached out, or stretched himself forth, that he might see my day; as Zaccheus, that ran before and climbed the tree, to see Jesus. The notices he had received of the Messiah, had raised in him an expectation of something great, of which he earnestly longed to know more. The dark intimation of that which is considerable, puts men upon inquiry, and makes them earnestly ask, Who? Where? When? and How? Thus the prophets of the Old Testament, having a general idea of a grace that should come, searched diligently; (1 Pet. 1:10.) and Abraham was as indigent herein as any of them. God told him of a land that He would give his posterity, and of wealth and honor; (Gen. 15:14.) but he never leaped thus to see that day. He could not look with so much indifference upon the promised Seed as he did upon the promised land; in that he was, but to the other he could not be contentedly, a stranger. Note, Those who rightly know any thing of Christ, cannot but be earnestly desirous to know more of Him. Those who discern the dawning of the Sun of righteousness, cannot but wish to see his rising. The mystery of redemption angels desire to look into, much more should we, who are more immediately concerned in it. Abraham desired to see Christ's day, though at a great distance; but this degenerate seed of his discerned not his day, nor bid it welcome. The appearing of Christ, which gracious souls love and long for, carnal hearts dread and loathe.

He saw it, and was glad. God gratified the

Abraham saw, better than Moses did. But there are divers things recorded, in which Abraham saw more of that which he longed to see, than he did when the promise was first made to him. He saw in Melchizedek, one made like unto the Son of God, and a priest forever; he saw an appearance of Jehovah, attended with two angels, in the plains of Mamre. In his intercession for Sodom, he saw a specimen of Christ's intercession; in the casting out of Ishmael, and the covenant with Isaac, he saw a figure of the gospel-day, which is Christ's day, for these things were an allegory. In offering Isaac, and the ram instead of Isaac, he saw a double type of the great Sacrifice; and his calling the place Jehovah-jireh—It shall be seen, intimates, that he saw something more in it than others did; and in making his servant put his hand under his thigh, when he swore, he had a regard to the Messiah.

Abraham entertained these discoveries of Christ's day, and bid them welcome; he saw, and was glad. He was glad of what he saw of God's favor to himself, and of what he foresaw of the mercy God had in store for the world. Perhaps this refers to Abraham's laughing when God assured him of a son by Sarah; (Gen. 17:16, 17.) for that was not a laughter of distrust as Sarah's, but of joy; in that promise he saw Christ's day, and it filled him with joy unspeakable. Thus he embraced the promises. Note, A believing sight of Christ and his day will put gladness into the heart. No joy like the joy of faith; we are never acquainted with true pleasure, till we are acquainted with Christ.

The Jews cavil at this, and reproach Him for it; (p. 57.) Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? They suppose that if Abraham saw Him and his day, He also had seen Abraham, which yet was not a necessary inuendo, but this turn of his words would best serve to expose Him; yet it was true that Christ had seen Abraham. They suppose it a very absurd thing for Him to pretend to have seen Abraham, who was dead so many ages before He was born. The state of the dead is an invisible state; but they understood that, corporally, which Christ spake spiritually. This gave them occasion to despise his youth; as if He were but of yesterday, and knew nothing Thou art not yet fifty years old. They might as well have said, Thou art not forty; for He was now but thirty-two, or thirty-three. Irenæus, with this passage, supports the tradition which he says he had from some that had conversed with St. John, that our Savior lived to be fifty years old. See what little credit is to be given to tradition; and as to this, the Jews spake at random; some year they would mention, and therefore pitched upon one that they thought He was far enough short of; He did not look to be forty, but they were sure He could not be fifty, much less contemporary with Abraham. Old age is reckoned to begin at fifty, (Num. 4:47.) so that they mean no more than, 'Thou art not to be reckoned an old man;

meaning, we must allow the "I am" to belong to Christ, in its proper and peculiar use, as signifying eternity and permanency of duration.'

Bp. SHERLOCK.

To their inquiry, He answered, with his usual most solemn asseveration, 'Before Abraham was, I AM.' The use of the present tense in this connection, and the construction of the passage, require us to understand it as a declaration, that, as the great I AM, who appeared to Moses, He possessed an 'eternal and independent' existence, before Abraham was brought into being, yea, from eternity. (Marg. Ref. z. a.—Notes, Ex. 3:14. A. b. 1:10-12. 13:8. Rev. 1:8.) I indeed the words do not admit of any other construction, which can render them intelligible as a man of ordinary capacity. Thus the Jews evidently understood them; and therefore they were about to stone Jesus for blasphemy. 'Christ here only signifies, that He was before Abraham, in the decree of God.' Grotius.—'But, 1. Christ answers to 'the objection of the Jews; which had no respect to the priority of these two persons in the decree of God; but as to actual existence (2. In this sense even Judas, and all the murderers of our Lord, might before Abraham have a being.' Walby. Some enser but injudicious Calvinists use language similar to this, about justification, and other Christian privileges; and they are justly censured even by their brethren; because the purpose of God, and its accomplishment, are perfectly distinct, and should never be thus confounded. But one would not have expected such crude language from the very learned anti-Calvinist, Grotius! SCOTT.

CHAP. IX.

Jesus gives sight to one who was born blind, 1-7. The man makes his inquiring neighbors to what means his eyes were opened, 8-12. He is brought to the Pharisees, who strictly examine both him and his teacher, 13-23. They are offended at him, for contending that Jesus is a prophet, and disdainfully excommunicate him, 24-31. Jesus makes Himself known to him as 'the Son of God'; and he believes in Him and worships Him, 35-38. Christ declares the design of his coming to be, that the blind might see, and the seeing be made blind; with reference to the miracle, and to the proud and willful blindness of the Pharisees, 39-41.

AND as Jesus passed by, ^a he saw a man which was blind from his birth.

^a 32.

worlds, Prov. 8: 23, ch. 1: 1. Secondly, As Mediator. He was the appointed Messiah, long before Abraham; the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, (Rev. 13: 8.) the channel of conveyance of life, and love, from God to man. This supposes his divine nature, that He is the same in Himself from eternity, (Heb. 13: 8.) and that He is the same to man ever since the fall; He was made of God Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, to Adam, Abel, Enoch, Noah, and Shem, and all the patriarchs that lived and died by faith in Him before Abraham was born. Abraham was the root of the Jewish nation, the rock out of which they were hewn. If Christ was before Abraham, his doctrine and religion were no novelty, but were, in the substance of them, prior to Judaism, and ought to take place of it.

This word ended the dispute abruptly; they could bear to hear no more from Him, and He needed to say no more to them, having witnessed this good confession, which was sufficient to support all his claims. One would think that Christ's discourse, so full of grace and glory, would have captivated them all; but their inveterate prejudice against the doctrine and law of Christ, so contrary to their pride and worldliness, baffled all conviction. Now was fulfilled that prophecy, (Mal. 3: 1, 2.) that when the Messenger of the covenant should come to his temple, they would not abide the day of his coming, because He would be like a refiner's fire.

They were enraged at Christ for what He said; *They took up stones, to cast at Him*, v. 59. Perhaps they looked upon Him as a blasphemer, and such were indeed to be stoned; (Lev. 24: 16.) but they must be first legally tried and convicted; farewell justice and order, if every man pretend to execute a law at his pleasure. Besides, they had said but just now, that He was a distracted man, and if so, it was against all reason and equity to punish Him as a malefactor, for what He said. *They took up stones*. Lightfoot will tell you how they came to have stones so ready in the temple; they had workmen at this time repairing the temple, and the pieces of stone which they hewed off, served for this purpose. See here the desperate power of sin and Satan over the children of disobedience. Who would think that there could be such wickedness in men; such daring rebellion against one that proved Himself the Son of God. Thus every one has a stone to throw at his holy religion. Acts 28: 22.

He made his escape out of their hands.

Jesus hid Himself—He was hid, either by the crowd of those who wished well to Him, to shelter Him; (He that ought to have been upon a throne, high and lifted up, is content to be lost in a crowd;) or perhaps He concealed Himself behind some of the walls or pillars of the temple; (*In the secret of his tabernacle He shall hide me*, Ps. 27: 5.) or by a divine power, casting a mist before their eyes, made Himself invisible to them. *When the wicked rise, a man is hidden*, a wise and good man, Prov. 28: 12, 28. Not that Christ was afraid, or ashamed to stand by what He said, but his hour was not yet come, and He would countenance the flight of his ministers and people in times of persecution, when called to it. The Lord hid Jeremiah and Baruch, Jer. 36: 26.

He departed, went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, undiscovered, and so passed by. This was not a cowardly, inglorious flight, nor such as argued guilt or fear. It was foretold concerning Him, that He should not fail or be discouraged, Isa. 49: 4. But, (1.) It was an instance of his power over his enemies, and that they could do no more against

Him than He gave them leave to do; by which it appears, that when afterward He was taken in their pits, He offered Himself, ch. 10: 19. They now thought they had Him sure, and yet He passed through the midst of them, either their eyes being blinded, or their hands tied, and thus He left them, like a lion disappointed of his prey. It was an instance of his prudent provision for his own safety, when He knew that his work was not done, nor his testimony finished; thus He gave an example to his own rule, *When they persecute you in one city, flee to another*; nay, if occasion be, to a wilderness, for so Elijah did, (1 Kings 19: 3, 4.) and the woman, the church, Rev. 12: 6. When they took up loose stones to throw at Christ, He could have commanded the fixed stones, which did cry out of the wall against them, to avenge his cause, or the earth to open and swallow them up; but He chose to accommodate Himself to the state He was in, to make the example imitable by the prudence of his followers, without a miracle. It was a righteous deserting of those who (worse than the Gadarenes, who prayed Him to depart) stoned Him from among them. Christ will not long stay with those who bid Him be gone. Christ visited the temple after this; as one loath to depart, He bid oft farewell; but at last He abandoned it forever, and left it desolate. Christ now went through the midst of the Jews, and none of them courted his stay, or stirred up themselves to take hold on Him, but were content to let Him go. Note, God never forsakes any til they have first provoked Him to withdraw, and will have none of Him. Calvin observes, that these chief priests, when they had driven Christ out of the temple, valued themselves on the possession they kept of it; 'But,' (says he) 'those deceive themselves, who are proud of a church or temple which Christ has forsaken.' When Christ left them, it is said that He passed by unobserved; so that they were not aware of Him. Note, Christ's departures from a church, or a particular soul, are often secret, and not soon taken notice of. As the kingdom of God comes not, so it goes not with observation. See Judg. 16: 20. Samson wist not that the Lord was departed from him. Thus it was with these forsaken Jews—God left them, and they missed Him not.

CHAP. IX. v. 1-7. The first words set me to refer to the last of the foregoing chapter, and countenance their opinion, who place this story immediately after that. There it was said, *He passed by*, and here, without so much as repeating his name, (though our translators supply it,) and as *He passed by*. 1. Though the Jews had abused Him, and gave Him the highest provocation, yet He did not slip any opportunity of doing good among them, nor take up a resolution, never to favor them. The cure of this blind man was a kindness to the public, enabling him to work for his living, who, before was a burthen to the neighborhood. It is noble, and Christ-like, to serve the public, even when we are slighted by it. 2. Though He was in flight from danger, and for his life, He stayed to show mercy to this poor man. We make more haste than good speed, when we outrun opportunities of doing good. 3. When the Pharisees drove Christ from them, He went to this

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 49-59. Calumny and reproach must be the recompense of those, who stand up for 'the truth as it is in Jesus' and they may expect to be called the enemies of mankind, of their country, nay, of the church and religion; for, the more they honor God, the more the ungodly and hypocritical will dishonor them. Nor ought we to be disconcerted, at being branded with opprobrious terms, by such men, as said to Jesus, 'Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil.' We must, amidst all, still direct men to Jesus, 'not seeking our own glory,' but leaving the matter to Him 'who seeketh and judgeth:' for we are assured, that they who 'keep his saying shall not see death forever.' We should steadfastly profess what we believe concern-

ing God and religion, whatever wrong constructions may be put upon our words, by those who falsely claim Him as their God, yet know Him not; and if we be heirs of Abraham's faith, we shall trust Him for temporal protection, and exult in expectation of that day, when the Savior, who said, 'Before Abraham was, I AM,' shall appear in his glory to the confusion of his enemies, and the salvation of all who believe in Him; while they shout in triumphant strains, 'Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the Lord, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.' (Notes, Is. 25: 9. 1 Tim. 4: 6-8. Tit. 2: 11-15. Heb. 9: 27, 28. 2 Pet. 3: 10-15.) SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. IX. v. 1-7. Though the first words of this chapter seem connected with the conclusion of the foregoing, yet it is generally thought that some months had intervened; for the events before recorded [704]

ed took place at the feast of tabernacles, but those of this chapter are supposed to have occurred at the feast of dedication, about a quarter of a year afterwards. (Note, 10: 22-24.) This question seems in part to have arisen from the opinion, that men in this world fare better

2 And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?

3 Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.

4 Matt. 16:14. 170:18-19, 2:3-6, 21:27, 22:5, 24:23, 42:7, Ec. 9:1, 3, Luke 13:2-5, Act. 28:4. 11:14, 40, 14:11-13, Matt. 11:5, Acts 4:21.

its structure exceeding nice and fine. In the formation of animals, it is said to be the first part discernible. What a mercy is it that there was no miscarriage in ours. Christ cured many that were blind by disease or accident; but this man was *born blind*. [1.] That He might give an instance of his power in desperate cases, to relieve when none else can. [2.] That He might give a specimen of the work of his grace upon the souls of sinners, which gives sight to those that were by nature blind.

(2.) The compassion of Jesus toward him was very tender. He *saw him*; that is, took cognizance of his case, and looked upon him with concern. When God is about to work deliverance, He is said to see the affliction; so Christ saw this man. Others saw him, but not as He did. He could not see Christ, but Christ *saw him*, and anticipated both his prayers and expectations. Christ is often found of those that seek Him not, nor see Him, Isa. 65: 1. And if we know or apprehend any thing of Christ, it is because we were first *known of Him*, (Gal. 4: 9.) and apprehended by Him, Phil. 3: 12.

When Christ and his disciples departed out of the temple, his disciples went along with Him, for they continued with Him in his temptations, and followed Him whithersoever He went; and they lost nothing by their adherence to Him, but gained experience abundantly. Observe,

1. When Christ looked upon this blind man, they had an eye to him too; Christ's compassions should kindle ours. It is probable that Christ told them that this man was born blind, or they knew it by common fame; but they did not move Christ to heal him, instead of that, they started a very odd question concerning him, *Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?* This question was, (1.) *Uncharitably censorious*. They take it for granted that this calamity was the punishment of some uncommon wickedness; and that this man was a sinner above all that dwelt at Jeru-

salem, Luke 13: 4. For the barbarous people to infer, *Surely this man is a murderer; was not so strange; but it was incredible in them who had read that all things come alike to all, and knew that it was adjudged in Job's case, that the greatest sufferers are not therefore to be looked upon as the greatest sinners. Repentance calls our own afflictions punishments, but charity calls the afflictions of others trials, unless the contrary is very evident.* (2.) *It was unnecessarily curious*. Concluding this calamity to be inflicted for some heinous crime, they ask, *Who were the criminals, this man, or his parents?* And what was this to them? Or what good would it do them to know it? We are apt to be more inquisitive concerning other people's sins than our own; whereas it is more our concern to know wherefore God contendeth with us, than wherefore He contends with others: for to judge ourselves is our duty, but to judge our brother is our sin.

Some think that the disciples were tainted with the Pythagorean notion of the pre-existence of souls, and their transmigration from one body to another. [1.] Was this man's soul condemned to the dungeon of this blind body, to punish it for some great sin committed in another body? The Pharisees seem to have had the same opinion of his case, when they said, *Thou wast altogether born in sin*; (c. 34.) as if all those, and those only, were born in sin, whom nature had stigmatized. Or, [2.] Whether he was punished for the wickedness of his parents, which God sometimes visits upon the children. It is a good reason why parents should take heed of sin, lest their children smart for them when they are gone. Let not us thus be cruel to our own, as the ostrich in the wilderness. Perhaps the disciples asked this, because Christ had intimated to another patient that his impotency was the cause of his sin, ch. 5: 14. 'Master,' say they, 'whose sin is the cause of this impotency?' The equity of God's dispensations is always certain, for his righteousness is as the great mountains, but not always to be accounted for, for his judgments are a great deep.

or worse, according to their behavior in some pre-existent state, of which they have no recollection! Many of the Jews at that time had imbibed this absurd sentiment from the heathen; for, not being satisfied with the scriptural account of the entrance of sin and death into the world, they had recourse to this notion to solve the difficulties which they met with in the dispensations of Providence, from observing the extraordinary calamities attendant on some men, more than on others, through the whole course of their lives. As far as I can recollect, this is the only instance, in which sight was miraculously given to one born blind; and indeed opening the eyes of the blind, strict speaking, was a miracle peculiar to our Lord Himself, and is repeatedly mentioned in the prophet's of his coming. It is neither included in the commission given to the apostles and seventy disciples; nor was it performed, either by the apostles, or by any of the ancient prophets. The removal of Saul's temporary blindness by Ananias, I think, the only exception. The same is observable also of opening the ears of the deaf, and the mouths of the dumb. (Notes. Ez. 4: 11, 12. Ps. 146: 8. Is. 29: 17-19, 35: 5-7. Matt. 9: 32, 33.)

A miracle ought to be independent of second causes, or performed without any natural instrument. If any external action or foreign circumstance accompany it, (as was commonly the case,) this action or circumstance has no natural connection with the strict speaking, was a miracle peculiar to our Lord Himself, and is repeatedly mentioned in the prophet's of his coming. It is neither included in the commission given to the apostles and seventy disciples; nor was it performed, either by the apostles, or by any of the ancient prophets. The removal of Saul's temporary blindness by Ananias, I think, the only exception. The same is observable also of opening the ears of the deaf, and the mouths of the dumb. (Notes. Ez. 4: 11, 12. Ps. 146: 8. Is. 29: 17-19, 35: 5-7. Matt. 9: 32, 33.)

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Read v. 10, 11. In proof of this being the design of these external applications, notice that they were used in no instance, except those of blindness and deafness, when a defect of the senses rendered such means necessary, to convey such assurance of Jesus having been the author of the miracle. If these remarks are just, they exhibit one of those numberless cases, where incidents apparently minute and objectionable, when well considered, display the miraculous nature of the facts, and the admirable propriety of our Lord's conduct in every circumstance; and every such instance confirms strongly the conclusion, that our Lord's miracles were not delusive visions, but plain proofs of a divine power, exhibited with the sobriety and dignity becoming his divine character.

(2.) In the rabbinical commentary on Eccl. 13: 3. "And the days approach, in which thou shalt say, *I have no pleasure in them*," the gloss is: "These are the days of the Messiah, in which there shall be neither merit nor demerit, i. e. no merit of the parents imputed for good, nor demerit imputed for evil." This, it seems, was the common opinion. But, if so, may we not be allowed to express the question of the disciples thus: "Master, we know that Thou art the Messiah, and that these are the days of the Messiah; and we have learned from our schools that there is now to be no imputation of merit or demerit from the parents; when, therefore, has the man been born blind, but to carry in these times the mark of imputation of blame? Is it from his parents? This is inconsistent with the common opinion. It seems, therefore, that he bears the guilt of his own blame. Is it so or not?"

LIGHTFOOT.

Who did sin? The notion that this blindness was the effect of sin, is a very reasonable one; taking the word *sin* in the sense of transgression or of disobedience to a law of God. And though the disciples may have had only what is called moral dereliction in view, we may well take occasion to reflect on the evils which result from wilful ignorance of or disobedience to not only the moral and religious, but the physical, and especially the organic laws of God, by impressing which on the constitution of nature, He has indicated his will to us, and placed us under the necessity of obeying them if we would be happy. How often do we find persons, who sincerely desire to obey all moral and religious laws, yet neglecting to inquire into, or obey the organic laws, so necessary to their health, comfort and usefulness, through this neglect may bequeath a legacy of misery to their offspring, and is seen to fill the world with disease and wretchedness. Yet, perhaps, these very persons and their friends often wonder that the best of people are so frequently tried with sickness, while the notoriously wicked seem to enjoy every moment of life; not reflecting that obedience to certain conditions of life, is followed by health and bodily comfort in all, while the contrary course is as inevitably punished, men receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. (Rom. 1: 27.) without exception of persons, or of moral, intellectual, or religious character.

4 I * must work the works of him that sent me, 'while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

5 As * long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world.

6 When he had thus spoken, ¹ix spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and he * anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay;

434. 5:19,36. 19:32,37,38. 174.
11:32-34. Acts 4:30.
11:9,10. 12:35. Ec. 9:10. Is. 38:18,
19. Eph. 5:16. Col. 4:5.
1:4-9. 3:19-21. 3:12. 12:35,38.
Is. 42:6,7. 48:1. 69:1-3. Mat. 4:
2. Matt. 4:16. Luke 9:32. Acts
13:47. 26:18,23. Eph. 5:14. Rev.
21:23.
* Mark 7:33. 8:22. Rev. 3:18
* Or, spread the clay upon the eyes
of the blind man.

works. God has a sovereignty over all his creatures, a property in them, and may make them serviceable to his glory as He thinks fit; and if God be glorified, by us or in us, we were not made in vain.

This man was born blind, and it was worth while for him to continue thus long dark, that the works of God might be manifest in him. That is, 1st. That the attributes of God might be manifested in him: his justice in making sinful man liable to such calamities; his power and goodness in supporting a poor man under such a tedious affliction; especially, that his power and goodness might be manifested in curing him. Note, The difficulties of Providence may be resolved into this—God intends to show Himself, to declare his glory, to make Himself to be taken notice of. Those who regard Him not in the ordinary course of things, are sometimes alarmed by things extraordinary. How contentedly then may a good man lose his comforts, sure that thereby God will be one way or other a gainer in his glory! 2dly. That the counsels of God concerning the Redeemer might be manifested. He was born blind, that our Lord might have the honor of curing him, and therein prove Himself the Light of the world. The fall of man was permitted, and the blindness that followed it, that the works of God might be manifest. It was a great while since this man was born blind, yet it never appeared till now why he was so. Note, The intentions of Providence commonly do not appear till a great while after the event. The sentences in the book of Providence are sometimes long; you must read a great way before you can apprehend their sense.

(2.) He gives the reason of his own readiness to heal him, v. 4, 5. It was in pursuance of his undertaking; I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day; the night cometh, the period of that day, when no man can work. This is not only a reason why Christ was constant in doing good to men, but why particularly He did this, though it was the Sabbath, on which works of necessity might be done, and He proves this to be a work of necessity.

It was his Father's will; I must work the works of Him that sent Me. Note, 1st. The Father, when He sent his Son into the world, gave Him work to do; He did not come into the world to take state, but to do business; whom God sends He employs, for He sends none to be idle. 2dly. The works Christ had to do, were the works of Him that sent Him, appointed by Him, done for Him: He was a Worker together with God. 3dly. He was pleased to lay Himself under the strongest obligations to do the business He was sent about; I must work. He engaged his heart, in the covenant of redemption, as Mediator, Jer. 30: 21. Shall we be willing to be loose, when Christ was willing to be bound? 4thly. Christ, having laid Himself under obligations to do his work, wrought with the utmost vigor and industry. He worked the works He had to do; made a business of that which was his business. It is not enough to look at our work, and talk over it, we must work it.

Now was his opportunity; while it is day; while the time lasts, appointed to work in, and the light lasts, given to work by. Christ Himself had his day, 1st. All the business of the mediatorial kingdom was to be done within the limits of time, and in this world; for when time shall be no more, the kingdom shall be delivered up to the Father, and the mystery of God finished. 2dly. All the work He had to do in his own person on earth, was to be done before his death; the time of his living in this world, is the day here spoken of. Note, During the day of life we must be busy, not waste day-time, nor play by day-light, it will be time enough to rest when our day is done, Ps. 104: 22, 23.

The night comes when no man can work. Note, The consideration of our death should quicken us to improve all opportunities, both of doing and getting good. The night comes, it will come certainly, may come suddenly, is

2. Christ was always apt to teach, and to rectify his disciples' mistakes.

[1.] 'Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents; but he was born blind, that now the works of God should be made manifest in him,' v. 3. Here Christ, who perfectly knew the secrets of the divine counsels, has told two things concerning such calamities.

[1.] They are not always inflicted as punishments of sin. The sinfulness of the race of man does indeed justify God in the miseries of human life; so that they who have the least share of them, must say that God is kind; and they who have the largest share, must not say that He is unjust; but many are more miserable than others in this life, who are not more sinful. This man was a sinner, and his parents sinners; but God had not an eye to any uncommon guilt in inflicting this upon him. Note, We must take heed of judging any to be great sinners, merely because they are great sufferers, lest we be found, not only persecuting those whom God has smitten, (Ps. 69: 26.) but accusing those whom He has justified, and condemning those for whom Christ died, Rom. 8: 33, 34.

[2.] They are sometimes intended purely for the glory of God, and the manifesting of his glory to his creatures, a property in them, and may make them serviceable to his glory as He thinks fit; and if God be glorified, by us or in us, we were not made in vain.

coming nearer and nearer. We cannot compute how high our sun is, it may go down at noon; nor can we promise ourselves a twilight between the day of life and the night of death. When the night comes we cannot work, because the light afforded us to work by is extinguished; the grave is a land of darkness, and our work cannot be done in the dark. And besides, our allotted time will then be expired; when our Master tied us to duty, He tied us to time; when night comes, call the laborers; we must then show our work, and receive according to the things done. In the world of retribution we are no longer probationers. Christ uses this as an argument with Himself, to be diligent, though He had no opposition from within to struggle with; much more need have we of these and like considerations to quicken us.

His business in the world was to enlighten it; As long as I am in the world, and that will not be long, I am the Light of the world. So ch. 9: 12. He is the Sun of righteousness, that has not only light in his wings for those that can see, but healing, or beams, for those that are blind, therein far exceeding that great light which rules by day. Christ would therefore cure this representative of a blind world, because He came not only to give light, but sight. This gives us great encouragement to come to Him, as a quickening Light. To whom should we look but to Him? Which way turn our eyes, but to the light? We partake of the sun's light, and so we may of Christ's grace, without money, and without price. What Christ saith of Himself, He saith of his disciples; Ye are lights in the world; if so, Let your light shine. What were candles made for but to burn?

The circumstances of the miracle are singular, and significant. When He had thus spoken for the instruction of his disciples, He addressed Himself to the blind man. He did not defer it till He could do it more privately, for greater safety, or more publicly, for greater honor, or till the Sabbath was past, when it would give less offence; what good we have opportunity of doing, we should do quickly; He that will never do a good work till there is nothing to be objected against it, will leave many a good work forever undone, Eccl. 11: 4.

Christ spit on the ground, and made clay of the spittle. He could have cured him with a word, but He chose this way, to show that He is not tied to any method. There was no water near; and He would teach us not to be nice or curious, but, when we have occasion, to take up with that which is at hand, if it will serve. Christ's making use of his own spittle intimates that there is healing virtue in every thing that belongs to Christ; clay made thus was more precious than the balm of Gilead.

He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay. Or, as the margin reads it, He spread, daubed the clay on his eyes, like a tender physician; did it with his own hand, though the patient was a beggar. And this, (1.) To magnify his power in making a blind man see, by a method, one would think more likely to make a seeing man blind. Note, The power of God often works by contraries; and He makes men feel their own blindness before He gives them sight. (2.) To give an intimation that it was the same hand that at first made man out of the clay; for by Him God made the worlds, both the great world, and man, the little world. (3.) To typify the healing and opening the eyes of the mind by the grace of Christ. The design of the Gospel is to open men's eyes, Acts 26: 18. The eye-salve that does the work, is of Christ's preparing; made up of his blood: we must come to Christ for eye-salve, Rev. 3: 18. He only is able, and He only is appointed, to make it, Luke 4: 18. The means used in this work

(5.) I am the light, &c. 'That is, the enlightener of the world. See on 1. 9, and Matt. 17: 2. The word is usually explained teacher; but by *ael, it is interpreted author of felicity. I prefer, with Schleusner, to understand both teacher and restorer of happiness to the human race; as it is a common metaphor of knowledge, so is it also of happiness, see Esth. 8: 16. Ps. 97: 11. "Light is sown for the righteous." Is. 60: 1. "Unto the righteous there is set up light in the

darkness," especially when considered as flowing from that religious knowledge which Christ came especially to impart.' BLOOMFIELD.

(6.) That spittle was beneficial in certain disorders of the eyes, appears to have been a general opinion among the Jews, Romans, and Greeks; and travellers find traces of this belief even to the present day in the East. Some kinds of clay also were by the ancients thought beneficial.

7 And said unto him, 'Go wash in ^{the} pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, ¹ Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, ^{and} came seeing.

8 The neighbors therefore, and they which before had seen him that he was blind, said, ^a Is not this he that ^a sat and begged?

9 Some said, This is he: others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he.

10 Therefore said they unto him, ^p How were thine eyes opened?

11 He answered and said, ^a A man that is called Jesus made clay, and anointed mine eyes, and said unto me, Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash: and I went and washed, and I received sight.

12 Kings 5:10-14.
k 11. Neh. 3:15. Siloah. Is. 8:6. Siloah.
10:36. Rom. 9:3. Gal. 4:4.
m 39. 1:17. Ec. 4:11. Ps. 145:8.
n 19. 2:18-19. 28:3. 35:5. 42:7-18.
18. 43:8. Luke 2:32. Act 26:18.
o Ruth 1:19. 1 Sam. 21:11, 12.
p 28. 28:5. Mark 10:16. Luke 16: 20-22. 18:35. Ec. 11:3-11.
q 15:21, 23. 3:9. Ec. 11:5. Mark 4: 27. 1 Cor. 15:35.
r 6:7, 27. Jer. 17:18.

Siloam. The evangelist notices the signification of the name. Christ is often called the *Sent of God*; the Messenger of the covenant; (Mal. 3:1.) so when Christ sent him to Siloam, He did in effect send him to Himself, for Christ is *all in all*, to souls. Christ, as a Prophet, directs us to Himself as *a* Priest. *Go, wash in the Fountain opened*, a Fountain, *not a pool*.

The patient went his way, probably led by some friend, or perhaps was so well acquainted with Jerusalem, that he could find the way himself; nature often supplies the want of sight with uncommon sagacity; and *he washed his eyes*. Probably the disciples, or some stander by, informed him that He who bid him do it, was Jesus, of whom he had heard so much, else he would not have gone on that looked so like a fool's errand. In confidence of Christ's power, as well as in obedience to his command, he went, and washed.

He came seeing. There is more glory in this concise narrative, *He went, and washed, and came seeing*, than in Caesar's *I came, I saw, I conquered*. When the clay was washed from his eyes, all the other impediments were done away; so when the pangs and struggles of the new birth are over, and the terrors of conviction past, the bands of sin fly off, and a glorious light and liberty succeed. See here the power of Christ. What cannot He do, who could not only do *this*, but do it *thus*? With a lump of clay laid on either eye, and washed off again, He couched those cataracts, which the most skillful oculist, with the finest instrument and the most curious hand, could not remove. No doubt, this is *He that should come*, for by Him the blind receive their sight. It is an instance of the virtue of faith and obedience. This man le. Christ do what He pleased, and did what He appointed, and so was cured. They that would be healed by Christ, must be ruled by Him. *He came back from the pool to his neighbors and acquaintance, wondering, and wondered at*. This represents the benefit of attending on ordinances, according to Christ's appointment; we go to the pool of Siloam *weak*, and come away *strengthened*; go *doubting*, and come away *satisfied*; go *mourning*, and come away *rejoicing*; go *trembling*, and come away *triumphing*; go *blind*, and come away *seeing*, and singing, Isa. 52: 8.

V. 12-13. Such a wonderful event as giving sight to a man born blind, could not but be the talk of the town, and many heeded it no more than they do other town-talk, that is but nine days' wonder; but here we are told what the neighbors said of it; for the confirmation of the fact. What was not believed at first *without scrutiny*, may afterward be admitted *without scruple*.

(7.) Siloam.] 'From the fountain Siloam there were two canals conveyed into two pools, the upper, situated at the extreme boundary of Jerusalem, and formed by Solomon, and the lower, (appropriated to the use of those who inhabited the lower city,) which was constructed after the time of Solomon. Which of these pools is to be here understood cannot be determined.

BLOOMFIELD.

The neighbors, knowing he had been blind, could not but be amazed; and said, *Is not this he that sat and begged?* It seems, he was a common beggar, disabled to work for his living; and so discharged from the obligation of the law, that if *any would not work, neither should he eat*. When he could not labor, his parents not being able to maintain him, he begged. Note, Those who cannot otherwise subsist, must not be ashamed to beg; let no man be ashamed of any thing but sin. Some beggars are objects of charity, and should be distinguished; we must not let the bees starve, because of the drones or wasps among them.

It was well ordered by Providence, that he on whom this miracle was wrought should be a common beggar, generally known; thus the truth of the miracle was the better attested, and there were more to witness against those infidel Jews, who would not believe *he had been blind*, than if he had been maintained in his father's house. It was the greater instance of Christ's condescension, that He seemed to take more pains about the cure of a common beggar than of others. When it was for the advantage of his miracle, that they should be wrought on those that were remarkable, He pitched upon those that were made so by their poverty and misery, not by their dignity.

In answer to this inquiry, some said, *This is the very same man*; and these are witnesses to the truth of the miracle, for they had long known him. Others, who could not think it possible a man should thus on a sudden receive sight, for that reason, and no other, said, *He is not he, but is like him*, and so, by their confession, if it be he, it is a great miracle. Hence the wisdom and power of Providence in ordering such a universal variety of faces, so that no two are so like, but that they may be distinguished; which is necessary to society, commerce, and the administration of justice. The grace of God makes such wonderful change upon some who before were very wicked, that one would not take them to be the same persons.

The man himself said, *I am the very man that so lately sat and begged; I was blind, and an object of charity, but now see, and am a monument of the mercy of God.* We do not find that the neighbors appealed to him, but he, hearing the debate, interposed, and put an end to it. It is a piece of justice we owe to our neighbors, to rectify their mistakes, and to set things before them, as far as we are able, in a true light. Those who are enlightened by the grace of God, should be ready to own what they were before that change, 1 Tim. 1: 13, 14.

They will now turn aside, and see this great sight, and inquire further concerning it. Our Lord did not sound a trumpet when He did these alms, nor perform his cures upon a stage; yet, like a city on a hill, they could not be hid.

How were thine eyes opened? The works of the Lord being great, they ought to be sought out, Ps. 111: 2. It is good to observe the method of them, and they will appear the more wonderful. To apply it spiritually, it is strange that blind eyes should be opened, but more strange when we consider *how they are opened*; how weak the means, how strong the opposition that is conquered.

In answer to this, He gives them a plain and full account of the matter; v. 11. Note, Those who have experienced special instances of God's goodness, should be ready to communicate their experiences, for the glory of God, and the instruction and encouragement of others. See David's collection of his experiences, his own and others', Ps. 34: 4-6. It is a debt we owe to our Benefactor, and to our brethren, God's favors are lost upon us, when they are lost with us, and go no further.

Where is He? Some perhaps asked this

Verse 9.

Like him, &c.] 'The circumstance of his having received his sight, would give him an air of spirit and cheerfulness, and would render him something unlike what he was before.'

Doddridge, in Scott.

12 Then said they unto him, 'Where is he? He said, I know not.

[Practical Observations.]

13 They brought to the Pharisees him that aforetime was blind.

14 And it was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.

15 Then again the Pharisees also asked him how he had received his sight. He said unto them, He put clay upon mine eyes, and I washed, and do see.

16 Therefore said some of the Pharisees, 'This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the sabbath-day. Others said, How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles? And there was a division among them.

5:11-13, 7:11, Ex. 2:18-20, 8:2-9, 11:6-12, 12:1-2, 13:1-14, 15:16-18, 22:1-23, Matt. 12:1-14, Mark 2:23-28, 3:1-6, Luke 6:1-11, 13:10-17, 14:1-5, 8:2-9, 10:11-28, 27, 24:30-33, 32, 5:36, 14:11, 15:24, 7:12, 43, 10:19, Luke 13:51-53, Acts 14:4.

cuted, was not what they represented Him, but one that gave considerable proofs of a divine mission. What hath convinced us of the truth and excellency of religion, and removed our prejudices against it, we should offer to others for their conviction.

It would seem rather, that they did it to *exasperate* the Pharisees against Christ; there was no need, for they were *bitter* enough of themselves. They brought him with such a suggestion as that, (ch. 11: 47, 43.) *If we let Him thus alone, all men will believe on Him.* Note, Rulers of a persecuting spirit, shall never want ill instruments to blow the coals, and make them worse.

Good was never maligned but under the imputation of evil. The crime objected here was, *It was the sabbath-day when Jesus made the clay, and opened his eyes.* The profanation of the Sabbath is certainly wicked; but the traditions of the Jews had made that to be a violation of it, which was far from being so. Many a time this matter was contested between Christ and the Jews, that it might be settled for all ages. But it may be asked, 'Why would Christ not only work miracles on the sabbath-day, but work them in such a manner as He knew would give offence to the Jews? When He had healed the impotent man, why should He bid him carry his bed? Could He not have cured this blind man without clay?' I answer, 1. He would not

question out of curiosity; 'Where is He, that we may see Him?' A man that did such cures as these, might well be a show, which one would go a good way for the sight of. Others, perhaps, asked out of *ill will*; 'Where is He, that we may seize Him?' A proclamation was out for his discovery, and apprehension; (ch. 11: 57.) and the unthinking crowd, in spite of reason and equity, will have *ill thoughts* of persons in an *ill name*. Some, we hope, asked this question out of *good will*.

In answer to this he could say nothing; *I know not.* As soon as Christ had sent him to the pool, He withdrew, and did not *doubt* the effect, or *wait* for the man's thanks. Humble souls take more pleasure in *doing good* than in hearing of it again; it will be time enough to hear of it in the *resurrection of the just*. The man had never seen Jesus; for by the time he had gained his sight, he had lost his Physician; and he asked, it is probable, *Where is He?* None of all the new objects that presented themselves, could be so grateful to him as one sight of Christ, but as yet he knew no more of Him than that He was called *Jesus—a Savior*. In the work of grace wrought on the soul we see the change, but *not the hand* that makes it; for the way of the Spirit is like that of the wind, of which thou hearest the sound, but canst not tell *whence it comes, or whither it goes*.

V. 13—34. One would have expected such a miracle would have settled the reputation of Christ, and silenced opposition, but it had the contrary effect; instead of being embraced as a prophet for it, He is prosecuted as a criminal, v. 13.

They brought him to the sanhedrim, which consisted chiefly of Pharisees, at least the Pharisees in the sanhedrim were most active against Christ.

Some think they did it with a *good design*, to show them that this Jesus, whom they perse-

seem to yield to the usurped power of the scribes and Pharisees; their government was illegal, their impositions arbitrary, and their zeal for the rituals consumed the substantial of religion; therefore Christ would not *give place* to them by *subjection*, *no, not for an hour*. Christ was made under the law of God, but not under *their law*. 2. He did it, that He might, both by word and action, expound the fourth commandment, and vindicate it from their corrupt glosses, and so teach us, both, that a weekly Sabbath is to be *perpetually* observed in the church, one day in seven; (for what need was there to explain that law, if it must soon be abrogated?) and that it is not to be so *ceremonially* observed by us as it was by the Jews. Works of necessity and mercy are allowed, and the sabbath-rest to be kept, not so much for its own sake, as in order to the sabbath-work. 3. Christ chose to work his cures on the sabbath-day, to dignify the day, and to intimate that spiritual cures should be wrought mostly on the Christian Sabbath. How many blind eyes have been opened by the preaching of the Gospel, on the Lord's day; how many impotent souls cured!

In the trial of this matter by the Pharisees, and much passion, prejudice, and ill-humor, and so little reason appear, that the discourse is nothing but cross questions. One would think they should have been so taken up in admiring the miracle, and congratulating the happiness of the poor man, that they could not have been peevish with him. But their enmity to Christ had divested them of all humanity. See how they teased this man.

They doubted whether he had been *born blind*, and demanded proof of it. Men that seek occasion to quarrel with the clearest truths, may find it if they please; and they that resolve to *hold fast deceit*, will never want a handle. This was not a prudent caution, but a prejudiced infidelity. It was a good way they took, to *call the parents*. This they did, in hopes to *disprove* the miracle. 'These parents were poor and timorous, and if they had said they could not be sure this was their son, and that it was only some weakness in his sight he had been born with, which, if they had been able to get help for him, might have been cured long since, or had otherwise prevaricated, for fear of the court, the Pharisees had robbed Christ of the honor of this miracle, which would have lessened the reputation of all the rest. But God so over-ruled their counsel, that it turned to the more effectual proof of the miracle, and left them under a necessity of being either convinced or confounded.

They asked them in an imperious way, 'Is this your son? Dare you swear it? Do you say he was born blind? Or did he pretend to be so, to have an excuse for begging?' How

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—12. It becomes us to be very cautious how we ascribe the calamities of others to their peculiar sinfulness: (Notes, Job 2: 12, 13, 4: 1. Luke 13: 1—5.) for the Lord may have far other reasons for afflicting them; and those whom He most loves are often sharply tried, in order to the display of his grace in supporting them. But we can never do wrong in applying to Jesus to solve our difficulties; for He is 'the Light of the world,' from whom we must derive all our instruction in the concerns of eternity.—Let us also learn to copy his perseverance in doing good, amidst discouragements and injuries; and let every one seize the present hour, to ensure his own salvation, and to do the work of God; remembering how speedily 'the night cometh, in which no man can work.' (Note, Ec. 9: 10.)—Those who confide in their own understandings, and 'trust in their own hearts,' are incompetent judges of the Lord's works and ways; for He generally employs such means as men despise: thus the captious and scornful exclude themselves; while the humble believe, and obtain the bless-

ing.—Those calamities, which are generally thought to be tokens of divine displeasure, and inseparable from misery, often prove occasions of special good, and evidences of the Lord's favor. The man born blind rejoices, and will rejoice forever, in having, by means of that heavy affliction, been brought to know and love Jesus; in the honor of his Savior, thus displayed; and in the benefits, which multitudes, in every subsequent age, have derived from the narrative.—But, on the other hand, what numbers make so perverse and mischievous a use of their limbs and faculties, even to the end of life, that they might wish forever, they had been born, and lived all their days, blind, deaf, dumb, lame, nay, even idiots or lunatics!—They whose eyes are opened, whose hearts are cleansed, by his grace, are the *same men*, yet 'new creatures'; and being known in the *identity* of their persons, and the *newness* of their characters, they live monuments to the Redeemer's glory, and continually recommend his grace to all who desire the same salvation. (P. O. Mark 6: 14—29. Note, 2 Cor. 6: 17.) SCOTT.

Verse 13. "They brought him to the Pharisees;" that is, to the council, which chiefly consisted of this sect; whence in this evangelist, the council passeth under the name of Pharisees.

Whitby, in Scott.

Verse 14. It is said, that anointing the eyes with any kind of unguent, or even with spittle, on the sabbath-day, was forbidden by a tradition of the elders; if so, our Lord might use this method of opening the man's

eyes, as a protest against their absurd and frivolous traditions. (Marg. Ref. 1.—Note, 7: 19—24.)

Verse 15, 16. (Note, 10—12.) (16.) Division.] The council was divided into two parties, which contended with each other, continuing in the same place. It is probable, that Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, with some others who privately favored our Lord, embraced this opportunity of checking the violent proceedings of his enemies.

SCOTT.

17 They say unto the blind man again, 'What sayest thou of him, that he hath opened thine eyes?' He said, 'He is a prophet.'

18 But the Jews did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and received his sight, until they called the parents of him that had received his sight.

19 And they asked them, saying, 'Is this your son, who ye say was born blind?' how then doth he now see?

20 His parents answered them, and said, 'We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind.'

21 But by what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not: he is of age, ask him; he shall speak for himself.

a 4:19. 6:14. Luke 24:19. Acts 2:22. 3:22-26. 10:38.
b 5:44. 12:37-40. Gen. 19:14. Luke 16:31. Heb. 3:15-19. 4:11.
c See on 8,9.—Acts 3:10. 4:14.

ed upon as really against Him, Luke 11:23. Mark 8:33.

That they might not be further urged in this matter, they refer themselves and the court to him; *He is of age, ask him, he shall speak for himself.* This implies that while children are not of age, it is incumbent on their parents to speak for them to God in prayer, to the church in baptism; but when they are of age, they should be asked whether they be willing to stand to what their parents did for them, and speak for themselves. This man, though born blind, seems to have been of quick understanding, which enabled him to speak for himself better than his friends could for him; thus God often by a kind providence makes up in the mind what is wanting in the body, 1 Cor. 12:23, 24. His parents' turning over to him, was only to save themselves from trouble; whereas they that had so great an interest in his mercies, had reason to embark with him in his hazards for the honor of Jesus, who had done so much for them.

The reason why they were so cautious; *they feared the Jews.* Near is my friend, my child, and perhaps my religion, but nearer is myself. But Christianity teaches another lesson, 1 Cor. 10:24. Esth. 8:6.

It was lately enacted, That if any man did confess that Jesus was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue. Observe,

1. The crime designed to be prevented by this statute, was embracing Jesus as the promised Messiah. They themselves did expect a Messiah, but could by no means bear to think this Jesus should be *He*, nor admit the question whether He were or no; his precepts were all so contrary to their traditional laws. The spiritual worship He prescribed, overthrew their formalities; nor did any thing more effectually destroy their narrow-spiritedness than that universal charity He taught; humility, mortification, repentance, self-denial, sounded harsh in their ears. His promises and appearances were contrary to their traditional hopes. They expected a Messiah in outward splendor, that should not only free the nation from the Roman yoke, but make all the members of the sanhedrim princes and peers; and now to hear of a Messiah, whose outward circumstances were mean, whose first appearance and principal residence were in Galilee, a despised province, who never made his court to them, whose followers were neither sword-men, nor gown-men, nor men of honor, but fishermen, who promised no redemption but from sin, no consolation of Israel but what is spiritual and divine, and at the same time bid his followers expect the cross, and count upon persecution; this was such a reproach to all the ideas they had formed, such a blow to their power, and such a disappointment to their hopes, that they could never be reconciled to it, nor so much as give it a patient hearing; but, right or wrong, it must be rushed.

(2.) The penalty to be inflicted for this crime. If any should own himself a disciple of Jesus, he should be taken as an apostate from the Jewish church, a rebel and traitor against the government, and should therefore be put out of the synagogue, as unworthy of the honors, and incapable of the privileges of their church; he should be excommunicated. Nor was this merely an ecclesiastical censure, which a man might slight; it was an outlawry, which excluded a man from civil commerce, and deprived him of liberty and property. Note, 1st. Christ's religion, from its rise, has been opposed by penal laws made against the professors of it; as if men's consciences would otherwise

then doth he now see? That is impossible, and therefore you had better unsay it.' Those who cannot bear the light of truth, do all they can to eclipse, and hinder the discovery of it. Thus the managers of evidence, or mismanagers, lead witnesses out of the way, teach them how to conceal the truth, and so involve themselves in a double guilt, like that of Jeroboam, who sinned, and made Israel to sin.

They fully attest what they could safely say in this matter, on their own knowledge; (v. 20.) *We know that this is our son*, and that he was born blind. It had cost them many a sad thought, and troublesome hour. How often they had looked on him, and lamented their child's blindness more than all the burthens of their poverty, and wished he had never been born. Those who are ashamed of their children, or relations, because of their bodily infirmities, may take a reproof from these parents, who freely owned, *This is our son*, though he was born blind, and lived upon alms.

They cautiously decline giving evidence concerning his cure; partly, because they were not themselves eye-witnesses of it; and partly, because it was a tender point, and would not bear to be meddled with.

1. Observe how warily they express themselves; (v. 21.) 'By what means he now seeth, we know not, or who has opened his eyes, we know not, otherwise than by hear-say.' See how the wisdom of this world teaches men to trim the matter in critical junctures. Christ was accused as a sabbath-breaker, and an impostor. Now these parents, though not eye-witnesses of the cure, were yet fully assured of it, and were bound in gratitude to bear testimony to the honor of Jesus; but they had not courage to do it, and then thought it might serve to atone for their not appearing in favor of Him, that they said nothing to his prejudice; whereas in the day of trial, he that is not apparently for Christ, is justly looked

naturally embrace it, this unnatural for: has been put upon them. 2dly. The church's artillery, when it has fallen into ill hands, has often been turned against itself, and ecclesiastical censures have been made to serve a secular interest. It is no new thing to see those cast out of the synagogue, that were the greatest blessings of it, and to hear those that expelled them say, *The Lord be glorified*, Isa. 66:5.

Of this edict it is said, 1. That the Jews had agreed, or conspired it. Their consultation herein, was a conspiracy against the crown and dignity of the Lord and his Anointed. 2. That they had already agreed it. Though He had been but a few months in any public character among them, and, one would think, in so short a time could not have made them jealous of Him, yet thus early were they aware of his growing interest, and already agreed to do their utmost to suppress it. He had lately made his escape out of the temple, and when they saw themselves baffled in their attempts to take Him, they presently took this course, to make it penal for any body to own Him. Thus unanimous and thus expeditious are the enemies of the church, and their counsels; but He that sits in heaven, laughs at them, and has them in derision, and so may we.

The parents of the blind man declined saying any thing of Christ, because they feared the Jews. Christ had incurred the frowns of the government, to do their son a kindness, but to say would not incur them, to do Him honor. Note, *The fear of man brings a snare*, (Prov. 29:25.) and often makes people disown Christ, his truths and ways, and act against their consciences.

2. They inquired of him concerning the manner of the cure, v. 16, 16.

The same question which his neighbors had put to him, now again the Pharisees asked him, how he had received his sight. This they inquired, not with any desire to find out the truth, but with a desire to find occasion against Christ; for should the man relate the matter fully, they would prove Christ a sabbath-breaker; should he vary from his former story, they would have some color to suspect the whole.

He here repeats the same answer, in effect, he had before given his neighbors. He does not speak of the making of the clay; he had not seen it made. That circumstance was not essential, and might give the Pharisees most occasion against him, and therefore he waives it. In the former account he said, *I washed, and received sight*; but lest they should think it was only a glimpse for the present, which imagination might fancy itself to have, he now says, 'I do see: it is a complete and lasting cure.'

The remarks made on this were different, and occasioned a debate in the court.

Some took occasion to condemn Christ. *This Man is not of God*, as He pretends, because He keepeth not the Sabbath. The doctrine on which this censure is grounded, is true—that those pretenders to prophecy are not sent of God, those pretenders to sainthood not born of God, who do not keep the Sabbath. They that are of God, will keep the commandments of God; and this is his commandment, that we sanctify the Sabbath. They that are of God, keep up communion with God, delight to hear from Him, and speak to Him, and therefore will observe the Sabbath, appointed for intercourse with heaven. The Sabbath is called a sign, for the sanctifying of it is a sign of a sanctified heart, and the profaning of it a sign of a profane heart. But, the application of it to our Savior is very unjust, for He did religiously observe the sabbath-day, and never violated it. He did not keep the Sabbath according to the tradition of the elders and the superstitions of the Pharisees, but according to the command of God, and therefore He was of God, and his miracles proved Him to be Lord also of the sabbath-day. Note, Much uncharitable judging is occasioned by making the rules of religion more strict than God has made them, and adding men's fancies to God's appointments. We ourselves may fear such and such things on the Sabbath, as we find

22 These words spake his parents, because they feared the Jews: for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that he was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue.

23 Therefore said his parents, 'He is of age, ask him.'

[Practical Observations.]

24 Then again called they the man that was blind, and said unto him, 'Give God the praise: we know that this man is a sinner.'

c 7:13, 12:42, 43, 19:38, 20:19, Ps. 27:1, 2, Prov. 23:25, Is. 51:7, 12, 57: 11, Luke 12:4-5, 22:56-61, Gal. 2:11-13, Rev. 21:8.
 d 24, 12:42, 16:2, Luke 6:22, Acts 4:18, 5:40.
 e 21.
 f 5:23, 8:19, 16:2, 1 Sam. 6:5-9, Is. 66:5, Rom. 10:2-4.
 g 15, 8:46, 14:30, 18:30, 19:6, Mark 15:28, Rom. 8:3, 2 Cor. 5:21.
 h Luke 7:33, 15:2, 19:7.

serve their inquiry concerning its Author.

They ask the man, 'What sayest thou of Him, seeing that He has opened thine eyes?' What idea hast thou of Him that did it? Should he speak slightly of Christ, as he might be tempted to do, now he was in their hands, as his parents had done; should he say, 'I know not what to make of Him, He may be a conjuror for aught I know, or some mountebank,' they would have triumphed in it. Nothing confirms Christ's enemies in their enmity to Him, so much as the slights put on Him by those that have passed for his friends. But if he should speak honorably of Him, they would prosecute him upon their new law; would make him an example, and so deter others from applying to Him for cures, which, though they came cheap from Christ, yet they would make them pay dear for. Or perhaps Christ's friends proposed to have the man's own sentiments concerning his Physician, and were willing to know, since he appeared to be a sensible man, what he thought of Him. Note, Those whose eyes Christ has opened, know best what to say of Him, and have great reason, on all occasions, to say well of Him. What think we of Christ?

This question the man makes a short, plain, direct answer; 'He is a prophet, inspired of God to preach, and work miracles, and delivers to the world a divine message.' There had been no prophets for three hundred years; yet they did not conclude they should have no more, for they knew that He was yet to come, who should seal up vision and prophecy, Dan. 9:24. It would seem, this man had no thoughts He was the Messiah, but one of the same rank with the other prophets. The woman of Samaria concluded He was a prophet, before she had any thought of his being the Messiah; (ch. 4:19,) so this blind man thought well of Christ, according to the light he had, though he did not think well enough of Him; but, being faithful in what he had already attained to, God revealed even that unto him. This blind beggar had a clearer judgment of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and saw further into the proofs of a divine mission, than the masters in Israel, that assumed authority to judge of prophets.

Having in vain attempted to invalidate the evidence of the fact, and finding that indeed a notable miracle was wrought, and they could not deny it; they renewed their attempt to banter it, and to shake the good opinion the man had of

a distraction to us, and we do well; but we must not therefore tie up others to the same strictness. Every thing that we take for a rule of practice, must not be made a rule of judgment.

Others spake in his favor, and very pertinently urged, *How can a man that is a sinner, do such miracles?* It seems that even in this council of the ungodly there were some capable of free thought, and witnesses for Christ, even in the midst of his enemies. The matter of fact was plain, that this was a miracle; the more it was searched into, the more it was cleared; and this brought his former works to mind, and gave occasion to speak magnificently of them,—so great signs, so many, so evident. And the inference from it is very natural; such things could never be done by a man that is a sinner, that is, not by any mere man, by his own power; or rather, not by one that is an impostor, and in that sense a sinner; such a one may indeed show some signs, and lying wonders, but not such signs as Christ wrought. How could a man produce such divine credentials, if he had not a divine commission? Thus there was a schism, so the word is; a warm debate arose, and the house divided upon it. Thus God defeats the counsels of his enemies by dividing them; and by such testimonies as these against the malice of persecutors, their designs against the church are sometimes rendered ineffectual, and always inexcusable.

After their inquiry concerning the cure, ob-

Him: Give God the glory, we know that this man is a sinner. Two ways this is understood; either,

[1.] By way of advice, to take heed of ascribing his cure to a sinful man; thus, under color of zeal for the honor of God, they rob Christ of his honor, as those do, who will not worship Christ as God, under pretence of zeal for this great truth, that there is but one God; whereas this is his declared will, that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father; and in confessing that Christ is Lord, we give glory to God the Father. When God makes use of men that are sinners, as instruments of good to us, we must give God the glory, for every creature is what He makes it to be; and yet there is a gratitude owing to the instruments. It was a good word, Give God the praise, but here it was ill used; and there seems to be this further in it, 'This man is a sinner, a bad man, therefore give the praise so much the more to God, who could work by such an instrument.'

[2.] Or by way of adjuration; 'We know, (though thou dost not, who hast but lately come into a new world) that this man is a great impostor, that cheats the country; therefore give God praise,' (as Joshua said to Achan) 'by making confession of the fraud we are confident there is in this matter; in God's name, man, tell the truth.' Thus is God's name abused in papal inquisitions, when by oaths, they extort accusations of themselves from the innocent, and of others from the ignorant. How basely they speak of the Lord Jesus; 'We know that this man is a sinner, a man of sin. In which we may observe, 1st. Their insolence and pride. They would not have it thought, when they asked, that they needed information; nay, they know very well, He is a sinner, and nobody can convince them of the contrary. He had challenged them to their faces, (ch. 8:46.) to convince Him of sin, and they had nothing to say; but now behind his back they speak of Him as a malefactor, convicted upon notorious evidence. False accusers make up in confidence what is wanting in proof. 2dly. The indignity hereby done to Jesus. When He became Man, He took upon Him the form, not only of a servant, but of a sinner, (Rom. 8:3.) and passed for a sinner. Nay, He was represented as a sinner of the first magnitude; and, being made sin for us, He despised even this shame.

A debate arose between the Pharisees and this man concerning Christ. They say, He is a sinner; he says, He is a prophet. As it is an encouragement to persons concerned for the cause of Christ, to hope it will never want witnesses, when they find a poor blind beggar picked up from the way-side, and made a witness for Christ, to the faces of his enemies; so it is an encouragement to those who are called out to witness for Christ, to find with what prudence and courage this man managed his defence. It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. Though he had never seen Jesus, he had felt his grace.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V 13—23. How perfect in wisdom and holiness was our Redeemer, when enemies, powerful, vigilant, and malignant, as he were, could find no flaw, and were driven to the necessity of renewing against Him the repeatedly refuted charge of breaking the Sabbath! May we thus be enabled 'by well-doing to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men,' (Note, 1 Pet. 2:13—17.)—The most illiterate and poor, who are simple-hearted, readily draw proper conclusions from the evidences afforded them of the truth of the Gospel; but they whose interests and inclinations lie another way, though 'ever learning,

are never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.'—Religious persecutions can only render men cowards or hypocrites, and suppress investigation, or an avowal of sentiments; and even the censures of the church have too often been levelled against her best friends. But no terror should induce us to conceal our obligations to the Lord; and what men generally term prudence and caution, in this case, is unbelief, and base fear of the cross; if not being fatally ashamed of Christ and his cause. (Note, Mark 8:38.)

SCOTT.

Verse 22.

Put out of the synagogue.] There were three sorts of excommunication. The slightest, which continued only thirty days, excluded the person from all approach nearer than four cubits, even from his wife and children, but not from the synagogue. If he only kept at the specified distance. The second, (that meant here probably,) was a severer kind of excommunication, involving exclusion from all sacred meetings, was accompanied with curses and maledictions, and forbade every kind of intercourse with the person. The third, and heaviest, was a perpetual exclusion from all sacred meetings, and implied excommunication from the Jewish people.

BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 24.

Give God the glory.] The best commentators unite in regarding this phrase as a Hebrew formula, employed in order to excite any one to speak the whole truth. So Josh. 7:9. 1 Sam. 6:5. ar. 1 k:6. and many other passages of the Old Testament, as also Ladv. 9:8. Thus it means 'Confess the truth, dissemble nothing.' And this may be accounted for, as Lampe suggests, on the principle that a lie is a denial of the omniscience, holiness, truth and justice of God; and he who wilfully conceals the truth, or declares a falsehood, insults all those attributes of the Deity.

BLOOMFIELD.

A sinner.] The original word refers here not so much to his breaking the Sabbath, as to his being an imitator.

KUHN.

25 He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: 'one thing I know, that, whereas I was blind, now I see.

26 Then said they to him again, What did he to thee? how opened he thine eyes?

27 He answered them, 'I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?

28 Then they reviled him, and said, Thou art his disciple; but we are Moses's disciples.

29 We know that God spake unto Moses: as for this fellow, we know not from whence he is.

j 30. 5:11. 1 John 5:10.
k 10-15. Luke 22:67, 68.
l 34. 7:47-52. Is. 51:7. Matt. 5:11.
m 37-39. 1 Cor. 4:12. 6:10. 1 Pet. 2:23.
n 5:45-47. 7:19. Acts 6:11-14. Rom. 2:17.
o 1:17. Num. 12:2-7. 16:28. Deut. 24:10. Ps. 103:7. 105:26. 106:10. Mal. 4:4. Acts 7:35. 26:22. Heb. 5:2-5.
p 18:24. 1 Kings 22:27. 2 Kings 9:11. Matt. 12:24. 23:51. Luke 23:2. Acts 22:22.
q 7:27, 41, 42. 6:4. Ps. 22:6. Is. 53:2, 3.

lured. Thus eager disputants, that resolve they will have the last word, by such vain repetitions, to avoid the shame of being silenced, make themselves accountable for many idle words. Secondly, They hoped, by putting the man upon repeating his evidence, to catch him tripping, or wavering, and then they would think they had gained a good point.

He upbraids them with obstinate infidelity, and invincible prejudice, and they revile him as a disciple of Jesus.

He would not gratify them with a repetition of the story, but bravely replied, *I have told you already, and ye did not hear; wherefore would ye hear it again? will ye also be his disciples?* Some think he spake seriously, really expecting they would be convinced. 'He has many disciples, I will be one, will you also?' Some zealous young Christians see so much reason for religion, that they think every one should presently be of their mind. But it rather seems to be spoken ironically; 'Will ye be his disciples?' I know you abhor the thoughts of it; why then desire to hear that which will either make you his disciples, or leave you inexcusable? Those that wilfully shut their eyes against the light, ist. *Make themselves contemptible and base*, as these did, who were justly exposed, by this poor man, for denying the conclusion, when they had nothing to object against either of the premises. 2dly. They forfeit the benefit of further instruction, and means of knowledge and conviction: they that have been told once, and would not hear, why should they be told again? Jer. 51:9. See Matt. 10:14. 3dly. They hereby receive the grace of God in vain. This is implied in that, 'Will ye be his disciples?' Ye resolve ye will not; why then hear it again? Only that you may be his accusers and persecutors? Those who will not see cause to embrace Christ, and join with his followers, one would think, should see cause enough not to hate and persecute Him and them.

For this they scorn and revile him, v. 23. When they could not resist the wisdom and spirit by which he spake, they broke out into a passion, and began to call names, and give him ill language. See what Christ's faithful witnesses must expect from adversaries: let them count upon all manner of evil to be said of them, Matt. 5:11. Unreasonable men commonly make out with railing what is wanting in reason.

1st. They taunted this man for his affection to Christ; *Thou art his disciple*, as if that were reproach enough. They do what they can to put Christ's religion in an ill name, and represent the profession of it as contemptible. They reviled him, or they cursed him; and what was their curse? *Be thou his disciple*; 'May such a curse' (saith Austin) 'ever be on us and on our children!' If we take our measures of credit and disgrace from the sentiment, or clamors rather, of a blind world, we shall glory in our shame, and be ashamed of our glory.

Verse 29.

Their partiality here was inexcusable; for if they believed the mission of Moses, on evidence of miracles, credibly attested indeed, but performed two thousand years before they were born, it was much more reasonable, on their own principle, to believe the mission of Jesus, on

This poor man sticks to the certain matter of fact, of which they endeavor to shake the evidence. That which is doubtful, is best resolved into that which is plain, and therefore he adheres to that which, to his own satisfaction, was past dispute; 'Whether He be a sinner or no, I will not now stand to dispute; the matter is plain, and, though I should altogether hold my peace, would speak for itself; or, as it might better be rendered, 'If He be a sinner, I know it not, I see no reason to say so; for this one thing I know, and can be more sure of than you can be of that which you are so confident of, that whereas I was blind, now I see.' Here, 1st. He tacitly reproves their great assurance of the ill character they gave Jesus; 'You say you know Him to be a sinner; I, who know Him as well, cannot give Him any such character.' 2dly. He boldly relies upon his experience of the power and goodness of Jesus, and resolves to abide by it. There is no disputing against experience, nor arguing a man out of his senses; here is an eye-witness of the power and grace of Christ, though he had never seen Him. Note, As Christ's mercies are most valued by those that have felt the want of them, so the most powerful and durable affections to Christ are those that arise from experimental knowledge of Him, 1 John 1:1. Acts 4:20.

He does not here give a nice account of the method of cure, nor pretend to describe it philosophically, but, in short, *Whereas I was blind, now I see*. Thus, in the work of grace in the soul, though we cannot tell when, and how, by what instruments, and by what steps the change was wrought, yet we may take the comfort of it, if we can say, through grace, 'Whereas I was blind, now I see.' I did live a worldly, sensual life, but, thanks be to God, it is now otherwise. Eph. 5:8.

What did He to thee? How opened He thine eyes? They asked these questions, First, Because they wanted something to say, and would rather speak impertinently, than seem to be silent.

Secondly, They hoped, by putting the man upon repeating his evidence, to catch him tripping, or wavering, and then they would think they had gained a good point.

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2dly. They gloried in their relation to Moses, 'We are Moses' disciples, and neither need we desire any other teacher.' Note, Carnal professors of religion are apt to trust to, and be proud of, the dignities and privileges of their profession, while strangers to the principles and power of religion. These Pharisees had boasted of their parentage, *We are Abraham's seed*; here of good education, *We are Moses' disciples*, as if these would save them. It is sad to see how much one part of religion is opposed, under color of zeal for another part; there was a perfect harmony between Christ and Moses; Moses prepared for Christ, and Christ perfected Moses, so that they might be disciples of Moses, and become the disciples of Christ too; yet they here put them in opposition, nor could they have persecuted Christ, but under the umbrage of the abused name of Moses. Thus they who gain say the doctrine of free grace, value themselves as promoters of man's duty, *We are Moses' disciples*; while, on the other hand, they that cancel the obligation of the law, value themselves as the asserters of free grace, as if none were the disciples of Jesus, but they; whereas, if we rightly understand the matter, we shall see God's grace and man's duty meet together, and befriend each other.

3dly. They gave some sort of reason for their adhering to Moses against Christ; *We know that God spake unto Moses; as for this fellow, we know not whence He is*. But did they not know that among other things which God spake to Moses, this was one, that they must expect another Prophet, and a further revelation of the mind of God? yet, when our Lord, pursuant to what God said to Moses, did appear, and gave proofs of his being that Prophet, under pretence of sticking to the old religion and the established church, they not only forfeited, but forsook, their own mercies.

They allege, in defence of their enmity to Christ, what none of his followers ever denied, *We know that God spake unto Moses*. We know it too; more plainly to Moses than to any other of the prophets; but what then? Does it therefore follow that Jesus is an impostor? Moses was a prophet, it is true, and might not Jesus be a prophet too? Moses spake honorably of Jesus, (ch. 5:46.) and Jesus spake honorably of Moses; (Luke 16:29.) they were both faithful in the same house of God, Moses as a servant, Christ as a Son; therefore their pleading Moses' warrant in opposition to Christ's, was an artifice to make unthinking people believe it was as certain, that Jesus was a false Prophet, as that Moses was a true one; whereas they were both true.

They urge their ignorance of Christ, to justify their contempt of Him; *As for this fellow*. Thus scornfully do they speak of Jesus, as not worthy to charge their memories with; they expressed themselves with as much disdain of the Shepherd of Israel, as if He had not been worthy to be set with the dogs of their flock. They looked upon themselves to have the key of knowledge, none must preach without a license from them; they expected that all who set up for teachers, should apply to them, which this Jesus had never done, and therefore they concluded Him one that came not in by the door; they knew not whence, or what He was, and therefore concluded Him a sinner; whereas those we know little of, we should judge charitably of; but proud and narrow souls think none good but such as are in their interest. It was not long ago, that the Jews had made the contrary to this, an objection against Christ; (ch. 7:27.) *We know this man whence He is, but when Christ comes, no man knows whence He is*. Thus they could with the greatest assurance either affirm or deny the same thing, according as it would serve. They knew not whence He was; whose fault was that? (1.) It is certain that they ought to have inquired;

at least equal miracles, wrought daily among them, when they might in many instances have been eye-witnesses to the facts, and one of which, notwithstanding all their malice, they were here compelled to own, or at least found themselves utterly unable to dispute.

30 The man answered and said unto them, Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.

31 Now we know that God heareth not sinners; but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth.

32 Since the world began was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

33 If this man were not of God, he could do nothing.

3:10, 12-37, Is. 29:14, Mark 6:6, Is. 29:18, 19, 35:5, 6, Matt. 11:5, Luke 7:22, Jol. 27:8, 9, 35:12, 42:8, Ps. 18:41, 34:15, 66:18-20, Prov. 1:28, 29, 21:13, 28:9, Is. 1:15, 58:9, Jer. 11:11, 14:12, Ez. 8:18, Mic. 5:4, Zech. 7:13, L. 4:54, 7:47, 15:16, Ps. 40:8, 143:10, Heb. 10:7, 1 John 3:21, 22, 11:41, 42, Gen. 18:32-33, 19:29, 20:7, 1 Kings 17:20-22, 18:36-38, 2 Chr. 32:29, Ps. 99:8, 106:23, Jer. 15:1, Jam. 5:15-18, Job 30:4, Is. 64:1, Luke 1:70, Rev. 16:18, y. 16, 32, Acts 5:38, 39.

ele. When they said, *We know not whence He is*, they meant, 'We know not any proof that his doctrine and ministry are from heaven.' Now this is strange, (saith the poor man,) 'that the miracle wrought upon me has not convinced you; that you, whose studies give you advantages above others, of discerning the things of God, should thus shut your eyes against the light.' It is a marvellous work, and a wonder, when the wisdom of the wise thus perisheth, (Isa. 29:14.) that they deny the truth of that, which they cannot gainsay the evidence of. Note, (1.) The unbelief of those who enjoy the means of knowledge and conviction, is indeed a marvellous thing, Mark 6:6. (2.) Those who have themselves experienced the grace of the Lord Jesus, especially wonder at the wilfulness of those who reject Him, and, having such good thoughts of Him themselves, are amazed that others have not so too. Had Christ opened the eyes of the Pharisees, they would not have doubted his being a Prophet.

They had determined concerning Jesus, that He was not of God, (v. 16.) but a sinner, v. 24. In answer to which, the man here proves, not only that He was not a sinner, (v. 31.) but that He was of God, v. 33. Though he could not read a letter, he was well acquainted with the Scripture and the things of God; he had wanted the sense of seeing, yet had well improved that of hearing, by which faith cometh; yet that would not have served him, without an extraordinary presence of God, and special aids of his Spirit, on this occasion. See his great zeal for the honor of Christ, whom he could not endure to hear evil spoken of; his boldness, and courage, not terrified by proud adversaries. Those who are ambitious of the favors of God, must not be afraid of the frowns of men. 'See here (saith Whitby) a blind man and unlearned, judging more rightly of divine things than the whole council of the Pharisees. Whence we learn, that we are not always to be led by the authority of councils, popes, or bishops; and that it is not absurd for laymen, sometimes, to vary from their opinions; these overseers being sometimes guilty of great oversights.'

The man's argument may be reduced into form, somewhat like that of David, Ps. 66:18, 19. The proposition in David's argument is, *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear me*; here it is to the same purport, *God heareth not sinners*; the assumption there is, *But verily God hath heard me*; here it is, *Verily God hath heard Jesus*; the conclusion there is, to the honor of God, *Blessed be God*; here, to the honor of the Lord Jesus, *He is of God*.

He lays it down for an undoubted truth, that none but good men are the favorites of heaven; *Now we know*, you as well as I, that God heareth not sinners, but if any man be a worshipper of God, and does his will, him He heareth.

The assertions, rightly understood, are true. 1st. Be it spoken to the terror of the wicked, *God heareth not sinners*, such sinners as the Pharisees meant, when they said of Christ, *He is a sinner*, one that, under the umbrage of God's name, advanced the devil's interest. This speaks no discouragement to repenting sinners, but to those that go on still in their trespasses, that make their prayers not only consistent with, but subservient to, their sins,

the Messiah was to appear about this time, and it concerned them to examine every indication; out these priests, like those, Jer. 2:8. said not, *Where is the Lord?* (2.) It is certain that they might have known whence He was, not only, by searching the register; but, by inquiring into his doctrine and miracles, might have known He was sent of God, and had a better commission than they could give Him. See the absurdity of infidelity; men will not know the doctrine of Christ, because they are resolved they will not believe it, and then pretend they do not believe it, because they do not know it. Such ignorance and unbelief, which support one another, aggravate one another.

The poor man, finding he had reason on his side, grows bold.

He wonders at their obstinate infidelity; (v. 30.) not at all daunted by their frowns, he bravely answered, 'Why, herein is a marvellous thing, strange, wilful ignorance, that you know not from whence He is, and yet He has opened mine eyes.' Two things he wonders at:

1. That they should be strangers to a man so famous. He that could open the eyes of the blind, must certainly be a considerable man; the Pharisees were inquisitive men, had a large correspondence, thought themselves the eyes of the church, and yet that they should talk, as if they thought it below them to take cognizance of such a man as this, is strange indeed. Many who pass for learned and knowing men, who understand business, and can talk sense in other things, are yet ignorant, to a wonder, of the doctrine of Christ, and have not so much as a curiosity, to acquaint themselves with that which angels desire to look into.

2. That they should question the divine commission of one that had wrought a divine miracle.

as the hypocrites do; God will not give an answer of peace to their prayers.

2dly. Be it spoken to the comfort of the righteous. Here is, 1. The character of a good man; he is one that worships God and doeth His will; is constant in his devotions at set times, and regular in his conversation at all times. He makes it his business to glorify his Creator by the solemn adorations of his name, and a strict obedience to his will and law; both go to gether. 2. The unspeakable comfort of such a man; him God hears; hears his complaints, and relieves him; his appeals, and right him; his praises, and accepts them; his prayers, and answers them, Ps. 34:15.

The application of these truths is very pertinent to prove that He whose word cured one born blind, was not a bad man, but, having manifestly such an interest in the holy God, as that He heard Him always, was certainly holy.

He magnifies the miracle Christ had wrought, to strengthen the argument; (v. 32.) Since the world began, was it not heard, that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. [1.] It was a true miracle, above the power of nature, it was never heard that any man, by natural means, had cured one born blind; no doubt this man and his parents had been very inquisitive into cases of this nature, whether any such had been helped, and could hear of none which enabled him to speak this with the more assurance. Or, [2.] It was an extraordinary miracle; neither Moses, nor any of the prophets ever did this; wherein divine power and divine goodness seem to strive which should outshine. Moses wrought miraculous plagues, but Christ miraculous cures. Note, 1st. The wondrous works of the Lord Jesus were such, as had never been done before. 2dly. It becomes those who have received mercy from God, to magnify the mercies; not that glory may redound to themselves, and they may seem to be favorites of heaven, but that God may have so much the more glory.

He therefore concludes, *If this man were not of God, He could do nothing*, no such thing as this; and therefore, no doubt, He is of God, notwithstanding his non-conformity to your traditions of the Sabbath. Note, What Christ did on earth sufficiently demonstrated what He was in heaven; for if He had not been sent of God, He could not have wrought such miracles. The man of sin comes with lying wonders, not real miracles; a false prophet might, by divine permission, give a sign or wonder; (Deut. 13:1, 2.) yet it would carry with it its own confutation, for it is to enforce a temptation to serve other gods, which was to set God against Himself. It is true, likewise, many wicked people have, in Christ's name, done many wonderful works, which does not prove them to be of God, but Him in whose name they were wrought. We may each of us know by this, whether we are of God: *What do we?* What do we for God, for our souls, in working out our salvation; what do we more than others?

The Pharisees, finding themselves unable either to answer his reasonings, or to bear them, fell upon him, and with great pride and passion broke off the discourse.

Having nothing to reply to his argument, they reflected on his person, *Thou wast altogether born in sin, and dost thou teach us?* They take that ill, which they had reason to take kindly, and are cut to the heart with rage, by that which should have pricked them to the heart with repentance.

They despised him; and what a severe censure they passed on him; 'Thou wast not only born in sin, as every man is, but wholly corrupt, and bearing about with thee in thy body, as well as in thy soul, the marks of that corruption; thou wast one whom nature stigmatized.' Had he continued blind, it had been barbarous to upbraid him with it, as more deeply tainted with sin than others; but it was most unjust to take

Thus a simple man, guided by the Spirit of truth, and continuing steadfast in his testimony, utterly confounded the most eminent Jewish doctors. When they had no longer either reason or argument to oppose to him, as a proof of their discomfiture, and a monument of

their reproach and shame, they had recourse to the secular arm, and thus silenced, by political power, a person whom they had neither reason nor religion to withstand. They have adorne many followers.

Dr. A. CLARK

34 They answered and said unto him, Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us? And they cast him out.

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?

36 He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?

37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.

38 And he said, Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him.

2. 8:41. Job 14:4. 15:14-16. 25: 4. Ps. 51:5. Gal. 2:15. Eph. 2:3. 20. 7:48-49. Gen. 18:9. Ex. 2:14. 2 Chr. 25:15. Prov. 8:7. 9:12. 29:1. Is. 65:5. Luke 11:45. 14:11. 19:10-11, 17. 1 Pet. 5:5. 1. 6:37. Ps. 27:1. Rom. 10:20. 6. 2:22. 3 John 9:10. Rev. 13:17. Or, excommunicated him. 18:17, 18. 1 Cor. 5:4, 5, 13. 5:14. Is. 27:1. Rom. 10:20. d 1:49-50. 3:15-18, 36. 8:9. 11:27. 20:28-31. Acts 8:37. 9:50. 1 John 4:1. 5:5, 10-13, 20. 2. 6:37. Ps. 27:1. Matt. 15:16. Rom. 1:4. Heb. 1:2-9. f 1:38. Prov. 30:24. Cant. 5:9. Matt. 11:3. 4:26. 11:7. 14:21-23. Ps. 25:9. 14. Matt. 11:25. 13:11, 12. Acts 10:31-33. h 20:28. Ps. 2:12. 45:11. Matt. 14: 23. 28:17. Luke 24:52. Rev. 5: 9-14.

our duty to go out of, and that unjustly, though cast out with an *anathema*, and all the hughar ceremonies of hell, bomb, and candle, is what we have no reason at all to dread. The curse *causess shall not come*. If they cast Christ's followers out of their *synagogues*, as He foretells, (ch. 16: 2.) there is no harm done, when they are become *synagogues of Satan*.

V. 35-33. When Jesus heard that they had cast him out, (for it is likely the town rang of it, and every body cried shame upon them for it,) then He found him, which implies his seeking him that He might comfort him, 1. Because he had, to the best of his knowledge, spoken well, and boldly, in defence of Jesus. Note, Christ will be sure to stand by his witnesses, and own those that own Him and his truth. Earthly princes neither do, nor can, take cognizance of all that vindicate them and their administration; but our Lord knows all the faithful testimonies we bear to Him at any time, and a book of remembrance is written, and it shall redound not only to our credit hereafter, but our comfort now. 2. The Pharisees had cast him out, and abused him. Beside the common regard which the Judge of the world has to those who suffer wrongfully, (Ps. 103: 6.) there is particular notice taken of those that suffer in the cause of Christ and conscience. Here was one poor man suffering for Christ, and He took care, that as his afflictions abounded, his consolations should much more abound. Note, (1.) Though persecutors may exclude good men from their communion, they cannot exclude them from communion with Christ, nor put them out of the way of his visits. Happy they who have a Friend from whom men cannot debar them! (2.) Christ will graciously find and take up those, who, for his sake, are unjustly rejected and cast out by men. He will be a hiding-place to his out-casts, and appear to the joy of those whom their brethren hated and cast out.

Christ brings him acquainted with the consolation of Israel. He had well improved the knowledge he had, and now Christ gives him further instruction; for he that is faithful in a little, shall be intrusted with more, Matt. 13: 12.

Our Lord examines his faith; 'Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Dost thou give credit to the promises of the Messiah? Art thou ready to receive and embrace Him when manifested to thee?' This was that faith of the Son of God, they lived by, who lived before his manifestation. The Messiah is here called the Son of God, and so the Jews had learned to call Him from the prophecies, Ps. 2: 7. 89: 27. See ch. 1: 49. Thou art the Son of God, that is, the true Messiah. They that expected the temporal kingdom of the Messiah, delighted rather in calling Him the Son of David, which gave more countenance to that expectation, Matt. 22: 42. But Christ, that He might give us an idea of his kingdom, as divine, calls Himself the Son of God, and rather Son of man in general, than of David in particular. The desires and expectations of the Messiah, in the Old-Testament saints, were graciously interpreted, and accepted, as their believing on the Son of God. This faith Christ here inquires after; Dost thou believe? Note, The great thing which is

now required of us, (1 John 3: 23.) and will shortly be inquired after concerning us, is, our believing on the Son of God, and by this we must stand or fall forever.

The poor man solicitously inquires concerning the Messiah, professing his readiness to embrace Him; Who is He, Lord, that I might believe in Him? Some think he did know that Jesus was the Son of God, but did not know which was Jesus, and therefore, supposing this that talked with him to be a follower of Jesus, desired Him to do him the favor to direct him to Him; not that he might satisfy his curiosity with the sight of Him, but that he might the more firmly believe in Him, and know whom he had believed. See Cant. 6: 6, 7. 3: 2, 3. Christ only can direct us to Himself. Others think he did know that this person who talked with him, was Jesus, that cured him, whom he believed a great and good man, and a prophet, but did not yet know that He was, or was to be, the Son of God, and the true Messiah. 'Lord, I believe there is a Christ to come; thou who hast given me bodily sight, O tell me, who and where He is.' Christ's question intimated that the Messiah was now among them, which he presently takes the hint of, and asks, Where is He? The question was rational and just; Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? For how could he believe in one of whom he had not heard? The work of ministers is to tell us *unto the Son of God is*, that we may believe on Him, ch. 20: 31.

Jesus graciously reveals Himself to him. Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. Thou needest not go far to find out the Son of God, Behold the Word is nigh thee. We do not find that Christ did thus expressly, and in so many words, reveal Himself to any other, as to this man here, and to the woman of Samaria, I that speak unto thee am He; He left others to find out by arguments who He was, but, to these weak and foolish things of the world, He chose to manifest Himself, so as not to the wise and prudent.

Thou hast seen Him; and he was much indebted to the Lord Jesus for opening his eyes, that he might see Him. Now he was sensible, more than ever, what unspeakable mercy it was to be cured of blindness, that he might see a sight, which rejoiced his heart more than that of the light of this world. Note, The greatest comfort of bodily eye-sight, is, its serviceableness to our souls. How contentedly might this man have returned to his former blindness, like old Simeon, now that his eyes had seen God's salvation! This intimates that spiritual sight is given principally for this end, that we may see Christ, 2 Cor. 4: 6. Can we say, that by faith we have seen Christ, in his beauty and glory, in his ability and willingness to save, so seen Him as to be satisfied concerning Him, to be satisfied in Him? Let us give Him the praise, who opened our eyes.

It is He that talketh with thee. He was not only favored with a sight of Christ, but admitted into fellowship with Him. Great princes are willing to be seen by those whom yet they will not vouchsafe to talk with. But Christ, by his Word and Spirit, talks with those whose desires are toward Him, and in talking with them manifests Himself to them, as He did to the two disciples, when He talked their hearts warm, Luk. 24: 32. Observe, This poor man was solicitous in inquiring after the Savior, when at the same time he saw Him, and was talking with Him. Note, Jesus Christ is often nearer the souls that seek Him, than they themselves are aware of. Doubting Christians are sometimes saying, Where is the Lord? and fearing that they are *ast out* from his sight, when, at the same time, it is He that talks with them, and puts strength into them.

The poor man readily entertained this surprising revelation, and, in a transport of joy and wonder, said, Lord, I believe; and worshipped him.

Lord, I believe Thee to be the Son of God. He would not dispute any thing that He said, who had shewed such mercy to him, nor doubt of the truth of a doctrine which was confirmed

19 ¶ And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world; that they which see not might see, and that they which see might be made blind.

40 And some of the Pharisees which were with him heard these words, and said unto him, "Are we blind also?"

41 Jesus said unto them, "If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."

1:31, 7:52-57, 8:15, 16, 12:47, 48, Jer. 1:8, 10, Luke 2:34, 13:30, 2 Cor. 2:15.
 25:36-38, 8:12, 12:46, Matt. 11:5, Luke 1:79, 4:18, 7:21, Acts 26:18, 2 Cor. 4:4-8, Eph. 5:14, 12:40, 41, Is. 69:10, 29:10, 42:18-20, 44:18, Matt. 6:23, 13:12-15, Luke 11:33, 17:10, 17:17-10, 2 Thess. 2:10-12, 1 John 2:11.
 34, 7:47-52, Matt. 15:12-14, 23:16, 17, 19, 24, 25, Luke 11:39, 40, 45, 46, Rom. 2:19-22.
 15:22-24, Prov. 26:12, Is. 5:20, 21, Jer. 2:35, Luke 12:47, Heb. 10:26, 27, 1 John 1:8-10.

rule of government now, and of judgment shortly. 2. To put a difference between men, by revealing the thoughts of many hearts, and laying open men's true characters, by this test, whether they were well or ill affected to Him. 3. To abolish the Jewish ceremony, and take down that fabric, which, though erected by the hand of God Himself, yet was antiquated, and by incurable corruptions was become rotten and dangerous; and to erect a new building by another model, institute new ordinances and offices, to abrogate Judaism and enact Christianity; for this judgment He came into the world, and it was a great revolution.

This great truth He explains by a metaphor borrowed from the miracle lately wrought: That they which see not might see: and that they which see might be made blind. Such a difference of Christ's coming is often spoken of; to some his Gospel is a savor of life unto life, to others of death unto death.

(1.) This is applicable to nations; that the Gentiles, who had long been

by such signs. Believing with the heart, he thus confesses with the mouth; and now the bruised reed was become a cedar.

He worshipped Him, not only gave Him the civil respect due to a great man, and the acknowledgments owing to a kind benefactor, but herein gave Him divine honor, and worshipped Him as the Son of God manifested in the flesh. None but God is to be worshipped; so that in worshipping Jesus, he owned Him to be God. Note, True faith will show itself in a humble adoration of the Lord Jesus. They who believe in Him, will see all the reason in the world to worship Him. We never read any more of this man; but, it is very likely, from henceforth he became a constant follower of Christ.

V. 39-41. Christ having spoken comfort to the poor man that was persecuted, here speaks conviction to his persecutors, a specimen of the distributions of trouble and rest at the great day; 2 Thess. 1:6, 7. Probably, this was not immediately after his discourse with the man, but He took the next opportunity that offered itself to address the Pharisees.

Here is the account Christ gives of his design in coming into the world: 'For judgment I am come, to administer the affairs of the kingdom of God, and am invested with judicial power in order thereunto, to be executed in conformity to the counsels of God. What Christ spake, He spake not as a mere preacher, but as a king, and a judge. His business into the world was great: He came for judgment, that is,

1. To preach a doctrine and a law which would try men, and effectually discover them, and would be completely fitted, in all respects, to be the

rule of government now, and of judgment shortly. 2. To put a difference between men, by revealing the thoughts of many hearts, and laying open men's true characters, by this test, whether they were well or ill affected to Him. 3. To abolish the Jewish ceremony, and take down that fabric, which, though erected by the hand of God Himself, yet was antiquated, and by incurable corruptions was become rotten and dangerous; and to erect a new building by another model, institute new ordinances and offices, to abrogate Judaism and enact Christianity; for this judgment He came into the world, and it was a great revolution.

V. 24-41. It has often happened, that they profess most zeal for the glory of God, who are most assiduous in dishonoring Christ; but he that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father that sent Him.—When a believer knows not how to answer the arguments of enemies to the truth, he may have recourse to his own experience: 'one thing he knows, that whereas he was blind, now he sees'; and what he has discovered of the glory of God, the evil of sin, the depravity of his own heart, the preciousness of Christ, the beauty of holiness, so evinces to him the truth of the Gospel, that no arguments can answer 'this witness in himself.' (Notes, 2 Pet. 1:19, 1 John 5:9, 10.)—How little ought we to regard the contempt and revilings of the scornful and unbelieving, though most eminent among men; when Jesus was reviled by a convention of Jewish priests and rulers, as a notorious sinner, and 'the Lord of glory' was disclaimed as contemptible! But how unbecoming are such revilings, especially in those who are of superiour rank and education!—Plain unlettered sense will [sometimes] go further, in understanding the most important matters, than all the advantages of science, which often render men too self-sufficient to judge aright.—Our God, who heareth the repenting

destitute of divine revelation, might see it; and the Jews, who had long enjoyed it, might have the things of their peace hid from their eyes, Hos. 1:10. 2:23. The Gentiles see a great light, while blindness is happened unto Israel.

(2.) To particular persons. Christ came into the world, [1.] Intentionally to give sight to them that were spiritually blind; by his Word to reveal the object; and by his Spirit to heal the organ, that souls might be turned from darkness to light. He came for judgment, that is, to set those at liberty from their dark prison, that were willing to be released, Isa. 61:1. [2.] Eventually, that those who see, might be made blind; that those who have a high conceit of their own wisdom, and set up that in contradiction to revelation, might be sealed up in ignorance and infidelity. The preaching of the cross was foolishness to them, who by wisdom knew not God. Christ came into the world, to administer the affairs of a spiritual kingdom in men's minds. Whereas, in the Jewish church, the blessings and judgments of God's government were mostly temporal, now the method of administration should be changed; and as the subjects of his kingdom should be blessed with spiritual blessings, such as arise from illumination of the mind, so the rebels should be punished with spiritual plagues, not war, famine, and pestilence, as formerly, but judicial infatuation, hardness of heart, terror of conscience, strong delusions, vile affections. In this way Christ will judge between cattle and cattle, Ezek. 34:17.

The Pharisees were with Him, not desirous to learn any good from Him, but to form evil against Him; and they said, Are we blind also? When Christ said that they who saw, should by his coming be made blind, they apprehended that He meant them who were the seers of the people, and valued themselves on their insight and foresight. 'Now,' say they, 'we know that the common people are blind; but are we blind also? What! we—the rabbins, the doctors, the learned in the laws?' This is a libel on the great. Note, Frequently those that need reproof most, and deserve it best, though they have wit enough to discern a tact one, have not grace enough to bear a just one. These Pharisees took this reproof for a reproach, as those lawyers, Luke 11:45. 'Darest thou say that

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 24-41. It has often happened, that they profess most zeal for the glory of God, who are most assiduous in dishonoring Christ; but he that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father that sent Him.—When a believer knows not how to answer the arguments of enemies to the truth, he may have recourse to his own experience: 'one thing he knows, that whereas he was blind, now he sees'; and what he has discovered of the glory of God, the evil of sin, the depravity of his own heart, the preciousness of Christ, the beauty of holiness, so evinces to him the truth of the Gospel, that no arguments can answer 'this witness in himself.' (Notes, 2 Pet. 1:19, 1 John 5:9, 10.)—How little ought we to regard the contempt and revilings of the scornful and unbelieving, though most eminent among men; when Jesus was reviled by a convention of Jewish priests and rulers, as a notorious sinner, and 'the Lord of glory' was disclaimed as contemptible! But how unbecoming are such revilings, especially in those who are of superiour rank and education!—Plain unlettered sense will [sometimes] go further, in understanding the most important matters, than all the advantages of science, which often render men too self-sufficient to judge aright.—Our God, who heareth the repenting sinner's cry, will not regard those, who go on in wickedness: (Note, Ps. 66:18, 19.) but when we desire and aim to do his will, He answers our prayers, and employs us in his service.—When arguments fail pertinacious disputers, they commonly have recourse to abusive language: and many show their pride and folly, by refusing to hear sense and argument from their supposed inferiors, and by answering them with contempt and upbraidings. But Jesus will show Himself peculiarly attentive to those, who are suffering for his sake: those who act conscientiously and boldly, according to their present measure of knowledge, shall be led forward; and the more they know of Christ, the greater honor they will render Him. (Notes, Hos. 6:1-3, v. 3.) Thus the Lord gives eyes to the blind, and closes the minds of haughty boasters. Conscious, humble ignorance dwells nearer the porch of wisdom, than arrogant genius and science. If a man be 'wise in his own conceit there is more hope of a fool than of him'; and none are so more danger than such as exclaim, 'Are we blind also?' For numbers of this character will perish under the guilt of 'loving darkness and hating the light, because their deeds are evil.' (Notes, 3:19-21. Is. 8:20.)

SCOTT.

Verse 39.

'The language of the Gospel has many seeming contradictions, called paradoxes, which, when examined, are strictly true and proper; this is one of them. How can he be said to see, that seeth not; or he to be made blind, that has the use of his sight? The meaning is, that the Gospel should make the poor, and ignorant, who are reckoned to see nothing, wise and knowing in the things of God; but that it should make those who are wise in their own conceit, know less than they did before. In the two characters of the Pharisees, and the person they thus cast out, we have a pattern of the believer and an unbeliever, which will hold true to the end of the world; where the temper of the Pharisee is, there will Christ be unknown or rejected; where the other temper is, of the man that was born blind, there will Christ be valued, and nowhere else.'

Verse 41.

'If ye were blind, &c.' 'If ye were unable to discern who I am, if you had paid to the law nor the prophets to direct you, nor the light of clear and early miracles, then your rejecting Me could not be

imputed to you as sin; but now, ye say, we see, and you arrogate to yourselves the knowledge of the law and the prophets: and yet ye will not receive the light that shineth in your eyes, therefore your sin remaineth inexcusable.'

WHITBY.

'It is worthy of observation, in what manner the Jews resisted the force of the miracle related in this chapter, and the conclusion to which it led, after they had failed in discrediting its evidence. If it should be inquired how a turn of thought so different from what prevails at present should obtain currency with the ancient Jews, the answer is found in two opinions which then prevailed. The one was their expectation of a Messiah, of a kind totally contrary to what the appearance of Jesus bespoke Him to be: the other, their persuasion of the agency of demons in the production of supernatural effects. Matt. 12:24. The first put them upon seeking out some excuses to themselves for not receiving Jesus in the character in which He claimed to be received; and the second supplied them with just such an excuse as they wanted.'

PALLET.

CHAP. X.

True shepherds enter in by the door of the sheep-fold, are acknowledged by the sheep, and go before them; being thus distinguished from dishonest and corrupt teachers, 1-8. Christ is the Door, and the good Shepherd, who lays down his life for the sheep, 9-18. Diverse opinions are held concerning Him, 19-21. He proves his mission by his works; allows the character of his sheep, to whom He gives eternal life, neither shall any pluck them out of his hands; and that He and the Father are One, 22-30. The Jews attempt to stone Him as a blasphemer; but He justifies his doctrine, and escapes from them, 31-39. He goes beyond Jordan, where many believed on Him, 40-42.

VERILY, 'verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.

2 But he that entereth in by the door, is the shepherd of the sheep.

3 To him the por-

a See on 3:3.
b Jer. 14:15. 33:16, 17, 21, 32. 23: 15-17. 39:31. 43:1. 48:32-34.
Matt. 7:15. 23:16, &c. Eph. 4:32.
2 Heb. 5:4. 1 Pet. 1:10, 11. 2 Pet. 2:1. 1 John 4:1.
c 10:15. 35:10-12. 2 Pet. 34:2-5. Zech. 11:4, 5, 6, 17. Rom. 16:18. 2 Cor. 14:13-15. Tit. 1:11. 2 Pet. 2:14-19.
d 7:6. Acts 20:28. 1 Tim. 3:2-7. 4:1. Tit. 1:5. Rev. 1:20. 2:2. 3:1.
e 11:12, 14. Ps. 23:1. 80:1. Ec. 12:11. Is. 40:11. 63:11. Ez. 34:23. Mic. 5:5. Zech. 11:3, 5, 8. 13:7. 1 Pet. 1:10. 13:20. 1 Pet. 2:2. 5:4.
f Is. 63:10-12. 1 Cor. 16:9. Col. 4:1. 3:1. 1 Pet. 1:12. Rev. 3:7, 8.

fore your sin remains, your case is desperate.' As those are most blind, who will not see, so their blindness is most dangerous, who fancy they do see. No patients are so hardly managed as those in a frenzy, who say, nothing ails them. The sin of the self-conceited and self-confident, remains, for they reject the Gospel, and therefore their guilt remains unpardoned; they forfeit the Spirit of grace, and therefore the power of their sin remains unbroken. *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? Hearest thou the Pharisees say, We see? There is more hope of a fool, of a publican and a harlot, than of such.*

CHAP. X. v. 1-18. It is not certain whether this discourse was at the feast of dedication in the winter, which may be taken as the date, not only of what follows, but of what goes before; (that which countenances this is, that Christ, in his discourse there, carries on the metaphor of the sheep, (v. 26, 27.) from whence it seems that that discourse and this were at the same time;) or whether this was a continuation of his parley with the Pharisees, in the foregoing chapter. The Pharisees supported themselves in their opposition to Christ with this, that they were the *pastors of the church*, and that Jesus, having no commission from them, was an intruder, and therefore the people were bound in duty to stick to them against Him. In opposition to this, Christ here describes who were *false shepherds*, and who the *true*, leaving them to infer what they were.

The similitude proposed, is borrowed from the custom of that country, in the management of sheep. Similitudes, used for the illustration of divine truths, should be taken from those things that are familiar, that the things of God be not clouded by that which should clear them. The preface to this discourse is solemn, *Verily, verily, I say unto you—Amen, Amen.* This speaks the certainty and weight of what He said; we find *Amen* doubled in the church's praises and prayers, Ps. 41:13, 72:19. 89:52. If we would have our *Amens* accepted in heaven, let Christ's *Amens* be prevailing on earth; his repeated *Amens*.

The evidence of a thief and a robber. He enters not by the door, as having no lawful cause of entry, but climbs up some other way, at a window, or breach in the wall. How industrious are wicked people to do mischief! What plots they lay, what pains they take, what hazards will they run, in

we are blind, for whose judgment every one has such a veneration? Note, Nothing fortifies men's corrupt hearts more against convictions, nor more effectually repels them, than the good opinion others have of them; as if all that had gained applause with men, must needs obtain acceptance with God, than which nothing is more false, for God sees not as man sees.

Christ's answer to this cavil, which, if it did not convince, yet silenced them; *If ye were blind, ye should have no sin; but now ye say, We see, therefore your sin remaineth.* They gloried in it, that they were not blind, as the common people, were not so credulous and manageable as they, but having abilities, needed not any to lead them. This very thing which they gloried in, Christ tells them, was their shame and ruin.

If ye were blind, ye would have no sin. (1.) 'If ye had been really ignorant, your sin had not been so deeply aggravated, nor would ye have had so much sin to answer for, as now. If ye were blind, as the Gentiles are, and many of your own subjects, from whom ye have taken the key of knowledge, ye would have had comparatively no sin.' The times of ignorance God winked at; invincible ignorance, though it does not justify sin, lessens the guilt. It will be more tolerable with those that perish for lack of vision, than for those that rebel against the light. (2.) 'If ye had been sensible of your own blindness, could have seen the need of one to lead you, ye would soon have accepted Christ as your guide, and then would have had no sin, would have submitted to an evangelical righteousness, and have been put into a justified state.' Note, Those that are convinced of their disease, are in a fair way to be cured, for there is not a greater hindrance to the salvation of souls than self-sufficiency.

But now ye say, We see; now that ye have knowledge, your sin is aggravated; and now that ye have a conceit of that knowledge, therefore your case is desperate.' As those are most blind, who will not see, so their blindness is most dangerous, who fancy they do see. No patients are so hardly managed as those in a frenzy, who say, nothing ails them. The sin of the self-conceited and self-confident, remains, for they reject the Gospel, and therefore their guilt remains unpardoned; they forfeit the Spirit of grace, and therefore the power of their sin remains unbroken. *Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? Hearest thou the Pharisees say, We see? There is more hope of a fool, of a publican and a harlot, than of such.*

NOTES.

CHAP. X. v. 1. 'Whoever pretends to feed and guide the flock of God, to teach and instruct his people, and yet does not come to them in that way which God has appointed, but follows the method of his own inventing, according to his own fancy or corrupt inclination, is certainly, notwithstanding any pretences of zeal or authority, an enemy and a hinderer of man's salvation. For every one that sincerely, and without worldly designs, intends to teach and instruct men in the way of salvation, will proceed by that method only which God shall think fit to appoint, and will submit entirely to his directions.' S. CLARKE. *Sheep-fold.* 'An enclosure, it seems, of walled work, high and strong enough to secure the flock against wild beasts.' Bloomfield. 'An unenclosed enclosure, surrounded by a wall, into which the sheep are collected before shearing. Num. 32:16, 24, 36. 2 Sam. 7:8.

their wicked pursuits! This should shame us out of our slothfulness and cowardice in the service of God.

The *rightful owner*, who has a property in the sheep, and a care for them, enters in by the door, as one having authority, (v. 2.) and comes to do them some good office, to bind up that which is broken, and strengthen that which is sick, Ezek. 34:16.

To him the porter openeth. Anciently they had their sheep-folds within the outer gates of their houses, for the safety of their flocks, so that none could come to them the right way, but those to whom the porter opened, or the master of the house gave the keys.

The sheep hear his voice, when He speaks familiarly to them, when they come into the fold, as men now do to their dogs and horses; and, which is more, He calls his own sheep by name, so exact is the notice He takes of them, the account He keeps of them; and He leads them out from the fold to the green pastures; and when He turns them out to graze, He does not drive them, but (such was the custom in those times) goes before them, to prevent any mischief or danger that might meet them, and they, being used to it, follow Him.

The sheep know his voice, so as to discern his mind by it, and to distinguish it from that of a stranger; (for the ox knows his owner, Isa. 1:3.) and a stranger will they not follow, but, suspecting some ill design, will flee from him, knowing it is not the voice of their shepherd. This is the parable; we have the key to it, Ezek. 34:31. *Ye my flock are men, and I am your God.*

(1.) Good men are compared to sheep. Men, as creatures depending on their Creator, are called the *sheep of his pasture*. Good men, as new creatures, have the good qualities of sheep, harmless and inoffensive; meek and quiet, without noise; patient as sheep under the hand both of the shearer and of the butcher; useful and profitable, tame and tractable, to the shepherd, and sociable one with another, and much used in sacrifices.

(2.) The church of God in the world is a sheep-fold, into which the children of God that were scattered abroad, are gathered together, and united; it is a good fold, Ezek. 34:14. See Mic. 2:12. It is well fortified, for God Himself is a wall of fire about it, Zech. 2:5.

(3.) This fold lies much exposed to thieves and robbers; crafty seducers, cruel persecutors, grievous wolves, Acts 20:29. Thieves that would steal Christ's sheep from Him, to sacrifice them to devils, or steal their food from them, that they might perish for lack of it. Wolves in sheep's clothing, Matt. 7:15.

(4.) The great Shepherd of the sheep takes wonderful care of the flock. God is the great Shepherd, Ps. 23:1. 80:1. He knows them that are his, calls them by name, marks them for Himself, leads them out to fat pastures, makes them feed and rest there; speaks comfortably to them, guards them by his providence, guides them by his Spirit and Word, and goes before them, to set them in the way of his steps.

(5.) The under-shepherds, intrusted to feed the flock of God, ought to be faithful in the discharge of that trust; magistrates must defend them, and protect and advance their secular interests; ministers must serve them in their spiritual interests, feed their souls with the Word of God faithfully opened and applied, and with gospel-ordinances duly administered, taking the oversight of them. 'they must enter

Zeph. 2:6. There is no other kind than this used in the East.' *Jahn* 'It appears that these folds had two doors, one a larger, by which the shepherd, the door-keeper, and the sheep entered, and a smaller one by which the lambs were put out.' *Lightfoot*. Ed.

Verse 3. *Porter.* 'The richer Jews usually kept a porter. 18:16, 17. Acts 12:13. Mention is also made of a porter, 2 Kings 7:10, and Ezek. 44:11. The Greeks and Romans too had their door-keepers, who were usually freedmen. Here, however, there is no reference to these domestics, and we must understand one of the shepherds who stays in the sheep-fold, and opens the door to any of his fellow-shepherds. For there were folds of a large size, in which, not merely one or two, but many shepherds used to enter, and there inhabit and sleep.'

BLOOMFIELD

ter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out.

4 And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.

5 And as a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.

6 This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.

7 Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the Door of the sheep.

f. 4, 16, 25, 27. 6:37, 45. Cant. 8:13. 1 Tim. 2:19. Rev. 20:15. 1 Cor. 1:1. 2 Cor. 1:1. 12:18. 13:15. 14:23. 15:1. 16:1. 17:1. 18:1. 19:1. 20:1. 21:1. 22:1. 23:1. 24:1. 25:1. 26:1. 27:1. 28:1. 29:1. 30:1. 31:1. 32:1. 33:1. 34:1. 35:1. 36:1. 37:1. 38:1. 39:1. 40:1. 41:1. 42:1. 43:1. 44:1. 45:1. 46:1. 47:1. 48:1. 49:1. 50:1. 51:1. 52:1. 53:1. 54:1. 55:1. 56:1. 57:1. 58:1. 59:1. 60:1. 61:1. 62:1. 63:1. 64:1. 65:1. 66:1. 67:1. 68:1. 69:1. 70:1. 71:1. 72:1. 73:1. 74:1. 75:1. 76:1. 77:1. 78:1. 79:1. 80:1. 81:1. 82:1. 83:1. 84:1. 85:1. 86:1. 87:1. 88:1. 89:1. 90:1. 91:1. 92:1. 93:1. 94:1. 95:1. 96:1. 97:1. 98:1. 99:1. 100:1. 101:1. 102:1. 103:1. 104:1. 105:1. 106:1. 107:1. 108:1. 109:1. 110:1. 111:1. 112:1. 113:1. 114:1. 115:1. 116:1. 117:1. 118:1. 119:1. 120:1. 121:1. 122:1. 123:1. 124:1. 125:1. 126:1. 127:1. 128:1. 129:1. 130:1. 131:1. 132:1. 133:1. 134:1. 135:1. 136:1. 137:1. 138:1. 139:1. 140:1. 141:1. 142:1. 143:1. 144:1. 145:1. 146:1. 147:1. 148:1. 149:1. 150:1. 151:1. 152:1. 153:1. 154:1. 155:1. 156:1. 157:1. 158:1. 159:1. 160:1. 161:1. 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in by the door. In the explication of the parable, He makes Himself to be both the Door by which the shepherd enters, and the Shepherd that enters in by the door. Though it may be a solecism in rhetoric, to make the same person both the door and the shepherd, it is no solecism in divinity, to make Christ have his authority from Himself, as He has life in Himself; and Himself to enter by his own blood, as the door, into the holy place.

Christ is the Door. This He saith to them who pretended to seek for righteousness, but, like the Sodomites, wearied themselves to find the door. He saith it to the Jews, who would be thought God's only sheep, and to the Pharisees, who would be thought their only shepherds; I am the door of the sheep-fold. (1.) He is as a door shut, to keep out such as are not fit to be admitted. The shutting of the door is the securing of the house; and what greater security has the church of God, than the interpossession of the Lord Jesus between it and its enemies? (2.) He is as a door open, for passage and communication. By Christ as the door, we have our first admission into the flock of God, ch. 14: 6. We go in and out in a religious conversation, assisted by Him, accepted in Him; walking up and down in his name, Zech. 10: 12. By Him God comes to his church. By Him, the sheep are at last admitted into the heavenly kingdom, Matt. 25: 34.

Christ is the Door of the shepherds, so that those who come not in by Him, are not pastors, but thieves and robbers; (though they pretended to be shepherds;) but the sheep did not hear them. This refers to all that had the character of shepherds in Israel, whether magistrates or ministers, that exercised their office without regard to the Messiah, or with expectations of Him suggested by their carnal interest.

All that went before Him, not in time, many of them were faithful shepherds, but all that went before He sent them, (Jer. 23: 21.) that assumed a superiority above Him, as the antichrist is said to exalt himself, 2 Thess. 2: 4. The scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests, all, even as many as have come before Me, that have endeavored to forestall my interest, and prevent my gaining glory in the minds of people, by prepossessing them with prejudices against Me, they are thieves and robbers, and steal those hearts which they have no title to, defrauding the right owner of his property. They condemned our Savior as a thief and robber, because He did not come in by them as the door; but He shows that they ought to have received their commission from Him, and to have come after Him; because they stepped before Him, they were thieves and robbers. They would not come as his disciples, and therefore were condemned as usurpers, and their pretended commissions superseded. Note, Rivals with Christ are robbers of his church, however they pretend to be shepherds, nay shepherds of shepherds

The care taken to preserve the sheep from them; but the sheep did not hear them. Those that had a true savor of piety, that were spiritual and heavenly, and sincerely devoted to God, could by no means approve of the traditions of the elders, nor relish their formalities. Christ's disciples, without particular instructions from their Master, made no conscience of eating with unwashed hands, or plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day; for nothing is more opposite to true Christianity than Pharisaism; nor any thing more disrelishing to a soul truly devout, than their hypocritical devotions.

Christ is the Door of the sheep: (p. 9.) By Me—through Me as the door, if any man enter into the sheep-fold as one of the flock, he shall be saved; shall not only be safe from thieves and robbers, but happy; he shall go in and out.

Here are plain directions how to come into the fold; by Jesus Christ as the door. By faith in Him as the Mediator between God and man, we come into covenant and communion with God. There is no entering into God's church but by coming into Christ's church; nor are any looked upon as members of the kingdom of God among men, but those that are willing to submit to the government of the Redeemer. We must enter by the door of faith, (Acts 14: 27.) since the door of innocence is shut against us, Gen. 3: 24.

Precious promises to those that observe this direction:

(1.) They shall be saved hereafter; that is the privilege of their home; these sheep shall be saved from being impounded by divine justice for trespass done, satisfaction being made for the damage by their great Shepherd; saved from being a prey to the roaring lion; they shall be forever happy.

(2.) In the mean time they shall go in and out, and find pasture; that is the privilege of their way. They shall have their conversation in the world by the grace of Christ, shall be in his fold as a man at his own house. True believers are at home in Christ; when they go out, they are not shut out as strangers, but have liberty to come in again; when they come in, they are not shut in as trespassers, but have liberty to go out. They go out to the field in the morning, come in to the fold at night; and in both the Shepherd leads and keeps them, and they find pasture in both; grass in the field, fodder in the fold. In public, in private, they have the Word of God to converse with, by which their spiritual life is supported, and out of which their gracious desires are satisfied; they are replenished with the goodness of God's house.

Christ is the Shepherd, v. 10., &c. He was prophesied of under the Old Testament as a Shepherd, Isa. 40: 11. Ezek. 34: 23. 37: 24. Zech. 13: 7. In the New Testament He is spoken of as the great Shepherd, (Heb. 13: 20.) the chief Shepherd, (1 Pet. 5: 4.) the Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, 1 Pet. 2: 25. God, our great Owner, the sheep of whose pasture we are by creation, has constituted his Son Jesus to be our Shepherd; and here again and again He owns the relation. He has all that care of his church, and every believer, that a good shepherd has of his flock; and expects all that attendance and observance from the church, and every believer, that the shepherds in those countries had from their flocks.

The mischievous design of the thief; (v. 10.) The thief cometh not with good intent, but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. 1st. Those whose affections they steal from Christ and his pastures, they kill and destroy spiritually; for the heresies they privily bring in, are damnable. Deceivers are murderers of souls. They that steal away the Scripture, by keeping it in an unknown tongue, that steal away the sacraments by altering the property of them, that steal away Christ's ordinances to put their own inventions in their room, kill and destroy; ignorance and idolatry are destructive. 2dly. Those whom they cannot steal, lead, drive, nor carry away from Christ, they aim by persecutions to kill and destroy corporally. He that will not suffer himself to be robbed, is in danger to be slain.

9 All that ever I came before me, are thieves and robbers: but the sheep do not hear them.

9 I am 'the Door': by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

[Practical Observations.]

10 The "thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.

11 I am 'the good Shepherd': the good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

See on 1.—Isa. 56:10–12. Ez. 22:25–26, 34:2–4, Zeph. 3:3, 4. Zech. 11:4–9, 16, 17. Acts 5:35, 37. 5:27. 1:7, 14, 9. Rom. 5:1, 2. Eph. 2:18. Heb. 10:19–22. 1:8, 23, 11–16, 80:1–3, 95:7, 100:3, 15. Ez. 40:11, 49:9, 10. Ez. 34:12–16. Zech. 10:12. 1:12, 13. Isa. 56:11. Ez. 34:2–4. Hos. 7:1. Matt. 21:31. 23:14. Mark 11:17. Rom. 2:21, 2. 2 Pet. 2:1, 7. 3:17, 6:35, 11, 12, 47. Matt. 18:11, 20:28, Luke 19:10, 1 Tim. 1:15. 1:8 Rom. 5:15–21. Heb. 6:17, 7:25. 2 Pet. 1:11. 2:14, Ps. 23:1, 80:1, Is. 40:11. Ez. 34:12, 23, 37, 24. Mic. 5:4. Zech. 13:7, Heb. 13:20. 1 Pet. 2:25, 5:4. 1 Cor. 11:39, 40. 1 Sam. 17:34, 35, 2 Sam. 24:17, Is. 53:6. Eph. 5:2. Tit. 2:14, 1 Pet. 2:24.

there were many that were not thieves, aiming to destroy the sheep, but passed for shepherds, yet were very careless in the discharge of their duty, and through their neglect the flock was greatly damaged; foolish shepherds, idle shepherds, Zech. 11:15, 17. In opposition to these,

In opposition to the design of the thief, the scribes and Pharisees, Christ saith, *I am come among men, 1. That they might have life.* He came to put life into the church, which had seemed rather like a valley of dry bones, than a pasture covered with flocks. Christ came to vindicate divine truths, to purify ordinances, to redress grievances, to revive dying zeal, to seek them of his flock that were lost, to bind up that which was broken, (Ezek. 34:16.) and this to his church is as life from the dead. Life is inclusive of all good, and stands in opposition to the death threatened; (Gen. 2:17.) that we might have life, as a criminal has when pardoned, as a sick man when cured, a dead man when raised; that we might be justified, sanctified, and glorified. 2. It is comparative, that they might have a life more abundant than that which was lost by sin; more abundant than was promised by the law of Moses, length of days in Canaan; more abundant than could have been expected, or than we ask or think. But it may be construed without a note of comparison, that they might have abundance, or, might have it abundantly. Christ came to give life, and something more, something better, life with advantage; that in Christ we might not only live, but live comfortably, plentifully, live and rejoice; life in abundance is eternal life; life without death, or fear of death; life, and much more.

The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 1. It is the property of every good shepherd to expose his life for the sheep. Jacob did so, when he would go through such a fatigue to attend them, Gen. 31:40. So did David, when he slew the lion and the bear. Such a shepherd of souls was Paul, who would gladly spend, and be spent, for their service, and counted not his life dear to him, in comparison with their salvation. But, 2. It was the prerogative of the great Shepherd, to give his life to purchase his flock, (Acts 20:28.) to satisfy for their trespass, and to shed his blood to cleanse them.

Christ is a good shepherd, and not a hireling;

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1.—9. It is incumbent on all, who enter the sacred ministry; to scrutinize their motives, and the tendency of their doctrine and example. By whatever external way men obtain admission, unless they enter by 'Christ, the Door,' unless their state of mind and heart, their aim and object, their example and instructions authorize the conclusion, that He has sent them; they will have a dreadful account to give of the emoluments and distinctions, which many now so eagerly pursue, or glory in. For it will at length be proved, that they have seized on advantages, to which they had no right; and grown rich and great by an office, in which they had neither knowledge, integrity, humility, nor industry to do good. Happy is that pastor, whom the Savior employs; who is a true Christian; regards the honor of Christ, the conversion of sinners, and the edification of believers, more than any advantage whatsoever; and can say to his people, 'I seek not yours, but you.' To him the Lord will 'open a door of utterance'; seals shall be given to his ministry; believers will approve and encourage his labors; and his work will be its own reward: while he gets acquainted with his people, attends to the case of each of them, leads them forward in the knowledge and

practice of the Gospel, and goes before them in every good work.—Every man, who values his own soul, should avoid those who, strangers to Christ and the knowledge of his salvation, intrude into the ministry, and whose example and doctrine prove them 'hirelings, who care not for the sheep.' The true people of God will flee from such teachers; for 'they know not the voice of strangers;' and for this they will be reproached by those who, like these Jews, understand not this parable. These very persons would think those men very imprudent, who should trust their health to some ignorant empiric, or their estate to a dishonest lawyer, merely because he happened to live in the same street, town, or village: yet they suppose it incumbent on them to follow the instructions of a man, who neither knows nor cares any thing about vital godliness, if he be the minister of the parish, or of some neighboring congregation! Alas! how much more sagacious are men in their temporal, than in their eternal concerns!—They will entrust their immortal souls and their eternal interests to such men, as no one of them would employ even to take care of his sheep!

SCOTT

Verse 8.

All that ever came before Me.] 'All who have entered in another manner. The words before Me, on which the meaning of the sentence depends, are wanting in some of the most ancient, and in a very great number of other manuscripts. There is nothing corresponding to them in the vulgate, and most of the ancient expositors appear not to have read them. Our Lord, when He compares Himself to a shepherd, speaks in the character of the great Prophet or Teacher of God's people; when He compares Himself to the door of the sheep-fold, He signifies that it is by Him, that is, by sharing in his grace and partaking of his Spirit, that the under-shepherds and teachers must be admitted into his fold, and participate in all the spiritual blessings belonging to its members. In this view, the words are directed chiefly against the scribes and Pharisees, considered as teachers, whose doctrine was far from breathing the same spirit with his, and whose chief object was not, like that of the good Shepherd, to feed and to protect the flock, but, like that of the robber, of the wolf, to devour them. The interpretation here given suits the words that follow, as well as those that precede. Thus, 7. 'I am the Door.' All who enter in another manner are thieves and robbers. 9. All who enter by Me,

Christ calls Himself the good Shepherd, (v. 11.) and again, (v. 14.) that good Shepherd whom God had promised. Note, Jesus Christ is the best of shepherds, none so skillful, faithful, tender, as He, no such feeder and leader, no such protector and healer of souls as He.

He proves Himself so, in opposition to all hirelings.

He that is a hireling, that is, employed as a servant, whose own the sheep are not, who has neither profit nor loss by them, sees the wolf coming, or some other danger threatening, and leaves the sheep to the wolf, for in truth he careth not for them. Here is plain reference to the idle shepherd, Zech. 11:17.

Here is the description of bad shepherds, magistrates and ministers, their bad principles and practices.

1. Their bad principles, the root of their bad practices. What makes those that have the charge of souls in trying times betray their trust, and in quiet times not mind it? What makes them false, trifling, and self-seeking? They are hirelings, and care not for the sheep. That is, 1. The wealth of the world is their chief good. They undertook the shepherd's office, as a trade to live and grow rich by, not as an opportunity of serving Christ. It is the love of money, and of their own bellies, that carries them on in it. Not that those are hirelings, who, while they serve at the altar, live, and live comfortably, upon the altar; the laborer is worthy of his meat; and a scandalous maintenance will soon make a scandalous ministry; but those are hirelings, that love the wages more than the work, and set their hearts upon that, as the hireling is said to do, Deut. 24:15. See 1 Sam. 2:29. Isa. 56:11. Mic. 3:5, 11. (2.) The work of their place is the least of their care; they are unconcerned in the souls of others, their business is to be their brothers' lords, not their brothers' keepers or helpers; they seek their own things, and do not, like Timothy, naturally care for the state of souls; what can be expected but that they will flee when the wolf comes? He is one whose own the sheep are not; in one respect we may say of the best of the under-shepherds, that the sheep are not their own, they have no dominion over them; (Feed my sheep and my lambs, saith Christ;) but in re-

shall be safe." How common was this method with our Lord, to enforce his sentiments by affirmations and negations thus connected.

T. H. HORN

A pastor ought to remember, that whoever boasts of being the way of salvation, shows himself to be a thief and an impostor; and though few are arrived at this degree of folly, yet there are many who rely too much upon their own talents, eloquence, and efforts, as if the salvation of the sheep depended necessarily thereon, in which respect they are always robbers, since they rob the grace of Christ of the glory of saving the sheep. God often puts such pastors to shame by not opening the hearts of the people to receive their word, while He blesses those who are humble, in causing them to be heard with attention, and accompanying their preaching with an unction which converts and saves souls. Let every man know, that in this respect his sufficiency and success are of the Lord? Quesnel, by Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verses 10–13.

The transition from viewing Christ, as the Door both of pastors and sheep, to the consideration of Him 'as the good Shepherd,' should be carefully noted; because it excludes that confusion of metaphors, which arises from viewing Him, at once as the Door by which the shepherd

12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep.

13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep.

14 I am the good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.

15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.

spect of dearness and affection, they should be their own. Paul looked upon those as his own, whom he called his *dearly beloved and longed for*. Those who do not cordially espouse the church's interests, will not long be faithful to them.

2. Their *bad practices*, the effect of bad principles, v. 12. The hireling deserts his post, when he sees the *wolf coming*, though then there is most need of him. Note, Those who mind their safety more than their duty, are an easy prey to Satan's temptations. How fatal the consequences; the hireling fancied the sheep might look to themselves, but the *wolf catches them, and scatters the sheep*, and havoc is made of the flock, which will be charged upon the treacherous shepherd. The blood of perishing souls is required at the hand of the careless watchman.

See the grace and tenderness of the good Shepherd, set over against the former, as it was in the prophecy, (Ezek. 34: 21, 22, &c.) *I am the good Shepherd*. It is made of comfort to the church and her friends, that, however she may be damaged by her under-officers, the Lord Jesus is, and will be, as He ever has been, the good Shepherd.

Here are two great instances of the shepherd's goodness.

1. His *acquainting* himself with all that in anywise appertain to his flock.

He is acquainted with all that are *now of his flock*; I know my sheep, and am known of mine. Note, There is a mutual acquaintance between Christ and believers; and knowledge denotes affection.

Christ *knows his sheep*. He knows who are his sheep, and who are not; He knows the sheep under their many infirmities, and the goats under their most plausible disguises. He takes cognizance of their state, concerns Himself for them, has a tender regard to them, and is continually mindful of them in the intercession He ever lives to make within the veil; He visits them graciously by his Spirit, and has communion with them, He approves and accepts of them, as Ps. 1: 6. 37: 18. Exod. 33: 17.

He is known of them. He observes them with favor, and they observe Him with faith. Christ's *knowing his sheep*, is put before their knowing Him, for He knew and loved us first; (1 John 4: 19.) and it is not so much our *knowing Him*, as our being known of Him, that is our happiness, Gal. 4: 9. Yet it is the character of Christ's sheep, that they *know Him* from all pretenders and intruders; they know his mind, his voice, the power of his death. Christ speaks here as if He gloried in being known by his sheep, and thought their respect an honor to Him.

As the Father *knows me*, even so *know I the Father*. This may be considered, either, 1st, As the ground of the intimate acquaintance between Christ and believers. The covenant of grace, the bond of that relation, is founded in the covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son, which stands firm; for the Father and the Son understood one another perfectly well, and there could be no mistake or uncertainty. The Lord Jesus *knows whom He hath chosen*, and is sure of them, (ch. 13: 18.) and they also *know whom they have trusted*; (2 Tim. 1: 12.) and the ground of both is the perfect knowledge which the Father and the Son had of one another's mind, when the *counsel of peace was between them*. Or, 2dly, As an apt similitude, illustrating the intimacy between Christ and believers; it may be connected with the foregoing words, thus; *I know my sheep, and am known of mine*, even as the Father *knows me*, and I *know the Father*; compare ch. 17: 21.

1. As the Father knew the Son, and loved and owned Him, in his sufferings, when led as a *sheep to the slaughter*, so Christ knows his sheep, and has a watchful eye upon them, will be with them when left alone, as He was with Him. 2. As the Son knew the Father, loved and obeyed Him, and always did those things that pleased Him, and confided in Him as his God, even when He seemed to forsake Him, so believers know Christ with an obedient regard.

He is acquainted with those that are hereafter to be of his flock; (v. 16.) *Other sheep I have a right to*, and an interest in, which are not of this fold, the Jewish church, *them also I must bring*.

Christ referred to the Gentiles; He had intimated his special concern for the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*, to them his personal ministry was confined, but, saith He, *I have other sheep*. Those who in process of time should

believe in Christ among the Gentiles, are here called *sheep*, and He is said to have them though as yet *uncalled*, and many of them *unborn*, because they were chosen of God, from eternity. Christ has a right to many a soul, by virtue of the Father's donation and his own purchase, which He has not yet the possession of; thus He had *much people* in Corinth, when as yet it lay in wickedness, Acts 18: 10. 'Those other sheep I have,' saith Christ, 'I have them on my heart, in my eye, am as sure to have them as if I had them already.' Christ speaks of those *other sheep*, 1st. To take off the contempt that was put upon Him, as having but a *little flock*, and therefore, if a *good* shepherd, yet a *poor* shepherd; 'But,' saith He, 'I have more sheep than you see.' 2dly. To take down the pride of the Jews, who thought the Messiah must gather all his sheep from among them. 'No,' saith Christ, 'I have others whom I will set with the lambs of my flock, though you disdain to set them with the dogs of yours.'

'Them also I must bring, home to God, into the church, and in order to that, bring off from their vain conversation, back from their wanderings, as that *lost sheep*,' Luke 15: 5. But why must He bring them? 1st. *The necessity of their case* required it; 'I must bring, or they must be left to wander endlessly, for, like sheep, they will never come back of themselves, and no other can or will bring them.' 2dly. *The necessity of his own engagements*: He must bring them, or He would not be faithful to his trust. 'They are my own, bought and paid for, and therefore, I must not neglect nor leave them to perish.' He must in honor bring those whom He was intrusted with.

'They shall hear my voice among them; they have not heard, and therefore could not believe; now the sound of the gospel shall go to the ends of the earth, I will speak, and give them to hear.' Faith comes by hearing, and our diligent observance of the voice of Christ is a mean and evidence of being brought to Christ, and to God by Him. *There shall be one fold and one Shepherd*, since both Jews and Gentiles, upon their turning to Christ, shall be incorporated in one church, be equal sharers in the privileges of it. Being united to Christ, they shall unite in Him. Note, One Shepherd makes one fold; one Christ one church. As the church is one in its constitution, subject to one head, animated by one spirit, and guided by one rule, so the members of it ought to be one in love and affection, Eph. 4: 3-6.

Christ's offering up Himself for his sheep, is another proof of his being a good Shepherd, and in this He yet more commended his love, v. 15, 17, 18.

(1.) He declares his purpose of dying for his flock; v. 15. He not only ventured his life for them, but He actually deposited it, submitted to a necessity of dying for our redemption;—*I put it*, as a pawn or pledge; as purchase-money paid down. Sheep appointed for the slaughter, ready to be sacrificed, were ransomed with the blood of the shepherd. He laid down his life, not only for the good of the sheep, but in their stead. Thousands of sheep had been offered in sacrifice for their shepherds, as sin-offerings, but here, by a surprising reverse, the shepherd is sacrificed for the sheep. When David, the destroying of Israel, was himself guilty, and the shepherd angel drew his sword against the flock for his sake, with good reason did he plead, *These sheep, what evil have they done? Let thy hand be against me*, 2 Sam. 24: 17. But the Son of David was sinless and spotless, and his sheep, what evil have they not done?

enters, and yet Himself 'the good Shepherd.' An hireling.] He is not an hireling, who, faithfully feeding the flock, is maintained by his ministry; but he, to whom the filthy lucre is the great object or inducement. (Notes, 1 Cor. 3: 7-12. 1 Tim. 5: 17, 18.) Scott.

Verses 14-18.

'The good Shepherd,' has been shown to be a character appropriated to JEHOSHAPHAT, throughout the Old Testament. (Notes, Ps. 23: 30: 1.) (1st) *I lay down my life for the sheep*. 'Nothing is more certain, than that Christ "gave Himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. 2: 6. Heb. 2: 1. 1 John 2: 2. 3: 16, 17.) But because the world can no otherwise obtain this salvation, than by believing in Him, and obeying [713]

'the voice of this Shepherd; therefore He is said to do this more eminently for his sheep.' *Whitby*, (17, 18.) A more decisive testimony to the Deity of our Lord cannot be conceived. It is *impossible* that a dead man, if no more than man, can do any thing towards restoring Himself to life; and even supposing the dead person to have a superior created nature, distinct from manhood; is raising the dead to life the work of an angel, arch-angel, a created being, however exalted? or is it the work of Almighty God exclusively? And did not God raise Christ from the dead? And if He raised Himself from the dead, is He not 'God over all blessed for evermore?' Scott.

21 Others said, 'These are not the words of him that hath a devil:

ness appointment of his Father; *This command-Father*; not such a commandment as made to his own undertaking; but this was *the law* willing to have *written in his heart*, so as to God, Ps. 40: 8.

V. 22—38. The time of this conference was, the feast of dedication, and it was winter, a feast annually observed, by consent, in remembrance of the dedication of a new altar, and the purging of the temple, by Judas Maccabeus after it had been profaned; we have the story in Maccabees 1: 4, and the prophecy of it, Dan. 8: 13, 14. See more of the feast, 2 Mac. 1: 18. The return of their liberty was to them as life from the dead, and, in remembrance of it, they kept a seven days' feast, commencing on the twenty-fifth day of the month *Cisleu*, about the beginning of *December*. It was not confined to Jerusalem, as that of the divine feasts was, but every one observed it in his own place, not as a *holy time*, (it is only a divine institution that can sanctify a day,) but as a *good time*, as the days

He did all this by the express appointment of his Father; *This commandment have I received of my Father*; not such a commandment as made what He did necessary, prior to his own undertaking; but this was the law of mediation, which He was willing to have written in his heart, so as to delight in doing the will of God, Ps. 40: 8.

ROSEN M.

'can a devil open the eyes of the blind?

[Practical Observations.]

22 ¶ And it was at Jerusalem the feast of the dedication; and it was winter.

23 And Jesus walked in the temple in Solomon's porch.

24 Then came the Jews round about him, and said unto him, 'How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us plainly.

25 Jesus answered them, 'I told you, and ye believed not: the works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness of me:

26 But ye believe not; because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you.

9:57, 32, 33. Ex. 4:11. 8:19. Ps. 145:3. Prov. 20:12. Is. 35:5, 6. Mat. 11:5.
z Acts 3:11. 5:12
a 1 Kings 18:21. Matt. 11:3. Luke 15.
b Or, hold us in suspense.
c 1:19. 8:25, 53. 9:22. Luke 22:67-70. 2 Cor. 3:12.
d 6:17-49. 8:12, 24, 58.
e 32:38. 3:2. 5:38. 7:31. 11:47. 12:87. 14:11. 20:30, 31. Acts 2:22. 10:38. Heb. 2:3, 4.
f 6:27. 6:37, 44, 45, 65. 8:47. 12:37-40. Rom. 11:7, 8. 2 Cor. 4:3, 4. 1 John 1:6.

it as we do; How long are we kept debating, not able to determine whether thou be the Christ or no? It was the effect of their infidelity and powerful prejudices, that, after our Lord had so fully proved Himself to be the Christ, they were still in doubt concerning it; this they willingly hesitated about, when they might easily have been satisfied. The struggle was between their convictions, which told them He was Christ, and their corruptions, which said No, because He was not such a Christ as they expected. Those who choose to be sceptics, may hold the balance so, that the most cogent arguments may not weigh down the most trifling objections. It was an instance of their impudence and presumption, as if He made them to doubt, whereas it was their prejudices. If Wisdom's sayings appear doubtful, the fault is not

of Purim, Esth. 9:18. Christ forecast to be at Jerusalem, not in honor of the feast, which did not require his attendance there, but that He might improve those eight days for good purposes.

Jesus walked in the temple, in Solomon's porch; so called, (Acts 3:11.) not because built by Solomon, but because built in the same place with that which had borne his name in the first temple, and the name was kept up for the greater reputation of it. Here Christ walked, to observe the proceedings of the Sanhedrim that sat here; (Ps. 82:1.) He walked ready to give audience to any that should apply to Him. He walked, as it would seem, alone, neglected; pensive, in the foresight of the ruin of the temple. Those that have any thing to say to Christ, may find Him in the temple, and walk with Him there.

The Jews came round about Him, to tease Him; He was waiting for an opportunity to do them a kindness, and they took the opportunity to do Him a mischief. Ill-will for good-will is no uncommon return. He could not enjoy Himself in his Father's house, without disturbance. They came to lay siege to Him: compassed Him about like bees. They came as if they had a joint desire to be satisfied; as one man, pretending an impartial and importunate inquiry after truth, but intending a general assault upon Him; and they seemed to speak the sense of their nation, as if they were the mouth of all the Jews; How long dost thou make us to doubt? If thou be the Christ, tell us.

They quarrel with Him, as if He had unfairly held them in suspense hitherto. How long dost thou steal away our hearts? or, take away our souls? So some read it; basely intimating that what share He had of the people's love, He did not come fairly by; as Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel; and as seducers deceive the hearts of the simple, and so draw away disciples after them, Rom. 16:18. Acts 20:30. But most interpreters understand

as we do; How long are we kept debating, not able to determine whether thou be the Christ or no? It was the effect of their infidelity and powerful prejudices, that, after our Lord had so fully proved Himself to be the Christ, they were still in doubt concerning it; this they willingly hesitated about, when they might easily have been satisfied. The struggle was between their convictions, which told them He was Christ, and their corruptions, which said No, because He was not such a Christ as they expected. Those who choose to be sceptics, may hold the balance so, that the most cogent arguments may not weigh down the most trifling objections. It was an instance of their impudence and presumption, as if He made them to doubt, whereas it was their prejudices. If Wisdom's sayings appear doubtful, the fault is not

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 10-21. Christ Himself is, not only the source of authority to all pastors, but the perfect model, according to which they ought to be formed, and by which their pretensions must be decided. He came, that sinners might have life, and have it more abundantly. For their good He became poor, abased Himself, labored, agonized, and died! While we adore his condescension, and love to such enemies, let us inquire, which professed pastors of his church are most like Him? Are they, who rise from obscurity to wealth and grandeur, by the ministry; but who leave the poor of the flock, and every thing that requires labor or self-denial to others; perhaps without much inquiry into their principles or characters, and without knowing whether they too be not 'hirelings' of an inferior order? Does this procedure, (alas! too common,) resemble the conduct of the good Shepherd? Or rather is it not a perfect contrast to it? But, whatever indignation it may excite, such men must be plainly told that they 'are thieves and robbers;' they only need the character of persecutors to complete their likeness to those, who 'came not, but to steal, and to kill, and to destroy;' and this exemption is often the effect, rather of want of power than of will. But, alas, 'such a minister carries a shroud down with him, of those who have perished in ignorance through his neglect, or of those who have been hardened in sin through his ill example.' Bp. Burnet.—Let those, however, be thankful, who have been preserved or recovered from

such a state; and let us pray for others, who are still blinded and deluded. Let all who have entered the ministry from worldly motives, and in an unholy manner, pause, and consider their awful case: that, by deep repentance and faith in Christ, they may be commissioned by Him, to exercise their ministry in a better manner, than they entered it. And let all, who desire to be faithful ministers, study Christ's example; that they may grow more willing to labor for the good of that flock, for which He shed his blood; that they may mortify every covetous and selfish desire; and lay aside all sloth, pride, false delicacy, fear of men, and whatever else can render them unwilling to 'spend and be spent for the people.'—We all, especially ministers, should have our desires fixed upon those, who are not yet brought into the fold of Christ, but are scattered abroad in the world, even to the remotest regions of the globe; and endeavor, with all our ability and diligence, that they too may hear the Savior's voice, and become 'the sheep of his pasture;' and if our zeal in such a work should bring upon us the reproach of being hypocrites, ignorant enthusiasts, or even fanatics, we may remember, that our holy Lord and Master was thus vilified before us.—Let sinners also hearken to Him, who says, 'I am the Door.' They can have no access into the favor of God, or into heaven, except they believe in Him. But He will admit all who come to Him, and nourish their souls unto everlasting life.

SCOTT.

Verse 23.

Solomon's porch.] 'It looked towards the East, and is therefore called by Josephus, the Eastern porch. It was the only part left uninjured when the Babylonians destroyed the temple. Hence, king Agrippa, though solicited by the people, could not be induced to demolish this ancient pile, even for the purpose of building it anew.' Kuinzel. 'It appears that several porticos, or piazzas, were erected round the temple, in which persons might walk, and the doctors and

in the object, they are all plain to him if it understands, but in the eye. Christ would make us to believe; we make ourselves to doubt.

They challenge Him to give a direct, categorical answer, whether He was the Messiah or no; 'If Thou be the Christ, as many believe Thou art, tell us plainly, not by parables, as, I am the Light of the world, and the good Shepherd, and the like, but in so many words, either that Thou art the Christ, or as John Baptist, that Thou art not,' ch. 1:20. This pressing query of theirs was seemingly good; they pretended to be desirous to know the truth, as if ready to embrace it; but it was put with an ill design; for if He should tell them plainly that He was the Christ, there needed no more to make Him obnoxious to the jealousy of the Roman government. Every one knew the Messiah was to be a king, and therefore, whoever pretended to be the Messiah, would be prosecuted as a traitor. Let Him tell them ever so plainly that He was Christ, they would have this to say presently, Thou bearest witness of Thyself, as ch. 8:13.

Christ is not at all necessary to their scepticism; I have told you. He had told them He was the Son of God, the Son of man; that He had life in Himself, and that He had authority to execute judgment. And is not this the Christ? They believed not; why then should they be told, merely to gratify their curiosity? They pretended they only doubted, but Christ tells them they did not believe, Scepticism in religion is no better than downright infidelity. It is not for us to teach God how He should teach us, nor prescribe to Him how plainly He should tell us his mind; but to be thankful for divine revelation as we have it, which if we do not believe, neither would we be persuaded if it were ever so much adapted to our humor. He refers them to his works, to his life, which was not only perfectly pure, but highly beneficent, and of a piece with his doctrine; especially to his miracles, which He wrought for the confirmation of his doctrine. It was certain, no man could do those miracles except God were with him, and God would not be with him to attest a forgery.

He condemns them for their obstinate unbelief, notwithstanding all the powerful arguments used to convince them; Ye believed not; and again, 'Ye believed not. Ye still are what ye always were, obstinate in your unbelief.'

The reason He gives, is very surprising; 'Ye believed not, because ye are not of my sheep; ye believe not in Me, because ye belong not to Me.'

other masters might communicate oral instruction to their followers sheltered from the inclemency of the weather.' Titman. 'So were porticoes contrived in Greece and Rome, and in the East, for a similar use.' Weston. [Hence the Stoics obtained their name.] 'Titman thinks this was called Solomon's porch, not as having been built by him, but as standing in the same place, and erected chiefly of materials supplied by the ruins of Solomon's portico.'

BLOOM, GLE.

27 My 'sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me:

28 And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.

1. 3. 16. 5. 27. 3. 43. Matt. 17. 5. Acts 5. 25. Heb. 3. 12. Rom. 8. 35. 1. 3. 14. Matt. 7. 23. 25:12. Luke 13: 27. 1 Cor. 8: 3. Gal. 4: 9. 2 Tim. 2: 19. 2. 8. 12. 19. 26. 21. 22. 1 Kings 19: 21. Matt. 16: 24. Mark 8: 34. 10: 91. Luke 9: 23. Rev. 14: 4. 3. 16. 35. 53. 40. 6. 37. 40. 47. 68. 11: 25. 17. 23. 18. 5. 51. 8. 23. 1 Tim. 1: 16. 1 John 2: 25. 5: 13-20. Jude 15. 1. 14. 5: 24. 5: 39. 40. 14: 19. 1. 8. 2. 9. 17. 2. 9. Ps. 37: 28. 103: 17. 1. 25: 12. Prov. 4: 18. 24: 16. 18. 45: 17. 54: 17. 55: 3. Jer. 52: 34. 32: 40. Mic. 1: 13. 2. Rom. 5: 23. 10: 17. 8: 1. 29. 30. 35. 39. Phil. 1: 6. C. 1. 3. 3. 4. 2 The. 2: 13. 14. 1. Pet. 1: 5. 1 John 2: 19. 5: 13. 18. Jude 14. 1. 17. 1. 12. Deut. 33: 3. Ps. 31: 5. Luke 22: 31. 23. 23: 6. Acts 7: 59. 2 Tim. 1: 12. Heb. 7: 25.

his word their rule. Christ will not account those his sheep, that are deaf to his call, deaf to his charms, Ps. 58: 5.

They follow Him, submit to his conduct by obedience to all his commands, and conformity to his Spirit and pattern. The word of command has always been, *Follow Me*. We must eye Him as our leader and captain, *tread in his steps*; follow the prescriptions of his word, the intimations of his providence, and the directions of his Spirit; *follow the lamb, the leader of the flock, whithersoever He goes*. In vain do we hear his voice if we do not follow Him.

To convince them it was their great unhappiness not to be of Christ's sheep, He here describes the state and case of those that are; which would likewise serve for the comfort of his despised followers, and keep them from envying the power and grandeur of those who were not of his sheep.

Our Lord Jesus takes cognizance of his sheep; They hear my voice, and I

Verses 25, 29.

The doctrine of the preservation of all true believers, from every enemy, and through all dangers and temptations, to the full enjoyment of eternal life, is taught in these verses, with the greatest decision. 'I give them eternal life,' they shall never perish, or 'not perish forever.' Now if any of them come short of eternal life, and actually and eternally perish, how can these testimonies be true, these engagements faithful? Will not the Savior's words pass away? (Note, Matt. 24: 35.) 'I have brought any defect on my part. Or Christ may speak here of sheep, *contrasting us to the devil*, *Whithy*. This means that they shall not perish, except by their own fault. But as such a condition was implied in this and similar Scriptures, (which must be supposed by those who deny the doctrine in question,) why is it never once hinted? (Marg. Ref. i.-1.-Notes, 5: 24-27. 1 Sam. 2: 9. Ps. 37: 27. 23. 133: 8. Is. 54: 15-17. Jer. 32: 39-41.) In none of these texts is such a condition so much as hinted at; and in some of them, the danger arising from it, and our violating it, is expressly obviated. Can we then reasonably suppose, that a condition was everywhere implied, a condition of infinite importance to us; and yet that not the smallest intimation of it was given in any one of them? Could this be done by design? Or could it possibly be an oversight? Or was the case so obvious, that no caution or warning was at all requisite? It was indeed of considerable importance for our Lord, in his circumstances, to declare his 'ability and readiness to save all such, as should persevere in believing on Him' but his words are calculated to convey far more than this assurance; and, 'persevere in believing' must be added to them, before they can be limited to it. (Notes, Deut. 4: 2. Prov. 30: 5. 6. Rev. 22: 18-21.) Where is the confidence of a believer to be placed, that he shall 'persevere in believing'? Must he trust in the strength of his own resolution? or the constancy of his own will? or on his experienced superiority to temptation? That is, shall he 'trust in his own heart'? (Notes, Prov. 23: 26. Jer. 17: 9, 10.) His confidence, as to *perseverance to the end in believing*, must be placed, either on the truth, love, and power of Christ, and on the supposition that He has promised to preserve the believer; or on his own heart, at least conjointly with Christ, if all the promises to this effect be conditional. If we have for a long time persevered in believing, ought we to take the credit of it to ourselves; or ought we to ascribe all the glory of it to the Lord alone? When Adam fell, it was not against his will, or without his own fault; yet he was overcome, and ruined, and must have perished with all his race, had not Christ interposed; and could the true believer, though by his own fault, thus be plucked out of the hands of Christ, and finally perish, the enemy would triumph over the second Adam, in some respects, as he did over the first. (Notes, 1 Cor. 15: 45-49. Col. 3: 1-4, v. 3, 4.) Indeed, there can be no sin, except where the will consents; or any conceivable way, by which our great enemy, or any of his servants, heretics, persecutors, or tempters of whatever description, can 'pluck us out of Christ's hand' by an act of violence, or without our own fault. (Notes, Rom. 8: 28-39. Jude 22-25.) It is said, 'Where do we learn this, except from such passages as that under consideration?' We learn it, not so much from any particular text, as from the general tenor of Scripture, and our own most obvious notions of right and wrong. Man had not fallen, had he not consented to the temptation; though it had been possible, to have forced the forbidden fruit on him. When Satan desired

to know them. He distinguishes them from others (2 Tim. 2: 19.) has a particular regard to every individual, (Ps. 34: 6.) knows their wants and desires; knows their souls in adversity, where to find them, and what to do for them. He knows others afar off, but them near at hand.

He has provided happiness for them; *I give unto them eternal life*, v. 28. 1st. The estate settled upon them is rich and valuable; it is eternal life. Man has a *living soul*, therefore the happiness provided is *life*, suited to his nature. Man has an *immortal soul*, therefore the happiness provided is *eternal life*. *Life eternal* is the felicity and chief good of a *soul immortal*. 2dly. The manner of conveyance is *free*; *I give it to them*; it is not sold upon a valuable consideration, but given by the free grace of Christ. The donor has power to give it. The Fountain of life, and Father of eternity, has authorized Christ to give eternal life, ch. 17: 2. Not *I will give it, but I do give it*, it is a gift in present. He gives the assurance of it, the pledge and earnest of it, the first fruits and foretastes of it; that *spiritual life*, which is eternal life begun, heaven in the seed, in the bud.

He has undertaken their security and preservation to this happiness. They shall be saved from everlasting perdition.—*Shall by no means perish forever*; so the words are. As there is an eternal life, so there is an eternal destruction; the soul not annihilated, but ruined; its being continued, but its happiness irrecoverably lost. All believers are saved from this; whatever cross they come under, they shall not come into condemnation. A man is never undone till he is in hell, and they shall not go down to that. Shepherds that have large flocks, often lose some of the sheep and suffer them to perish; but Christ has engaged that none of his sheep shall perish, not one. They cannot

to have Peter to sift him as wheat,' our Lord said, 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' (Notes, Luke 22: 31-34, v. 32. 1 Cor. 10: 13. 1 Pet. 1: 2-5.) His perseverance in believing, therefore, was insured by Christ's intercession. The event was certain; but the exhortation to watch and pray was not superfluous; for had Peter regarded it, he would have escaped unspeakable anguish. Now if Peter's perseverance in believing was secured by our Lord's intercession, is it not most obvious, with such Scriptures before us as that under consideration, to suppose that our perseverance in believing is secured in the same way; and that we are assured of it by express promises, as we are of that, which is provided for true believers. The warnings and exhortations which many object to this doctrine, as if nugatory on the supposition that it is true, are of different sorts. Some are suited to stir up professed Christians to examine, whether they have the true faith or not. This may be distinguished from a dead faith, not only by its other fruits, but by standing the trials, which cause many to fall away, 'having no root in themselves.' 'Continue in my word,' 'Abide in Me.' 'He that continueth to the end shall be saved.' 'That on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.' (Notes, 8: 30-36, v. 31. 15: 1-3. Matt. 13: 20-23. Luke 8: 4-15, v. 14, 15. 1 Pet. 1: 6, 7.) These guarding doctrine from perversion, and tend to exclude presumption. Others are suited to stir up believers to 'give all diligence to make their calling and election sure'; and to 'possess the full assurance of hope unto the end'; that, knowing their own safety and happiness, they may be the more cheerful, in self-denying services and afflictions. (Note, 1 Cor. 15: 55-58.) There are also such warnings and exhortations as call them to the use of those means, by which it is the will of God to preserve them. Thus the apostle assured his companions in danger, 'that there should be no loss of any man's life'; yet he afterwards said, 'Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved'; for that was the method, in which it was the will of God to save them. (Notes, Acts 27: 30-32.) And others are intended to put believers on their guard against those temptations, which, if listened to, would not only greatly distress and injure them, but also hinder their usefulness, disgrace their profession, dishonor God, and do unspeakable evil to their brethren and neighbors. Indeed, though a man could be most fully assured, that he should not be killed by falling from a precipice: there might yet be sufficient reason to warn him to beware; for broken bones, and various dreadful effects might follow, should he heedlessly fall down, though by a miracle his life should be preserved. In fine, it cannot be said to be impossible, that Christ should engage, not only to take care of his sheep, while they persevere in believing; but also to insure their perseverance, and to secure them from final apostasy, or from dying impenitent and unbelieving. Now, can any one possibly convey this meaning in clearer, and more determinate, and more emphatical language, than that contained in these verses, and the texts referred to? But, if any be confident that the doctrine is of such a nature, that no words can prove it; do they not 'lean to their own understandings, instead of simply crediting the Word of God?'

Neither shall any enemy pluck them, &c.] 'This is the plain import and energy of the original, which is greatly exalted by adding the word *man* in the translation, as the authors of our English version have frequently done.' SCOTT.

DOVERPICK.

29 My father, "which gave them me," is greater than all; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.

30 I and my Father are one.

31 Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him.

32 Jesus answered them, "Many good works have I showed you from my Father: for which of those works do ye stone me?"

33 The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.

m 6:37-39, 17:2, 6, 9, 11.
 n 14:28, Ex. 18:11. Ps. 145:3. Dan. 4:3. Mal. 1:14.
 o 58. 11:12, 57:22, 9:58, 14:9, 10, 23, 16:15, 17:40, 11:21-23. Matt. 11:27, 28:19. 1 Tim. 3:16. Tit. 2:1, 1 John 5:7, 20.
 p 5:19, 8:59, 11:5, Ex. 17:4. 1 Sam. 30:6. Matt. 21:35, 33:35. Acts 7:59, 58, 59.
 q 55:37, 5:19, 20, 38. Matt. 11:5. Acts 12:10, 10:38.
 r 1 Sam. 18:1-6, 2 Chr. 24:20-22. Ps. 35:12, 109:4-5, Ec. 4:4. 1 John 3:12.
 s 20: 24-14-6, 1 Kings 21:13.
 t 30. 5:18. Phil. 2:6.

they have, or hinder them from the glory designed them; not able to put them out of God's protection, nor get them into their own power. Christ had Himself experienced the power of his Father *upholding and strengthening* Him, and therefore puts all his followers into his hand too. He that secured the glory of the Redeemer, will secure the glory of the redeemed.

Further to corroborate the security, that the sheep of Christ may have strong consolation, He asserts the union of these two undertakers; 'I and my Father are one, and have jointly undertaken for the protection of the saints.' This speaks more than the harmony, that was between the Father and the Son in the work of redemption; every good man is so far one with God, as to concur with Him; it must be meant of the *oneness of the nature* of Father and Son, that they are the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

The fathers urged this, both against the Sabellians, to prove the distinction and plurality of the persons, that the Father and the Son are two; and against the Arians, to prove the unity of the nature, that these two are *one*. If we should hold our peace concerning this sense of the words, even the stones which the Jews took up to cast at Him would speak it out, for the Jews understood Him as hereby making Himself God, (v. 33.) and He did not deny it. He proves that none could pluck them out of his hand, because they could not pluck them out of the Father's hand; which had not been a conclusive argument, if the Son had not had the same almighty power with the Father, and, consequently, been one with Him in essence and operation.

The Jews took up stones again, v. 31. It is not the word that is used before, (ch. 8: 59.) that they carried stones, stones that were a load, such as they used in stoning malefactors; they brought them from some place at a distance, as if preparing for his execution without any judicial process; as if He were convicted of blasphemy upon notorious evidence. The absurdity of this insult which the Jews offered to Christ, will appear, if we consider, 1. That they had imperiously, not to say impudently, challenged Him to tell them plainly whether He were the Christ; and now that He not only said it, but proved Himself so, they condemned Him for it as a malefactor. If the preachers of the truth propose it modestly, they are branded as cowards; if boldly, as insolent. 2. When they had made the like attempt before, it was in vain, He escaped through the midst of them; (ch. 8: 59.) yet they repeat their baffled attempt. Daring sinners will throw stones at heaven, though they return upon their own heads; and will strengthen themselves against the Almighty, though never any hardened themselves against Him, and prospered.

Verse 30.

'That Christ speaks not here of an unity of will and concord only, appears, 1. From the reason assigned of the security of the sheep; the want of power in any one to snatch them out of the hands of Christ, because, the Father being greater in power than all, his power could secure them from all: and so could also Christ, He being one in power with the Father; for the foundation of this argument is not, that the Father's will; but that his power was above all. 2. From the inference of the Jews, that by these words, 'He made Himself God,' and so was guilty of blasphemy.' Whitby. (Notes, 32-35. 2 Tim. 11: 12. 1 Job 4: 1-4.)

Scott.

be kept from everlasting happiness; He that gives it them will preserve them to it.

His own power is engaged for them; *Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand*. A mighty contest is here supposed about these sheep. The Shepherd is so careful of their welfare, that He has them not only in his fold, and under his eye, but in his hand, interested in his special love, and under his special protection; (all his saints are in thy hand, Deut. 33: 3.) yet their enemies are so daring, they attempt to pluck them out of his hand; but they cannot, shall not, do it. Note, Those are safe, who are in the hands of Jesus. The saints are preserved in Christ; their salvation is not in their own keeping, but in the keeping of a Mediator. The Pharisees and rulers did all they could to frighten the disciples of Christ from following Him, but Christ saith they shall not prevail.

His Father's power is likewise engaged for their preservation, v. 29. He now appeared in weakness, and, lest his security should therefore be thought insufficient, He brings in that of his Father.

My Father is greater than all; greater than all the other friends of the church, shepherds, magistrates, or ministers. Those shepherds slumber and sleep; it will be easy to pluck the sheep out of their hands; but He keeps his flock day and night. He is greater than the enemies of the church, and able to secure his own; He is greater than the combined force of hell and earth.

'It is my Father that gave them Me, and He is concerned in honor to uphold his gift.' They were given to the Son as a trust, and therefore God will still look after them. All the divine power is engaged for the accomplishment of all the divine counsels.

If this be so, then none (neither man nor devil) is able to pluck them out of the Father's hand, not able to deprive them of the grace

that they have, or hinder them from the glory designed them; not able to put them out of God's protection, nor get them into their own power. Christ had Himself experienced the power of his Father *upholding and strengthening* Him, and therefore puts all his followers into his hand too. He that secured the glory of the Redeemer, will secure the glory of the redeemed.

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Christ tenderly expostulates with them upon this outrage; *Jesus answered what they did, for we do not find that they said any thing, unless perhaps they stirred up the crowd to join with them, crying, Stone Him, stone Him, as afterwards, Crucify Him, crucify Him.* When He could have answered them with fire from heaven, He mildly replied, *Many good works have I showed you from my Father: for which of those works do you stone Me?* Words, that one would think would have melted a heart of stone.

In dealing with his enemies He still argued from his works; men evidence what they are by what they do. His good works: it signifies both great works and good works.

The divine power of his works convicted them of obstinate infidelity. They were works from his Father, so far above the course of nature, as to prove Him that did them, *sent of God*. These works He showed them openly, not in a corner; his works would bear the test, and refer themselves to the testimony of the most inquisitive and impartial spectators. He did not show his works by candle-light, as they that do them only for show, but at noon-day before the world, ch. 18: 20. See Ps. 111.

The divine grace of his works convicted them of the most base ingratitude. The works He did among them were not only miracles, but mercies; not only works of wonder, but works of love and kindness. He healed the sick, cleansed the lepers, cast out devils, which were favors, not only to the persons concerned, but to the public; these He had multiplied; 'Ye cannot say that I have done you any harm; or given any provocation; if therefore ye will quarrel with Me, it must be for some good work, tell Me for which.' Note, (1.) The horrid ingratitude of our sins against God and Christ, is a great aggravation of them. See how God argues to this purpose, Deut. 32: 6. Jer. 2: 5. Mic. 6: 3. (2.) We must not think it strange if we meet with those who not only hate us without cause, but are our adversaries for our love, Ps. 35: 12. 41: 9. When He asks, *For which of these do ye stone Me*, as He intimates the abundant satisfaction He had in his own innocency, which gives a man courage in suffering, so He induces his persecutors to consider the true reason of their enmity, and ask, as al. should do, that create trouble to their neighbor, *Why persecute ye him?* As Job advises his friends to do, Job 19: 23.

They vindicate their attempt upon Christ, and the cause on which they grounded their prosecution, v. 33. What sin will warrant leaves to cover itself, when the persecutors of the Son of God could find something to say for themselves?

They would not be thought such enemies to their country, as to persecute Him for a good work; *For a good work we stone Thee not*. They would scarcely allow any of his works to be so. His curing the impotent man, (ch. 5.) and the blind man, (ch. 9.) were so far from being acknowledged such, that they were put on the score of his crimes, because done on the sabbath-day. But if He had done any good works, they would not own that they stoned Him for them, though these were really the things that did most exasperate them, ch. 11: 47. Thus, though most absurd, they could not be brought to own their absurdities.

They would be thought such friends to God and his glory, as to prosecute Him for blasphemy; *Because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God*.

Here is, (1.) A pretended zeal for the law. They seem mightily concerned for the honor

I and my Father are one. 'That is, the union between us is as strict and intimate in nature, as was affection and design, that his almighty power is mine, to be employed for the defence of my sheep, and no one can deprive them of eternal life without prevailing against Him as well as Me. How widely different that sense is, in which Christians are said to be one with God, (John 17: 21.) it will sufficiently appear, by considering how flagrantly absurd and blasphemous it would be to draw that inference from their union with God, which Christ does from his.'

LOUGHRIDGE

34 Jesus answered them, is it not written 'in your law, *I said, Ye are gods?'

35 If he called them gods, 'unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture cannot be broken;

36 Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, 'I am the Son of God?'

37 If 'I do not the works of my Father, believe me not.

38 But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works: that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in him.

u 12.34. 15.25. Rom 3:10-19.

x Ps 22:1, 6, 7.

y Ez 4:16. 7:1. 22:29 Ps 133:1.

z Gen 1:51. Deut 18:15, 18-20. 1

Sam 14:36-37. 15:1. 23:9-11. 28:

6. 30:8. 1 Sam 7:5. 1 Chr 22:8.

2 Chr 11:23. 19:2. Rom 15:1.

a 12:33-39. 19:28-36. 37. Matt 5:18.

24:35. 26:13-56. 27:35. Luke 16:

17. 24:29, 41-49. Acts 1:16.

b 2:1. 6:27. Ps 22:6-12. Is 11:2

-5. 42:1. 49:1-4-8. 53:4-5.

61:1-3. Jer 1:5.

c 3:17. 5:30. 6:33-39. 57. Gal 1:74.

8. 18:21. Rom 8:3. Gal 4:4. 1

John 4:3-14.

d 29-53. 5:17, 18. 9:35-57. 19:7.

e 18:21. Matt 26:63-66. 27:43, 54.

f Rom 1:4. 9:5.

g 25:32. 5:31. 12:37-40. 15:24.

h Matt 11:20-24.

i 2:22. 5:35. Acts 2:22. 4:8-12.

j 30. 14:9-11, 20. 17:11, 21-23.

Scripture on his side. It is written, (Ps. 82: 6.) *I have said, Ye are gods.* It is an argument from the less to the greater. If they were gods, much more am I. Observe,

(1.) How He explains the text; *He called them gods, to whom the Word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken.* The word of God's commission came to them, appointing them to their offices, as judges, and therefore they are called gods, Exod. 22: 28. To some the Word of God came immediately, as to Moses; to others in the way of an instituted ordinance. Magistracy is a divine institution; and magistrates are God's delegates, and therefore the Scripture calleth them gods; and we are sure that the Scripture cannot be broken, or broken in upon, or found fault with. Every word of God is right, the very style and language of Scripture are unexceptionable, and not to be corrected, Matt. 5: 18.

(2.) How He applies it. *They were very rash and unreasonable, who condemned Christ as a blasphemer, for calling Himself the Son of God, when they themselves called their rulers so, and therein the Scripture warranted them.* But the argument goes further; v. 36. If magistrates were called gods, because commissioned to administer justice in the nation, say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified, Thou blasphemest? We have here two things concerning Jesus:

[1.] *The honor due Him by the Father, which He justly glories in; He sanctified, sent Him into the world.* Magistrates were called the sons of God, though the Word of God only came to them, and the spirit of government came upon them by measure, as upon Saul; but our Lord was Himself the Word, and had the Spirit without measure; they were constituted for a particular country, city, or nation, but He was sent into the world, with a universal authority; they were sent to, as persons at a distance, He was sent forth, as having been from eternity with God. The Father sanctified Him, that is, designed Him, and set Him apart to the office of Mediator, and qualified Him for that office. Sanctifying Him is the same with sealing Him, ch. 1: 27. Note, Whom the Father sends, He sanctifies; whom He designs for holy purposes, He prepares with holy principles and dispositions. The holy God will reward, and therefore will employ, none but such as He

of the divine majesty, and to be seized with religious horror at what they imagined to be a reproach to it. A blasphemer was to be stoned, Lev. 24: 16. This law, they thought, did not only justify, but sanctify, what they attempted, as Acts 26: 9. Note, The vilest practices are often varnished with plausible pretences. As nothing is more courageous than a well-informed conscience, so nothing is more outrageous than a mistaken one. See Isa. 66: 5, ch. 16: 2.

(2.) *A real enmity to the Gospel, on which they could not put a greater affront, than by representing Christ as a blasphemer.*

The crime laid to his charge is blasphemy, speaking reproachfully of God. God Himself is out of the sinner's reach, and not capable of receiving any real injury; and therefore enmity to God spits its venom at his name.

The proof of the crime; *Thou, being a man, makest thyself God.* As it is God's glory, that He is God, which we rob Him of when we make Him altogether such a one as ourselves, so it is his glory, that beside Him there is no other, which we rob Him of when we make ourselves, or any creature, altogether like Him.

Thus far they were in the right, that what Christ said of Himself, amounted to this—that He was God, for He had said that He was One with the Father, and that He would give eternal life; and Christ does not deny it, which He would have done, if it had been a mistaken inference from his words.

But, They greatly mistook, when they looked on Him as a mere man, and that the godhead He claimed was his own usurpation. They thought it impious that such a poor, mean man, should profess Himself the Messiah, and entitle Himself to the honors due to the Son of God. Note, 1. Those who say that Jesus is a mere man, and only a made God, as the Socinians say, do in effect charge Him with blasphemy, but do effectually prove it upon themselves. 2. He, who, being a man, makes himself a god, as the pope does, is, no question, a blasphemer, and that antichrist.

Christ proves Himself to be no blasphemer, 1. From God's Word. He appeals to their law, the Old Testament; Christ is sure to have

finds or makes holy. The Father's sanctifying and sending Him is here vouched as a sufficient warrant for his calling Himself the Son of God; for, because He was a holy man, He was called the Son of God; Luke 1: 35. See Rom. 1: 4.

[2.] He justly complains that they impiously said of Him, whom the Father had thus dignified, that He was a blasphemer, because He called Himself the Son of God; 'Say ye of Him so and so? Dare ye thus set your mouths against the heavens?' If devils had said so of Him, whom He came to condemn, it had not been so strange; but that men should say so of Him, whom He came to save, be astonished, *O heavens!* See the language of obstinate unbelief; it, in effect, calls the holy Jesus a blasphemer. It is hard to say which is more to be wondered at, that men who breathe God's air, should yet speak such things, or that men who have spoken such things, should still be suffered to breathe. The wickedness of man, and the patience of God, as it were, contend which shall be most wonderful.

In the former argument, He only answered the charge of blasphemy by an argument ad hominem—turning a man's own argument against himself; here He makes out his own claims, and proves that He and the Father are One; *If I do not the works of my Father, believe Me not.* Though He might justly have abandoned such blasphemous wretches as incurable, He reasons with them.

2. He argues from his works, which He has often vouched as the proofs of his mission. As He proved Himself sent of God by the divinity of his works, so we must prove ourselves allied to Christ by the Christianity of ours. The argument is very cogent; for the works He did, were the works of his Father, which could not be done in the ordinary course of nature, but only by the over-ruling power of God. He that can dispense with the laws of nature, repeat, and over-rule them at his pleasure, is certainly the sovereign Prince who instituted those laws. The miracles the apostles wrought in his name, and for the confirmation of his doctrine, corroborated this argument, and continued the evidence of it, when He was gone. It is proposed as fairly as can be desired, and put to a short issue.

If I do not the works of my Father, believe Me not. He does not demand a blind faith, nor an assent to his divine mission further than He gave proof of it. He did not wind Himself into the affections of the people, nor wheedle them by sly insinuations, nor impose upon their credulity by bold assertions; but, with the greatest fairness imaginable, quitted all demands of their faith, further than He produced warrants for these demands. Christ is no hard master, who expects to reap in assents, where He has not sown in arguments. None shall perish for the disbelief of that which was not proposed to them with sufficient motives of credibility, Infinite Wisdom itself being judge.

But if I do the works of my Father, if I work undeniable miracles, though you are so scrupulous as not to take my word, yet believe the works; believe your own eyes, the thing speaks itself plainly enough.' As the invisible things of the Creator are clearly seen by his works of creation and common providence, (Rom. 1: 20.) so the invisible things of the Redeemer were seen by his miracles, and by all his works, both of power and mercy; so that they who were not convinced by these works, were without excuse.

That ye may know and believe, may believe it intelligently, and with entire satisfaction, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him; which is

Lord, to the divine inspiration of the Old Testament. (36.) *Sent into the world.* It may be said of every man, that God 'sent him into the world.' Campbell. It is however, not said in Scripture of any other man except our Lord, but of Him frequently; (Marg. Ref. c.) and, it may be questioned, whether it could be said, with propriety, of any other man. God creates men, or brings them into the world; and then sends them, as He sees good; but 'to send,' applied to rational creatures, pre-supposes a capacity of being sent, as moral agents; and 'to send into the world,' in this sense, evidently implies pre-existence. (Notes. 6: 35-40. 16: 25-30. c. 28-30. 1 Tim 1: 15, 16. v. 15 Heb. 2: 10-15.)

Score

1723.

Verses 34-36.

When magistrates and judges are in Scripture called gods, the Holy Christ still addeth something, which exalts them from true divinity to that 'they shall die like men.' (Ps. 82: 6.) or they are 'rulers of the people,' (Ex. 22: 28.) Whereas, when Christ is called God, it is either with some epithet belonging to the supreme God, as 'God over all;' (Rom. 9: 5.) 'The great God;' (Tit. 2: 13.) 'The true God;' (1 John 5: 20.) or with addition of some operation proper to God, as when it is said, 'The Word was God, and all things were made by Him,' (1: 1.) *Whitby.* (35.) *The Scripture cannot be broken.* This is a decisive testimony of our

Lord, to the divine inspiration of the Old Testament. (36.) *Sent into the world.* It may be said of every man, that God 'sent him into the world.' Campbell. It is however, not said in Scripture of any other man except our Lord, but of Him frequently; (Marg. Ref. c.) and, it may be questioned, whether it could be said, with propriety, of any other man. God creates men, or brings them into the world; and then sends them, as He sees good; but 'to send,' applied to rational creatures, pre-supposes a capacity of being sent, as moral agents; and 'to send into the world,' in this sense, evidently implies pre-existence. (Notes. 6: 35-40. 16: 25-30. c. 28-30. 1 Tim 1: 15, 16. v. 15 Heb. 2: 10-15.)

Score

1723.

39 Therefore ^b they sought again to take him: but he escaped out of their hand;

40 And went away again beyond Jordan, into ^c the place where John at first baptized: ^d and there he abode.

41 And ^e many resorted unto him, and said, ^f John did no miracle; ^g but all things that John spake of this man were true.

42 And ^h many believed on him there.

† 31. 7:30, 44. 8:59. Luke 4:29, 30.
‡ 1:298. 3:26.
§ 7:1. 11:54.
|| 3:26. Matt. 4:23-25. Mark 1:37.
¶ Luke 5:1. 12:3.
‖ Matt. 14:2. Luke 7:26-28.
‗ 2:39, 53, 94. 3:29-36. Luke 7:29, 30.
x 2:23. 4:39, 41. 8:30. 11:45. 12:42.

and therefore, having the same provocation, they express the same resentments, and justify their attempt to stone Him by another attempt to take Him. Such is the temper of a persecuting spirit, and such its politics, to cover one set of bad deeds with another, lest the former should fall through.

He avoided them by flight; not an inglorious retreat, in which there was any thing of human infirmity, but a glorious retirement, in which there was much divine power. He escaped out of their hands, not by the interposals of any friend, but He either drew a veil over Himself, or cast a mist before their eyes, or tied the hands of those whose hearts He did not turn. Note, No weapon formed against our Lord Jesus shall prosper, Ps. 2: 5. He escaped, not because He was afraid to suffer, but because his hour was not come. And He who knew how to deliver Himself, no doubt knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to make a way for them to escape.

He went away again beyond Jordan, v. 40. The Bishop of our souls care: not to be fixed in one see, but to go from place to place, doing good. This great Benefactor was never out of his way, for wherever He came there was work to be done. Observe,

1. What *seeker* He found there. He went into a private part of the country, and there abode; there He found some rest, when in Jerusalem He could find none. Note, Though persecutors may drive Christ and his Gospel out of their own city or country, they cannot drive Him or it out of the world. Though Jerusalem was not gathered, yet Christ was glorious. Christ's going now beyond Jordan, was a figure of the taking of the kingdom of God from the Jews, and bringing it to the Gentiles. Christ and his Gospel have often found better entertainment among plain country-people than among the wise, the mighty, the noble, 1 Cor. 1: 26, 27.

2. What success He found there. He did not go thither merely for security, but to do good; and therefore He chose to go where John at first baptized, (ch. 1: 28.) because there could not but remain some impressions of John's ministry, which would dispose them to receive Christ, for it was not three years since John was baptizing, and Christ was Himself baptized here at Bethabara. Christ came hither now to see what fruit there was of all the pains John Baptist had taken among them, and what they retained of the things they then heard. The event in some measure answered expectation; for we are told,

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 22-42. The proud, the malicious, and all who are not the sheep of Christ, will be convinced by no evidence, and take no warning; but his sheep 'hear his voice,' and follow his example; thus they become like the harmless, holy, patient Lamb of God. These He knows, and they know Him; they 'love Him, because He hath first loved them,' (Note, 1 John 4: 19.) they seek his glory, and He takes care of their interests. He gives them eternal life, and keeps them to the enjoyment of it; nor shall any enemy, or any event, ever separate them from his love. 'They know whom they have believed;' their Redeemer is the LORD of Hosts. 'God is become their Salvation;' JEHOVAH, Jesus, is their good Shepherd, One with the Father, and possessing with Him divine perfection. They cannot expect too much from Him, to whom the prophets bare witness, of whom the priests and kings of Israel were types, 'whom all angels worship,' and 'who upholds all things by the word of his power.' (Notes, Heb. 1: 1-4.) His works pro-

(1.) That they *flocked* after Him; *Many resorted to Him*. The return of the means of grace to a place, after they have been for some time intermitted, commonly occasions a great stirring of affections. Some think Christ chose to abide at Bethabara, the house of passage, where the ferry-boats for crossing the Jordan lay, that the confluence of people thither might give an opportunity of teaching many who would come to hear Him when it lay in their way, but would scarcely go a step out of the road for an opportunity of attending on his word.

(2.) They *reasoned* in his favor, and sought arguments to induce them to close with Him, as much as they at Jerusalem sought objections against Him. They said very judiciously, *John did no miracle, but all things that John spake of this Man were true*.

Christ far exceeded John Baptist's power, for *John did no miracle*, but Jesus does many. If John were so great a prophet, how great then is Jesus! Christ is best known by such a comparison with others as sets Him superlatively above them. Though John came in the spirit and power of Elias, yet he did not, like him, work miracles, lest the minds of people should be made to hesitate between him and Jesus; therefore the honor of working miracles was reserved for Jesus, that there might be a sensible and an undeniable demonstration, that, though He came after John, yet He was preferred far before him.

Christ exactly answered John Baptist's testimony. John not only did no miracle to divert people from Christ, but directed them to Christ, turned them over as apprentices to Him, and that came to their minds now; all things John said of this Man were true, that He should be the *Lamb of God*, should baptize with the *Holy Ghost and with fire*. Great things John had said of Him, which raised their expectations; so that, though they had not zeal enough to carry them into his country to inquire after Him, yet, when He came into theirs, they acknowledged Him as great as John had said He would be. When we get acquainted with Christ, and come to know Him experimentally, we find all that the Scripture saith of Him is true; nay, that the reality exceeds the report, 1 Kings 10: 6, 7. John Baptist was now dead, yet his hearers profited by what they had heard formerly, and by comparing what they heard then with what they saw now, they gained a double advantage; for, 1st. They were confirmed in their belief that *John was a prophet*, who foretold such things, and spake of the eminence to which this Jesus would arrive. 2dly. They were prepared to believe that *Jesus was the Christ*, in whom they saw those things accomplished, which John foretold. Thus we see that the efficacy of the word preached, is not confined to the life of the preacher, nor does

Verse 40
[And went away] 'When our Lord wrought any signal miracle, He withdrew Himself from the noisy plaudits of the multitude; and when He said any thing august of Himself, he retired, on account of the anger of the envious; thus giving way to it, and suffering it to die away by his absence.' *Euthymius*. Abode.] 'Four months, till his last passage. The words do not preclude the supposition that He took some journey into Palestine.'
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Verse 42
'This and the preceding chapter contain two remarkable "scintillations" of the Jewish doctors. In the former, they were confounded by the testimony of a plain, uneducated man, simply appealing to the various circumstances of a matter of fact at which they cavilled. In this chapter the wise are taken in their own craftiness. The Pharisees are confounded by that wisdom which is from above, speaking of and manifesting the deep things of God.'

D. A. CLARK

CHAP. XI.

Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary, is sick, 1, 2. They send to Jesus, declaring his sickness, not unto death, but for the glory of God, abides two days where He is, 3-8. He informs the disciples that Lazarus is dead, and intimating that He would raise him to life. He proposes going to him: the disciples, fearing the Jews, express their aversion, yet resolve to accompany Him, 7-16. Jesus arrives at Bethany, after Lazarus had been dead four days, 17, 18. He assures Martha that her brother shall rise again, and requires her to believe, that He is the 'Resurrection and the Life'; and as she confesses her faith in Him as 'the Christ, the Son of God', 19-27. She calls Mary, who comes with her, 28-31. Jesus, sympathizing with the mourners, 'groans in spirit,' and 'weeps': the remarks of the Jews on the occasion, 32-37. He comes to the grave, appeals to God as his Father, who sent Him, and calls Lazarus out of the grave, 38-44. Many Jews believe; but some inform the Pharisees, 45-46. They hold a council; and confer with Caiaphas, who insinuates that to put Jesus to death; while, as high priest, Caiaphas says, 'that by his intention, to prophesy concerning the gracious design and extensive efficacy of his death, 47-53. Jesus retires from places of public resort, 54. Before the passover, the Jews inquire about Him, the rulers having given orders to apprehend Him, 55-57.

NOW a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of ^aBethany, the town of ^bMary and her sister Martha.

2 (It was ^cthat Mary which ^danointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.)

3 Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold, ^ehe whom thou lovest is sick.

4 When Jesus heard that, he said, ^fThis sickness is not unto death; but ^gfor the glory of God, ^hthat the Son of God might be glorified thereby.

- a 9, 6. Gen. 49:1. 2 Kings 20:1-12 Acts 9:37.
b 5:11. 12:2, 9, 17. Luke 16:20-25.
c 12:1. Matt. 21:17. Mark 11:1.
d Luke 10:38-42.
e 12:3. Matt. 26:6, 7. Mark 14:3.
f Luke 7:37-38.
g 1:5. 13:23. Gen. 22:2. Ps. 16:3. Phil. 2:26, 27. 2 Tim. 4:20. Heb. 9:26, 7. Jam. 5:14, 15.
h 10:1. Mark 5:38-42. Rom. 11:11.
i 10: 9, 24. 12:28. 13:31, 32. Phil. 1:11. 1 Pet. 4:11, 14.
k 1:11. 5:22. 9:35, 37. 13:31, 32. 17:1, 13:11. Phil. 4:12. 1 Pet. 1:21.

It relates: (ch. 12: 3.) for the evangelists never refer to one another, but John frequently refers in one place of his Gospel to another. Extraordinary acts of piety, that come from love to Christ, will not only find acceptance with Him, but gain reputation in the church, Matt. 26: 13. Her brother Lazarus was sick; and the sickness of those we love is our affliction. The more friends we have, the more frequently we are afflicted by sympathy; and the dearer they are, the more grievous it is. The multiplying of our comforts is but the multiplying of our cares.

Tidings were sent to Jesus of the sickness of Lazarus. His sisters knew that He was a great way off beyond Jordan, and they sent a special messenger to acquaint Him with the affliction of their family. In which they manifest, 1. Affection and concern for their brother. Though it is likely, his estate would come to them after his death, yet they earnestly desired his life. They showed their love to him now that he was sick, for a brother is born for adversity, and so is a sister. We must weep with our friends when they weep, as well as rejoice with them when they rejoice. 2. The regard they had to Jesus, whom they were willing to make acquainted with all their concerns, and, like Jephthah, utter all their words before Him. Though God knows all our wants, and griefs, He will know them from us, and is honored by our saying them before Him.

it expire with his breath, but that which seemed as water spilt upon the ground, may afterward be gathered up again. See Zech. 1: 5, 6. Many believed on Him there. Believing that He who wrought such miracles, and in whom John's predictions were fulfilled, was what He declared Himself to be, the Son of God, they gave up themselves to Him as his disciples, v. 42. [1.] The persons that believed on Him, were many. While they that received his doctrine at Jerusalem, were but as the grape-gleanings of the vintage, they that believed on Him in the country beyond Jordan, were a full harvest. [2.] In this place, where John had been preaching with great success, many believed on the Lord Jesus. Where the preaching of repentance has had success, there the preaching of reconciliation is most likely to prosper. Where John has been acceptable, Jesus will not be unacceptable. The jubilee-trumpet sounds sweetest in the ears of those, who in the day of atonement have afflicted their souls for sin.

CHAP. XI. v. 1-16. In this chapter, we have the history of the illustrious miracle Christ wrought a little before his death—the raising of Lazarus to life; recorded only by this evangelist: for the other three confined themselves to what Christ did in Galilee, where He resided most, and scarcely ever carried their history into Jerusalem till the passion-week: whereas John's memoirs relate chiefly to what passed at Jerusalem; this passage therefore was reserved for his pen. Some suggest that, when the other evangelists wrote, Lazarus was alive, and it would not agree, either with his safety or humility, to have it recorded till now, when it is supposed He was dead. It is more largely recorded than any other of Christ's miracles, not only because many circumstances of it are so very instructive, and the miracle of itself so great a proof of Christ's mission, but because it was an earnest of the crowning proof of all—Christ's own resurrection.

Bethany was a village not far from Jerusalem, where Christ usually lodged, when He came up to the feasts. It is here called the town of Mary and Martha, the town where they dwelt, as Bethsaida is called the city of Andrew and Peter, ch. 1: 44. I see no reason to think, as some do, that Martha and Mary were owners of the town. Their brother was named Lazarus; his Hebrew name, probably, was Eleazar, which, being contracted, and a Greek termination put to it, is Lazarus. Perhaps, in prospect of this history, our Savior made use of the name Lazarus, Luke 16: 22. Martha and Mary seem to have been the housekeepers, while perhaps Lazarus lived a retired life, and gave himself to study and contemplation. Here was a happy, well-ordered family, that Christ was very much conversant in, where yet there was neither husband nor wife, (for aught that appears,) but the house kept by a brother, and his sisters, dwelling together in unity. One of the sisters is particularly described to be Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, v. 2. Some think she was that woman that we read of, (Luke 7: 37, 38,) who had been a sinner. I rather think it refers to that anointing of Christ, which this evangelist

The message they sent was very short, not petitioning, much less prescribing or pressing, but barely relating the case with tender insinuation Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest, is sick. Not he whom we love, but whom Thou lovest. Our greatest encouragements in prayer are fetched from God Himself and from his grace. They do not say, Lord, behold, he who loveth Thee but, he whom Thou lovest; for herein is love not that we loved God, but that He loved us. Our love to Him is not worth speaking of, but his to us can never be enough spoken of. Note (1.) There are some of the friends and followers of Jesus for whom He has a special kindness. Among the twelve there was one whom Jesus loved. (2.) It is no new thing for those whom Christ loves, to be sick; all things come alike to all; bodily distempers correct the corruption, and try the graces, of God's people. (3.) It is a great comfort to us when sick, to have those about us that will pray for us. (4.) We have great encouragement in our prayers for the sick, if we have ground to hope that they are as such as Christ loves; and we have reason to love and pray for those, whom we have reason to think Christ loves and cares for.

Christ prognosticated the event of the sickness, and probably sent it as a message to the sisters to support them while He delayed. Two things He prognosticates:

(1.) This sickness is not unto death; it proved fatal, and no doubt Lazarus was truly dead four days. But, [1.] That was not the errand on which this sickness was sent; it came not, as in a common case, to be a summons to the grave; there was a further intention in it. [2.] That was not the final effect. He died, and yet it might be said he did not die,—That is not said to be done, which is not done for a perpetuity. Death is an everlasting farewell to this world, the way whence we shall not return; in this sense it was not unto death. The grave was not his long home, his house of eternity. Thus Christ said of the maid whom He proposed to restore to life, She is not dead. The sickness of good people, how threatening soever, is not unto death, for it is not unto eternal death. The body's death to this world is the soul's birth into another; when we or our friends are sick, the hope of a recovery is our principal support, but in that we may be disappointed; therefore it is our wisdom to build upon that in which we cannot be disappointed; if they belong to Christ, let the worst come, they cannot be hurt of the second death, and then not much hurt of the first.

(2.) But it is for the glory of God, that an opportunity may be given for the manifesting of God's power. The afflictions of the saints are designed for the glory of God, that He may show them favor; for the sweetest, and most affecting mercies, are those occasioned by trouble. Let this reconcile us to the darkest dispensations; they are for the glory of God; and if God be glorified, we ought to be satisfied, Lev. 10: 3. As before, the man was born blind, that Christ might have the honor of curing him, (ch. 9: 3,) so Lazarus must be sick and die, that Christ may be glorified as the Lord of life, in raising him from the dead. Let this comfort those whom Christ loves under all their grievances, that the design of them all is, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby, his wisdom, power, and goodness glorified in supporting and relieving them; see 2 Cor. 12: 9, 10.

He deferred visiting his patient. They had pleaded, Lord, it is he whom Thou lovest, and the plea is allowed; (v. 5.) Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus: the claims of faith are ratified in heaven. One would think it should follow, When He heard therefore that he was sick, He made all haste to him. If He loved them, now was a time to show it. But He took the contrary way to show his love: it is not said, He loved them, and yet He lingered; but He loved them, and therefore He lingered; instead of coming post to him, He abode three days still in the same place where He was. He loved them, that is, had a great opinion of Martha and Mary, of their wisdom, grace, faith, and patience, above others of his disciples, and of the

5 Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister, and Lazarus.

6 When he had heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was.

[Practical Observations.]

7 Then after that saith he to his disciples, "Let us go into Judea again."

8 His disciples say unto him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone thee; and goest thou thither again?

9 Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world."

1. 3.36. 15.9-13. 16.27. 17.26.
n Gen. 22:14. 42:24. 43:29-31. 44:1-5. 45:1-5. Is. 30:18. 55:8,9.
Matt. 15:22-28.
n 10:40-42. Luke 9:51. Acts 15:36. 20:22-24.
o 10:31,39. Ps. 111-3. Matt. 16:21-23.
p 9:4. Luke 13:31-33.
q 12:35. Prov. 3:23. Jer. 31:9.

om 3. and the worst time is commonly the set time. When our hope is lost, we are cut off for our parts, then they shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened the graves, Ezek. 37: 11, 13. In the depths of affliction, let this therefore keep us out of the depths of despair, that man's extremity is God's opportunity; *Jehovah-jireh*. Or it was a trial of the courage of the disciples, whether they would venture to follow Him thither, where they had so lately been frightened by an attempt on their Master's life, which they looked upon as an attempt on theirs. To go to Judea, was a saying that proved them. But Christ did not say, "Go ye into Judea, and I will take shelter here;" no, *Let us go*. Note, Christ never brings his people into any peril, but He accompanies them in it.

Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee, and goest Thou thither again? Christ's disciples are apt to make a greater matter of sufferings than their Master, and to remember injuries longer. He had put up the affront, it was forgotten, but his disciples could not forget it. Though it was at least two months ago, the remembrance of it was fresh in their minds. They marvel that He will go thither again. "Wilt Thou favor those with thy presence, that have expelled Thee out of their coats?" Christ's ways, in passing by offences, are above our ways. "Wilt Thou expose Thyself among a people so desperately enraged against Thee?" *Goest Thou thither again*, where Thou hast been so ill used? Here they showed great care for their Master's safety, as Peter did, when he said, *Master, spare Thyself*; Christ did not want friends to persuade Him to shift off suffering, but He had opened his mouth to the Lord, and would not go back. While the disciples show a concern for his safety, they discover distrust of his power; as if He could not secure

fore deferred coming to them, that their trial might at last be found to praise and honor. He loved them, that is, designed to do something great for them, such as He had not wrought for any of his friends; and therefore delayed coming to them, that Lazarus might be buried before He came. If Christ had come and cured the sickness of Lazarus, He had done no more than He did for many; if He had raised him to life when newly dead, no more than He had done for some; but, deferring relief so long, He had an opportunity of doing more for him than for any. Note, God hath gracious intentions, even in seeming delays, Isa. 54: 7, 8. 49: 14, &c. Christ's friends at Bethany were not out of his thoughts, though He made no haste to them. When the work of deliverance, temporal or spiritual, public or personal, stands at a stay, it does but stay the time, and every thing is beautiful in its season.

The discourse He had with his disciples, when about to visit his friends at Bethany, makes out what Christ saith, *I have called you friends*.

His disciples were the men of his counsel, and to them He saith, (v. 7.) "Let us go into Judea again, though unworthy such a favor. Christ repeats the tenders of his mercy to those that have often rejected them. This may be considered a purpose of kindness to his friends at Bethany, whose affliction, and all the circumstances of it, He knew very well, though no more expresses were sent to Him; for He was present in spirit, though absent in body. When He knew they were brought to extremity, when the brother and sisters have given and taken a final farewell: 'Now,' saith He, 'let us go to Judea.' Christ will arise in favor of his people, when the time to favor them, yea, the set time is commonly the set time. When our hope is lost,

Himself and them now in Judea, as He had done formerly. Is his arm waxen short? When solicitous for the interests of Christ's church, we must rest satisfied in the wisdom and power of the Lord Jesus, who knows how to secure a flock of sheep in the midst of wolves. They secretly feared suffering themselves: for they count upon that if He suffer. When our private interests run in the same channel with the public, we are apt to think ourselves zealous for the Lord of hosts, while really we are only zealous for our own wealth, credit, ease, and safety, under color of seeking the things of Christ; we have therefore need nicely to distinguish as to our principles.

Christ's answer to this objection: *Are there not twelve hours in the day?* An hour with the Jews was the twelfth part of the time between sun and sun; so some. Or, they lying much more south than we, their days were nearer twelve hours long than ours. The Divine Providence has given us daylight to work by, and lengthens it out to a competent time; and reckoning the year round, every country has just as much daylight as night, and so much more as the twilight's amount to. Man's life is a day, divided into ages, states, and opportunities; the consideration of this should make us not only very busy, as to the work of life, but also very easy as to the perils of life; our day shall be lengthened out till our work be done. This Christ applies to his case, and shows why He must go to Judea, because He had a clear call to go.

He shows the comfort and satisfaction a man has in his own mind, while he keeps in the way of duty, as it is in general prescribed by the Word of God, and particularly determined by his providence. *If any man walk in the day, he stumbles not*; that is, if a man keep close to his duty, and set the will of God before him as his rule, he does not hesitate in his own mind, but, *walking uprightly, walks surely*. As he that walks in the day, goes on steadily and cheerfully in his way, because he sees the light of this world, so a good man, without sinister aims, relies on the Word of God as his rule, and regards the glory of God as his end; thus he is furnished with a faithful guide in all his doubts, and a powerful guard in all his dangers, Gal. 6: 4. Ps. 119: 6. Christ, wherever He went, walked in the day, and so shall we, if we follow his steps.

He shows the pain and peril a man is in, who walks not according to this rule; (v. 10.) *If a man walk in the night, he stumbles*; that is, if a man walk in the way of his heart, and according to the course of this world, if he consult his own reasonings more than the will and glory of God, he falls into snares, is liable to uneasiness and apprehensions; while an upright man stands undaunted. See Isa. 33: 14-16. *There is no light in him, for light in us is that to our moral actions, which light about us is to our*

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-6. Those families, in which love and peace abound, are highly favored; but they whom Jesus loves, and by whom He is beloved, are most happy. Alas! that this should so very seldom be the case with every individual, even in small families, and still more rarely in large households! Yet even this privilege cannot exclude sickness and death. It may still be often said, "Lord, he whom Thou lovest is sick;" and they whom Thou lovest are mourning over the dying agonies, or the dead bodies of their relatives; for Jesus did not come to preserve his people from these afflictions; but to 'save them from their sins,' and 'from the wrath to come;' and to convert outward sorrows, and temporal death, into means of completing that salvation.—It behooves us, however, to seek to Him, in behalf of the sick and afflicted; and if they be true Christians, this will suggest the most encouraging plea in their behalf. But we must leave the event to his unerring wisdom. In one

way or other, the sickness of those whom He loves will be 'for the glory of God,' and for their own good. We ought to be willing to live or die, to pass through any temporal suffering, or part with our dearest relatives, when his glory requires it: for that cannot be separated from the real, and enduring advantage of those whom He loves, any more than the glory of the Father can be separated from that of his Son. We cannot judge of his love to us by outward dispensations: 'his ways are not as our ways;' and He sees good to prove the faith of his people by afflictions and delays, when we should think it proper and almost indispensable for Him to hasten to their relief. (P. O. 13: 1-7.—Note, Is. 55: 8, 9.) We must therefore learn to 'walk by faith,' and to wait for Him in patience and hope, and fervent prayer. (Notes, Rom. 8: 24-27. Heb. 10: 35-39. 12: 1-3. Jam. 5: 7-11.)

SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XI. v. 7, 8. 'The sentiments expressed by the apostles, on this and similar occasions, afford a clear proof that they were not persons of an over-easy credulity; or such as may, with any color of probability, be supposed to have been themselves deceived in the wonders they reported of our Lord. They seem rather to have deserved the reproach which, after his resurrection, He cast upon them, "fools, and slow of heart to believe." They appear to have believed nothing till the testimony of their own senses extorted the belief. They reasoned

not from what they had once seen, to what might be; they built a probabilities of the future on the past. They formed no general belief concerning the extent of our Lord's power, from the effects of it they had already witnessed.'

EP. HORSLEY.

Verse 9.

Twelve hours, &c.) 'There is a saying of the rabbins, cited by Cantwight: "There are twelve hours in the day, and twelve in the night." Comp Matt. 20: 3, and seq.'

RLC MISPLD.

10 But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

11 These things said he and after that, he saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus 'sleepeth' but I go that I may 'awake him out of sleep.'

12 Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep he shall do well.

13 Howbeit, Jesus spoke of his death; but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.

14 Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.

15 And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless, let us go unto him.

Ra. 27:2. Prov. 4:18,19. Jer. 13:16. 30:11. 1 John 2:10,11.
E. 3:29. 15:13-15. Ex. 33:11. 2 Chr. 20:7. 14:18. Jam. 2:23
Ps. Deut. 21:16. Mt. 9:24. Mark 5:39. Acts 7:80. 1 Cor. 15:18,51. 1 Thim. 4:11,15. 5:10.
43:44. 5:25-29. Dan. 12:2. 1 Cor. 15:54. Eph. 5:14.
10:24. 16:25,22.
E. 35:56.
12:30. 17:19. Gen. 28:24. 39:5.
Ps. 105:14. 15:51-53. 65:3. 2 Cor. 4:10,15. 2 Tim. 2:10.
E. 4: 2:11. 14:10,11. 1 John 5:13.

I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. He could have done it, where He was; He that recovered at a distance one dying, (ch. 4: 50.) could have raised at a distance one dead; but He would put this honor upon the miracle, to work it by the grave-side. As sleep is a resemblance of death, so a man's waking out of sleep, especially when called by his own name, is an emblem of the resurrection; (Job. 14: 15.) Then shalt thou call. Christ had no sooner said, *Our friend sleeps*, but presently added, *I go, that I may awake him*. When Christ tells his people at any time how bad the case is, He lets them know in the same breath how easily He can mend it. Christ's telling his disciples that this was his business to Judea, might help to take off their fear of going with Him: He did not go on an errand to the temple, but on a private visit, which would not so much expose Him and them; and besides, it was to do a kindness to a family they were all obliged to.

They mistake his meaning; *Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well*. This speaks, [1.] *Some concern for Lazarus*; they hoped he would recover. Now that they heard he slept, they concluded the fever was gone, and the worst was past. Sleep is often nature's physic, and reviving to its weak and weary powers. This is true of the sleep of death; if a good Christian so sleep, he shall do well, better than he did here.

[2.] Yet it speaks a *greater concern* for themselves; for hereby they insinuate that it was now needless for Him to go to him. 'If he sleep, he will be quickly well, and we may stay where we are.' Thus we are willing to hope that that good work we are called to do, will do itself, or be done by some other hand, if there be peril in doing it.

Jesus spoke of his death. How dull of understanding Christ's disciples as yet were. Let us not therefore condemn all as heretics, who mistake the sense of some of Christ's sayings. It is not good to aggravate our brethren's mistakes; yet this was a *gross* one, for they should have remembered how frequently death is called a sleep in the Old Testament. They should have understood Christ when He spoke scripture-language. Besides, it would seem odd for their Master to undertake a journey of two or three days, only to awake a friend out of a natural sleep. What Christ undertakes to do, we may be sure, is something *worthy of Himself*. How carefully the evangelist corrects this error; *Jesus spoke of his death*. Those that speak in an unknown tongue, or use similitudes, should learn hence to *explain themselves*, and pray that they may interpret, to prevent mistakes.

natural actions. He has not a good principle within; his eye is evil. Thus Christ not only justifies his purpose of going into Judea, but encourages his disciples to go with Him. *

After He had prepared his disciples for this, he goes into an enemy's country. He gives them plain intelligence of the death of Lazarus, though He had received no advice of it. See here how Christ calls a believer his *friend*; *our friend Lazarus*. Note, 1. There is a covenant of friendship between Christ and believers, and a friendly affection, which our Lord Jesus will not be ashamed of. *His secret is with the righteous*. 2. Those whom Christ is pleased to own as his friends, all his disciples should take for theirs. Christ speaks of Lazarus as their common friend; *Our friend*. 3. Death itself does not break the bond of friendship between Christ and a believer. Lazarus is dead, and yet is still *our friend*. He calls the death of a believer a *sleep*; *he sleepeth*. It is good to call death by such names as will help to make it familiar and less formidable. The death of Lazarus was in a peculiar sense a *sleep*, as that of Jairus' daughter, because he was to be raised again *speedily*; and since we are sure to rise again at last, why should that make any difference? And why should not the hope of that resurrection make it as easy to us to put off the body and die, as to put off our clothes and sleep? A good Christian, when he dies, does not sleep; he rests from the labors of the day past, and is refreshing himself for the next morning. Sleep is only the parenthesis, but death is the period, of our cares and toils. The soul does not sleep, but becomes more active; but the body sleeps not disturbed nor disturbed. The grave to the wicked is a prison, its grave-clothes the shackles of a criminal reserved for execution; but to the godly it is a bed, and all its bands as the downy fetters of an easy sleep. Though the body corrupt, it will rise in the morning as if it had never seen corruption; it is but putting off our clothes to be mended for the marriage-day. See Isa. 57: 2. 1 Thess. 4: 14. The Greeks called their burying-places, *dormitories*.

What He had before said *darkly*. He now says *plainly*; *Lazarus is dead*. Christ takes cognizance of the death of his saints, for is *precious* in his sight, (Ps. 116: 15.) and He is not pleased if we do not consider it, and love it to heart. What a compassionate Teacher, Christ is; He condescends to those that are out of the way, and by his subsequent sayings and doings explains the difficulties of what went before.

He gives them the reason He had delayed so long to go and see him; *I am glad for your sakes that I was not there*. If He had been there, He would have prevented his death, which would have been much for the comfort of Lazarus' friends; but then his disciples would have seen no further proof of his power than what they had often seen, and their faith had received no improvement; but now that He went and raised Him from the dead, as there were many brought to believe on Him, so there was much done to perfect what was lacking in their own faith, which Christ aimed at; *to the intent that ye may believe*.

He resolves now to go to Bethany, with his disciples; *Let us go unto him*. Not, 'Let us go to his sisters, to comfort them,' (which is the utmost we can do,) but, 'Let us go to him; for Christ can show wonders to the dead.' Death which will separate us from all other friends, cannot separate us from the love of Christ, not put us out of his reach; as He will maintain his covenant with the dust, so He can make visits to the dust. Perhaps those who said, 'If he sleep, there is no need to go, we were ready to say, if he be dead, it is to no purpose to go.'

Thomas excited his fellow-disciples to attend; their Master's motions, *Thomas, which is called Didymus*. Thomas in Hebrew, and Didymus in Greek, signify a *twain*, Gen. 25: 24. The word for twins is *Thomin*; probably, Thomas was a *twain*; he said to his fellow-disciples, very courageously, *Let us also go, that we may die with him*. With him; that is,

[1.] With Lazarus; so some take it. Lazarus was a dear friend both to Christ and his disciples, and perhaps Thomas had a particular intimacy with him. Now if he be dead, saith he, let us even go and die with him. For, 1st. 'If we survive, we know not how to live without him.' Probably, Lazarus had sheltered them, and provided for them; and now that he was gone, they had no man like minded. Thus we are sometimes ready to think our lives bound up in some that were dear to us; but God will teach us to live, and to live comfortably, upon Himself, when those are gone; whom we thought we could not have lived without. But that is not all. 2dly. 'If we die, we hope to be happy with him.' Such a firm belief he has of a happiness on the other side death, and such good hope through grace of their own and Lazarus' interest in it. It is better to die, and go with Christian friends to that world which is enriched by their removal, than stay behind in a world that is impoverished by their departure. The more of our friends are translated hence, the fewer cords we have to bind us to this earth, and the more to draw our hearts heaven-ward. How pleasantly does the good man speak of dying, as if it were but going to bed. Or,

[2.] 'Let us go and die with our Master, who is now exposing Himself to death by venturing into Judea;' and so I rather think it is meant. 'If He will go into danger, let us also go and take our lot with Him, according to the command we received, Follow Me.' Thomas knew so much of the malice of the Jews, and the counsels of God concerning Him, which He had often told them of, that it was no foreign supposition that He was now going to die. The readiness of Thomas to die with Christ, flowed from strong affections to Him, though his faith was

(9, 10.) *Walk*. 'A metaphor borrowed from travelling, as Christ was about to proceed to Judea. Walking and journeying is the traveller's work, so that "walk" is in the application equivalent to "work".'

Verses 11-13.

'The use of the expression *sleeping*, may be considered as an instance of the friend's tenderness, as being least shocking when speaking of so dear a friend, and also of his modesty. He does not immedi-

ately say, "He is dead, and I go by my almighty power to burst the bonds of the sepulchre and command him back to life again;" but, avoiding all ostentation. He chooses the simplest and humblest expression that can be thought of.'

Doddridge, after BLACKWALL.
(12.) *If he sleep he shall do well*. 'The rabbins reckon sleep among the "six good symptoms" in sickness. On its being a prognostic of recovery, many classical citations are adduced by West-

BLOOMFIELD.

10 Then said ^b Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, 'Let us also go, that we may die with him.'

[Practical Observations.]

17 ¶ Then when Jesus came, he found that he had ^alain in the grave ^afour days already.

18 Now Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about ^afifteen furlongs off.

19 And many of the Jews: came to Martha and Mary, ^ato comfort them concerning their brother.

20 Then Martha, 'as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him; but Mary sat still in the house.'

weak, as appeared afterward, ch. 14: 5. 20: 25. *Where thou diest I will die*, Ruth 1: 17. See his desire to help his fellow-disciples into the same frame; 'Let us go, and die with Him; if they stone Him, let them stone us; who would desire to survive such a Master?' Thus, in difficult times, Christians should animate one another. We may each of us say, *Let us die with Him*. Note, The consideration of the dying of the Lord Jesus should make us willing to die whenever God calls us.

V. 17-32. In this journey, the other evangelists record the healing of a blind man at Jericho, and the conversion of Zaccheus. We must not reckon ourselves out of the way, while in the way of doing good; nor be so intent on one good office as to neglect another.

Bethany is said to be about *fifteen furlongs* (two miles) from Jerusalem. Notice is taken of this, that this miracle was in effect wrought in Jerusalem, and so put to her score. Christ's miracles in Galilee were more numerous, but those in or near Jerusalem were more illustrious; there He healed one that had been diseased *thirty-eight years*, another that had been blind *from his birth*, and raised one that had been dead *four days*.

When He was last with his friends there, it is probable He left them well, in health and joy; but when we part from our friends, (though Christ knows,) we know not what changes may affect us before we meet again.

He found his friend Lazarus in the grave. When He came near the town, probably by the burying-place belonging to the town, He was told by some He met, that Lazarus had been *four days buried*. Some think Lazarus died the same day the messenger came to Jesus, and so reckon two days for his abode in the same place, and two days for his journey. I rather think he died at the very instant Jesus said, 'Our friend sleepeth; he is now newly fallen asleep;'

and that the time between his death and burial, (among the Jews but short,) with the four days of his lying in the grave, was taken up in this journey; for Christ travelled publicly, as appears by his passing through Jericho; and his abode at Zaccheus' house took up some time. Promised salvations, though sure, often come slowly.

He found his friends in grief. Martha and Mary were almost swallowed up with sorrow for the death of their brother, which is intimated where it is said, *many came to comfort them*. Note, (1.) Where death is, there are mourners, especially when those that were agreeable and amiable to their relations, and serviceable to their generation, are taken away. The house where death is, is called the *house of mourning*, Eccl. 7: 2. When man goes to his long home, the mourners go about the streets, (Eccl. 12: 5.) or rather sit alone, and keep silence. Here was Martha's house, a house where the fear of God was, and on which his blessing rested; yet a house of mourning. Grace will keep sorrow from the heart, (ch. 14: 1.) not from the house. (2.) Where there are mourners, there ought to be comforters. It is our duty to mourn with persons in sorrow, and comfort them; our mourning with them will be some comfort to them. When under present grief, we are apt to forget those things which would comfort us, and therefore have need of remembrancers. It is a mercy to have such when in sorrow, and our duty to be such to persons in sorrow. The Jewish doctors laid great stress on this, obliging their disciples to make conscience of comforting the mourners after the burial of the dead. They comforted them concerning their brother, by speaking to them of him, not only of the good name he left behind, but of his happy state.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7-15. When we follow our Redeemer's example of diligence in the work of the Lord, we shall experience similar protection, as far as it is good for us. As long as the appointed but unknown days of our life continue, we may pursue our journey and attend to our duty, without fear of our enemies; but when that time is past, we must fall into the grave, and all our precautions will be unavailing. (Notes, Job 7: 1-6. 14: 13-15.)—While we therefore have opportunity, and the light of the Gospel is afforded us, let us endeavor 'to do good to all men;' and let us expect death as the end of our labors, and as the entrance of our souls into rest; nay, the quiet repose of our

When godly relations and friends are taken from us, whatever occasion we have to be afflicted concerning ourselves, who are left behind, and miss them, we have reason to be comforted concerning them who are gone, before us, to a happiness where they do not miss us.

This visit of the Jews to Martha and Mary is an evidence that they were persons of distinction; as also that the, behaved obligingly to all; so that though they were followers of Christ, yet those who had no respect for Him, were civil to them. There was also a providence in it, that so many Jews, Jewish ladies, it is probable, should come together, to comfort the mourners, that they might be unexceptionable witnesses of the miracle. Christ did not usually send for witnesses to his miracles, and yet if none were by but relations, it would have been excepted against; therefore God so ordered it, that those should come together accidentally, to bear their testimony to it, that infidelity might stop her mouth.

When Christ defers his visits for a time, they are thereby the more acceptable, much the more welcome. His departures endear his returns, and his absence teaches us how to value his presence.

Martha went and met Him, v. 20.

It would seem that Martha was earnestly expecting Christ's arrival. Either she had sent out messengers, to bring her tidings of his first approach, or she had often asked, *Sao ye Him whom my soul loveth?* So that the first who discovered Him, ran to her with the news. However it was, she heard of his coming before He was come. She had waited long, and could bear no tidings of Him; but He came at last.

Martha, when the good news was brought that Jesus was coming, threw all aside, and went and met Him, in token of a most affectionate welcome. She waived all ceremony with the Jews who came to visit her, and hastened to meet Jesus. Note, When God, by his grace or providence, is coming towards us in ways of mercy and comfort, we should go forth by faith, hope and prayer, to meet Him. Mary sat still in the house. Some think she did not hear the tidings, being in her withdrawing-room, receiving visits of condolence, while Martha, who was busied in the household affairs, had early notice of it.—Holy prudence conducts us to Christ while brethren and parents know not what we are doing. Others think that she did hear that Christ was come, but was so overwhelmed that she chose rather to sit poring upon her affliction, and saying, *I do well to mourn*. (Compare this story with Luke 10: 39, 39, &c.) We may observe the different tempers of these two sisters, and the temptations and advantages of each. Martha's natural temper was active and busy, she loved to be here and there, and at the end of every thing; and this had been a snare to her, when by it she was not only careful and cumbered about many things, but hindered from the exercises of devotion; but now, in a day of affliction, this active temper did her a kindness,

bodies also, till Jesus shall awake them from sleep to participate our eternal recompense.—Let us remember, that even disciples are dull of apprehension; and that, while He orders every thing in suberviency to the increase of faith, He deems their transient distress a small matter, compared with the good of their souls, and the common benefit of his people. We should therefore be ready to suffer and die with Him, if called to it: but many have lively affections, and make confident resolutions, whose views are dark and erroneous, and who, like Thomas, are in no wise prepared for the day of trial. (Note, 20: 24-29, v. 24, 25.)

SCOTT.

Verse 16.

That we may die with him.] 'It was not unusual among many ancient nations, for two or more friends, called, by the Egyptians, "death associates," to bind themselves by a solemn vow never to forsake each other, as a common leader; to share with each other in good and ill fortune, and even death.'

Rosenn, in Burdett.

The custom, it is believed, still exists in the Turkish empire. Ep.

Verse 19.

'Bethany being so nigh to Jerusalem, many of the relatives and friends of the family came, according to the Jewish custom, to mourn with the afflicted sisters. Mourning among the Jews lasted about thirty days; the first three days were termed days of weeping, then followed

seven of lamentation. During the three days, the mourner did no servile work. During the seven days, he did no servile work except in private, lay with his bed on the floor, did not put on his sandals, did not wash nor anoint himself, had his head covered, and neither read in the law, the Mishnah, nor the Talmud. All the thirty days he continued unshaven, wore no white or new clothes, and did not seek up the rents which he had made in his garments. See Lightfoot.'

Dr. A. CLARK

Verse 20.

Met Him.] 'One of the greatest marks of respect to a great Comp. Gen. 18, 2, 3. 19: 1, 24, 29. 29: 13.'

BL. JONP. M.D.

21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

22 But I know, ^b that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.

23 Jesus saith unto her, ^c Thy brother shall rise again.

24 Martha saith unto him, ^d I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

25 Jesus said unto her, ^e I am the Resurrection and ^f the Life: ^g he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live;

kept the grief from her heart, and made her forward to meet Christ, and so she received comfort from Him the sooner. On the other hand, Mary's natural temper was contemplative and reserved; this had been formerly an advantage to her, when it set her at Christ's feet, to hear his word, and enabled her there to attend upon Him, without those distractions which Martha was cumbered with: but now in the day of affliction, that same temper proved a snare to her, and made her less able to grapple with grief, and disposed her to melancholy; but Mary *saith still in the house.* See here how much it will be our wisdom carefully to watch against the temptations, and improve the advantages, of our natural temper.

Martha complains of Christ's long absence and delay. She said it, not only with grief for the death of her brother, but some resentment for the seeming unaddress of the Master; *Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.* Here is, 1. Some evidence of faith. She believed Christ's power; she believed his pity, that, if He had but seen Lazarus in his extreme illness, and his relations in tears about him, He would have prevented so sad a breach, for his compassions fail not. But, 2. Here are sad instances of unbelief. Her faith was true, but weak as a bruised reed, for she limits the power of Christ, in saying, *If Thou hadst been here*; whereas she ought to have known that Christ could cure at a distance, and that his gracious operations were not limited to his bodily presence. She reflects likewise upon the wisdom and kindness of Christ, that He did not hasten to them when they sent for Him, as if He had not *timed his business* well, and now might as well not have come at all, as to come too late; and as for any help now, she can scarcely entertain the thought of it.

Yet she corrects and comforts herself with the thoughts of the interest Christ had in heaven; for *I know that even now*, desperate as the case is, *whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.* How willing her hope was.

Though she has not courage to ask of Jesus that He would raise him to life again, there having been no precedent as yet of any one raised to life that had been so long dead, yet, like a modest petitioner, she humbly recommends the case to the wise and compassionate consideration of Jesus. When we know not what in particular to ask or expect, let us refer ourselves to God, to do as seemeth Him good. *I leave it to thy judgment, not to my presumption.* When we know not what to pray for, it is our comfort that the great Intercessor knows what to ask for us, and is always heard. How weak her faith was. She should have said, 'Lord, Thou canst do whatsoever Thou wilt;' but she only says, 'Thou canst obtain whatever Thou prayest for;' she had forgotten that the Son has *life in Himself*, that He wrought miracles by his own power. Yet both these considerations must be taken for the encouragement of our faith and hope; the dominion Christ has on earth, and his interest and intercession in heaven. He has in the one hand the golden sceptre, and in the other the golden censer; his power always predominant, his intercession always prevalent.

Jesus saith unto her, *Thy brother shall live again.* We are apt to add to our trouble, by fancying what might have been. 'If such a method had been taken, such a physician employed, my friend had not died;' which is more than we know: but what good does this do, when God's will is done, and our business is to submit to Him? Christ directs Martha, and us in her, to look forward, and to think what *shall be*, for that is a certainty, and yields sure comfort; *Thy brother shall rise again.*

1st. This was true of Lazarus in a sense peculiar to him, he was presently to be raised; but Christ speaks of it in general as a thing to be done, not which He Himself would do, so humbly did our Lord Jesus speak of what He did. He also expresses it *ambiguously*, leaving her uncertain at first, whether He would raise him presently, or not till the last day, to try her faith and patience.

2dly. It is applicable to all the saints, and their resurrection. Note, It is matter of comfort to us, when we have buried our godly friends and relations, to think that they shall *rise again*. As the soul at death is *not lost*, but *gone before*, so the body is *not lost*, but *laid up*. Hear Christ saying, 'Thy parent, thy child, thy yoke-fellow, shall rise again; *these dry bones shall live.*' Observe

The faith Martha mixed with this word, and the unbelief mixed with this faith.

She accounted it a *faithful saying*, that *he shall rise again at the last day*. Though the doctrine of the resurrection was to have its full proof from Christ's resurrection, yet, as it was already revealed, she firmly believed it, Acts 24: 15. 1. There shall be a *last day*, with which all the days of time must be finished. 2. There shall be a *general resurrection* at that day; the ear: and sea shall give up their dead. 3. There shall be a *particular resur-*

rection of each one. 'I know that *I shall rise* again, and this and the other relation that was dear to me.' As bone shall return to his bone in that day, so friend to his friend.

Yet she seems to think this saying not so worthy of all acceptance as really it was; 'I know he shall rise again at the last day; but what are we the better for that now?' As if the comforts of the resurrection to eternal life were not worth speaking of, or yielded no satisfaction sufficient to balance her affliction. See our weakness and folly, that we suffer present things to make a deeper impression upon us, both of grief and joy, than things which are the objects of faith. *I know that he shall rise again at the last day; and is not that enough?* By discontent under present crosses, we greatly undervalue our future hopes. See

The further instruction and encouragement Christ gave her; for He will not quench the smoking flax, nor break the bruised reed. *I am the Resurrection and the Life.* Two things Christ inspires her with the belief of, in reference to the present distress; our faith should fasten upon them in the like cases.

1st. *The power of Christ; I am the Resurrection, and the Life*, the Fountain of life, the Author of the resurrection. Martha believed that, at his prayer, God would give any thing, but He would have her know, that by his word He could *work* any thing. Martha believed a resurrection at the last day, Christ tells her that He had that power in his own hand, that the dead were to *hear his voice*, (ch. 5: 25.) whence it was easy to infer, He that could raise a world of men that had been dead many ages, could doubtless raise one that had been dead *four days*. Note, It is an unspeakable comfort to Christians, that Christ is the Resurrection and the Life, and will be so to them. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come, and Christ is both; the author and principle of both, and ground of our hope of both.

2dly. The promises of the new covenant give us further ground of hope that *we shall live*. Observe,

These promises are made to them that believe in Christ, to them that *consent to, and confide in Him*, as the only Mediator between God and man; that receive the record God has given of his Son, and answer all the intentions of it. The condition of the latter promise is thus expressed, *Whosoever liveth, and believeth in Me; which may be understood, Whosoever lives in this world, whether Jew or Gentile, wherever he lives.* Yet it limits the time; whoever, during life, while in this state of probation, *believes in Me*, shall be happy in Me, but after death it will be too late. Whoever *lives and believes*, lives by faith, (Gal. 2: 20.) has a faith that influences his conversation. Or, He that *lives and believes*, is he that by faith is born again, to whom to *live is Christ*—that makes Christ the life of his soul.

The promises are, (v. 25.) *Though he die, yet shall he live*, nay, (v. 26.) *he shall never die*. Man consists of body and soul, and provision is made for the happiness of both.

(1.) For the body, here is the promise of a *blessed resurrection*. Though the body be dead because of sin, (there is no remedy but it will die,) yet it *shall live again, though he were dead*. All the difficulties that attend the state of the dead, are here made nothing of. Though the sentence of death was just, though its effects be dismal, its hands strong, though he be dead and buried, though the scattered dust be so mixed with common dust, that no art of man can distinguish, much less separate them, yet we are sure that the body shall be raised a glorious body.

(2.) For the soul, here is the promise of a *blessed immortality*. He that *liveth and believeth*, who, being united to Christ by faith, lives spiritually, shall *never die*. That spiritual life shall never be extinguished, but perfected in

26 And ^o whosoever loveth and believeth in me shall never die. ^a Believest thou this?

27 She saith unto him, 'Yea, Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, ^a which should come into the world.

[Practical Observations.]

28 And when she had so said, she went her way, ^a and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, ^a The Master is ^a come, and calleth for thee.

29 As soon ^a as she had heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him.

30 Now ^a Jesus was not yet come into the town, but was in that place where Martha met him.

31 The ^a Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her, saying, ^b She goeth unto the grave to weep there.

^p 3:15-18, 4:14, 5:24, 6:50, 54-58.

^r 5:32, 33, 10:28. Rom. 8:13. 1 John

5:10-12, 12.

^q 9:35, [4:10, Matt. 9:28, 26:53.

Mark 9:23.

^r 1:49, 4:32, 6:69, 9:36-38, 20:28

-31, Matt. 18:18, Acts 8:37, 1

John 5:1.

^q 6:14, Mal. 3:1, Matt. 11:3, Luke

7:19, 20, 1 Tim. 1:15, 16, 1 John 5:20.

^q 20, [4:14, 5, Zech. 3:10, Luke 10:

38-42, 1 Thes. 4:17, 18, 5:11.

Heb. 12:12.

^p 13:13, 20:16.

^q 10:3, Cant. 2:8-14, Mark 10:49.

^y Pa. 27:8, 119:59, 60, Prov. 15:23.

^y 27, 1 Cor. 3:11-4.

^z 20.

^z 19.

^b Gen. 37:35, 2 Sam. 12:16-19, 1

Cer. 2:15.

had for so many ages waited for ^a future, she embraced ^a present.

She inferred hence, that if she admits that Jesus is the Christ, there is no difficulty in believing that He is the Resurrection and the Life; for, (1.) He is the Fountain of *light and truth*, and we may take all his sayings for faithful and divine, upon his own word. If He be the Christ, He is that Prophet whom we are to hear in *all things*. (2.) He is the Fountain of *life and blessedness*, and we may therefore depend upon his ability as well as upon

eternal life. As the soul, being in its nature *spiritual*, is therefore *immortal*; so, if by faith it live a *spiritual* life, its fecundity shall be immortal. It shall never die, shall never be otherwise than easy and happy, and there is not any intermission, or interruption of its life, as of the life of the body. The mortality of the body shall at length be *scallop'd up of life*; but the life of the soul shall be immediately at death swallowed up of immortality. *He shall not die forever*. The body shall not be forever in the grave; it dies (like the two witnesses) but for a time, times, and the dividing of time; and when time shall be no more, a *spirit of life from God shall enter into it*. But that is not all; the soul shall not die eternally. *Blessed and holy*, that is, Blessed and happy, is he, that by faith has part in the first resurrection, in Christ, who is that Resurrection; for on such the second death shall have no power; see ch. 6:40.

Christ asks her, '*Believest thou this? Canst thou take my word for it?*' Note, When we have read or heard the Word of Christ concerning the great things of the other world, we should seriously put it to ourselves, '*Do we believe this*, attended with so many difficulties, *this which is suited to my case?* Does my belief of it realize it to me, and give my soul an assurance of it, so that I can say, not only *this I believe*, but *thus I believe it?*' Martha was doing upon her brother's being raised to life in this world; before Christ gave her hopes of that, He directed her thoughts to another life; 'No matter for that, but *believest thou this* that I tell thee concerning the future state?' The crosses and comforts of this present time would not make that impression upon us they do, did we but believe the things of eternity.

We have here Martha's creed, the good confession she witnessed, the same for which Peter was commended, Matt. 16: 17.

The guide of her faith, is the word of Christ; without any alteration, exception, or proviso, she takes it entire as Christ had said it. Faith is an echo to divine revelation; *Yea, Lord. As the word did make it, so I believe and take it*, said queen Elisabeth.

The ground of her faith, is the authority of Christ; she believes this, because He who saith it, is Christ. She has recourse to the foundation for the support of the superstructure. '*I have believed that Thou art Christ, and therefore I believe this.*'

She believed, concerning Jesus, three things; (1.) That He was the Christ. (2.) That He was the Son of God; so the Messiah was called, (Ps. 2: 7.) not by office only, but by nature. (3.) That it was He which should come into the world; that Blessing of blessings the church

his veracity. How shall bodies, turned to dust, live again? How shall souls, clogg'd and clouded as ours are, live forever? We could not believe this, but that we believe Him, that undertakes it, to be the Son of God, who has life in Himself, and for us.

When she had so said, she went her way, easy in mind, and called Mary her sister. Having received instruction and comfort from Christ herself, she called her sister to share with her. Time was, when Martha would have drawn Mary from Christ, to help her in much serving t (Luke 10: 40,) but, to make amends, here she is *industrious to draw her to Christ*. She called her *secretly*, because there were Jews by, who were no friends to Christ. The saints are called into the fellowship of Christ, by an invitation secret and distinguishing; they have meat to eat that the world knows not of, joy that a stranger does not intermeddle with. She called her by order from Christ; He bid her go call her sister. Christ sends the call that is effectual, whoever brings it. The Master is come, and calleth for thee. She calls Christ the Master; a teaching Master; by that title He was commonly known among them. She triumphs in his arrival; He whom we have long wished for, is come; this was the best cordial in the present distress. 'Lazarus, and our comfort in him, is gone; but the Master is come, who is better, and will abundantly make up all our losses. He is come, our Teacher, who will teach us how to get good by our sorrow, (Ps. 94: 12.) who will teach, and so comfort.' She invites her sister to go and meet Him; 'He calls for thee.' Note, When Christ, our Master, comes, He calls for us. He comes in his Word and ordinances, and calls us to them, by them to Himself. He calls for thee in particular, by name, Ps. 27: 8. And if He call thee, He will cure, He will comfort thee.

She arose quickly, and came to Him. She little thought how near He was to her, for He is often nearer to them that mourn in Zion than they are aware of; but when she knew how near He was, in a transport of joy, she runs to meet Him; the least intimation of Christ's approaches, is enough to a lively faith, which stands ready to answer the first call. When Christ was come, forgetting ceremony, and the common usage in cases of mourning, she runs through the town, to meet Christ. Let not punctilios of decency and honor deprive us at any time of opportunities of conversing with Christ. She did not consult the Jews, that were with her, comforting her; she left them all, to come to Him.

The Master was not yet come to Bethany, but was at the place where Martha met Him. See here, 1st. Christ's love to his work; He staid near the place where the grave was, that He might be ready to go to it; and would not refresh Himself till He had done the work He came to do; nor would He go into the town, lest it should look like a design to levy a crowd to be spectators of the miracle. 2dly. Mary still loved much. Though Christ had seem'd

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17-27. Natural humanity may induce men to sympathize with the afflicted; and divine grace will always lead us to do so: yet our compassions and our endeavors are feeble, and generally unavailing; (Note, 14: 27, 28.) but, however the Lord may prove his people, by delaying to appear for their relief, He is their only effectual Comforter, and they will leave friends, to pour out their complaints before Him.—How seldom have we adequate views of his power and love, and suitable expectations of help from Him! How constantly is our faith counteracted by unbelief!—We are assured, that our deceased relatives shall 'rise again at the resurrection at the last day,' and that all believers shall then appear with Jesus in glory; yet this assurance, comfortable as it is, cannot wholly allay our anguish for the loss of those, who were a daily blessing to us. But we should by no means 'sorrow without hope, for those who sleep in Him;' neither should we look forward

to death with dismay; for our Friend, who gave Himself for us, is 'the Resurrection and the Life;' and death is a conquered enemy, or rather converted into a friend to every believer. (Notes, 1 Cor. 3: 18-23, v. 22, 15: 55-58. Phil. 1: 21-26, 1 Thes. 4: 13-18. P. O. 9-18.) Our pious friends, whose bodies now sleep in the grave, live in heaven; and they, who are alive and remain, shall never die; for Jesus 'hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel.' (Notes, 2 Tim. 1: 10. Heb. 2: 14, 15.)—Do we indeed believe this? And are we debilitated by the troubles of life, and the prospect of the grave? Lord, pardon our unbelief, 'increase our faith,' help us assuredly to hope in Thee as 'the Christ, the Son of God,' who 'came into the world to save sinners,' by dying on the cross; and 'to those that wait for Thee Thou wilt appear the second time without sin unto salvation.' (Note, Heb. 9: 27, 28.)

SCOTT.

Verse 31.

'It appears that it was the custom of the nearest relatives of the deceased to go at times, during the three days of weeping, to turn near the graves of the deceased. They supposed that the spirit hovered about the place where the body was laid, for three days, to see whether it might be permitted again to enter; but when it saw the face

change, it knew that all hope was now past. It was on this ground that the seven days of lamentation succeeded the three days of weeping, because all hope was now taken away. They had traditions, that in the course of three days, persons who had died were 'raise to life again.'

Dr. A. C. R. B.

32 Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.

33 When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and * was troubled,

34 And said, * Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.

^e Luke 6:8. 8:41. 17:18. Rev. 5:9, 14. 22:8.
^d 21:37.
^c Rom. 12:15.
^f 38. 12:27. Mark 3:5. 9:19. 14:33
^g 35. Heb. 4:15. 5:7, 8.
^h 37. *He troubled Himself.* Gen. 48: 30, 31. 45:1-5.
ⁱ 1:33. 20:2. Matt. 28:8. Mark 15: 47. 16:8.

in their sorrows, for thereby

Mary came attended with her train of comforters, *fell down at his feet*, overwhelmed with sorrow, and said with many tears, (as appears, v. 33.) *Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*, as Martha said before, for they had often said it to one another.

Her posture is humble and submissive; *She fell down at his feet*, which was more than Martha did, who had a greater command of her passions. *She fell down* as a sinking mourner, but *at his feet* as a humble petitioner. This Mary had sitted at Christ's feet to hear his word, (Luke 10: 39.) and now we find her there on another errand. Note, Those that in a day of peace set themselves at Christ's feet, to receive instructions, may with comfort and confidence in a day of trouble cast themselves at his feet, to find favor with Him. *She fell at his feet*, as submitting to his will, and referring herself to his good will in what was now to be done. When in affliction, we must cast ourselves at Christ's feet in penitent sorrow, and self-abasement for sin, and resignation of ourselves to the divine conduct. Mary's casting herself at Christ's feet, was in token of the veneration she had for Him. Thus they were wont to honor kings and princes; but our Lord not appearing in secular glory, they who by this posture honored Him, certainly looked upon Him as more than man, and intended hereby to give Him divine honor. Mary hereby made profession of the Christian faith, as truly as Martha, and in effect said, *I believe that Thou art the Christ; bowing the knee to Christ, and confessing Him with the tongue*, are equivalent, Rom. 14: 11. Phil. 2: 10, 11. This she did in presence of the Jews, (who, though friends to her and her family, yet were bitter enemies to Christ;) neither ashamed to own the veneration she had for Christ, nor afraid of disobliging her neighbors by it. Let their resent it as they pleased; if this be to be vile, she will be yet more vile; see Jan. 8: 1. We serve a Master whom we have no reason to be ashamed of, and whose acceptance of our services balances the reproach of men.

Her address is very pathetic; *Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died*. Christ's delay was designed for the best, and proved so; yet both the sisters in effect charge Him with the death of their brother. He might have told them He had something else to do than to be at their beck; He must come when his business would permit Him: but not a word of this; He considered the circumstances of their affliction, and that losers think they have leave to speak; and therefore overlooked the rudeness, and gave us an example of mildness in such cases. Mary added no more, as Martha did; but it appears by what follows, that what she fell short in words, she made up in tears; she said less than Martha, but wept more; and tears of devout affection have a loud, prevailing voice, in the ears of Christ: no rhetoric like that.

V. 33-34. Christ had a tender sympathy with his afflicted friends.

Jesus said, *Mary weeping* for the loss of a brother, and the Jews that came with her weeping for the loss of a friend; when He saw this, *He groaned in spirit, and was troubled*.

The griefs of the sons of men are represented in the tears of Mary and her friends. What an emblem of this vale of tears! *Nature teaches us to weep* over relations, removed by death; Providence thereby calls to weeping and mourning. *Religion teaches us to weep with them that weep*, as those Jews with Mary, considering that we ourselves also are in the body. They that truly love their friends, will share with them in their joys and griefs; for what is friendship, but a communication of affections? Job. 16: 5.

In all their afflictions Christ is afflicted, Isa. 63: 9. Judg. 10: 16. When He saw them all in tears, *He groaned in the spirit*. He suffered Himself to be troubled, (as we are when disturbed by great affliction,) yet without sin. This

unkind in his delays, she can take nothing amiss from Him. Let us go thus to Christ without the camp, Heb. 13: 13.

The Jews that were with Mary, said, *She goes to the grave, to weep there*. Martha bore up better under this affliction than Mary, who was a woman of a tender and sorrowful spirit. Those that are so, have need to watch against melancholy, and ought to be pitied and helped. Those comforters found that their formalities did her no service, but that she hardened herself in sorrow; and therefore concluded, that she went out, to go to the grave, and weep there. The folly and fault of mourners often is, they contrive how to aggravate their grief. We are apt in such cases to take a strange pleasure in our pain, and say, *We do well to be passionate in our grief, even unto death*; we are apt to fasten upon those things that aggravate the affliction; what good does it do us, when it is our duty to reconcile ourselves to the will of God? Why should mourners go to the grave, to weep there, when they sorrow not as those that have no hope? Affliction of itself is grievous; why make it more so? The wisdom and duty of comforters, is, to prevent as much as may be, in those who grieve inordinately, the revival of the sorrow, and to divert it. Those Jews that followed Mary, were thereby led to Christ, and became witnesses of one of his most glorious miracles. It is good cleaving to Christ's friends we may come to know Him better.

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was an expression, either, 1st. Of his displeasure at the inordinate grief of those about Him, as Mark 5: 39. *'Why make ye this ado, and weep? Does this become those that believe a God, a heaven, and another world?'* Or, 2dly. Of his deep sense of the calamitous state of human life, and the power of death; being now to make a vigorous attack upon death and the grave, He thus stirred up Himself to the encounter, put on the garments of vengeance, and his fury it upheld Him; and that He might the more resolutely redress our grievances, and cure our griefs, He was pleased to make Himself sensible of the weight of them. Or, 3dly. It was an expression of his sympathy with his friends in sorrow. Here were the sounding of the bowels, and the mercies, which the afflicted church so earnestly solicits, Isa. 63: 15. Christ not only seemed concerned, but groaned in the spirit; He was inwardly and sincerely affected. David's pretended friends counterfeited sympathy, to disguise their enmity; (Ps. 41: 6.) but we must learn of Christ o have our love and sympathy without dissimulation. Christ's was a deep and hearty sigh. He was troubled. He troubled Himself; so the phrase is. He had all the passions and affections of human nature, for in all things He must be like to his brethren, but He had a perfect command of them, so that they were never up, but when and as they were called; He was never troubled, but when He troubled Himself; He often composed Himself to trouble, but was never discomposed; He was voluntary both in his passion and in his compassion.

His concern for them appeared by his inquiry after the remains of his deceased friend; (v. 34.) *Where have ye laid him?* He knew where he was laid, and yet asks, because, (1.) He would thus express Himself as a man, even when He was going to exert the power of a God. Being found in fashion as a man, He accommodates Himself to the manner of the sons of men; He is not ignorant, but makes as if He were, saith Austin. He inquired where the grave was, lest, if He had gone to it of his own knowledge, the Jews should take occasion to suspect a collusion between Him and Lazarus, and a trick in the case. He would thus divert the grief of his friends, by raising their expectations of something great; as if He had said, 'I did not come hither with an address of condolence; I have other work to do; let us adjourn to the grave.' Note, A serious address to our work is the best remedy against inordinate grief. He would hereby intimate to us the special care He takes of the bodies of the saints; He takes notice where they are laid; there is not only a covenant with the dust, but a guard upon it.

Those about Him did not tell Him where the body was buried, but led Him directly to the grave, that his eye might yet more affect his heart. As He was going to the grave, as if following the corpse, *Jesus wept*, v. 35. A very short verse, but it affords many useful instructions. (1.) That Christ was really and truly Man, and partook not only of flesh and blood, but a human soul susceptible of joy, grief, and other affections. Christ gave the proof of his humanity, in both senses of the word; that, as a man, He could weep, and, as a merciful man, He would weep, before He gave this proof of his divinity. (2.) He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, Isa. 53: 2. We never read that He laughed, but more than once we read He was in tears. Thus He shows not only that a mournful state will consist with the love of God, but they who sow to the Spirit, must sow in tears. (3.) Tears of compassion well become Christians, and make them resemble Christ. It is a relief to those who are in sorrow, to have their friends sympathize with them, especially such a friend as the Lord Jesus.

Some made a kind and candid interpretation of Christ's weeping. Then said the Jews, *Behold how He loved him!* They seem to wonder

Verse 33.

Groaned in spirit. 'Euthymius translates, *repressed his emotion*. when He struggled with his emotion, a certain tremor pervaded his frame, as is frequently the case with those who put a constraint

on their feelings. Thus also Markland, who understands it to mean, *repressed the rising human passion of grief, by the superior principle in Him.* And so v. 33. "again chiding Himself." Bloomfield.

35 Jesus wept.

36 Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

37 And some of them said, Could not this man, which opened the eyes of the blind, have raised that even this man should not have died?

38. Gen 43:30. Job 30:25. Ps. 35: 13-15. 119:136. Is. 53:3. Jer. 9:1. 13:17. 14:17. Lam. 1:16. Luke 19: 41. Rom. 9:2,3. Heb. 4:15. 14:21-23. 21:15-17. 2 Cor. 8:9. Eph. 5:2,25. 1 John 3:1. 4:9,10. 15:1-5. 9:5,7. Ps. 78:19,20. Matt. 27:40-42. Mark 15:32. Luke 23:35,39.

that H. should have so strong an affection for one to whom He was not related, and with whom He had not had a long acquaintance, for Christ spent most of his time in Galilee, a great way from Lazarus. It becomes us, according to this example, to show our love to our friends, living and dying. We must sorrow for our brethren that sleep in Jesus, full of love, though not void of hope; as the *devout men* that buried Stephen, Acts 8: 2. Though our tears profit not the dead, they embalm their memory. These tears were indications of his particular love to Lazarus, but He has given proofs no less evident of his love to all the saints, in that He died for them. When He only dropped a tear over Lazarus, they said, *See how He loved him!* Much more reason have we to say so, for whom He hath laid down his life; *See how He loved us. Greater love has no man than this.*

Others made a peevish reflection, as if these tears bespoke his inability to help his friend; (p. 37.) *Could not this Man, that opened the eyes of the blind, have prevented the death of Lazarus?* Here it is insinuated, 1st. That the death of Lazarus being, (as it seemed by his tears,) a great grief to Him, if He could have prevented it He would, and therefore because He *did not*, they incline to think that He *could not*, as when He was dying, they concluded that He could not, because He did not, *come down from the cross*; not considering that divine power is always directed by divine wisdom, not merely according to his will, but according to the counsel of his will. If Christ's friends, whom He loves, die; if his church, whom He loves, be persecuted and afflicted; we must not impute it to any defect, either in his power or love, but conclude that it is because He sees it for the best. 2dly. Therefore it might justly be questioned, whether He did indeed *open the eyes of the blind*. His not working this miracle, they thought enough to invalidate the former; at least, it would seem that He had limited power, and therefore not divine. Christ soon convinced them that He could have prevented his death, but did not, because He would glorify Himself the more.

Christ repeats his groans, upon coming near the grave: (p. 38.) *Agnin groaning in Himself, He comes to the grave*; He groaned, (1.) Being displeased at the unbelief of those, who spake doubtfully of his power, and blamed Him for not preventing the death of Lazarus; He was *grieved for the hardness of their hearts*. He never groaned so much for his own sufferings as for the sins and follies of men, particularly Jerusalem's, Matt. 23: 37. (2.) Being affected with the fresh lamentations, which, it is likely, the sisters made, when they came near the grave; his tender spirits were sensibly touched with their wailings. (3.) Some think that He *groaned in spirit*, because, to gratify the desire of his friends, He was to bring Lazarus again into this troublesome world, from the rest into which he was entered; it would be a kindness to Martha and Mary, but it would be like thrusting one out to a stormy sea, who was newly got into a safe and quiet harbor. If Lazarus had been left alone, Christ would quickly have gone to him into the other world; but, being restored to life, Christ quickly left him behind in this world. (4.) Christ groaned, as affected with the calamitous state of human nature, subject to death from which He was now about to redeem Lazarus. Thus He stirred up Himself to take hold on God in prayer, that He might *offer it up with strong crying*, Heb. 5: 7. Ministers, when sent by the preaching of the Gospel to raise dead souls, should be much affected with the condition of those they preach to, and pray for, and groan in themselves to think of it.

The grave *was a cave, and a stone lay upon it*. The graves of the common people, probably, were digged as ours are; but persons of distinction were, as with us, interred in vaults; so Lazarus was, and such was the sepulchre in which Christ was buried. Probably, this was in imitation of the patriarchs, who buried their dead in the cave of Machpelah, Gen. 23: 19. This care taken of the bodies of their friends, intimates their expectation of their resurrection; they reckoned the solemnity of the funeral ended, when the stone was rolled to the grave, or, as here, *laid upon it*, like that on the mouth of the den into which Daniel was cast, (Dan. 6: 17,) that the *purpose might not be changed*; intimating that the dead are separated from the living, and gone the way whence they shall not return. This stone was probably a *grave-stone*, with an inscription upon it.

Take ye away the stone. He would have this stone removed, that all the standers-by might see the body dead, and that way might be made for its coming out, and it might appear to be a true body, and not a *spectre*. He would have some of the servants remove it, that they might be witnesses that it was truly dead. It is a good step toward the raising of a soul to life when the stone is taken away, when prejudices are removed, and way made for the Word to the heart, that it may do its work there, and say what it has to say.

Martha objected to the opening of the grave; *Lord, by this time he is become noisome, for he has been dead four days, he is four days old in the other world*.

It is easy from hence to observe the nature of human bodies; four days is but a little while, yet what a change will that make with the body of man, if he be but so long without food, much more if so long without life! Dead bodies, (saith Dr. Hammond,) after a revolution of the humors, which is completed in seventy-two hours, naturally putrefy; and the Jews say, that by the fourth day after death, the body is so altered, that one cannot be sure it is such a person. Christ rose the third day, because He was not to see corruption.

It is not so easy to say what was Martha's design in saying this. Some think that she said it in tenderness, such as decency teaches to the dead body; she did not care it should be thus publicly shown. Others think she said lest the smell of the dead body should be offensive to Christ. That which is very noisome, as compared to an open sepulchre, Ps. 5: 9. It would seem by Christ's answer, that it was the language of her unbelief and distrust; 'Lord, it is too late to attempt any kindness to him.' She gives up his case as hopeless, there having been no instances, either of late or formerly, of any raised to life after they had begun to see corruption. When our bones are dried, we are ready to say, *Our hope is lost*. Yet this distrustful word of hers, served to make the miracle the more evident and the more illustrious; by this it appeared that he was truly dead, and not in a trance. Her suggesting that it *could not be done*, puts the more honor on Him that did it.

Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldst see the glory of God? It is probable that He said this to her, when she had said, (p. 27.) *Lord, I believe*, and it is enough that it is recorded here, where it is repeated. Note, (1.) Our Lord has given us all the assurance imaginable, that a *sincere faith* shall at length be crowned with a *blessed vision*; 'If thou believe, thou shalt see God's glorious appearances for thee in this world, and in thee in the other world.' If we will rely on Christ's power and faithfulness, we shall see the glory of God, and be happy in the sight. (2.) We have need to be often reminded of these *sure mercies* with which our Lord hath encouraged us. Christ does not give a direct answer to what Martha had said, nor any particular promise of what He would do, but orders her to keep hold of the general assurances He had already given; *On thy believe*. We are apt to forget what Christ has spoken, and need Him to put us in mind of it by his Spirit.

Then they took away the stone; Martha was satisfied, and had waived her objection. If we will see the glory of God, we must let Christ take his own way, and not prescribe, but subscribe, to Him. *They took away the stone*, and that was all they could do; Christ only could give life. What man can do is but to *prepare the way of the Lord*, to fill the valleys, and level the hills, and, as here, to *take away the stone*.

The spectators, invited by the rolling away of the stone, gathered about the grave, not to commit dust to dust, but to receive dust from the dust; and their expectations being raised, our Lord Jesus addresses Himself to his work.

He applies Himself to his living Father in heaven, ch. 6: 57.

The gesture He used was very significant; He *lifted up his eyes*, an outward expression of the elevation of his mind; and to show them who stood by from whence He derived his power; also to set us an example; this outward sign is hereby recommended to our practice, see ch. 17: 1. That which is especially charged upon us hereby, is, to *lift up our hearts to God*: what is prayer, but the assent of the soul to God, and the directing of its affections heavenward? He *lifted up his eyes*, as looking beyond the grave, and overlooking the difficulties that arose thence, to teach us to do as Abraham, who considered not his own body now dead, and so gained such a degree of faith, as not to stagger at the promise, Rom. 4: 20.

His address to God was with great assurance; *Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me*. He has here taught us, [1.] In prayer to call God Father, and to draw nigh to Him as children to a father, with humble reverence, and yet with holy boldness. [2.] In our prayers to praise Him, and, when we come to beg for further mercy, thankfully to acknowledge former favors. Thanksgivings, which speak God's glory, not our own, like the Pharisee's God, I thank Thee, are decent forms into which to put supplications.

Our Savior's thanksgiving here was intended to express his unshaken assurance of effecting this miracle, in concurrence with his Father;

38 Jesus therefore again 'groaning in himself cometh to the grave.' It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

39 Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, 'Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.'

40 Jesus saith unto her, 'said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?'

[Practical Observations.]

41 Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, 'Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.'

133 Ez. 94, 21-5, Mark 8:12, m Gen. 23:19, 20, 49:23-31, Is. 22: 16, Matt. 27:60, 66, n 17, Gen 3:19, 23:4, Ps. 49:14, Acts 13:36-37, Phil. 3:21, o 23-28, 2 Chr. 20:20, Rom. 4:17-25, p 4, 1:14, 9:3, 12:41, Ps. 63:2, 90: 16, 2 Cor. 3:18, 4:6, q 17:1, Ps. 123:1, Luke 18:13, r Matt. 11:25, Luke 10:21, Phil. 4:5,

with early thanksgivings. As God answers us with mercy, even before we call, and hears while we are yet speaking, so we should answer Him with praise, even before He grants, and give Him thanks while He is yet speaking comfortable words.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 28-40. When Jesus displays his presence to us, as He does not to the world, we should confer with our fellow-Christians on the encouragement given us, that we may be 'helpers of their joy': and when He calls us to his ordinances, or his throne of grace, we must not permit company to detain us. But we should be careful not to limit our faith and hope, by the measures of those with whom we converse; lest we impede instead of furthering, each other's 'growth in grace.'—Our Redeemer was 'a man of sorrows.' In this world of affliction, He conformed Himself to the situation; we do not read that He ever laughed; but 'He groaned,' 'He troubled Himself,' 'He wept.' That sensibility, by which many are elated in self-complacency, and self-preference, while they weep for fictitious distress, but are callous to real woe, He never sanctioned. But He wept with the afflicted; and thus both encouraged mourners to trust in Him, and expect comfort from Him; and set us an example to withdraw from scenes of mirth, that we may sympathize with the distressed, (Note, Ec. 7:2-6.) Yet proud and prejudiced unbelievers call far more for our compassion and deep concern, than the most afflicted servants of our God. (Notes, Ps. 119:136. Jer. 9:1, 2, 13:15-17. Luke 19:41-44. Rom. 9:1-3.)—It is indeed grievous to

He professes his cheerful assurance of a ready answer at any time, (v. 42.) And I knew that Thou hearest Me always. Let none think that this was some favor, such as He ever had before, nor should ever have again; H. had the same divine power with Him in his hole undertaking. 'I gave thanks,' saith He, 'for hearing heard in this, because I am sure to be heard in every thing.' See here, (1.) The interest our Lord had in heaven; the Father heard Him always. He had access to the Father upon every occasion, and success with Him in every errand. And we may be sure that his interest is not the less for his going to heaven; which may encourage us to depend upon his intercession, and put all our petitions into his hand, for we are sure that Him the Father hears always. (2.) The confidence He had of that interest; I knew it. He did not in the least doubt concerning it, but had an entire satisfaction in his own mind of the Father's concurrence with Him in every thing. We cannot have such a particular assurance as He had; but this we know, that whatsoever we ask according to his will, He heareth us, 1 John 5:14, 15.

But why should Christ give this public intimation of his obtaining this miracle by prayer? He adds, It is because of the people which stand by, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me; for prayer may preach.

It was to obviate the objections of his enemies. It was blasphemously suggested by the Pharisees, that He wrought his miracles by compact with the devil; now, to evidence the contrary, He openly made his address to God, using prayers, and not charms, not peeping and muttering, as they did, that used familiar spirits, (Isa. 8:19.) but with elevated eyes and voice professing his dependence on Heaven.

It was to corroborate the faith of those that were well inclined to Him; that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me, not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. Moses, to show that God sent him, made the earth open and swallow men up; (Num. 16:29, 30.) Elijah, to show that God sent him, made fire come from heaven,

hear men pertinaciously dispute against those truths, by the belief of which alone they can be saved from everlasting misery; and to see the world full of sin and woe, and men rejecting the only remedy with obstinate contempt.—The Lord, however, proceeds with his gracious plan, notwithstanding the perverseness of mankind: and those who believe and obey his Word, shall experience the displays and efficacy of his power. But, while we expect help from Him alone, we must not neglect the means which He has instituted, or refuse to follow his directions to the best of our ability. The sinner cannot quicken his own soul; but he ought to use the means of grace: the believer cannot sanctify himself; but he ought to 'lay aside every weight'; we cannot convert our children, relatives, neighbors, or congregations; but we should instruct, and exhort them; and exhibit before them an edifying and conciliating example: seeking a blessing by fervent and persevering prayer. (Note, Ez. 37:1-10. P. 9:1-14.) We may remove the stone, or loose the grave-clothes, though we cannot raise the dead: and if we would have the Lord do for us and ours, what man cannot do; we must diligently attend to all those things, which we can and ought to do. SCOTT.

Verse 33.

It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. 1. 'From this we learn the



form of the Jewish sepulchres, which consisted of subterranean caves hewn out in the rock, or (as in so rocky and cavernous a country as

Judea) shaped into proper form, with a foramen, closed with a huge stone, instead of a door. This stone was called *gelo*, the roller. The corpses were placed in repositories hollowed out on the sides of the cave. Such were the hypogæa of the Greeks, and the cryptæ of the Romans and the middle ages. It appears that the bodies were here deposited naked, just as the embalmers had left them, except that they were wrapt in rolls of linen cloth. At least, there is here no mention made of a sarcophagus or coffin. So even in Italy, hypogæa or cryptæ of this sort are formed under the floors of the churches, into which the corpses are lowered, wrapt only in linen. The particle rendered 'upon,' should be rendered *at, against*; for the Jewish tomb opened on the side; (as is seen in the cut, (given in Nicolai,) representing the grave of Lazarus.) BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 39.

'Martha's mind seems to have been in a painful struggle, tossed with a variety of passions, which prevented a perfect consistency in her behavior.'

DODDRIDGE.

Verse 41, 42.

Father, I thank Thee, &c. 1. I praise Thee, O Father, that Thou hast always heard my secret prayers, and I know that Thou wilt always hear them, since thy will is the same as mine; but now I pray aloud on account of the people which stand by, &c.

Tittman, in Bloomfield.

42 And ¹I knew that thou hearest me always: ²but because of the people which stand by I said it, ³that they may believe: ⁴that thou hast sent me.

43 And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, ¹Lazarus, come forth.

44 And ²he that was dead came forth, ³a bound hand and foot with grave clothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, ⁴Loose him, and let him go.

45 Then many of the Jews which came to Mary, and had seen the things which Jesus did, believed on him.

^c 2. 8:29. 12:27, 28. Matt. 26:53. Heb. 5:7. 7:25
^d 13. 12:29, 30
^e 43. 10. 9:21-24. 10:37, 38. 20:31. Ma. 12:22-24.
^f 3:17. 1:38-40. 7:28-29. 9:16-42. 10:36. 9:8, 21, 25. Rom. 8:3. Gal. 4:4. 1. 1. 4:10, 10:14.
^g 1 Kings 17. 11:22. 2 Kings 4:39-36. Mark 4:41. Luke 7:14-15. Acts 3:6, 12. 9:34-40.
^h 25:26. 5:21, 29. 10:39. Gen. 1:3. 1 Sam. 2:8. Ps. 33:9. Ez. 37:2. 10. Hos. 15:14. Phil. 3:21. Rev. 1:18.
ⁱ 20:5.
^j 39. Mark 5:43. Luke 7:15.
^k 39. 31. 2:23. 10:41, 42. 12:9-11, 17-19, 42.

63.) and now He gives a specimen of it. By his Word, *He saith to souls, Live, Ezek. 15: 6. Arise from the dead, Eph. 5: 14.* The Spirit of life from God entered into dry bones, when Ezekiel prophesied over them, Ezek. 37: 10. They who infer from the commands of the Word, to *turn and live*, that man has a power of his own to convert and regenerate himself, might as well infer from this call to Lazarus, that he had a power to raise himself to life.

[2.] Of the sound of the archangel's trumpet at the last day, with which they that sleep in the dust, shall be summoned before the great tribunal. Christ shall descend with a shout, a call, or command, like this, *Come forth.* Ps. 50: 4. *He shall call both to the heavens for their souls, and to the earth for their bodies, that He may judge his people.*

This loud call here was but short, yet mighty through God to the battering down of the strong-holds of the grave.

He calls him by name, *Lazarus*, as we call those by their names, whom we would awake out of sleep. God said to Moses, as a mark of his favor, *I know thee by name.* The naming of him intimates that the same individual person that died, shall rise again at the last day. He that calls the stars by their names, can distinguish by name his stars that are in the dust, and will lose none of them.

He calls him out of the grave, as if he were already alive, and had nothing to do but to come out of his grave. He does not say unto him, *Live*, for He Himself must give life, but He saith to him, *More*, for when by the grace of Christ we live spiritually, we must stir up ourselves to move; the grave of sin and this world is no place for those whom Christ has quickened, and therefore they must come forth.

The event was according to the intention; *he that was dead came forth, v. 14.* Power went with the word of Christ, to reunite the soul and body of Lazarus. The miracle is described, not by its invisible springs to satisfy curiosity, but by its visible effects to confirm our faith. Do any ask where the soul of Lazarus was during the four days of its separation? We are not told, but have reason to think it was in paradise; but you will say, 'Was it not then an unkindness to it, to return it into the prison of the body?' And if it were, yet, being for the honor of Christ, and the interests of his kingdom, it was no more an injury to him than to Paul to continue in the flesh, when he knew that to depart to Christ, was so much better. If any ask whether Lazarus, after he was raised, could give an account of his soul's removal out of

and devour men; for the law was a dispensation of terror: but Christ proves his mission by raising to life one that was dead. Some give this sense; had Christ declared his doing it by his own power, some of his weak disciples, who as yet understood not his divine nature, would have thought that He took too much upon Him; these babes could not bear that strong meat; therefore He chooses to speak of his power as derived; He speaks self-denyingly of Himself, that He might speak the more plainly to us. In what He said, He consulted not so much his dignity as our salvation.

He now applies Himself to his dead friend in the earth. *He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.* He could have raised Lazarus by a silent power, and the indiscernible operations of the Spirit of life; but He did it by a loud call.

(1.) To be significant of the power put forth; He spake, and it was done. He cried aloud, to signify the greatness of the work, and of the power employed in it, and to excite Himself as it were to this attack upon the gates of death, as soldiers engage with a shout. Speaking to Lazarus, it was proper to cry with a loud voice; for, [1.] The soul of Lazarus, which was to be called back, was at a distance, not hovering about the grave, as the Jews fancied, but removed to the world of spirits; it is natural to speak loud when we call to those at a distance. [2.] The body of Lazarus, which was to be called up, was asleep, and we usually speak loud, when we would awake any out of sleep. He cried with a loud voice, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, (Isa. 45: 19.) *I have not spoken in secret, in a dark place of the earth.*

(2.) To be typical of other works of wonder, and particularly other resurrections, which the power of Christ was to effect. This loud call was a figure,

[1.] Of the gospel-call, by which souls were to be brought out of the grave of sin, which resurrection Christ had formerly spoken of, (ch. 5: 25.) and of his Word as the means of it; (ch. 6: 25.)

[2.] Of the power of his Word, which was to effect, (ch. 5: 25.) and of his Word as the means of it; (ch. 6: 25.)

[3.] Of the power of his Word, which was to effect, (ch. 5: 25.) and of his Word as the means of it; (ch. 6: 25.)

[4.] Of the power of his Word, which was to effect, (ch. 5: 25.) and of his Word as the means of it; (ch. 6: 25.)

[5.] Of the power of his Word, which was to effect, (ch. 5: 25.) and of his Word as the means of it; (ch. 6: 25.)

[6.] Of the power of his Word, which was to effect, (ch. 5: 25.) and of his Word as the means of it; (ch. 6: 25.)

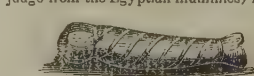
[7.] Of the power of his Word, which was to effect, (ch. 5: 25.) and of his Word as the means of it; (ch. 6: 25.)

Verues 43, 44.

'Such is the voice we shall one day hear, which will raise us from the dust. Such the voice which will pierce the rocks, divide the mountains, and bring up the dead. His word made all, his word will repair all. Let us cast away all diffident fears. He in whom we trust is omnipotent.'

Bp. HALL.
(44.) *Grave-clothes.* Literally, a sort of belts or bandages, brought round the linen shroud, by which the spices used in embalming were kept in their places. *Napkin.* The kerchief, which was brought round the forehead and under the chin, through (if we may

judge from the Egyptian mummies) it did not cover the face. But this is uncertain. Thus by loose, is meant cut or remove the bandages, which would still leave the sinder, or liner sheet in which the corpse was involved, without which



Lazarus would have been left entirely naked; which Jesus could not have intended.

BLOOMFIELD

46 But ⁴some of them went their ways to the Pharisees, and told them what things Jesus had done.

47 ¶ Then ⁵gathered the chief priests and the Pharisees a council, and said, 'What do we? for this man doeth many miracles.'

48 If ⁶we let him thus alone, ⁷all men will believe on him; and the Romans shall come, and take away both our place and nation.

49 And one of them, named ⁸Caiaphas, being the high priest that same year, said unto them, 'Ye know nothing at all,

ed. But blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed. The more we see of Christ, the more cause we shall see to love, and confide in Him. These were some of those Jews that came to Mary to comfort her. When we are doing good offices to others, we put ourselves in the way of receiving favors from God, and have opportunities of getting good when we are doing good.

Others were irritated, and hardened in their unbelief.

The informers were so; (v. 46.) Some of them were so far from being convinced, that they went to the Pharisees, his implacable enemies, and told them what things Jesus had done; as an inducement to think more favorably of Christ, but with a spiteful design. Here is a strange instance, (1.) Of obstinate infidelity; and it is hard to imagine how they could evade the force of this evidence, but that the god of this world had blinded their minds. (2.) Of a most inveterate enmity. If they would not be satisfied that He was to be believed in as the Christ, yet one would think they should have been persuaded not to persecute Him; but if the water be not sufficient to quench the fire, it will inflame it. They told what Jesus had done, and told no more than was true; but their malice gave a tincture of diabolism to their information equal to that of lying; perverting what is true is as bad as forging what is false. Doeg is called a false, lying, and deceitful tongue. (Ps. 120: 2, 3. 52: 2-4.) though what he said was true.

A special council is called, (v. 47.) Then gathered the chief priests and Pharisees a council, as was foretold, (Ps. 2: 2.) The rulers take counsel together against the Lord. The sanhedrim was intended for the public good, but here the greatest injury and mischief are done to the people. The things that belong to the nation's peace, were hid from the eyes of those

who were intrusted with its counsels. This council was called, not only for joint advice, but for mutual irritation; as iron sharpens iron, and as coals are to burning coals, and wood to fire, so they might exasperate and inflame one another against Christ and his doctrine.

The matter to be debated was, what course they should take with Jesus; they said, *What do we?* For this man doeth many miracles. The information given about Lazarus, was produced, and the men, brethren, and fathers are called in to help, as if a formidable enemy had been with an army in their country. They own the truth of Christ's miracles, and that He had wrought many of them: they are therefore witnesses against themselves, for they acknowledged his credentials, and yet denied his commission. They consider what was to be done, and chide themselves that they had not done something sooner, to crush Him. They do not take it at all into consideration, whether they should not receive Him as the Messiah, though they professed to expect Him, and Jesus gave proofs of his being so; but they take it for granted that He is an enemy. *What do we?* Have we no care to support our church? Is it nothing to us that a doctrine, so destructive to our interest, spreads thus? Shall we tamely yield the ground we have got in the affections of the people? Shall we see our authority brought into contempt, and the craft by which we get our living ruined? What have we been doing? What are we now thinking of? Shall we always talk, and bring nothing to pass?

That which made this matter weighty, was the peril they apprehended from the Romans, (v. 43.) 'If we do not silence Him, all men will believe on Him; and this being the setting up of a new King, the Romans will take umbrage at it, and will come with an army, and take away our place and nation.' See what an opinion they have,

1st. Of their own power. They speak as if they thought Christ's progress in his work depended on their connivance; as if He could not work miracles, and make disciples, unless they let Him alone; as if it were in their power to conquer Him who had conquered death, or as if they could fight against God. But He, that sits in heaven, laughs at the fond conceit which impotent malice has of its own omnipotence.

2ly. Of their own politics.

They prophesy that, in a little time, if He have liberty, all men will believe on Him: hereby owning, when it was to serve their purpose, that his doctrine and miracles had a very convincing power, such as could not be resisted; that all men would become his proselytes and votaries; thus do they now make his interest formidable, though, to serve another turn, they strove to make it contemptible; (ch. 7: 48.) Have any of the rulers believed on Him? This they were afraid of, that men would believe on Him, and then all their measures were broke. Note, The success of the Gospel is the dread of its adversaries; if souls be saved, they are undone.

VERSES 49-53.

'It would appear, that some of the sanhedrim were sensible that Jesus had given them no just or legal handle, by any thing He had either done or taught, for taking away his life; and that in their deliberations something had been advanced, which made the high priest fear they would not enter with spirit and resolution into the business.

'May we not reasonably conjecture, that this must have arisen from some objections made by Nicodemus, who was not afraid to object to them the illegality of their proceedings, (7: 50-52) or by Joseph or Arimathea, concerning whom we have this honorable testimony, that he did not concur in their resolutions? (Luke 23: 50 51.)' Camp

Scott.

They foretell, that, if the generality of the nation be drawn after Him, the rage of the Romans will be drawn upon them. They will come and take away our place; the country in general, especially Jerusalem, or the temple their idol; or, their places of power and trust.

It was true the Romans had a very jealous eye on them, and knew they wanted nothing but power and opportunity to shake off their yoke. It was likewise true that if the Romans should pour an army in upon them, it would be very hard for them to make any head against it; yet here appeared a cowardice which one would have found in the priests of the Lord, if they had not by their wickedness forfeited their interest in God, and good men. Had they kept their integrity, they needed not to have feared; but they speak like a dispirited people, as the men of Judah, when they basely said to Sennacherib, *Knowest thou not that the Philistines rule over us?* Judg. 15: 11. When men lose their piety, they lose their courage.

But, it was false that there was any danger of the Romans, being irritated against their nation by the progress of Christ's Gospel, for it was no way hurtful to kings or provinces, but highly beneficial. The Romans had no jealousy at all of his growing interest, for He taught men to give tribute to Cæsar, and not to resist evil, but take up the cross. The Roman governor, at his trial, could find no fault in Him. There was more danger of the Romans being incensed against the Jewish nation by the priests, than by Christ. Note, Pretended fears are often the color of malicious designs.

Had there really been danger of displeasing the Romans by tolerating Christ's preaching, that would not justify their persecuting a good man. Note, [1.] The enemies of Christ have often colored their enmity with a seeming care for the public good, and the common safety, and, in order to that, have branded his ministers as troublers of Israel, and men that turn the world upside down. [2.] Carnal policy commonly sets up reasons of state, in opposition to rules of justice. When men are concerned for their own wealth and safety, more than for truth and duty, it is wisdom from beneath, earthly, sensual, devilish. But see the issue; they pretended fear, that tolerating Christ would bring desolation upon them, and therefore, right or wrong, set themselves against Him; but it proved that their persecuting of the Gospel, filled up the measure of their iniquity, and the Romans came and took away their place and nation, and their place knows them no more. Note, That calamity which we seek to escape by sin, we take the most effectual course to bring upon our own heads; and they who think by opposing Christ's kingdom to advance their own secular interest, will find Jerusalem a more burthensome stone than they think, Zech. 12: 3. The fear of the wicked it shall come upon them.

Caiaphas makes a malicious but mystical speech in the council, on this occasion.

The malice of it appears evident at first view, v. 49, 50. He, being the high priest, and so, president of the council, took upon him to decide the matter before it was debated: 'You know nothing at all, your hesitating betrays your ignorance, for it is not a thing that will bear a dispute, if you consider the received maxim, That it is expedient for us that one man should die for the people.'

This counsellor was Caiaphas, who was high priest that same year. The high-priesthood was, by divine appointment, settled upon the heir of the house of Aaron, during the term of his natural life, and then to his heir, but in those degenerate times it was become, though not an annual office, like a consulship, yet frequently changed, as they could make an interest with the Romans. It happened that this year Caiaphas wore the mitre.

The drift of the advice was, that some way or

50 Nor ^m consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not.

51 And this spake he not of himself; but, being high priest that year, ^e he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation:

52 And ^a not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one, ^a the children of God ^a that were scattered abroad.

53 Then ^a from that day forth ^a they took counsel together for to put him to death.

54 Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews; but ^a went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued with his disciples.

other ^a was found to put Jesus to death. We have reason to think they strongly suspected Him ^a Messiah; but his doctrine was so contrary to their traditions and interest, and his design did so thwart their notions of the Messiah's kingdom, that they resolve, be He who He will, He must be put to death. Caiaphas does not say, let Him be silenced, imprisoned, banished, though that is sufficient for the restraint of one they thought dangerous; but *die He must*. Note, Those that have set themselves against Christianity, have commonly divested themselves of humanity, and been infamous for cruelty.

This is plausibly insinuated, with all the subtlety as well as malice of the old serpent.

He suggests his own sagacity, which we must suppose him as high priest to excel in, though the *Urim and Thummim* were long since lost. How scornfully does he say, 'Ye know nothing, who are but common priests; ye must give me leave to see further into things than you.' It is common for those in authority to impose their corrupt dictates; and because they should be the wisest and best, to expect that every body should believe they are so.

He takes it for granted, that the case is plain, and that those are very ignorant, who do not see it to be so. Note, Reason and justice are often run down with a high hand. *Truth is fallen in the streets*, and, when it is down, down with it; *equity cannot enter*, and, when it is out, out with it, Isa. 59: 14.

He insists upon a maxim in politics, That the welfare of communities is to be preferred before that of particular persons. *It is expedient for us as priests*, whose all lies at stake, *that one man die for the people*. Thus far it holds true, that it is expedient, and more, it is truly honorable, for a man to hazard his life for his country; (Phil. 2: 17, 1 John 3: 16.) but to put an innocent man to death under color of consulting the public safety, is the devil's politics. Caiaphas craftily insinuates that the greatest and best man, though greater than any individual, is less than the collected mass, and ought to think his life well spent, nay we lost, to save his country. But what is this to the murdering of one evidently a great blessing, under pretence of preventing an imaginary mischief to the country? The case ought to have been put thus, Was it expedient for them to bring on themselves and their nation the guilt of a prophet's blood, to secure their civil interests from a danger they had no just reason to fear? Was it expedient to drive God and their glory from them, rather than venture the Romans' displeasure, who could not harm them, with God on their side? Note, Carnal policy, which steers only by secular considerations, while it thinks to save all by sin, ruins all at last.

The mystery in this counsel of Caiaphas, does not appear at first view, but the evangelist leads us into it; (v. 51, 52.) *This spake he not of himself*; it was not only the language of his own enmity and policy, but in these words he prophesied, though he himself was not aware of it, *That Jesus should die for that nation*. Here is a precious comment upon a pernicious text; the counsel of cursed Caiaphas so construed as to fall in with the counsels of God. Charity teaches us to put the most favorable construction upon men's words and actions; but piety teaches us to make a good improvement of them, even contrary to what they were intended for. If wicked men in what they do against us, are God's hand to humble and reform us, why may they not, in what they say against us, be God's mouth to instruct and convince us? But in this of Caiaphas, there was an extraordinary direction of heaven, prompting him to say that which was capable of a very sublime sense. As the hearts of all men are in God's hand, so are their tongues. They are deceived, who say, 'Our tongues are our own, so that either we may say what we will, and are not accountable to God's judgment, or we can say what we will, and are not restrainable by his providence and power.' Balaam could not say what he would, when he came to curse Israel; nor Laban when he pursued Jacob.

The evangelist explains what he said, and shows how it was intended to be accommodated to an excellent purpose. He did not speak *it of himself*; as it was an artifice to stir up the council against Christ, he spake *it of himself*; or of the devil: but as it was an oracle, declaring it the purpose of God by the death of Christ to save his spiritual Israel from sin and wrath, he did not speak *it of himself*, for he knew nothing of the matter; *he meant not so, neither did his heart think so*, for nothing was in his heart out to destroy and cut off, Isa. 10: 7.

Verse 54.

Ephraim, ^a Situated eight miles north of Jerusalem, near Bethel, and apparently ^a between that city and Jericho. Accordingly we find

[734]

He prophesied, and those that prophesied, did not speak of themselves. But is Caiaphas also among the prophets? He is so, *this once*, though a bad man, and an enemy to Christ and his Gospel. Note, (1.) God can, and often does, make wicked men instruments to serve his purposes, even contrary to their own intentions, for He has them not only in a chain, to restrain them from doing the mischief they would, but in a *bridle*, to lead them to do the service they would not. (2.) Words of prophecy in the mouth are no infallible evidence of grace in the heart. *Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?* will be rejectea as a frivolous plea.

He prophesied, *being high priest that year*; not that his being high priest did at all dispose or qualify him to be a prophet; we cannot suppose the pontifical mitre to have first inspired with prophecy the basest head that ever wore it; but, (1.) Being high priest, and therefore eminent in the conclave, God put this significant word into his mouth, that it might be the more observed, or the non-observance of it the more aggravated. The apophthegms of great men have been thought worthy of special regard; *A divine sentence is in the lips of the king*; this divine sentence was put into the lips of the high priest, that even out of his mouth this word might be established, that Christ died for the good of the nation, and not for any iniquity in his hands. He happened to be high priest that year which was fixed to be the year of the redeemed, when Messiah the Prince must be cut off, but not for Himself; (Dan. 9: 26.) and he must own it. (2.) Being high priest that famous year, in which there was to be an effusion of the Spirit, more than had ever been, according to the prophecy, (Joel 2: 28, 29.) compared with Acts 2: 17, some drops of the showery light upon Caiaphas, as the crumbs (saint Lightfoot) of the children's bread, which fall from the table among the dogs. This year was the year of the expiration of the Levitical priesthood; and out of the mouth of him who was then high priest, was extorted resignation of it to Him, who should not (as they had done for many ages) offer beasts for that nation, but Himself, and so make an end of the *sin-offering*. This resignation he made *unwillingly*, as Isaac gave the blessing to Jacob.

The matter of his prophecy was, *that Jesus should die for that nation*, to which all the prophets bare witness, who testified before-hand the sufferings of Christ; (1 Pet. 1: 11.) That the death of Christ must be the salvation of Israel; he meant by *that nation*, those in it that obstinately adhered to Judaism; but God meant those in it that would receive the doctrine of Christ; all believers, the spiritual seed of Abraham. The death of Christ proved the ruin of that interest in the nation, which Caiaphas intended should be the establishment of it, for it brought wrath upon them to the uttermost; but it proved the advancement of the interest he hoped it would have been the ruin of, for Christ being lifted up from the earth, drew all men unto Him. A great thing is here prophesied; That Jesus should die, for others, not only for *their good*, but in *their stead*; die for *that nation*, for they had the first offer of salvation by his death. If the Jews had unanimously believed in Christ, they had been not only saved eternally, but saved as a nation. The fountain was first opened to the house of David, Zech. 13: 1. He so died for that nation, as that the whole nation should not perish, but that a remnant should be saved, Rom. 11: 5.

The evangelist enlarges on this word of Caiaphas, (v. 52.) *not for that nation only*, how much soever it thought itself the darling of heaven, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad.

Christ died not for the nation of the Jews only, (it would have been but a light thing for the Son of God only to restore the preserved of Jacob, and the outcasts of Israel,) He must be

that a desert or wilderness extended from Jericho to Bethel, called the wilderness of Bethaven, in which Joshua and the Israelites slew the inhabitants of Ai.
GREENFIELD.

55 And the Jews' passover was nigh at hand; and many went out of the country up to Jerusalem ⁴ before the passover, * to purify themselves.

56 Then 'sought they for' Jesus, and spake among themselves, as they stood in the temple, What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?

57 Now both the chief priests and the Pharisees ⁵ had given a commandment, that if any man knew where he were, he should shew it, that they might take him.

c 2:13. 5:1. 6:4. Ex: 12:11, &c. d 7:8-10. 12:1. Eze: 31, &c. Neh. 8:1, &c.
e 4:1. Gen. 35:2. Ex. 19:10, 14, 15. Num. 9:3. 1 Sam. 16:5. 2 Chr. 30: 17-20. Job 1:5. Ps. 26:8. Acts 24:18. 1 Cor. 11:28. Heb. 9:13, 14. Jam. 4:8.
f 7:11, 12. g 5:16-18. 8:5, 9. 9:22. 10:39. Ps. 109:4.

salvation to the ends of the earth, Isa. 49: 6. He must die for the children of God that were scattered abroad. Some understand it of the children of God then in being, in the Gentile world, devout men of every nation, (Acts 2: 5.) that feared God, (Acts 10: 2.) and worshipped Him; (Acts 17: 4.) proselytes of the gate, who served the God of Abraham, but submitted not to the ceremonial law of Moses; persons that had a savor of natural religion, but were dispersed in the nations, had no peculiar profession to distinguish themselves by. Christ died, to incorporate these in one great society, to be denominated from, and governed by Him; and this was the setting up of a standard, to which all that had a regard to God and their souls, might have recourse. Others take in with these all that belong to the election of grace, who are called the children of God, though not yet born, because they are predestinated to the adoption of children, Eph. 1: 5. These are scattered abroad in several places of the earth, out of all kindreds and tongues, (Rev. 7: 9.) and in several ages of the world, to the end of time; there are those that fear Him, throughout all generations; to all those He had an eye in the atonement. As He prayed, so He died, for all that should believe on Him.

The purpose and intention of his death concerning those persons; He died to gather them in, who wandered; and to gather them together in one, who were scattered; to invite them to Him, who were at a distance from Him, and unite them to Him, who were at a distance from each other. Christ's dying is,

(1.) The great attractive of our hearts; He is lifted up, to draw men to Him. The conversion of souls is the gathering of them to Christ as their ruler and refuge, as the doves to their windows; and He died to effect this. By dying He purchased them to Himself, and the gift of the Holy Ghost for them; his love in dying for us is the loadstone of our love.

(2.) The great centre of our unity. He gathers them together in one, Eph. 1: 10. They are one with Him, one body, one spirit, and one with each other, in Him. All the saints in all places and ages meet in Christ, as all the members in the head, and all the branches in the root. Christ, by the merit of his death, recommended all the saints in one to the grace and favor of God; (Heb. 2: 11-13.) and by the motive of his death recommends them all severally to the love and affection one of another, ch. 13: 34.

(3.) The result of this debate is a resolve of the council to put Jesus to death; v. 53. They now understand one another's minds, and each was fixed in his own, that Jesus must die; and, it would seem, a committee was appointed to sit daily to consult about it, and receive proposals for effecting it. Note, The wickedness of the wicked ripens by degrees, James 1: 15. Ezek. 7: 10.

Two considerable advances were now made in their design against Christ. [1.] What before they had thought of severally, now they jointly concurred in, and so strengthened the hands one of another. Ill men encourage themselves and one another in ill practices, by comparing notes; men of corrupt minds bless themselves, when they find others of the same mind: then the wickedness which before seemed impracticable, appears not only possible, but easy to be effected. [2.] What before they wished done, but wanted a color for, now they are furnished with a plausible pretence to justify themselves in, which will serve, if not to take off the guilt, (that is the least of their care,) yet to take off the odium, and so satisfy, if not the personal, yet the political conscience, as some subtly distinguish. Many will go on very securely in doing an ill thing, as long as they have but something to say in excuse for it. Now this resolution of theirs, to put Him to death, right or wrong, shows that all the formality of a trial, afterwards, was but show and grimace.

(4.) Christ, hereupon, knowing the vote of their cabal, suspended his public appearances; He walked no more openly among the Jews, the inhabitants of Judea, who were properly called Jews, especially those at Jerusalem; He did not walk up and down among them, from place to place, preaching and working miracles, but, while He staid in Judea, He was there incognito. Thus the chief priests put the Light of Israel under a bushel.

He withdrew into a part of the country so obscure, that the name of the town is scarcely met with any where else. He went to a country near the wilderness, as if driven out from among men, or rather wishing, with Jeremiah, that he might have in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, Jer. 9: 2. He entered into a city called Ephraim, some think Ephrath, that is, Bethlehem, where He was born, and which bordered upon the wilderness of Judah; others think Ephron, or Ephraim, mentioned 2 Chron. 13: 19. Thither his disciples went with Him; neither would they leave Him in soli-

tude, nor would He leave them in danger. There He conversed; He knew how to improve this time of retirement in private conversation, when He had not an opportunity of preaching publicly. He conversed with his disciples, his family, when forced from the temple, and his discourses there, no doubt, were very edifying. We must do the good we can, when we cannot do the good we would.

Christ did not fear the power of his enemies, or distrust his own power; He had many ways to save Himself, and was neither averse to suffering, nor unprepared for it; but He retired, to put a mark of his displeasure upon Jerusalem. They rejected Him and his Gospel; justly therefore did He remove Himself and his Gospel from them. The Prince of teachers was now removed into a corner, (Isa. 30: 20.) there was no open vision of Him; and it was a sad presage of that thick darkness shortly to come upon Jerusalem, because she knew not the way of her visitation. He would render the cruelty of his enemies against Him the more inexcusable. If his public appearance was grievous to them, and thought dangerous to the public, He would try whether their anger would be turned away by his privacy; when David fled to Gath Saul sought no more for him, 1 Sam. 27: 4. But it was the life, the precious life, these wicked men hunted after. Again, His hour was not yet come, and therefore He declined danger, in a way common to men, both to warrant and encourage the flight of his servants in time of persecution, and to comfort those who are forced from their usefulness, and buried alive in privacy and obscurity; the disciple is not better than his Lord. His retirement, for a while, was to make his return into Jerusalem, when his hour was come, the more remarkable and illustrious. This swelled the acclamations of joy, with which his well-wishers welcomed Him at his next public appearance, when He rode triumphantly into the city.

(5.) But strict inquiry was made for Him (v. 55-57) on occasion of the approach of the passover, at which they expected his presence, according to custom; (v. 55.) this was Christ's fourth and last passover; and it might truly be said, (as, 2 Chron. 35: 18.) There was never such a passover in Israel, for in it Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. The passover being at hand, many went out of all parts of the country to Jerusalem, to purify themselves. This was either, 1st. A necessary purification of those who had contracted ceremonial pollution; they came to be sprinkled with the water of purification, and to perform the other rites of cleansing according to the law, Numb. 9: 6. Thus before our gospel-passover we must renew our repentance, and by faith wash in the blood of Christ, and so compass God's altar. Or, 2dly. A voluntary purification, by fasting and prayer, and other religious exercises, which many, that were more devout than their neighbors, spent some time in before the passover, and chose to do at Jerusalem, because of the advantage of the temple-service. Thus must we, by solemn preparation, set bounds about the mount on which we expect to meet with God.

The inquiry was very solicitous; They said, What think ye, that He will so come to the feast? v. 56.

Some think this was said by those who wished well to Him, and expected his coming, that they might hear his doctrine, and see his miracles. They who came early out of the country, that they might purify themselves, were very desirous to meet with Christ, and perhaps came the sooner with that expectation, and therefore as they stood in the temple, the place of their purification, they inquired what news of Christ? Could any body give them

To purify themselves.] Verse 55. It was customary for those who had contracted a defilement which was to be purified by a sacrifice, to reserve themselves for one of the great feasts; also for those who had entered into a vow of Naziritism, to perform it at those seasons' WHITBY. It was required too of those who had become defiled in any manner, to purify themselves before they partook of the celebration of the paschal feast. LITCHFORD.

This whole chapter abounds with great and important truths, delivered in language the most impressive and edifying. Christ's eternal power and godhead are sufficiently manifested in the resurrection of Lazarus. In all his conduct here, we find majesty, humanity, friendship, and sublime devotion blended in the most intimate manner, and illustrating each other, by their respective splendor and excellence. In every act, in every word, we see God manifest in the flesh: Man, in all the amiable and charitable of his nature; God, in the plenitude of his power and goodness. DR. A. CLARK.

CHAP. XII

people is entertained. 1. Bethany, 1, 2. Mary anoints his feet, 3; Judas, from dishonest motives, objects, but Jesus vindicates her. 4-5. The people resort to Him on account of Lazarus; and the rulers consult about putting Lazarus also to death, 6-11. Jesus enters Jerusalem as a triumph, riding on an ass, to the exultation of the Pharisees, 12-19. Certain Greek disciples to see Him, 20-22. He predicts his own death, and his blessed effects, 23-25. Being troubled in spirit, He resigns to the Father, prays, and is answered by a voice from heaven, 27, 28. He speaks of an enemy of his death, 29-34; and exhorts the people to improve their present advantages, 35, 36. The unbelief of the Jews shown to be a fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy, 37-41. Many rulers believe, but dare not confess Him, 42, 43. He further warns the people not to reject Him, 44-50.

THEN Jesus, ^a six days before the passover, came to ^b Bethany, where Lazarus was, which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

2 There ^c they made him a supper, ^d and Martha served; but ^e Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

a 11:55.
b 11:44. Matt. 21:17. Mark 11:11, 12. Luke 24:50.
c Cant. 4:16. 1st. Luke 5:29. 14: 12. Rev. 3:20.
d Matt. 26:6. Luke 10:39-41. 12:37. 22:27.
e 9:10. 11:43, 44.

show it; probably promising a reward; and imposing a penalty on such as harbored Him. So that hereby He was represented as a dangerous man, an outlaw, whom any one may have a blow at. Saul issued such a proclamation for apprehending David, and Ahab for Elijah. See, 1st. How intent they were on this prosecution, and how they labored in it; at a time when, if they had had any sense of religion and the duty of their function, they would have found something else to do. 2dly. How willing they were to involve others in the guilt with them; if any man were capable of betraying Christ, they would have him think himself bound to do it. Thus was the interest they had in the people abused to the worst purposes. Note, It is an aggravation of the sins of wicked rulers, that they commonly make those under them instruments of their unrighteousness. But, notwithstanding this proclamation, though doubtless many knew where He was, such was his interest in the affections of some, and such God's hold of the consciences of others, that He continued undiscovered, for the *Lord hid Him*.

CHAP. XII. v. 1-11. Our Lord's coming to Bethany now, may be considered,

1. As a preface to the passover He intended to celebrate, to which relation is had in the date of the time; *six days before the passover*. Devout men set time apart, to prepare themselves for that solemnity, and thus it became our Lord Jesus to *fulfil all righteousness*. He has set us an example of solemn self-sequestration, before the solemnities of the gospel-pass-

over; let us hear the voice crying *Prepare ye the way of the Lord*.

2. As a voluntary exposing of Himself to the fury of his enemies; now that his hour was at hand, He came within their reach, though He had showed how easily He could evade their snares. Note, (1.) Our Lord Jesus was voluntary in his sufferings; his life was not forced from Him, but *resigned*; *Lo, I come*. As the strength of persecutors could not overpower Him, so their subtlety could not surprise Him, but He died, because He would. (2.) As there is a time when we are allowed to shift for our own preservation, so there is a time when we are called to jeopard our lives in the cause of God, as St. Paul, when he *went bound in the Spirit to Jerusalem*.

3. As an instance of his kindness to his friends at Bethany, from whom He was shortly to be taken away. This was a farewell visit; He came to leave with them words of comfort against the approaching day of trial. Note, Though Christ depart for a time from his people, He will give them intimations that He parts in love, and not in anger. Bethany is here described to be the town *where Lazarus was, whom He raised from the dead*. That miracle, wrought here, put honor upon the place, and made it remarkable; Christ came hither to observe what improvement was made of it; for where Christ shows signal favors, He looks after them, to see whether the intention of them be answered. Where He has sown plentifully, He observes whether it comes up again.

They made Him a supper, v. 2. It is queried whether this that recorded, Matt. 26: 6, &c. in the house of Simon, were the same; most think they were; for the substance of the story and many of the circumstances agree; but that comes in after what was said two days before the passover, whereas this was done six days before; nor is it likely that Martha would serve in any house but her own; and therefore I incline with Dr. Lightfoot to think them different; that that in Matthew was on the third day of the passover week; but this the seventh day of the week before, being the Jewish Sabbath, the night before He rode in triumph into Jerusalem; that in the house of Simon, this of Lazarus; these two being the most public and solemn entertainments given Him in Bethany, Mary graced them both with this token of her respect; and what she left of her ointment this first time, when she spent but a pound of it, (v. 3.) she used that second time, when she poured it all out, Mark 14: 3.

With them, ordinarily, supper was the best meal. A feast is made for *frienship*, and they wished to have an opportunity of free and pleasant conversation with Him, for a feast is made for *fellowship*. Perhaps in allusion to this and the like entertainments given to Christ in the days of his flesh, it is that He promises to such as open the door of their hearts to Him, that He will *sup with them*, Rev. 3: 20.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 41-57. Who can express the majesty and condescension of our Redeemer! For the sake of those, who sought his life, He veiled his glory, and in 'the form of a servant' addressed the Father, before He performed that stupendous miracle, which He immediately after wrought by his own power, as 'the Resurrection and the Life,' as 'God manifest in the flesh.' If He shall please to speak, how soon can He rebuke our enemies, new-create our hearts, or answer our prayers for the conversion of those around us! How safely may we trust the health and life of our dearest relatives in his hand! How cheerfully go down to the grave, in sure hope of a glorious resurrection! Our sharpest trials will terminate in abundant comfort, if we believe in Him; and they often are means of promoting his glory in the conversion of our fellow-sinners; so that, if we could foresee all the effects of them, they would be causes of admiring gratitude and joy, and not of sorrow and dejection. But we must wait in faith, hope, and prayer, till these effects take place. No outward means can overcome the obdurate enmity of sinners against God: and they, who have engaged their interest and reputation in the unequal contest, become more callous than others. Sagacious and infidel politicians count all men ignorant and foolish, who hesitate to sacrifice honesty and justice to expediency; and persecutors deem it a public calamity, when numbers are converted to Je-

sus. They think themselves culpable, when, not using the most sanguinary methods of opposing the truth: they undertake to crush those with oppressive and overwhelming power, whom they cannot answer: they imagine that the excellency of the end will sanctify all the impieties, frauds, and murders, which are used to compass it: and they deem the life of innocent persons a trivial matter, compared with the peace and uniformity of the church; which too generally consist in gross superstition, usurped authority over men's consciences, and destructive heresies. But, while they seek to avert calamities by such means, they bring them upon themselves in the most tremendous manner.—The Lord will, however, honor his institutions, notwithstanding man's wickedness, and extort confessions to his truth from his enemies. Once, and but once, it was expedient that the innocent should suffer for the guilty; and the divine Savior willingly died for us, to gather us, as 'the children of God,' from all our dispersions, into his kingdom; may He gather far more and more into his church from every part of the earth! No devices of man can derange the purposes of God: while hypocrites amuse themselves with forms and controversies, and worldly men pursue their own projects, Jesus still communes with his disciples, and orders all things in subsequence to his own glory and their salvation.

SCOTT.

: Then 'took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odor of the ointment.

4 Then saith 'one of his disciples, 'Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him.

5 Why 'was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

6 This he said, 'not that he cared for the poor; but 'because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

f 11:2,28,32. Matt. 26:7. Mark 14:3. Luke 10:39.
g Ps. 134. Cant. 1:12. 4:10,13,14.
h Mark 14:3. Luke 7:37,38,46.
i Cant. 1:3.
k 1 Sam. 17:28,29. Ec. 4:5. Matt. 10:4. Luke 6:16.
l Ex. 58:17. Am. 6:5. Mal. 1:10. 1:13-22. 28 9:9. Mark 14:4. Luke 6:41,42.
m 6:7. Matt. 22:2. marg. Mark 14:5.
o 16:9. Luke 12:33. 18:22.
p 10:13. Ps. 41:1. Prov. 29:7. Ez. 33:31. Gal. 2:10. Jam. 2:2-6.
q 10:8-10. 2 Kings 5:20-27. Ps. 103:2-20. Matt. 21:13. 1 Cor. 6:10.
r 13:29. 2 Kings 12:14,15. Ezra 8:24-34. 2 Cor. 8:19-21. 1 Thes. 5:22.

create an occasion of expense any thing more valuable than another, that must be brought out for Christ. Note, Those who love Christ truly, love Him so much better than this world, as to be willing to lay out the best they have for Him.

2. *Condescending*: she not only bestowed her ointment upon Christ, but poured it upon Him with her own hands, which she might have ordered a servant to do; nay, she did not, as usual, anoint his head, but his feet. True love, as it does not spare charge, so it does not spare pains in honoring Christ. Considering what Christ has done for us, we are very ungrateful, if we think any service too hard or too mean, whereby He may be glorified.

3. There was faith working by this love, faith in Jesus as the Christ, the Anointed, who, being both Priest and King, was anointed as Aaron and David were. Note, God's Anointed should be our Anointed. Has God poured on Him the oil of gladness above his fellows? Let us pour on Him the ointment of our best affections. By consenting to Christ as our King, we must comply with God's designs, appointing Him our Head, whom He has appointed, Hos. 1:11.

The filling of the house with the pleasant odor may intimate, (1.) That those who entertain Christ in their hearts and houses, bring a sweet odor into them; Christ's presence brings with it an ointment and perfume which rejoice the heart. (2.) Honors done to Christ are comforts to all his friends and followers; they are to God and good men an offering of a sweet smelling savour.

The person that carpied, was Judas, one of his disciples; not one of their nature, but only one of their number. It is possible for the worst of men to lurk under the disguise of the best profession; and many pretend to stand in relation to Christ, who really have no kindness for Him. Judas was a preacher of the Gospel; yet discouraged and checked this instance of pious affection and devotion. Note, It is sad to see religion and holy zeal frozen upon by such as are obliged by their office to assist and encourage it. But this was he that should betray Christ. Note, Coldness of love to Christ, and a secret contempt of serious piety, are sad presages of final apostasy. Hypocrites, by the less instances of worldliness, discover themselves to be ready for a closure with greater temptations.

'Why was not this ointment, since it was designed for a pious use, sold for three hundred pence, (3l. 10s.) and given to the poor?' Here is, A, foul iniquity gilded over with a specious pretence; worldly wisdom passing censure

Martha served; she herself waited at table, in token of her great respect to the Master; though a person of some quality, she did not think it below her to serve, when Christ sat at meat; nor should we think it a disparagement to us, to stoop to any service whereby Christ may be honored. Christ had formerly reproved Martha for being troubled with much serving. But she did not therefore leave off serving, as, some, who, when they are reproved for one extreme, peevishly run into another; still she served; not as then at a distance, but within hearing of Christ's gracious words, reckoning those happy, who, as the queen of Sheba said concerning Solomon's servants, stood continually before him, to hear his wisdom; better be a waiter at Christ's table, than a guest at the table of a prince.

Lazarus was one of them that sat at meat. It proved the truth of his resurrection, as it did of Christ's, that there were those who did eat and drink with Him, Acts 10:41. Lazarus did not retire into a wilderness after his resurrection, as if, when he had made a visit to the other world, he must ever after be a hermit in this; he conversed familiarly with people, as others did. He sat at meat, as a monument of the miracle Christ had wrought. Those whom Christ has raised to spiritual life, are made to sit together with Him. See Eph. 2:5, 6.

Mary had this ointment by her, probably, for her own use; but the death and resurrection of her brother had quite weaned her from the use of all such things, and with this she anointed the feet of Jesus, and, as a further token of reverence for Him, and neglence of herself, wiped them with her hair, and this was taken notice of by all present, for the house was filled with the odor of the ointment. See Prov. 27:16.

Doubtless, she intended this as a token of her love to Christ, who had given real tokens of his love to her and her family; and thus she studies what she shall render. By this her love appears to have been,

1. *Generous*: so far from sparing necessary charges in his service, she is as ingenious to create an occasion of expense any thing more valuable than another, that must be brought out for Christ. Note, Those who love Christ truly, love Him so much better than this world, as to be willing to lay out the best they have for Him.

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upon pious zeal, as guilty of imprudence and mismanagement. Those who value themselves on their secular policy, and undervalue others for their serious piety, have more of the spirit of Judas than they would be thought to have. Here is charity to the poor made a color for opposing piety to Christ, and secretly made a cloak for covetousness. Many excuse them selves from laying out in charity, under pretence of laying up for it; whereas, if clouds be full of rain, they will empty themselves. Why not given to the poor? Because better bestowed on the Lord. Note, We must not conclude that those do no acceptable service, who do it not in our way; as if every thing must be imprudent and unfit, which does not take its measures from us. Proud men think all ill-advised who do not advise with them.

The evangelist remarks, by the direction of Him who searches the heart, This he said, not that he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the bag.

What were the poor to him, any further than he might serve his own ends, by being overseer of the poor? Some warmly contend for the power of the church, as others for its purity, when perhaps it may be said, Not that they care for the church, whether its true interest sink or swim; but, under pretence of this, they are advancing themselves. Simeon and Levi pretended zeal for circumcision, not that they cared for the seal of the covenant, any more than Jehu for the Lord of hosts, when he said, Come, see my zeal.

Judas said this from a principle of covetousness. The truth was, this ointment being designed for his Master, he would rather have it in money, to be put in the common stock he was entrusted with, and then he knew what to do with it.

Judas was treasurer of Christ's household, whence some think he was called Iscariot, the bag-bearer.

See what little estate Jesus and his disciples had to live upon; they had neither farms nor merchandise, barns or storehouses, only a bag; or, as some think, the word signifies a box, or coffer, wherein they kept just enough for their subsistence, giving the overplus, if any were, to the poor; this they carried about with them, wherever they went. This bag was supplied by the contributions of good people, and the Master and his disciples had all in common: let this lessen our esteem of wealth, deaden us to the punctilios of state and ceremony, and reconcile us to mean living, if that be our lot, that it was our Master's lot; for our sakes He became poor.

The steward of the little they had, was Judas. It was his office to receive and pay, and we do not find that he gave in any account. He was appointed to this office, either 1st. Because he was the least and lowest of all the disciples; it was not Peter or John that was made steward, but Judas, the meanest of them. Note, Secular employments, as they are a diversion, so they are a diminution, to a minister of the Gospel; see 1 Cor. 6:4. The ministers of state in Christ's kingdom refused to be concerned in the revenue, Acts 6:2. 2dly. Because he was desirous of the place. He loved in his heart to be fingering money, and therefore had the money-bag committed to him, 1. As a kindness, to please him, and thereby oblige him to be true to his Master. Subjects are sometimes disaffected to the government, because disappointed of preferment; but Judas has no cause to complain; the bag he chose, and the bag he had. Or, 2. To punish him for his secret wickedness, that was put into his hands, which would be a snare to him. Note, Strong inclinations to sin within, are often justly punished with strong temptations without. We have little reason to be fond or proud

Verse 6.

And bare, &c.] 'Origen, Nonnus and the best commentators of the last century, translate, "and carried off, stole." The examples produced establish this signification beyond dispute. It supplies the true reason, as Lampe observes why the evangelist called Judas a thief.'

BLOOMFIELD.

7 Then said Jesus, Let her alone: 'against the day of my burying hath she kept this.'

8 For "the poor always ye have with you;" but me ye have not always.

[Practical Observations.]

9 ¶ Much "people of the Jews therefore knew that he was there; and they came, not for Jesus' sake only, but that they might see Lazarus" also, whom he had raised from the dead.

10 But "the chief priests consulted, that they might put Lazarus also to death;"

¶ Ps. 109:31. Zech. 3:2. Matt. 26:10. Mark 14:6,9.
1. 19:42. Matt. 23:12. 27:57—60. Mark 15:42—47. Luke 23:50—56.
2. Deut. 15:11. Matt. 26:11. Mark 14:7.
3. 8:21. 13:33. 16:5—7. Acts 1:9—11.
4. 11:43—45. Acts 3:10,11. 4:14.
5. 11:47—53,57. Gen. 4:4—10. Ex. 40:3.
6. Job 15:25,26. 40:8,9. Ez. 9:3.
7. Dan. 8:21—25. Matt. 2:3—8,16. Luke 16:31.

let them alone. For Mary's justification,

Christ puts a favorable construction upon what she did, which they that condemned it were not aware of; *Against the day of my burying she has kept this.* Or, *She has reserved this for the day of my embalming.* 'You do not grudge the ointment used for the embalming of friends, nor say that it should be sold, and given to the poor. Now this anointing either was so intended, or at least may be so interpreted; for the day of my burying is at hand, and she has anointed a body that is already as good as dead.' Note, '1.] Our Lord Jesus thought much and often of his death and burial; it is good for us to do so too. [2.] Providence often so opens a door of opportunity to Christians, and the Spirit of grace so opens their hearts, that the expressions of their pious zeal prove more seasonable, and more beautiful, than any foresight of their own could make them. [3.] Christ puts kind comments upon the pious words and actions of good people, and not only makes the best of what is amiss, but makes the most of what is good.

He gives a sufficient answer to Judas' objection, 2. 8. [1.] It is so ordered in the kingdom of Providence, that the poor ye have always with us; objects of charity (Deut. 15: 11.) there will be, as long as there is so much folly and affliction. [2.] It is so ordered in the kingdom of grace, that the church should not always have the bodily presence of Christ; 'Me ye have not always, but only for a little time.' Note, We need wisdom when two duties come in competition, to know which to prefer, circumstances must determine. Opportunities are to be improved, and those opportunities first and most vigorously, which are likely to be of the shortest continuance. That good duty which may be done at any time, ought to give way to that which cannot be done but just now.

Public notice was taken of our Lord at this supper; (v. 9.) *Much people of the Jews knew He was there, and they came flocking thither;* the more because He had been absent, and now broke out as the sun from behind a cloud.

They came to see Jesus, whose name was made considerable by the late miracle of raising Lazarus. They came, not to hear Him, but to gratify their curiosity, at Bethany, fearing He would not appear publicly at this passover. They came, not to seize Him, or inform against Him, though the government had prosecuted Him to an outlawry, but to see Him, and

of the bag, for at best we are but stewards of it; and it was Judas, one of an ill character, and born to be hanged, (pardon the expression,) that was steward of the bag; the prosperity of fools destroys them.

He was a thief, had a thievish disposition. The reigning love of money is heart-theft, as much as anger and revenge are heart-murder. Perhaps, he had been guilty of embezzling his Master's stores. Some conjecture, that he was now contriving to fill his pockets, and run away, having heard Christ speak so much of troubles approaching, to which he could by no means reconcile himself. Note, They to whom the management and disposal of public money is committed, have need to be governed by steady principles of justice and honesty; for though some make a jest of cheating the government, or the church, if cheating be thieving, and communists being more considerable than particular persons, if robbing of them be the greater sin, the guilt of theft and the portion of thieves will be found no jesting matter. Judas, who had betrayed his trust, soon after betrayed his Master.

Christ justified what Mary did; (v. 7, 8.) *Let her alone.* Hereby He intimated, 1. His acceptance of her kindness. Though perfectly mortified to all the delights of sense, yet, as it was a token of her good-will, He signified Himself well-pleased with it. 2. His care that she should not be molested in it; *Pardon her*, so it may be read; 'excuse her; if an error, it is an error of her love.' Note, Christ would not have them discouraged, who sincerely design to please Him, though in their honest endeavors there be not all desirable discretion, Rom. 14: 3. Though we would not do as they do, yet

show Him respect. Note, There are some in whose affections Christ will have an interest, in spite of all the attempts of his enemies. It being known where Christ was, multitudes came to Him. Note, Where the King is, there is the court; where Christ is, there will be the gathering of the people be, Luke 17: 37.

They came to see Lazarus and Christ together, a very inviting sight. Some came for the confirmation of their faith, to have the story from Lazarus' own mouth. Others came only to gratify their curiosity, that they might say they had seen a man who had been dead and buried, so that Lazarus served for a show, these holy-days, to those, who, like the Athenians, spent their time in telling and hearing new things. Perhaps some came to question Lazarus about the state of the dead; we ourselves have sometimes said, it may be, We would have gone a great way for one hour's discourse with Lazarus. But if any came on this errand, it is probable Lazarus was silent; however, the Scripture is silent on it; and we must not covet to be wise above what is written. Our Lord was present, a much fitter person for them to apply to than Lazarus; if we hear not Moses and the prophets, Christ and the apostles, concerning another world, neither should we be persuaded though Lazarus rose from the dead. We have a more sure word of prophecy.

The indignation of the chief priests at the growing interest of Jesus, and their plot to crush it; v. 10, 11. They consulted (or decreed) how they might put Lazarus also to death, because that by reason of him, many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

How vain and unsuccessful their attempts against Christ had hitherto been. They had done all they could to alienate the people from Him, and exasperate them against Him, yet many of their creatures, their admirers, were so overcome by the evidence of Christ's miracles, that they went away from the interest and party of the priests, and believed on Jesus. And it was by reason of Lazarus; his resurrection put life into their faith, convinced them that this Jesus was undoubtedly the Messiah, and had life in Himself, and power to give life.

This miracle confirmed them in the belief of his other miracles, which they had heard He wrought in Galilee; what was impossible to Him that could raise the dead?

How absurd and unreasonable this vote was—that Lazarus must be put to death. This is an instance of the most brutish rage; they were like a wild bull in a net, full of fury, laying about them without consideration. It was a sign that they neither feared God, nor regarded man. For,

If they had feared God, they would not have done such an act of defiance to Him. God will have Lazarus live by miracle, and they will have him die by malice. They cry, *Away with such a fellow*, it is not fit he should live; when God had so lately sent him back to the earth, declaring it highly fit he should live; what was this but walking contrary to God? They would put Lazarus to death, and challenge almighty power to raise him again, as if they could contend with God. 'Blind malice, to suppose that Christ, who could raise one that had died a na-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—8. No violence of persecutors will deter zealous believers from avowing their love and gratitude to their Savior. (Notes, & P. O. Luke 7: 36—50.)—When the heart is upright, every endeavor to honor Him will be accepted; though good men may censure it, as injudicious and unsuitable. But a high profession of religion sometimes covers the most contemptible avarice and dishonesty, or the most consummate wickedness.—Many plead for charity, in opposition to faith and love to Christ; not because they 'care for the poor,' but because it answers their selfish purposes. And in various ways, one part of religion is pleaded for, in preference to other parts: not that the advocates care for what they recommend; but because they aim to discredit what they dislike.—It behooves those who are entrusted with money, for pious or charitable uses, to watch and pray continually against covetousness.

Carrying the bag^s has always been a perilous, though generally a coveted service, especially to church-men: and alas! ('46)

thieves have often been employed in it! The less men are disposed to suspect, or call us to account, in matters of this kind, the more scrupulous should we be in our own conduct; for if Satan can prevail with ministers, or professors of the Gospel, to venture on petty frauds, by pilfering from the poor, or embezzling holy things; he will soon gain a more decided victory, and expose them to open infamy and ruin.—We should not generally be much moved with the unjust censures which are cast upon us, if we knew the secret practices and motives of those who utter them: it is therefore commonly best, while we are careful to keep a clear conscience, silently to leave the Lord to answer for us.—Whatever other methods we may occasionally take, of honoring Christ with our substance; the relief of the poor is the stated method, and we have them always with us for that purpose. (Notes, 1 Pet. 15: 4—15. P. O.

11 Because that ^a by reason of him many of the Jews went away, and believed on Jesus.

12 ¶ On the next day, ^b much people that were ^c come to the feast, when they heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem,

13 Took ^d branches of palm-trees, and went forth to meet him, and cried, ^e Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord.

14 And ^f Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; ^g as it is written,

15 ^h Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, ⁱ sitting on an ass's colt.

a 19. 11:45, 48. 15:13-25. Acts 13: 45. Jam. 3:14-16.
b Matt. 21:8.
c 11:55, 56.
d Lev. 23:40. Rev. 7:9.
e Ps. 72:17-19. 118:25, 26. Matt. 21: 1:1. 23:39. Zeph. 3:15-16. Luke 19:36-38.
f 15. 1:49. 19:15, 19-22. Is. 44:6. Hos. 3:5. Zeph. 3:15. Rev. 15:3. 19:16.
g Matt. 21:1-7. Mark 11:1-7. Luke 19:29-35.
h 19:36, 9:9.
i 19:35, 4:5. 40:9, 10. 41:4. Eccl. 11: 1:1. 4:2. Zeph. 3:16, 17. Zech. 2: 9-11. Matt. 2:2-8.
k Deut. 17:16. Job. 5:10. 13:14. 2 Sam. 15:1. 16:2. 1 Kings 1:33.

more inclined to religion than their neighbors, and were forward to honor Christ. Note, The more regard men have to God and religion in general, the better disposed they will be to entertain Christ and his religion. They were not rulers, or great men, that went out to meet Christ, but the commonalty; some would have called them a *rabble*; but Christ has chosen the weak and foolish things, (1 Cor. 1:27.) and is honored more by the multitude, than the magnificence of his followers; for He values men by their souls, not their names and titles of honor.

They had inquired for Him, (ch. 11:55, 56.) Will He not come up to the feast? Now they hear He is coming, (p. 12.) for none that seek Christ, seek in vain. When they heard He was coming they bestirred themselves to give Him an agreeable reception. Note, Tidings of the approach of Christ and his kingdom should awaken us to consider what is the work of the day, that it may be done in the day. Israel must prepare to meet their God, (Amos 4:12.) and the virgins to meet the bridegroom.

In what way they expressed their respects; they had not the keys of the city to present Him, nor the sword or mace to carry before Him, no civility to compliment Him with, but such as they had they gave Him; and even this despicable crowd was a faint resemblance of that glorious company which John saw, *before the throne, and before the Lamb*, Rev. 7: 9, 10. Though these were not before the throne, they were before the Lamb, the paschal Lamb, who now, according to the usual ceremony, *four days* before the feast, was set apart to be sacrificed for us. It is said of the celestial choir,

(1.) That they had palms in their hands; so had these branches of palm-trees. The palm-tree has ever been an emblem of victory and triumph; Ciceo calls one that had won many prizes—a *man of many palms*. Christ was by his death to conquer principalities and powers, and therefore should have the victor's palm borne before Him. The carrying of palm-branches was also part of the ceremony of the feast of tabernacles, (Lev. 23: 40. Neh. m. 8:15.) and their using this expression of joy in welcoming Jesus, intimates that all the feasts pointed at, and were accomplished in, his Gospel, and particularly the feast of tabernacles, Zech. 14:16.

(2.) That they cried with a loud voice, saying, *Salvation to our God*; (Rev. 7: 10.) so these shouted before Him, as is usual in popular welcomes, *Hosanna*, *Blessed is the King of Israel that comes in the name of the Lord*; and *hosanna* signifies *salvation*, Ps. 118: 25, 26. How well acquainted these common people were with the Scripture, and how pertinently they apply it to the Messiah. High thoughts of Christ will be best expressed in scripture-words.

They acknowledge Jesus to be the King of Israel, that comes in the name of the Lord. Though He went in poverty and disgrace, yet, contrary to the notions their scribes had given them of the Messiah, they own Him to be a

tural death, could not raise one that had been slain! Lazarus is singled out to be the object of their special hatred, because God has distinguished him by the tokens of his peculiar love, as if they had made a league offensive and defensive with death and hell, and resolved to be severe upon all deserters. One would think they should rather have consulted how they might have joined in friendship with Lazarus and his family, and by their mediation have reconciled themselves to this Jesus whom they had persecuted; but the god of this world had blinded their minds.

If they had regarded man, they would not have done such an act of injustice to Lazarus, an innocent man, to whose charge they could not pretend to lay any crime. What bands are strong enough to hold those who can break through the sacred ties of common justice, and violate the maxims which even nature itself teaches? But the support of their own tyranny and superstition was thought sufficient, as in the church of Rome, not only to justify, but to consecrate the greatest villainies, and make them meritorious.

V. 12-19. This story of Christ's riding in triumph to Jerusalem is recorded by all the evangelists, as worthy of special remark; and in it we may observe, the respects paid to our Lord by the common people.

They that paid Him these respects, were much people—a great crowd of those that came up to the feast; not the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but the country people from remote parts: the nearer the temple of the Lord, the further from the Lord of the temple. Perhaps they had been Christ's hearers in the country, and admirers of Him there, and therefore were forward to testify their respects to Him at Jerusalem, where they knew He had many enemies. Note, Those that have a true value and veneration for Christ will neither be ashamed nor afraid to own Him before men, in any instance whereby they may do Him honor. Perhaps they were those more devout Jews that came up to the feast some time before, to purify themselves, that were

King, which speaks both his dignity and honor, which we must adore; and his dominion and power, which we must submit to. They own Him to be, 1st. A rightful King, coming in the name of the Lord, (Ps. 2: 6.) sent of God, not only as a prophet, but as a king. 2dly. The promised and long-expected King, Messiah, for He is King of Israel.

They heartily wish well to his kingdom, that is the meaning of *hosanna*; let the King of Israel prosper; as when Solomon was crowned, they cried, *God save king Solomon*, 1 Kings 1: 39. In crying *hosanna* they prayed for three things. 1st. That his kingdom might come, i. light, knowledge, power and efficacy. God speed the Gospel. 2dly. That it might be victorious over all opposition, Rev. 6: 2. 3dly. That it might continue. *Hosanna* is, *Let the King live forever*; though his kingdom be disturbed, let it never be destroyed, Ps. 72: 17.

They welcome Him to Jerusalem; *Welcome is He that cometh*; we are heartily glad to see Him; come in, *Thou blessed of the Lord*; and well may we attend Him with our blessings, who meets us with his. This welcome is like that, (Ps. 24: 7, 9.) *Lift up your heads, O ye gates*. Thus we must welcome Christ into our hearts, that is, must praise Him, and be well pleased in Him. As we should be heartily pleased with the being and attributes of God, and his relation to us, so we should be with the person and offices of the Lord Jesus, and his mediation between us and God. Faith saith, *Blessed is He*.

When He had found, or procured, a young ass, He sat thereon; it was but a poor sort of figure He made, He alone upon an ass, and a crowd of people about Him shouting *Hosanna*.

This was much more of state than He used to take; He used to travel on foot. Though his followers should be willing to take up with mean things, and not affect grandeur, yet it is allowed them to use the inferior creatures, according as God in his providence gives particular possession of that, over which h, by his covenant with Noah and his sons, He has given to man a general dominion.

If He would have made a public entry, according to the state of a man of high degree, He should have rode in a chariot like that of Solomon's, (Cant. 3: 9, 10.) with pillars of silver, the bottom of gold, and the covering of purple; but if we judge according to the fashion of this world, to be introduced thus was rather a disparagement than any honor to the King of Israel, for it seemed as if He would look great, and knew not *honor*. His kingdom was not of this world, and therefore came not with outward pomp. See,

(1.) The fulfilling of Scripture in this, *As it is written, Fear not, daughter of Sion*, p. 15. Zech. 9: 9. To Him bare all the prophets witness, and particularly to this concerning Him.

(2.) Even this minute circumstance, *sitting on an ass's colt*, was foretold of Zion's King, and Christ took care it should be punctually fulfilled. Note, [1.] Christ is Zion's King; the holy hill of Zion was of old destined to be the royal city of the Messiah. [2.] Zion's King does and will look after her, and come to her; though for a short time He retires, in due time He returns.

(3.) Though He comes but slowly, (He rode on a slow-paced animal,) yet He comes surely, and with such expressions of humility and condescension, as greatly encourage the addresses and expectations of his loyal subjects. Humble supplicants may reach to speak with Him. If this be a discouragement to Zion, that her King appears in no greater state or strength, let her know, that, though He comes to her, riding on an ass's colt, yet He goes forth against her enemies, riding on the heavens for her help, Deut. 33: 26.

Fear not. In the prophecy, Zion is bid to rejoice greatly, and to shout; here it is rendered. Fear not. Unbelieving fears are enemies to spiritual joys; if they be cured, conquered, joy

Perhaps Lazarus had purposely lived very retired, from the time they met him, to gratify their curiosity with a sight of him, till our Lord's return afforded them the opportunity. (11: 54-57.) Scott

10 These things I understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him.

17 The people therefore that was with him when he called Lazarus out of his grave, and raised him from the dead, bare record.

18 For this cause the people also met him, for that they heard that he had done this miracle.

19 The Pharisees, therefore, said among themselves, 'Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? behold, the world is gone after him.

[Practical Observations.]

20 ¶ And there were certain Greeks among

1 Luke 9:45, 19:34, 24:25, 45.
23, 7:39, 13:31, 32, 17:5, Mark
16:19, Acts 2:3, 36, 31:3, Heb. 8:
1, 12:2.
2, 22, 14:56, 16:4, Luke 24:8-8,
9, 11:31, 45, 46, Ps. 145:6, 7.
9, 11:31, 24, 5:35-39, 8:13, 14, 15:
24-27, 19:35, 21:26, Acts 1:22, 5:
32, 1 John 5:9-12, Rev. 1:2.
9-11.
11:34-39, Matt. 21:15, Luke 19:
47-48, Acts 4:16, 17, 5:27, 38.
3:56, 17:21, Ps. 52:27, 49:1, Is.
27:5, Acts 17:5, 1 John 2:2.
1:7, 5, Mark 7:26, Acts 14:1, 16:1,
17:4, 20:21, 21:28, Rom. 1:16,
10:12, Gal. 2:3, 3:28, Col. 3:11.

repulsion is to all the saints

They compared that prophecy with the event, and so came to understand both. Then remembered they that these things were written of Him by the prophets. Note, Such an admirable harmony exists between the Word and works of God, that the remembrance of what is written, will enable us to understand what is done; and the observation of what is done, will help us to understand what is written. As we have heard, so have we seen. The Scripture is every day fulfilling.

The people pay this respect to Jesus, though the government was so much against Him, because of that illustrious miracle He had lately wrought in raising Lazarus.

Observe what account, and what assurance they had of this miracle; no doubt, the city rang of it. But they who considered it as a proof of Christ's mission, and a ground of their faith in Him, that they might be well satisfied of the matter of fact, traced the report to the eye-witnesses of it. The people therefore that stood by when He called Lazarus out of his grave, being found out and examined, bare record, v. 17. They unanimously averred the thing to be true, and were ready to depose it upon oath, for so much is implied in the word. Note, The truth of Christ's miracles was evidenced by incontestable proofs. Probably those who had seen this miracle, published it unasked; also, to add to the triumphs of this solemn day; and Christ's coming in now from Bethany, where it was done, would put them in mind of it. Note, They who wish well to Christ's kingdom, should be forward to proclaim what they know, that may redound to his honor.

For this cause, as much as any other, the people met Him. Some, out of curiosity, desired to see one who had done such a wonderful work. Many a good sermon He had preached in Jerusalem, which drew not such crowds after Him as this one miracle. But, others, out of conscience, studied to

comes of course; therefore Christ comes to his people, to silence their fears. If we cannot reach to the exultations of joy, we should labor to get from under the oppressions of fear. Rejoice greatly; at least, fear not.

The disciples understood not at first why Christ did this, and how the Scripture was fulfilled; but when Jesus was glorified, and thereupon the Spirit poured out, then they remembered that these things were written of Him in the Old Testament, and that they and others had, in pursuance thereof, done these things to Him.

See the imperfection of the disciples in their infant state; even they understood not these things at first; did not consider, when they fetched Him the ass, and set Him thereon, that they were performing the ceremony of the inauguration of Zion's King. The Scripture is often fulfilled by the agency of those, who have not themselves an eye to the Scripture, in what they do, Isa. 45:4. There are many excellent things, both in the Word and providence of God, which the disciples themselves do not at first understand, while they see men as trees walking. That which afterward is clear, at first was dark and doubtful. It well becomes Christ's disciples, when grown up to maturity in knowledge, frequently to reflect on the follies and weakness of their beginning, that free grace may have the glory of their proficiency, and they have compassion on the ignorant. When I was a child, I spake as a child.

See the improvement of the disciples in their adult state. Though once children, they were not always so, but went on to perfection.

They understood it, when Jesus was glorified; for, [1.] Till then they did not rightly apprehend the nature of his kingdom, but expected it to appear in external pomp, and therefore knew not how to apply the Scriptures which spake of so mean an appearance. Note, The right understanding of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, its powers, glories, and victories, would prevent our misinterpreting the Scriptures that speak of it. [2.] Till then the Spirit was not poured out, who was to lead them into all truth. Note, The disciples of Christ are enabled to understand the Scriptures by the same Spirit that indited the Scriptures. The Spirit of

do Him honor, as one sent of God. This miracle was reserved for one of the last, that it might confirm those who went before, and might gain Him this honor just before his sufferings; Christ's works were all not only well done (Mark 7:37,) but well timed.

The indignation of the Pharisees at this; some of them, probably, came, and they all soon heard of, Christ's public entry. The committee, appointed to find out expedients to crush Him, thought they had gained their point when He was retired into privacy, and that He would soon be forgotten in Jerusalem, but they now rage and fret, when they see they imagined but a vain thing.

They own their ill success, v. 19. They could not, with all their insinuations, alienate the people's affections from Him, nor with their menaces restrain them from showing their affection. Note, They who oppose Christ, and his kingdom, will be made to perceive that they prevail nothing. God will accomplish his own purposes, in spite of the little efforts of their impotent malice. Ye prevail nothing, or ye profit nothing. Note, Nothing is got by opposing Christ.

They own that He had got ground; The world is gone after Him; there is a vast crowd attending Him, a world of people. Yet here, like Caiaphas, ere they were aware, they prophesied that the world would go after Him; some of all sorts, some from all parts; nations shall be disciplined. This was said to express their vexation at the growth of his interest; their envy makes them fret. If the horn of the righteous be exalted with honor, the wicked see it, and are grieved, Ps. 112:9, 10. Considering how great these Pharisees were, and what abundance of respect was paid them, one would think they needed not grudge Christ so considerable an honor as was now done Him; but proud men would monopolize honor, like Haman. They excite themselves, and one another, to a more vigorous war against Christ. 'Dallying and delaying thus will never do. We must take some more effectual course, to stop this infection; it is time to try our utmost skill and force before the grievance grows past redress.' Thus the enemies of religion are made more resolute and active by being baffled; and shall its friends be disheartened with every disappointment, who know its cause is righteous, and will at last be victorious?

V. 20-26. Certain Greeks here honor Christ, by inquiring for Him with respect. Probably this was not the same day He rode into Jerusalem, (for that day was taken up in public work,) but a day or two after.

Some think these Greeks were Jews of the dispersion, of the twelve tribes scattered among the Gentiles, called Greeks, Hellenist Jews; but others think they were Gentiles, proselytes of the gate, as the eunuch and Cornelius. Pure, natural religion met with the best assistance among the Jews; therefore those among the Gentiles, who were piously inclined, joined them in their solemn meetings, as far as allowed. There were devout worshippers of the true God, even among them that were strangers to the commonwealth of Israel. This flocking of the Gentiles to the temple at Jerusalem, was in the latter ages of the Jewish church; a happy presage of the taking down of the partition-wall between Jews and Gentiles. The forbidding of the priests to accept any oblation or sacrifice from a Gentile, (which was done by Eleazar, son of Ananias, the high priest,) Josephus saith, was one of those things that brought the Ro-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 9-19. There is nothing so infuriated but men, who have once decidedly engaged in persecution, and staked their credit in the cause, will attempt, to escape defeat, and the infamy and ruin connected with it. The success of the Gospel often enrages them to madness; and they speak and act, as if they really hoped to obtain a victory over almighty God Himself! (Note, Matt. 2:3-8. P. O. 1-8.) We should hence learn to avoid every measure, which has the most remote tendency to this dreadful evil.—But how miserable must they at length become, who are pained by the honor conferred on Zion's King! All things written of Him must be accomplished! [1742]

'all nations must bow down before Him; 'all his enemies must be put under his feet; and the whole world must either submit to Him, or be destroyed by Him. Yet the more He is glorified, the more exquisite will be the torture of those who hate Him, to all eternity. Happy then are they, and they only, who from their hearts can cry, 'Hosanna: Blessed is the King of Israel, who cometh in the name of the Lord!' and who as a rejoice in the meek and lowly triumphs of his grace, and in the prospect of his universal and everlasting kingdom of glory (Notes, 2 Thes. 1:5-10. Rev. 1:7.)

SACT.

them that came up to worship at the feast:

21 The same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus.

22 Philip cometh, and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus.

23 And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of man should be glorified.

24 Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit.

u 1 Kings 48:41-43. Is. 11:10. 60:2-14. 66:19-21. Acts 8:27.
z 143-47. 65:4-7. 14:8-9.
y 1:26-39. 6:40. Matt. 22. 8:9-12. 12:19-21. 13:22-28. Luke 13:4-4. Rom. 15:8-12.
a 1:40-41. 6:8.
b 1:41. 10:5. Mark 10:13, 14. Luke 9:49, 50.
c 13:31, 32. 17:1-5, 9-10. Is. 49:5-6. 53:10-12. 55:5. 60:9. Matt. 25:1.
d 1 Pet. 2:24, 10.
e Ps. 72:16. 1 Cor. 15:36-38.
f 32, 33. Ps. 22:15, 22-31. Is. 53:10-12. Heb. 2:9, 10. Rev. 7:9-17.

o the faith, and the discipling of the nations.

Their address to Philip was, *Sir, we would see Jesus*. They gave him a title of respect, as worthy of honor, because he was in relation to Christ. Their business is, to see Jesus; not only see his face, that they might say, at home, they had seen one so much talked of; it is probable they had seen Him when in public; but would be taught by Him, which it was no easy thing to find Him at leisure for. Now they were come to worship at the feast, they would see Jesus. Note, In our attendance upon ordinances, and particularly the gospel-passover, the great desire of our souls should be to see Jesus; to see Him as ours, to keep up communion with Him, and derive grace from Him: we miss our end in coming, if we do not see Jesus.

Philip tells Andrew, likewise of Bethsaida, and a senior fellow in the college of apostles, contemporary with Peter, and consults him what was to be done; whether he thought the motion would be acceptable or no, because Christ had sometimes said He was not sent but to the house of Israel. They agree that it must be made; but then he would have Andrew go with him, remembering the favorable acceptance Christ had promised them, in case two should agree touching any thing they should ask, Matt. 18:19. Note, Christ's ministers should be helpful to one another, and concur in helping souls to Christ. Two are better than one. It would seem that Andrew and Philip brought this message to Christ, when He was teaching in public, for we read (v. 29.) of the people that stood by; but He was seldom alone.

Christ's acceptance of this honor done Him, was signified by what He said to the people hereupon, foretelling both the honor He Himself should have in being followed, (v. 23, 24.) and the honor they should have that followed Him, v. 25, 26. This was intended for the direction and encouragement of these Greeks, and all others that desired acquaintance with Him.

He foresees that plentiful harvest in the conversion of the Gentiles, of which this was the first-fruits. Christ said to those two disciples, who spake

Verse 20.

'The Gentiles usually worshipped the gods of any foreign city or nation, into which they came. They moreover made journeys to the most celebrated cities, in which were any temples, to worship there. Many passages are extant, not only in Josephus and Philo, but in Suetonius, evidencing, that persons of the noblest birth and highest rank, even of the family of Caesar, offered sacrifices in the temple of Jerusalem. And, indeed, many Gentiles at that time were diligent in researches after true religion, and, to attain a knowledge of it, used to frequent the synagogues, although they made no external profession of the Jewish religion, nor were circumcised. These are, in Acts 17:4, called "devout Greeks." And although the epithet "devout" is not here added, yet in the New Testament, things, though changed somewhat, retain their original names. Compare Matt. 23:6, where Simon, though heathen, is still called "the leper." So, also, those who in verse 42 of Acts 13, are called "the Gentiles," are, in the next verse, styled "religious proselytes." There is, then, no difficulty in supposing that "Greeks" here simply denotes proselytes. But these "Greeks" are said to be of those who had proceeded to Jerusalem at the passover, to celebrate the festival. Now, that the Gentiles were accustomed to do this, cannot be proved. Others, therefore, understand by these, the Gentile proselytes, called proselytes of the gate,

for these Greeks, but doubted whether they should speed, *The hour is come, when the Son of man shall be glorified*, by the accession of the Gentiles to the church, and in order to that He must be rejected of the Jews.

The end designed hereby, is the glorifying of the Redeemer; 'And is it so? Do the Gentiles begin to inquire after?' Does the morning-star appear to them; and the day-spring begin to take hold of the ends of the earth? Then the hour is come for the glorifying of the Son of man.' This was no surprise to Christ, but a paradox to those about Him. Note, [1.] The effectual calling of the Gentiles into the church of God, greatly redounded to the glory of the Son of man. The multiplying of the redeemed, was the magnifying of the Redeemer. [2.] There was a set time for the glorifying of the Son of man, which came at last, when the days of his humiliation were numbered and finished, and He speaks of its approach with exultation and triumph; *The hour is come*.

The strange way in which this end was to be attained, was by the death of Christ, intimated in this simile; 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, to whom I have spoken of my death and sufferings, that except a corn of wheat fall, not only to, but into the ground, and die, be buried and lost, it abideth alone, and you never see any more of it; but if it die according to the course of nature, it bringeth forth much fruit; God giving to every seed its own body.' Christ is this Corn of wheat, the most valuable and useful grain.

The necessity of Christ's humiliation is intimated. He had never been the quickening Head and Root of the church, if He had not descended from heaven to this accursed earth, and ascended from earth to the accursed tree. He must pour out his soul unto death, else He cannot divide a portion with the great, Isa. 53:12. He shall have a seed given Him, but must shed his blood, to purchase and purify them; must win and wear them. It was necessary likewise, as a qualification for that glory, which He was to have by the accession of multitudes to his church; for if He had not by his sufferings made satisfaction for sin, and so brought in an everlasting righteousness, He had not been provided to entertain those that should come to Him, and therefore must abide alone.

The advantage of Christ's humiliation is illustrated. He fell to the ground in his incarnation, seemed to be buried alive in this earth, so much was his glory veiled; but that was not all, He died, this immortal Seed submitted to the laws of mortality, lay in the grave like seed under the clods; but as the seed comes up again green, fresh, and flourishing, and with great increase, so one dying Christ gathered to Himself thousands of living Christians, and He became their Root. The salvation of souls hitherto, and henceforward to the end of time, is all owing to the dying of this Corn of wheat. Hereby the Father and Son are glorified, the church replenished, the mystical body is kept up, and will at length be completed; and when time shall be no more, the Captain of our salvation, bringing many sons to glory by the virtue of his death, and being so made perfect by sufferings, shall be celebrated forever with the

who were born and bred as Gentiles, but afterwards made profession of the Mosaic religion. So Titman. Such were those who desired an interview with Jesus. They had probably seen, or at least heard of, his triumphant entry into Jerusalem; were aware that the people regarded Him as the promised Messiah, and saluted Him as king of Israel; and knew that great was the expectation of all the followers of Christ, that He would soon establish his earthly kingdom. In its honors and advantages they therefore desired to participate; (as the sons of Zebedee, Matt. 20:20.) and therefore anxiously wished to recommend themselves to the notice and favor of Jesus. This wish they seem to have communicated to Philip and Andrew, as having especially expressed expectations of the speedy establishment of Christ's kingdom. Wherefore Jesus undeceives them. Michaelis, Kuinoel, and Rosenmueller.

Verse 24.

[Die.] This is spoken according to the im, effect philosophy of that age. By death, says Lampe, is here meant, not the total destruction of parts, but only the dissolution and corruption of those which do not contain the germ, from which the new plant is produced. This is analogous to the death of man, by which, properly speaking, that alone turns to corruption which is not the germ of the body; this being preserved for resurrection by Divine Providence.

25 He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.

26 If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my servant be: if any man serve me, him will my Father honor.

[Practical Observations.]

27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

e Matt. 10:39. 16:25. 19:29. Mark 8:35. Luke 9:23,24. 17:33. Acts 20:24. 21:13. Heb. 11:35. Rev. 12:11.
f Gen. 29:30-33. Ec. 2:17. Luke 14:26.
g 13:16. 15:20. Rom. 1:1. 14:18. 2 Cor. 4:5. Gal. 1:10. Col. 3:24. 4:12. 2 Pet. 1:1. Jude 1.
h 10:27. 21:22. Num. 14:24. 32:11. Matt. 16:24. Mark 8:34. Luke 9:23. Eph. 5:1,2. Rev. 14:4.
i 14:3. 17:24. Ps. 17:15. Matt. 25:21. 2 Cor. 5:8. Phil. 1:23. 1 Thes. 4:17.
j 14:1-23. 1 Sam. 13:20. Prov. 27:18. 11:23-35. 13:24. Ps. 69:1-3. 88:3. Is. 53:3. Matt. 26:38,39,42. Mark 14:33-36. Luke 22:41,53. Heb. 5:7.
k as 38:15. Luke 12:49,50.
l 11:41. Matt. 26:35,34.
m 18:37. 1 Tim. 1:15. Heb. 2:14. 10:5-9

hate, that is, despise, as insufficient to make us happy, dread the temptations that are in them, and cheerfully part with them whenever they come in competition with the service of Christ, Acts 20:24. 21:13. Rev. 12:11. See here the power of godliness—it conquers the strongest natural affections; and the mystery of godliness—it is the greatest wisdom, and yet makes men hate their own lives. 2dly. Those who, in love to Christ, hate their own lives in this world, shall be abundantly recompensed in the resurrection of the just. He that hateth his life, shall keep it; he puts it into the hands of One that will keep it to life eternal, and restore it with as great an improvement, as the heavenly life can make of the earthly one.

If any man profess to serve Me, let him follow Me, as a servant his master; and where I am, there let my servant be; so some read it as part of the duty. Let him be, to attend upon Me; we read it as part of the promise, There shall he be in happiness with Me. And lest this should seem a small matter, He adds, If any man serve Me, him will my Father honor. The Greeks desired to see Jesus; but Christ lets them know that it was not enough to see Him, they must serve Him. He did not come into the world, to be gazed at, but is a King to be ruled by. He saith this for the encouragement of those who inquired after Him, to become his servants. In taking servants, it is usual to fix both the work and the wages; Christ does both here.

[1.] The work Christ expects is very easy and reasonable, and such as becomes his servants.

1st. Let them attend their Master's motions; let him follow Me. Christians must follow Christ, do the things that He saith; walk as He also walked; follow his conduct, by his providence and Spirit. We must go whither He leads us, and in the way He leads us; follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes before us. If any man serve Me, let him apply himself to the business,

admiring praises of saints and angels, Heb. 2:10-13.

He foretells and promises abundant recompense to them who cordially embrace Him, his Gospel and interest, and make it appear that they do so, by faithfulness in suffering for, or in serving Him.

In suffering for Him, (v. 25.) He that loves his life better than Christ, shall lose it; but he that hates his life in this world, and prefers the favor of God and an interest in Christ before it, shall keep it unto life eternal. This doctrine Christ much insisted on, it being the great design of his religion to wean us from this world, by setting before us another world.

See here the fatal consequence of an inordinate love of life; many a man loses his life by over-loving it. He that so loves his animal life, as to indulge his appetite, and make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof, shortens his days, shall lose the life he is so fond of, and another infinitely better. He that is so much in love with the life of the body, its ornaments and delights, as, for fear of exposing it or them, to deny Christ, shall lose it; lose a real happiness in the other world, while he thinks to secure an imaginary one in this. Skin for skin a man may give for his life, and make a good bargain; but he that gives his soul, his God, his heaven, buys life too dear, and is guilty of his folly, who sold a birth-right for a mess of pottage.

See the recompense of a holy contempt of life. He that so hates the life of the body, as to venture that for the preserving of the life of his soul, shall find both in eternal life. Note, 1st. It is required of the disciples of Christ, that they hate their life in this world; a life in this world supposes a life in the other, and this is hated when it is loved less than that. Our life in this world includes all the enjoyments of our present state, riches, honors, pleasures, and long life in the possession of them: these we must

and be always ready at my call.' Or, 'If any man do indeed serve Me, let him make an open and public profession of his relation to Me, by following Me, as the servant owns his master by following him in the streets.'

2dly. Let them attend their Master's repose; Where I am, there let my servant be, to wait upon Me. Christ is where his church is, in the assemblies of his saints, where his ordinances are administered; there let his servants be, to present themselves, and receive instructions from Him. Or, 'Where I am to be in heaven, there let the thoughts, and affections, and conversation of my servants be, where Christ sitteth,' Col. 3:1, 2.

[2.] The wages Christ promises his servants; they are very rich and noble.

1st. They shall be happy with Him; Where I am, there shall also my servant be. To be with Him, when in poverty and disgrace, would seem but poor preferment, and therefore, doubtless, He means being with Him in paradise, sitting with Him at his table above; on his throne; it is the happiness of heaven to be with Christ there, ch. 17:24. Christ speaks of heaven's happiness as if already in it, Where I am; because He was sure of it, and near to it. The same joy and glory which He thought recompense enough for all his services and sufferings, are proposed to his servants as the recompense of theirs. They that follow Him in the way, shall be with Him in the end.

2dly. They shall be honored by his Father; He will make them amends for all their pains and loss, by conferring an honor on them, such as becomes a great God to give, but far beyond what worms of the earth could expect. The Rewarder is God Himself, who takes the services done to the Lord Jesus as done to Himself. The reward is true, lasting honor; the honor that comes from God. It is said, (Prov. 27:18.) He that waits on his master, (humbly and diligently,) shall be honored. Those that wait on Christ, God will honor, though now under a veil. Thus far Christ's discourse has reference to those Greeks who desired to see Him, encouraging them to serve Him; what became of those Greeks, we are not told, but are willing to hope that they who thus asked the way to heaven, with their faces thitherward, found it, and walked in it.

V. 27-36. Honor is here done to Christ by the Father, in a voice from heaven, occasioned by the following part of his discourse, and gives occasion to a further conference with the people.

I. Christ addressed his Father, upon occasion of the trouble which seized his spirit at this time; (v. 27.) Now is my soul troubled. A strange word to come from Christ's mouth, and at this time surprising, for it comes in the midst of pleasing prospects, in which, one would think, He would have said, Now is my soul pleased. Note, Trouble of soul sometimes follows after great enlargements of spirit. In this world of mixture and change we must expect damps upon our joy, and the highest degree of comfort to be the next degree to trouble. When Paul had been in the third heaven, he had a thorn in the flesh.

Christ's dread of his approaching sufferings;

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 20-26. Those who are nearest to the means of grace, often ripen the most rapidly for vengeance, while sinners come from afar to inquire after Christ: and it is joyful, to hear the ignorant and careless desiring the instructions and prayers of ministers. To receive inquirers of this character is his glory and joy; and when they approach Him, 'He sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied.' (Note, Is. 53:11, 12.)—So great was his love to us perishing rebels, that He would not abide alone in heavenly felicity; but chose to assume our nature, to submit to death in its most dreadful form, and to be laid in the grave; that He might return to glory, and be followed by an unnumerable multitude of those, whom He had 'redeemed unto God with his blood!' While we admire this love of our Redeemer, let us inquire whether our conduct and character prove us to be the increase of this 'Corn of wheat.' Selfish, ambitious, contentious, revengeful, or sensual professors of Chris-

tianity, are not the genuine produce from the holy Jesus. Such are doubtless the tares, which the enemy has sown in the field, and which will at last be separated and cast into the fire: while the wheat, who are conformed by divine grace to their Savior's likeness, shall be preserved to his heavenly kingdom. (Notes, Matt. 13:36-43. 2 Cor. 3:1-6. P. O.) Let us 'then examine whether 'Christ be in us, the Hope of glory;' and let us beg of Him to render us more and more indifferent about this life and its trifling concerns; that we may be ready to relinquish, venture, or suffer any thing, in order to obtain eternal life; and that we may serve the Lord Jesus with a willing mind, and follow his example. For where He is, there will all his true servants be forever, whatever station they have filled in his church on earth; and they will be honored by the Father before his holy angels, far above the most enlarged of their present expectations.

SCOTT.

Verse 27.

What shall I say? &c. Some understand here two interroga-

tions, and read, 'What shall I say? Father save Me from this hour?' i. e. 'Shall I say Father, save Me, &c.' BLOOMFIELD

28 "Father, glorify thy name. "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

29 The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it "thundered: others said, "An angel spake to him.

30 Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, *but for your sakes.

31 Now *is the judgment of this world: *now shall the prince of this world be cast out.

p 18:11. Matt 26:42. Mark 14:36.
q Matt. 3:17. 17:5. 2 Pet. 1:17.
r 2:22. 14:40-41.
s 18:31, 32. Is 49:3-7. Eph. 2:7. 3:10, 21. Phil. 1:6-11. Rev. 5:9-14.
t Ex. 19:16. 20:19. Job 37:2-5. 40:3.
u Is. 10:5. Rev. 6:1. 8:5. 11:19. 14:2.
v Acts 23:8, 9. Rev. 18:12.
w 5:34. 11:15, 16. 2 Cor. 8:9.
x 2:22-27. 16:8-10.
y 14:30. 16:11. Gen. 3:15. Is. 49:24, 25. Matt. 12:28-39. Luke 10:17-20.
z Acts 26:18. 2 Cor. 4:4. Eph. 2:1, 2. Col. 2:15. Heb. 2:14. 1 John 3:8. Rev. 12:9-11. 20:2, 3.

when we know not what to do, to turn our eyes to Him.

His prayer to the Father in this strait; *Father, save Me from this hour—out of this hour*: praying not so much that it might not come, as that He might be brought through it. This was the language of innocent nature, poured forth in prayer. Note, It is the duty and interest of *troubled souls* to have recourse to God by prayer, as a Father. Christ was voluntary in his sufferings, yet prayed to be saved from them. Note, Prayer against a trouble may very well consist with patience under it, and submission to the will of God. Observe, He calls his suffering, *This hour*, meaning the events of the *time now at hand*; hereby He intimates that the time of his suffering was, (1.) *A set time*, set to an hour, and He knew it. It was said twice before, that his hour was not yet come, but it was now so near that He might say it was come. (2.) *A short time*; an hour is soon over, so were Christ's sufferings; He could see through them to the *joy set before Him*.

He presently corrects Himself, and, as it were, recalls what He had said; *But for this cause came I to this hour*. Innocent nature got the first word, but divine wisdom and love the last. Note, They who would proceed regularly, must go upon *second thoughts*. With the second thought He checked Himself; *For this cause came I to this hour*; He does not *silence* Himself with this, that He could not avoid it, there was no remedy; but *satisfies* Himself, that He could not avoid it, for it was his own voluntary engagement, and the crown of his whole undertaking. Reference is here had to the divine counsels concerning his sufferings, by virtue of which, it behooved Him to submit and suffer. Note, This should reconcile us to the darkest hours of our lives, that we were all along designed for them; see 1 Thess. 3:3.

Upon the withdrawing of his former petition, He presents another; *Father, glorify thy name*; to the same purport with, *Father, thy will be done*, for God's will is his glory. This speaks more than barely a *submission* to the will of God, it is a *consecration* of his sufferings to the glory of God. It was a mediatorial word, and was spoken by Him as our Surety. The wrong which by sin we have done to God, is *in his glory*, his declarative glory; for in nothing else are we capable of doing Him injury. We were never able to make Him satisfaction for this wrong done Him, nor any creature for us; nothing therefore remained, but that God should get Him honor upon us in our utter ruin. Here therefore our Lord Jesus *interposed*, undertook to satisfy God's injured honor, and He did it by his *humiliation*; He denied Himself

None is my soul troubled. Now the black and dismal scene began, now were the first throes of the travail of his soul, now his soul began to be exceeding sorrowful. Note, (1.) *The sin of our souls was the trouble of Christ's soul*, when He undertook to redeem us, and to make his soul an offering for our sin. (2.) *The trouble of his soul was designed to ease the trouble of ours*; for, after this, He said to his disciples, (ch. 14: 1.) *Let not your hearts be troubled*; why should yours be troubled and mine too? Our Lord went on cheerfully in his work, in prospect of the joy set before Him, and yet submitted to *trouble of soul*. Holy mourning is consistent with spiritual joy, and the way to eternal joy. Christ was *now* troubled, *now* in sorrow, *now* in fear, for a season; but it would not be so *always*, nor *long*. The same is the comfort of Christians in their troubles. They are but *for a moment*, and will be turned into joy.

And what shall I say? This does not speak Him consulting with any other, as if He needed advice, but considering with Himself what was fit to be said now. When our souls are troubled, we must take heed of speaking unadvisedly, but debate with ourselves what we shall say. Christ speaks like one at a loss, as if what He should choose He wot not. There was a struggle between the *work* He had taken upon Him, which required sufferings, and the *nature* He had taken upon Him, which dreaded them; between these two He pauses with, *What shall I say?* He looked, and there was *none to help*. Calvin observes this as a great instance of Christ's humiliation, that He should speak thus like one at a plunge. *The more entirely the Lord of glory emptied Himself, the brighter is the proof of the love He bare us*. Thus He was *in all points tempted as we are*, to encourage us,

in, and divested Himself of, the honors due the Son of God incarnate. Here He makes a *tender* of his satisfaction as an equivalent; *Father, glorify thy name*; let thy justice be honored upon the *Sacrifice*, not upon the *sinner*; let the debt be levied upon Me, I am solvent, the principal is not; thus He restored that which He took not away.

II. The Father heard Him, and this answer was given—*by a voice from heaven*. The Jews speak much of the *daughter of a voice* as one of those *divers manners* by which God in time past spake to the prophets; but we do not find any instance of his speaking thus to any but our Lord Jesus; it was an honor reserved for Him, Matt. 3: 17. 17: 5.

The answer was an express return to that petition, *Father, glorify thy name. I have glorified it, and I will glorify it yet again*. When we pray, *Our Father, hallowed be thy name*, this is a comfort to us, that it is an *answered* prayer; answered to Christ here, and, in Him, to all true believers. (1.) The name of God had been glorified in the *life of Christ*, in his doctrine and miracles, and all the examples He gave of holiness and goodness. (2.) *It should be further glorified in the death and sufferings of Christ*; his wisdom and power, his justice and holiness, his truth and goodness, were greatly glorified; the demands of a broken law were answered, the affront done to God's government satisfied for, and God declared Himself well pleased. What God has done for the glorifying of his own name, is an encouragement to us to expect what He will yet further do.

Of the standers-by, we may hope there were some whose minds were so well prepared to receive a divine revelation, that they understood what was said. But notice is here taken of the perverse suggestion of the multitude; some of them said that it *thundered*, others, who took notice that there was an articulate voice, said that certainly an *angel spake to Him*. Now this shows, 1. That it was a *real thing*, even in the judgment of those that were not at all well affected to Him. 2. That they were loath to admit so plain a proof of Christ's divine mission. They would rather say that it was this, or that, or any thing, than that God spake to Him in answer to his prayer; and yet, if it *thundered with articulate sounds*, (as Rev. 10: 3, 4.) was not that God's voice? Or, if *angels spake to Him*, are not they God's messengers? But thus God speaks once, yea twice, and man perceives it not.

The account our Savior Himself gives of this voice is, *'It came not because of Me, not merely for my encouragement and satisfaction,'* (then it might have been whispered in his ear privately,) *'but for your sakes.'* (1.) 'That all you who heard it, may believe that the Father hath sent Me.' What is said from heaven concerning Jesus, and the glorifying of the Father in Him, is said *for our sakes*, that we might submit to, and rest upon Him. (2.) 'That you, who are to follow Me in sufferings, may therein be comforted with the same comforts that carry Me on.' Let this encourage them to part with life itself for his sake, if called to it, that it should redound to the honor of God. Note, The promises and supports granted to Jesus in his sufferings, were intended *for our sakes*. *For our sakes He sanctified Himself, and comforted Himself*.

He that lay in the Father's bosom, knew his voice, and what was the meaning of it; two

Verse 31.

'Some think the phrase, *this world*, meant the general wickedness then so prevalent among the Jews and Gentiles; a simple ignorance of divine truths; errors, unbelief, idolatry, vices and crimes of every sort, an, the misery resulting from them; the *general body of sinners* in the whole world; and by "the prince," either properly the evil spirit, i. e. Satan; or, as others think, improperly, and by personification, "the spirit of wickedness." For when, in the New Testament, mention is made of "the prince of this world," some would understand the devil, and are of opinion that he was so called, either from the manner of thinking and speaking, at that time in use among all nations, and more particularly the Jews, (especially after the Babylonish captivity,) who thought that the whole world, and peculiarly the air, was filled with demons, both good and evil; and that their prince called, by way of eminence, the devil, had a power over the bodies and external affairs of men, as also over their minds; and was the author of all

evils, but especially of vice and sin, and thus held his chief dominion among the Gentiles; or, on this account, namely, since he is said to be the author of all sin and misery, by exciting men to sin, for which reason sinners are said to be the works of the devil. Others understand the "genius of the age," what we call a spirit of unbelief and iniquity; and the word translated *prince* is indeed so used in the New Testament, as in Eph. 2: 2, where this sense is clear; first, from his being called the prince of the power of the air, (or, as in some places, of *darkness*, i. e. wickedness;) and secondly, since in the preceding words there is the synonyme, "the course of this world," i. e. the genius and the manners of the age. Or when the apostle attaches power to Satan (Acts 26: 18) he explains it in Col. 1: 13, by the power of *darkness*, and opposes to it "the kingdom of his beloved Son." So that "the prince of this world" means the influence vice exerted over the minds of men." *Tittman*. (But see P. O. 47—33.)

BLU. FIELD

32 And I, *if I be lifted up from the earth, ^b will draw ^c all men unto me.

33 This he said, ^d signifying what death he should die.

Practical Observations.]

34 The people answered him, We have heard out of the law, that Christ abideth forever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? ^e who is this Son of man?

■ 3:14. 9:28. 19:17-18. Deut. 21:22, 23. 2 Sam. 18:10-18. Ps. 22:16-18.
■ 3:15. 1 Pet. 2:24. 3:18.
■ 6:41. Cant. 1:14. Hos. 11:4.
■ 1:7-29. Is. 49:6. Rom. 8:17-19. 1 Tim. 2:6. Heb. 2:5, 10. 1 John 2:2. Rev. 5:9.
■ 18:32. 21:29.
■ 10:34. 15:26. Rom. 3:19.
■ 2 Egn. 7:15. Ps. 72:7, 17-19. 89:36, 57. 110:4. Is. 9:7. Ec. 37:24, 25. Dan. 2:44. 7:14, 27. Mic. 4:7.
■ 3:14-16. 5:32-47. 9:53-58. Matt. 16:13-16. 21:10. 22:52-45.

lasting righteousness was thereby brought in, not for Jews only, but the whole world, 1 John 2:1, 2. Dan. 9:24. 3dly. It is a judgment of condemnation against the powers of darkness; see ch. 16:11. Judgment is put for the asserting of an invaded right. At the death of Christ there was a trial between the serpent and the *promised seed*, for the world, and the lordship of it; the devil had borne sway among the children of men, *time out of mind*; he now pleads prescription, grounding his claim also upon the *forfeiture* incurred by sin. We find him willing to have come to a composition; (Luke 4:6, 7.) he would have given the kingdoms of this world to Christ, provided He would hold them *by, from, and under him*: but Christ, by dying, takes off the forfeiture to divine justice, then fairly *disputes* the title, and *recovers* it in the court of heaven. Satan's dominion is declared to be an usurpation, and the world adjudged to the Lord Jesus as his right, Ps. 2: 6, 8.

None is the prince of this world cast out.

The devil is here called the *prince of this world*, because he rules over the men of the world by the things of the world; he is the ruler of the darkness of this world, that is, of this dark world, of those in it that walk in darkness, 2 Cor. 4: 4. Eph. 6: 12.

He is said to be *now* cast out; for, whatever had been done hitherto toward the weakening of the devil's kingdom, was done in the virtue of a Christ to come, and therefore is said to be done *now*. Christ, *reconciling* the world to God by his death, broke the *power of death*, and cast out Satan as a *destroyer*; Christ, *reducing* the world to God by the doctrine of his cross, broke the *power of sin*, and cast out Satan as a *deceiver*. The bruising of his heel was the breaking of the serpent's head, Gen. 3: 15. When his oracles were silenced, his temples forsaken, his idols famished, and the kingdoms of the world become Christ's kingdoms, then was the *prince of this world cast out*, as appears by comparing this with Rev. 12: 8-11. where it is said to be done by the *blood of the Lamb*. Christ's frequent casting of devils out of the bodies of people, was an indication of the great design of his undertaking.

(2.) By the death of Christ souls shall be converted, and that would be the casting out of Satan; *If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto Me.*

The great design of our Lord Jesus was, to draw all men to Him, not the Jews only, who had been long in profession near to God, but the Gentiles also, who had been *afar off*; He was to be the desire of all nations, (Hag. 2: 7.) and to Him must the gathering of the people be. His enemies dreaded that the world would go after Him, notwithstanding their opposition. Christ is all in all in the conversion of a soul. 1st. It is Christ that *draws*; *I will draw*. It is sometimes ascribed to the Father, (ch. 6: 44.) but here to the Son, who is the *Arm of the Lord*. He does not drive by force, but draws with the *cords of a man*, (Hos. 11: 4. Jer. 31: 3.) as the lodestone; the soul is *willing*,

things God intended, when He said that He would glorify his own name.

(1.) That, by the death of Christ, *Satan should be conquered*; (v. 31.) *Now is the judgment*. He speaks with a divine exultation, 'Now the year of my redeemed is come, and the time prefixed for the breaking of the serpent's head; now for that glorious achievement, so long thought of in the divine counsels, talked of in the written Word, so much the hope of saints, and the dread of devils.'

Now is the judgment of this world; 'Now is the crisis of this world.' The sick and diseased world is now upon the turning point, this is the critical day, upon which the trembling scale will turn for life or death, to all mankind; all that are not recovered by this, will be left hopeless. Or, rather, the death of Christ was the judgment of this world. 1st. A judgment of discovery and distinction. Men shall have their character according as the cross of Christ is to them; to some it is foolishness and a stumbling-block, and to others the wisdom and power of God; of which there was a figure in the thieves crucified with Him. By this, men are judged, what they think of the death of Christ. 2dly.

It is a judgment of favor and absolution. Christ upon the cross interposed as a Sacrifice for sin and a Surety for sinners, so that when He was judged, and iniquity laid upon Him, and He was wounded for our transgressions, it was as it were the judgment of this world, for an ever-

but it is in a day of power. 2dly. It is to Christ that we are drawn; 'I will draw them to Me as the centre of their unity.' The soul that was at a distance from Christ, is brought into an acquaintance with Him; though shy and distrustful of Him, it is brought to love and trust Him; drawn up to his terms, into his arms. Christ was now going to heaven, and would draw men's hearts to Him thither.

The strange method He took to accomplish his design, by being lifted up from the earth. What He meant by that, to prevent mistake, we are told; (v. 33.) *This He spoke, signifying by what death He should die*, the death of the cross, though they had designed, and attempted to stone Him to death. He was lifted up as a spectacle to the world, between heaven and earth, as unworthy of either; yet the word here used signified an honorable advancement, *If I be exalted*; He reckoned his sufferings his honor. Whatever death we die, if we die in Christ, we shall be lifted up out of this dungeon, this den of lions, into the regions of light and love. We should learn of our Master to speak of dying with a holy pleasantness, and to say, 'We shall then be lifted up.'

Christ's drawing all men to Him, followed his being lifted up. It followed after it in time. The great increase of the church was after the death of Christ; while Christ lived, we read of thousands at a sermon miraculously fed, but it was after his death that we read of thousands at a sermon added to the church. It followed as a blessed consequence of it. Note, There is powerful virtue and efficacy in the death of Christ, to draw souls to Him. The cross of Christ, though to some a stumbling-stone, to others is a load-stone. Some make it an allusion to the drawing of fish into a net; the lifting up of Christ was as the spreading of the net; (Matt. 13: 47, 48.) or to the setting up of a standard, which draws soldiers together; or rather, it refers to the lifting up of the brazen serpent in the wilderness, which drew all those to it that were stung with fiery serpents, as soon as it was known that it was lifted up, and there was healing virtue in it. Oh, what flocking was there to it! So there was to Christ, when salvation through Him was preached to all nations; see ch. 3: 14, 15.

The people, though they had heard the voice from heaven, and the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth, object, and pick quarrels with Him. Christ had called Himself, the Son of man, (v. 23.) which they knew to be one of the titles of the Messiah, Dan. 7: 13. He had also said, that the Son of man must be lifted up, which they understood of his dying, and, probably, He explained Himself so; and some think repeated what He said to Nicodemus, (ch. 3: 14.) *So must the Son of man be lifted up*. Against this,

They alleged those Scriptures which speak of the perpetuity of the Messiah, that He should be so far from being cut off in the midst of his days, that He should be a Priest forever, (Ps. 110: 4.) and a King forever, (Ps. 89: 29, &c.) that He should have length of days forever and ever, and his years as many generations; (Ps. 61: 6.) from all this they inferred that the Messiah should not die. Great knowledge in the letter of Scripture, if the heart be unsanctified, is capable of being abused to serve the cause of infidelity, and to fight against Christianity with

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 27-33. Even temporary pain and suffering are grievous; and the holy Jesus felt a reluctance of nature to the load of anguish, which He endured for our sins. We cannot therefore choose suffering for its own sake; reluctance of mind and inward perturbation will be felt on such occasions. The true believer will sometimes scarcely know what he shall say: his nature will plead, 'Father, save me from this hour;' (Note, 18: 10-14, v. 11.) but grace will enable him to add, 'Father, glorify thy name;' and, after the example of his crucified Lord, he will be resigned to suffering, that God may be glorified. This state of mind and heart, notwithstanding all its defects, will be graciously accepted through Him, who has glorified the

Father, and will glorify Him, to all eternity.—In the great event of the death of Christ, faith beholds the world judged and condemned; Satan vanquished and deprived of his dominion; his slaves liberated, his works destroyed, his cause eventually ruined; and while we look to Jesus upon the cross, we find ourselves impelled by fear to flee from deserved wrath, allured by hope to seek unmerited mercy, and drawn by admiration and gratitude to renounce all other confidences, to break through all impediments, to cast away all our transgressions, and to give up all other interests, that we may enlist under the Redeemer's banner, and aspire to a participation of his glory. (Notes, 1: 29. Heb. 12: 2, 3.)

SCOTT.

Lifted up. An expression by no means unfrequent among the rabbins, in the sense of "to die;" and some among the people grounded that our Lord spoke of his death.

BLOOMFIELD.

35 Then Jesus said unto them, ^b Yet a little while is the light with you: ^c walk while ye have the light, ^d lest darkness come upon you: ^e for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth.

36 While ye have light, ^f believe in the light, that ye may be ^g the children of light. These things spake Jesus, ^h and departed, and did hide himself from them.

37 ¶ But ⁱ though he had done so many mi-

ⁱ 7:33, 9:4, 15:16. Heb. 3:7, 8.
^j 35:46, 1:5-9, 8:12, 9:5. Is. 2:5, 42:6, 7. Rom. 13:12-14. Eph. 5:8, 14:15. 1 Thes. 5:5-8. 1 John 1:6, 7.
^k 39:40. Ps. 69:29-38. Jer. 13:16, 17. Rom. 11:7-10, 2 Cor. 3:14, 15.
^l 11:10. Prov. 4:19. 1 John 2:8-11.
^m 1:7, 3:21. Is. 60:1. Acts 13:47, 48.
ⁿ Luke 16:8. Eph. 5:8. 1 Thes. 5:5.
^o 8:29. 10:39-40. 11:54. Matt. 21:17.
^p 1:11, 11:42. 15:24. Matt. 11:20-24. Luke 16:31.

inds are stones of stumbling—as Christ crucified, and yet glorified; lifted up from the earth, yet drawing all men to Him.

They ask, hereupon, *Who is this Son of man?* This they asked tauntingly, as if now they had baffled Him. 'Thou sayest, *The Son of man must die*; we have proved the Messiah must not; where is then thy Messiahship? This Son of man, as Thou callest Thyself, cannot be the Messiah.' His meanness and poverty prejudiced them against Christ; they would rather have no Christ than a suffering one.

The objection was a perfect cavil; they might, if they pleased, answer it themselves. Man dies, and yet is immortal, and abideth forever, so the Son of man; therefore, instead of answering these fools according to their folly, He gives them a serious caution to take heed of trifling away the day of their opportunities, in such vain and fruitless cavils as these; '*Yet a little while*, and but a little while, *is the light with you*; therefore be wise, and walk while ye have the light.'

In general, we may observe here, 1. The concern Christ has for the souls of men, and his desire of their welfare. With what tenderness does He here admonish those to look well to themselves, who were contriving ill against Him? Even when He endured the contradiction of sinners, He endeavored their conversion. See Prov. 29:10. 2. The method He takes with those objectors; with meekness instructing those that opposed themselves, 2 Tim. 2:25. Were but men's consciences awakened by a due concern about their everlasting state, and did they consider how little time they have to spend, and none to spare, they would not waste thoughts and time in cavils.

We have here,

(1.) *The privilege and advantage of having Christ and his Gospel, with the shortness and uncertainty of the enjoyment of it; yet a little while is the light with you.* Christ is this light; and some of the ancients suggest, that, in calling Himself the Light, He gives a tacit answer to their objection. His dying was as consistent with his abiding forever, as the setting of the sun is with his perpetuity. The duration of Christ's kingdom is compared to that of the sun and moon, Ps. 72:17. 89:36, 37. The ordinances of heaven are unchangeably fixed, yet the sun and moon set and are eclipsed; so Christ, the Sun of righteousness, abides forever, and yet was eclipsed by his sufferings, and was but a little while within our horizon. The Jews at this time had the light with them, they had Christ's presence, heard his preaching, saw his miracles. The Scripture is to us a light shining in a dark place. It was to be but a little while with them; Christ would shortly leave them, their visible church state would soon after be dissolved, and the kingdom of God taken from them, and blindness and hardness would happen to Israel. Note, It is good for us all to consider what a little while we are to have the light with us. Time is short, and perhaps opportunity not so long. The candlestick may be removed; however, we must be removed shortly. Yet a little while is the light of life with us; yet a little while is the light of the Gospel with us, the day of grace, the means of grace, the Spirit of grace, a very little while.

The warning to make the best of these advantages, because of the danger of losing them; *Walk while ye have the light*: as travellers make the best of their way forward, that they may not be benighted, because travelling in the night is unsafe. 'Come,' say they, 'let us mend our pace, while we have day-light.' Thus would should we be for our souls, who are journeying towards eternity. Note, [1.] It is our business to press forward toward heaven, and get nearer it by being made fitter for it. Our life is but a day, and we have a day's journey to go. [2.] The best time of walking is while we have the light. The day is the proper season for work, as the night is for rest. The proper time for getting grace is when the word of

its own weapons. Their perverseness, in opposing this to what Jesus had said, will appear, if we consider, that, when they vouched the Scripture to prove that the Messiah *abideth forever*, they took no notice of those texts which speak of the Messiah's death: they had heard out of the law, that Messiah *abideth forever*; and had they never heard out of the law, that Messiah *shall be cut off*, (Dan. 9:26.) and that He shall *pour out his soul unto death*, (Isa. 53:12.) and particularly, that his hands and feet should be pierced? Note, We often run into great mistakes, and then defend them with scripture-arguments, by putting those things asunder, which God in his Word has put together; and opposing one truth, under pretence of supporting another. We have heard, out of the Gospel, that which exalts free grace; we have heard also that which enjoins duty, and we must cordially embrace both, and not set them at variance. When they opposed what Christ said concerning the sufferings of the Son of man, they took no notice of what He said concerning his glory and exaltation. They had heard out of the law, that Christ *abideth forever*; and had they not heard our Lord say that He should be glorified, that He should bring forth much fruit, and draw all men to Him? Had He not just now promised immortal honors to his followers, which supposed his abiding forever? But this they overlook. Thus unfair disputants oppose some parts of the opinion of an adversary, to which, if they would but take it entire, they could not but subscribe; and in the doctrine of Christ there are paradoxes, which to men of corrupt

grace is preached to us, and the Spirit of grace strives with us; then is the time to take heed. [3.] We are highly concerned thus to improve opportunities, for fear lest our day be finished before we have finished our day's work and journey. Then darkness comes, that is, such an utter incapacity to make sure the great salvation, as renders the state of the careless sinner deplorable; so that if his work be undone then, it is likely to be undone forever.

The sad condition of those who have sinned away the Gospel, and are come to the period of their day of grace. *They walk in darkness*, and know neither where, nor whither they go; neither the way they are walking in, nor the end they are walking toward. He that is destitute of the light of the Gospel, not acquainted with its discoveries and directions, wanders endlessly in mistakes and errors, and is not aware of it. Set aside the instructions of the Christian doctrine, and we know little of the difference between good and evil. He is going to destruction, and knows not his danger, for he is either sleeping or dancing at the pit's brink.

The great duty and interest of every one of us, is inferred from all this: *While ye have the light, believe in the light.* The Jews had now Christ's presence with them, let them improve it; afterward they had the first offers of the Gospel by the apostles wherever they came; this is an admonition to them to accept the offer when it is made: Christ saith the same to us all who enjoy the Gospel. Note, It is the duty of every one to believe in the gospel-light, to receive it as a divine light, to subscribe to the truths it discovers, and to follow its conduct. Christ is the light; we must believe in Him as revealed to us; as a true light that will not deceive us. We are concerned to do this, while we have the Gospel to show us the way to Him. They that believe in the light, shall be the children of light, shall be owned as Christians, who are called children of light, (Luke 16:8. Eph. 5:8.) and of the day, 1 Thes. 5:5. They that have God for their Father, are children of light, for God is light; they are born from above, and heirs of heaven, for heaven is light.

Christ's retiring from them, hereupon; *These things spake Jesus*, and said no more at this time, but left this to their consideration, and departed, and did hide Himself from them. And this He did for their conviction and awakening. If they will not regard what He hath said, He will have nothing more to say to them. They are joined to their infidelity, as Ephraim to idols; let them alone. Note, Christ justly removes the means of grace from those that quarrel with them, and hides his face from a forward generation, Deut. 32:20. He hid Himself from their rage, retreating, it is probable, to Bethany, where He lodged. By this it appears, that what He said exasperated them, and they were made worse by that which should have made them better.

V. 37-41. We have here the honor done our Lord Jesus by the Old-Testament prophets, who foretold and lamented the infidelity of the many that believed not on Him. It was a dishonor and grief to Christ, that his doctrine met with so much opposition; but this takes off the wonder and reproach, makes the offence of it to cease, and it caused no disappointment to Christ, that herein the Scriptures were fulfilled. Two things are here said concerning this untractable people, and both were foretold by the evangelical prophet Isaiah, that they did not, and could not, believe.

They did not believe; *Though He had done so many miracles before them.* Observe,

The plenty of the means of conviction which Christ afforded them; He did miracles, so many miracles; it signifies both so many, and so great. It refers to all the miracles He had wrought formerly; nay, the blind and lame now came to Him into the temple, and He healed them, Matt. 21:14. His miracles were the great proof of his mission, and on their evidence He relied. He here insists upon their number and notoriety. The multitude of them was no, only a proof of his unexhausted power, but gave the greater opportunity to examine them; [747]

racles before them, yet they believed not on him:

38 ^a That the saying of ^a Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spake, Lord, ^a who hath believed our report? and to whom hath ^a the arm of the Lord been ^a revealed?

39 Therefore ^a they could not believe, ^a because that Esaias said again,

q 15:25. 17:12. 19:24, 36, 37. Matt. 27:55. Acts 1:32-29.
2 Pet. 1:21. ^a Esai. 53:1. Rom. 10:16.
r Pa. 44:3. 1 Cor. 10:11. 51:5, 9. 1 Cor. 1:24.
s Matt. 16:17. 2 Cor. 3:14-18. 4:3-6. Gal. 1:16. Eph. 1:17-20.
t 5:44. 6:44, 65. 10:33. 14:18-20. 2 Pet. 2:14.
y Is. 6:9, 10.

ed. The Gospel is here called *their report*; *Who has believed our hearing*, which we have heard, *from God*, and which you have heard *from us*; our report is the *report* of a matter of fact. It is foretold, that few comparatively of those to whom this report is brought, will be persuaded to credit it. Many hear, but few heed and embrace it; *Who hath believed it?* Here and there one, but none to speak of; not the wise, not the noble; it is to them but a report which wants confirmation. It is spoken of as a thing to be greatly lamented, that so few believe the report of the Gospel. A sorrowful account is brought to God by the messengers, of the cold entertainment they and their report had; *as the servant came, and showed his lord all these things*, Luke 14: 21. The reason why men believe not the report of the Gospel, is, *the arm of the Lord is not revealed* to them, they do not acquaint themselves with, and submit themselves to, the grace of God; they do not experimentally know the virtue and fellowship of Christ's death, in which the arm of the Lord is revealed. They saw Christ's miracles, but did not see the arm of the Lord revealed in them.

They could not believe, *because Esaias said, He hath blinded their eyes*. This is a hard saying, who can explain it? We are sure that God is infinitely just and merciful, and therefore we cannot think that there is in any impotency to good, resulting from the counsels of God, as lays them under a fatal necessity of being evil; God damns none by mere sovereignty, yet it is said, *They could not believe*. Austin, coming in course to the exposition of these words, expresses himself with a holy fear of entering upon an inquiry into this mystery. *His judgments are just, but hidden*. 1. They could not believe, that is, they would not; they were obstinately resolved in their infidelity; thus Chrysostom and Austin incline to understand it; and the former gives divers instances of Scripture of the putting of an impotency to signify the invincible refusal of the will, as Gen. 37: 4. *They could not speak peaceably to Him*. And ch. 7: 7. This is a moral impotency, like that of

Verses 37-41.

The prophecy was not the *motive*, or the *cause*, of their wickedness; but it was the declaration of the purpose of God, which could not be defeated; as, therefore, this prophecy stood in Scripture against them, and others of like character, who hated the truth from love of sin. The event became certain: in which sense it is said, that *they could not believe*. (Note, 2 Thes. 2: 8-12.) Numbers indeed were given up to judicial blindness; yet others in the multitude were not; and the preceding exhortations and warnings would eventually be useful to many of these, as well as manifest the desperate enmity of the others. In fact, a large remnant, according to the election of grace, were afterwards converted, while the bulk of the nation was left to be blinded and hardened. (Notes, Acts 21: 17-21. Rom. 11: 1-10.) The *unfailing certainty* of predicted events must arise, not only from the infallible foreknowledge of God, but also from his fixed decree; unless it can be thought that He foreknows things over which He has no power, and which He cannot possibly alter! But if thousands and ten thousands more of the Jews, rulers and priests among the number, had embraced the Gospel, these prophecies would nevertheless have been accomplished in all the unbelieving part of the nation; as the prediction and promise of God, concerning Abraham's seed inheriting Canaan, were fulfilled, though the generation which came first out of Egypt perished in the wilderness through their unbelief. (Num. 14: 27-30, 34. Ps. 95: 10-17.) So that no hindrance to any man's complying with our Lord's exhortations arose from the prophecy or purpose of God; which related only to those who obstinately refused to comply with them. (39.) *Could not*, (Mark 1: 45.) "That is," says Theophylact, out of Chrysostom, "they would not." And yet, if you look to the thing itself, it is true, that the reprobate do not believe; because they *will* not believe; so that this is the nearest, and most direct cause of their unbelief. But the evangelist goes deeper, when he says, "They could not believe;" for as the reprobate will not believe, so it is certain that they *cannot* be willing, because the darkness in which they are born cannot comprehend the light." Beza. (Note, Acts 28: 23-29.) St. John adds, that the prophet *said* these things, when he saw *His* glory and spake of Him; (41.) evidently meaning Christ, of whom he discoursed both before and afterwards. The reference is made to that august vision which Isaiah had, of the

one that is accustomed to do evil, Jer. 13: 23. But, 2. They could not, because Esaias had said, *He hath blinded their eyes*. Here the difficulty increases; it is certain that God is not the author of sin, and yet,

(1.) The righteous hand of God is sometimes to be acknowledged in the blindness and obstinacy of those who persist in impenitence and unbelief, by which they are justly punished for their former resistance of divine light, and rebellion against the divine law. If God withhold abused grace, and give men over to *indulge* lusts; if He permit the *evil spirit* to do his work on them that resisted the *good Spirit*; and if in his providence He lay *stumbling-blocks* in the way of sinners, which confirm their prejudices, then He *blinds* their eyes, and *hardens* their hearts, and these are *spiritual judgments*, like the giving up of idolatrous gentiles to *vile affections*, and degenerate Christians to *strong delusions*.

Observe the method of conversion implied here, and the steps taken in it. Sinners are brought to discern the reality, and have some knowledge of divine things; to *understand with their heart*, to apply these things to themselves; not only to assent, but to consent and accept; to be *converted*, and turned from sin to Christ, from the world and the flesh to God. Then God will *heal*, justify, and sanctify them; will *pardon* their sins, which are as *bleeding wounds*, and mortify their corruptions, which are as *lurking diseases*. When God denies his grace, nothing of this is done; the alienation of the mind from, and its aversion to, God and the divine life, grows into a rooted and invincible antipathy, and so the case becomes desperate.

(2.) Judicial blindness and hardness are in the Word of God threatened against those who persist in wickedness, and were particularly foretold concerning the Jewish church and nation. Known unto God are all *his* works, and all *ours* too. Christ knew before who would betray Him, and spake of it, ch. 6: 70. This is a confirmation of the truth of scripture-prophecies, and thus even the unbelief of the Jews may help to *strengthen our faith*. It is also intended for caution to particular persons, to *beware lest that come upon them, which was spoken of in the prophets*, Acts 13: 40.

(3.) What God has foretold will certainly come to pass, and so it might be said, that *therefore they could not believe*, because God by the prophets had foretold they would not; for such is the knowledge of God, that He cannot be deceived in what He *foresees*, and such his truth, that He cannot *deceive* in what He *fore-*

glory of the Lord; and the worship of the attendant seraphim; and the prophet then saw "the glory of Christ, and spake of Him;" from which we confidently infer that Jesus is JEHOVAH. The word, in the first verse of the chapter referred to, is not JEHOVAH, but ADONAI; but it is JEHOVAH in the third verse; and the words in the fifth verse, "Thine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts," are very remarkable. (Marg. Ref. e-g—Notes, 1. 18. Is. 6: 1-5.) "If these words," "These things said Isaiah, when he saw his glory," are not to be understood of Christ, what use have they, or to what purpose do they serve? There being no need to tell us, that Isaiah then saw the "glory of God the Father, and spake of Him." Whithy. Scott.

(35.) *The arm of the Lord been revealed*. This phrase may allude to the habit, generally worn by the Easterns and especially by persons of rank, which was a long robe without sleeves; so that when the arm was stretched out to perform any action requiring strength, it would appear *uncovered*. [It was customary for heroes, when preparing for battle, to *uncover the arms*; (Virg. *Æn.* 5. and *Arrian*?) also when giving orders to their soldiers. See Plautus. *Lamps*, in *Bloomfield*.] (Compare Is. 53: 1.) In this connection it seems strongly to imply, that whenever true faith is produced in the mind, it is to be considered as the effect of a *divine energy*. (See Eph. 1: 19. and Col. 2: 12.) Doddridge. "I take the arm of the Lord to signify his Spirit, who at other times is represented as the *Finger of God*, and the *Hand of the Lord*; Luke, 11: 20. and Acts 1: 21."

(39.) "In all ancient languages, especially the Hebrew, any one is often said to do anything, who tells, narrates, and shows a thing to be, or to do; and thus verbs active are to be understood *declaratively*." [Compare 2 Kings 1: 16.] The meaning, therefore, of Is. 6: 10. is this: Go, show and declare to the people that their heart is heavy, &c. equivalent to "This people's heart is gross," &c. And so the Sept. have expressed it, and have been followed by Matthew and Luke. But John expresses it simply, *He hath blinded*, &c., without adding *who has done so*; which may be understood from Isaiah; for he who is *taxed* with blindness must be the author of his blindness.

Tittman, in *Bloomfield*. "They could not believe." It is not meant that they had a will to believe, and could not, but that they set themselves against having such a will." Dr. Wall.

40 He ^a hath blinded their eyes, ^a and hardened their heart; ^b that they should not see with *their eyes*, nor understand with *their heart*, ^c and be converted, and I should ^d heal them.

41 These things said Esaias, ^e when he ^f saw his glory, ^g and spake of him.

42 Nevertheless, ^h among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees ⁱ they did not confess him, ^j lest they should be put out of the synagogue:

43 For ^k they loved the praise of men more than ^l the praise of God.

44 ¶ Jesus ^m cried and said, ⁿ He that believeth on Me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

z 9:39. 1 Kings 22:26-23. Is. 29:10
—14. Ez. 14:9. Matt. 13:13-15.
15:14. Mark 4:12. Luke 8:10. Acts
1:6, 7. Rom. 1:18-11.
a Ez. 4:21. 7:13, 14; 8:17. Josh.
11:20. 20:31, 11:7. Marg.
b Deut. 29:4. Ps. 105:10-18. Is. 26:
11. 1:19, 20. Jer. 5:21. Ez. 12:2.
Mark 8:17, 18.
c Acts 3:19. 15:3. Jam. 5:19, 20.
d Ps. 62. 41:4. 147:3. Is. 53:5. 57:
18, 19. Jer. 3:22. Hos. 6:1. 14:4.
Luke 1:18.
e Is. 61:5-9, 10.
f Is. 14:18. 14:9. Ez. 33:18-23. 2
Cor. 4:6. Heb. 1:3.
g 5:29. Acts 10:43. 1 Pet. 1:11, 12.
Rev. 19:10.
h 2:7. 4:48-51. 11:45. 19:38.
i 1 Matt. 10:32, 33. Luke 1. 8. Rom.
10:10.
j 7:13. 9:22, 34. 16:2. cor. 29:45
Is. 51:7, 8. 57:11. 66:5. Matt. 26:
69-75. Luke 6:52. 1 Jn. 5:41. 1
Pet. 4:12-16.
k 9:41, 44. Matt. 6:2. 2:5-7. Luke
15:15. Rom. 3:28. 1 Jn. 2:6.
l m 26. 8:54. 1 Sam. 3:30. Luke 19:
17. Rom. 2:7. 1 Jn. 4:5. 2 Cor.
1:12. 1 Pet. 1:7, 8. 3:5.
n 7:25, 37. 11:45. Prov. 1:20. 8:1.
Is. 55:1-3.
o 13:30. Matt. 10:40. Mark 9:37. 1
Pet. 1:21.

happos those chief rulers were true believers, though very weak, and their faith like smoking flax. Note, Some are better than they seem. Their faults are known, but their repentance is not; a man's goodness may be concealed by a culpable yet pardonable weakness, which he himself truly repents of. The kingdom of God comes not in all with a like observation; nor have all they that are good the faculty of showing it as some have.

See the power of the world in smothering these convictions. They believed in Christ, but durst not confess Him, for fear of excommunication. Observe here,

1. Wherein they were defective; they did not confess Christ. Note, There is cause to question the sincerity of that faith, which is either afraid or ashamed to show itself; for those who believe with the heart, ought to confess with the mouth, Rom. 10: 9.

2. What they feared; being put out of the synagogue; disgrace and damage; as if it would do them any harm to be expelled a synagogue, that had made itself a synagogue of Satan, and from which God was departing.

3. What was at the bottom of this fear; they loved the praise of men, as a more valuable good, and a more desirable end, than the praise of God; which was an implicit idolatry, like that (Rom. 1: 25.) of worshipping and serving

the creature more than the Creator. They set the praise of men in one scale, and considered how good it was to give praise to men, and pay deference to the Pharisees, and receive praise from men; to be commended by the chief priests, and applauded by the people, as good sons of the church. And they would not confess Christ, lest they should thereby derogate from the reputation of the Pharisees, and forfeit their own, and hinder their preferment. And besides, the followers of Christ were looked upon with contempt, which they who had been used to honor could not bear. Perhaps if they had known one another's minds, they would have had more courage; but each one thought that, if he should declare himself in favor of Christ, he should stand alone; whereas if any one had had resolution to break the ice, he would have had more seconds than he thought. They put the praise of God in the other scale; they were sensible that by confessing Christ they should both give praise to God, and have praise from God; but, they gave the preference to the praise of men, and that turned the scale; sense prevailed above faith. Note, Love of the praise of men is a great prejudice to the power and practice of religion. Many come short of the glory of God, by a regard to it. As a by-end in that which is good, it will make a man a hypocrite when religion is in fashion, and credit is to be got by it; and as a base principle in that which is evil, it will make a man an apostate, when religion is in disgrace, and credit is to be lost for it, as here. See Rom. 2: 29.

The evangelist, having quoted the prophecy, shows (v. 41.) that it was intended to look further than the prophet's own days, and that its principal reference was to the days of the Messiah.

We read in the prophecy, that this was said to Esaias, Isa. 6: 9. But here we are told that it was said by him to the purpose. For nothing was said by him as a prophet, which was not first said to him; nor any thing said to him, which was not afterward said by him. See Isa. 21: 10.

The vision the prophet there had of the glory of God, is here said to be his seeing the glory of Jesus Christ; he saw his glory. Jesus Christ therefore is equal in power and glory with the Father, and his praises are equally celebrated. Christ had a glory before the foundation of the world, and Esaias saw this.

It is said that the prophet there spake of Him. It seems to have been spoken of the prophet himself, (for to him the instructions were there given,) yet it is here said to be spoken of Christ, for as all the prophets testified of Him, so they typified Him. This they spake of Him, that, as to many, his coming would be not only fruitless, but fatal, a savor of death unto death. It might be objected against his doctrine, if it was from heaven, why did not the Jews believe it? But this is an answer to it; It was not for want of evidence, but because their heart was made fat, and their ears heavy. It was spoken of Christ, that He should be glorified in the ruin of an unbelieving multitude, as well as in the salvation of a distinguished remnant.

V. 42, 43. Some honor was done to Christ by these rulers, for they were convinced that He was sent of God; but they did not do Him honor enough, for they had not courage to own their faith. Many professed more kindness for Christ than they had; these had more kindness for Him than they were willing to profess.

See the power of the Word in the convictions many of them were under, who did not wilfully shut their eyes against the light. They, as Nicodemus, believed on Him, as a teacher come from God. Note, The truth of the Gospel has perhaps a better interest in the consciences of men than we are aware, 1 Kings 19: 18. Perhaps those chief rulers were true believers, though very weak, and their faith like smoking flax. Note, Some are better than they seem. Their faults are known, but their repentance is not; a man's goodness may be concealed by a culpable yet pardonable weakness, which he himself truly repents of. The kingdom of God comes not in all with a like observation; nor have all they that are good the faculty of showing it as some have.

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V. 44-50. We have here the honor Christ asserted to Himself, in the account He gave of his mission. Probably, this discourse was not at the same time with that before, (for then He departed, v. 36.) but some time after, when He made another appearance; and as this evangelist records it, it was Christ's farewell sermon to the Jews; all that follows, was private with his disciples. Observe, He cried and said, Doth not wisdom cry, (Prov. 8: 1.) without? Prov. 1: 20. The raising of his voice, and crying, intimate his boldness in speaking; though they had not courage openly to profess faith in his doctrine, He had courage openly to publish it; if they were ashamed of it, He was not; but set his face as a flint, Isa. 50: 7. He cried as one that was serious and importunate in what He said, as willing to impart to them, not only the Gospel of God, but even his own soul. It denotes his desire that all might take notice of it. This being the last time of the publication of his Gospel by Himself in his person, He makes proclamation, 'Whoever will hear Me, let them come now.'

What is this closing summary of Christ's discourses? It is much like that of Moses, (Deut. 30: 15.) See, I have set before you life and death. Christ here takes leave of the temple, with a solemn declaration of three things.

I. The privileges and dignities which they have, that believe; this gives great encouragement to us to believe in Christ, and to profess that faith. It is a thing we need not be either shy of doing, or of owning; for,

By believing in Christ we are brought into acquaintance with God; He that believes on Me, and so sees Me, believes on Him that sent Me, and sees Him. He that believes on Christ, does not believe in a mere man, such as He was generally taken to be, but in the Son of God, equal in power and glory with the Father. Or rather, his faith does not terminate in Christ, but through Him is carried out to the Father that sent Him; to whom, as our end, we come by Christ as our way. The doctrine of Christ is believed and received as the truth of God. The rest of a believing soul is in God through

rewards of his heavenly presence should be lost, to secure a little regard from those who will ever long be themselves the objects of everlasting shame and contempt! Ver. 44-46.

'Morus, Rosenmüller, Kuinoel, and Tittman, agree that these verses form another part of the discourse of John, in which he meant to show that the Jews had no more faith in the doctrines than in the miracles of Jesus; and this was entirely their own fault. This brief summary of the principal discourses of Christ, during his triennial ministry, is given (as is usual with John) in the words of our Lord

45 And ^{he} that seeth me, seeth him that sent me.

46 I ^{am} come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.

47 And if any man hear my words, and believe not, ^I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.

48 He that ^{rejecteth} me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: ^{the} word that I have spoken, the same shall ^{judge} him in the last day.

49 For ^I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak.

50 And I know that ^{his} commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.

Col. 14:10. 15:24. 2 Cor. 4:6. 11:15. Heb. 1:3. 1 John 5:20. 35:36. 1:4. 3:19. 8:12. 9:5. Ps. 36:9. Is. 59:1. Mal. 5:2. Matt. 4:5. Luke 1:76-79. 8:32. Acts 26:18. 1 John 1:1-3. 2:2,9. Is. 42:7,16. Eph. 5:14.

3:15. 5:15. 15:15,25. 2 Pet. 1:19. Matt. 18:11. 20:28. Luke 9:58. 19:10. 1 Tim. 1:15,16. 2:17. 3:15. 1 John 4:14.

Deut. 18:19. 1 Sam. 8:7. 10:19. Is. 53:3. Mark 2:142. Mark 8:31. 12:10. Luke 7:30. 9:22. 16:17. 17:95. 22:17. Acts 3:23. Heb. 2:3. 10:29-31. 12:65. Mark 15:16. 2 Cor. 2:15. 16. 4:3. 2 Thes. 1:8.

1:184. Matt. 25:31. Rom. 2:16. Heb. 9:27,28.

3:11,32. 5:30. 6:38-40. 8:26,42. 14:10. 15:15. 17:18. Deut. 18:18. Rom. 1:11.

6:63,68. 17:3. 20:31. 1 Tim. 1:16. 1 John 2:25. 3:23,24. 5:11-13,20.

The constructive malignity of their unbelief is, not receiving Christ's Word; it is interpreted, (v. 43.) a *rejecting* of Christ. It denotes a rejection with contempt. Where the gospel-banner is displayed, no neutrality is admitted; every man is either a subject or an enemy.

The wonderful forbearance of our Lord Jesus, towards those who slighted Him; *I judge him not*, not now. Note, Christ was not hasty to take advantage against those who refused the first offers of his grace, but continued waiting to be gracious. He did not strike those *dumb or dead*, who contradicted Him, never made intercession against Israel, as Elias; though He had authority to judge, He suspended the execution of it, because He had work of another nature to do, *first*, and that was to save the world. (1.) To save effectually those that were given Him, before He came to judge mankind. (2.) To offer salvation to all the world, so that it is their own fault if they be not saved. He was to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. The exe-

cuting of the power of a judge was not congruous with that undertaking, Acts 3:33. *In his humiliation his judgment was taken away.* See

The unavoidable judgment of unbelievers at the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God; unbelief will certainly be a damning sin. Some think, when Christ saith, *I judge no man*, He means that they are *condemned already*; there needs no process, judgment goes against them of course, Heb. 2:3. Christ needs not appear *against* them as their accuser, they are miserable if He do not appear for them as their Advocate; however, He tells them plainly, when and where they will be reckoned with.

There is *one* that judgeth them. Nothing is more dreadful than abused patience, and grace trampled on; though for a while *mercy rejoiceth against judgment*, yet there *will be judgment without mercy*.

Their final judgment is reserved to the *last day*; to that day of judgment Christ binds over all unbelievers, to answer then for all the contempts that have been put upon Him. Divine justice has appointed a day, and adjourns the sentence to that day, as Matt. 26:64.

The Word of Christ will judge them then; *The words that I have spoken*, how light soever you have made of them, the same shall judge the unbeliever in the last day; as the apostles, the preachers of Christ's Word, are said to judge, Luke 22:30. Christ's words will judge unbelievers two ways. [1.] As the evidence of their crime, they will convict them. Every word Christ spoke, every kind offer, will be produced as testimony. [2.] As the rule of their doom, they will condemn them; they shall be judged according to the tenor of that covenant Christ procured and published. That word of Christ, *He that believeth not, shall be damned*, will judge all unbelievers to eternal ruin; and there are many such like words.

III. A solemn declaration of the authority Christ had to demand our faith, and require us to receive his doctrine on pain of damnation, v. 49, 50. Where observe,

1. The commission which our Lord Jesus received from the Father to deliver his doctrine to the world; (v. 49.) *I have not spoken of Myself*, as a mere man, much less a common man; but the Father gave Me a commandment what I should say. This is the same with what He said, ch. 7:16. *My doctrine is not mine, for I have not spoken of Myself.* Christ, as Son of man, did not speak that which was of human contrivance; as Son of God, He did not act separately, but what He said was the result of the counsels of peace; as Mediator, his coming into the world was voluntary, and with his full consent, but not arbitrary, and of his own head. But God the Father gave Him his commission, as his agent and plenipotentiary to concert matters between Him and man, to set a treaty of peace on foot, and to settle the articles. His instructions, here called a *commandment*, for they were like those given an ambassador, directed Him not only what He might say, but what He must say. Note, Our Lord Jesus learned obedience Himself, before He taught it us, though He were a Son. *The Lord God commanded the first Adam*, and he by his disobedience ruined us; He commanded the second Adam, and He by his obedience saved us.

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1. The commission which our Lord Jesus received from the Father to deliver his doctrine to the world; (v. 49.) *I have not spoken of Myself*, as a mere man, much less a common man; but the Father gave Me a commandment what I should say. This is the same with what He said, ch. 7:16. *My doctrine is not mine, for I have not spoken of Myself.* Christ, as Son of man, did not speak that which was of human contrivance; as Son of God, He did not act separately, but what He said was the result of the counsels of peace; as Mediator, his coming into the world was voluntary, and with his full consent, but not arbitrary, and of his own head. But God the Father gave Him his commission, as his agent and plenipotentiary to concert matters between Him and man, to set a treaty of peace on foot, and to settle the articles. His instructions, here called a *commandment*, for they were like those given an ambassador, directed Him not only what He might say, but what He must say. Note, Our Lord Jesus learned obedience Himself, before He taught it us, though He were a Son. *The Lord God commanded the first Adam*, and he by his disobedience ruined us; He commanded the second Adam, and He by his obedience saved us.

God commanded Him what He should say, and what He should speak; two words signifying the same thing, to denote that every word

For these very words have occurred, and been explained above, at 1:15. *Cried denials, spoke openly*, in the hearing of all. So Rom. 9:27. and elsewhere.

(47.) *I judge him not.* The word not only denotes to *judge*, or *condemn*, but expresses the effect of judgment or condemnation, namely, ruin and destruction; it is opposed to *save*. Our Lord means to say, He will not be the cause of condemnation; the blame of which must, therefore, rest with those who prefer darkness to light.

Tittman, in BLOOMFIELD.

Carson 49-50

This summary consists of four capital points. Our Lord taught and demonstrated by words and deeds: 1. That He is the Legate of God, sent for the salvation of the human race. 2. That He is intimately conjoined and united with the Father, not only in respect of will and counsel, but of works and deeds; and thus, even in respect of His human nature, is, in short, the Son of God. 3. That He is the

Savior of the human race, who will obtain for, and impart to, all that believe in Him, life and felicity. 4. That this doctrine concerning Himself, the Son of God, sent on earth by his Father, and the Savior of the human race, is indisputably true, and infinitely beneficial, as being the only means of attaining universal salvation. These four points are what theologians term the *essential, primary, and fundamental* articles of the Christian faith; and such as, if removed, leave the religion insufficient for salvation.

Tittman, in BLOOMFIELD. Many are liberal in their condemnation of the Jews, because they did not believe on the Son of God, but do not reflect that they are probably committing the same sort of transgression in circumstances which heighten their sin. Paradoxical as it may seem, it is nevertheless possible for a man to credit the *four evangelists*, and yet live and die an infidel, as far as his own salvation is concerned. Realize it is possible to hold the truth in unrighteousness.

Dr. A. Carson

CHAP. XIII.

Jesus washes the feet of his disciples; and requires them to imitate his example of humility and love, 1-17. He intimates that some of them would betray Him; and is taken to John points out Judas as the traitor, 18-26. Satan enters into Judas, who betrays the company, 27-30. Jesus speaks of his glorification, as at hand; and enjoins his disciples to love one another, 31-35. He forewarns Peter, who avowed his readiness to die with Him, that before the cock croweth, he would thrice deny Him, 36-38.

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come, that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

64. Matt. 25:2. Mark 14:1. Luke 22:1.
67. 9:30. 8:20. 11:9, 10. 12:23. 17:1.
18:4. Matt. 26:45. Luke 9:51. 13:32, 33. 28:13.
34. 14:28. 16:5-7, 28. 17:5, 11, 13.
35. Jer. 31:3. Rom. 8:37. Eph. 5:25, 26. 1 John 4:19. Rev. 1:5.
68. Matt. 28:20. 1 Cor. 1:8. Heb. 3:6, 14. 6:11. 1 Pet. 1:13.

kept back nothing that was profitable. Note, (1.) This is a great encouragement to faith; we may venture our souls upon the sayings of Christ, rightly understood. (2.) It is a great example of obedience. Christ said as He was hidden, and so must we; communicated what the Father had said to Him, and so must we. See Acts 4:20. This was his glory, that, as a Son, He was faithful to Him that appointed Him; and, by unfeigned belief of every word of Christ, and an entire subjection of soul to it, we must give Him the glory due by his name.

CHAP. XIII. v. 1-17. Probably Christ's washing his disciples' feet, and the discourse that followed, were the same night in which He bade

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 34-50. Those who have not faith cannot behold the Object of faith, even a crucified Redeemer, 'purchasing the church with his own blood;' and must be strangers to its influence, as shown to the soul by the Holy Spirit: they will therefore find a thousand cavils, in excuse for unbelief. They often insinuate that the Scripture contradicts itself; and then quote the authority of one sacred writer to invalidate the testimony of another: whereas their own partial and prejudiced understanding alone is to blame: for the simplest believer gradually learns to reconcile most of them; as easily as he can the prophecies of Christ on the cross, and Christ on his glorious throne.—It is generally best to avoid disputing with prejudiced objectors; and rather to remind them how short their time may be, to prepare for death and judgment. It behooves us all to 'walk in the light while we have' the light; and an obedient faith is far more suited to our case, than frivolous or disputatious speculations. Those who 'believe in the light' will be approved as 'the children of the light;' on all others, darkness will speedily come, and they will not know whether they are going, till they fall into 'the blackness of darkness forever.' For while men indulge their proud and infidel prejudices, rebelling against Scripture and their own consciences, and quenching the motions of the Holy Spirit; the Lord Jesus withdraws in anger, leaves them to reject his salvation, 'sends them a story of delusion to believe a lie,' and so they are finally blinded, hardened, and ruined. (P. O. 2 Thes. 2:5-12.) Such warnings have always been given by those, who 'saw his glory and spake of Him;' and the awful denunciations of the Word of God will as surely take effect on unbelievers, as his faithful

NOTES.

CHAP. XIII. v. 1, 2. 'After mature deliberation, I am inclined to think this was the paschal supper, for it was that at which Christ's hour was come, and at which He said, *Now is the Son of man glorified*, (1. and 31.) which must naturally intimate the nearest approach of his death. And in the close of this discourse at this supper He said, (14. 31.) *Ariase, let us go hence*, and He then arose to go to the garden where He was apprehended, as appears from the following parts of the history, for He continued his discourse, and concluded with a prayer, (ch. 17.) and then went forth with his disciples and entered a garden, and Judas knew the place, (ch. 18:1, 2. Besides, Christ's notifying his disciples of the traitor at this supper, accords with the discovery He made of him at the passover, as recorded, Matt. 26:21, &c. And what is said (v. 30.) of Judas' going out at night from this supper, well agrees to that night in which He betrayed his Lord, and

trayed, and at the time He ate the passover, and instituted the Lord's supper. But whether before the solemnity, or after, or between the eating of the passover, and the institution of the Lord's supper, it is not agreed. This evangelist gathers those passages the others had omitted, and industriously omits those they had recorded; which occurs as difficulty in putting them together. If it were then, we suppose Judas went out, (v. 30.) to get his men ready to apprehend Jesus. But Dr. Lightfoot is of opinion, that this was done and said, even all that is recorded to the end of ch. 14. not at the passover-supper, for it is here said, (v. 1.) to be before the feast of the passover; but at the supper in Bethany, two days before the passover, (of which we read Matt. 26:2-6.) at which Mary the second time anointed Christ's head with the remainder of her box of ointment. Or, it might be at some other supper the night before the passover, not, as that was, in the house of Simon the leper, but in his own lodgings, where He had none but his disciples about Him.

Christ's washing his disciples' feet, was an action of a singular nature; a miracle of humility. Mary had just anointed his head; now, lest his acceptance of that should look like taking state, He presently balances it with this abasement. But why would Christ do this? If the disciples' feet needed washing, they could do it themselves; a wise man will not do a thing that looks odd and unusual, but for good causes. We are sure it was not done in a humor; the transaction was very solemn, and carried on with great seriousness; four reasons are intimated why Christ did this. 1. To testify his love to his disciples, v. 1, 2. 2. To give an instance of voluntary humility and condescension, v. 3-5. 3. To signify spiritual washing, referred to in his discourse with Peter, v. 6-11. 4. To set them an example, v. 12-17.

I. Christ washed his disciples' feet, to give a proof of that great love wherewith He loved them to the end, v. 1, 2.

This is true of his immediate followers, the

promises will be fulfilled to his people. Every man, therefore should be peculiarly careful not to sin against conviction, from fear of reproach and persecution, from love of praise or reputation, or from regard to the friendship of the world. (Not; Jam. 4:4-6.) That will not be accounted true faith, which does not overcome this ambition, and teach men to value 'the praise of God' more than that of the world; and so induce its possessors to confess Christ before his enemies. Chief rulers are especially in danger of prevaricating; and thus they may become accomplices in the basest crimes; because the fear of God does not deliver them from the fear of men. (Notes, Prop. 29:25, 26. Matt. 10:27, 28.) But faith in Christ, and in the power, truth, and love of God, 'overcometh the world.' (Note, 1 John 5:4, 5.) Beholding in Jesus the glory of the Father, we learn to obey, love, and confide in Him. By daily looking to Him, who 'came a Light into the world,' we are gradually extricated from the darkness of ignorance, error, and misery; we learn to know the commandment of God our Savior to be everlasting life; and enjoy foretastes of that inheritance, and at length are admitted to it. (Notes, 2 Cor. 3:17, 18. 4:5, 6. 1 John 3:1-3. Rev. 21:22-27.) Yet the same Word will seal the condemnation of all, who reject and despise it; their present impunity serves only to harden them in incredulity; and the more gracious the truths, promises, and precepts are, which they now despise, the greater will be their confusion, and the severer their punishment, at the last day. 'From all hardness of heart, and contempt of thy Word and commandment, good Lord, deliver us.' SCOTT.

seems different from his first going to the chief priests to make the offer of betraying Him, spoken of in Matt. 26:14, 15. This account of the matter seems natural and easy, and keeps the history free from many perplexities otherwise attending it. And all that passed after this supper might easily be brought into the time between the paschal supper and his being betrayed.' GURSE.

Doddridge refers to the above note as valuable, and adds, that such a disposition of the story best suits several of the circumstances of the paschal supper; and that the propriety of it is especially evinced from the 38th verse, which must be spoken the very night Jesus was betrayed, and yet is so connected with this story of washing the disciples' feet by verses 21 and 31, that they cannot, without great violence, be separated. He observes also, 'it is in the first verse that we have peculiar energy according to this plan.' ED.

2 And 'supper being ended, the devil having now^b put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

3 Jesusⁱ knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands,^a and that he was come from God, and went to God;

4 He riseth from supper,¹ and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself.

[4.26. Luke 22:3,31. Acts 5:3. Eph. 2:2. ^a Exa 7-7. Neh. 2:12. 2 Cor. 8:16. Jam. 1:17. Rev. 17:17. 1.3:35. 5:22-27. 17:2. Matt. 11:27. 28:18. Luke 10:22. Acts 1:28. 1 Cor. 15:27. Eph. 1:21.22. Phil. 2:9-11. Heb. 1:2. 2:8.9. 1. 1:18. 3:13. 7:29.33. 8:42. 16:2. 28. 17:5-8. 11-13. 1. Luke 12:37. 17:7. 22:27. 2 Cor. 8:9. Phil. 2:6-8.

Christ has a *cordial* love for his *own*. He did love them with a love of good will, when He gave Himself for their redemption. He does love them with a love of complacency, when He admits them to communion with Himself. Though they are in this world, of darkness and distance, of sin and corruption, yet He loves them. He was now going to his *own* in heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect; but He seems most concerned for his *own* on earth, because they most needed his care: the sickly child is most indulged. [3.] Those whom Christ loves He loves to the end; He is constant in his love to his people; He rests in his love. He loves with an everlasting love, (Jer. 31:3.) from everlasting in the believers, to everlasting in the consequences of it. Nothing can separate a believer from the love of Christ; He loves his own, unto perfection, for He will perfect what concerns them, will bring them to that world where love is perfect.

Christ manifested his love to them by washing their feet, as the woman, (Luke 7:44.) showed her love to Christ by washing his feet. Thus He would show that his love to them was *condescending*, that in prosecution of its designs, He was willing to humble Himself; and that the glories of the exalted state, He was now entering on, should be no obstruction at all to the favor He bore his chosen: thus He would confirm the promise He had made to the saints, that He would make them sit down to meat, and would come forth, and serve them, (Luke 12:37.) would put honor upon them, as great and surprising as for the Lord to serve his servants. The disciples had just now betrayed the weakness of their love to Him, in grudging the ointment that was poured upon his head; (Matt. 26:8.) yet He presently gives this proof of his love to them. Our infirmities are foils to Christ's kindnesses, and set them off.

He chose this time to do it, a little before his last passover, for two reasons:

He knew that his long expected hour was come, when He should depart out of this world to the Father. Observe here,

The change that was to pass over our Lord Jesus; He must depart. This began at his death, but was completed at his ascension. As Christ Himself, so all believers, by virtue of their union with Him, when they depart out of the world, are absent from the body, go to the Father, are present with the Lord. It is a departure out of the world, this unkind, injurious, treacherous world; this world of labor, toil, temptation; this vale of tears; and it is going to the Father of spirits, and the fruition of Him.

(2.) Supper being ended. 'The reader will observe here, that I have rendered the clause, *supper being come*, which is the sense in which the word is often used elsewhere. (21:4. Luke 4:42. Acts 12:18. 16:35. 21:40.) It was much more natural to wash the feet of guests before than after supper. It was done before the passover: part of the discourse which John mentions after the feet were washed, is mentioned by the other evangelists, as passing at supper; nay, John himself, when he speaks (26) of Christ's dipping the sop, and giving it to J^hs, after this, plainly shows that supper was not ended.' Doddridge.

'Almost all the best critics of the last century have agreed in abandoning the sense—*Supper being ended*. Strictly speaking, the supper must have commenced, otherwise our Lord could not be said to rise from supper.' (See Note, Luke 22:12.)

Verse 3.

'Was come, &c.] 'How can God be said to come from God into the world, when He is always in the heavens? Or to leave the world, and go to the Father?' Socinian Objections. 'As to his divine nature, He is said to descend from heaven, not by a local descent, or by quitting heaven, but only by the manifestation of Himself upon his birth. And in this sense God Himself is often said to descend from heaven, when, by any divine work done on earth, He demonstrates his presence there; and He is also said to ascend into heaven afterwards. Why therefore may not God the Word be said to descend from heaven, and even dwell with men, (as God is said to dwell in the

twelve. These were his own in the world, his family. Children He had none, to call his own, but He adopted them, and took them as his own. He had those that were his own in the other world, but He left them for a time, to look after his own in this world. These He loved, called them into fellowship with Himself, conversed familiarly with them, was always tender of them, their comfort and reputation. He allowed them to be free with Him, and bore with their infirmities. He continued his love to them as long as He lived, and after his resurrection. Though there were persons of distinction that espoused his cause, He did not lay aside his old friends for new ones. They were weak and defective in knowledge and grace, dull and forgetful; yet, though He reproved them often, He never ceased to love them.

It is true of all believers, for these twelve patriarchs were the representatives of all the tribes of God's Israel. Note, [1.] Our Lord Jesus has a people in the world, that are his own; they were given Him by the Father, He has purchased them, has set them apart for Himself; his own, for they have devoted themselves to Him as a peculiar people. His own: where his own were spoken of, that received Him not, it is his own things, as a man's cattle are his own, which he may, when he pleases, dispose of. But here it is, his own persons, as a man's wife and children are his own. [2.]

He did love them with a love of good will, when He gave Himself for their redemption. He does love them with a love of complacency, when He admits them to communion with Himself. Though they are in this world, of darkness and distance, of sin and corruption, yet He loves them. He was now going to his own in heaven, the spirits of just men made perfect; but He seems most concerned for his own on earth, because they most needed his care: the sickly child is most indulged. [3.] Those whom Christ loves He loves to the end; He is constant in his love to his people; He rests in his love. He loves with an everlasting love, (Jer. 31:3.) from everlasting in the believers, to everlasting in the consequences of it. Nothing can separate a believer from the love of Christ; He loves his own, unto perfection, for He will perfect what concerns them, will bring them to that world where love is perfect.

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The change that was to pass over our Lord Jesus; He must depart. This began at his death, but was completed at his ascension. As Christ Himself, so all believers, by virtue of their union with Him, when they depart out of the world, are absent from the body, go to the Father, are present with the Lord. It is a departure out of the world, this unkind, injurious, treacherous world; this world of labor, toil, temptation; this vale of tears; and it is going to the Father of spirits, and the fruition of Him.

The time of this change: his hour was come. It is sometimes called his enemies' hour. (Luke 22:53.) the hour of their triumph; sometimes his hour, the hour of his triumph. The time of his sufferings was fixed to an hour, and the continuance of them but for an hour.

His foresight of it; He knew from the beginning that his hour would come, but now He knew that it was come. We know not when our hour will come, and therefore what we have to do in habitual preparation for it ought never to be [left] undone; but when we know by the harbingers that our hour is come, we must apply ourselves to an actual preparation, as our Master did, 2 Pet. 3, 14.

It was in the immediate foresight of his departure that He washed his disciples' feet; that, as his head was anointed against the day of his burial, so their feet might be washed against the day of their consecration, by the descent of the Holy Ghost fifty days after, as the priests were washed, Lev. 8:6. When we see our day approaching, we should do what good we can to those we leave behind. The second reason for doing it now, was, the devil had now put it into the heart of Judas to betray Him, v. 2. These words in a parenthesis, trace Judas' treason to its original. What way of access the devil has to men's hearts, and mingles undiscovered with those thoughts which are natives of the heart, we cannot tell. But some sins are in their own nature so exceeding sinful, and there is so little temptation to them, that it is plain, Satan laid the egg of them in a heart disposed to be their nest. For Judas to betray such a Master so cheaply, and upon no provocation, was such downright enmity to God, as could not be forged but by Satan himself, who thereby thought to ruin the Redeemer's kingdom; but it proved the ruin of his own.

Judas being now resolved to betray Him, the time of his departure could not be far off; if this matter be determined, it is easy to infer with St. Paul, I am now ready to be offered. Note, The more malicious we perceive our enemies to be against us, the more industrious we should be to prepare for the worst. Judas being now in the snare, and the devil aiming at Peter, and the rest of them, (Luke 22:31.) Christ would fortify his own against him. If the wolf had seized one of the flock, it is time for the shepherd to look to the rest. Antidotes must be stirring, when the infection is begun. Lightfoot observes that the disciples had learned of Judas to murmur at the anointing of Christ; (compare ch. 12:4, &c. with Matt. 26:8.) lest they should learn worse, He fortifies them by a lesson of humility. Christ would hereby show that He did not design to cast them all off for the faults of one of their number. Though one had a devil, yet they should fare never the worse for that. Christ loves his church, though there are hypocrites in it.

II. Christ washed his disciples' feet; to give an instance of his own humility, and show how condescending He was, and how low He could stoop in love to his own. This is intimated, v. 3-5. Jesus knowing, and perhaps discoursing

'tabernacle and in the temple,) when the Logos dwelt in the human nature upon earth, and manifested his glory? And also to 'leave the world and go to the Father,' not only as properly doing this by the exaltation of his human nature; but by doing all his divine works 'now from heaven, where He sits in the majesty and glory of the Father' *Whitby*. 3:12, 13.

'Our Lord has, at 17:2, asserted his dominion over the whole human race, as also over the whole world, (see Matt. 28:18.) which neither was nor could be the reign of doctrine, (as some,) but of power. So the evangelist here.' BLOOMFIELD. And went to God.] 'Rather, "and was going to God." This form of expressing the imperfect tense in English, occasionally gives great precision to the sense.' HEWLETT.

Verses 4, 5.

Garments.] 'The pallium, the outer garment; De Dieu thinks, the two outer garments, the pallium and stola. The Hebrew themselves expressed, as here, the pallium in the plural, (for honor,) as it was very wide and flowing. Example of this use of the plural for the singular are very rare in the classics, yet Lampe produces one from Plutarch. There is an exactly similar use in our word clothes. De Dieu observes, there is no reason to suppose with Origen, that Jesus stripped Himself entirely, since next the body was the 'tunic,' and the 'drawers,' both covered by the 'stole,' or waistcoat, which was bound about by the 'belt,' or girdle: and over all this the 'pallium.' (Here translated garments.) BLOOMFIELD.

5 After that, he poureth water into a pason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.

m 19:34. 2 Kings 3:11. Ez. 36:25.
Zech. 13:1. Eph. 5:26. 1 John 5:8.
n 5. Ez. 29:4. Lev. 14:8. 2 Kings
5:10-13. Ps. 51:2, 7. Is. 1:16. Acts
22:16. 1 Cor. 6:11. Tit. 2:3-5.
Heb. 10:22. 1 John 1:7. Rev. 1:5.
7:14.
o 10:12-14. Gen. 19:4. 19:2 1 Sam.
25:41. Luke 7:38, 44. 1 Tim. 5:10.
p 1:27. Matt. 3:11-14. Luke 5:8.
q 10-12. 12:16. 14:26. Jer. 32:24.
25, 43, 44. Dan. 14:8, 12. Hab. 2:1-
3. Jam. 5:7-11.

to be an Agent for Him on earth, so He went to God to be an Agent for us in heaven; and it is a comfort to us to think how welcome He was there; He was brought near to the Ancient of days, Dan. 7: 13. And it was said to Him, Sit Thou at my right hand, Ps. 110: 1.

He knew all this; was not like a prince in the cradle, that knows nothing of the honor he is born to, or like Moses, who wist not that his face shone; He had a full view of the honors of his exalted state, yet stooped thus low. But how does this come in here?

[1.] As an inducement to Him now quickly to leave what lessons and legacies He had to leave, to his disciples.

[2.] As that which supported Him under suffering, and carried Him cheerfully through this sharp encounter. Judas was now betraying Him, and He knew it, and the consequence of it; yet, knowing also that He came from God, and went to God, He did not draw back, but went on cheerfully.

[3.] As a foil to his condescension, to make it the more admirable. The reasons of divine grace are sometimes represented in Scripture as strange; (as Isa. 57: 17, 18. Hos. 2: 13, 14.) so here that is given as an inducement to Christ to stoop, which should rather have been a reason for his taking state; for God's thoughts are not ours. Compare with this, those passages which preface signal instances of condescending grace, with the displays of divine glory, as Ps. 68: 4, 5. Isa. 57: 15. 66: 1, 2.

Here is the voluntary abasement of our Lord Jesus notwithstanding. Jesus knowing his own glory as God, and his own authority and power as Mediator, one would think it should follow, He rises from supper, lays aside his ordinary garments, calls for robes, bids them keep their distance, and do Him homage; no, quite contrary, when He considered this, He gave the greatest instance of humility. Note, (1.) A well grounded assurance of heaven and happiness, instead of puffing a man with pride, will make and keep him very humble. (2.) Those that would be found conformable to Christ, must study to keep their minds low in the midst of the greatest advancements.

The action itself was mean and servile, and that which servants of the lowest rank were employed in. Let thine handmaid (saith Abigail) be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of my Lord; let me be in the meanest employment, 1 Sam. 25: 41. If He had washed their hands or faces, it had been great condescension; (Elisha poured water on the hands of Elijah, 2 Kings 3: 11.) He would teach us to think nothing below us, wherein we may be serviceable to God's glory, and the good of our brethren.

The condescension was so much the greater, that He did this for his own disciples, who in themselves were of a low and despicable condition, not curious about their bodies. In relation to Him, they were such as should have washed his feet. Many, of great spirits otherwise, will do a mean thing to get favor with their superiors; they rise by stooping, and climb by cringing; but for Christ to do this to his disciples, could be no act of policy or complaisance, but pure humility.

He rose from supper to do it. Though we translate it, (v. 2.) supper being ended, it might be better read, there being a supper made, or He being at supper, for He sat down again, (v. 12.) and we find Him dipping a sop, (v. 26.) so that He did it in the midst of his meal, and thereby taught us, not to reckon it a disturbance, to be called from our meal to do God or our brother any real service, esteeming the discharge of our duty more than our necessary food, ch. 4: 34. Christ would not leave preaching, to oblige his nearest relations, (Mark 3: 33.) but would leave his supper, to show his love to his disciples. Christ did it, not that we might learn to be rude and slovenly, (cleanliness and godliness will do well together,) but to teach us not to indulge, but mortify, the delicacy of the appetite, giving good manners their due place, and no more.

II. put Himself into the garb of a servant, to do it; laid aside his loose, upper garments. We must address ourselves to duty as those that are

of his honors as Mediator, and telling his friends that the Father had given all things into his hand, riseth from supper, and, to the great surprise of the company, washed his disciples' feet.

Glorious things are here said of Christ as Mediator.

The Father had given all things into his hands; had given Him a property in all, and a power over all, as Possessor of heaven and earth, in pursuance of the great designs of his undertaking; see Matt. 11: 27. The accommodation and arbitration of all matters in variance between God and man, were committed into his hands: and the administration of the kingdom of God among men, in all the branches of it, was committed to Him; so that all acts, both of government and judgment, were to pass through his hands; He is heir of all things.

He came from God: this implies that He was in the beginning with God, not only before He was born into this world, but before the world itself was born; and then when He came into the world, He came as God's Ambassador. He came as the Son of God, and the Sent of God. The Old-Testament prophets were raised up and employed for God, but Christ came directly from Him.

He went to God, to be glorified with Him, with the glory which He had with God from eternity. That which comes from God, shall go to God; they that are born from heaven, are bound for heaven. As Christ came from God

resolved not to take state, but to take pains must divest ourselves of every thing that would either feed our pride, or hang in our way, and hinder us in what we have to do; must rid up the loins of our mind, as those in earnest.

He did it with all humble ceremony, went through all parts of the service discreetly; did it as if He had been used thus to serve; did it Himself, and had none to minister to Him in it. He girded Himself with the towel, as servants throw a napkin on their arm, or put an apron before them; poured water into the basin out of the water-pots, (ch. 2: 6.) and then washed their feet; and, to complete the service, wiped them. Some think He did not wash the feet of all, but only four or five of them, that being sufficient to answer the end; but I see nothing to countenance this conjecture, for in other places where He did make a difference, it is taken notice of; and his washing the feet of them all without exception, teaches us charity to all Christ's disciples, even the least.

Nothing appears to the contrary, but that He washed the feet of Judas among the rest, v. 26. It is the character of a widow indeed, that she had washed the saints' feet, (1 Tim. 5: 10.) and there is some comfort in that; but the blessed Jesus here washed the feet of the worst of sinners, who was at this time contriving to betray Him.

Many interpreters make Christ, washing his disciples' feet, a representation of his whole undertaking. He knew that He was equal with God, and all things were his; yet He rose from his table in glory, laid aside his robes of light, girded Himself with our nature, took upon Him the form of a servant, came not to be ministered to, but to minister, poured out his blood, his soul unto death, and thereby washed us from our sins, Rev. 1: 5.

III. Christ washed his disciples' feet, that He might signify the spiritual washing of the soul from sin. This is plainly intimated in his discourse with Peter upon it, v. 6-11.

It is most probable, when He went about this service, (which is all that is meant by his beginning to wash, v. 5.) that He took Peter first; and the rest would not have suffered it, if they had not first heard it explained in what passed between Christ and Peter.

Lord, (saith Peter, startled at the proposal,) dost Thou wash my feet? Here is an emphasis to be laid upon the persons, Thou and me; and the placing of the words is observable. What, Thou mine? These things are rather to be contemplated than uttered. Aug. What, Thou! our Lord and Master, the Son of God. Savior and Ruler of the world, for me, a worm of the earth, a sinful man, O Lord? Shall those hands wash my feet, which with a touch have cleansed lepers, given sight to the blind, and raised the dead? Very willingly would Peter have taken the basin and towel, and washed his Master's feet, and been proud of the honor, Luke 17: 7, 8. Note, Christ's condescensions to us, in noticing us by his grace, are justly matter of our admiration, ch. 14: 22. Who am I, Lord God? And what is my father's house?

What I do, thou knowest not now, but shall know hereafter. Here are two reasons why Peter must submit to it.

(1.) He was at present in the dark, and might not to oppose what he did not understand, but acquiesce in the wisdom of One who could give a reason for all He said and did. Christ would teach Peter implicit obedience: 'You must believe it well done, because I do it.' Note, Conscientiousness of the darkness we labor under, and our inability to judge of what God doeth, should make us modest in our censures of his proceed ing; see Heb. 11: 8.

(2.) There was something in it, the meaning of which he should hereafter know; 'Thou shalt know hereafter what need thou hast of it' being washed, when thou shalt be guilty of the heinous sin of denying me;' so some. 'Thou shalt know, when, in the discharge of the office of an apostle, thou wilt be employed in washing from thy charge the sins and defilements of earthly affections;' so Hammond. Note, [1.] Our Lord Jesus does many things which even his

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12 So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was ^{as} down again, he said unto them, ^bKnow ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye ^ccall me Master and Lord: ^dand ye say well; for so I am.

14 If ^eI then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ^fye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have ^ggiven you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.

16 ^hVerily, verily, I say unto you, ⁱThe servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.

b 7. Ez. 24:19,24. Matt. 13:51. Mark 4:15.

c 11:28. Matt. 7:21,22. * 23:8-10. Luke 5:46. Rom. 14:8,9. 1 Cor. 8:6. Phil. 2:11. 3:8. 2 Pet. 1:14-16.

d 1:12. Luke 7:43. 10:28. Jam. 2:19.

e Matt. 20:26-28. Mark 10:43-45. Luke 22:26-27. 2 Cor. 8:9. Phil. 2:6-7. Heb. 5:8,9. 12:2.

f Acts 20:38. Rom. 12:10,15. 15:1-10. 1 Cor. 8:13. 9:19-22. 2 Cor. 10:1. Gal. 5:13. 6:12. Phil. 2:2-5. 1 Pet. 4:1. 5:5.

g Matt. 11:29. Rom. 15:5. marg. Eph. 5:2. 1 Pet. 2:21. 3:17,18. 1 John 2:6.

h See on 3:35. i 15:20. Matt. 10:24,25. Luke 8:40.

evidence of their hypocrisy all along. [4.] Christ sees it necessary to let his disciples know that they are *not* all clean; that we may all be jealous over ourselves, (*Is it I? Lord, is it I*, that am among the clean, yet not clean?) and that when hypocrites are discovered, it may be no surprise or stumbling to us.

IV. Christ washed his disciples' feet, to set us an example. This explanation He gave, when He had done it, v. 12-27. Observe with what solemnity,

He adjourned the explication till He had finished the transaction, [1.] To try their implicit obedience. What He did, they should not know till after, that they might learn to acquiesce in his will when they could not give a reason for it. [2.] It was proper to finish the riddle before He unriddled it. Thus, when his sufferings were finished, He had resumed the garments of his exalted state, and was ready to sit down again, then He opened the understandings of his disciples, and poured out his Spirit, Luke 24: 45, 46.

Before He explained it, He asked them if they would construe it. He put this question, not only to make them sensible of their ignorance, and the need they had to be instructed, (as Zech. 4: 5, 13.) but to raise their desires of instruction; 'I would have you know, and if you will give attention, I will tell you.' Note, it is the will of Christ that sacramental signs should be explained, and that his people should be acquainted with the meaning of them; otherwise, though ever so significant, to them who know not the thing signified, they are insignificant. Hence they are directed to ask, *What mean ye by this service?* Exod. 12: 26.

Observe what He grounds that which He had to say upon; (v. 13.) 'You call Me Master and Lord, you give Me those titles, in speaking of Me, and to Me, and you say well, for so I am; you are in the relation of scholars to Me, and I do the part of a Master to you.' Note, (1.) Jesus Christ is our Master and Lord; our Redeemer and Savior is, in order to that, our Lord and Master. He is our Teacher and Instructor, in all necessary truth and rules, as a Prophet revealing to us the will of God. He is our Lord, or Ruler and Owner. (2.) It becomes the disciples of Christ to call Him Master and Lord, not in compliment, but in reality; not by constraint, but with delight.

Our calling Christ Master and Lord, is an obligation on us to receive and observe the instructions He gives us. Christ would thus pre-engage their obedience to a command that was displeasing to flesh and blood. If Christ be our Master and Lord, by our own consent, we are bound in honor and honesty to be observant of Him.

Observe the lesson Christ hereby taught; *Ye also ought to wash one another's feet*, v. 14.

Some have understood this literally, and have thought these words amount to the institution of a standing ordinance in the church; that Christians should, in a religious manner, wash one another's feet, in token of condescending love to one another. Ambrose took it so, and practised it in the church of Milan. Austin saith, those Christians who do it not with their

be again put into a justified state, for then should they often be baptized. The evidence of a justified state may be clouded, and the comfort of it suspended, when yet the charter of it is not taken away. Though we have occasion to repeat daily, God's gifts and callings are without repentance. The heart may be *sneep* and *garnished*, and yet still remain the devil's palace; but if it be *washed*, it belongs to Christ, and He will not lose it.

See what ought to be the daily care of those who through grace are in a justified state; that is, to wash their feet; to cleanse themselves from the guilt they contract daily through infirmity and inadvertency, by the renewed exercise of repentance, with a believing application of the virtue of Christ's blood. We must also wash our feet by constant watchfulness against every thing defiling, for we must cleanse our way, and our feet, by taking heed thereto, Ps. 119: 9. The priests, when consecrated, were washed with water; and though they did not need afterward to be washed all over, yet, whenever they went in to minister, they must wash their feet and hands at the laver, on pain of death, Exod. 30: 19, 20. The provision for our cleansing should not make us presumptuous, but more cautious; *I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?* From yesterday's pardon, we should fetch an argument against this day's temptation.

He pronounces his disciples clean, through the word He had spoken to them, ch. 15: 3. He washed them Himself, and then said, *Ye are clean*; but except Judas; *not* all; they were all baptized, even Judas, yet not all clean; many have the sign, that have not the thing signified. Note, [1.] Even among persons called disciples of Christ, professing relation to Him, there are some who are *not* clean, Prov. 30: 12. [2.] The Lord knows them that are his, and them that are not, 2 Tim. 2: 19. The eye of Christ can separate between the precious and the vile, the clean and the unclean. [3.] When those that have called themselves disciples, afterward prove traitors, their apostasy, at last, is a certain proof that they were never clean. [4.] Christ sees it necessary to let his disciples know that they are *not* all clean; that we may all be jealous over ourselves, (*Is it I? Lord, is it I*, that am among the clean, yet not clean?) and that when hypocrites are discovered, it may be no surprise or stumbling to us.

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hands, yet (he hoped) did it with their hearts in humility; but he saith, it is much better to do it with the hands also, when there is occasion, as 1 Tim. 5: 10. What Christ has done Christians should not disdain to do. Calvin saith, that the pope, in the annual observing of this ceremony on Thursday in the passion week, is rather Christ's ape than his follower, for the duty enjoined, in conformity to Christ, was mutual; *Wash one another's feet*. And Jansenius saith, it is done—*Frigidly*, and unlike the primitive model.

But doubtless it is to be understood figuratively; it is an instructive sign, but not sacramental. This was a parable to the eye; and our Master, hereby, designed to teach us,

[1.] *A humble condescension*; like Him to be lowly in heart, (Matt. 11: 29.) and walk with all lowliness; we must think meanly of ourselves, and respectfully of our brethren, and deem nothing below us but sin; we must say of that which seems mean, but tends to the glory of God, and our brethren's good, as David, (2 Sam. 6: 22.) *If this be to be vile, I will be yet more vile*. Christ had often taught his disciples humility, and they had forgotten the lesson; but now He teaches them in such a way as surely they could never forget.

[2.] *A condescension to be serviceable*. To wash one another's feet is to stoop to the meanest offices, for the real benefit one of another, as Paul, who, though free from all, made himself servant of all; and Jesus, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. We must not grudge to take care and pains, and to spend time, and to diminish ourselves for the good of others to whom we are not under any particular obligation, even our inferiors, and such as are not in a capacity of making us any requital. *Washing the feet* after travel, contributes both to the decency of the person, and to his ease, so that to wash one another's feet, is to consult both the credit and the comfort one of another; to do what we can, both to advance our brethren's reputation and to make their minds easy. See 1 Cor. 10: 24. Heb. 6: 10. The duty is mutual; we must both accept help from, and afford help to our brethren.

[3.] *A serviceableness to the sanctification one of another*; *Ye ought to wash one another's feet*, from sin. We cannot satisfy for one another's sins, that is peculiar to Christ, but may help to purify one another from sin. We must in the first place wash ourselves; this charity must begin at home, (Matt. 7: 5.) but it must not end there, we must sorrow for the failings and follies of our brethren, much more their gross pollutions, (1 Cor. 5: 2.) must wash our brethren's polluted feet in tears. We must faithfully reprove, and do what we can to bring them to repentance, (Gal. 6: 1.) and must admonish them, to prevent their falling into the mire; this is washing their feet.

The enforcing of this command is from the example of Christ: *If I, your Lord and Master, have done it to you, you ought to do it to one another*.

I am your Master, and you are my disciples, you ought to learn of Me, (v. 15.) for in this, as in other things, *I have given you an example, that you should do to others, as I have done to you*.

What a good teacher Christ is. He teaches by example as well as doctrine, and came into this world, to set us a copy of all those graces and duties his holy religion teaches; and it is a copy without one false stroke. Hereby He made his own laws more intelligible and honorable. Christ is a commander like Gideon, who said to his soldiers, *Look on me, and do likewise*; (Judg. 7: 17.) like Abimelech, who said, *What ye have seen me do, make haste and do as I have done*; (Judg. 9: 48.) and like Cæsar, who called his soldiers, not—*soldiers*, but—*fellow-soldiers*, and whose usual word was, not *Go*, but *Come*.

As good scholars, we must do as He hath done; 1 John 4: 17. and 2: 6. Christ's example herein is to be followed by ministers in particular, in whom the graces of humility and holy love should especially appear, and by the

11 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.

[Practical Observations.]

18 ¶ I speak not of you all; - I know whom I have chosen: but, that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me.

19 * Now ¶ I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

k 15:14. Gen. 6:22. Ex. 40:16. Ps. 131:1. 119:1-5. Ec. 38:27. Matt. 7:25. 25. 12:30. 21:38-41. Luke 12:47, 48. 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. Gal. 5:6. Heb. 11:7, 8. Jam. 1:25. 2:20-24. 4:17. Rev. 22:14.
l 11. 17:12. 21:17. 1 Cor. 4:5. Heb. 4:13. Rev. 2:25.
m 21-27. 1. 41:9. Matt. 10:36. 26:28. Mark 14:20.
n Dr. From New-ford.
o 14:29. 16:4. 1. 41:23. 49:5. Matt. 24:25. Luke 21:13.
p 1:16. 5:23, 24, 38. 10. 43:10. Mat. 3:1. Matt. 11:6. Rev. 1:17, 18.

place as *his servants*. If He were humble and condescending, it ill became them to be proud and assuming. Note, [1.] We must take heed lest Christ's condescensions to us, and advancements of us, occasion high thoughts of ourselves, or low thoughts of Him. We need to be put in mind of this, that we are not *greater than our Lord*. [2.] Whatever our Master was pleased to condescend to, in favor to us, we should much more condescend to, in conformity to Him. Christ, by humbling Himself, has dignified humility. When we see our Master *servant*, we cannot but see how ill it becomes us to be *domineering*.

Our Savior closes this part of his discourse with an intimation of the necessity of obedience: *If ye know these things; or, Seeing ye know them, happy are ye if ye do them*. Most people think, Happy are they that *rise and rule*. Washing one another's feet will never get preferments; but Christ saith, Happy they that *sloop and obey*. If ye know these things: that may be understood either as speaking *doubtfully*, whether they knew them or no; so strong was their conceit of a temporal kingdom, that it was a question whether they could entertain the notion of a duty so contrary to that conceit; or, as *taking it for granted*, that they did know these things; since they had such excellent precepts given them, recommended by such a pattern, it will be necessary to complete their happiness, that they practise accordingly.

This is applicable to the *commands of Christ in general*. Note, Though it is a great advantage to know our duty, yet we shall come short of happiness if we do not to it. Knowing is in order to doing; knowledge therefore not reduced to practice is vain and fruitless; nay, will aggravate the sin and ruin, Luke 12:47, 48. James 4:17. It is knowing and doing that will demonstrate us of *Christ's kingdom*, and wise builders. See Ps. 103:17, 18.

It is to be applied especially to this command of humility and serviceableness. Nothing is better known, or more readily acknowledged, than this, that we should be *humble*; and therefore, though many will own themselves *passionate and intemperate*, few will own themselves *proud*, for it is as *inexcusable a sin*, and as *hateful*, as any other; and yet how little is to be seen of true humility, and that mutual subjection and condescension, which the law of Christ insists so much upon! Most know these things so well as to expect that *others* should do according to them, but not so well as to do so themselves.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 12-17. If we would have the comfort of acceptance of Christ, we must inquire whether we understand the nature of what Jesus has done for sinners; and whether we are aiming to copy his example of love: whether we be delivered from self-importance and self-indulgence; and have learned to stoop, to labor, and to deny ourselves, in order to be serviceable to the last of our brethren. How many refuse to do as Christ has done before them, even where his example is most clearly given them to imitate! How many of his professed servants act, as if they were greater than their Lord! Instead of his lowly deportment, they affect state and consequence; they deem useful employ-

V. 18-30. Here is the discovery of Judas' plot. Christ knew it from the beginning; but now first discovered it to his disciples, who did not expect Christ should be betrayed, though He had often told them so, much less did they suspect that one of them should do it.

Christ gives a general intimation of it; (v. 8.) I cannot expect you will all do these things; for I know whom I have chosen, and whom I have passed by; but the Scripture will be fulfilled, (Ps. 41:9.) *He that eateth bread with Me, hath lifted up his heel against Me*. He doth not yet speak out the crime, or the criminal, but raiseth their expectations of a further discovery.

He intimates, that they were not all right. Note, The word of Christ is a distinguishing word, separating between *cattle and cattle*, and will distinguish thousands into hell, who flattered themselves with hopes of heaven. I speak not of you all, my followers. Note, There is a mixture of bad with good in the best societies; and will be till we come to the blessed society into which shall enter nothing unclean or disguised.

He Himself knew who were right, and who were not; I know whom I have chosen, among the many that are called with the common call. Note, Them that are chosen, Christ Himself had the choosing of: and He never forgets any, whom He has once had in his thoughts of love, 2 Tim. 2:19.

Christ took one into his family, whom He foresaw to be a traitor, and did not by effectual grace prevent his being so, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. Let it not therefore be a stumbling-block to any; for though it do not at all lessen Judas' offence, it may lessen our offence at it. The Jewish expositors generally understand David's complaint here of Ahithophel; Grotius thinks it intimates that the death of Judas would be like that of Ahithophel. But because that Psalm speaks of David's sickness, of which we read nothing at the time of Ahithophel's deserting him, it may better be understood of some other friend of his, that proved false to him. This our Savior applies to Judas.

Judas, as an apostle, was admitted to the highest privileges; he *eat bread with Christ*. He was familiar with Him, favored by Him, was one of his family, with whom He was intimately conversant. David saith of his treacherous friend, He did eat of my bread, but Christ, (being poor, He had no bread He could properly call his own,) saith, He did eat bread with Me; of such as He had by the kindness of ministering friends, his disciples had their share, Judas among the rest. Note, All that eat bread with Christ, are not his disciples indeed. See 1 Cor. 10:3-5.

Judas, as an apostate, was guilty of the basest treachery; spurned at Christ as *wrestlers* do at their adversaries, whom they would overthrow. Note, It is no new thing for Christ's *seeming friends*, to prove his *real enemies*. They eat not only the bread of his charity, but the bread of his covenant, yet rebel against Him, and thereby prove themselves guilty not only of the

Verses 4-17.
* Evident that this mode of expressing our love one to another, was not intended by Christ as a *permanent law*, but a direction adapted to the prevailing custom of the people, to whom it was originally given. T. H. Horne. * That the apostles did not take Christ's words in a literal sense, is clear; since this washing was neither observed by them nor by the primitive Christians. BLOOMFIELD.

Verses 18.
[Lifted up his heel.] Kuhnke explains, "Hath endeavored to supplant, trip up, and overthrow Me;" a metaphor taken from wrestling.

So Euthymius, and many others. But I think with Grotius it seems harsh, and assent to Wetstein, Lamps, Doddridge, &c., that it is a metaphor taken from kicking horses, oxen, &c., which sometimes mangle and even kill their benefactors, usually in a very shy and treacherous manner: in which consists most of the force of the allusion. This communion of bread has been in every age accounted an inviolable pledge of friendship. BLOOMFIELD.

[I speak not of you all.] This is a continuation of the discourse from the tenth verse. The preceding verses may be read in a parenthesis. Dr. A. Clarke.

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, ¹ He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

21 When Jesus had thus said, ² he was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ³ one of you shall betray me.

22 Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

23 Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, ⁴ whom Jesus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore ⁵ beckoned to him, that he should ask, who it should be of whom he spake.

25 He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, ⁶ who is it?

26 Jesus answered, ⁷ He it is to whom I shall give a ⁸ sop, when I have dipped it. And,

12:46-48. Matt. 10:40-42. 25:40. Mark 9:37. Luke 9:48. 10:16. Gal. 4:14. Col. 2:5. 1 Thes. 4:5.
11:33, 35, 38. 12:27. Matt. 26:38. Mark 3:5. Act. 17:16. Rom. 9:23. 2 Cor. 2:12, 13.
2:18. Matt. 26:21. Mark 14:18. Luke 22:21, 22. Act. 1:16, 17. 1 John 2:19.
Gen. 42:1. Matt. 26:22. Mark 14:19. Luke 22:23.
9:5. 1:18. 21:20. 2 Sam. 12:3. 11:3, 5, 36. 19:34. 20:2. 21:7, 24. Rev. 1:16-19.
Luke 1:22. 5:7. Act. 12:17. 13:16. 21:40.
Gen. 44:1-12. Esth. 7:5, 8.
20. Matt. 25:23. Mark 14:19, 20. Luke 22:21. Or morsel.

will neither justify uncharitableness, nor lose us the reward of our charity.

We are here encouraged to receive ministers as sent of Christ; 'He that receiveth whomsoever I send, though weak and poor, and subject to like passions as others, (as by the law, so the Gospel, makes men priests that have infirmity,) yet if he deliver my message, and be regularly called and appointed to do so, and as an officer, give himself to the Word and prayer; he that entertains him, shall be owned as a friend of mine.' Christ was now leaving the world, but would leave an order of men, to deliver his Word, and those who receive that in the love of it, receive Him; to believe the doc-

trine of Christ, obey his law, and accept the salvation offered on the terms proposed, this is receiving those whom Christ sends, it is receiving Christ.

The reason ¹ He told them beforehand of the treachery of Judas; (v. 19.) 'Now I tell you before Judas has begun to put his plot in execution; and when it is come to pass, you may, instead of stumbling at it, be confirmed in your belief, that I am He that should come.'

By his foresight of things to come, of which in this, as in other instances, He gave incontestable proof, He proved Himself to be the true God, before whom all things are naked and open. Christ foretold that Judas would betray Him, when there was no ground to suspect such a thing, and so proved Himself a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The prophecies of the New Testament concerning the apostasy of the latter times, (2 Thes. 2. 1 Tim. 4. and in the Apocalypse,) being evidently accomplished, it is a proof that those writings were divinely inspired, and confirms our faith in the whole of Scripture.

By thus applying the types and prophecies of the Old Testament to Himself, He proved Himself the true Messiah, to whom all the prophets bare witness. He suffered as it was written, Luke 24: 25, 26. ch. 8: 28.

He encourages his apostles, and ministers; (v. 20.) He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth Me. It is not easy to make out the coherence of those words here. 1. Christ had told his disciples they must humble and abase themselves. 'Now, though there be those that despise you for your condescension, there will be those that will honor you, and shall be honored for so doing.' Those who are dignified by Christ's commission, may be content to be vilified by the world. 2. It is intended to silence the scruples of those, who, because there was a traitor among the apostles, would be shy of receiving any of them; for if one of them was false to his Master, to whom would any of them be true? No, as Christ will think never the worse of them for Judas' crime, so He will own them, and will raise up such as shall receive them. They that had received Judas, when a preacher, and perhaps were converted and edified by his preaching, were never the worse, nor should reflect upon it with any regret, though he afterward proved a traitor; for he was one whom Christ sent. We cannot know what men are, much less what they will be, but those who appear to be sent of Christ, we must receive, till the contrary appear. Though some, by entertaining strangers, have entertained robbers unawares, yet we must still be hospitable, for thereby some have entertained angels. The abuses of our charity, though ever so discreet, will neither justify uncharitableness, nor lose us the reward of our charity.

Verses 23, 25.
The Hebrews anciently sat at table, but afterwards imitated the Per-



and Chaldeans, who reclined on table-beds, or divans, while eating. Ancient females were not admitted to the tables of the men,

trine of Christ, obey his law, and accept the salvation offered on the terms proposed, this is receiving those whom Christ sends, it is receiving Christ.

We are here encouraged to receive Christ as sent of God; He that thus receiveth Christ in his ministers, receiveth the Father also, for they come upon his errand likewise, baptizing in the name of the Father, as well as of the Son. Or, in general, He that receiveth Me, as his Prince and Savior, receiveth Him that sent Me, as his Portion and Felicity. In embracing Christ's religion, we embrace the only true religion.

Christ more particularly notifies to them the plot of one of their number against Him; (v. 21.) When Jesus had thus said in general, to prepare them for a more particular discovery, He was troubled in spirit, and showed it by some gesture or sign, and He testified, (with the solemnity of a witness on oath,) 'One of you shall betray Me.' None indeed could be said to betray Him but those in whom He reposed a confidence, the witnesses of his retirements. This did not determine Judas to the sin by any fatal necessity; for though the event did follow according to the prediction, yet not from the prediction. Christ is not the author of sin; yet as to this heinous sin of Judas,

1. Christ foretold it; for that which is secret and future, is naked and open before the eyes of Christ; 2 Kings 8: 12. Isa. 45: 8.

2. He foretold it, not only for the sake of the rest, but of Judas, that he might take warning, and recover himself out of the snare of the devil. Traitors proceed not in their plots, when they find they are discovered; surely Judas when he finds that his Master knows his design, will retreat; if not, it will aggravate his condemnation.

3. He spake of it with manifest concern; He was troubled in spirit. He had often spoken of his own sufferings and death, without such trouble of spirit as here. Note, The falls and miscarriages of disciples are a great trouble of spirit to their Master; 'What? One of you? that have received from Me such distinguished favors; you, that I had reason to think would be firm to Me, that have professed such respect for Me; what iniquity have you found in Me, that one of you should betray Me?' This went to his heart, as the unprofitableness of children grieves those who have nourished and brought them up, Isa. 1: 2. See Ps. 95: 10. Isa. 63: 10.

The disciples quickly take the alarm; By looking one upon another they discovered the trouble they were in upon this notice; it struck such an horror upon them, that they knew not which way to look, or what to say. They saw their Master troubled, and therefore they were troubled. This was at a feast where they were cheerfully entertained; but hence we must be taught to rejoice with trembling, as though we rejoiced not. When David wept for his son's rebellion, all his followers wept with him; (2 Sam. 15: 30.) so Christ's disciples here. Note, That which grieves Christ, is, and should

(at this day it would be considered an indecency throughout the East,) but had a table set in their own apartment; Esth. 1: 6, 9. Babylon and Persia must however be looked upon as exceptions, Dan. 5: 2? Jahn.] The general character of the meals seems to have been the same among the Greeks, Romans, and Hebrews. See Potter and Adam. The custom prevails now in the East, of sitting or reclining on the floor at meat. [The middle cushion and the centre position on any given cushion, was the most honorable.] Jahn.] The cut represents a common eating-table. The three tables form but one, and to each is a couch or klinium—three of these, united, to surround the three tables, formed the triclinium, (three beds.) These beds were mattresses stuffed; each guest reclines on his left elbow, using principally his right hand. It will thus be seen how John, as he was next to Jesus, lay in his bosom, and fell back on his breast, to whisper to him. The feet were readily reached by a person passing behind, as Luke 7: 38. Calmet, by Rob. Ed.

Verses 26.

Sop.] 'Rather, morsel, a piece of any thing, and consequently of any kind of food. Some of the best commentators understand by it a slice of meat from the paschal lamb.' BLOOMFIELD.

Dipped it.] 'That is, in the sauce called charoseth, in which the herbs and bread were dipped when eaten. It was composed of dates, figs, almonds, apples and other fruits, beaten together and mixed with wine and aromatics, and stewed over with broken cinnamon, to represent the straw and clay used by the Israelites in making bricks in Egypt.' ENYNG.

when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

27 And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, 'That thou doest, do quickly.

28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

29 For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast: or, that he should give something to the poor.

6:70-71. 12:4-6.
h 9 Ps. 109:6. Matt. 12:45. Luke 11:33,35. 21:3. Acts 5:3.
c 1 Kings 18:27. Prov. 1:18. Ec. 9:3. Jer. 2:2,25. Dan. 2:15. Mark 6:25. Jam. 1:13-15.
d 12:5.
e 12:5. Acts 20:34,35. Gal. 2:10. Eph. 4:8.

the fashion in those countries to sit at meat in a leaning posture, so that the second lay in the bosom of the first, and so on; it seems an extraordinary expression of endearment. Note, Some of Christ's disciples have more intimate communion with Him than others. The Father loved the Son, and laid Him in his bosom, (ch. 1:18.) and believers are in like manner one with Christ, ch. 17: 21. This honor all the saints shall have shortly in the bosom of Abraham. Those who lay themselves at Christ's feet, He will lay in his bosom.

He conceals his name, being himself the penman of the story; to show that he was pleased with it, he puts instead of his name, this title of honor, the disciple whom Jesus loved, as in David's and Solomon's court, there was one that was the king's friend; yet he does not write his name, to show he was not proud of it, nor would boast of it. So Paul saith, I knew a man in Christ.

2. Of all the disciples Peter was most forward to know; (v. 24.) sitting at some distance, he beckoned to John, by some sign to ask. Peter was generally the leading man, most apt to put himself forth; and where men's natural tempers lead them to be thus bold in answering and asking, if kept under the laws of humility and wisdom, they make very serviceable men. God gives his gifts variously; but that the forward men in the church may not think too well of themselves, nor the modest be discouraged, it must be noted that it was not Peter, but John, that was the beloved disciple. Peter was desirous to know, not only that he might be sure it was not he, but that, knowing who it was, they might withdraw from him, and if possible, prevent his design. It was desirable to know who in the church will deceive us; yet let this suffice—Christ knows. Peter himself did not ask, because John had a much fairer opportunity, from his seat at table, to whisper the question in Christ's ear, and receive a private answer. It is good to improve our interest in those that are near to Christ. Do we know any that we have reason to think lie in Christ's bosom? Let us beg of them to speak a good word for us.

The question was asked accordingly; John shows here, (1.) A regard to his fellow-disciple. Though Peter had not the honor he had at this time, John did not disdain his hint. Note, They who lie in Christ's bosom, may often learn from those who lie at his feet, something that will be profitable for them, and be reminded of what they did not themselves think of. Having opportunity, John gratified Peter herein. As every one hath received the gift, so let him minister the same for a common good, Rom. 12: 6.

(2.) A reverence of his Master. Though he whispered in Christ's ear, he called Him Lord; the familiarity he was admitted to, did not at all lessen his respect for his Master. Reverence in expression and decorum, are becoming in our secret devotions, as well as in public assemblies. The more intimate communion souls have with Christ, the more sensible they are of his worthiness, and their own unworthiness, Gen. 18: 27.

Christ gave a speedy answer to this question, but whispered it in John's ear; for he rest, it appears, (v. 25.) were still ignorant of the matter. He it is to whom I shall give a sop, a morsel, a crust; when I have dipped it in the sauce.

Christ notified the traitor by a sign: thus He would exercise the observation of John, and intimate what need his ministers have of a spirit of discerning; for false brethren are not made known to us by words, but by signs; by their fruits, by their spirits; it requires great diligence and care to form a right judgment of them.

That sop was a very proper sign, because it was the fulfilling of the Scripture, (v. 18.) that the traitor should be one that ate bread with Him. It likewise teaches us, [1.] That Christ sometimes gives sops to traitors; worldly riches, honors, and pleasures, are sops, (so to speak,) which Pro-

be, a grief to all that are his; particularly the scandalous misarrangements of those that are called by his name: Who is offended, and I burn not?

Hereby they endeavored to discover the traitor; but while those who were faithful, had their consciences so clear, that they could lift up their faces without spot; he that was false, had his conscience so seared, that he was not ashamed, neither could he blush, and so no discovery could be made this way. Christ thus put his disciples into confusion for a time, to humble and prove them, and excite in them a jealousy of themselves, and an indignation at the baseness of Judas. It is good for us sometimes to be put to a pause.

The disciples were solicitous to get their Master to tell them particularly whom He meant; nothing but that can put them out of present pain, for each thought he had as much reason to suspect himself as any of his brethren; now,

1. Of all the disciples, John was most fit to ask, because He was the favorite, and sat next his Master; v. 23. It appears that this was John, by comparing ch. 21: 20.

Observe, The particular kindness Jesus had for him; he was known by this name, the disciple whom Jesus loved. He loved them all, (v. 1.) but John was particularly dear to Him. His name signifies gracious. Daniel, who was honored with the revelations of the Old Testament, as John of the New, was a man greatly beloved, Dan. 9: 23.

He was leaning on Jesus' bosom. It was

vidence sometimes gives wicked men. Judas perhaps thought himself a favorite, because he had the sop, like Benjamin at Joseph's table, a mess by himself; thus the prosperity of fools, like a stupefying sop, helps to destroy them. [2.] We must not be outrageous against those whom we know to be very malicious against us. Christ carved to Judas as kindly as to any at the table, though He knew he was then plotting his death. If thine enemy hunger feed him, as Christ does.

Judas, instead of being convinced hereby of his wickedness, was the more confirmed in it, and the warning given him was to him a savor of death unto death; for the devil hereupon took possession of him; (v. 27.) not to make him melancholy, or drive him distracted, to hurry him into the fire, or the water; (happy for him, had that been the worst of it, or if, with the same, he had been choked in the sea;) but to possess him with a prevailing prejudice against Christ and his doctrine, and a contempt of Him, as one whose life was of small value; to excite in him a covetous desire of the wages of unrighteousness, and a resolution to stick at nothing to obtain them.

How is it said, that now Satan entered into him? Judas was all along a devil, (ch. 6: 70.) a son of perdition, but now Satan had a more abundant entrance into him. His purpose was now ripening into a fixed resolution; now he returned with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, Luke 11: 26. Note, Though the devil is in every wicked man that does his works, (Eph. 2: 2.) yet sometimes he enters more powerfully than at other times, when he puts them upon some enormous wickedness. Betrayers of Christ have much of the devil in them. Christ speaks of the sin of Judas as greater than that of any of his persecutors.

How came Satan to enter into him after the sop? Perhaps, aware it was the discovery of him, he became desperate. Many are made worse by the gifts of Christ, and are confirmed in impenitence by that which should have led them to repentance. The coals of fire heaped upon their heads, instead of melting, harden them.

Christ hereupon dismissed him, and delivered him up to his own heart's lusts; Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. This is not to be understood as either advising him to his wickedness, or warranting him in it; but either as, 1. Abandoning him to the power of Satan. The various methods Christ had used for his conviction, were ineffectual; and therefore, 'What thou doest thou wilt do quickly; if resolved to ruin thyself, go on, and take what comes.' Note, When the evil spirit is willingly admitted, the good spirit justly withdraws. Or, 2. As challenging him to do his worst. Note, Our Lord was very forward to suffer and die for us, and was impatient of delay in his undertaking. Christ speaks of Judas' betraying Him as a thing he was now doing, though he was only purposing it. Those who are contriving and designing mischief, are, in God's account, doing mischief.

Those who were at table, understood not what He meant, because they did not hear what He whispered to John; (v. 23, 29.) No man at table, except John, knew for what intent He spake this to him.

They did not suspect that Christ said it to Judas as a traitor, because it did not enter into their heads that Judas was, or would prove so. Note, It is an excusable dulness in the disciples of Christ not to be quick sighted in their censures. Most are ready enough to say, when they hear harsh things spoken in general, now such a one is meant, and now such a one; but Christ's disciples were so well taught to love one another, that they could not easily learn to suspect one another; charity thanks no evil.

Their surmises discover for what purposes our Lord commonly directed payments to be made out of their little stock, and so teach us how to honor the Lord with our substance. They concluded something was to be laid out either,

1. In works of piety; v. 29. Though H

33 ¹ Little children, yet a little while I am with you, ² Ye shall seek me; and, as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go ye cannot come; so now I say to you.

34 A new commandment I give unto you, ³ That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 Ye shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

1 Gal. 4:19. 1 John 2:1. 4:4. 5:21.
m 12:35, 36. 14:19. 16:16-22.
n 7:33, 34. 8:21-24. 14:4-6.
c Gal. 6:5. 1 John 2:8-10. 3:14-15.
2. 2 John 5.
p 15:12, 13, 17. 17:21. Lev. 19:18, 34.
Pa. 16:3. 119:63. Rom. 12:10. 1
Cor. 12:26, 27. 13:4-7. Gal. 5:6, 13.
14:22. 6:10. Eph. 5:2. Phil. 2:1-5.
5. Col. 1:4. 3:12, 13. 1 Thes. 3:12.
4:9, 10. 2 Thes. 1:3. Heb. 13:1.
Jam. 2:8. 1 Pet. 1:22. 3:9, 2.
2 Pet. 1:7. 1 John 17:11. 5:1.
17:21. Gen. 13:7. Acts 4:32-35.
8:12-14. 1 John 2:10. 3:10-14. 4:1.
20, 21.

in Himself, and give Him honor. Note, 1st. In the exaltation of Christ there was a regard had to his humiliation, and a reward given for it. *Because He humbled Himself, therefore God highly exalted Him.* If the Father be so great a gainer in his glory by the death of Christ, the Son shall be no loser. See the covenant, Isa. 53:12. 2dly. Those who mind the business of glorifying God, shall be glorified with Him.

Here is something Christ instructs them in, concerning his sufferings, which was awakening, for as yet they were slow of heart to understand it; *Little children, yet a little while I am with you, &c.*

Two things Christ here suggests, to quicken his disciples to improve their present opportunities.

(1.) That they would find his stay in this world, with them, to be very short. *Little children.* This compellation speaks not so much their weakness as his tenderness; He speaks with the affection of a father, about to leave them, and to leave blessings with them; Know this then, that yet a little while I am with you. Whether we understand it of the time previous to his death, or the time to his ascension, it comes much to one; He had but little time to spend with them, and therefore, if they had any good question to ask, if they would have any advice, instruction, or comfort, let them speak quickly. We must make the best of the helps we have for our souls while we have them, because they will soon be taken from us, or we from them.

Let them not dote on his bodily presence, as if their happiness and comfort were bound up in that; they must think of living without it; not be always little children, but go alone. Ways and means are appointed but for a little while, and are not to be rested in, but pressed through to our rest, to which they refer.

(2.) That they would find it very difficult to follow Him to the other world. What He said to the Jews, (ch. 7: 34.) He saith to his disciples; for they have need to be quickened by the same considerations that are propounded for the convincing and awakening of sinners. Christ tells them here, [1.] *Ye shall seek Me*, that is, 'Shall wish ye had Me again with you.' We are often taught the worth of mercies by the want of them. Though the presence of the Comforter yielded real and effectual relief in straits and difficulties, yet it was not such a sensible satisfaction as his bodily presence. But observe, Christ said to the Jews, *Ye shall seek Me and not find Me*; but to the disciples He only saith, *Ye shall seek Me*, intimating, that they should not seek in vain. When they sought his body in the sepulchre, though they did not find it, they sought to good purpose. [2.] Whither He went they could not come; this suggests to them high thoughts of Him who was going to an invisible, inaccessible world, to dwell in light unapproachable; and also low thoughts of themselves, and serious thoughts of their future state. Christ tells them that they could not follow Him, (as Joshua told the people that they could not serve the Lord,) only to quicken them to diligence and care. They would not follow Him to his cross, for they had not courage and resolution; (as appeared when they all forsook Him and fled;) nor to his crown, for they had not a sufficiency of their own, nor were their work and warfare yet finished.

II. He discourses with them concerning the great duty of brotherly love; (v. 34, 35) *Ye shall love one another.* Judas was now gone out, and had

them, in consideration of God's being greatly glorified by them, v. 32.

God glorified Him in his sufferings by signs and wonders, both in heaven and earth; which extorted even from his crucifiers an acknowledgment that He was the Son of God. But especially after his sufferings He glorified Him, when He set Him at his own right hand, gave Him a name above every name.

He will glorify Him in Himself. Either, 1st. In Christ Himself: in his own person, and not only in his kingdom among men. This supposes his speedy resurrection. A common person may be honored after his death, in his memory or posterity, but Christ was honored in Himself. Or, 2dly. In God Himself. God will glorify Him with Himself, as explained, ch. 17: 5. *He shall sit down with the Father upon his throne*, Rev. 3: 21. This is true glory.

He will glorify Him straightway. He looked on the joy and glory set before Him, not only as great, but as near; and his sorrows and sufferings soon over. Good services to earthly princes, often remain long unrewarded; but Christ had his preferments presently. It was but forty hours (or less) from his death to his resurrection, and forty days thence to his ascension, so that it might well be said He was straightway glorified, Ps. 16: 10.

All this, in consideration of God's being glorified in and by his sufferings; *Seeing God is glorified in Him*, and receives honor from his sufferings, God shall in like manner glorify Him in Himself, and give Him honor. Note, 1st. In the exaltation of Christ there was a regard had to his humiliation, and a reward given for it. *Because He humbled Himself, therefore God highly exalted Him.* If the Father be so great a gainer in his glory by the death of Christ, the Son shall be no loser. See the covenant, Isa. 53:12. 2dly. Those who mind the business of glorifying God, shall be glorified with Him.

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Verse 34.

Note. Xenophon calls the laws of Lycurus, very new laws, several hundred years after they were made, because, though commended by other nations, they had not been practised by them.

Ex. A new commandment. 'It seems a strong and lively intimation, that the engagements to mutual love, peculiar to the Christian dispensation, are so singular and cogent, that all other men, when compared with its votaries, may seem un instructed in the school of friendship,

and Jesus may appear, as it were, the first Professor of that divine science.'

By this shall all men know, &c. 'It is well known that the founders of new societies appoint some peculiar ornaments, signs, or mode of living, by which their followers may be known from others. This seems alluded to here.'

Verse 35.

It is well known that the founders of new societies appoint some peculiar ornaments, signs, or mode of living, by which their followers may be known from others. This seems alluded to here.'

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

Id.

36 Simon Peter said unto him, Lord, 'whither goest thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards.

37 Peter said unto him, Lord, 'why cannot I follow thee now? I will lay down my life for thy sake.

38 Jesus answered him, 'Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice.

r 33. 14:4, 5. 16:17. 21:21.
 21:18, 19, 22. 2 Pet. 1:14.
 21:16. Matt. 26:31—35. Mark 14:
 27—31. Luke 22:31—34. Acts 20:
 24. 21:13.
 v. Prov. 15:18. 23:26. 29:23. 1 Cor.
 10:12.
 v. 18:16, 17, 27. Matt. 26:34, 69—
 75. Mark 14:30, 66—72. Luke 22:
 34, 56—62.

said, *See how these Christians love one another.* (3.) If the followers of Christ do not love one another, they not only cast an unjust reproach on their profession, but give just cause to suspect their sincerity. *O Jesus I are these thy Christians, these passionate, malicious, spiteful, ill-natured people? Is this thy son's coat?* When our brethren need help from us, and we have an opportunity of being *serviceable to them*, when they differ in opinion and practice from us, or are rivals with, or provoking to us, and we have an occasion to condescend and forgive; in such cases as this it will be known whether we have this badge of Christ's disciples.

V. 36—38. We have here, Peter's *curiosity and confidence*, and the *check* given them.

His question was bold and blunt. He overlooks the practical instructions Christ had given them concerning brotherly love, but fastens on that concerning which Christ purposely kept them in the dark. Note, It is a common fault, to be more inquisitive concerning things secret, which belong to God only, than concerning things *revealed, which belong to us and our children*; more desirous to have our *curiosity gratified*, than our *consciences directed*; to know what is done in heaven, than what we may do to get thither. Observe in the converse of Christians, how soon a discourse of that which is plain and edifying, is *dropped*, and no more said of it; while a matter of doubtful disputation runs into an endless strife of words.

Christ's answer was instructive. He did not gratify him with a particular account of the world He was going to, nor ever foretold his glories and joys so distinctly as his sufferings; but said as before, v. 33. Let that suffice, *thou canst not follow Me now, but shalt hereafter.*

We may understand it of his following Him to the cross; 'Thou hast not yet strength of faith and resolution to drink of my cup;' and it appeared so by his cowardice. For this reason, when Christ was seized, He provided for the safety of his disciples; *Let these go their way, because they could not follow Him now.* Christ considers the frame of his disciples, and will not

ready. 'Hereby it will appear that you are indeed my followers by following me in this.' Note, Brotherly love is the badge of Christ's disciples. By this He knows them, by this they may know themselves, (1 John 3:14.) and by this *others may know them*; this He would have them *noted for*, as that wherein they excelled all others. For this their Master was famous; all that ever heard of Him, have heard of his great love; and therefore if you see any people more affectionate one to another, than is common, say, 'Certainly these are the followers of Christ; they have been with Jesus.'

By this it appears, (1.) That the heart of Christ was very much upon it, that his disciples should *love one another*; in this they must be *singular*; whereas the way of the world is, to be *every one for himself*; they should be hearty for one another. He does not say, *By this shall men know that ye are my disciples*—if ye work miracles; for a worker of miracles is but a cipher without charity; (1 Cor. 13: 1, 2.) but if ye *love one another* from a principle of self-denial and gratitude to Christ; this Christ would have to be the peculiarity of his religion, the principal note of the true church. (2.) It is the true honor of Christ's disciples to excel in brotherly love; and nothing will more effectually recommend them to the esteem and respect of others. See what a powerful attractive it was, Acts 2:46, 47. Tertullian speaks of it as the glory of the primitive church, that the Christians were known by their affection to one another. Their adversaries took notice of it, and

give them work and hardship they are not as yet fit for; the day shall be as the strength is. Peter cannot follow Christ now, not being come to his full growth, but he shall *follow Him hereafter*; shall be crucified at last, like his Master. Let him not think that because he escapes suffering now, he shall never suffer. From *missing the cross* once, we must not infer we shall never meet it; we may be reserved for greater trials than we have yet known.

We may understand it of his following Him to the crown. Christ was now going to his glory, and Peter was very desirous to go with Him; 'No,' saith Christ, 'thou canst not, thou art not yet ripe for heaven, nor hast thou finished thy work on earth. The Forerunner must first *enter to prepare a place for thee*, but thou shalt follow Me after thou hast fought the good fight, and at the time appointed.' Note, Believers must not expect to be glorified as soon as they are effectually called, for there is a wilderness between the Red sea and Canaan.

Peter makes a *daring protestation of constancy*. He is not content to be left behind, but asks, 'Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? Dost Thou question my sincerity and resolution? I promise Thee, if there be occasion, I will lay down my life for thy sake.' Some think Peter had a conceit, as the Jews had in a like case, (ch. 7: 35.) that Christ was designing a journey to some remote country, and declared his resolution to go with Him wherever He went; but, having so often heard his Master speak of his own sufferings, surely he could not understand Him any otherwise than of his going away by death; and he resolves, as Thomas, that he will go and die with Him; and better die with Him, than live without Him. What affection Peter had to Jesus, 'I will lay down my life for thy sake, and I can do no more.' I believe Peter spake as he thought, and, though *inconsiderate*, he was not *insincere*. Note, Christ should be dearer to us than our lives, which, therefore, when called to it, we should be willing to lay down for his sake, Acts 20: 24. How ill he took it to have it questioned; 'Why, Lord? Dost Thou suspect my fidelity?' 1 Sam. 29: 8. Note, True love hears its own sincerity arraigned with regret, as ch. 21: 17. Christ had indeed said that one of them was a devil, but he was discovered, and gone out, and therefore Peter thinks he may speak with more assurance of his own sincerity; 'Lord, I am resolved I will never leave Thee, and therefore why cannot I follow Thee?' We are apt to think that we can do any thing, and take it amiss to be told that this and the other we cannot do, whereas without Christ we can do nothing.

Christ gives him a *surprising prediction* of his inconstancy, v. 28. He has many ways of discovering those to themselves, whom He loves.

He upbraids Peter with his confidence; *Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?* Methinks, He seems to have said this with a smile, 'Pe-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 31—38. While hypocrites and apostates 'bring upon themselves swift destruction,' the loss is wholly their own: for nothing can prevent the glory of the Redeemer, and that of the Father in Him. Even on the cross, the Savior acquired the most illustrious victories over Satan, the world, sin, and death. (Col. 2: 13—15.)—There He magnified the divine law, paid an inestimable ransom, and rescued millions from eternal misery, to the glory of the Father: therefore a name and a glory have been given Him, above all the inhabitants of heaven and earth; that 'all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father.' (5: 20—23. Phil. 2: 9—11.) The thoughts of his glory, and of his love to us, should reconcile us to our distance and trials, while we continue in this world. We cannot now follow our Lord to heaven; yet if we truly believe, we 'shall follow Him hereafter,' notwithstanding our remaining errors, temptations, and conflicts: but we must await his time, perform our work, and be gradually humbled and purified for our inheritance.—Who, that seriously contemplates the state of the Christian church, or the spirit of those who seem most zealous for evangelical truth, would suppose, that mutual love, after the example of Jesus, is indeed the appointed criterion, by which all men should know and distinguish his disciples? Had a zealous zeal for doctrines, forms, parties, or mutual slanders, revilings, and anathemas rashly denounced, or exactness in the minutiae of a system, or a perverted ingenuity in multiplying

Shibboleths, been the test of Christianity, modern appearances might suggest less melancholy reflections than now obtrude upon the pious mind. But the commandment 'to love one another, even as Christ hath loved us,' is still new and strange to most professed Christians: many seem never to have read it; few appear to understand, or practise it; and 'because iniquity abounds, the love of these few waxes cold.' Instead of exercising candor in judging of our brethren, that we may take in all, who appear to hate and repent of sin, to believe in a divine Savior, and love and follow after holiness; many seem to think, that a rigorous zeal for an orthodox system, or some external forms, ought to swallow up all meekness, candor, and kindness to those, who differ from them even in the smallest particulars! (P. O. 1 Cor. 12: 12—26. Eph. 4: 1—6.) Men in general notice any of the words of Christ rather than these: and self-preference, boasting, and judging others, supplant humble love which 'hoped all things.' (1 Cor. 13: 4—7. P. O. 1—7. P. O. Jam. 3: 13—18.) But this 'haughty spirit goes before a fall;' and some, whom the Lord loves, are left to feel and to show their weakness and folly; in order to humble them, to teach them more tenderness to their brethren, as well as more entire dependence on Christ. May we then endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; 'to love one another with a pure heart fervently,' and 'walk humbly with God.'

SCOTT.

CHAP. XIV.

teins encourage his disciples to believe in God and in Him; and promises them mansions in heaven, [1.] It shows that this is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, 5, 6; and that He is One with the Father, 7-11. He promises them power to do even greater works than He had done. And that He will grant all the prayers offered in his name, 12-14. He requires obedience as the proof of their love; and promises to give them the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and much security and comfort, in communion with the Father and with Him, as comfort and making their abode with those that love Him, 15-26. He leaves his peace with them; and shows that his return to his Father was a proper ground for their rejoicing, 27-29; and He informs them of his approaching conflict with the prince of this world, in obedience to the Father, 30, 31.

LET ^a not your heart be troubled: ^b ye believe in God, believe also in me.

2 In ^c my Father's house are many mansions: ^d if it were not so, I would have told you. ^e I go to prepare a place for you.

27, 28. 11:33. marg. 12:27. 16:5. Job 21:4-6. 13:15. 16. Ps. 42:5, 6, 8-11. 43:5. 77:2, 3, 10. Is. 48:1, 2. Jer. 8:18. Lam. 3:17-23. 2 Cor. 2:7. 4:3-10. 12:9, 10. 1 The. 3:3. Heb. 12:12, 13. 10:11. 5:23. 6:40. 11:27-27. 12: 14. 13:19. Is. 12:2, 3. 28:3, 4. Acts 3:15, 16. Jer. 1:12, 15. 3:11-17. 1 Eze. 1:21. 1 Job 2:23, 24. 5:10-12. 2 Cor. 5:1. Heb. 11:10, 14-16. 13. Rev. 3:12, 21. 21:10-27. 1 Acts 25, 26. 16:1. Luke 14:26-33. 1 Acts 18. 1 The. 3:3, 4. 5:9. 2 The. 1:4-10. 1 Tim. 1:2. Rev. 1:5. 13:3, 36. 17:24. Heb. 6:20. 9:23-26. 11:16.

fatality inconsistent with human liberty; and yet this plain, circumstantial prophecy did neither; nor did in the least make Christ necessary to Peter's sin. But we may well imagine what a mortification it was to Peter's confidence to be told this, and in such a manner, that he durst not contradict it, else he would have said as Hazael, *Is thy servant a dog?* This could not but fill him with confusion. Note, The most secure are commonly the least safe; and those most shamefully betray their own weakness, that most confidently presume on their strength, 1 Cor. 10: 12.

CHAP. XIV. v. 1-3. The disciples now began to be troubled, and Christ noticed it. Perhaps it was *legible* in their looks; it was said, (ch. 13: 22.) *they looked one upon another with anxiety and concern*, and Christ looked upon them all, and observed it. Jesus is acquainted with the secret wound that bleeds inwardly: He knows not only how we are *afflicted*, but how we stand *affected* under afflictions, and how near they lie to our hearts; He takes cognizance of all the trouble his people are at any time in danger of being overwhelmed with; He *knows our souls in adversity*.

Many things concurred to trouble the disciples. Christ had just told them of the unkindness He should receive from some of them, and this troubled them all. Peter, no doubt, looked very *sorrowful*, and all the rest were sorry for him and themselves too, not knowing whose turn it would be to be told next of some ill thing they should do. As to this, Christ comforts them; a godly jealousy over ourselves is of great use to keep us humble and watchful, yet it must not disquiet our spirits, and damp our holy joy.

He had just told them that He should not only go away from them, but go in a cloud of sufferings. They must shortly hear Him loaded with reproaches, and see Him barbarously abused, and put to death, and this will be as a

NOTES.

CHAP. XIV. v. 1. 'Let it not suffice you, that ye believe in one infinite and invisible God, but repose your hearts upon Me, the true and only Son of God, whom ye see clothed with flesh. And the rather now fasten your souls on Me, by a steadfast belief; for ye shall not find this humanity of mine subjected to many and great miseries, and given contempt, pain, and insult, even to an ignominious death: but let not your hearts be troubled, the issue of those things shall be glorious.' *Bp. Hall.*—As I find no example where the same word, in the same sentence, is used both in the Indicative and imperative mood, I had rather render these words in the same mode thus, 'Believe in God, believe also in Me.' *Whitby.*—(So Doddridge, Lampe, &c.) This criticism is probably well grounded. Campbell concurs in it, and adds, 'How frequently, in the book of Psalms, are the people of God, in the time of affliction, exhorted to trust in the Lord? Such exhortations, therefore, are not understood to imply a total want of faith in those to whom they are given.'—Yet Bp. Hall's view of the nature and object of that faith in Christ, to which the disciples were exhorted, is most satisfactory: He had just before predicted, *Let it not*

ter, thy promises are too lavish to be relied on; thou dost not consider with what reluctance and struggle a life is *laid down*.' Christ hereby puts Peter upon second thoughts, not that he might retract his resolution, but that he might insert that necessary proviso, *Thy grace enabling me, I will.* 'Wilt thou undertake to die for Me? thou that tremblest to walk upon the water to Me? thou that, when sufferings were spoken of, criest out, *Be it far from Thee, Lord?*' It was an easier thing to leave thy hoats and nets, than to lay down thy life.' His Master Himself struggled when it came to that, and the disciple is not greater than his Lord. Note, It is good for us to *shame ourselves out of presumptuous confidence*. Shall a bruised reed set up for a pillar, or a sickly child for a champion? He plainly foretels his cowardice. To stop his boasting, Peter should say it again, *Yea, Master, that I will*, Christ solemnly asserts it with, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied Me thrice*. He does not say, as afterward, *This night*, for it seems to have been two nights before the passover; but, 'Shortly, the cock shall not have finished his crowing till thou hast again and again denied Me, and that for fear of suffering.' The crowing of the cock is mentioned, [1.] To intimate that the trial in which he would miscarry, would be in the night, which was improbable, but Christ's foretelling it was an instance of his infallible foresight. [2.] The crowing of the cock was to be the occasion of his repentance, which would not have been, had not Christ predicted this. Christ not only foresaw that Judas would betray Him, though he only in heart designed it; but that Peter would deny Him, though he did not design it. He knows not only the *wickedness of sinners*, but the *weakness* of saints.

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sword in their bones; piercing through their *own souls*, for they had loved and chosen Him, and left all to follow Him. When we look on Christ pierced, we cannot but *mourn* and be in bitterness, though we see the glorious fruit of it; much more grievous must the sight be to them who could then look no further.

If Christ depart, they will think then *themselves disappointed*; for, looking that this had been He that would deliver Israel, and set up his secular kingdom in power and glory, they had lost all to follow Him. Now, if He leave the world in the same circumstances in which He had lived, and worse, they are quite defeated. They will think themselves sadly *deserted* and exposed. They knew by experience what little presence of mind they had in difficult emergencies, that they could count upon nothing but being ruined, and run down, if they part with their Master. In reference to all these, *Let not your heart be troubled*. The emphasis may significantly be laid,

1st. Upon the word *troubled*. Be not put into a hurry and confusion, *like the troubled sea when it cannot rest*. He does not say, 'Let not your hearts be sensible of grief, or sad,' but, 'Be not ruffled and discomposed, be not cast down and *disquieted*,' Ps. 42: 5.

2dly. Upon the word *heart*. 'Though the nation and city, though your little family and flock be troubled, *let not your heart be troubled*. Keep possession of your own souls, if of nothing else. The heart is the main fort; whatever you do, keep trouble from that, keep it with *all diligence*. The spirit must sustain the infirmity, therefore see that it be not *wounded*.'

3dly. Upon the word *your*. 'You that are my followers, my redeemed, sanctified ones, however others are overwhelmed with the sorrows of this time, he not you, for you know better; let the sinners in Zion tremble, but let the sons of Zion be joyful in their King.' Herein Christ's disciples should do more than others; they should keep their minds quiet, when every thing else is unquiet.

The remedy He prescribes against this trouble of mind, which He saw ready to prevail over them, is, *believe*. (1.) Some read it imperatively, 'Believe in God, and his perfections and providences, believe also in Me, and my mediation. Build with confidence upon the acknowledged principles of natural religion; that there is a God, most holy, wise, powerful, and good; who has the sovereign disposal of all events; and comfort yourselves likewise with the peculiar doctrines of that religion I have taught you.' But, we read the former as an acknowledgment, that they did believe in God, for which He commends them; 'But if you would effectually provide against a stormy day, believe also in Me.' Through Christ we are brought into covenant with God, and become interested in his favor, which otherwise as sinners we must despair of, and the remembrance of God would have been our trouble; but by believing in Christ as the Mediator between God and man, our belief in God becomes comfortable; and this is the will of God, that all men should honor the Son as they honor the Father, by believing in the Son, as they believe in the Father: those that rightly believe in God, will believe in Christ, whom He has made known to them; and believing in God through Christ, is an excellent mean of

that all the disciples would forsake Him, and that Peter would thrice deny Him: (13: 36-38.) and therefore, faith in Him as a Savior, and in the mercy of God through Him for the pardon of these sins, would be especially requisite, to keep them from despair and its awful consequences. (Luke 22: 31-34. 1 John 2: 1, 2.)

Verse 2. 'Heaven is spoken of under the notion of a temple, in which are many mansions, (quiet and continued abodes, Doddridge,) where those are to abide who are made kings and priests unto God.' ('An allusion to the custom of Oriental monarchs, of assigning to their courtiers habitations within their immensely extensive, royal palaces.' *Moshem.*) 'Perhaps this intimates various degrees of glory.'—*I go to prepare a place, &c.* ('This was prepared in the purpose of God from the foundation of the world, (Matt. 25: 34. Eph. 1: 3-5.) but as that was founded on the mediation of Christ, it may be strictly said, that when He entered there as our High Priest and Forerunner, to present as he were, his own blood, He prepared it for the admission of his people. See Heb. 2: 23, 24.') *R. OBITOR &*

3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.

4 And whether I go ye know, and the way ye know.

5 Thomas saith unto him, Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?

6 Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life: no man

keeping trouble from the heart. The joys of faith are the best remedies against the griefs of sense; it is a remedy with a promise annexed to it; *the just shall live by faith; I had fainted unless I had believed.*

Here is a particular direction, to act faith upon the promise of eternal life, v. 2, 3. For what did He direct them to trust to God, and in Him? For happiness to come, when this body, and this world shall be no more; and to last as long as the immortal soul and the eternal world shall last. This is proposed as a sovereign cordial under the troubles of this present time, to which the happiness of heaven is admirably adapted. All the saints have encouraged themselves with this in their greatest extremities, *that heaven would make amends for all.*

Believe and consider, that really there is such a happiness; v. 2. The happiness of heaven is here represented as mansions. [1.] In a Father's house; my Father's house; and Christ's Father is ours; so that, in right of their elder brother, all true believers shall be welcome to that happiness as to their home. It is his house, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, dwells in light, and inhabits eternity. [2.] There are mansions there; that is, 1st. *Distinct dwellings*, an apartment for each; perhaps there is an allusion to the priests' chambers about the temple. In heaven there are accommodations for particular saints; though all shall be swallowed up in God, yet our individuality shall not be lost; every Israelite had his lot in Canaan, and every elder a seat, Rev. 4: 4. 2dly. *Durable dwellings; abiding places.* The house itself is lasting; our estate in it is not for a term of years, but a perpetuity. Here we are as at an inn, in heaven we shall gain a settlement. The disciples had quitted their houses to attend Christ, who had not where to lay his head, but the mansions in heaven will make them amends.

[3.] There are many mansions, for there are many sons to be brought to glory, and He ex-

actly knows their number; nor will room be wanting. He had told Peter he should follow Him, (ch. 13: 36); but let not the rest be discouraged; in heaven, there are mansions for them all. *Rehoboth*, Gen. 26: 22.

An assurance of the reality of the happiness and the sincerity of its proposal to us; v. 2. 'If you had deceived yourselves, when you quitted your households, and ventured your lives for Me, in prospect of a happiness future and unseen, I would soon have undeceived you.' The assurance is built, 1. On the veracity of his word. 2. On the sincerity of his affection to them. As He is true, and would not impose upon them Himself, so He is kind, and would not suffer them to be imposed upon. If either there were no such mansions, or none designed for them, who had left all to follow Him, He would have given them timely notice of the mistake, that they might have made an honorable retreat to the world again. Note, Christ's good will to us is a great encouragement to our hope in Him. He loves us too well, and means us too well, to disappoint the expectations He has raised, or to leave those to be of all men most miserable, who have been of Him most observant.

Believe and consider, that the design of Christ's going away was to prepare a place in heaven for his disciples. I go as the Forerunner; I am to enter for you; that is, 1. To take possession for us, as our Advocate, and so secure our title. 2. To make provision for us as our Friend and Father. The happiness of heaven, though prepared before the foundation of the world, yet must be further fitted up for man in his fallen state. It consisting much in the presence of Christ, He must go before, to enter into that glory which his disciples were to share in. Heaven would be an unready place for a Christian, if Christ were not there. He went to prepare a table, thrones, for them, Luke 22: 30. Thus He designates the fitness of heaven's happiness for the saints.

Believe and consider, that therefore He would certainly come again in due time, to fetch them to that place; (v. 3.) 'If it be the errand of my journey, to prepare a place for you, you may be sure, when every thing is ready, I will come again, to receive you to Myself; so that you shall follow Me hereafter, that where I am, there ye may be also.' Comfortable words indeed.

1. Christ will come again; I do come; intimating the certainty of it, that He will come, and that He is daily coming. We say, we are coming, when we are busy in preparing for our coming, and so He is; all He does has reference and tendency to his second coming. Note, The belief of Christ's second coming, of which He has given us assurance, is an excellent preservative against trouble of heart, Phil. 4: 5. Jam. 5: 8.

2. He will come again, to receive all his faithful followers to Himself. He sends for them privately at death, and gathers them one by one; but they are to make their public entry in solemn state together at the last day, and then Christ Himself will come to receive and welcome them out of the abun-

dance of his love; hereby testifying the utmost respect and endearment. Christ's coming is in order to our gathering together unto Him, 2 Thess. 2: 1.

3. Where He is, there they shall be also. Many other Scriptures speak the same, that the essence of heaven's happiness is being with Christ, ch. 17: 24. Phil. 1: 23. 1 Thess. 4: 17 Christ speaks of his being there as now present, that where I am; where I am to be shortly, to be eternally; there ye shall be shortly, eternally: not only there, in the same place, but there, in the same state: not only spectators of his glory, but sharers in it.

4. This may be inferred from his going to prepare a place for us, for his preparations shall not be in vain; He will not build and furnish lodgings, and let them stand empty; He will be the Finisher of that, of which He is the Author: if He have prepared the place for us, He will prepare us for it, and in due time put us in possession of it. As Christ's resurrection is the assurance of ours, so his ascension, victory, and glory, are in assurance of ours.

V. 4—11. Christ, having set heaven before them as the end, shows Himself as the way to it, and tells them that they were better acquainted both with the end, and with the way, than they thought; *Ye know*, that is, 1. 'Ye may know; it is none of the secret things which belong not to you; ye need not ascend into heaven, or go down into the deep, for the Word is nigh you, (Rom. 10: 6—8) level to you.' 2. 'Ye do know; ye know the home, and the way, though perhaps not as such. Ye have been told it, and cannot but know, if ye would consider.' Note, Christ is willing to make the best of his people's knowledge, though defective. He knows the good in them, better than they themselves, and is certain they have that knowledge, faith, and love, which they themselves are not sensible, or certain of.

This word of Christ gave occasion to two of his disciples to address Him, and He answers them both.

Thomas said, 'Lord, we know not whither Thou goest, to what place and state, and how can we know the way to follow Thee? Christ's testimony concerning their knowledge made them more sensible of their ignorance, and inquisitive after further light. Thomas here shows more modesty than Peter, who thought he could follow Christ now. His confession of ignorance was commendable enough; if good men know but in part, yet they are willing to own their defects; but, The cause of this ignorance was culpable. They knew not whither Christ went, because they dreamed of a temporal kingdom, notwithstanding He had said the contrary again and again. Hence their fancy ran upon his going to some remarkable city, Bethlehem, or Nazareth, or Capernaum, or some of the cities of the Gentiles, as David to Hebron, there to be anointed king, and to restore the kingdom of Israel; and which way this place lay, they could not tell. Thus we think ourselves more in the dark than we need be, concerning the future state of the church, because we expect its worldly prosperity, whereas the promise points at spiritual advancement. Had Thomas understood, as he might, that Christ was going to the invisible, spiritual world, he would not have said, we know not the way.

To this complaint of their ignorance, which included a desire to be taught, Christ gives a full answer, (v. 6, 7.) making good what He had said, that they would have needed no answer if they had understood themselves aright; for they knew Him, and He was the way; they knew the Father, and He was the end; and therefore, whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Believe in God as the end, and in me as the way, (v. 1.) and ye do all ye should do.

Great things Christ here saith of Himself, v. 6.

Verse 3.
I will come again, &c.] This ultimately refers to Christ's appearance at the last day; yet it is a habitual circumstance, that the death of every particular believer, considering the universal power and provi-

dence of Christ, (Rev. 1: 18.) may be regarded as Christ's coming to fetch him home: whereas Satan is spoken of as having naturally the power of death. Heb. 2: 14.

DUDDING.

come, h unto the Father, but by me.

[Practical Observations.]

7 If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him.

8 Philip saith unto him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us.

9 Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?

p 9:10, 20. 1:18. 8:19. 15:24. 16:3. 17:3, 21, 23. Matt 11:27. Luke 10: 22. 2 Cor. 4:8. Col. 1:15-17. 2:4. 3. Heb. 1:3.

c 16-20. 16:13-16. 17:6, 8, 26.

1:148-16. 6:5-7. 12:21, 22.

1:163. Ps. 33:18-23. 34:5-7. Job 33:26. Ps. 17:15. 63:2. Matt. 5:8. Rev. 22:3-5.

t Mark 9:19.

u 7:30. 12:45. Phil. 2:6.

x Gen. 29:9. Jer. 11:1. Jer. 2:23. Luke 12:56. 1 Cor. 15:12.

end. In Him we must set out, go on, and finish. As the truth, He is the guide; as the life, He is the end of our way. 2. He is the true and living way; (Heb. 10: 20.) there is truth and life in it, as well as at the end of it. 3. He is the true way to life, the only true way; other ways may seem right, but the end of them is the way of death.

No man cometh to the Father but by Me. Fallen man must come to God, as a Judge, but not as a Father, otherwise than by Christ as Mediator. We cannot come to God by repentance and the acts of worship, without the Spirit and grace of Christ, nor come to God as our Father, without his merit and righteousness; He is the High Priest of our profession, our Advocate.

He speaks of his Father as the end; (v. 7.) 'If ye had known Me aright, ye should, or would, have known my Father also; and from henceforth, by the glory seen in Me, and the doctrine heard from Me, ye know Him and have seen Him.' Here is a tacit rebuke for their dulness in acquainting themselves with Christ, though his constant associates; If ye had known Me.—They did not know Him so well as they might and should have known Him. They knew Him to be the Christ, but did not follow on to know God in Him. He had said to the Jews, (ch. 8: 19.) If ye had known Me, ye would have known my Father also; and here the same to his disciples; for it is hard to say, which is more strange, the wilful ignorance of enemies to the light, or the defects and mistakes of the children of light, that have had such

1st. He is the way, the highway spoken of, Isa. 35: 8. Christ was his own way, for by his own blood He entered into the holy place, (Heb. 9: 12.) and he is our way, for we enter by Him. By his doctrine and example He teaches us our duty, by his merit and intercession He procures us our happiness, and so He is the way. In Him God and man are brought together. We could not get to the tree of life in the way of innocence; but Christ is another way to it. By Christ, an intercourse is settled and kept up between heaven and earth; the angels of God ascend and descend; our prayers go to God, and his blessings come to us by Him; this is the way that leads to rest, the good old way. The disciples followed Him, and Christ tells them that they followed the road, and, while they continued following Him, they would never be out of their way.

2dly. He is the truth: 1. As truth is opposed to figure and shadow. Christ is the substance of all the Old-Testament types, thence called figures of the truth, Heb. 9: 24. Christ is the true manna, (ch. 6: 32.) the true tabernacle, Heb. 8: 2. 2. As truth is opposed to error; his doctrine is true; when we inquire for truth, we need learn no more than the truth as it is in Jesus. 3. As truth is opposed to deceit; He is true to all that trust in Him, is truth itself, 2 Cor. 1: 20.

3dly. He is the life; for we are alive unto God, only in and through Him, Rom. 6: 11. Christ, formed in us, is to our souls, what our souls are to our bodies. He is the resurrection and the life.

Christ is the way, the truth, and the life; that is, 1. He is the beginning, the middle, and the end, out, go on, and finish. As the truth, He is the guide; as the life, He is the end of our way. 2. He is the true and living way; (Heb. 10: 20.) there is truth and life in it, as well as at the end of it. 3. He is the true way to life, the only true way; other ways may seem right, but the end of them is the way of death.

No man cometh to the Father but by Me. Fallen man must come to God, as a Judge, but not as a Father, otherwise than by Christ as Mediator. We cannot come to God by repentance and the acts of worship, without the Spirit and grace of Christ, nor come to God as our Father, without his merit and righteousness; He is the High Priest of our profession, our Advocate.

He speaks of his Father as the end; (v. 7.) 'If ye had known Me aright, ye should, or would, have known my Father also; and from henceforth, by the glory seen in Me, and the doctrine heard from Me, ye know Him and have seen Him.' Here is a tacit rebuke for their dulness in acquainting themselves with Christ, though his constant associates; If ye had known Me.—They did not know Him so well as they might and should have known Him. They knew Him to be the Christ, but did not follow on to know God in Him. He had said to the Jews, (ch. 8: 19.) If ye had known Me, ye would have known my Father also; and here the same to his disciples; for it is hard to say, which is more strange, the wilful ignorance of enemies to the light, or the defects and mistakes of the children of light, that have had such

opportunities of knowledge. Had they known Christ aright, they would have known that his kingdom is spiritual; that He came down from and therefore must return to heaven: and then they would have known us Father also, whether He designed to go, when He said, I go to the Father. If we knew christianity better, we should better know natural religion.

He was well satisfied of their sincerity, notwithstanding the weakness of their understanding; 'And from henceforth, from this hint, (a key to all my instructions hitherto,) ye know Him and have seen Him, inasmuch as ye know Me, and have seen Me;' for in the face of Christ we see the glory of God, as we see a father in his son that resembles him. Christ tells his disciples, they were not so ignorant as they seemed; for, though little children, yet they had known the Father, 1 John 2: 13. Note, Many disciples of Christ have more knowledge and grace than they think, and Christ notices that good in them which they themselves are not aware of; for they that know God, do not all at once know that they know Him, 1 John 2: 3.

Philip requests some extraordinary discovery of the Father. He was not so forward to speak as some of them, and yet, from an earnest desire of further light, he cries, Show us the Father. Philip fastened upon the last words Christ said to Thomas, Ye have seen Him. 'Nay,' saith Philip, 'that is it we would have; show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.'

This supposes an earnest desire of acquaintance with God as a Father: the petition is, 'Show us the Father, in that relation to us;' and this he begs, not for himself only, but for his fellow-disciples. Jansenius saith, 'Though Philip did not mean it, yet the Holy Ghost, by his mouth, designed here to teach us, that the satisfaction of a soul consists in the fruition of God,' Ps. 16: 11. 17: 15. In the knowledge of God the understanding rests; in the knowledge of God as our Father the soul is satisfied; a sight of the Father is heaven upon earth.

As Philip speaks here, it intimates that he was not satisfied with such a discovery of the Father as Christ thought fit to give them, but would prescribe and press upon Him something further, some visible appearance of the glory of God, like that to Moses, (Exod. 33: 22.) and to the elders of Israel, Exod. 24: 9-11. It discovers, not only the weakness of his faith, but his ignorance of the gospel-way of manifesting the Father. A sight of God with their bodily eyes, he thinks, would suffice them, and yet those who did thus see Him were not suffi-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-6. We cannot help feeling trouble under our trials and sins, and because of the apostasies and iniquities which we witness: but we should watch against dejection, and that inward disquietude, which excites distrust, and unfits for present duty. (Luke 21: 12-19, v. 19.) Faith in the promises and perfections of God, and in our Advocate, forms the proper method of keeping trouble from our hearts, and of producing joy in the midst of tribulation. We shall thus be animated, by the prospect of admission into mansions in our Father's house. This hope will never disappoint, this promise never deceive us: He has told us, that 'in the world we shall have tribulation,' and we may know what to expect; and He would not have permitted us to look for so glorious a felicity, if He had not intended to give it to us. But 'He is gone before to prepare a place for us.' He is as much performing the part of a faithful and affectionate Friend now, as when on earth He shed his blood for our sins: and He is as mindful of the concerns of all who look for Him, as He will be when He shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation.' We ought therefore, with all diligence, to use the appointed means of preparing for heaven; and to wait, in the patience of hope and the obedience of love, till He shall return to 'take us to Himself, that where He is, there we may be also.' But stubborn unbelievers have no place prepared in heaven, and no friend at death to receive their souls, or to welcome them at the resurrection: indeed a far different place, 'prepared for the devil and his angels,' awaits them; and their enemy stands

ready to receive them to himself, that where he is, there they may be also; nor is there any one to prevent his success. As therefore all know, that they are liable to be turned out of their present residence at an hour's warning; surely, common sense demands of them, to seek admission into those mansions, which Jesus has provided for his people.—We are indeed far more faulty than Thomas, if with all our advantages, we know not whither the Savior is gone, or the way by which we must follow Him. Yet ignorance and uncertainty envelope the minds of even professed Christians, in this obvious and important matter: and numbers seek to enter heaven by ways of man's devising; while Jesus, 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' is wholly, or in great measure, neglected, if not despised and opposed. It will, however, be most certainly known at last, that no one of Adam's race ever found acceptance with God, or admission into heaven, who refused to seek them by faith in the atonement and mediation of Christ, by reliance on his Word, who is essential Truth, and by seeking life in his soul from Him, who is the Life itself. It greatly concerns all despisers of the grace proposed in the Gospel to reconsider this subject; and all who are beginning to seek the favor of God, and eternal life, should especially direct their attention to it, that they may not delay to come in that Way, by which alone sinners can find access to a holy God, and admission into the holy heaven. (Is. 28: 12-20. Jer. 6: 16, 17. Matt. 1: 27-30. P. O. 25-30.)

Scott.

Verse 7.

Know.] 'To know Jesus does not merely denote (as most commentators explain) to know the doctrine of Jesus in general, but to know [764]

How to be what He is, in respect of his purposes, benefits, and the revelation of which He is the Author.' Tittman, in Bloomfield

10 'Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? 'the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father, 'that dwelleth in me, 'he doeth the works.'

11 Believest me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: 'or also believe me for the very works' sake.

12 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, 'the works that I do shall be do also; 'and greater works than these shall he do; 'because I go unto my Father.

7 11:30. 14-18. 10:30, 38. 11:26. 17: 21-23. 1 John 5:7.
8 3:32-34. 5:19. 6:38-40. 7:16, 28. 9: 8, 22, 38, 40. 12:49. 17:8.
9 Ps. 68:16-18. 2 Cor. 5:19. Col. 1: 19. 2:9.
a 5:17. Acts 10:38.
c 5:31. 10:25-32, 38. 12:39-40. Matt. 11:45. Luke 7:1-2. Acts 2:22. Heb. 2:4.
d Matt. 21:21. Mark 11:19. Luke 10:17-19. Acts 3:5-8. 4:9-12, 16. 8:26. 8:27. 9:34, 40. 16:18. 1 Cor. 12:10, 46.
e Acts 2:4-11, 41. 4:4. 5:15, 16. 6:7. 10:48. 19:12. Rom. 15:19.
f 28. 7:39. 15:7. Acts 2:33.

He gives him a maxim, which not only in general magnifies Christ, and leads to the knowledge of God in Him, but justifies what He had said, (v. 7.) *Ye know the Father, and have seen Him; and answers what Philip had asked, Show us the Father. He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father.* Ist. All that saw Christ in the flesh, might have seen the Father in Him, if Satan had not blinded their minds, and kept them from a sight of Christ, as the image of God, 2 Cor. 4: 4. 2dly. All that saw Christ by faith, did see the Father in Him, though not at once aware of it. In the light of Christ's doctrine, they saw God as the Father of lights; in the miracles, they saw God as the God of power. The holiness of God shone in the purity of Christ's life, and his grace in all the acts of grace He did.

He refers him to what he had reason to believe; (v. 10, 11.) 'Hast thou not believed that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me, and therefore that in seeing Me thou hast seen the Father? If not, take my word for it, and believe it now.'

We are to believe: that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; that is, as He had said, (ch. 10: 38.) *I and my Father are one.* He speaks of the Father and Himself as two persons, and yet so one as never any two were or can be. In knowing Christ, as God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, and as being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made, we know the Father; and in seeing Him thus, we see the Father. In Christ we behold more of the glory of God than Moses did at Horeb.

We must believe this, 1st. For his word's sake; *The words that I speak to you, I speak not of myself.* See ch. 7: 16. *My doctrine is not mine.* What He said, seemed to them careless as the word of man, speaking his own thoughts at his own pleasure; but the wisdom of God indited, and the will of God enforced it. He spoke not of Himself only, but the mind of God according to the eternal counsels.

2dly. For his works' sake: *The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth them; and therefore believe Me for their sakes.* Observe, 1. The Father is said to dwell in Him.—*He abideth in Me*, by the inseparable union of the divine and human nature; never had God such a temple to dwell in on earth, as the body of the Lord Jesus, (ch. 2: 21.) the true Shechinah, of which that in the tabernacle was but a type. *The fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Him bodily*, Col. 2: 9. *The Father so dwells in Christ*, that in Him He may be found, as a man where he dwells. *Seek ye the Lord*, in Christ, and *He will be found*. 2. *He doeth the works.* Many works of power, and works of mercy, Christ did, and the Father did them in Him; and the work of redemption in general was God's own work. 3. We are bound to believe this, for the very

ced, but soon corrupted themselves, and made a graven image. Christ's institutions have provided better for the confirmation of our faith than our own inventions.

Christ refers him to what he had seen, v. 9. He upbraids him with his inadvocacy; 'Have I been so long time with you, above three years, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? Wilt thou ask for that which thou hast already?' v. 9. He reproves him,

1st. For not improving his acquaintance with Christ; 'Hast thou not known Me, Philip, whom thou hast so long conversed with? Philip, the first day he came to Him, declared that he knew Him to be the Messiah, (ch. 1: 45.) and yet to this day did not know the Father in Him. Many that have good knowledge in the Scripture, and divine things, fall short of the attainments justly expected from them, for want of compounding the ideas they have, and going on to perfection. Many know Christ, who yet do not know what they might know of Him, nor see what they should see in Him. Note, The longer we enjoy the means of knowledge and grace, the more inexcusable we are, if defective therein. Christ expects a proficiency in some measure according to our standing, that we should not be always babes. Let us thus reason with ourselves; 'Have I been so long a hearer of sermons, a student in the Scripture, a scholar in the school of Christ, and yet so weak in the knowledge of Christ, and so unskillful in the word of righteousness?'

2dly. He reproves his infirmity in the prayer, *Show us the Father.* Note, Herein appears much of the weakness of Christ's disciples, that they knew not what to pray for as they ought, (Rom. 8: 26.) but often ask amiss, (James 4: 3.) for that which either is not promised, or is already bestowed in the sense of the promise, as here.

works' sake. As we are to believe the being and perfections of God, for the sake of the works of creation; so we are to believe the revelation of God to man in Christ, for the sake of the works of the Redeemer; those mighty works, which, by showing forth themselves, (Matt. 14: 2.) show forth Him, and God in Him. Note, Christ's miracles are proofs of his mission, not only for the conviction of infidels, but for the confirmation of his disciples, ch. 2: 11. 5: 36. 10: 37.

V. 12-14. The disciples, as they were full of grief to think of parting with their Master, were full of care what would become of them when He was gone; while He was with them, He was a support to them, kept them in heart; but if He leave them, they will be as sheep having no shepherd. To silence these fears, Christ assures them that they should be clothed with powers sufficient to bear them out. As Christ had all power, they, in his name, should have great power, both in heaven and in earth.

1. Great power on earth, v. 12. This does not weaken the argument Christ had taken from his works to prove Himself one with the Father, (that others should do as great works,) but rather strengthens it; for the miracles the apostles wrought, were wrought in his name, and by faith in Him; and this magnifies his power more than any thing, that He not only wrought miracles Himself, but gave power to others to do so too.

They should be enabled to do such works as He had done, and should have a more ample power for doing them, than when first sent forth, Matt. 10: 8. Did Christ heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead? So should they. Did He convince and convert sinners, and draw multitudes to Him? So should they. Though He should depart, the work should not fall to the ground, but be carried on as successfully as ever.

In the kingdom of nature they should work greater miracles, v. 12. No miracle is little; but some seem greater than others. Christ had healed with the hem of his garment, but Peter with his shadow, Acts 5: 15. Paul by the handkerchief that had touched him, Acts 19: 12. Christ wrought miracles for two or three years in one country, but his followers wrought miracles in his name for many ages in divers countries. *Ye shall do greater works*, if there were occasion, for the glory of God. *The prayer of faith*, if at any time necessary, should remove mountains.

They should obtain greater victories by the Gospel, than had been obtained while Christ was on earth. The truth is, the captivating of so great a part of the world to Christ, under such disadvantages, was the miracle of all. I think this refers especially to the gift of tongues, an immediate effect on the pouring out of the Spirit and a constant miracle upon the mind, in which words are framed, and made to serve so glorious an intention as that of spreading the Gospel to all nations in their own language. This was a greater sign to them which believed not, (1 Cor. 14: 22.) and more powerful for their conviction, than any other miracle.

The reason Christ gives for this, is, *I go unto my Father.* 1. 'Because I go, it will be requisite you should have such a power, lest the work suffer by my absence.' 2. 'Because I go, I shall be in a capacity to furnish you with such a power, for I go to the Father, to send the Comforter, from whom you shall receive power.' Acts 1: 8. The wonderful works they did in Christ's name, were part of the glories of his exalted state, when He ascended on high, Eph. 4: 8.

II. Great power in heaven: 'Whatsoever ye shall ask, that will I do, (v. 13, 14.) as Israel.

Verses 10, 11.

'See ch. 8: 15. Christ's referring to his works here, as often elsewhere, respects not merely his miracles themselves, but his sovereign, God-like way of performing them by his own divine power, which was he same in Him as in the Father: otherwise those works themselves were no proof of his being in the Father, and the Father in Him, or of the Father's dwelling in Him in any higher sense than the same might be affirmed of the apostles, who, He says in the next verse, should do the same, or greater works than these: much less could it be said, that

he who had seen Him, had also seen the Father unless He had been partaker of the same nature with the Father, and had, in his acting like a divine person, exerted the very same power, as resides in the Father Himself, and that in such an absolute way as the Father Himself would have done it, had He appeared personally and visibly among men. For nothing like this was ever said of the apostles, or any other mere man: because they acted, not by their own, but by Christ's power.

GUTH.

13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that I will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

[Practical Observations.]

15 ¶ If 'ye love me, keep my commandments.'

¶ 15:17, 16-23, 24, 25. Matt. 7:7, 8. 21:22. Mark 11:24. Luke 11:9. Eph. 3:20, 21. Jam. 1:5. 5:16. 1 John 3:22. 5:14. ¶ 16:1. John 2:12. 3:12, 14, 15, 21. Col. 3:17. Heb. 4:15, 16. 7:25. 13:15. 1 Pet. 2:5. 14:1, 6, 14. 5:19. 7:37. 10:30. 12:44. 2 Cor. 12:10. Phil. 4:13. 12:44. 13:31, 32. 17:4, 5. Phil. 2:9-11. ¶ 17:1. 24-26. 8:42. 15:10-14. 21:15-17. Matt. 10:37. 25:34-40. 1 Cor. 16:2. 2 Cor. 8:14. 15. 8:9. Gal. 5:6. Eph. 3:16-18. 6:24. Phil. 1:20-23. 5:7-11. 1 Pet. 1:8. 1 John 2:2-5. 4:19, 20. 5:2, 3.

be informed, directed, vindicated.' Occasions vary, but they shall be welcome to the throne of grace upon every occasion.

Ask in my name. To ask in Christ's name is, 1. To plead his merit and intercession, and depend on that plea. The Old-Testament saints had an eye to this when they prayed for the Lord's sake, (Dan. 9:17.) and for the sake of the Anointed, (Ps. 84:9.) but Christ's mediation is brought to a clearer light by the Gospel, and so we are enabled more expressly to ask in his name. When Christ dictated the Lord's prayer, this was not inserted, because they did not so fully understand this matter as when the Spirit was poured out. If we ask in our own name, we cannot expect to speed, for being sinners, we have an ill name there; but Christ's is a good name, well known in heaven, and very precious. 2. It is to aim at his glory, and seek that as our highest end in all our prayers.

What ye ask, that I will I do; v. 13. And again, (v. 14.) 'I will do it.' Ye may be sure I will: not only, I will give orders for it, I will do it; for He has not only the interest of an intercessor, but the power of a sovereign prince, who sits at the right hand of God, the hand of action, and has the doing of all in the kingdom of God. By faith in his name we may have what we will ask.

The reason why their prayers should speed so well; that the Father may be glorified in the Son. This they ought to aim at in asking. In this all our desires and prayers should meet, as in their centre; that God in Christ may be honored by our services, and in our salvation. Hallowed be thy name, is an answered prayer, and is put first, because if the heart be sincere in that, it does in a manner consecrate all other petitions. This Christ will aim at in granting, and for the sake of this will do what they ask, that hereby the glory of the Father in the Son may be manifested. The wisdom, power, and goodness of God were magnified in the Redeemer, when by power exerted in his name, his apostles were enabled to do great things, both in proof of their doctrine, and in its success.

V. 15-17. Christ here promises to send the Spirit, who should be their Comforter, and impress those things upon them. But, He promises to this a memorandum of duty; (v. 15.) If ye love Me, keep my commandments. Keep-

that was a prince with God. You shall do such mighty works, because you have such an interest in Me, and in my Father.' Observe.

They were to keep up communion with Him, and fetch power from Him, when He was gone, by prayer. When friends are to be removed at a distance from each other, they provide for the settling of a correspondence; thus, when Christ was going to his Father, He tells his disciples how they might write to Him upon every occasion, and send by a safe and ready conveyance; 'Let Me hear from you by the prayer of faith, and you shall hear from Me by the Spirit.' This was the old way of intercourse with heaven, ever since men began to call upon the name of the Lord; but Christ by his death hath laid it more open to us. Here.

1. Humility is prescribed; Ye shall ask. Though they had quitted all for Christ, they could demand nothing of Him as a debt, but must be humble supplicants, beg or perish.

2. Liberty is allowed; Ask any thing that is good and proper for you; any thing, provided you know what you ask; you may ask for assistance in your work, for a mouth and wisdom, for preservation out of the hands of your enemies, for power to work miracles, for the success of the ministry in the conversion of souls; ask to

ing the commandments of Christ, is here put for the practice of godliness in general, and for the faithful and diligent discharge of their office as apostles. Observe, 1. When Christ is comforting them, He bids them keep his commandments; we must not expect comfort but in the way of duty. The same word signifies both to exhort and to comfort. 2. When they were in care what they should do, now their Master was leaving them, He bids them keep his commandments, and then nothing could come amiss. In difficult times our care concerning the events of the day should be swallowed up in a care concerning the duty of the day. 3. When they were showing their love to Christ by grieving to think of his departure, He bids them, if they would show their love to Him, do it, not by weak passions, but by their conscientious care to perform their trust, and by a universal obedience to his commands; that is better than sacrifice or tears. Lovest thou Me? Feed my lambs. 4. When Christ has given them promises of the answer of their prayers, and the coming of the Comforter, He lays down this as a limitation of the promises, 'Provided ye keep my commandments, from a principle of love to Me.' Christ will not be an advocate for any but those that will be ruled and advised by Him as their counsel. Follow the conduct of the Spirit, and you shall have comfort of the Spirit.

It is promised that they shall have another Comforter. This is the great New-Testament promise, (Acts 1:4.) as that of the Messiah was of the Old Testament; a promise adapted to the present distress of the disciples, who were in sorrow. Observe,

The blessing promised, a Comforter. The word is used only in these discourses of Christ, and 1 John 2:1. where we translate it an advocate. Some would retain the Greek word, Paraclete; we read (Acts 9:31.) of the comfort (this same word) of the Holy Ghost, including his whole office as a Paraclete.

1. Ye shall have another Advocate. The office of the Spirit was to be Christ's Advocate with them, to plead his cause, and take care of his concerns, on earth, to be Christ's Vicar, as one of the ancients calls Him; and to be their Advocate with opposers. When Christ was with them, He spake for them as there was occasion; but now He is leaving them, the Spirit of the Father shall speak in them, Matt. 10:19, 20. The cause cannot miscarry, that is pleaded by such an advocate.

2. Ye shall have another Master, or Teacher, or Exhorter. While they had Christ with them, He excited and exhorted them to duty; now He is going, He leaves one with them that shall do this as effectually, though silently. A Patron, one that shall both instruct and protect you.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 7-14. In proportion as we know Jesus, we know the Father. Every true believer has, in a measure, thus known and seen Him: the character, doctrine, and cross of Christ form the glass, in which we must contemplate the glory of the invisible God. (17:1-3, v. 3. 2 Cor. 3:17, 18. P. O. 7-18, 4:6.) It is owing to inattention, that our discoveries are so feeble and few. Thus we are our own enemies, for this is the only satisfactory good, which can suffice to fill our enlarged capacities. If we could behold God in his essential glory, the discovery would overwhelm us: in the Person of Jesus alone can we see Him, as 'a just God and a Savior,' as glorious in holiness and abundant in mercy; and as the proper Object of our delightful contemplation, our confidence, our rejoicing, and adoration. May the doctrine and character, the miracles and

prophecies, the sufferings and glory of our divine Redeemer; the great things He performed when on earth, and the still greater He has done by his believing servants, since his ascension into heaven, confirm our faith in Him, and assure us, that 'He is in the Father, and the Father in Him.' Even now, 'whatsoever we shall ask in his name,' as conducive to our good, and suited to our state, He will give it us: (Matt. 7:7-11. Jam. 5:16-18. 1 John 5:14, 15.) that, in the renewal of our souls to holiness, our resistance of temptation, our obedience under trials, and the conversion of sinners by our means, 'the Father may be glorified in the Son;' for these are great works in the sight of angels and of God Himself, however men may despise them. (P. O. Luke 15:1-10.) SCOTT.

Verse 13.

Whatsoever 'they should ask in his name,' as conducive to these important ends, He should bestow it upon them, by his own power and authority. Christ saith, 'Whatsoever ye thus ask, I will do; which, as it supposes in Him omnipotence, enabling Him to know the requests of all Christians upon earth; and omnipotence, enabling Him to assist them every where in the performance of the greatest works: so must it consequently imply an unity of essence betwixt the Father and the Son, and so the Father is glorified in the Son. Hence what is here, "I will do it," is, (16:23.) "the Father will give you." Note also, that whereas the Jews used to be a blessing... for the sake of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; though, being only mere men, they never prayed to them; the Christians not only prayed to the Father in the name of the Son, but invoked the Son also, as being one God with the Father: this being a periphrasis of Christians, that they were those who called on the name of Christ. (Acts 9:14, 21. Rom. 10:13.)

'And this seems here to be mentioned to confirm their faith in Him,' that He who so loved them, had power to do all things for them, 'Whitby.—What prophet ever used such language, as this of our Lord in these verses?' It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace. (Gen. 41:16. Dan. 2:30. Acts 3:12.) The answer of the prayer of faith, in working miracles, seems to have been immediately intended; [so Dr. A. Clarke:] yet not to the exclusion of any other case, in which believers pray to the Father in the name of Christ, for promised blessings. (16:23, 24. Matt. 21:21, 22.) SCOTT.

Verse 14.

In my name. [That is, In my cause.] This whole discourse respects apostles. In v. 26, Jesus says, the Father will send the Spirit in my name; which denotes simply—for my cause, in my place, and to supply my place. And when, in ch. 16:24, He says, hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name, He means in his cause.

TITMAN, in EVANGELIST.

16 And ^m I will pray the Father, and he shall give you ⁿ another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even ^v the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you ^w comfortless; I will come to you.

m 14, 16, 29, 27. v 9—11, 15, 20. Rom. 8:24. Heb. 7:25. 1 John 2:1.
n 19, 25, 15, 29. 16:7—15. Acts 9:31.
15:32. Rom. 5:5. 8:15, 16, 26, 27. 17:17. 15:13. Gal. 5:22. Phil. 2:1.
o 4:14. 16:22. Matt. 23:26, 27. Eph. 1:13, 14. Col. 3:3, 4. 2 Thes. 2:16.
p 15:26. 16:13. 1 John 2:27. 4:6.
q Prov. 14:10. 1 Cor. 2:14. Rev. 2:17.
r 16:32. 1e. 5:7, 15. 5:21. 1e. 36:27. Rom. 8:9, 11, 13, 14. 1 Cor. 3:16. 6:19. 2 Tim. 1:14. 1 John 2:27. 3:24. 4:12, 13.
s Matt. 10:20. Rom. 8:10. 1 Cor. 14:15. 2 Cor. 13:5. Gal. 4:6. Col. 1:27. 1 John 4:4.
t 16:27. 16:33. Ps. 23:4. 1e. 43:1, 2. 51:12. 66:11—13. 2 Cor. 12—6. 2. 2 Tim. 2:15, 17. Heb. 6:18.
u Or, orphan. 1am. 5:3. Hos. 14:3. 3:25. Ps. 101:2. Rom. 8:3. Matt. 18:20. 22:20.

to be with them forever. [2.] 'With your successors, to the end of time.' [3.] If we take *forever* in its utmost extent, the promise will be accomplished in those consolations of God which will be the eternal joy of all the saints; *pleasures forever*.

This Comforter is the *Spirit of truth, whom ye know*, v. 16, 17. They might think it impossible to have a comforter equivalent to the *Son of God*; 'Yea,' saith Christ, 'ye shall have the Spirit of God, who is equal in power and glory with the Son.'

He is the *Spirit*: One who should do his work inwardly and invisibly, by working on men's spirits.

The *Spirit of truth*. True to you, and to his undertaking for you, which He will perform to the utmost. He will *teach you the truth*; will enlighten your minds with the knowledge of it, strengthen your belief of it, and increase your love to it. The Gentiles by their idolatries, and the Jews by their traditions, were led into gross errors; but the Spirit of truth shall not only lead you into all truth, but others by your ministry.' Christ is the truth, and He is the Spirit of Christ, with which He was anointed.

(2.) He is One whom the world cannot receive; but ye know Him. Therefore He abideth with you.

Christ's disciples are here distinguished from the world; for they are chosen and called out of a world lying in wickedness; are children and heirs of another world.

It is the misapprehension of those who are devoted to the world, that they cannot receive the Spirit of truth. The spirit of the world and of God are directly contrary the one to the other, (1 Cor. 2:12), for where the spirit of the world has become ascendant, the Spirit of God is excluded. Even the *princes of this world*, though, as princes, they had advantages of knowledge, yet, as princes of this world, labored under invincible prejudices, so that they knew not the *things of the Spirit of God*, 1 Cor. 2:8.

Men cannot receive the Spirit of truth, because they see Him not, neither know Him. His comforts are *foolishness to them*, as much as the cross of Christ; and the great things of the Gospel, like those of the law, [are] counted a strange thing. These are judgments far above, out of their sight. Speak to the children of this world of the operations of the Spirit, and you are as a barbarian to them.

The best knowledge of the Spirit of truth, is by experience; *Ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you*. Christ had dwelt with them, and by their

3. Another Comforter. Christ was expected as the consolation of Israel. One of the names of the Messiah among the Jews was, the *Comforter*. The Targum calls the days of the Messiah, the *years of consolation*. Christ was the Comforter of his disciples when with them, and now He was leaving them in their greatest need, He promises them another.

The same that gave the Son to be our Savior, will give his Spirit to be our Comforter, pursuant to the same design. The Son is said to send the Comforter, (ch. 15:26.) but the Father is the prime Agent.

This blessing is procured by the *intercession* of the Lord Jesus; He said, (v. 14.) *I will do it*; here He saith, *I will pray for it*, to show not only that He is both God and man, but also King and Priest. As priest He is ordained to make *intercession*, as king He is authorized by the Father to execute judgment. When Christ saith, *I will pray the Father*, it does not suppose that the Father is unwilling, or must be importuned, but only that the gift of the Spirit is a fruit of Christ's mediation, purchased by his merit, and taken out by his intercession. See

The continuance of this blessing; that He may abide with you forever. That is, [1.] 'As long as you live. Ye shall never know the want of a comforter, nor lament his departure, as you are now lamenting mine.' Note, It should support us under the loss of those comforts which were designed us for a time, that everlasting consolations are provided for us. It was not expedient that Christ should be with them forever, for they who were designed for public service must not always live a college life; they must disperse, and therefore a comforter that would be with them in all places alike, and howsoever distressed, was alone fit

acquaintance with Him, they could not but know the *Spirit of truth*. They had themselves been endued with the Spirit in some measure. What enabled them to leave all to follow Christ, and to continue with Him in his temptations? What enabled them to preach the Gospel and work miracles, but the *Spirit dwelling in them*? The experiences of the saints are the explications of the promises; paradoxes to others are axioms to them.

They that have experimental acquaintance with the Spirit, have a comfortable assurance of his continuance; He *dwelleth with you, and shall be in you*. They that know Him, know how to value Him, and bid Him welcome; and therefore He shall be in them, as the light in the air, the sap in the tree, the soul in the body. Their communion with Him shall be intimate, their union with Him inseparable.

The gift of the Holy Ghost is a peculiar gift, bestowed upon the disciples of Christ in a distinguishing way; them, and not the world; it is to them hidden *manna*, and the *white stone*. No comforts comparable to those which make *no show, or noise*. This is the favor God bears his chosen; the *heritage of those that fear his name*.

V. 18—24. He promises to continue his care of them; (v. 18.) *I will not leave you orphans, or fatherless, for though I leave you, yet I leave you this comfort, I will come to you*. His departure grieved them; but it was not so bad as they apprehended; it was neither *total*, nor *final*.

1. Not *total*; 'Though I leave you without my bodily presence, I do not leave you without *comfort*.' Though children, and left *little*, they had received the adoption of sons, and his Father would be their Father, with whom those who otherwise would be fatherless, find mercy. Note, The case of true believers, though sometimes *sorrowful*, is never *comfortless*, because they are never orphans: for God is an *everlasting Father*.

2. Not *final*; *I will come to you, I do come*; that is, (1.) 'I will come *speedily* to you at my resurrection.' He had often said, *The third day I will rise again*. (2.) 'I will be coming daily to you in my Spirit'; in the tokens of his love, and visits of his grace, He is still coming. (3.) 'I will come certainly at the end of time, to introduce you into the joy of your Lord.' Note, The consideration of Christ's coming saves us from being comfortless in his removals from us; for if He depart for a season, it is that we may receive Him forever. Let this moderate our grief, *The Lord is at hand*.

He promises that their acquaintance and interest in Him should continue; (v. 19, 20.) *Yet a little while, and the world sees Me no more*; after his death, the world saw Him no more, for though He rose to life, He never showed Himself to all the people, Acts 10:41. The malignant world cried, *Away with Him, crucify Him*; so shall their doom be; they shall see Him no more. Those only that see Christ by faith, shall see Him forever; the world sees Him no more till his second coming; but his disciples have communion with Him in his absence.

Ye see Me, and shall continue to, when the world sees Me no more. They saw Him after his resurrection, for He showed Himself to them by many infallible proofs, Acts 1:3. They saw Him by faith after his ascension, at God's right hand, as Lord of all.

Because I live, ye shall live also. It grieved

Verse 16.

Comforter. The masculine personal pronoun, surely marks the personality of the Holy Spirit. By some mistake of his prompters, Mohammed seems to have confounded the Greek name of a Comforter, with another signifying very celebrated. His name Mohammed, signifies celebrated; another name, which he assumed, Achmed, an adjective from the same root, signifies, very celebrated.—He therefore affirmed that Jesus foretold his coming, as Achmed; and complains that Christians refused to receive him. Hence the ungrounded notion, that he professed to be the Holy Spirit.

Scorr.

The Spirit is here evidently spoken of as a distinct person from Christ. He is one Comforter and the Spirit, who, after his departure, should come from the Father, is another. Guise. Besides the several passages in Scripture, which speak of three persons in the Godhead, there are a great variety of texts which separately prove both the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit. Thus in the present text, and ch. 15:

25. The Comforter is mentioned as a distinct person from the Father and Son. St. Peter uses the expressions, 'lying to the Holy Ghost,' and 'lying to God,' as equivalent, Acts 5:3, 4. The Holy Ghost is said to be eternal, (Heb. 9:14.) to teach all things, (John 14:26.) to guide into all truth, (John 16:13.) to search all things, yet the deep things of God, (1 Cor. 2:10.) to change us into the same image with Christ, (2 Cor. 3:18. Rom. 8:27. John 16:8. 1 Pet. 3:18. 1 Cor. 12:4—11.) In all these passages, the Holy Ghost is plainly spoken of, not merely as a quality or operation, but as a person, and the persons attributed to Him are such, that they can belong only to a divine person. Ep. TOMLINE.

Verse 18.

Comfortless.] Literally, orphans. The disciples of a particular teacher among the Hebrews, called him father, his scholars were called his children, and on his death, were considered orphans.

Dr. A. CLARKE.

19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also.

20 At that day I will manifest myself to you in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

22 Judas saith unto him, (not Iscariot,) Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?

23 Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.

7:33, 34. 8:21. 12:35. 13:33. 16:18, 22.
8:6. 6:55-58. 11:25, 26. Rom. 5:10.
1 Cor. 15:20, 45. 2 Cor. 4:10-12. Col. 3:24. Heb. 7:26. 1 John 1:3.
10:10. 13:38. 17:11, 21-23, 26. 2 Cor. 5:19. Col. 1:19. 2:9.
6:56. 15:5-7. Rom. 8:1. 16:7. 1 Cor. 1:30. 2 Cor. 5:17. 12:2. 13:5. Gal. 2:20. Eph. 2:10. 3:17. Col. 1:27. 1 John 4:12, 13.
15:23, 24. 15:14. Gen. 25:3-5. Deut. 10:12, 13. 11:3. 30:5-8. Ps. 119:4-6. Jer. 31:33, 34. Ez. 35:26-28. Luke 11:28. 2 Cor. 5:14, 15. Jam. 2:23, 24. 1 John 3:18-24. 5:3. 2 John 6. Rev. 22:14.
23. 15:19, 19. 16:27. 17:23. Ps. 35: 5. Is. 62:6. 1 John 3:1. Zeph. 3:17. 2 Thes. 2:16. 1 John 3:1.
d 18:23, 23. 16:14, 15. Act. 18:9-11. 22:12. 2 Cor. 3:18. 4:8. 12:8, 9. 2 Tim. 4:17, 18, 22. 1 John 1:1-3. Rev. 2:17. 3:20.
e Matt. 10:3. Lebbeus, Thaddeus. Mark 3:18. Thaddeus. Luke 6:16. Act. 1:13. Jude 1.
f 34:9. 4:11. 6:52, 60. 16:17, 18. 15:21.
g 11:7-19. 6:56. 10:30. Gen. 1:26. 1:27. Ps. 90:1. 91:1. Is. 57: 15. Rom. 8:9-11. 1 John 2:24. 4: 4, 15, 16. Rev. 3:20, 21. 7:15-17. 21:22, 23. 22:3.

for all that should believe in Him through their word. Her is,

(1.) Duty; having Christ's commandments, we must keep them; as Christians in name and profession, we have Christ's commandments sounding in our ears, written before our eyes; but this is not enough; we would approve ourselves Christians, we must keep them. Having them in our heads, we must keep them in our hearts and lives.

(2.) The dignity of those that do the duty of disciples. They are looked upon by Christ to be such as *love Him*. Not those that have the greatest wit, and know how to talk for Him, or the greatest estate to lay out for Him, but those that *keep his commandments*. Note, The surest evidence of love to Christ is, obedience to the laws of Christ. Such is the love of a subject to his sovereign, a dutiful, obedient love, a conformity to his will, and satisfaction in his wisdom.

II. In return. (for there is no love lost upon Christ.)

1. They shall have the Father's love; v. 21. We could not love God, if He did not first, out of *good-will* to us, give us grace to love Him; but there is a love of complacency promised to those that do love God, Prov. 8:17. He lets them know that He loves them. God so loves the Son, as to love all that love Him.

2. They shall have Christ's love; *And I will love him*, as Mediator. God will love him as a Father, I will love him as an elder Brother. The Creator will love him, and be the felicity of his being; the Redeemer will love him, and be the Protector of his well-being. In the nature of God, nothing shines more bright than this, that *God is love*. And in the undertaking

them, that their Master was dying, and they counted on nothing else but to *die with Him*. No, saith Christ, *I live*; this God glories in, *I live*, saith the Lord, and Christ saith the same; for He has *life in Himself*. We are not comfortless, while we know that our Redeemer *lives*. Therefore, *ye shall live also*. Note, The life of Christians is bound up in the life of Christ; as sure and as long as He lives, they that by faith are united to Him, shall live also; live spiritually, in communion with God, hid with Christ; if the head and root live, the members and branches live also. They shall *live eternally*; their bodies shall rise, in virtue of Christ's resurrection; in the world to come, it cannot but be well with all that are his, Isa. 26:19.

Ye shall have the assurance of this; (v. 20.) *At that day, when I am glorified, when the Spirit is poured out, ye shall know more clearly than now, that I am in my Father, and you in Me, and I in you.*

These glorious mysteries will be fully known in heaven; *At that day, when I shall receive you to Myself, you shall know perfectly* that which now you see through a glass darkly. Now it appears not what we shall be, but then it will appear what we were.

They were now fully known after the pouring out of the Sp. it on the apostles; at that day divine light would shine, and their eyes would see more clearly, their knowledge would increase, be more distinct, like the blind man's at the second touch of Christ, who at first only *saw men as trees walking*.

They are known by all that receive the Spirit; for in this is founded their fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. They know that *Christ is in the Father*, one with Him, by experience of what He has wrought for and in them; they find what admirable harmony there is between Christianity and natural religion, that that is grafted into this, and so they know that *Christ is in the Father*. That Christ is in them, experienced Christians know by the Spirit, 1 John 3:24. They know that they are in Christ, for the relation is mutual; Christ in them, and they in Christ, which speaks an inseparable union; therefore, because He *lives, they shall live also*. Note, 1st. Union with Christ is the life of believers, and their relation to Him, and to God through Him, is their felicity. 2dly. The knowledge of this union is their unspeakable satisfaction; they were now in Christ, and He in them; but He speaks of it as a further act of grace, that they should know, and have the comfort of it. An interest in Christ and the knowledge of it are sometimes separated.

He promises to *love them*, and manifest Himself to them, v. 21-24. Observe,

I. Whom Christ will accept, as lovers of Him; those that *have his commandments, and keep them*. By this Christ shows that the kind things here said to his disciples, were intended

of Christ, nothing appears more glorious than this, that He *loved us*. Now both these are the crown and comfort, the *grace and glory*, which shall be to all them that *love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity*. Christ was leaving his disciples, but promises to continue his *love to them*; for He not only retains a kindness for believers, though absent, but is doing them kindness while absent, for He bears them a his heart, and ever intercedes for them.

3. They shall have the comfort of that love; *I will manifest myself to him*. Some understand it of Christ's showing Himself alive to his disciples after his resurrection, but it is promised to all that *love Him and keep his commandments*; there is a spiritual manifestation of Christ to all believers; when He enlightens their minds to know his love, (Eph. 3:18, 19.) enlivens their graces, and thus enlarges their comforts. When He clears up the evidences of their interest in Him, and gives them tokens of his love, experience of his tenderness, and earnestness of his kingdom and glory, then He manifests Himself to them; and Christ is manifested to none but those to whom He is pleased to manifest Himself.

At this promise one of the disciples expresses wonder, v. 22.

Judas, not Iscariot. Judah, or Judas, was a famous name; Judah was the most famous tribe in Israel; two of Christ's disciples were of that name, one was the traitor; the other, the brother of James, (Luke 6:16.) one of those akin to Christ, Matt. 13:55. He is called *Lebbeus* and *Thaddeus*; and was the penman of the last of the epistles, which in our translation, for distinction's sake, we call the *Epistle of Jude*. Observe, 1st. Names commend us not to God, nor do they make men worse; Judas the apostle was never the worse, nor Judas the apostate ever the better, for being namesakes. But, 2dly. The evangelist carefully distinguishes between them; he adds, *not Iscariot*. Let us not confound the *precious* and the *vile*.

Lord, how is it? Which speaks either, 1st. The weakness of his understanding. He expected a temporal kingdom of the Messiah, such as all the world would wonder after. How then, should it be confined to us only? Why is it that Thou wilt not show thyself openly, that the Gentiles may come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising? Note, We create difficulties to ourselves by mistaking the nature of Christ's kingdom, as if it were of this world. Or, 2dly. As speaking the strength of his affections, and the humble sense he had of Christ's distinguishing favor; *Lord, how is it?* He is amazed at the condescensions of divine grace, as David, 2 Sam. 7:18. What is there in us to deserve so great a favor? Note, 1. Christ's manifesting Himself to his disciples, is done in a distinguishing way; to them, and *not to the world that sits in darkness, to the base, not to the mighty and noble; to babes, and not to the wise and prudent*. Distinguishing favors are very obliging, considering who are passed by, and who are pitched upon. 2. It is justly marvellous in our eyes; it is unaccountable, and must be resolved into sovereign grace; *Even so, Father, because it seemed good unto Thee*.

Christ, in answer hereunto, explains and confirms what He had said, v. 23, 24. He overlooks what infirmity there was in what Judas spake, and goes on with his comforts.

He further explains the condition of the promise, which was, loving Him, and keeping his commandments. He shows what an inseparable connection there is between love and obedience; love is the root, obedience the fruit.

1st. Where a sincere love to Christ is in the heart, there will be obedience; *If a man love Me, that love will be such a constraining principle in him, that he will keep my words*. Where there is true love to Christ, there is a value for his favor, a veneration for his autho-

Verse 23.
Come. 1. In the Old Testament. God is said to come to men when He promises or bestows peculiar benefits on them; also to dwell or
[739]

remain with those He especially favors: as also to leave and depart from those whom He ceases to benefit.
Bloomfield.

24 He ¹that loveth me not, keepeth not my sayings; ²and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me.

[Practical Observations.]

25 These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you.

26 But ¹the Comforter, which is the ²Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, ³he shall teach you all things, ⁴and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

1 15:21-23, Matt. 19:21, 22, 25:41-46, 2 Cor. 8:8, 9, 1 John 3:16-20, 10, 3:24, 5:38, 7:16, 28, 8:28, 28, 42, 12:44-50.
1 22, 15:19, 15:41, 16:1-4, 12, 13, 17:6-8.
m 16.
n 7:39, 20:22, Ps. 51:11, Is. 63:10, 11, Matt. 11:8, 20, 3:11, 28:19, Mark 12:36, 13:11, Luke 1:15, 35, 41, 9:7, 2:25, 26, 3:22, 11:13, Acts 1:2, 8, 24, 5:3, 7:51, 35, 13:24, 15:28, 28, 16:5, 20:28, 28:25, Rom. 5:5, 14:17, 15:13, 16, 1 Cor. 2:13, 6:19, 12:3, 2 Cor. 6, 13:14, Eph. 1:13, 4:30, 1 Thes. 1:5, 4:5, 2 Tim. 1:14, Tit. 2:5, Heb. 2:4, 3:7, 9:8, 19:16, 1 Pet. 1:12, 2 Pet. 1:21, 1 John 5:7, Jude 20.
c 16, 15:28, 16:7, Luke 24:49, Acts 1:4, 13.
d 6:45, 16:13, 14, Ps. 25:8, 9, 12-14, Is. 54:13, Jer. 31:33, 34, 1 Cor. 2:10-13, Eph. 1:17, 18, 1 John 2:20, 27, Rev. 2:11.
q 2:22, 12:16, Acts 11:16, 20:35.

He gives a good reason to bind us to observe the condition, and encourage us to depend upon the promise; v. 24. To this purpose He had often spoken, ch. 7: 16, 8: 25, 12: 49. 1st. The stress of duty is laid upon the precept of Christ as our rule, and justly, for the word of Christ which we are to keep, is the Father's word, and his will the Father's will. 2dly. The stress of our comfort is laid upon the promise of Christ. But forasmuch as, in dependence upon that promise, we must deny ourselves, take up our cross, and quit all, it concerns us to inquire, whether the security be sufficient to venture our all upon; and this satisfies us it is, that the promise is not Christ's bare word, but the Father's which sent Him.

V. 25-27. These things have I spoken unto you, (the lessons taught them, since they entered his school,) being yet present with you. This intimates, that He retired what He had said, and that He had improved the opportunity of his bodily presence with them to the utmost. Encouragement is given them to expect another teacher, and that Christ would find a way of speaking to them, after his departure, v. 25, 26. Two things He here tells

them further, concerning the sending of the Holy Ghost.

1. On whose account; The Father will send Him in my name; for my sake, at my special request; or, 'as my agent and representative.' He came in his Father's name, as his Ambassador; the Spirit comes in his name, to carry on his undertaking, and ripen things for his second coming. Hence He is called the Spirit of Christ, for He pleads his cause, and does his work.

2. On what errand; (1.) He shall teach you all things, necessary to learn or to teach others; as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation. If Christ's Teacher leave them now, when they have made so little proficiency, the Spirit shall teach them. For they that would teach the things of God, must first be taught of God. See Isa. 59: 2..

(2.) He shall bring all I have said to you to your remembrance. Many a lesson Christ had taught, which they had forgotten, and would have occasion for; many things they did not remember, because they did not understand their meaning: the Spirit shall not teach them a new Gospel, but bring to their minds what they had been taught, by leading them to understand it. All the apostles were to preach, and some to write, the things Jesus did and taught, for distant nations and future ages; now if left to themselves, some needful things might have been forgotten, others misrepresented, through the treachery of their memories; therefore the Spirit is promised to enable them truly to relate and record what Christ said to them. To all the saints the Spirit is given to be a remembrancer, and to Him by faith and prayer we should commit the keeping of what we hear and know.

Peace I leave with you. When Christ was about to leave the world, He committed his soul to his Father, his body to Joseph, to be decently interred, his clothes fell to the soldiers, his mother He left to the care of John; but what should He leave to his poor disciples, that had left all for Him? Silver and gold He had none; but He left them what was infinitely better, his peace; as a dying father leaves portions to his children; and it is a worthy portion.

Observe, 1. The legacy is, My peace. Peace is put for all good, and Christ has left us all that is really and truly good. Peace is put for reconciliation and love; the peace bequeathed is peace with God, and one another; peace in our own bosoms, seems to be especially meant; a tranquillity of mind arising from a sense of justification. It is the counterpart of pardon. Christ is Himself our Peace, Eph. 2: 14. It is the peace He purchased for us, and preached to us, and on which the angels congratulated men at his birth, Luke 2: 14.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15-24. We have not indeed been favored with the Redeemer's personal presence; but are to hope for that of the Holy Spirit, sent by the Father, through his intercession, to 'abide with us forever.' His miraculous operations are not to be expected, nor are they needful for us; but as a Teacher, Sanctifier, and Comforter, He will always continue with his church; and, as the Source of holiness and felicity, will abide with every believer forever. (4: 10-15. P. O. 1-15.) Unconverted men, with all their wisdom, are unable to understand, desire, or receive, the influences of 'the Spirit of truth;' and we can scarcely expect to escape the appellation of enthusiasts or hypocrites, if we profess our faith and experience, in the most scriptural manner. But the true believer cannot be unacquainted with that 'Comforter, who dwelleth in him;' nor may he deny his obligations to Him and dependence on Him, from whose influences all his joys arise. Whatever losses such may sustain, or whatever troubles may await them, they shall not be left friendless: the absence of their Lord will be short, and his return sure; they see Him, whom the world perceives not; they believe and are assured, that 'He is in the Father, and they in Him, and He in them;' in his strength they labor, in his righteousness they are entitled to eternal life; and 'because He lives they shall live also, and be kept by his power

through faith to complete salvation. (1 Pet. 1: 3-5.)—These privileges do not belong to all who profess, or even are zealous for, the truths of the Gospel; being confined to them, whose 'faith worketh by love,' and whose love to Jesus induces them 'to keep his commandments;' and they are enjoyed in proportion to the degree of love and obedience. Such persons are thus evidenced to be the subjects of the Father's electing love, the purchase of the Son, and partakers of the Holy Spirit, in regenerating grace. The divine image, renewed upon their souls, is delighted in by the Father and the Son; their holy affections and obedience honor the Gospel; and their communion with the Lord in ordinances, the light of his countenance, and the joy of his salvation, will make them know, 'how He manifests Himself to them as He doth not to the world;' while their conscious unworthiness will fill them with admiration of his condescension. But those who do not love Jesus, and who keep not his sayings, cannot know what these manifestations mean: they only proclaim their folly, if they deny the reality of them, because they never experienced them; (Prop. 14: 1.) 2 Pet. 1: 19, 1 John 5: 9, 10; and if any pretend to them, while living in allowed disobedience to Christ, they must be plainly told that they deceive themselves.

SCOTT.

Verse 26.
Remembrance.] 'Here Christ promises that inspiration, which enabled them not only to give a true history of his life and death, but also

gave them the most perfect recollection of all the words He had spoken to them, so that they have been able to transmit to posterity the identical words which Jesus uttered in his discourses.' Dr. A. CLARK.

27 'Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you: 'not as the world giveth, give I unto you. 'Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be 'afraid.

28 Ye have 'heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. 'If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said, 'I go unto the Father: for 'my Father is greater than I.

29 And 'now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe.

30 Hereafter 'I will not talk much with you: for 'the prince of this world cometh, 'and hath nothing in me.

31 But 'that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. 'Arise, let us go hence.

2. It is bequeathed 'To you, my disciples and followers, who will be exposed to trouble; who are the sons of peace, and qualified to receive it.' This legacy was left to them as the representatives of the church, to them and all true Christians in all ages.

3. How it is left: *Not as the world giveth, give I.* That is, 'I do not compliment you with the formality, *Peace be unto you*; it is a real blessing. The smiles of the world cannot give it, nor its frowns take it away.' Or, 'The gifts I give you, are not such as *this world* gives to its votaries.' The world's gifts concern only the body and time; Christ's gifts enrich the soul for eternity: the world gives lying vanities, which cheat us; Christ gives substantial blessings, which will never fail us: the world gives and takes; Christ gives a good part that shall never be taken away. Infinitely more valuable than the peace which the world gives; which begins in ignorance, consists with sin, and ends in endless troubles; Christ's peace begins in grace, consists with no allowed sin, and ends at length in everlasting peace. It differs from the world's as does a deadly lethargy from a refreshing sleep.

4. Its use; *Let not your heart be troubled*, for any evils past or present, *neither let it be afraid of any evil to come.* Note, Those who are interested in the covenant of grace, and entitled to the peace Christ gives, ought not to yield to overwhelming grief and fear. This comes in as the conclusion of the whole matter; He had said, (v. 1.) *Let not your heart be troubled*, and here He repeats it as that for which He had now given sufficient reason.

V. 28-31. Christ gives another reason, why their hearts should not be troubled for his going away; *because his was not.* And here He tells them what enabled Him to endure the cross and despise the shame, that they might look unto Him, and run with patience. He comforted Himself.

I. That He should come again; 'Ye have heard how I have said, and now I say it again, *I go away, and come again.*' Note, What we have heard of the doctrine of Christ, especially concerning his second coming, we have need to be told again and again. When under the power of passion, grief, fear, or care, we forget it. See Phil. 4: 5. Christ encouraged Himself with this, in his sufferings and death, that He should come again, and the same should comfort us in our departure at death; *we go to come again*; the leave we then take of friends, is only a good-night, not a final farewell. See I Thess. 4: 13, 14.

II. That He went to his Father; 'If ye loved Me, as your sorrow indicates, ye would rejoice instead of mourning, because *I go to the Father*, which will be my advancement and your advantage; for *my Father is greater than I.*'

It is matter of joy to Christ's disciples, that He is gone to the Father, to take possession for orphans, and make intercession for transgressors. His departure had a bright, as well as a dark side. Therefore He sent this message after his resurrection, (ch. 20: 17.) *I ascend to my Father and your Father.*

The reason is, because the Father is greater

than He, which, if it be a proper proof of that for which it is alleged, (as no doubt it is,) must be understood thus, that his state with his Father would be much more glorious than his present state; his returning to his Father would advance Him to a much higher condition than He was now in. Or, thus, His going to the Father Himself, and bringing all his followers to Him there, was the end of his undertaking, and therefore greater than the means. This Christ raises the thoughts and expectations of his disciples to something greater, than that in which now they thought on their nappiness bound up. The kingdom of the Father, wherein He shall be all in all, will be greater than the mediatorial kingdom.

Christ's disciples should show they love Him by rejoicing in his exaltation, rather than by lamenting his humiliation; and rejoicing that He is gone to his Father, where we shall be shortly with Him. Many that love Christ, let their love run in a wrong channel; they think if they love Him, they must be continually in pain because of Him; whereas they that love Him, should dwell at ease in Him, should rejoice in Christ Jesus.

III. 'I have told you before it come to pass, that I must die and rise again, and ascend to the Father, and send the Comforter, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.' See this reason, ch. 13: 19, 16: 4. Christ told his disciples of his death, (though He knew it would puzzle and grieve them,) because it would afterward redound to the confirmation of their faith in two things.

1. That He who foretold those things, had a divine prescience. Paul, when going to Jerusalem, knew not the things that did abide him there, but Christ did.

2. That the things foretold were according to the divine purpose, not sudden resolves, but the counterparts of an eternal counsel. Let them therefore not be troubled at that, which, by confirming their faith, would redound to their benefit; for the trial of our faith is very precious, though it cost us present heaviness, through manifold temptations, 1 Pet. 1: 6.

IV. He was sure of a victory over Satan, with whom He knew He was to struggle in his departure; (v. 30.) 'Henceforth I will not talk much with you, having not much to say, till the pouring out of the Spirit.' He talked much with them after this; (ch. 15: and 16:) but in comparison with what He had said, it was not much. His time was short, He therefore spake largely now. Note, We should always endeavor to talk to the purpose, because we may not have time to talk much. We know not how soon our breath will be stopped, and therefore should be always breathing something good. When we come to be sick and die, we may not be capable of talking much to those about us; therefore what good counsel we have to give, let us give it while in health.

One reason why He would not talk much with them, was, He had other work; *The prince of this world comes*; he called the devil so, ch. 12: 31. The disciples dreamed of their Master being the Prince of this world, and they worldly princes under Him. But Christ tells them that the prince of this world was his enemy, as

16:32. 20:19-21:26. Num. 6:26. Ps. 29:11. 72:2,3,7. 85:10. 14. 9:6,7. 32:13-17. 54:7-10,13. 55:12. 57:19. Zech. 6:13. Luke 1:79. 2:14. 10:5. Acts 10:36. Rom. 1:7. 5:1, 10: 8,6. 13:13. 1 Cor. 13: 2. Cor. 5:18-21. Gal. 1:3. 5:22. 6:16. Eph. 2:14-17. Phil. 4:7. Col. 1:2. 3:15. 2 Thes. 1:3. 3:16. Heb. 7:2. 12:20. Rev. 1:4. Job. 42:39. Ps. 28:3. Lam. 3:17. Dan 4:1. 6:25.

See page 1.
* Ps. 11:1. 27:1,2. 56:3,11. 91:5. 112:7. Prov. 3:25. 14:12. 41:10. 14. Jer. 1:3. Ez. 2:5. Matt. 10:28. * Luke 12:15. Acts 18:6. 2 Tim. 1:7,8. Rev. 2:10. 21:8. 3:18. 16:16-22. 16:17. Ps. 47:5-7. 69:19,19. Luke 21:33. 1 Pet. 1:8. 12:16,16. 20:17.

* 5:18. 16:30,38. 13:16. 20:21. 1a. 42:1. 49:5-7. 53:11. Phil. 12:18. 1 Cor. 11:3. 15:24-28. Phil. 2:6. 11. Heb. 12:3. 2:9-15. 3:1-4. Rev. 1:11,17,21. Matt. 24:24,25. 16:12. Luke 24:44-49. Acts 1:3. 12:31. 16:11. Luke 22:53. 2 Cor. 4:4. Eph. 2:2. 6:12. Col. 1:13. 1 John 4:4. 5:19. Rev. 12:9. 20:2,3,7,8.

* Luke 1:35. 2 Cor. 5:21. Heb. 7:26. 1 Pet. 1:19. Matt. 1 John 3:6. 4:34. 10:18. 12:27,28. 15:9,10. 18:11. Ps. 40:8. Matt. 26:39-42. Phil. 2:6. Heb. 5:7,8. 10:5-9. 13:2,3. 18:1-4. Matt. 26:45. Luke 12:50.

Verse 28.

It has been already seen, that the Word, as God and with God, is declared to be One with and equal to the Father. (1:1-3. 5: 17-29. 10: 26-31. v. 30.) In this respect Jesus could not say, 'My Father is greater than I'; indeed there can be no greater or less in the infinite perfection of Deity. But, as God the Son was manifested in human nature; and as in this sense He was about to finish his work, and go to receive his merited recompense, in being exalted to the mediatorial throne, the language is evidently proper, not only as to his human nature, but likewise in respect of his mediatorial character and kingdom, in which He acted as the Servant and Apostle of his Father; even as an ambassador, though equal in nature, is inferior in office, to the prince who commissions him. (Note, 16: 7.) In this sense it perfectly accords to the rest of Scripture; and it becometh all who love Him greatly to rejoice in his exaltation to glory, after his voluntary humiliation. (Marg. Ref. y-a-10: 32-39. Matt. 28: 18.) 'I am greater than I.' (Matt. 11: 11. 23: 11. Rom. 9: 12.) Superiority in rank, or office, with equality in nature, as men, is evidently intended in these and other instances. (16: 7.)

It certainly requires very little argument, and no sophistry, to reconcile this passage with the most orthodox notion of the Deity of Christ, as He is repeatedly speaking of his divine, and of his human

nature. Of the former He says, (10: 30.) *I and the Father are one*, and of the latter He states, with the same truth, *the Father is greater than I.*

Dr. A. CLARKE.

Verse 29.

'It is very judiciously observed by Dr. Jenkin, (in his excellent defence of Christianity,) that when miraculous events are also the accomplishment of prophecies, the degree of evidence arising from them, is the greatest that can possibly be conceived.'

DODDRIDGE.

Verse 30.

Has nothing in Me. 'That is, can effect nothing against Me. The word translated here, is here, as often, used for can; (Mark 14: 8. Matt. 18: 25,) do being understood.'

BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 31.

'It is not probable that so interesting and important a discourse was pronounced in the street, or on the way to the garden; nor is there a hint to that effect in the course of the chapters; still less probable is it that our Lord should have poured forth so solemn a prayer as that which occupies the whole of ch. 17, under such circumstances. The portion in question must have been pronounced, either at the house in Jerusalem or in the garden; the former is most probable. Because the words arise, let us go hence, were pronounced, it does not follow that they should immediately have departed.'

10

CHAP. XV.

Jesus, by the parable of Himself as the true Vine, and his disciples as the branches, shew us the necessity of union and communion with Him, in order to fruitfulness; illustrates the conduct of God towards his church; and exhorts his disciples to abide in Him, 1-8. He shews the greatness of his love to them, 9-15; and that He has chosen them, that they may bring forth fruit which may remain. 16. He commands them to love one another, and warns them to expect hatred and persecutions from the world, which hates both Him and his Father, 17-25. He promises the Comforter, to confirm the testimony which they should bear to Him, 26, 27.

I AM the true Vine, and my Father is the Husbandman.

a 1:9, 17. b 3:25. c 1 John 2:9.
d Gen. 49:10, 11. Ps. 80:9, &c. Is. 42: 6, &c. Jer. 2:2. Ez. 15:2—6. Hos. 10:1. Zech. 3:8. Matt. 21:33, &c. Luke 13:6, 7.
e Cant. 7:12. 8:11, 12. Is. 37:23, 30: 21. 61:3. Matt. 23:1. Mark 12:1. 1 Cor. 3:3.

Him, and therefore, though he prevailed to crucify Him, could not prevail to terrify Him; though he hurried Him to death, yet not to despair. When Satan comes to disquiet us, he has something in us to perplex us with, for we have all sinned; but when He would disturb Christ, he found no occasion against Him. There was no corruption in Christ to give advantage to the prince of this world in his temptations; he could not crush his undertaking by drawing Him to sin, because there was nothing sinful in Him, no tinder for him to strike fire into; He was above the possibility of sinning. The more Satan's interest in us decays, the more comfortably may we expect sufferings and death.

V. His departure was in compliance with, and obedience to, his Father. Satan could not force life from Him, yet He would die; *That the world may know that I love the Father*; v. 31.

This confirms what He had often said, that his undertaking, as Mediator, was a demonstration to the world, (1.) Of his compliance with the Father. As it was an evidence of love to man, that He died for his salvation; so it was of love to God, that He died for his glory. *As the Father loved the Son, and gave all things into his hands; so the Son loved the Father, and gave his spirit into his hand.* (2.) Of his obedience to his Father; v. 31. Note, The best evidence of our love to the Father, is, our doing as He hath given us commandment. As Christ loved the Father, and obeyed Him, even to the death, so we must love and obey Christ. Christ's eye to the Father's commandment, obliging Him to suffer and die, bore Him up with cheerfulness, and overcame the reluctance of nature: this took off the offence of the cross, that what He did was by order from the Father; the command of God is sufficient to bear us out in that which is most disputed by others, and therefore should be sufficient to bear us up in that which is most difficult to ourselves; *This is the will of Him that made Me, that sent Me.*

That the world may know that I love the Father, Arise, let us go hence to the garden; so some; or to Jerusalem. When we talk of troubles at a distance, it is easy to say, *Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest*; but when an unavoidable cross lies in the way of duty, then to say, *Arise, let us go to meet it*; this lets the world know that we love the Father. If this discourse was at the close of the passover-supper, it would seem that at these words He rose from the table, and retired where He might the more freely carry on the discourse with his disciples in the following chapters, and pray with them. Dr. Goodwin's remark upon this, is, that Christ mentioning the great motive of his sufferings, his Father's commandment, was in haste to go forth to suffer and die, afraid of missing the time of Judas' meeting Him; *Arise, let us go hence*; but He looks upon the glass, as it were, sees it not quite out, sits down again, and preaches another sermon.

V. 25-31. Would we know the way of peace, we must fervently pray for the teaching of the Holy Spirit and depend on it: thus the words which Jesus has spoken will be brought to our remembrance, and we shall be enabled to understand, believe, and obey them; and our experience of their truth and goodness will solve difficulties insuperable to others. Thus we shall receive that legacy, which Jesus has bequeathed to all his disciples, even 'His peace,' the peace of God that passeth all understanding; and it will contribute more to our present comfort, than the friendship, or even the possession of the whole world; for it will guard our hearts against trouble and terror, in the most afflictive scenes of life, and in the hour of dissolution. (Phil. 4:5-7.) We may distinguish the peace He gives, from that of Pharisees and hypocrites, by its hum-

were the princes of this world, actuated and ruled by him, 1 Cor. 2:8. But he has nothing in Me. Observe,

1. The devil had set upon Christ with his temptations, (Matt. 4:) had offered Him the kingdoms of this world, (if He would hold them as tributary to him, with an eye to which, Christ calls him in disdain, the prince of this world; then the devil departed from Him for a season; 'But now,' says Christ, 'I see him preparing to make a furious onset, and so to frighten from his undertaking, whom he could not entice.' Note, The foresight of a temptation gives us great advantage in resisting it; for, being forewarned, we should be fore-armed. While here, we may see Satan continually coming against us, and ought therefore to be always on our guard.

2. The assurance He had of good success in the conflict; *He hath nothing in Me—nothing at all.* There was no guilt in Christ to give authority to the prince of this world in his temptations. The devil is said to have the power of death; (Heb. 2:14.) the Jews called him the angel of death, as an executioner. Christ having done no evil, he had no legal power against

In these words He gives his disciples encouragement to follow Him. He does not say, *I must go*; but *Let us go*. He calls them out to no hardships, where He does not lead. They had promised they would not desert Him; *Let us go then*; let us see how you will make the words good.

He gives them an example, teaching them at all times, especially in suffering, to sit loose to all things here below, and often to think and speak of leaving them. Though we sit easy, in the delights of an agreeable conversation, we must not think of being here always; *Arise, let us go hence*. If it were at the close of the supper, it teaches us that the solemnities of our communion with God are not to be constant in this world. When we sit down under Christ's shadow with delight, and say, *It is good to be here*; yet we must think of rising and going down from the mount.

CHAP. XV. v. 1-8. It is generally agreed that Christ's discourse in this and the next chapter, was at the close of his last supper, the night in which He was betrayed, and it is a continued discourse, not interrupted as that in the foregoing chapter was; and what He chooses to discourse of is very pertinent to the present sad occasion of a farewell sermon. Now that He was about to leave them, I. They would be tempted to leave Him, and return to Moses again; and therefore, He tells them, how necessary it was that they should by faith adhere to Him, and abide in Him. II. They would be tempted to grow strange one to another; and therefore He presses it upon them to love one another, and to keep up that communion when He was gone, which had hitherto been their comfort.

III. They would be tempted to shrink from their apostleship, when they met with hardships; and therefore He prepares them to bear the shock of the world's ill-will. There are four words, to which his discourse in this chapter may be reduced: 1. Fruit, v. 1-8. 2. Love, v. 9-17. 3. Hatred, v. 18-25. 4. The Comforter, v. 26, 27.

Here Christ discourses concerning the *fruits of the Spirit*, which his disciples were to bring forth, under the similitude of a vine.

Jesus Christ is the true Vine. It is an instance of the humility of Christ, that He is pleased to speak of Himself under low and humble comparisons. He that is the Sun of righteousness, and the bright and morning Star, compares Himself to a vine.

1. He is the Vine, planted in the vineyard, not a spontaneous product; for He is the Word made flesh. The vine has an unpromising outside; Christ had no form, nor comeliness, Isa. 53:2. It is a spreading plant, and Christ will be known, *Salvation to the ends of the earth.* The fruit of the vine honors God, and cheers man; (Judg. 9:13.) so does the fruit of Christ's mediation; it is *better than gold*, Prov. 8:19. Whatever excellency there is in any creature, serviceable to man, it is but a shadow of that grace which is in Christ, for his people's good.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

bling and sanctifying effects; and by its enabling us to unite tenderness of conscience with trust in God's mercy, and submission to his will. Let us rejoice, that our Savior has, in our nature, entered into 'the joy set before Him,' being 'ascended to his Father and our Father, to our God and his God.' (20:11-17, p. 17.) 'Let us compare his words with our experience and observation, for the daily confirmation of our faith. Let us rejoice in his victories over 'the prince of this world;' and though the enemy has still a strong party in our souls, yet, depending on the Redeemer's grace, let us prosecute his victories, both by resisting temptation, and opposing the cause of sin and Satan; let us copy the example of the Savior's love and obedience; and be ready to encounter hardship and danger, and to go hence by death, whenever He shall please. SCOTT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XV. v. 1. The close of the preceding chapter intimates that our Lord and his disciples then arose from table, as about to leave the house and retire to Gethsemane; yet probably they did not set out till He had finished this discourse, and the prayer with which He closed it. (14:31, 18:1.) Perhaps the fruit of the vine, of which they had been talking, was the sight of a spreading vine, gave occasion to this illustration of that union, between Christ and his disciples, which had been

been mentioned. (14:18-20.) The nation of Israel, the worshippers of JERUSALEM, had frequently been represented as 'a vine'; but Jesus declared that He was 'the true Vine.' (Marg. Ref. a, b.—Ps. 80:8—13. Is. 5:1-7. Jer. 2:20, 21.) For that nation had been only a type of the true Israel, the seed of Abraham; which consists of Christ, and believers as one with Him. (Rom. 4:9-17. 11: Cui. 3:15-29.) He therefore was 'the true Vine,' the substance of that shadow; and all the fruitful branches of that vine, which had produced good

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing.

6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

2. He is the true Vine, really a fruitful plant, a plant of renown; not like that wild vine, which deceived those who gathered of it, 2 Kings 4: 39. Unfruitful trees are said to lie, (Hab. 3: 17, marg.) but Christ is that true vine typified by Judah's vine, which enriched him with the blood of the grape, (Gen. 49: 11.) by Joseph's vine, the branches of which run over the wall, (Gen. 49: 22.) by Israel's vine, under which he dwelt safely, 1 Kings 4: 25.

Believers are branches of this vine, which supposes that Christ is the root: the root is unseen, and our life is hid with Christ; the root bears the tree, (Rom. 11: 18.) diffuses sap to it, and is all in all to its fruitfulness; and in Christ are all supplies. The branches of the vine are many, on one side and on the other; yet, meeting in the root, are all but one vine; thus all good Christians, though in place and opinion distant from each other, meet in Christ, the Centre of their unity. Believers, like the branches of the vine, are insufficient to stand of themselves. See Ezek. 15: 2.

The Father is the Husbandman—the land-worker. Though the earth is the Lord's, it yields Him no fruit unless He work it. God has not only a property in, but a care of, the vine and all the branches. He hath planted, and watered, and gives the increase; for we are God's husbandry, 1 Cor. 3: 9. See Isa. 5: 1, 2, 7, 23. He had an eye upon Christ, the Root, and upheld Him, and made Him to flourish out of a dry ground. He has an eye upon the branches, and prunes, and watches over them. Never was any husbandman so wise, so watchful about his vineyard, as God about his church, which therefore must needs prosper.

The duty taught by this similitude, is, to bring forth fruit, and, in order to that, to abide in Christ.

From a vine we look for grapes, (Isa. 5: 2.) and from a Christian for Christianity, that is, the fruit; a Christian temper, disposition, life and conversation, Christian devotions and Christian designs. We must honor God, and do good, and exemplify the religion we profess; this is bearing fruit. The disciples here must be fruitful, as Christians, in all the fruits of righteousness, and as apostles, in diffusing that knowledge.

The doom of the unfruitful; (v. 2.) they are taken away. It is here intimated, that there are many who pass for branches in Christ, who yet bear no fruit. Were they really united to Christ by faith, they would bear fruit; but, being only tied to Him by the thread of an outward profession, they will soon be seen to be dry branches; unfruitful professors are unfaithful professors; professors, and no more. It might be read, Every branch that beareth not fruit in Me, and it comes much to one; for they that do not bear fruit in Christ, are as if they bore no fruit at all, Hos. 10: 1. It is here threatened, that they shall be taken away, in justice to them and in kindness to the rest of the branches. From him that has not real union with Christ, and fruit produced thereby, shall be taken away even when he seemed to have, Luke 8: 18. Some think this refers primarily to Judas.

The promise to the fruitful; He purgeth them, that they may bring forth more fruit. Note, 1. Further fruitfulness is the blessed reward of former fruitfulness. The first blessing was, Be fruitful; and it is still a great blessing. 2. Even fruitful branches, in order to their further fruitfulness, have need of purging, or pruning; He taketh away that which is superfluous and luxuriant, which hinders its growth and fruitfulness. The best have in them that which is peccant, something which should be taken away; some notions, passions, or humors, that need to be purged away, which Christ has promised to do by His Word, Spirit, and Providence, by degrees, in the proper season. 3. The purging of fruitful branches, in order to their greater fruitfulness, is the care and work of the great Husbandman, for his own glory.

The benefits believers have by the doctrine of Christ, the power of which they should labor to exemplify; (v. 3.) Now ye are clean.

Their society was clean, now Judas was expelled: by that word of Christ, What thou doest, do quickly. The Word of Christ is a distinguishing Word, and separates between the precious and the vile; it will purify the church of the first-born in the great dividing day.

They were each of them clean, that is, sanctified; (ch. 17: 17.) that faith by which they received the Word of Christ, purified their hearts, Acts 15: 9. The Spirit of grace by the Word refined them from the world, the flesh, and the leaven of the scribes and Pharisees. Apply it to all believers. The Word of Christ is spoken to them; there is a cleansing virtue in it, as it works grace, and works out corruption; it cleanses, as fire cleanses the gold from its dross, and as physic the body from disease. We evidence that we are cleansed by the Word, when we bring forth fruit unto holiness. Perhaps, here is an allusion to the law concerning vineyards in Canaan; the fruit of them was as unclean, and uncircumcised, the first three years after it was planted; and the fourth year it was to be holiness of praise unto the Lord; and then it was clean, Lev. 19: 23, 24. The disciples had now been three years under Christ's instruction; and now ye are clean.

Glory will redound to God by our fruitfulness; comfort and honor will come to ourselves by it, v. 8. Herein our Father will be glorified. The fruitfulness of the apostles, in the discharge of their office, would be to the glory of God in the conversion of souls, Rom. 15: 9, 16. The fruitfulness of Christians, in a narrower sphere, is to the glory of God. By the eminent good works of Christians many are brought to glorify our Father which is in heaven.

So shall we be Christ's disciples indeed, making it to appear that we are really what we call ourselves. So shall we evidence our discipleship, and be to our Master for a name, and a praise, Jer. 13: 11. So shall we be owned by our Master in the great day, and share in the joy of our Lord. And the more we abound in that which is good, the more He is glorified.

In order to fruitfulness, we must abide in Christ, (v. 4.) keep up our union with Him by faith, and do all we do in religion in virtue of that union. Note, It is the great concern of all Christ's disciples, to keep up a dependence upon Christ, and communion with Him; habitually to adhere to, and derive from Him. Those that come to Christ, must abide in Him; 'Abide in Me, by faith; and I in you, by my Spirit; and then fear not but I will abide in you'; for the communion between Christ and believers never fails on his side. We must abide in Christ's Word by a regard to it, and it in us as a light to our feet. We must abide in Christ's merit as our righteousness and plea, and it in us as our support and comfort. The knot of the branch abides in the vine, and the sap of the vine abides in the branch, so there is a constant communication between them.

So necessary is it to our happiness, that we be fruitful, that the best argument to engage us to abide in Christ, is, that otherwise we cannot be fruitful, v. 4, 5.

Abiding in Christ is in order to our doing much good. He that is constant in the exercise of faith and love to Him, that lives upon his promises, and is led by his Spirit, bringeth forth much fruit, is very serviceable to God's glory, and his own account in the great day. Note, Union with Christ is productive of all good. A life of faith in the Son of God is incomparably the most excellent life a man can live in this world; it is regular and even, pure and heavenly, useful and comfortable, and all that answers the end of life.

It is necessary to our doing any good. It is not only a mean of cultivating the good already

fruit, had been rendered so by grace derived from Him. The union of the divine and human nature in the person of Christ, and the fulness of the Spirit in Him, resemble the root of the vine, deriving the fertilizing juices from a rich soil, and his mediatorial work, like the stem, conveys these to all believers, to render them fruitful. Like the vine, the Redeemer appears to the proud and unbelieving, mean and despicable: while the wise of this world, and the mighty, are counted like the stately cedar, or the sturdy oak; but the fruit of this Vine, and of

its branches, is far more valuable than all other productions of the earth. (Is. 4: 2. 53: 2, 3. Ez. 15: 6-8.)

Verse 6. If a man abide not in Me! 'It is strange any should think this text a conclusive argument against the doctrine of perseverance, when to be in Christ (v. 2.) so plainly signifies making an external profession of Christianity, whether vain or sincere.'

LODDRIDGE.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples.

[Practical Observations.]

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

P 19. Deut. 6:5 Job 23:12 Ps 119:1 Prov. 4:4 Jer. 15:16 Col. 1:11 1 John 2:14, 27 2 John 1:2 16 14:13 14:23 Job 22:26, 27 Ps. 37:4 Ps. 102:15 Is. 55:8, 9 Jer. 42:3 5:16 1 John 3:22 5:14, 15 Ps. 92:12-15 Is. 60:21 61:3 Hag. 1:8 Matt. 5:15 1 Cor. 6:20 10: 21 2 Cor. 9:10-15 Phil. 1:11 Tit. 2:10 1 Pet. 2:12 4:11 E 8:31 13:35 Matt. 5:44, 45 Luke 6:35 13: 17:23, 25 Eph. 3:18, 19 Rev. 1:5 11 1 John 2:28 Jude 20, 21 14:15, 21 23 1 Cor. 7:19 1 Thes. 4:13 2 Pet. 2:21 1 John 2:5 3: 21-24 5:3 Rev. 22:14 7: 4:24 9:23 12:19, 50 14:31 17: 14 31-41 Matt. 3:15-17 Heb. 7:26 10:5-10 1 John 2:12

seize for himself. When the Spirit of the Lord was departed from Saul, an evil spirit possessed him.

They cast them into the fire, that is, they are cast into the fire; and they who seduce them to sin, do in effect cast them there; for they made them children of hell. Fire is the fittest place for withered branches, good for nothing else, Ezek. 15: 2, 4.

They are burned, of course; but it is here added very emphatically, and makes the threatening terrible, they will not be consumed in a moment, like thorns under a pot, (Ecc. 7: 6.) but are burning forever in a fire, which not only cannot be quenched, but will never spend itself. This comes of quitting Christ; this is the end of barren trees. Apostates are twice dead; (Jude 12.) and when it is said, *They are cast into the fire and burned*, it speaks as if they were twice damned. Some apply men's gathering them, to the ministry of the angels in the great day, when they shall gather out of Christ's kingdom all things that offend, and shall bundle the tares for the fire.

The privilege they have, that abide in Christ, v. 7.

1. Our union with Christ is maintained by the Word; *If ye abide in Me*, He had said before, and *I in you*; here He explains Himself, and *my words abide in you*; for it is in the Word that Christ is set before us, and offered to us, Rom. 10: 6-8. It is in the Word that we receive Him; and where the Word of Christ dwells richly, there Christ dwells. If the Word be our constant guide, if it be in us at home, then we abide in Christ, and He in us.

V. 1--8. In the person and salvation of Christ, the Lord has made provision for the sanctification, as well as the pardon and justification, of all who believe; but all others must die unholy. He is the true Vine, whom God has planted, and waters continually. As professed Christians, we appear to belong to this Vine; but woe to them, who have no other union, than what consists in notions, sacraments, and forms. Such branches do not bear good fruit; perhaps indeed very bad fruit; and one after another of them is taken away, and left as fuel to the fire of divine wrath. But even such branches as bear fruit have many remaining hinderances to fruitfulness; and the care of the Husbandman consists in purging them, that they may bring forth more fruit; so that it may be expected, that true believers will grow under this heavenly culture; and if sharp means be employed to promote their sanctification, they will, when in their right mind, be thankful for them. They also earnestly desire and fervently pray to be enabled to abide in Christ, that He may abide in them, by His Word and Spirit; and they attend on ordinances, as means of cementing this union. They know, that only by persevering faith in Christ can they possess the assurance that they are clean; they dread nothing so much, as being found at last

in us; but it is the root and spring of all good; *Without Me ye can do nothing*: not only no great thing, heal the sick, or raise the dead, but nothing. Note, We have as necessary a dependence upon the Mediator for spiritual life, as we have upon the Creator for all the actions of natural life; for, as to both, it is in the divine power, that we live, move, and have our being.

Abstracted from the merit of Christ, we can do nothing towards our justification; and from the Spirit of Christ, nothing towards our sanctification. *Without Christ ye can do nothing* aright, nothing that will please God, or profit ourselves, 2 Cor. 3: 5. We depend upon Christ, not only as the vine upon the wall, for support; but as the branch of the root, for sap. Observe,

The fatal consequences of forsaking Christ, v. 6. A description of the fearful state of hypocrites that are not in Christ; and of apostates that abide not in Christ.

They are cast forth as withered branches, plucked off because they cumber the tree. It is just that they should have no benefit by Christ, who think they have no need of Him; and that they who reject Him, should be rejected by Him; those that abide not in Christ, shall be abandoned by Him; they are left to themselves, to fall into scandalous sin, and then are justly cast out of the communion of the faithful.

They are withered, as a branch broken from the tree. They that abide not in Christ, though they may flourish a while in a passable profession, yet in a little time wither and come to nothing. Their parts and gifts wither, their zeal and devotion, their credit and reputation, their hopes and comforts wither, Job 8: 11-13. Note, They that bear no fruit, after a while will bear no leaves. How soon is that fig-tree withered away, which Christ has cursed!

Men gather them. Satan's agents and emissaries pick them up, and make an easy prey of them. They that fall off from Christ, presently fall in with sinners; and the sheep that wander from Christ's fold, the devil stands ready to

seize for himself. When the Spirit of the Lord was departed from Saul, an

2. Our communion with Christ is maintained by prayer; *Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done to you*. And what can we desire more than to have what we will for asking? Note, They that abide in Christ, as their hearts' delight, shall have, through Christ, their hearts' desire. If we have Christ, we shall want nothing that is good for us. Two things are implied in this promise: 1st. That if we abide in Christ, and his Word in us, we will not ask any thing but what is proper. The promises abiding in us, lie ready to be turned into prayers; and the prayers so regulated, cannot but speed. 2dly. If we abide in Christ and his Word, we shall have such an interest in God's favor and Christ's mediation, that we shall have an answer of peace to all our prayers.

V. 9-17. Christ, who is love itself, is here discoursing concerning love; a fourfold love.

1. Concerning the Father's love to Him, He here tells us,

1. That the Father loved Him as Mediator; *This is my beloved Son*. He was the Son of his love. He loved Him, and gave all things into his hand; and yet so loved the world, as to deliver Him up for us all. When entering on his sufferings, Christ comforted Himself with this, that his Father loved Him. The one whom God loves as a Father, may despise the hatred of the world.

2. He abode in his Father's love, v. 10. He continually loved his Father, and was beloved of Him. Even when made sin and a curse for us, and it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, He abode in his Father's love. See Ps. 89: 33. Because He continued to love his Father, He went cheerfully through his sufferings, and therefore his Father continued to love Him.

3. Therefore He abode in his Father's love, because He kept his Father's law, (v. 10.) as Mediator. His soul delighted in law, because He did not fail in his undertaking, nor was discouraged, Isa. 42: 1, 4. We having broken the law of creation, and thereby thrown ourselves out of the love of God; Christ satisfied for us by obeying the law of redemption, and so abode in his love, and restored us to it.

II. Concerning his own love to his disciples. Though He leaves them, He loves them.

The pattern of this love, v. 9. A strange expression of the condescending grace of Christ! As the Father loved Him, who was most worthy, He loved them, who were most unworthy. The Father loved Him as his Son, and He loves them as his children. *The Father gave all things into his hand*; so, with Himself, He freely giveth us all things. The Father loved Him as Mediator, head of the church, the great trustee of divine grace, which He had, not for Himself only, but for the benefit of those for whom He was intrusted. 'I have been a faithful trustee. As the Father has committed his love to Me, so I transmit it to you.' Therefore the Father was well pleased with Him, that He might be well pleased with us in Him; and loved Him, that in Him, as beloved, He might make us accepted, Eph. 1: 6.

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among the unfruitful branches, to wither and be cast into the fire; this fear, and the desire of being made fruitful and useful, ornaments to the Gospel and blessings to mankind, dictate such prayers as will surely be answered.—True Christians long to bring forth more fruit; they know that the will and the power must come from Christ, without whom they can do nothing; they find by experience, that any interruption in the exercise of faith and the prayer of faith, abates the vigor of every holy affection; makes way for the renewed energy of sinful inclinations; and robs them of all spiritual consolation. On the other hand, when they live by faith in the Son of God, they are fruitful and joyful; they glorify God, and possess the assurance, that they are true disciples; and are manifested as such in the consciences of others. (Notes, 2 Cor. 1: 12-14. 5: 9-12. 1 John 3: 18-24.) Let us then live more simply on the fullness of Christ, and grow more and more fruitful in every good word and work; let us be upon our guard against those, who profess to abide in the living Vine, but produce wild and poisonous grapes, instead of the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the praise and glory of God. (Note Phil. 1: 9-11, v. 11.)

Scot

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

12 ¶ This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

15 Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the

The proofs and products of this love are four: 1. Christ loved his disciples, for He laid down his life for them, v. 13. Christ is *Bail* for us, body for body, life for life; though He knew our insolvency, and foresaw how dear the engagement would cost Him. Observe,

(1.) The extent of the love of the children of men to one another; and the highest proof of it is, laying down one's life for a friend; and there have been some such heroic achievements of love. *If all that a man has he will give for his life*, he that gives that for his friend, gives all; this may sometimes be our duty, 1 John 3: 16. Paul was ambitious of the honor; (Phil. 2: 17.) and for a good man some will even dare to die, Rom. 5: 7. It is love in the highest degree, which is strong as death.

(2.) The excellency of Christ's love beyond all other. Others have laid down their lives, content that they should be taken from them; Christ was not merely passive, but made it his own act. The life others have laid down, has been but of equal value with the life for which it was laid down, and perhaps less valuable; but Christ is of infinitely more worth than ten thousand of us. Others have laid down their lives for their friends, but Christ laid down his for us, when we were enemies, Rom. 5: 8. *Those hearts must be harder than iron or stone, which are not softened by such incomparable sweetness of divine love.* Calvin.

2. Christ loved his disciples, for He took them into a covenant of friendship with Himself; (v. 14, 15.) 'If ye approve yourselves by obedience my disciples indeed, ye are, and shall be treated as friends.' Note, The followers of Christ are his friends; He is pleased to call them so. They that do the duty of his servants, are advanced to the dignity of friends. David had one servant in his court, Solomon one in his, that was, in a particular manner, the king's friend; (2 Sam. 15: 37. 1 Kings 4: 5.) but this honor have all Christ's servants. We may in some particular instances befriend a stranger; but we espouse all the interests of a friend, and concern ourselves in all his cares: thus Christ takes believers to be his friends, visits them, converses with them, bears with them; is afflicted in their afflictions, takes pleasure in their prosperity, pleads for them in heaven. Have friends but one soul? He that is joined to the Lord, is one Spirit, 1 Cor. 6: 17. Though they often show themselves unfriendly, He is a Friend at all times.

He will not call them servants, though they call Him Master and Lord. They that would be like Christ in humility, must not take pride in insisting upon their authority and superiority, but remember that their servants are their fellow-servants. But He will call them friends; will not only love them, but let them know it; for in his tongue is the love of kindness. After his resurrection He seems to speak with more affectionate tenderness of and to his disciples than before; Go to my brethren, (ch. 20: 17.) Children, have ye any meat, ch. 21: 5. But, though Christ called them his friends, they called themselves his servants: Peter, a servant of Christ, (1 Pet. 1: 1.) and so James ch. 1: 1. The more Christ honors us, the more honor we should study to do Him; the higher in his eyes, the lower in our own.

3. Christ loved his disciples, for He was very free in communicating his mind to them; (v. 15.) Henceforth ye shall not be kept so much in the dark, like servants, told their present work

intimacy with Him, employed in such an embassy, and endued with such power from on high? It was not owing to their wisdom and goodness in choosing Him for their Master, but to his favor and grace in choosing them for disciples. It is fit that Christ should have the choosing of his own ministers; still He does it by his providence and Spirit. Though ministers make that holy calling their own choice, Christ's choice is prior to theirs. Of all that are chosen to grace and glory, it may be said, They have not chosen Christ, but He has chosen them, Deut. 7: 7, 8.

I have ordained you, put you into the ministry, 1 Tim. 1: 12. By this it appeared He took them for his friends, that He crowned their heads with such honor, and filled their hands with such a trust. He reposed a mighty confidence in them, when He made them his ambassadors, to negotiate the affairs of his kingdom in this world, and ministers of state in the administration of it.

The treasure of the Gospel was committed to them,

1st. That it might be propagated;—that ye should go, as under a yoke or burthen, for the ministry is a work, and ye that go about it, must resolve to undergo a great deal; that ye may go from place to place, and bring forth fruit. They were ordained, not to sit still, but to go about, to be diligent in their work, and lay themselves out in doing good. They were ordained, not to beat the air, but to be instrumental for the bringing of nations to Christ, Rom. 1: 13. Note, Those whom Christ ordains, should and shall be fruitful; should labor, and shall not labor in vain.

2dly. That the fruit should remain, the good effect of their labors continue in the world to the end of time. The church of Christ was not to be a short-lived thing, as many sects of philosophers; it did not come up in a night, nor should it perish in a night, but be as the days of heaven. The sermons and writings of the apostles are transmitted to us, and we at this day are built upon that foundation; ever since the Christian church was founded by the ministry of the apostles and seventy disciples, as one generation of ministers and Christians has passed away, another has come. By virtue of that great charter, (Matt. 28: 19.) Christ has a church in the world, which, as lawyers say of bodies corporate, does not die, but lives in succession.

Lastly, His love to them appeared in the interest they had at the throne of grace; Whatsoever ye shall ask of my Father in my name, He will give it you. Probably, this refers in the first place to the power of working miracles, which was to be drawn out by prayer. 'Whatever gifts are necessary to your labors, whatever help from heaven ye have occasion for, it is but ask and have.' Three things are here hinted for our encouragement in prayer: 1. That we have a God to go to, who is a Father; Christ here calls Him the Father, both mine and yours; and the Spirit teaches us to cry, Abba, Father. 2. We come in a good name. Whatever errand we come upon to the throne of grace, according to God's will, we may with humble boldness mention Christ's name; and plead that we are related to Him, and He is concerned for us. 3. An answer of peace is promised us. What ye come for, shall be given you. This great promise made to that great duty, keeps up a comfortable and gainful intercourse between heaven and earth.

III. Christ, in consideration of the great wherewith He had loved them, exhorts them,

1. To continue his love, v. 9. We must place our happiness in the continuance of Christ's love to us, and make it our business to give continued proofs of our love to Christ, that nothing may tempt us to withdraw from Him, or provoke Him to withdraw from us. Note, All that love Christ, should be always loving Him, and

- ¶ 16. 53:11. 62:4, 5. Jer. 32:41. 33:9. Zeph. 3:17. Luke 15:6, 9, 10, 23, 24, 32. 1 John 14.
- ¶ 16:24, 33. 17:13. Rom. 15:13. 2 Cor. 1:24. Eph. 6:18. Phil. 1:25.
- ¶ 1 Thes. 5:15. 1 Pet. 1:8. 2 John 12.
- ¶ 13:34, 35. Rom. 12:10. Eph. 5:15.
- ¶ 1 Thes. 3:12. 4:9, 10. 2 Thes. 1:3.
- ¶ 1 Pet. 1:22. 3:9, 4:8. 1 John 2:7.
- ¶ 7:10. 8:11—18, 23. 4:21.
- ¶ 10:11, 15. Rom. 5:6—8. Eph. 5:2. 1 John 4:7—11.
- ¶ 2:12, 28. 2 Cor. 20:7. Cant. 5:1. Is. 41:8. Matt. 12:50. Luke 12:4. Jam. 2:23.
- ¶ 9:5. 13:17. 14:21. 1 John 5:3.
- ¶ 20. 12:25. 13:15. 20:17. Gal. 4:6. Philim. 16. Jam. 1:1. 2 Pet. 1:1. Jude 1. Rev. 1:1.
- ¶ 16.
- ¶ 4:19. 17:6—8, 26. Rom. 18:17—19. 2 Kings 6:8—12. Ps. 25:14. Am. 3: 7. Matt. 13:11. Luke 10:23, 24. Acts 20:12. Rom. 16:25, 26. 1 Cor. 9:12. Eph. 1:18. 3:6. Col. 1:26. 1 Pet. 1:11, 12.
- ¶ 19. 6:70. 13:18. Luke 6:13. Acts 12:4. 9:15. 10:41. 22:14. Rom. 9: 11—16, 21. 1 John 4:10, 12.
- ¶ 20:21—23. 21:15—17. Is. 49:1—3. Jer. 15:4—7. Matt. 28:18, 19. Mark 16:15, 16. Luke 24:47—49. Acts 1: 6.
- ¶ 8. Rom. 1:3. 15:15, 16. 1 Cor. 9: 16—18. Gal. 1:15, 16. Col. 1:23. 1 Tim. 2:7. 2 Tim. 1:11. 2:8. Tit. 1:5.
- ¶ 8. Prov. 11:30. Is. 27:6. 55:10—13. Mic. 5:7. Rom. 1:13. 15:16—19. 1 Cor. 9:6, 7. Col. 1:5. Jam. 3:18.
- ¶ Gen. 18:18, 19. Ps. 71:18. 78:4—6. 145:4. Zech. 14:4—6. Acts 20:25—29. Rom. 15:34. 2 Cor. 10:11. 2 Tim. 3:15, 17. Heb. 11:4. 2 Pet. 1:14—21. 3:2, 15, 16.
- ¶ 7. 14:13, 14. 16:23, 24. Matt. 21:22.

my; and when the Spirit is poured out, ye shall know your Master's designs as friends, v. 15. As to the secret will of God, there are many things which we must be content not to know; but as to the revealed will, Jesus Christ has faithfully handed to us what He received of the Father, ch. 1: 18. Matt. 11: 27. The great things relating to man's redemption, Christ declared to his disciples, that they might declare them to others; they were the men of his counsel, Matt. 13: 11.

1. Christ loved his disciples, for He chose them to be the prime instruments of his honor in the world, v. 16. His love to them did not begin on their side; Ye have not chosen me, but I first chose you. Why were they admitted to such

Verse 13.

Luty Owen's life. 'Christ here saith, He doth "lay down his life for his friend," rather to express the greatness of his love, than the merit of his passion; and when He doth so, He useth constantly this

phrase: (10: 15, 17. 1 John 3: 16.) but when the merit of his passion is expressed, the phrase used is, "to die for us, or for our sins," (Rom. 6: 6, 8. 2 Cor. 5: 15. Heb. 2: 9. 1 Pet. 3: 18.) V. 13.

Father in my name, he may give it you.

[Practical Observations.]

17 ¶ These things °I command you, that ye love one another.

18 If °the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

19 If ye were °of the world, the world would love ye own: but °because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hatheth you.

• 12. 1 Pat. 2:17. 1 John 3:14-17.
p 23-25, 2:30, 7:7. 1 Kings 22:8.
p 14. 49:7. 53:3. 7:16. 18. Matt.
5:11. 10:22. 24:9. Mark 13:13.
1. 10: 6:22. Heb. 12:2, 3. Jam. 4:4.
1. 11: 5:13.
q 1. 1. 5:32. 33. 1 John 4:4, 5.
p 15. 17:11-16. Eph. 1:4-11. 2:2-
6. Tit. 3:3-7. 1 Pet. 2:9-12. 4:
3, 4. 1 John 3:12, 5:19, 20. Rev.
1:19, 17. 20:7-9.

to fill the joy of his people; see 1 John 1:4. He tells them,

3. To evidence their love to Him, by keeping his commandments; (v. 10.) your love, and then they may be sure of the continuance of his love to them. Observe here, (1.) The promise; 'Ye shall abide in my love, as at home; as in a resting-place, as in a strong-hold. Ye shall have grace and strength to persevere in loving Me.' If the same hand that first shed abroad the love of Christ in our hearts, did not keep us in that love, we should, through the love of the world, go out of love with Christ Himself. (2.) The condition of the promise; 'If ye keep my commandments, not only by a constant conformity to them, but by a faithful delivery of them to others. They were to keep them as trustees of that great deposit, for they were to teach all things that Christ had commanded, Matt. 28: 20. This commandment they must keep without spot, (1 Tim. 6: 14.) and thus must show that they abide in his love.

To induce them to this He urges,

[1.] His own example; v. 10. Christ submitted to the law of mediation, to teach us to submit to the laws of the Mediator, for we cannot otherwise preserve our relation to Him.

[2.] The necessity of it to their interest in Him; v. 14. Note, 1st. Those only will be accounted Christ's faithful friends, that approve themselves his obedient servants; for they that will not have Him to reign over them, shall be treated as his enemies. Friendship involves a fellowship of aversions and

taking all occasions to show it, and love to the end. The disciples were to go out upon a sermon for Christ full of troubles; but says Christ, 'Keep up your love to Me, and then all the troubles you meet with will be easy. I.e.: hem not quench your love, but quicken it.'

2. To let his joy remain in them, and fill them, v. 11. That my joy in you may remain. If they bring forth much fruit, and continue in his love, He will continue to rejoice in them. Note, Fruitful and faithful disciples are the joy of the Lord Jesus, Zeph. 3: 17. As there is a transport of joy in heaven in the conversion of sinners, so there is a remaining joy in the perseverance of saints.

Or, that your joy in Me, may remain. It is the will of Christ that his disciples should continually rejoice in Him, Phil. 4: 4. The joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment, but the joy of those who abide in Christ's love is a continual feast. The Word of the Lord endureth forever, so do the joys founded on it.

'That your joy might be full; not only that ye might be full of joy, but that your joy in Me and in my love may rise higher and higher, till it come to perfection, when ye enter into the joy of your Lord.' Note, 1. They only that have Christ's joy remaining in them, have their joy full; worldly joys scarce it, but never satisfy; it is only wisdom's joy that fills the soul, Ps. 36: 8. 2. The design of Christ in his Word is

see 1 John 1: 4. He tells them, 3. To evidence their love to Him, by keeping his commandments; (v. 10.) your love, and then they may be sure of the continuance of his love to them. Observe here, (1.) The promise; 'Ye shall abide in my love, as at home; as in a resting-place, as in a strong-hold. Ye shall have grace and strength to persevere in loving Me.' If the same hand that first shed abroad the love of Christ in our hearts, did not keep us in that love, we should, through the love of the world, go out of love with Christ Himself. (2.) The condition of the promise; 'If ye keep my commandments, not only by a constant conformity to them, but by a faithful delivery of them to others. They were to keep them as trustees of that great deposit, for they were to teach all things that Christ had commanded, Matt. 28: 20. This commandment they must keep without spot, (1 Tim. 6: 14.) and thus must show that they abide in his love.

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attachments. 2dly. Universal obedience to Christ is the only acceptable obedience; not excepting, much less excepting against, any command.

IV. The disciples' love one to another, en joined as an evidence of their love to Christ. This is his commandment, that we love one another, (v. 12.) and again, v. 17. No one duty of religion is more frequently, or pathetically urged upon us, by our Lord, than that of mutual love.

It is here recommended by Christ's pattern, (v. 12.) as I have loved you. Christ's love to us should engage our love to each other; in that manner, and from that motive, we should love one another, and, because, Christ has loved us. He here specifies some of the expressions of his love to them; He called them friends, communicated his mind to them, was ready to give them what they asked; Go ye and do likewise.

It is required by his precept. He has made it one of the statutes of his kingdom. Observe how differently it is expressed in these two verses, and both very emphatical. 1. This is my commandment, (v. 12.) as if this were the most necessary of all the commandments. As under the law the prohibition of idolatry was the commandment more insisted on than any other, foreseeing the people's addictedness to that sin; so Christ, foreseeing the addictedness of the Christian church to uncharitableness, has laid most stress upon this precept. 2. These things I command you, v. 17. He speaks as if about to give them many things in charge, and yet names this only, that ye love one another; not only because this includes many duties, but because it will have a good influence upon all.

V. 18-25. Christ discourses concerning hatred, which is the character and genius of the devil's kingdom, as love is of the kingdom of Christ.

This hatred is found in the children of this world, (as distinguished from the children of God,) who are in the interests of the god of this world, whose image they bear, and to whose power they are subject; all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who would not come into the church of Christ, which He visibly separates from this evil world. The calling these the world, speaks, 1. Their number; there were a world of people that opposed Christ and Christianity. Lord, how were they increased, that troubled the Son

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V. 9-16. While we admire the love of Jesus to us, according to the Father's love of Him; let us follow his example of obedience, that we may continue in his love; and as He 'rejoices over us to do us good,' so may our joy in Him and his salvation be full, by communion with Him, and a conscientious walk before Him. (Note, 1 John 1: 3, 4. 2 John 12, 13.)—Let us often recollect, what a gracious Lord we serve. It is his 'commandment that we love one another, as He hath loved us; and no love of man, to his dearest friend, ever equalled, or even was comparable, to his love to us, when strangers and enemies.' What admiration must have pervaded the hosts of heaven, when a friendship was proposed, between the Object of their adorations, and sinful men! when He assumed human nature, and laid down his life for us! when He quickened us by his grace, and made us willing to be his disciples and friends! (Note, 1 John 3: 1-3.) and when they observe his unreserved affection, making known to us his purposes, and noticing our mean concerns! But they alone are the Redeemer's friends, who 'do whatsoever He commands them.' He has stated this evidence, and insisted on this return of friendship; and it is presumption to claim the privilege, while we allow ourselves in disobedience.—If we choose Him, we should remember, that this is the effect of his previous choice of us. He has also appointed each of us his place and work; that we may bring forth fruit, in holy lives, and the faithful and diligent improvement of our several talents; and as the fruit produced by the apostles still remains for our good, so the effect of our feeble endeavors may conduce to the benefit of others, long after we are gone to our rest. Even in our case, some to whom God has made us useful, may, after our decease, be useful to others, and they to others, in increasing numbers; as the produce of a few grains of wheat, sown again and again, from year to year, may at length yield an increase which baffles all calculation. Thus faithful ministers, able writers, and champions for the truth, nay, apostolical missionaries, may spring from the seed which we have sown; and how far this may extend, or how long it may remain, or what numbers may eventually derive benefit from it, who can tell?—Let us then be 'steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord.' (1 Cor. 15: 58.) at the same time 'continuing in prayer, and watching thereunto with thanksgiving.' (Col. 4: 2.) See &c.

Verses 17-21.

'This seems a strong intimation, that even in nations which profess Christianity, if true religion fall, as it very possibly may, to a low ebb; they who exert themselves for the revival of it, must, on the principle here laid down, expect opposition: and that the passages of scripture relating to persecution are not so peculiar to the first ages, or to Christians living in idolatrous countries, as some have supposed. Would to God, the malignity to be found in some of us against our brethren did not too plainly illustrate this remark. Men will probably experience the truth of it, in proportion to the degeneracy of those around them; and to the vigor with which they bear testimony against prevailing errors.' Doddridge. 'The world,' which thus hated Christ and his apostles, or that part of it especially intended, were the professed worshippers of God, as much as nominal Christians now are: they were the teachers and rulers of the people of God, according to the law; and were far more zealous for religion, according to their views of it, than professed Christians and ministers

are at present. Now, if true religion be the same as it then was; if it be preached and exemplified in the same manner, and with the same zeal, as in the primitive times; and if the spirit of the world be the same in every age and nation; persecution must be the consequence—except as lukewarmness, and indifference about all religion, paralyze the carnal enmity of the heart; or as wise laws bind the hands of those, who would persecute if they might; and even then their tongues and pens will show their deep and slanderous malignity against the truth and its zealous friends. The indiscretions and mistakes of the persons concerned, may give the occasion and advantage to their enemies; but perfect wisdom, meekness, and love would not abate the enmity itself, nay, would greatly exasperate it. (18.) Hatred me before it hated you. 1: 15, 30. Matt. 22: 38. Mark 6: 21. 1 Tim. 1: 15, 16. (19.) I have chosen, &c.] See on 16. To be 'chosen out of the world' must imply far more, than to be chosen as an apostle: for Judas was neither chosen nor called 'out of the world,' though chosen to be an apostle.

20 Remember * the word that I said unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: 'if they have kept my saying, they will keep your's also.

21 But * all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, * because they know not him that sent me.

22 If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no * cloak for their sin.

• 5:16, 7:32, 8:59, 10:31, 11:57, 13:18, Matt. 10:24, 25, Luke 2:34, 35, 6:40, Acts 4:27-30, 7:52-60, 1 Thes. 2:15, 16.
 1. 1 Rem. 8:7. Is. 53:1-3. Ez. 3:7.
 16:3. Ps. 69:7. Is. 66:5, Matt. 5:11, 10:18, 22:29, 24:9, Luke 6:22, 9:16, 1 Pet. 4:13, 14.
 8:19, 51, 55, Acts 17:23, 28:25-27, Rom. 1:28, 1 Cor. 2:8, 15:34, 2 Cor. 4:3-6, 2 Thes. 1:38, 1 John 2:3, 4.
 24, 3:18-21, 9:11, 12:48, 19:11, Ez. 2:5, 33:31-33, Luke 12:46-47, Acts 17:30, 2 Cor. 2:14-16, Heb. 6:8, Jam. 4:17.
 Or, excuse. Rom. 1:20, 2:1, 1 Pet. 2:16.

did Cain hate Abel, but because his works were righteous? Esau hated Jacob, because of the blessing; Joseph's brethren hated him, because his Father loved him; Saul hated David, because the Lord was with him; Ahab hated Micahiah, because of his prophecies; such are the causeless causes of the world's hatred.

2. The fruits of that enmity. 1st. They will persecute you, for hatred is a restless passion. It is the common lot of those who will live godly in Christ Jesus, to suffer persecution, 2 Tim. 3:12. Christ foresaw what ill-usage his ambassadors would meet with in the world, and yet, for the sake of a few that by their ministry were to be called out of the world, He sent them forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. 2dly. Another fruit of their enmity is implied, that they would reject their doctrine; when Christ says, *If they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours*. He means, they will keep and regard yours, no more than they have regarded and kept mine. Note, The preachers of the Gospel cannot but take the despising of their message to be the greatest injury that can be done to themselves; as it was a great affront to Jeremiah, to say, *Let us not give heed to any of his words*, Jer. 18:18.

3. The causes of that enmity. 1st. Because they do not belong to it; (v. 9.) 'If ye were of the world, of its spirit, and in its interests, the world would love you, as its own; but because ye are called out of the world, it hates you and ever will.' Note, 1. We are not to wonder, if persons devoted to the world, are caressed by it as its friends; most men *bless the conculous*, Ps. 10:3, 49:18. 2. Nor are we to wonder, if those that are delivered from the world, are malign'd by it as its enemies; when Israel is rescued out of Egypt, the Egyptians will pursue them. Observe, The reason why Christ's disciples are not of the world, is not because they have by their own wisdom and virtue distinguished themselves from the world, but because Christ hath set them apart for Himself. The glory which, by virtue of this choice, they are designed for, sets them above the world, and makes them the objects of its envy. The saints shall judge the world, and the upright have dominion, and therefore they are hated. The grace they are endued with, by virtue of this choice, sets them against the world; they swim against the stream of the world, they witness against it, and are not conformed to it. This would support them under all the calamities the world's hatred would bring on them, that they were hated, because they were the chosen ones of the Lord Jesus. Now, this was no just cause for the world's hatred of them. If we do any thing to make ourselves hateful, we have reason to lament it; but if men hate us for that for which they should love and value us, we have reason to pity them, but no reason to perplex ourselves. Nay, this was just cause for their own joy rather.

2dly, 'Another cause of the world's hating you, will be, because you belong to Christ, (v. 21) for my name's sake.' Here is the core of the controversy; whatever is pretended, this is the ground of the quarrel, they hate Christ's disciples because they bear his name, and bear up his name in the world. Note, 1. It is the character of Christ's disciples, that they stand up for his name. The name into which they were baptized, is that which they will live and

of David! 2. It speaks their confederacy and combination; these numerous hosts are embodied as one, Ps. 83:5. Jews and Gentiles, that could agree in nothing else, agreed to persecute Christ's ministers. 3. It speaks their spirit and disposition; they are men of the world, (Ps. 17:13, 14.) wholly devoted to this world, and never thinking of another. The people of God are taught to hate the sin of sinners, not their persons, to love and do good to all. A malicious, spiteful, envious spirit, is not the spirit of Christ, but of the world.

This hatred is levelled against the disciples of Christ, against Christ Himself, and against the Father.

The world hates the disciples of Christ. The world hateth you, (v. 19.) and He speaks of it as what they must expect, v. 18, as 1 John 3:13. Christ had expressed his great kindness for them as friends; but, lest they should be puffed up with this, there was given them, as to Paul, a thorn in the flesh, that is, as explained there, reproaches and persecutions for Christ's sake, 2 Cor. 12:7, 10. He had appointed them their work, but tells them what hardships they should meet with in it, to prepare them. He had charged them to love one another, and need enough they had to do it, for the world would hate them; to be kind to one another, for they would have great unkindness, and ill-will from those without. 'Keep peace among yourselves, and that will fortify you against the world's quarrels with you.' See,

1. The world's enmity against the followers of Christ; it hateth them. Note, Whom Christ blest, the world curseth. The favorites and heirs of heaven have never been the darlings of this world, since enmity was put between the seed of the woman and of the serpent. Why

die by. 2. It has commonly been the lot of those that appear for Christ's name, to suffer for so doing; to suffer many things, and hard things. 3. It is matter of comfort to the greatest sufferers, if they suffer for Christ's name sake, 1 Pet. 4:14. Happy indeed are they, considering not only the honor imprinted upon those sufferings, (Acts 5:41.) but the comfort infused into them, and especially the crown of glory to which they lead. If we suffer with Christ, and for Christ, we shall reign with Him.

2dly, The world's ignorance is the true cause of its enmity to the disciples of Christ; v. 21. 1. They know not God. If men had but a due acquaintance with the first principles of natural religion, though they would not embrace Christianity, yet they could not hate and persecute it. Those have no knowledge, who eat up God's people, Ps. 14:4. 2. They know not God, as He that sent our Lord Jesus, and authorized Him to be the Mediator of peace. We do not rightly know God, if we do not know Him in Christ, and they who persecute those whom He sends, make it to appear they know not that He was sent of God. See 1 Cor. 2:8.

The world hates Christ Himself. This is spoken of here to mitigate the trouble of his followers, arising from the world's hatred, and to make it the less strange and grievous; (v. 18.) *Ye know that it hated Me before you*. We read it as signifying priority of time; but it may be read as speaking his superiority over them; 'Ye know that it hated Me, your first, your Leader, and Commander.' 1. If Christ, who excelled in goodness, and was perfectly innocent, and beneficent, was hated, can we expect any virtue or merit of ours should screen us from malice? 2. If the founder of our religion met with opposition in planting it, his servants and followers can look for no other in propagating it.

For this He refers them, (v. 20.) to his own word, at their admission into discipleship. I would help us to understand Christ's latter sayings, to compare them with the former. Nor would any thing contribute more to make us easy, than remembering the words of Christ, which will expound his providences.

The servant is not greater than his Lord. This He had said to them, Matt. 10:24. Christ is our Lord, and therefore we must attend all his motions, and acquiesce in all his disposals. The plainest truths are sometimes the strongest arguments for the hardest duties; Elihu answers a multitude of Job's murmurings, with this one self-evident truth, *God is greater than man*, Job 33:12. So here,

'If they have persecuted Me, as ye have seen, and are likely to see much more, they will also persecute you;' for, 1. 'Ye will do the same that I have done, to provoke them; ye will reprove them for their sins, call them to repentance, and give them rules of holy living, which they will not bear.' 2. 'Ye cannot do more than I have done to oblige them; after so great an instance, let none wonder if they suffer ill for doing well.' He adds, 'If they have kept my sayings, they will keep yours also; as there have been a few, and but a few, that have been wrought upon by my preaching, so there will be by yours a few, and but a few.' Some give another sense of this: 'If they have lain in wait for my sayings, with a design to insnare Me, they will in like manner lie in wait to entangle you in your talk.'

To hate and persecute the apostles was bad enough, but to hate and persecute Christ Himself, was much worse. The world is generally in an ill name in Scripture, and nothing can put it into a worse name than this, that it hated Jesus Christ. There is a world of people that are haters of Christ. Two things He insists on to aggravate their wickedness.

1. There was the greatest reason why they should love Him; men's good words and works recommend them. His words merited their

Verse 22.
 They had not had sin, &c. 'It is so evident from the word of God, (see Rom. 1:20, 21, and 2:12-15,) as well as from the reason of things, that sin may be imputed to those who have no revelation, that it is most evident, this is only a hebraism; as when, according to the

pathetic manner of speaking, especially 'n use among the carnal nations, that is said to be nothing at all, which, when compared with something else, is inconsiderably small. See Ps. 20:9, Isa. 40:17, 1 Cor. 1:28, &c.'

MODRIVE.

23 He that hateth me, hateth my Father also.

24 If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin. But now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.

25 But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause.

26 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

27 And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

9:40-42, 1 John 2:23, 2 John 9.
3:2, 5:8, 7:31, 10:32, 37, 38, 11:47-50, 12:10, 11:37-40, Matt. 9:38, 11:5, 20-24, Mark 2:12, Luke 10:16-18, 19:37-40, 24:19, Acts 2:22, 10:38, Heb. 3:4.
6:38, 12:45, 14:9, Matt. 21:32, Ex. 20:5, Deut. 5:9, Ps. 81:15, Prov. 6:36, Rom. 1:30, 8:7, 8, 2 Tim. 3:4, Jam. 4:4.
10:34, 19:38, Luke 24:44, Rom. 9:14.
9:7, 7:4, 35:19, 69:4, 109:3.
Matt. 10:8, Rom. 3:24, 2 Cor. 11:7, Gal. 2:21, 2 Thes. 3:3, Rev. 2:5, 22:17, All in the Greek.
14:16, 17:28, 18:7, 13:14, Luke 24:4, Acts 2:33.
8:42, Rev. 22:1.
14:15, Acts 3:23, 3:3, 5:32, 15:8, 1 Cor. 1:8, Heb. 2:4, 1 John 5:6-10.
21:24, Luke 24:48, Acts 1:8, 21:22, 2:15, 4:30, 5:3, 10:39-42, 13:31, 18:5, 24:11, 1 Pet. 5:12, 2 Pet. 1:16-18, Rev. 10:9.
Mark 1:1, Luke 1:2, 1 John 1:1, 2.

commission from heaven, could work miracles, ch. 3: 2. And no prophet ever wrought such miracles. Moses and Elias wrought miracles by a derived power: but Christ, as a Son, by his own power. This amazed the people, that with authority He commanded diseases and devils; (Mark 1:27.) they owned they never saw the like, Mark 2:12. They were all works of mercy; and this seems especially intended here, for He is upbraiding them with this, that they hated Him. One so universally useful, more than ever any man was, it might be thought, should have been universally beloved, and yet even He is hated. 3. The works of Christ enhance the guilt of sinners to the last degree. If they had only heard his words, and not seen his works; if we had only his sermons upon record, and not his miracles, unbelief might have pleaded want of proof; but now it has no excuse. Nay, the rejecting of Christ both by them and us, has in it the sin, not only of obstinate unbelief, but of base ingratitude. They saw Christ to be most amiable, and studious to do them kindness; yet they studied to do Him mischief. And we see in His Word that great love wherewith He loved us, and yet are not wrought upon by it.

There was no reason why they should hate Him. Some say, and do what is recommending at one time, yet, at another, what is disobliging; but our Lord not only did much to merit men's good-will, but never did any thing justly to incur their displeasure; this He pleads by quoting

love; (v. 22.) 'If I had not spoken unto them, to court their love, they had not had sin, their opposition had not amounted to a hatred of Me; their sin had been comparatively no sin. But now that I have said so much to recommend Myself to their best affection, they have no excuse for their sin.' Observe,

(1.) The advantage they have, that enjoy the Gospel; Christ in it comes and speaks to them; He spake in person to that generation, and is still speaking to us by our Bibles and ministers, and as one that has authority over, and affection for us. Every word of his is pure, carries with it a commanding majesty, and yet a condescending tenderness.

(2.) Their excuse that enjoy not the Gospel; 'If I had not spoken to them, if they had never heard of Christ and salvation, they had not had sin.' (1.) Not this kind of sin. They had not been chargeable with contempt of Christ. As sin is not imputed where there is no law, so unbelief is not imputed where there is no Gospel; and where it is imputed, it is thus far the only damning sin, that, being a sin against the remedy, other sins would not damn, if the guilt of them were not bound on with this. (2.) Not such a degree of sin. If they had not had the Gospel among them, their other sins had not been so bad; for the times of ignorance God winked at, Luke 12:47, 48.

(3.) The aggravated guilt they lie under, to whom Christ has spoken in vain; they have no cloak for their sin, are altogether inexcusable, and at the judgment will be speechless. Note, The clearer the discoveries made us of the grace and truth of Christ, the more said to us, that is convincing and endearing, the greater our sin if we do not love and believe in Him. The Word of Christ strips sin of its cloak, that it may appear sin.

2. His works were such as merited their love, as well as his words; (v. 24.) 'If I had not done among them, before their eyes, such works as no other man ever did, they had not had sin; their unbelief and enmity had been excusable; and they might have had some color to say that my word was not to be credited, if not otherwise confirmed; but He produced satisfactory proofs of his mission, works which no other man did. Note, 1. As the Creator demonstrates his power and godhead by his works, (Rom. 1:20,) so doth the Redeemer. His works of wonder, and of grace, prove Him sent of God, and on a kind errand. 2. Christ's works were such as no man ever did. No person that had not a

commission from heaven, could work miracles, ch. 3: 2. And no prophet ever wrought such miracles. Moses and Elias wrought miracles by a derived power: but Christ, as a Son, by his own power. This amazed the people, that with authority He commanded diseases and devils; (Mark 1:27.) they owned they never saw the like, Mark 2:12. They were all works of mercy; and this seems especially intended here, for He is upbraiding them with this, that they hated Him. One so universally useful, more than ever any man was, it might be thought, should have been universally beloved, and yet even He is hated. 3. The works of Christ enhance the guilt of sinners to the last degree. If they had only heard his words, and not seen his works; if we had only his sermons upon record, and not his miracles, unbelief might have pleaded want of proof; but now it has no excuse. Nay, the rejecting of Christ both by them and us, has in it the sin, not only of obstinate unbelief, but of base ingratitude. They saw Christ to be most amiable, and studious to do them kindness; yet they studied to do Him mischief. And we see in His Word that great love wherewith He loved us, and yet are not wrought upon by it.

Verse 23.

Hath my Father also.) 'How much is it to be wished that those who make light of Christ, while they pretend a great veneration for the Father, would seriously attend to this weighty admonition, lest haply they be found to fight against God. Acts 5:39.' FODDRIDGE.

Verse 26.

The Holy Spirit is here said to proceed from the Father; and many suppose this to refer, not only to his being sent forth from the Father and the Son, (as the Son was from the Father,) a messenger, to apply the salvation of Christ to the hearts of his people; but to what is called his 'eternal procession' from the Father; by which is meant something in a measure answering to the eternal generation of the Son, yet distinct from it. But these are incomprehensible mysteries; and (though inserted in most of the ancient creeds and formularies) seem not to be explicitly revealed: perhaps it is therefore better to abstain wholly, than to attempt any explanation of such subjects;

a Scripture for it; (v. 25.) 'This comes to pass, this unreasonable hatred of Me, and of my disciples for my sake, that the world might be fulfilled, which is written in their law' (that is, in the Old Testament, which is a law, and was received by them as a law,) 'They hated me without a cause;' this David speaks of himself as a type of Christ, Ps. 35: 19. 69: 4. Isa. 53: 3-9. Note, 1st. Enmity to Christ is unreasonable. We think the haughty and froward deserve to be hated, but Christ is meek and lowly, compassionate and tender towards also that, under color of complaisance, are malicious, envious, and revengeful; but Christ devoted Himself to the service of those that abused Him; toiled for others' ease, and impoverished Himself to enrich us. Thus we think hateful, that are hateful to kings and provinces, and disturbers of the public peace; but Christ, on the contrary, was the greatest blessing imaginable to his country. He testified indeed, that their works were evil, with a design to make them good, but to hate Him for that cause was to hate Him without a cause. 2dly. Herein the Scripture was fulfilled, and the antitype answered the type. Saul and his courtiers hated David without a cause, for he had been serviceable to him with his harp and sword; Absalom and his party hated him, though to him he had been an indulgent father, and a great benefactor. Thus, too, was the Son of David hated and hunted most unjustly. They that hated Christ did not design therein to fulfil the Scripture; but God, in permitting it, had that in his eye; and it confirms our faith in Christ as the Messiah, that even this was foretold, and accomplished in Him. We must not think it strange or hard, if it have a further accomplishment in us. We are apt to justify our complaints of injuries done us, with this, that they are causeless, whereas the more they are so, the more like they are to the sufferings of Christ, and may be the more easily borne.

In Christ, the world hates God Himself; this is twice said here; (v. 23.) He that hateth Me, though he thinks his hatred goes no further, yet really hates my Father also. And again, (v. 24.) They have seen and hated both Me and my Father. Note, 1. There are those that hate God, notwithstanding the beauty of his nature, and the bounty of his providence; they are enraged at his justice, as the devils, that believe it and tremble, are vexed at his dominion, and would gladly break his bands asunder. They who cannot bring themselves to deny that there is a God, and yet wish there were none, see and hate Him. 2. Hatred of Christ will be adjudged hatred of God, for He is in his person his Father's express Image, and in his office, his Agent and Ambassador. God will have all men honor the Son as they honor the Father, and therefore what entertainment the Son has, that the Father has. Hence it is easy to infer, that those who are enemies to the Christian religion, however they may cry up natural religion, are really enemies to all religion. Devils are in effect atheists, and they that ridicule the Gospel, would, if they could, extinguish even natural light, and shake off all obligations of conscience and the fear of God. Let an unbelieving, malignant world know that their enmity to the Gospel of Christ, will be looked upon in the great day as an enmity to God Himself; and let all that suffer for righteousness' sake, according to the will of God, take comfort from this; if God Himself be struck at through

which, not being clearly revealed, cannot otherwise be understood.

SCOTT.

Whom I will send unto you from the Father.] 'Our Lord said, at ch. 16: 16. I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter. He, therefore, who in one capacity prays that the Comforter may be sent, in another is the Person who sends Him being joined in authority and power with the Father. "I and the Father are one." Many are the passages of this kind in Scripture, which can only be explained and reconciled by that great Christian doctrine, the twofold nature of Christ.' Ep. HOSKIN.

He.] See on 14: 25.—The Greek for Spirit is neuter; yet the masculine personal pronoun is joined with it. (Note, 1 John 2: 1, 2.)—In fact, all the language is manifestly personal: 'He,' the Comforter, 'the Spirit of truth,' 'is sent,' 'comes,' 'bears witness,' &c. as in other places He is said to hear, speak, command, forbid, &c.

SCOTT

[777]

CHAP. XVI.

Jesus again warns his disciples to expect persecution, 1-3. He states, that He foretells these things, because He was about to leave them, and they were beginning their sorrow, and assuring them that this would be expedient for them, as He would send the Comforter, 4-7. He explains the nature and effects of the Spirit's influences, 8-15. He intimates his own death, resurrection, and ascension; with assurances, that their sorrow should soon be turned into joy, and that their prayers in his name should be accepted, 16-22. They profess their faith in Him; He foretells that they will desert Him in his extremity of suffering; yet promises them his peace, amidst their tribulation in the world, 23-33.

THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended.

4. 15:11. Matt. 11:6. 13:21, 57. 24:10. 25:31-33. Rom. 14:21. Phil. 1:10. 1 Pet. 2:8.

ly Ghost, than in any one verse beside, in the Bible; and being baptized into his name, we are concerned to acquaint ourselves with Him, as far as He is revealed.

Here is an account of Him in his subsistence. He is the *Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father*. Here, 1. He is spoken of as a distinct person; not a quality or property, but a person under the proper name of a *Spirit*, and proper title of the *Spirit of truth*, a title fitly given Him where He is brought in testifying. 2. As a divine person, that *proceedeth from the Father*, by outgoings that were of old *from everlasting*. The *spirit or breath of man*, called the *breath of life*, proceeds from the man, and by it modified he delivers his mind, by it invigorated he sometimes exerts his strength. Thus the Spirit is the emanation of *divine light*, and the energy of *divine power*. The rays of the sun, by which it diffuses its influence, proceed from the sun, yet are one with it. The Nicene Creed says, the Spirit *proceeded from the Father and the Son*, for He is called the *Spirit of the Son*, (Gal. 4: 6.) and the Son is here said to send Him. The Greek church choose rather to say, *from the Father by the Son*.

He will come in a more plentiful effusion of his gifts, and power, than had ever yet been. Christ had been long the—*He that should come*; now the Spirit is so. *I will send Him to you from the Father*. He had said, (ch. 14: 16.) *I will pray the Father, and He shall send you the Comforter*; that speaks the Spirit to be the fruit of the intercession Christ makes within the veil: here He says, *I will send Him*; that speaks Him to be the fruit of his dominion within the veil. The Spirit was sent, 1. By Christ as Mediator, *now ascended on high to give gifts unto men*. 2. From the Father: 'Not only from heaven, my Father's house,' (the Spirit was given in a sound from heaven, Acts 2: 2.) 'but according to my Father's will, with his concurring authority.' 3. 'To the apostles, to instruct, enable, and carry them through their sufferings. He was given to them and their successors, both in Christianity and in the ministry; according to the promise, Isa. 59: 21.

His office and operations, are two;

1. He is the *Comforter, or Advocate*. An advocate for Christ, to maintain his cause against the world's infidelity, a comforter to the saints against the world's hatred.

2. He is also a witness for Jesus Christ; *He shall testify of Me*. He is one of the three that *bear record in heaven*, and the first of the three that *bear witness on earth*, (1 John 5: 7, 8. He instructed the apostles, and enabled them to work miracles; He indited the Scriptures, the standing witnesses that *testify of Christ*, ch. 5: 39. The power of the ministry is derived from the Spirit, for He qualifies ministers; and the power of Christianity too, for He sanctifies Christians, and in both testifies of Christ.

It is here promised that the apostles also, by the Spirit's assistance, should have the honor of being Christ's witnesses; v. 27. Note, The Spirit's working is not to supersede, but to encourage ours. Though the Spirit testify, ministers also must bear their testimony, and people at-

them, they need not be either ashamed of their cause, or afraid of the issue.

V. 26, 27. Christ having spoken of the opposition his Gospel was likely to meet with in the world, and the hardships that would be put upon the preachers of it, lest any should fear that they and it would be run down by that violent torrent, here intimates what effectual provision was made to support it, both by the principal testimony of the Spirit, (v. 26.) and the subordinate testimony of the apostles; (v. 27.) and testimonies are the proper supports of truth.

It is here promised that the Spirit shall maintain the cause of Christ in the world. Christ, when He was reviled, *committed his injured cause to his Father*, and did not lose by his silence, for the Comforter pleaded it powerfully, and carried it triumphantly. '*When the Comforter or Advocate is come, which proceedeth from the Father, and whom I will send to supply the want of my bodily presence*, He shall testify of Me, against those that *hate Me without cause*.'

We have more in this verse concerning the Holy Ghost, than in any one verse beside, in the Bible; and being baptized into his name, we are concerned to acquaint ourselves with Him, as far as He is revealed.

Here is an account of Him in his subsistence. He is the *Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father*. Here, 1. He is spoken of as a distinct person; not a quality or property, but a person under the proper name of a *Spirit*, and proper title of the *Spirit of truth*, a title fitly given Him where He is brought in testifying. 2. As a divine person, that *proceedeth from the Father*, by outgoings that were of old *from everlasting*. The *spirit or breath of man*, called the *breath of life*, proceeds from the man, and by it modified he delivers his mind, by it invigorated he sometimes exerts his strength. Thus the Spirit is the emanation of *divine light*, and the energy of *divine power*. The rays of the sun, by which it diffuses its influence, proceed from the sun, yet are one with it. The Nicene Creed says, the Spirit *proceeded from the Father and the Son*, for He is called the *Spirit of the Son*, (Gal. 4: 6.) and the Son is here said to send Him. The Greek church choose rather to say, *from the Father by the Son*.

He will come in a more plentiful effusion of his gifts, and power, than had ever yet been. Christ had been long the—*He that should come*; now the Spirit is so. *I will send Him to you from the Father*. He had said, (ch. 14: 16.) *I will pray the Father, and He shall send you the Comforter*; that speaks the Spirit to be the fruit of the intercession Christ makes within the veil: here He says, *I will send Him*; that speaks Him to be the fruit of his dominion within the veil. The Spirit was sent, 1. By Christ as Mediator, *now ascended on high to give gifts unto men*. 2. From the Father: 'Not only from heaven, my Father's house,' (the Spirit was given in a sound from heaven, Acts 2: 2.) 'but according to my Father's will, with his concurring authority.' 3. 'To the apostles, to instruct, enable, and carry them through their sufferings. He was given to them and their successors, both in Christianity and in the ministry; according to the promise, Isa. 59: 21.

His office and operations, are two;

1. He is the *Comforter, or Advocate*. An advocate for Christ, to maintain his cause against the world's infidelity, a comforter to the saints against the world's hatred.

2. He is also a witness for Jesus Christ; *He shall testify of Me*. He is one of the three that *bear record in heaven*, and the first of the three that *bear witness on earth*, (1 John 5: 7, 8. He instructed the apostles, and enabled them to work miracles; He indited the Scriptures, the standing witnesses that *testify of Christ*, ch. 5: 39. The power of the ministry is derived from the Spirit, for He qualifies ministers; and the power of Christianity too, for He sanctifies Christians, and in both testifies of Christ.

It is here promised that the apostles also, by the Spirit's assistance, should have the honor of being Christ's witnesses; v. 27. Note, The Spirit's working is not to supersede, but to encourage ours. Though the Spirit testify, ministers also must bear their testimony, and people at-

tend to it: for the Spirit of grace works by the means of grace. The apostles were the first witnesses in the trial between Christ and the prince of this world, which issued in the ejection of the intruder. They were to attest the truth concerning Christ, for the recovering of his just right, and the maintaining of his crown. Though they fled when they should have been witnesses for Him upon his trial, yet after the Spirit was poured out, they appeared courageous in vindication of the cause of Christ. The truth of the Christian religion was to be proved very much by the evidence of matter of fact, especially Christ's resurrection, of which the apostles were in a particular manner chosen witnesses, (Acts 10: 41.) and bore their testimony accordingly, Acts 3: 15: 5: 32. Christ's ministers are his witnesses. Honor is put upon them hereby—that they should be *workers together with God*; 'The Spirit shall testify of Me, and you also, under the conduct of, and in concurrence with the Spirit, (who will preserve you from mistake in what you relate on your own knowledge, and will inform you of what you cannot know but by revelation,) shall bear witness.' This might encourage them against the hatred and contempt of the world, that Christ had honored, and would own them.

Ye have been with Me from the beginning. They not only heard his public sermons, but had constant private converse with him. He went about doing good, and while others saw his works that He did in their own town and country only, they that went about with Him were witnesses of them all. They had likewise opportunity of observing the unspotted purity of his conversation, and could witness for Him that they never saw in Him any thing of human frailty. Note, 1. We have great reason to receive the record the apostles gave of Christ, for they did not speak by hear-say, but of what they had the greatest assurance, 2 Pet. 1: 16. 1 John 1: 1, 3. 2. Those are best able to witness for Christ, that have been with Him, by faith, love, and a life of communion with God in Him. Ministers must first learn Christ, and then preach Him. Those speak best of the things of God, that speak experimentally. It is particularly a great advantage to have been acquainted with Christ, *from the beginning*, to understand all things from the *very first*, (Luke 1: 3.) to have been with Him from the beginning of our days. Early acquaintance, and constant converse with the Gospel, will make a man as a good householder.

CHAP. XVI. v. 1-6. Christ dealt faithfully with his disciples when He sent them forth, for He told them the worst, that they might count the cost.

I. He here gives them a reason why He alarmed them with the expectation of trouble; Christ's disciples are apt to be *offended at the cross*; and the offence of the cross is a dangerous temptation, even to good men, either to turn back from the ways of God, or out of them, or go heavily in them; to quit either integrity or comfort. A suffering time is not without reason called *an hour of temptation*.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17-27. It is of great importance that Christians should unite with their brethren in love, and zealous endeavors to promote the cause of the Gospel: and let us not be dismayed by the hatred of the world, which can 'love only its own,' but must dislike those whom Christ 'has chosen out of the world,' who bear his image, profess his truth, and obey his commandments. We cannot experience worse usage than our Master met with: and we ought not to be offended, or grow weary of well-doing, if we meet with no better. The more we resemble Him, the greater enmity will ungodly men feel against us: yet we should be thankful for the restraints which Providence has placed to persecution; and we ought carefully to avoid exciting needless opposition, by rashness, turbulence, or intermeddling with things not properly belonging to us. But, if we suffer for Christ's sake, and from those who 'hate Him and the Father that sent Him,' we should 'rejoice and be exceeding glad.'—How little do many persons think, that in rejecting the doctrine of Christ, as our Prophet, Priest, and King, they prove themselves ignorant of God, whom they profess to worship; that they are in fact setting up the creature of their imagination and

reasonings, in the place of 'the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;' and that their opposition to the scriptural view of the person and atonement of the Son of God, springs from determined enmity to the character and law of JEHOVAH. Thus it was with the Jews, 'who saw and hated' both the Son of God, and the Father who sent Him: thus it is, at this day, with many who have the Scriptures in their hand, the evidences of their divine original clearly set before them, and perhaps the Gospel faithfully preached to them; whose guilt is thus aggravated, and 'they have no cloak for their sins,' as they evidently hate Christ, 'the Light of the world,' because their deeds are evil, and their whole disposition and conduct are opposite to his precepts. But even in these persons the Scripture is fulfilled: while, by the conversion of many, and the holy lives of numbers who profess the Gospel, 'the Comforter, even the Spirit of truth,' still bears testimony to Christ, and confirms that of those faithful ministers, who preach his salvation, after the example and doctrine of those 'who were with Him from the beginning.'

St. J. T.

2 They 'sha.' put you out of the synagogues: yea, 'the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

3 And these things will they do unto you, 'because they have not known the Father, nor me.

4 But these things have I told you, 'that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, 'because I was with you.

5 But now 'I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, 'Whither goest thou?

6 But because I have said these things unto you, 'sorrow hath filled your heart.

7 Nevertheless, 'I tell you the truth; 'It

By giving notice of trouble, He designed to remove the terror and surprise of it. Of all the adversaries of our peace in this world of troubles, none insult us more violently, nor put our troops more into disorder, than disappointment: but we can easily welcome a guest we expect, and being forewarned, are fore-armed.

II. He foretells particularly what they should suffer: (v. 2.) Behold two swords drawn against the followers of Jesus.

1. The sword of ecclesiastical censure; drawn by the Jews, the only pretenders to church-power. They shall cast you out of their synagogues, make you excommunicates. (1.) 'Out of the particular synagogues ye were members of.' At first, they scourged them in their synagogues as contemners of the law, (Matt. 10: 17.) and at length, cast them out as incorrigible. (2.) 'They shall cast you out of the national church of the Jews; shall put you into the condition of an outlaw,' 'look upon you as Samaritans, heathen men and publicans.' Note, It has often been the lot of Christ's disciples to be unjustly excommunicated. Many a good truth has been branded with an anathema, and many a child of God delivered to Satan.

2. The sword of civil power: 'The time cometh, the hour is come; now things are likely to be worse with you than hitherto; when expelled as heretics, they will kill you, and think they do God service, and others will think so too.'

(1.) You will find them really cruel. Christ's sheep have been accounted as sheep for the slaughter; the twelve apostles were all put to death, except John. Christ had said, (ch. 15: 27.) Ye shall bear witness, 'ye shall be martyrs, shall seal the truth with your hearts' blood.

(2.) You will find them seemingly conscientious: thinking they do God service; they will seem to offer a sacrifice to God; as those that cast out God's servants of old, and said, Let the Lord be glorified, Isa. 66: 5. Note, [1.] It is possible for real enemies to God's service, to pretend zeal for it. The devil's work has often been done in God's livery, and one of the most mischievous enemies Christianity ever had, sits in the temple of God. Nay, [2.] It is common to patronize enmity to religion with a color of duty to God, and service to his church. God's people have suffered the greatest hardships from conscientious persecutors. Paul verily thought he ought to do what he did against the name of Jesus. This does not at all lessen the sin of the persecutors, for villainies will never be consecrated by putting the name of God to them; but it increases the sufferings of the persecuted, to die under the character of enemies to God; but there will be a resurrection of names, as well as of bodies, at the great day.

III. He gives them the true reason of the world's enmity against them; (v. 3.) 'These things will they do unto you, not because you have done them harm, but because they have not known the Father, nor Me. Let this comfort you, that none will be your enemies but the worst of men.' Note, 1. Many that pretend to know God, are wretchedly ignorant of Him. They that pretended to do Him service, thought they knew Him, but it was a wrong notion they had of Him. Israel transgressed the covenant, and yet cried, My God, we know Thee, Hos. 8: 1, 2. Those who are ignorant of Christ, cannot have any right knowledge of God. In vain do men pretend to know God and religion, while they slight Christ and Christianity. 3. Those are very ignorant of God and Christ, that think it an acceptable service to persecute good people. They that know Christ, know that He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them; that He rules by the power of truth and love, not of fire and sword. Never was such a persecuting church as that which makes ignorance the mother of devotion.

IV. He tells them,

1. Why He told them of it now; (v. 4.) not to discourage them, or add to their sorrow; nor that they might contrive how to avoid their danger, but that, when the time shall come, you may remember that I told you. Note, In suffering times, it will be of use to remember what Christ has told us of sufferings. (1.) That our belief of his foresight and faithfulness may be confirmed; and, (2.) That the trouble may be the less grievous, for we were told of it before, and took up our profession in expectation of it, so that it ought not to surprise us, nor be looked upon as a wrong to us. As Christ in his sufferings, so his followers in theirs, should have an eye to the fulfilling of Scripture.

2. Why He did not tell them of it sooner; 'I spake not this to you when you and I were first acquainted, because I was with you.' While

with them, He bore the shock of the world's malignice, and stood in the front of battle; against Him the powers of darkness levelled all their force, not against small or great, but only against the King of Israel, and therefore He did not need then to say so much to them of suffering, because it did not fall much to their share; but we find that from the beginning He bid them prepare for sufferings; and therefore, (2.) It seems rather to be meant of the promise of another Comforter. This He had said little of, because He was Himself with them to instruct, and comfort them, and then they needed not the promise of the Spirit's extraordinary presence. The children of the bride-chamber would not have so much need of a comforter till the bridegroom should be taken away.

V. He expresses a concern for the sadness of his disciples, 'None I am to be no longer with you, but go my way to Him that sent Me, to repose after this fatigue; and none of you asketh Me with courage, Whither goest thou? But, instead of inquiring after that which would comfort you, you pore upon that which looks melancholy, and sorrow has filled your heart.'

He had told them He was about to leave them; not driven away by force, but voluntarily; his life was not extorted from Him, but deposited by Him. He went to Him that sent Him, to give an account of his negotiation. When we depart from this world, we go to Him that sent us into it, which should make us solicitous to live to good purposes, remembering we have a commission to execute, which must be returned at a certain day.

He had told them what they must suffer; now, if these were the legacies He had to leave them, who had left all for Him, they would be tempted to think they had made a sorry bargain, and were for the present, in consternation about it, in which their Master sympathizes with them, yet blames them.

1. As bareness of the means of comfort; None of you asks Me, Whither goest Thou? Peter had started that question, (ch. 13: 36.) and Thomas had seconded it; (ch. 14: 5.) but they did not seek for fuller satisfaction; they did not continue knocking. What a compassionate teacher Christ is; how condescending to the weak and ignorant. Many a teacher will not endure that the learner should ask the same question twice; if He cannot take a thing quickly, let him go without it; but our Lord knows how to deal with babes, that must be taught with precept upon precept. If the disciples here would have inquired, they would have found that his going away was for his advancement, (and therefore should not inordinately trouble them,) and for their advantage; and therefore their sufferings for Him should not trouble them; for a sight of Jesus at the right hand of God, would support them, as it did Stephen. Note, A humble inquiry into the darkest dispensations of Providence, would help to reconcile us to them, and to grieve the less, because of them; it will silence us to ask, Whence come they? but will abundantly satisfy us to ask, Whither go they? for we know they work for good, Rom. 8: 28.

2. As pining too much upon the occasions of their grief; v. 6. Christ had said enough to fill them with joy; (ch. 15: 11.) but, by looking at that only which made against them, they were so full of sorrow, there was no room left for joy. Note, It is the fault and folly of melancholy Christians, to dwell only on the dark side of the cloud; to meditate nothing but terror, and be deaf to the voice of joy and gladness. That which filled the disciples' hearts with sorrow, and hindered the operation of the cordials Christ administered, was, too great an affection to this present life. They were big with hopes of external glory, that they should shine and reign; and now, instead of that, to hear of nothing but bonds and afflictions, filled them with sorrow. Nothing is a greater prejudice to our joy in God, than the love of the

NOTES.
CHAP. XVI. v. 2. The highest degree of excommunication was supposed to imply the sentence of death: (Deut. 13.) and as the magistrates, at this time, had authority to carry it into execution; the

zealots seem to have made a merit of inflicting it, by assassination, in any way which they could devise. (3: 15-23. Acts 7: 54-60. v. 57-59. 23: 12-22.)

SCOTT.

is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; and if I depart I will send him unto you.

[Practical Observations.]

8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

7:29. 14:16, 17, 26. 15:26.
1 Pt. 68-18. Luke 24:49. Acts 1:4, 5.
2:23. Eph. 4:8-13.
c. Zech. 12:10. Acts 2:37. 16:29-30.
Or, convince. 8:9, 46. 1 Cor. 14:24.
John 15.

whether we think so or not. He deals not with us according to the folly of our own choice, but graciously overrules it, and gives us the medicine we are loath to take, because He knows it is good for us.

It was expedient, because it was in order to the sending of the Spirit.

If I go not away, the Comforter will not come. 1st. So it was settled in the divine counsels, and the measures must not be altered; shall the earth be forsaken for them? He that gives freely, may recall one gift before He bestows another; while we would fondly hold all. 2dly. It is congruous enough that the ambassador extraordinary should be recalled, before the envoy come, that is constantly to reside. 3dly. The sending of the Spirit was to be the fruit of Christ's purchase, and that purchase was to be made by his death, which was his going away. 4thly. It was to be in answer to his intercession within the veil. See ch. 14: 16. Thus must this gift be both paid for, and prayed for, by our Lord, that we might put the greater value upon it. 5thly. The great argument the Spirit was to use in convincing the world, must be, Christ's ascension to heaven, and his welcome there. See v. 10, and ch. 7: 39. Lastly, The disciples must be weaned from his bodily presence, which they were too apt to dote upon, before they were duly prepared to receive the spiritual aids and comforts of a new dispensation.

If I depart, I will send Him to you; as though He had said, 'Trust Me to provide effectually that you shall be no losers by my departure.' The glorified Redeemer is not unmindful of his church on earth, nor will ever leave it without necessary supports. Though He departs, He sends the Comforter: nay, He departs on purpose to send Him.

The presence of Christ's Spirit in his church is so much more desirable than his bodily presence, that it was really expedient for us that He should go away, to send the Comforter. His corporal presence could be but in one place at one time, but his Spirit is in all places, at all times. Christ's bodily presence draws men's eyes; his life-giving Spirit their hearts.

The coming of the Spirit was absolutely necessary to carry on Christ's interest on earth; (v. 8.) And when He is come, He will reprove, or, as the mar-

gin reads it, convince the world, by your ministry, concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.

V. 7-15. As it was usual with the Old-Testament prophets to comfort the church, in its calamities, with the promise of the Messiah, (Isa. 9: 6. Mic. 5: 5. Zech. 3: 8.) so, the Messiah being come, the promise of the Spirit was the great cordial, and is still.

Christ's departure was absolutely necessary to the Comforter's coming, v. 7. The disciples were so loath to believe this, that Christ asserted with more than ordinary solemnity; I tell you the truth. He here tells them, a strange doctrine, but if true, comfortable enough, and showing how absurd their sorrow was; It is expedient, not only for Me, but for you also, that I go away. Note, 1. Those things often seem grievous, that are really expedient for us; and particularly our going away when we have finished our course. 2. Our Lord Jesus is all ways for that which is most expedient for us.

He deals not with us according to the folly of our own choice, but graciously overrules it, and gives us the medicine we are loath to take, because He knows it is good for us.

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gin reads it, convince the world, by your ministry, concerning sin, righteousness, and judgment.

The office of the Spirit, and his errand, is, 1. To reprove. The Spirit, by the Word and conscience, is a reprover; ministers are reprovers by office, and by them the Spirit reproveth. 2. To convince. It is a law term, and speaks the office of the judge in summing up the evidence, and setting a matter that has been canvassed in a clear light. He shall convince, that is, 'put to silence the adversaries of Christ, by demonstrating the fallacy of what they maintain, and the truth of what they oppose.' Note, Convincing work is the Spirit's work. He can do it effectually, and none but He; man may open the cause, but the Spirit only can open the heart. The Spirit is called the Comforter, (v. 7.) and here it is said, He shall convince. The method of the Spirit is first to convince, and then to comfort; first to open the wound, and then apply healing medicines. Or, taking conviction more generally, for a demonstration of what is right, it intimates that the Spirit's comforts are solid, and grounded upon truth.

They whom He is to reprove and convince, are the world, both Jew and Gentile. 1. He shall give the world the most powerful means of conviction, for the apostles shall go into all the world, by the Spirit, to preach the Gospel, fully proved. He shall sufficiently provide for silencing the objections and prejudices of the world against the Gospel. Many an infidel was convinced of all, and judged of all, 1 Cor. 14: 24. 2. He shall effectually convince many in the world, some in every age, in every place, in order to their conversion to Christ. This encouraged the disciples, in reference to the difficulties they were likely to meet with, (1.) That they should see good done, Satan's kingdom fall like lightning, which would be their joy, as it was his. Even this malignant world the Spirit shall work upon: and the conviction of sinners is the comfort of faithful ministers. (2.) This would be the fruit of their services and sufferings, these should contribute much to this good work.

The Spirit is sent to convince sinners of sin, (v. 9.) not barely to tell them of it; in conviction there is more than that, it is to prove it upon them, and force them to own it, as they (ch. 3: 9.) that were convicted of their own con-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-7. How fallacious is the common opinion, that God will accept every man who is sincere in his religion, whatever it may be! For the most bigoted and cruel persecutors have often been very sincere, in their way; indeed no less than the more candid and philosophical opposers of 'the truth, as it is in Jesus.' They have murdered the worshippers of God, by tens of thousands, and imagined they were offering Him an acceptable sacrifice! (1 Tim. 1: 15, 16.) But did these men sincerely desire to know the truth and do the will of God? Did they humbly and impartially examine his Word, and pray to be taught by his Spirit, that they might know what He would have them to do? Did they sincerely embrace the truth, and obey the will of God; without being influenced by temporal interests, or by fear of persecution? Were they sincerely willing to obtain the favor of God, and devote themselves to his service, without regarding consequences?—Without this state of heart and tenor of conduct, what is called sincerity may be a compound of prejudice, ignorance, self-confidence, policy, and malignant passions: and the event will prove, that, after all their pretences and advantages, such men were strangers and enemies both 'to the Father and the Son'; and that they hated the light, because their deeds were evil.—The prophecies, however, so prepare the believer's mind for these events, that, instead of being stumbled at them, he sees

in them the truth of revelation, and an illustration of its doctrines; especially in respect of the 'deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the human heart'; the subtlety of Satan, and the awful justice of God, in giving up his enemies to strong delusions, and leaving them to perish with a 'lie in their right hand.' (8: 41-47. Jer. 17: 9, 10. 2 Thes. 3: 8-12. Rev. 12: 7-12, v. 9, 13-17.)—But let us remember, that humble docility, implicit belief of the Scripture, and a disposition unreservedly to do the will of God, are essential to 'godly sincerity.' (2 Cor. 1: 12.) This will lead men to come to the Father through his Son; and to 'set their affections on things above where Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God'; thus they will learn to rejoice in his exaltation, and in the hope of being with Him to share his glory.—If this be our character and experience, we should remember, that our hearts are often filled with sorrow at events highly advantageous. This was the case with the apostles: the atonement, ascension, and intercession of the Redeemer, and the presence of the Comforter, were not only more desirable than Christ's personal presence; but were absolutely necessary to them, and to all, in order to salvation: yet no removal of a beloved relation, or Christian friend, or minister, can possibly appear comparable to that loss, which the apostles supposed they must sustain, when their Lord should be removed from them.

SCOTT.

Verse 7.

'Our Lord not only promised that He would 'pray the Father' to send the Comforter, but also that He Himself, as One with the Father, and as exalted for that purpose to his mediatorial throne, would send Him. This certainly does not imply that the Holy Spirit is naturally inferior to the Son of God; neither does the mission of the Son prove that He is naturally inferior to the Father. An ambassador is not naturally inferior to the prince who sends him; and his being a subject is a mere circumstance, not essential to his office: but in that office he appears relatively inferior to his prince, and, as such, acts by commission, and observes his instructions. To this he is bound by the nature of the service, though he might be perfectly voluntary in taking it upon him. This illustration may help our conceptions of the equality of the three Persons in the sacred Trinity; and of the relative

and voluntary inferiority of the Son and Spirit, as to their respective offices in man's redemption.

Verse 8-11.

'In these words is a great manifestation of our Savior's divine knowledge and wisdom. The greatest sin in the world, is sin against the Gospel, contempt of, and opposition to Christ; and the greatest evidence of man's sin, is his ill treatment of Christ, his Gospel, and followers. In this most clearly appears the malignity of sin, and particularly that violent opposition to the pouring out of the Spirit of God. As the Spirit's coming occasions this, so it eventually convicts the world of wickedness. Persons savingly taught by the Spirit are, in the first place, convicted of sin, especially their sin against Christ, or against God as revealing Himself in the Gospel. Thus, immediately after the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the Jews thus were

9 Of sin, because they believe not on me;

10 Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;

11 Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.

12 I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.

13 Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that

3:18-21. 5:40-44. 8:23,24,42-47. 12:47-48. 15:22-25. Mark 16:16. Acts 1:35-38. 14:14-19. 7:51-52. 28:9-10. Rom. 3:19-20. 1 Thea. 2: 15:16. 1 Tim. 1:13. Heb. 3:12. 10: 22,29.

q. 42-21. 45:24-25. Jer. 23:5-8. Dan. 9:24. Rom. 1:17. 3:91-26. 6:17-21. 8:33-34. 10:3-4. 1 Cor. 1:30. 15:14-20. 2 Cor. 5:21. Gal. 6:5. Phil. 3:7-9. 1 Tim. 3:16. Heb. 10:5-13.

r. 5:22-27. Matt. 12:18,36. Acts 10: 42:14. 17:30,31. 24:25. Rom. 2:3,4. 18. 14:10-12. 1 Cor. 4:5. 6:5-4. 2 Cor. 5:10,11. Heb. 6:2. 9:27. 2 Pet. 2:4-9. 3:7. Rev. 17:7. 20: 11-15.

12:31. 14:30. Gen. 3:15. Ps. 68:18. Is. 49:24-28. Luke 10:18. Rom. 15:20. 2 Cor. 4:4. Eph. 2:22. Heb. 2:14. 1 Jcm. 9:7. Rev. 12:7-10. 20:2,3,10.

t. 14:30. 15:15. Acts 1:3. 1 Cor. 14:33. 1 Cor. 9:12. Heb. 5: 11-14.

u. 14:17. 15:26. 1 John 4:6.

y. 14:26. 1 Cor. 2:10-13. Eph. 4:7-11. 1 John 2:27. 1 John 4:13.

z. 3:32. 7:16-18. 8:33. 12:49.

not, be convinced but that He was a bad man, which strengthened their prejudices against his doctrine; but He is justified by the Spirit, (1 Tim. 3:16.) is proved a righteous man, and not a deceiver; and then the point is in effect gained; for He is either the great Redeemer, or greatly deceives; but a deceiver we are sure He is not.

Now by what argument will the Spirit convince men of the sincerity of our Lord? 1st. Their seeing Him no more, will contribute to remove their prejudices; they shall see Him no more, in the likeness of sinful flesh, in the form of a serpent, which made them slight Him. Moses was more respected after his removal than before. But, 2dly. His going to the Father would be a full conviction of it. The coming of the Spirit, according to the promise, was a proof of Christ's exaltation to God's right hand, (Acts 2:33.) the demonstration of his righteousness; for the holy God would never set a deceiver at his right hand.—Or,

[2.] Of Christ's righteousness, communicated to us for our justification and vivification; Dan. 9:24.

1st. The Spirit shall convince men of this righteousness, having by convictions of sin showed them their need of a righteousness; lest that drive them to despair, He will show them where it is to be had, and how they may, on

sciences; Make them to know their abominations. The Spirit convinces of the fact of sin, that we have done so and so; of the fault of sin, that we have done ill in doing so; of the folly of sin, that we have acted against right reason, and our true interest; of the filth of sin, that we are become odious to God; of the fountain of sin, the corrupt nature; and lastly, of the fruit of sin, that the end thereof is death. The Spirit demonstrates that all the world is guilty before God.

The Spirit, in conviction, fastens especially upon the sin of not believing in Christ,

1st. As the great, reigning sin. There was, and is, a world of people, that believe not in Christ, and are not sensible it is their sin; natural conscience tells them that murder and theft are sins; but it is a supernatural work of the Spirit to convince them that it is a sin to suspend their belief of the Gospel, and to reject the salvation offered by it. Natural religion leaves us under this obligation, that whatever divine revelation shall be made to us at any time, with sufficient evidence to prove it divine, we accept, and submit to it; which law they transgress, who, when God speaketh to us by his Son, refuse Him that speaketh; and therefore it is sin.

2dly. It is the great, ruining sin. Every sin is so in its own nature, no sin is so to them that believe in Christ; so that it is unbelief that damns sinners; because of that, they cannot enter into rest; cannot escape the wrath of God; it is a sin against the remedy.

3dly. It is at the bottom of all sin; so Calvin takes it. The Spirit shall convince the world, that the true reason why sin reigns among them, is, they are not by faith united to Christ. Let us not suppose that, apart from Christ, we have a drop of rectitude. Calvin.

The Spirit convinces of righteousness, v. 10.

[1.] Of Christ's personal righteousness. He shall convince the world, that Jesus of Nazareth was Christ the righteous, (1 John 2:1. Luke 23:47.) Certainly this was a righteous man. His enemies put Him under the worst character, and multitudes were not, or would

believing, he acquitted from guilt, and accepted as righteous in God's sight. It was hard to convince those of this righteousness, that went about to establish their own; (Rom. 10:3.) but the Spirit will do it.

2dly. Christ's ascension is the argument to convince men of his righteousness; I go to the Father, and, as evidence of my welcome with Him, you shall see Me no more; we are now sure He is at the right hand of God, and are sure of being justified through Him.

The Spirit convinces of judgment, v. 11.

1. The devil, the prince of this world, was judged; discovered to be a deceiver and destroyer; and as such, judgment was entered against him, and execution in part done. He was cast out of the Gentile world, when his oracles were silenced, and his altars deserted; cast out of the bodies of many, in Christ's name, which miraculous power continued long in the church; he was cast out of the souls of people by the grace of God working with the Gospel; he fell as lightning from heaven.

2. This is a good argument wherewith the Spirit convinces the world of judgment, Matt. 12:18. By the judgment of the prince of this world, it appears that Christ is stronger than Satan, and can disarm him, and set up his throne upon the ruins of his. He shall show that Christ's errand into the world, was to set things right, and introduce reformation and regeneration; and He proves it by this, that the prince of this world, the great master of misrule, is judged and expelled. All will be well when his power is broken, who made the mischief. He shall convince the world that all judgment is committed to Him, and that He is Lord of all; which is evidently this, that He has judged the prince of this world, broken the serpent's head, destroyed him, and the power of death, and spoiled principalities. If Satan be thus subdued by Christ, we may be sure no other power can stand before Him. He shall convince of the final day of judgment; all the obstinate enemies of Christ's Gospel shall be reckoned with at last; for the devil, their ringleader, is judged.

The coming of the Spirit would be of unspeakable advantage to the disciples themselves; the Spirit has work to do, not only on the enemies of Christ, but upon his servants, to instruct and comfort them; and therefore was expedient for them that He should go away.

He intimates the tender sense He had of their weakness; (v. 12.) I have yet many things to say unto you, (things which He could and would have said,) but ye cannot bear them now. See what a teacher Christ is! None like Him for copiousness; when He has said much, He hath still many things more to say; treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid in Him; we are not straitened in Him, if we be not straitened in ourselves. None like Him for compassion; He would have told them more of the things pertaining to the king-

awakened were convinced of this sin, of rejecting and crucifying Christ, and for this were pricked in their hearts, and said, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2: also 3:13, 14, &c.) When Saul was converted, he was convinced of, and repented for this sin, Acts 9:4, 5. In most places where the apostles preached, there first arose great opposition, and the Gospel finally prevailed against it, opposers were converted, and the sin they were especially convinced of was opposition to Christ. So the jailer, and, in all ages, such as are humbled by the Spirit of God, and brought to repentance, are convinced of their sins against the Gospel. Of righteousness, because I go to my Father.] Christ's ascension, to live and reign in heaven, was the brightest evidence that He suffered wrongfully. It confirmed the righteousness and veracity of his words, his doctrines, his design in coming into the world, his promises. This ascension, taken as a completing and crowning of the grand affair of redemption, with its antecedents and disclosures, particularly the divinity and infinite dignity of the person of Christ, manifests the greatest evidence of the righteousness and holiness of God, in saving sinners. It conveys by far the greatest manifestation, and brightest effulgence of the moral perfection and glory of the divine Being, that ever was. Of Judgment, &c.] Satan has usurped the throne, and set up himself as the prince of this world. It is the greatest evidence of Christ's might and kingly power, as Captain of the salvation of his people, to overcome and dethrone this enemy, and the greatest manifestation of his high judicial authority, to judge and condemn this great rebel, and head of all the rebellion in the universe, and to execute vengeance upon him. A conviction of these three things, is the substance of that conviction, by the Spirit, implied in saving faith. The Spirit's conviction of sin, righteousness, and

judgment, is always implied in the saving knowledge of good and evil; which is the true knowledge of ourselves, and of God in Christ. This knowledge is the light of the divine glory in the face of Jesus, and the foundation of all true compliance with the Gospel in heart.

Pres. EDWARDS.

Righteousness.] Christ's holiness and innocence of the charges of being a rebel, impostor, and pseudo-Messiah. Because I go to my Father.] To this proof of his divine mission, that He was just, holy, innocent man, the Son of God, the Savior of men, as He professed, our Lord seems confidently to have appealed, in 8:28 12:32. As did also the apostles. Acts 2:22. seq. 17:31. Rom. 1:4. 1 Cor. 15:14. seq. 1 Tim. 3:16, &c.] Judgment.] By the prince of this world, (see 12:31.) is meant all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who had the power of impeding the propagation of the Gospel, particularly the Jewish rulers, chief priests, civilians, and Pharisees: for these were especially the cause of his not being generally recognized as the Messiah. But this prince of this world was condemned, (as the world may be regarded,) inasmuch as his power was broken and diminished, and therefore his hatred was frustrated, and his counsels at last decided to naught. And this was done by the Holy Spirit through the ministry of the apostles; who taught that the only means of attaining salvation, was faith in Christ. The power of Jewish malice was broken especially by the destruction of the temple, and the ruin of the Jewish state. So Titman?

(8.) Their sin in rejecting Me. Divine judgment, soon to be manifested in the punishment of an incredulous nation, and in defence of the truth. CAMPBELL.

shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.

14 He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

15 All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, That he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you.

[Practical Observations.]

a Joe 2:28. Acts 2:17, 18. 11:28. 20: 23. 21:9. 11. 27:24. 2 Thes. 2:13. 12. 1 Tim. 4:1-3. 2 Tim. 3:1-5. 2 Pet. 2:1 &c. Rev. 1:13. 8-20. b 9, 10. Acts 2:32-36. 4:10-12. 1 Cor. 12:3. 1 Pet. 1:10-12. 2:7. 1 John 4:1-3, 13, 14. 5:6. c 19:20. Zach. 12:10. 1 Cor. 2:8-10. 2 Cor. 3:14-18. 4:6. Gal. 5:5. 1 John 3:23, 24. 4:13, 14. 5:20. Rev. 19:10. d 3:35. 10:29, 30. 13:3. 17:2, 10. Matt. 11:27. 28:15. Luke 10:22. Col. 1:19. 2:3, 9.

a truth, is more than barely to know it; it is to be intimately and experimentally acquainted with it; to be strongly affected with it; not only to have the notion of it in our heads, but the relish, and power of it in our hearts; it denotes a gradual discovery of truth shining more and more; 'He shall lead you by those truths that are plain and easy, to those that are more difficult.'

But how into all truth? The meaning is,

1st. Into the whole truth relating to 'their embassy; whatever was needful for them to know, they should be fully instructed in; what truths they were to teach others, He would teach them, and enable them both to explain and to defend.

2dly. Into nothing but the truth; All that He shall guide you into, shall be truth; (1 John 2:27.) the anointing is truth.

1. 'The Spirit shall teach nothing but the truth, for He shall not speak of Himself any doctrine distinct from mine, but whatsoever He shall hear, and knows to be the mind of the Father, that, only, shall He speak.' This intimates, (1.) That we may rely upon the testimony of the Spirit, in the Word and by the apostles. The Spirit knows and searches all things, even the deep things of God, and the apostles received that Spirit; (1 Cor. 2:10, 11.) so that we may venture our souls upon the Spirit's Word. (2.) The testimony of the Spirit always concurs with the Word of Christ, for He does not speak of Himself, has no separate interest of his own, but as in essence, so in record, is one with the Father and the Son, 1 John 5:7. Men's word and spirit oft disagree, but the eternal Word and the eternal Spirit never.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 8-15 Every professed Christian ought to inquire, whether the Holy Spirit has 'begun a good work' in his heart. When about to come as a Comforter, He generally occasions a temporary, poignant sorrow; He always produces deep humiliation, often attended with terror and distress. For, without abasing convictions of sin, and a discovery of our guilt and danger, we never understand the value of Christ's salvation: but when brought to a just estimate of our own character, general conduct, and best duties, we perceive the preciousness of the Redeemer's obedience, atonement, and intercession. We also discover the sinfulness of unbelief, and neglect of the Gospel: and if at any time we are tempted to despair, through a sense of guilt and depravity; we are aware that this would be a more fatal and atrocious offence, than all our other transgressions. Thus we learn to value and rely upon Christ, for righteousness and sanctification; and to prepare to meet Him with comfort and rejoicing hope, when He shall come to judgment. The 'prince of this world,' and all who continue his servants, will then be cast into the lake of fire, the blackness of darkness forever. Every one who is 'delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son,' knew what it is to be thus 'convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.' This is essential to true religion, and to salvation through Him, 'who was made sin for us, though He knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.' (2 Cor. 5:18-21, v. 21.)—If then this be the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit in redemption, his servants, and 'workers together with Him,' should use all proper means to produce these convictions: they should often and particularly lay open the law of God, as 'the ministration of condemnation;' (2 Cor. 3:7-11. Gal. 3:10-14.) They should show the evil of sin, the way of justification by faith in Christ, the consequences of unbelief; and the solemn transactions and event of 'the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.' On these subjects, all who would be honored as instruments in converting sinners, should be frequent, copious, alarming, encouraging, and distinguishing. But in matters less essential, they would do well, after the example of Christ, not to

2. 'He shall teach you all truth, and keep back nothing that is profitable for you, for He will show you things to come.' The Spirit was in the apostles, a Spirit of prophecy; it was foretold He should be so, Joel 2:25. The Spirit showed them things to come, as Acts 11:28. 20:23. 21:11. The Spirit spoke of the apostasy of the latter times, 1 Tim. 4:1. John, when in the Spirit, had things to come showed Him in vision. This was a great satisfaction to their minds, and of use to them in their conduct, and also a great confirmation of their mission. We should not grudge, says one, that the Spirit does not now show us things to come, in this world, as He did the apostles; let it suffice, that in the Word He hath showed us things to come in the other world, which are our chief concern.

The sending of the Spirit was the glorifying of Christ, v. 14, 15. God the Father glorified Him in heaven, and the Spirit, on earth. It was the honor of the Redeemer, that the Spirit was both sent in his name, and on his errand, to carry on and perfect his undertaking. All the gifts and graces of the Spirit, the preaching and writing of the apostles, under his influence, the tongues, and miracles, were to glorify Christ.

The Spirit glorified Christ, by leading his followers into the truth as it is in Jesus, Eph. 4:21. He assures them,

1st. That the Spirit should communicate the things of Christ to them; He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. As in essence He proceeded from the Son, so in influence and operation He derives from Him. He shall take of that which is mine. All that the Spirit applies to us, for instruction and comfort, for strength and quickening, all He seals to us, belonged to Christ, and was received from Him. He bought it, and therefore had reason to call it his own; it was given Him as the Head of the church, to be derived from Him to all his members. The Spirit came not to erect a new kingdom, but to advance that which Christ had erected, to maintain the same interest, and pursue the same design; those therefore who pretend to the Spirit, yet vilify Christ, give themselves the lie, for He came to glorify Christ.

2dly. That herein the things of God should be communicated to us; lest any should think

press them on their auditories, before they are 'able to bear them,' or to make a good use of them; and incalculable them gradually, and as the Spirit removes prejudices and darkness from the mind, and enables it to receive them.—The Holy Spirit comes forth from the Father, to 'glorify Christ' among men. We need not then wonder, that so many deny his Deity and atonement, or treat his prophetic or kingly authority with neglect or contempt: for they imagine, that the work of the Holy Spirit was confined to the primitive ages, and that all dependence upon his influences at present at least borders on enthusiasm. Could they ascertain this position, it would follow, that Jesus could 'be glorified' only in the primitive times.—In proportion as men overlook, or do not trust, expect, and pray for, the influences of the Holy Spirit, Christ is neglected and dishonored, even by those who call themselves his disciples.—On the other hand, if men profess to be influenced by the Holy Spirit, and yet do not honor Christ; but either treat his Word with contempt, or place their dependence elsewhere than on his atoning blood, or disgrace Him by their unholy lives; it is plain that they are deceivers, or deceived. Where this Teacher and Comforter resides, He shows the Savior, in all his offices, to be glorious and precious; leads men to depend on and glory in Him; constrains them, by love, to devote themselves to his service, and to honor Him by their lives, and the improvement of their talents, to recommend and promote his cause: He enables them to see, that 'all things which the Father hath' are the Son's also; that in 'honoring Him they honor the Father that sent Him;' and that all the power and perfection of Deity are in Christ, for the completion of that design for which He suffered. We should therefore have more admiring views of our Redeemer, and more lively affections towards Him, did we more entirely depend on the Holy Spirit, more frequently and earnestly pray to 'our heavenly Father, to give us his Holy Spirit, as He has promised' (Luke 11:13.) and were we more careful neither to grieve Him by our sins, nor to quench his sacred influences by our negligence. Thus we should learn to rejoice in Christ Jesus amidst all our tribulations. (Rom. 8:3-5.)

SCOTT.

16 ¶ A little while, and ye shall not see me, and again a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go to the Father.

17 Then ^bsaid some of his disciples among themselves, What is this that he saith unto us A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me; and, Because I go to the Father?

18 They said therefore, What is this that he saith, A little while? we cannot tell what he saith.

19 Now ^kJesus knew that they were desirous to ask him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me?

e 5, 10, 17-19. 7:33. 12:35. 13:33. 14:19.
f 1:19-29. 21:1-32. Acts 1:3. 10:40. 11 Cor. 15:9-19.
g 128. 13:3. 17:5, 13. Mark 16:19. Heb. 12:22.
h 1:5, 13. 12:16. 14:5, 22. Mark 9:10. 32. Luke 9:45. 18:34.
i Matt. 16:9-11. Luke 24:25. Heb. 5:12.
k 30. 2:24, 25. 21:17. Ps. 139:1-4. Matt. 6:8. 9:4. Mark 9:33, 34. Heb. 4:13. 5:1. 2:25.

sion, which scattered the ignorance and mistakes they were almost lost in, and gave them a clearer insight into the mysteries of Christ's Gospel. *The Spirit's coming* was Christ's visit to his disciples, not transient but permanent, and such a visit as abundantly retrieved the sight of Him. 3. At his second coming. They saw Him again as they removed one by one to Him at death, and when He shall come in the clouds, at the end of time, every eye shall see Him. It might be truly said, that this was but a little while; for what is time, to eternity? 2 Pet. 3:8, 9.

The reason given is, 'I must leave you for a time, because I go to the Father, my business calls Me to the upper world, and be content, for my business is yours.' 'Therefore you shall see Me again shortly, for the Father will not detain Me to your prejudice.' It would seem, all this refers rather to his going away at death, and return at his resurrection, than his going away at his ascension, and return at the end of time; for his death was their grief, not his ascension, (Luke 24:52.) and between his death and resurrection it was indeed a little while. And it may be read, not, yet a little while, but for a little while ye shall not see Me, namely, the three days of his lying in the grave; and again, for a little while ye shall see Me, namely, the forty days between his resurrection and ascension. Thus we may say of our ministers and Christian friends, Yet a little while, and we shall not see them, either they must leave us, or we them, and yet we part not forever.

The disciples were perplexed at this; (v. 17, 18.) Some said, softly, among themselves, either some of the weakest, that were least able, or some of the most inquisitive, that were most desirous to understand Him, What is this that He saith to us? Though Christ had often spoken thus before, still they were in the dark; though precept be upon precept, it is in vain, unless God give the understanding.

The disciples could not understand so plain a saying, to which Christ had already given them a key; having so often told them plainly, that He should be killed, and the third day rise again; yet, say they, We cannot tell what He saith; for, 1. Sorrow had filled their heart, and made them unapt to receive impressions of comfort. The darkness of ignorance and of melan-

choly commonly thicken one another; mistakes cause griefs, and then griefs confirm mistakes. 2. The notion of Christ's secular kingdom was so deeply rooted in them, that they could make no sense of those sayings, which they knew not how to reconcile with that notion. When we think the Scripture must be made to agree with the false ideas we have imbibed, no wonder we complain of its difficulty; but when our reasonings are captivated to revelation, the matter is easy. 3. It would seem, that which puzzled them was, the little while. They could not conceive how He should leave them quickly, when his stay had been so short. Thus it is hard to represent to ourselves that change as near which yet we know will come certainly, and may come suddenly. When told, Yet a little while, and we must go hence; Yet a little while, and we must give up our account; we know not how to digest it; for we always took the vision to be for a great while to come, Ezek. 12:27.

V. 16-22. Our Lord, for the comfort of his sorrowful disciples, promises to visit them again. A little while, and ye that have seen Me so long, and still desire to see Me, shall not see Me; therefore if they had any question to ask, they must ask quickly. Note, It is good to consider how near to a period our seasons of grace are, that we may be quickened to improve them while they continue. Now our eyes see our teachers, see the days of the Son of man; but, perhaps, yet a little while and we shall not see them. They lost the sight of Christ, 1. At his death, when He withdrew from this world, and never after showed Himself openly in it. The most that death does to our Christian friends, is, to take them out of sight, not out of being, nor out of bliss. 2. At his ascension, when He withdrew from them, (who after his resurrection, had for some time conversed with Him,) out of their sight; a cloud received Him, and, though they looked up steadfastly after Him, they saw Him no more, Acts 1:9, 10. 2 Kings 2:12. See 2 Cor. 5:16.

They should speedily recover the sight of Him; Again a little while, and ye shall see Me, and therefore ye ought not to sorrow as those that have no hope; his farewell was not final, they should see Him again, 1. At his resurrection, when He shewed Himself alive, by many infallible proofs, and this in a very little while, not forty hours. See Hos. 6:2. 2. By the pouring out of the Spirit, soon after his ascension, which scattered the ignorance and mistakes they were almost lost in, and gave them a clearer insight into the mysteries of Christ's Gospel. *The Spirit's coming* was Christ's visit to his disciples, not transient but permanent, and such a visit as abundantly retrieved the sight of Him. 3. At his second coming. They saw Him again as they removed one by one to Him at death, and when He shall come in the clouds, at the end of time, every eye shall see Him. It might be truly said, that this was but a little while; for what is time, to eternity? 2 Pet. 3:8, 9.

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When at a loss about the meaning of Christ's words, they conferred upon it and asked help of one another. By converse we borrow the light of others, and improve our own. How exactly they repeat Christ's words. Though we cannot fully solve every difficulty in Scripture, yet we must not therefore throw it by, but revolve what we cannot explain, and wait till God shall reveal even this unto us.

Christ explained what He had said, (v. 19.) because He knew they were desirous to ask Him. Note, The knots we cannot untie, we must bring to Him who alone can give understanding. Christ knew they were desirous to ask, but were bashful. Note, Christ takes cognizance of pious desires, though they be not as yet offered up, the groanings that cannot be uttered, and even presents them with the blessings of his goodness. Christ instructed those who were desirous to ask, though they did not ask. Before we call, He answers.

Another reason why Christ explained it, was, He observed them canvassing this matter among themselves; 'I will make it easy to you. This intimates whom Christ will teach: 1. The humble that confess their ignorance. 2. The diligent, that use the means they have; 'Do ye inquire? You shall be taught. To him that hath, shall be given.'

He explained it, not by a nice and critical descent upon the words, but by bringing the thing more closely to them; He had told them of not seeing Him, and seeing Him; they did not apprehend that, therefore He explains it by their sorrowing and rejoicing, because we commonly measure things according as they affect us; (v. 20.) Ye shall weep and lament, for my departure, but the world shall rejoice in it; ye shall be sorrowful, while I am absent, but, on my return, your sorrow will be turned into joy. But He says nothing of the little while, because He saw that perplexed them more than any thing; and it is no matter to know the times and seasons. Note, Believers have joy or sorrow, according as they have or have not a sight of Christ, and the tokens of his presence.

Ye shall weep and lament, and ye shall be sorrowful. The sufferings of Christ, whom they loved, could not but be the sorrow of his disciples; when they slept, it was for sorrow, Luke 22:45. They wept in sad apprehension for themselves. They grieved to lose Him for whom they had left all, expecting so much. Christ has given notice to his disciples both beforehand to expect sorrow, that they may treasure up comforts accordingly.

But the world shall rejoice. The grief of saints, is the joy of sinners. 1st. Strangers to

his resurrection, (v. 20, 22.) and would introduce them to a state of comfortable converse with God by prayer, and a joy of which none should deprive them, (v. 23-27.) He adds, (v. 28.) that He was quickly leaving the world, to go and reside with the Father, from whom He came; thereby intimating that temporal reign was to be expected. And if we suppose Him thus to have glanced obliquely at the most secret sentiments of their hearts, it will account for that confession of his omniscience which immediately follows this 28th verse, (v. 29, 30.) the reason of which would not appear merely from his discovery, that they doubted about something, which their countenances and whispers might show.

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20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, 'That ye shall weep and lament,' but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.

21 A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but, as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world.

22 And ye now therefore have sorrow; but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.

[Practical Observations.]

23 And in that day

1. 6. 32. 19:25-27. Mark 14:72. 16: 10. Luke 22:45-62. 23:47-49. 24:17. Matt. 21:38. 27:39-44. 62-66. Mark 15:29-32. Rev. 11: 10. 18:7.
2. Ps. 30:5, 11. 40:1-3. 97:11. 126: 5, 6. Is. 12:1. 25:8, 9. 61:3. 66:5. Jer. 31:9-14, 25. Matt. 5:4. Luke 6:21. Acts 2:46, 47. 5:41. Rom. 5: 2, 3, 11. 2 Cor. 6:10. Gal. 5:22. 1 Thes. 1:6. 2 Thes. 2:16, 17. Jam. 2: 2. 1 Pet. 1:8-3. 2:18, 24. Rev. 7:14-17.
3. Gen. 3:16. Is. 26:16-18. Jer. 30: 6, 7. Hos. 13:13, 14. Mic. 4:10. Rev. 12:2-5.
4. Gen. 21:6, 7. 30:23-24. 1 Sam. 1:26. 27. Ps. 113:9. Luke 1:57, 58. Gal. 4:27.
5. 3:30.
6. 20:19, 20. 21:7. Is. 25:9. 65:13, 14. 66:9-14. Matt. 20:9. Luke 24:41, 51-53. Acts 13:52.
7. 4:14. Job 34:29. Ps. 146:9. Is. 19: 2-4. 51:11, 12. 54:7, 8. 65:18, 19. Hab. 3:17, 18. Luke 10:42. 16:25. 1:128. Act. 5:41. 19:25. 20:23, 24. Rom. 8:35-39. 1 Thes. 3:7-3. 2 Thes. 2:16. Heb. 6:18. 10:34. 1 Pet. 4:13, 14.

rounded with thorns; all the children of men are foolish children, being the heaviness of her that bore them from the very first. This comes of sin.

2. The fruit of the blessing; the joy for a child born, so the word is. If God had not preserved the blessing in force after the fall, *Be fruitful and multiply*, parents could never have looked on their children with comfort; but the fruit of a blessing is matter of joy; the birth of a living child is; (1.) The parents' joy. Jer. 20: 15. Though children are certain cares, uncertain comforts, and often prove the greatest crosses, it is natural to rejoice at their birth. Were we sure that our children, like John, should be filled with the Holy Ghost, we might, like his parents, have joy and gladness in their birth, Luke 1: 14, 15. But when we consider, not only that they are born in sin, but, as here express-

Christ, will continue in carnal mirth, and not at all interest themselves in these sorrows. It is nothing to them that pass by, Lam. 1: 12. Nay, 2dly. Christ's enemies will therefore rejoice, because they hope they have conquered Him, and ruined his interest. When the chief priests had Christ upon the cross; we may suppose they made merry over Him, as they that dwell on earth over the slain witnesses, Rev. 11: 10. Let it not surprise us to see others triumphing, when we are trembling for the ark.

But your sorrow shall be turned into joy. As the joy of the hypocrite, so the sorrow of the true Christian, is but for a moment. The disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. His resurrection was life from the dead to them, and their sorrow for Christ's sufferings was turned into a joy of such a nature as could not be damped by any sufferings of their own. They were sorrowful, and yet always rejoicing; (2 Cor. 6: 10.) had sorrowful lives, and yet joyful hearts.

This applies to all the faithful followers of the Lamb.

1. Their condition and disposition are mournful; sorrows are their lot, and seriousness their temper: those who are acquainted with Christ, must, like Him, be acquainted with grief; they weep and lament for what others make light of, their own sins, and the sins of those about them; they mourn with sufferers that mourn, and for sinners that mourn not for themselves.

2. The world, at the same time, goes away with all the mirth; they so spend their days, that one would think they neither knew sorrow, nor feared it. Carnal mirth and pleasures are surely none of the best things, for then the worst men would not have so large a share of them, and the favorites of heaven be such strangers to them.

3. Spiritual mourning will shortly be turned into eternal rejoicing. Gladness is sown for the upright in heart, that sown in tears, and without doubt they shall shortly reap in joy. Their sorrow will not only be followed with joy, but turned into it; for the most precious comforts take rise from pious griefs.

This He illustrates by a similitude, v. 21. Observe,

1. The fruit of the curse; (Gen. 3: 16.) In sorrow (i. e. pain as here) thou shalt bring forth. The greatest griefs and pains are compared to these; (Ps. 48: 6. Isa. 13: 8. 21: 3. Jer. 4: 31: 6, 24.) and they are inevitable, 1 Thes. 5: 3. See what this world is; all its roses are sur-

ed, into the world, a world of snares, and a vale of tears, we shall see reason to rejoice with trembling, lest it prove better for them that they had never been born. (2.) It is such joy as makes the anguish not to be remembered, or remembered as waters that pass away, Job 11: 15. Gen. 41: 51. This very properly sets forth, [1.] The sorrows of Christ's disciples, in this world, are like travelling pains, sure and sharp, but not to last long, and in order to a joyful produce; the church is described as in pain to be delivered, (Rev. 12: 2.) and the whole creation. Rom. 8: 22. And, [2.] Their joys after these sorrows, will wipe away all tears, for the former things are passed away, Rev. 21: 4. When born into that world, and reaping the fruit of their services and sorrows, the toil and anguish of this world will be no more remembered, as Christ's were not, when He saw of the travail of his soul to his satisfaction, Isa. 53: 11.

The application of the similitude; (v. 22.) 'Ye now have sorrow, and are likely to have more, but I will see you again, and all will be well.'

Here again He tells them of their sorrow; 'Ye now have sorrow, because I am leaving you.' Note, Christ's withdrawals are just cause of grief to his disciples. And Christ notices those griefs, has a bottle for the tears, and a book for the sighs, of all gracious mourners.

He, more largely than before, assures them of a return of joy, Ps. 30: 5, 11. He went through his own griefs, and bore ours, for the joy set before Him; and would have us encourage ourselves with the same prospect.

'I will see you again. I will make you a visit, and minister comfort to you.' Note, 1. Christ will return to those that wait for Him, though for a small moment He has seemed to forsake them, Isa. 54: 7. They shall not only see Him in his glory, but He will visit them in their meanness. 2. Christ's returns are returns of joy to his disciples; clouded evidences are cleared up, interrupted communion revived.

Your heart shall rejoice. Divine consolations put gladness into the heart. Joy in the heart is solid; secret, and a stranger does not intermeddle therewith; it is sweet, gives a good man satisfaction in himself: sure, not easily broken in upon.

Your joy no man taketh from you. Men will attempt it, but shall not prevail. Some understand it of them that are glorified; they that are entered into the joy of their Lord, shall go no more out. We are liable to be robbed of our joys on earth by a thousand accidents, but heavenly joys are everlasting. I rather understand it of the spiritual joys of the sanctified, particularly the apostles' joy in their apostleship. Thanks be to God, says Paul, in the name of the rest, who always causes us to triumph, 2 Cor. 2: 14. If the bonds, banishments, tortures, and deaths of a malicious world would have taken it from them, they had lost it; but when they took every thing else, they could not take this; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing. They

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 16-22. For a little while, believers must be absent from their Savior; and may be often called to mourn for sin, and to pass through manifold tribulations; while the world around them rejoices in carnal mirth, and destructive prosperity, or perhaps in the success of atrocious iniquities! But their joys and the believer's sorrows are alike transient: they have their fears and forebodings to damp their mirth; he has his hopes and anticipations to alleviate his afflictions: and, as a sorrow is coming on them, which none can mitigate or termi-

nate; so the believer is the heir of an unalienable joy.—It might have excited in us astonishment and distress, if we had seen the apostles weeping over their crucified Lord, and the enemies of God glorying in their success: but where is now the joy of his murderers, or the sorrow of his friends? These have seen Him again, and are filled with consolation. Such will be the event of every believer's trials: may we then choose that good part, which can never be taken from us.

Scott.

Verse 23, 24:

To suppose that Christ meant to forbid them to address Him in prayer, when He said, 'Ye shall ask Me nothing,' is a direct censur on the apostles and primitive Christians, when acting under the immediate influence of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 7: 54-60. v. 59, 60. 2 Cor. 12: 7-10. v. 8, 9. 1 Thes. 3: 11-13. 2 Thes. 2: 16, 17.) The disciples had been used to inquire of their Lord, as Man, in all their difficulties; but this would speedily and finally be terminated, and they would be taught to apply to God by prayer, through his mediation. But to address the Father in the name of Christ, or to address the Son, as God dwelling in human nature, and 'reconciling the world to Himself,' must be equivalent, if indeed the Father and the Son are One Deity. (10: 26-31. v. 30.) The apostles, hearing this, declared that He had now spoken plainly, without any proverb: yet, according to the system of some professed Christians, He scarcely ever spoke any thing

so obscure or inexplicable: but it is evident, that those who deny the Deity of Christ do not agree with the apostles in interpreting his words. (Marg. Ref. e, f.—3: 12, 13. 6: 60-65. 13: 1-5, v. 3. 17: 4, 5.)

Scott.

In that day, &c. 'Here is a plain reference to their wanting to ask Him what He meant by a little while, &c. (v. 19.) And here Christ says, "In that day when the Spirit shall have come, and shall have taught you all things, and satisfied all your doubts, ye shall have no more need to ask Me any further questions." He is far from designing, by this, to forbid their praying to Him, for not only Stephen and the apostles did this after He was gone to heaven; but it is made the distinguishing character of Christians, that they call upon Him, or upon his name. Acts 9: 14. Rom. 10: 12-14. 1 Cor. 1: 2.

HAMMOND and CUTLER

ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

24 Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.

25 These things have I spoken unto you in *proverbs: the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall shew you plainly of the Father.

26 At that day ye shall ask in my name; and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you:

1. 19, 13:35, 37, 14:5, 22, 15:15, 21, 20:21.

14:11, 14, 15:7, 16, 16:5, 24, Matt. 21:22, Eph. 2:19, 21:4-20, 1 Tim. 2:5, Heb. 4:14-16, 7:25, 35, 10:19-23, 1 John 2:1, 5:14-16.

Gen. 32:9, 1 Kings 18:36, 2 Kings 19:15, Matt. 6:9, Eph. 1:16, 17, 1 Thes. 5:11-13, 2 Thes. 1:2, 2:16, 18, 17.

29, 15:11, 1 John 1:3, 4, 2 John 12, Or. parables, 12:17, Ps. 49:3, 70:2, Prov. 1, 2, Matt. 13:10, 11, 34, 25, Mark 4:13.

29, 29, Acts 2:33-35, 2 Cor. 3:12-15, 12.

14:4, 5, 17:9, 19:24, Rom. 8:34.

Father, for that is the happiness of heaven, but to see God? *To know God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, is the greatest mystery with the contemplation of which the understanding can please itself; and to know Him as our Father, is the greatest happiness, with the choice and enjoyment of which the will and affections can please themselves.

Of this He had hitherto spoken in proverbs, wise sayings, but figurative, and sung in generals. Christ had spoken many things very plainly to them, and expounded his parables privately to the disciples; but, considering their dullness, and unaptness to receive what He said to them, He might be said to speak in proverbs; what He said to them was as a book sealed, Isa. 29:11. Comparing the discoveries made, in what He had spoken to their ears, with what He would make when He would put his Spirit into their hearts; all hitherto had been by proverbs. They would think themselves in a new world, when reflecting on their former notions as confused and enigmatical, compared with their present clear knowledge of divine things. *The ministration of the letter* was nothing to that of the Spirit, 2 Cor. 3:8-11. Confining it to what He had said of the Father, and his counsels, what He had said was very dark, compared with what was shortly to be revealed, Col. 2:2.

He would speak to them plainly, with freedom, of the Father. When the Spirit was poured out, the apostles attained to greater knowledge of divine things, as appears by the utterance the Spirit gave them, (Acts 2:4.) and what the Spirit showed them, Christ is here said to show them, for as the Father speaks by the Son, so the Son by the Spirit. But this promise will be fully accomplished in heaven, where we shall see the Father, face to face, not as now, through a glass darkly; (1 Cor. 13:12.) which is comforting under present darkness, by reason of which we cannot order our speech, not often disorder it. While here, we have many questions to ask concerning God and the invisible world; but in that day we shall ask no more questions.

II. He promises they should request nothing in vain. It is taken for granted that all Christ's disciples give themselves to prayer. He had taught them by his precept and pattern to be much in prayer; their instruction, strength, success, must be fetched in by prayer.

Here is an express promise of a grant, v. 23. Its preface leaves no room to question it; *Verily, verily, I say unto you*. The promise itself is incomparably rich and sweet, v. 23, ch. 14:13. What would we more?

We are here taught how to seek; we must have an eye to God as a Father, and come as children to Him; and to Christ as a Mediator, and come as clients. Asking of the Father includes a sense of spiritual wants and a desire of spiritual blessings, with a conviction that they are to be had from God only. It includes humility of address, with a believing confidence

could not rob them of their joy, because they could not separate them from the love of Christ, nor rob them of their God, nor of their treasure in heaven.

V. 23-27. An answer is here promised, for their further comfort. There are two ways of asking; inquiring and requesting. Christ speaks of both.

I. They should not need to inquire; (v. 23.) *In that day ye shall ask Me nothing; no questions; ye shall have such a clear knowledge of gospel-mysteries, that ye shall not need to inquire; (as Heb. 8:11. They shall not teach; ye shall have more knowledge on a sudden than hitherto by diligent attendance.)* They had asked ignorant questions, (as ch. 9:2.) ambitious, (as Matt. 18:1.) distrustful, (as Matt. 19:27.) impertinent, (as ch. 21:21.) curious, (as Acts 1:6.) but after the Spirit was poured out, nothing of all this. In Acts we seldom find them asking questions, as David, *Shall I do this? Or, Shall I go thither?* For they were constantly under divine guidance. In that weighty case of preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, Peter went, nothing doubting, Acts 10:20. We should aim at such a full assurance of understanding, that we may not hesitate, but be constantly led in a plain path both of truth and duty.

For this He gives a reason; (v. 25.) *These things have I spoken to you in proverbs, in a way you have thought not so plain as you could wish, but the time cometh, when I shall show you as plainly as you can desire, of the Father, without need of questions.*

The great thing Christ would lead them into, was, the knowledge of God; *I will show you the Father and bring you acquainted with Him*. This is what Christ designs to give, and all true Christians desire. When Christ would speak the greatest favor intended his disciples, He tells them He would show them plainly the

Father, for that is the happiness of heaven, but to see God? *To know God as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, is the greatest mystery with the contemplation of which the understanding can please itself; and to know Him as our Father, is the greatest happiness, with the choice and enjoyment of which the will and affections can please themselves.

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in Him, as able and ready to help us. Asking in Christ's name includes an acknowledgment of unworthiness to receive any favor, a complacency in God's method of correspondence with us by his Son, and an entire dependence on Christ as the Lord our righteousness.

We are taught how we shall speed, *We are more than we wish to have what we want, nay, what we will, in conformity to God's will, for asking? He will give it you, from whom proceedeth every good and perfect gift.* What Christ purchased by his death, He needed not, but intended it for, and consigned it to, his followers; and the valuable consideration He gave, being accepted, He draws a bill, as it were, on the treasury in heaven, which we are to present by prayer, and in his name ask for what is purchased and promised. Christ had promised illumination, but they must pray for it, and did so, Acts 1:14. He had promised perfection hereafter, but what shall they do in the mean time? They must continue praying. Perfect fruition is reserved for our rest; asking and receiving are the comfort of our pilgrimage.

It is thought sufficient if great men permit addresses, but Christ calls upon us to petition, v. 24.

Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name. Either, 1. *Nothing to what you might have asked, and will ask when the Spirit is poured out.* What a generous benefactor our Lord is; He gives liberally, and so far from upbraiding us with the frequency and largeness of his gifts, rather upbraids us with the seldomness and straitness of our requests; *Ye have asked nothing in comparison of what you want, and what I have to give, and have promised to give.* We are bid to open our mouth wide. Or, 2. They prayed many a prayer, but never so expressly in the name of Christ as He now directs them to; for He had not as yet offered up that great sacrifice, in the virtue of which our prayers were to be accepted, the incense whereof was to perfume all our devotions. Hitherto they had cast out devils, and healed diseases, in the name of Christ, as a King and a Prophet, but they could not as yet distinctly pray in his name as a Priest.

Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full. Here, 1. He directs them to ask for all they needed, all He had promised. 2. He assures them that they shall receive. What we ask from a principle of grace, God will graciously give. There is something more in that than in the promise, that He will give it. He will not only give it, but give you the comfort and benefit of it, a heart to eat of it, Eccl. 6:2. 3. That hereby their joy shall be full. Which speaks, 1st. The effect of the prayer of faith. Would we have our joy as full as it is capable of being in this world, we must be much in prayer. When bid to rejoice evermore, it follows immediately, *Pray without ceasing*. See how high we are to aim in prayer—not only at peace; but a fullness of joy. Or, 2dly. The effects of the answer of prayer: *Ask, and ye shall receive what will fill your joy.* Christ's gifts fill the treasures of the soul, they fill its joys, Prov. 8:21. *Ask for the Holy Ghost, and ye shall receive it; and whereas other knowledge increases sorrow, (Eccl. 1:18.) the knowledge He gives will increase, fill, your joy.*

The grounds on which they might hope, (v. 26, 27.) summed up in short by the apostle, (1 John 2:1.) *We have an advocate with the Father.*

We have an Advocate; Christ saw cause at present not to insist upon that, only to make the following encouragement shine the brighter; *Suppose I should not tell you that I will undertake to solicit every particular cause you have there, yet it may be a general ground of*

He will give it you. [Is it true then, that, literally speaking, whatever we ask God, He will give us? Such is not the meaning of the promise, for we may ask for many things sinful in themselves, or hurtful in their application. It is the end of all the dispensations of our heavenly Father to promote his own glory, and therein the holiness and happiness of his people. In this sense is the promise to be understood, that if they are conducive to the promotion of God's glory, and the holiness and happiness of his people, all these things will He give us. Whatsoever may appear to us the best means for attaining these

ends, it is reasonable we should pray for; still we should always pray with a firm persuasion that our own judgment as to the means must be infinitely below that of the Judge of all the earth, and should, therefore, be convinced, that however He may appear to refuse our petitions, He is really and effectually granting them; though, perhaps the effects of prayer are not perceptible to the bodily eye, and can be discovered only by the eye of faith, which discerns the fulfillment of the spirit of a petition, where it may not be agreeable to the divine wisdom to vouchsafe a compliance with its letter.] Bp. May

27 For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God.

28 I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father.

29 His disciples said unto him, Lo, now speakest thou plainly, and speakest not *proverb.

30 Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: ^b by this we believe that thou camest forth from God.

b 14:21, 23. 17:23, 25. Zeph. 3:17. Heb. 12:6. Jude 20, 21. Rev. 3: 9, 19.
c 8:42. 21:15-17. Matt. 10:37. 1 Cor. 16:22. 2 Cor. 5:14. Eph. 6:24.
d 1 Pet. 1:8. 1 John 4:19.
e 4:30. 3:13. 7:29. 17:7, 8, 25. Rom. 8:3. 1 Cor. 15:47. Gal. 4:4. 1 Tim. 1:15.
f 8:14. 13:1-3. 15:16. 14:23. 17:5, 11, 13. Luke 9: 51. 24:51. Acts 1:8-11.
g Or, *parable*. 25.
h 17:19. 5:20. 21:17. Heb. 4:13. h 27. 17:8.

as that which recommended Me, and believed in Me, when the world hated and rejected Me; and ye shall be distinguished, who have thus distinguished yourselves. See what advantage Christ's disciples have; the Father loves them, because they love Christ; so well pleased is He in Him, that He is well pleased with all his friends. Observe

What encouragement this gave them in prayer. It cautions us against hard thoughts of God. When we are taught in prayer to plead Christ's merit and intercession, it is not as if all the kindness were in Christ only, and in God nothing but wrath: the Father's love and good-will appointed the Mediator; so that we owe Christ's merit to God's mercy. Let it cherish and confirm in us good thoughts of God. Believers, that love Christ, ought to know that God loves them, and therefore to come boldly to Him as children to a loving Father.

V. 23-33. We have here,

1. A plain declaration of Christ's mission from the Father, and return to Him; v. 23. This is the conclusion of the whole matter. Nothing had He more inculcated upon them, than these two things,—the *Alpha* and *Omega* of the mystery of godliness, (1 Tim. 3:16.) that the Redeemer, in his entrance, was *God manifest in the flesh*, and, in his exit, was *received up into glory*. These two great truths are here put into a few words. Brief summaries of Christian doctrine are of great use to beginners. The principles of the oracles of God brought into a little compass in creeds and catechisms, have, like the beams of the sun contracted in a burning-glass, conveyed divine light and heat with wonderful power. Such we have, (Job 28: 23. Eccl. 12: 13. 1 Tim. 1: 15. Tit. 2: 11, 12. 1 John 5: 11.) much in a little. They are compared and set the one against the other. There is an admirable harmony in divine truths; they corroborate and illustrate one another; Christ's coming and his going do so; Christ had commended his disciples for believing that He came from God, (v. 27.) and from thence infers the necessity and equity of his returning to God, which therefore should not seem either strange or sad. Note, The due improvement of what we know and ~~own~~ would help us to understand what seems difficult and doubtful. Christ will return no more to the world, till He comes to put an end to it; still He is spiritually present with his church, and will be to the end.

The disciples' satisfaction in this; (v. 29, 30.) *Lo, now speakest Thou plainly*. This one word did them more good than all the rest, though He had said many things likely enough to fasten upon them. The Spirit, as the wind, blows when and where, and by what word, He pleases; perhaps a word that has been *spoken once, yea twice*, and not perceived, yet, being often repeated, takes hold at last.

When in the dark concerning what He said, they did not say, *Lo, now speakest Thou obscurely*, as blaming Him; but now that they apprehend his meaning, they give Him glory for condescending to their capacity. *Divine truths are then most likely to do good*, when spoken plainly, 1 Cor. 2: 4. Note, When Christ is pleased to speak plainly to our souls, and to bring us with open face to behold his glory, we have reason to rejoice in it.

Now we are sure. We believe that Thou camest forth from God. He had said, (v. 27.) that they did not believe this; 'Lord,' (say they,) 'we do

believe it, have cause to, and know that we believe it.

The motive of their faith was his omniscience. This proved Him a teacher from God, and more than a prophet, that He knew all things, which they were convinced of by this, that He resolved the doubts hid in their hearts, and answered the scruples they had not confessed. Note, Those know Christ best, that know Him by experience; that can say of his power, *It works in me*; of his love, *He loved me*. And this proves Christ not only to have a divine mission, but to be a divine Person; that He is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, therefore the essential, eternal Word, Heb. 4: 12, 13. He has made all the churches to know that He searches the reins and the heart, Rev. 2: 23. This confirmed the faith of the disciples here, as it made the first impression upon the woman of Samaria, that Christ told her all things that ever she did, (ch. 4: 29.) and upon Nathaniel, that Christ saw him under the fig-tree, ch. 1. 48, 49.

These words, and needest not that any man should ask thee, may speak, either, Christ's aptness to teach, as He prevents us with his instructions, is communicative of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hid in Him, and needs not to be importuned; or, His ability to teach; 'Thou needest not, to have the learners' doubts told thee.' The best teachers can answer what is spoken only, but Christ what is thought, what we are afraid to ask, as the disciples were, Mark 9: 32. Thus He can have compassion, Heb. 5: 2. See

The gentle rebuke Christ gave the disciples for their confidence, that they now understood Him, v. 31, 32. Observing how they triumphed in their attainments, He said, 'Do ye now look upon yourselves as advanced and confirmed disciples? Do ye now think to make no more blunders? Alas! ye know not your weakness; ye will very shortly be scattered every man to his own,' &c. Here is,

1. A question to put them upon consideration; *Do ye now believe?* (1.) 'If now, why not sooner? Have ye not heard the same things before?' They who after many instructions are at last persuaded to believe, have reason to be ashamed that they believed not sooner. (2.) 'If now, why not ever? Where will your faith be in an hour of temptation?' As far as there is inconstancy in our faith, there is cause to question the sincerity of it, and to ask, 'Do we indeed believe?'

2. A prediction of their fall; how confident soever they were now of their stability, in a little time they would all desert Him; which was fulfilled that very night, when, on his being seized, all his disciples forsook Him and fled, Matt. 26: 56. They were scattered, (1.) From one another; they provided every one for his own safety, without concern for each other. Troublous times are times of scattering to Christian societies; in the cloudy and dark day the flock of Christ is dispersed, Ezek. 34: 12. So Christ, as a society, is not visible. (2.) From Him; *Ye shall leave Me alone*. They should have been witnesses for Him upon his trial, should have ministered to Him in his sufferings; if they could have given Him no comfort, they might have done Him some credit; but they were ashamed of his chain, and afraid of sharing with Him in his sufferings. Note, Many a good cause, when distressed by enemies, is deserted by its friends. The disciples had continued with Christ in his other temptations, and yet turned their back upon Him now; those that are tried, do not always prove trusty. If at any time we find our friends unkind to us, let us remember that Christ's were so to Him.

They were scattered every man to his own; not to their own possessions or habitations, those were in Galilee; but to their own friends and acquaintance in Jerusalem; every one went where he fancied he should be most safe. Note, Those will not dare to suffer for religion, that seek their own things more than the things of Christ, and that look upon the things of this world as *their own pro-*

31 Jesus answered them, ¹Do ye now believe?

32 Behold, ²the hour cometh, yea, is now come, ³that ye shall be scattered, every man to his ⁴own, and shall leave me alone: and ⁵yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that ¹in me ye might have peace. ²In the world ye shall have tribulation; ³but be of good cheer, ⁴I have overcome the world.

1 13.38, Luke 9:44, 45.
2 4:21, 23, 5:35, 38, 12:23.
3 1 Zech. 13:7, Matt. 26:31, 58, Mark 14:27, 50, Acts 8:1, 2 Tim. 4:16, 17.
4 Or, own home.
5 m 8:16, 29, 14:10, 11, 1a, 50:6-9.
6 14:27, Ps. 35:8-11, 1a, 8:6, 7, Mic. 5:5, Luke 2:14, 19:38, Rom. 5:1, 2, Eph. 2:14-17, Phil. 4:7, Col. 1:20, 2 Thes. 3:16, Heb. 7:2, 13:20, 21.
7 15:19-21, Acts 14:22, Rom. 9:36.
8 Cor. 7:4, 1 Thes. 3:4, 2 Tim. 3:12, Heb. 11:25, 1 Pet. 5:9, Rev. 7:14.
9 16:11, Acts 9:31, 23:11, 27:22, 25.
10 p 16:1, Acts 2:13, 13:11, 1 Thes. 3:7, 11.
11 q 11, 12:31, 1 Sam. 17:51, 52, Ps. 48:18, Rom. 8:37, Gal. 1:4, 2:14, 1 John 4:4, 5:4.

Him, Isa. 50: 7. When He complained of his Father's forsaking Him, He called Him *My God*, and presently after was so well assured of his favorable presence with Him as to commit his Spirit into his hand. This He had comforted Himself with all along; (ch. 8, 29.) *He that sent Me, is with Me, the Father hath not left Me alone*, and especially now at last. This assists our faith in the acceptableness of Christ's satisfaction: no doubt the Father was well pleased in Him, for He went with Him from first to last.

[2.] All believers, by virtue of their union with Chr st, when *alone*, are not alone, but the Father is with them. 1st. When solitude is *their choice*, as Isaac in the field, Nathaniel under the fig-tree, Peter upon the house-top, meditating and praying. They that converse with God in solitude, are never less alone than when alone. God and a good heart are good company. 2dly. When solitude is *their affliction*, their enemies lay them alone, and their friends leave them so; their company, like Job's, is made desolate; yet they are not so much alone as they are thought to be; the Father is with them, as He was with Joseph in his bonds, and with John in his banishment. In their greatest troubles they are as one whom his father pities, whom his mother comforts. While we have God's favorable presence with us, we are happy, and ought to be easy, though all the world forsake us. *We do not render due honor to God, unless we deem Him alone all-sufficient.* Calvin.

He comforts them with a promise of peace in Him, by virtue of his victory over the world, p. 33. Observe,

1. The end Christ aimed at in preaching this farewell sermon to his disciples, was, that in Him they might have peace. He did not hereby intend to give them a full view of the doctrine they were shortly to be made masters of by the

spirit, but only to satisfy them for the present that his departure was for the best. Or, Christ had said all this, that by enjoying Him they might have the best enjoyment of themselves.

Note, (1.) It is Christ's will that his disciples have peace within, whatever be their troubles without. (2.) Peace in Christ is the only true peace, and in Him alone believers have it, for *this man shall be the peace*, Mic. 5: 5. *Through Him we have peace with God, and in Him peace in our own minds.* (3.) The word of Christ aims at this, that in Him we may have peace. Peace is the fruit of the lips, of his lips, Isa. 57: 19.

2. The entertainment they were likely to meet in the world; 'Never expect outward peace'; though sent to proclaim peace on earth, and good-will to men, they must expect trouble on earth, and ill-will from men. Note, Tribulation has been the lot of Christ's disciples in this world. Men persecute them because they are so good, and God corrects them because they are no better. Men design to cut them off from the earth, and God designs by affliction to make them meet for heaven; and thus they shall have tribulation.

3dly. He spake of it as a thing very near. *The hour was already come*, in a manner. Note, A little time may produce great changes, both concerning us and in us.

Yet I am not alone. He would not be thought to complain of their deserting Him, as if it were any real damage; for He should be sure of his Father's presence, which was every thing; *The Father is with Me*. We may consider this;

[1.] As a privilege peculiar to the Lord Jesus; the Father was with Him in his sufferings as He never was with any, for still He was in the bosom of the Father. The divine nature did not desert the human nature, but put invincible comfort and inestimable value into his sufferings. The Father had engaged to be with Him in his whole undertaking, (Ps. 89: 21, &c.) and to preserve Him; (Isa. 49: 3.) this emboldened

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PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 23—33. We are encouraged to come at all times, especially when depressed with sorrow, to God, in the Redeemer's name; that we may ask and receive, till our affliction be turned into 'the fulness of joy!' 'Darkness will become light before us'; those things, which seemed most obscure, will appear plain: we shall have increasing evidence, that the Father Himself loves us, as those who, taught and drawn by his preventing grace, love and believe in his Son. We shall perceive that He knows, and anticipates, our desires; delights to hear and answer our prayers; and that even our manifold infirmities and offences will not cause Him to cease from loving us, and communicating all needful blessings to us. But 'while

we think we stand, let us take heed lest we fall'; we know not how we should act, if brought into temptation; we ought therefore to watch and pray without ceasing, that we may not be left to ourselves.—We must seek our peace and comfort in Christ; not in the world, which we must conflict with as an enemy, in whatever form it appears; an enemy which we must overcome, or we shall fatally be overcome by it: and we should expect tribulation as long as we continue here on earth. But, relying on our Savior, and looking constantly to Him, we may go forward with confidence; assured of being made more than conquerors, through the love and power of our omnipotent, faithful, unchangeable Friend.

SCOTT.

Vers 33.

I have overcome the world. 'By "the world," we must here understand the evil of the world, its wickedness, troubles, and temptations, all in it that we have reason to fear and avoid, for the sake of our safety, or our happiness in this life and the next. And these Christ overcame by expiating sin upon the cross, and enabling the faithful, by the assistance of his grace, to subdue their corrupt passions, by Himself submitting to poverty, sorrow, and even death itself, and by displaying those heavenly virtues which shine in his whole character and conversation.'

Abp. TILLOTSON.

'These last discourses are excellently adapted to the intent for which John wrote the whole Gospel: since they contain the most evident and illustrious proofs of the Divinity of Christ's per-

son, and the excellence of his work, both which John meant to demonstrate from his words and deeds themselves. In the discourses our Lord has declared in many ways the exalted nature of his person; as when He says, "He that seeth Me, seeth the Father; what the Father hath, I have"; and when He says, "He went out from the bosom of the Father, came upon the earth, and is now returning to the Father, from whom He had departed; that his words are not his own, but the Father's; that He came, not only in order to teach, but to lay down his life for others; and that by Him alone is there an entrance to eternal life, &c. From all which John has established the fact he meant to prove, that Jesus is the true Messiah, the Son of God, and the Savior of the human race.'

TITTMAN.

CHAP. XVII.

Jesus prays the Father to glorify Him, that He may glorify the Father, and give eternal life, which is found in knowing the Father and the Son, to His disciples, 1-5; to preserve the spiritual unity of faith and love, after His ascension, 6-12; and from the world and all evil, 13-16; and to sanctify them by the truth, 17-19. He intercedes for them, and all who should believe in Him through their word; that they might be united in love and love, to the most intimate communion with the Father and the Son, and be brought to share His glory in heaven, 20-26.

THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

a. 1141. Ps. 121:1, 2. 123:1. Is. 38: 14. Luke 18:13.
b. 730. 8:20. 12:23, 27, 28. 13:1. 16: 7. Mark 14:2. Luke 22:53.
c. 4, 5. 7:39. 11:4. 13:31, 32. Acts 3: 13. Pet. 2:9-11. 1 Pet. 1:21.

3. It was a family-prayer. Christ's disciples were his family, and, to set a good example before masters of families, He not only, as a son of Abraham, taught his household, (Gen. 18: 19.) but, as a son of David, blessed his household, 2 Sam. 6: 20.

4. It was a parting prayer; when parting with our friends, it is good to part with prayer, Acts 20: 36. Christ's parting, by death, should be sanctified and sweetened by prayer. Dying Jacob blessed the twelve patriarchs, Moses, when dying, the twelve tribes, and here, the dying Jesus the twelve apostles.

5. The prayer was a preface to his sacrifice, now about to be offered on earth, specifying the favors and blessings designed to be purchased by the merit of his death, for those that were his. Christ prayed then as a priest now offering sacrifice, in virtue of which all prayers were to be made.

6. It was a specimen of his intercession, within the veil. Not that in his exalted state He addresses Himself to his Father by way of humble petition, as when on earth. His intercession in heaven is a presenting of his merit to his Father, for the benefit of all his chosen ones.

He lifted up his eyes to heaven, as ch. 11: 41. not that Christ needed thus to engage his own attention, but He was pleased thus to sanctify this gesture to those that use it, and justify it against those that ridicule it. It is significant of the lifting up of the soul to God in prayer, Ps. 25: 1. *Up with your hearts*, was, anciently, a call to prayer, up to heaven; thither we must direct our desires.

Christ prays to God as a Father. All that have the Spirit of adoption, are taught to cry, *Abba, Father*, Rom. 8: 15. Gal. 4: 6. And it is our duty, for we have liberty of access to God, ground of confidence in Him, and great expectations from Him. Christ calls Him *holy Father*, (v. 11.) and *righteous Father*, v. 25. It will be of great use in prayer, both for direction and encouragement, to call God what we hope to find Him.

He prayed for Himself first; though Christ, as God, was prayed to, Christ, as man, prayed; thus it became Him to fulfil all righteousness. It was said to Him, as it is to us, *Ask, and I will give thee*, Ps. 2: 8. What He had purchased He must ask for; and shall we expect to have what we never merited, but have a thousand times forfeited, unless we pray for it? This honors prayer; it was Christ's messenger, the way in which even He corresponded with Heaven. It likewise gives great encouragement to praying people, and cause to hope that even the prayer of the destitute shall not be despised; time was, when our Advocate had a cause of his own to solicit, on the success of which depended his honor as Mediator; and this He was to solicit in the method prescribed to us, *prayer and supplication*, (Heb. 5: 7.) so that He knows the heart of a petitioner, Ex. 23: 9.

Christ began with prayer for Himself, and afterward prayed for his disciples; this charity must begin at home, though it must not end there. We must love and pray for our neighbor as ourselves, and therefore in a right manner love and pray for ourselves first.

His prayer for Himself was much shorter than that for his disciples. Our prayers for the church must not be crowded into a corner; in making supplication for all saints, we have room to enlarge, and should not straiten ourselves.

The two petitions of Christ for Himself, are one—that He might be glorified. But the petition is twice made, because it has a double reference; 1. To the prosecution of his undertaking; *Glorify Me, that I may glorify Thee*, in what is agreed to be yet done, v. 1-3. And, 2. To the performance of his undertaking hitherto; *Glorify Me, for I have glorified Thee*.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVII. v. 1-3. 'Christ, the eternal High Priest, being about to offer Himself, by solemn prayers consecrates Himself as the sacrifice, and us with Him, to God the Father. This prayer, therefore, after He had been the foundation of the church of God from the creation of the world, is now, and will be, to the consummation of all things.' *Beza*. (3.) *The only true God*. 'These words cannot be reasonably supposed to exclude Him from a true divinity, who is in Scripture styled the true God. (1 John 5: 20) He is styled the only true God, in exclusion of those whom the false persuasion of the Gentiles had introduced.' *Whitby*

SCOTT.

put into our possession; all is yours, even the world. Christ having overcome the world, believers are to pursue the victory, and divide the spoil. This is by faith, 1 John 5: 4. *We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us*.

CHAP. XVII. v. 1-5. Many a solemn prayer Christ made in the days of his flesh; (sometimes He continued all night in prayer;) but no one is recorded so fully as this.

When He had spoken these words, the foregoing farewell to his disciples, He prayed this prayer in their hearing.

1. It was a prayer after sermon; when He had spoken from God to them, He addressed God for them. Note, We must pray for those we preach to. He that was to prophesy upon the dry bones, was also to pray, *Come, O breathe, and breathe upon them*. And the word preached should be prayed over, for God gives the increase.

2. It was a prayer after sacrament; after Christ and his disciples had eaten the passover and Lord's supper together, and He had given them a suitable exhortation, He closed the solemnity with prayer; that God would preserve the good impressions of the ordinance upon them.

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I have done my part; now, Lord, do thine; v. 4: 5.

Glorify thy Son according to thy promise that thy Son may glorify Thee according to his undertaking, v. 1. 'The hour is come when all the powers of darkness will combine to vilify thy Son; now, Father, glorify Him on earth; which was done, 1. Even in his sufferings, by the signs and wonders which attended them. When they that came to take Him, were thunder-struck with a word, when Judas confessed Him innocent, and sealed that confession with his own guilty blood, when the judge's wife asleep, and the judge himself awake, pronounced Him righteous, when the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple rent, then the Father not only justified, but glorified the Son. 2. Even by his sufferings; when He was crucified, He was magnified, and glorified, ch. 13: 31. It was in his cross that He conquered Satan and death; his thorns were a crown, and Pilate in the inscription wrote more than he thought. But, 3. Much more after his sufferings; the Father glorified the Son when He raised Him from the dead, showed Him openly to chosen witnesses, and poured out the Spirit to support his cause, and set up his kingdom.

He pleads, to enforce this request,

1. *Relation*; *Glorify thy Son*; thy Son as Mediator. In consideration of this, the heathen are given Him for his inheritance; for *Thou art my Son*, Ps. 2: 7, 8. The devil had tempted Him to renounce his sonship with an offer of the kingdoms of this world; but He rejected it with disdain, and depended on his Father for preferment, and here applies for it. Note, They that have received the adoption of sons, may in faith pray for the inheritance of sons; if sanctified, then glorified; *Father, glorify thy Son*.

2. He pleads the time; *The hour is come*: the season fixed to an hour. The hour of Christ's passion was determined in the counsel of God. He had often said his hour was not yet come; but now it was, and He knew it. *Man knows not his time*, (Ec. 9: 12.) but the Son of man did. He calls it *this hour*, (ch. 12: 27.) and here *the hour*; compare Mark 14: 35. ch. 16: 21. For, the hour of the Redeemer's death, which was also the hour of his birth, was the most remarkable hour, and, without doubt, the most critical that ever was. Never did any hour challenge such expectations of it before, nor such reflections upon it after.

'The hour is come, in the midst of which I need to be owned.' Now is the crisis; the decisive battle between heaven and hell; that great cause, in which God's honor and man's happiness are embarked, must now be won or lost forever. 'Now glorify thy Son, give Him victory over principalities and powers, let the bruising of his heel be the breaking of the serpent's head, let thy Son be upheld, and not fail or be discouraged.' When Joshua went forth conquering and to conquer, it is said, *The Lord magnified Joshua*; so He glorified his Son, when He made the cross his triumphant chariot.

'The hour is come, in the close of which I expect to be crowned; when I am to be glorified, and set at thy right hand.' Between Him and that glory there intervened a bloody scene of suffering; but, being short, He made little of it; He did not expect glory till the hour was come. Christians in a trying hour, particularly a dying hour, may thus plead; 'Appear for me, now the earthly tabernacle is to be dissolved, the hour is come, that I should be glorified;' 2 Cor. 5: 1.

3. He pleads the Father's own concern therein—that thy Son may glorify Thee; for He had consecrated his whole undertaking to his Father's honor; He desired to be carried triumph-

(3.) 'Some have abused this passage to impugn the divinity of Christ. But in the words immediately preceding, Jesus asserts that to Him is delivered, by the Father, dominion over the human race, so that He has the power of bestowing eternal life. And a little after, He claims the glory He had before the creation of the world.' (A Hebrew phraseology, for eternity.) Now, could Jesus have asserted all this of Himself, and at the same time have been nothing more than a mere man? If He has, (and we see He has here expressly,) how could He, with any regard to truth, decline the divinity of Son of God, equal to the Father, and God Himself? But in this passage He testifies, that whosoever would attain eternal life, should know the true God

2 As ^d thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him:

3 And ^e this is life eternal; that they might know thee ^b the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

d 8:35 5:21-23. Pa. 2:5-12. 110: 1. Jan. 7:14. Matt. 11:27. 28:18. 1 Cor. 15:25-27. Eph. 1:20-23. Heb. 1:2. 2:9-13. 1 Pet. 2:22. 1:25. 4:14. 6:27, 31-37. 10:23. 1 Tim. 2:6. Rom. 8:23. Col. 3:3, 4. 1 Tim. 1:16. 1 John 1:2. 2:25. 5:20. John 21.

1. 6, 9, 12, 24. 6:37, 39. 10:29. 25. 8:19, 54, 55. 1 Cor. 28:9. Pa. 16. 53:11. Mat. 9:21. 31:33, 34. 2 Thes. 1:3. 1 Cor. 15:34. 2 Cor. 4:8. Hosa 6:1. Heb. 8:11, 12. 1 John 4:6. 5:20. 1 John 10. 2 Chr. 15:3. Jer. 10:10. 1 Cor. 8:4. 1 Thes. 1:3. 1 Tim. 6:15. 16. 1 John 5:20. 1:8, 17, 24. 6:27-29. 12:43, 50. 14:25. 15:19, 26. 16:11. Mat. 9:27. Luke 9:48. 1 John 4:14, 15. 5:11, 12.

if we secretly honor ourselves to our own counsels, and then, instead of honoring, we shall shame ourselves.

4. He pleads his commission; *Gloryify thy Son, as Thou hast given Him power; in the execution of the powers Thou hast given Him; or, that thy Son may gloryify Thee according to the power given Him.* Observe

The origin of the Mediator's power; *Thou hast given Him power.* Man must, in order to his recovery, be taken under a new model of government, erected by a special commission of heaven, constituting Christ sole Arbitrator of the grand difference that was, and sole Guarantee of the grand alliance that was to be between God and man; so He received his official power; which was to be executed in a way distinct from his power and government as Creator. Note, The church's king is no usurper, as the prince of this world is.

He has power over all flesh. (1.) Over all mankind. The powers of the upper and unseen world of spirits, are subject to Him: (1 Pet. 3: 22,) but, mediating between God and man, He here pleads his power over all flesh. They were men whom He was to subdue and save, and therefore that rank of beings was put under his feet.

(2.) Over mankind, corrupt and fallen, called flesh, Gen. 6: 3. If he had not in this sense been flesh, he had not needed a Redeemer. All power over, and all judgment concerning, this sinful race is committed to Christ; power to bind or loose, acquit or condemn; to forgive sins, or not. Christ, as Mediator, has the government of the whole world put into his hand, is King of nations, has power even over those that know Him not, nor obey his Gospel; whom He does not rule, He overrules, Ps. 22: 23. 72: 8. Matt. 28: 18. ch. 3: 35.

The grand design of this power; *that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.* Here is the mystery of our salvation laid open.

(1.) The Father makes over the elect to the Redeemer, as his charge and trust, the crown and recompense of his undertaking. He has a sovereign power over all the race, but a peculiar interest in the chosen remnant: all things were put under his feet, but they were delivered into his hand.

(2.) The Son undertakes to secure the happiness of those that were given Him; to give eternal life to them. How great the authority of the Redeemer! He has lives and crowns to give, eternal lives, immortal crowns that never

andly through his sufferings to his glory, that He might gloryify the Father. (1.) By the death of the cross. The great intention of his sufferings was, to retrieve his Father's injured honor among men, and, by his satisfaction, to come up to the glory of God, which man, by his sin, came short of; 'Father, own Me in my sufferings, that I may honor Thee by them.' (2.) By the doctrine of the cross, now shortly to be published to the world. He prays that his Father would so grace his sufferings, as not only to take off the offence of the cross, but to make it to them that are saved, the wisdom of God, and the power of God. If God had not glorified Christ, by raising Him from the dead, his undertaking had been crushed.

Hereby He hath taught us, [1.] In our prayers, designs, and desires, to aim at the honor of God. It being our chief end to gloryify God, other things must be sought in subserenity to it. 'Do this for thy servant, that thy servant may gloryify Thee. Give me health, that I may gloryify Thee with my body; success, that I may gloryify Thee with my estate.' Hallowed be thy name, must be our first petition, and must fix our end in all other petitions, 1 Pet. 4: 11. [2.] He hath taught us what to expect. If we sincerely set ourselves to gloryify our Father, He will enable us to gloryify Him; give us grace sufficient, and opportunity. But more than Him, it is just with Him to leave us to our own counsels, and then, instead of honoring, we shall shame ourselves.

He pleads his commission; *Gloryify thy Son, as Thou hast given Him power; in the execution of the powers Thou hast given Him; or, that thy Son may gloryify Thee according to the power given Him.* Observe

The origin of the Mediator's power; *Thou hast given Him power.* Man must, in order to his recovery, be taken under a new model of government, erected by a special commission of heaven, constituting Christ sole Arbitrator of the grand difference that was, and sole Guarantee of the grand alliance that was to be between God and man; so He received his official power; which was to be executed in a way distinct from his power and government as Creator. Note, The church's king is no usurper, as the prince of this world is.

He has power over all flesh. (1.) Over all mankind. The powers of the upper and unseen world of spirits, are subject to Him: (1 Pet. 3: 22,) but, mediating between God and man, He here pleads his power over all flesh. They were men whom He was to subdue and save, and therefore that rank of beings was put under his feet.

(2.) Over mankind, corrupt and fallen, called flesh, Gen. 6: 3. If he had not in this sense been flesh, he had not needed a Redeemer. All power over, and all judgment concerning, this sinful race is committed to Christ; power to bind or loose, acquit or condemn; to forgive sins, or not. Christ, as Mediator, has the government of the whole world put into his hand, is King of nations, has power even over those that know Him not, nor obey his Gospel; whom He does not rule, He overrules, Ps. 22: 23. 72: 8. Matt. 28: 18. ch. 3: 35.

The grand design of this power; *that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him.* Here is the mystery of our salvation laid open.

(1.) The Father makes over the elect to the Redeemer, as his charge and trust, the crown and recompense of his undertaking. He has a sovereign power over all the race, but a peculiar interest in the chosen remnant: all things were put under his feet, but they were delivered into his hand.

(2.) The Son undertakes to secure the happiness of those that were given Him; to give eternal life to them. How great the authority of the Redeemer! He has lives and crowns to give, eternal lives, immortal crowns that never

fade. How gracious He is, in giving eternal life to those whom He undertakes to save. 1st. He sanctifies them in this world, gives them the spiritual life, which is eternal life in the bud ch. 4: 14. Grace in the soul, is heaven in the soul. 2dly. He will gloryify them in the other world; their happiness shall be completed in the vision and fruition of God. This only is mentioned, because it supposes all the other parts of his undertaking, teaching them, satisfying them, sanctifying them, and preparing them for that eternal life; and indeed, all the other were in order to this; we are called to his kingdom and glory, and begotten to the inheritance; what is last in execution was first in intention, and that is eternal life.

(3.) The subserenity of the Redeemer's universal dominion to this, v. 2. Note, Christ's dominion over the children of men, is in order to the salvation of the children of God. All things are for their sakes, 2 Cor. 4: 15. All Christ's laws, ordinances, and promises, which are given to all, are designed effectually to convey spiritual life, and secure eternal life, to all that were given to Christ; He is Head over all things to the church. The kingdoms of Providence and grace are put into the same hand, that all things may concur for good to the called.

Here is a further explication of this grand design; (v. 3.) 'This is life eternal, which I am empowered to give; this is the nature of it, this the way leading to it, to know Thee the only true God, and all the discoveries of natural religion, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent, as Mediator, and the doctrines and laws of that holy religion, which He instituted for the recovery of man.'

The great end which the Christian religion sets before us, is eternal life, the happiness of an immortal soul in the vision and fruition of God. This, He was to reveal to all, and secure to all, that were given Him. By the Gospel, life and immortality are brought to light, to hand, a life transcending this as much in excellency as in duration.

The sure way of attaining this end is, by the right knowledge of God and Christ; *This is life eternal, to know Thee;* which may be taken two ways. 1st. Life eternal lies in the knowledge of God and Christ; the present principle of this life is the believing knowledge of God and Christ; the future perfection of that life will be the intuitive knowledge of God and Christ: they that are brought into union with Christ, and live a life of communion with God in Christ, know, in some measure, by experience, what eternal life is, and will say, 'If this be heaven, heaven is sweet.' See Ps. 17: 15. 2dly. The way in which Christ gives eternal life, is by the knowledge of Him that has called us; (2 Pet. 1: 3.) and this is the way in which we receive it.

The Christian religion shows the way to heaven,

and Jesus Christ. Now the Greek translated *know*, as is well known and universally admitted, must here, (as in many other passages of Scripture,) denote not only to know, but to worship. But this worship can be suitable only to the true God: yet Christ expressly refers it not only to the Father, but to Himself. He neither discriminates, nor could mean to discriminate, Himself and the Father, or the worship due to each; but claims equal worship for both; as He had plainly done at 5: 23. Now if He has made, and commanded Himself to be accounted, equal to the Father, how could He, in one and the same place, say that He is inferior to the Father? Jesus revealed the true God, not such as He is in general, but such as He is unto men, not in respect of his nature, and divine essence, but his decrees and counsels; for in respect to nature, God cannot be known; (1 Tim. 6: 16.) not in reference to his attributes and works of power, but works of grace, exhibited by Christ: with the former knowledge, men were well acquainted; that the Jews had, and the Gentiles could attain unto; (Rom. 1: 19, 20,) but the latter (as we are told by Paul, 1 Cor. 2: 7.) was hidden, and no one ever possessed it, learnt it from others, or could form any conception of it. And this knowledge concerning God, our Lord has called the name of the Father, (v. 6, 11, 12, 26.) and his words: (v. 8.) finally, truth, v. 17, 19. Such then has Jesus revealed Himself by words and deeds, namely, as the Son of God, who was in heaven, and came from heaven in order to procure for, and confer salvation upon men. This, then, is the true God, and the true Christ; this, is the true knowledge of God and Christ, and as such, do God and Jesus claim to be worshipped, namely, as God who sent, as the Son who was sent by the Father for man's salvation. Any other knowledge of God is but of the right sort, nor sufficient for one who professes the name of Christ, and aspires to the salvation obtained by Him. He, indeed, who acknowledges God as the supreme Deity, and

the Creator and Governor of all things, and expects salvation from Him as such, acknowledges God not aright, not after the manner in which his Son has manifested Him, and has taught and commanded that He should be acknowledged and worshipped. He who recognizes in Jesus merely a holy man, of extraordinary endowments, intellectual and moral, a teacher of religion, does not acknowledge Him aright, that is, not after the manner in which Jesus has manifested Himself, and commanded Himself to be worshipped. We know or worship God then truly and aright, only when we acknowledge Him such as He hath revealed Himself by his Son Jesus Christ; and we know Jesus truly and aright, only when we acknowledge Him such as He hath professed Himself, and such as his Father hath demonstrated Him. To 'know the only true God,' is to acknowledge, that the true God, out of his ineffable love to the human race, decreed from eternity to save it by his own Son, and to that end sent Him on the earth, and committed the whole work of salvation into his hands; and that he is to acknowledge Him with effect, as not only, in return for this love, to worship God with our whole heart and mind, but also seek our salvation from this love of God by his Son. To know Christ, is to know Him as a Savior, the sole Giver of salvation, and to worship Him as such.

That Christ here speaks of the only true God, in distinction from idols, and not to the exclusion of Himself, appears from his speaking of Himself, as the object of the same fiducial knowledge with the Father, and from his distinguishing Himself from the Father, not by any essential title, but merely by his office-character, viz: Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent. And the same apostle, who recorded this prayer, expressly says of Christ, *This is the true God, and eternal life*, in opposition to idols. 1 John 5: 20, 21.

4. I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

[Practical Observations.]

12:28, 13:31, 32.
14:3, 5:36, 9:3, 14:31, 19:30.
Act. 20:21, 2 Tim. 4:7.
m. 24, 1:14, 3:13, 10:30, 14:9, Prov.
8:22-31, Phil. 2:6, Col. 1:15-17,
Heb. 1:3, 10, 1 John 1:2, Rev. 5:9-14,
1 Tim. 2, Matt. 28:34, 1 Pet. 1:20,
Rev. 1:8.

would have been *life eternal* to him; but now he is fallen, to *know God* is to *know Him* as a righteous Judge; we are therefore concerned to *know Christ* as our Redeemer, by whom alone we can now have access to God; it is *life eternal to believe in Christ*; and this He gives to as many as were given Him. See ch. 6: 39, 40. Those who are acquainted with God and Christ, are already in the suburbs of *life eternal*.

Christ prays to be glorified, in consideration of having glorified the Father hitherto, v. 4, 5. The former petition was, *Glorify Me* in this world; the latter is, *Glorify Me* in the other world. *I have glorified Thee on the earth, and now glorify Thou Me.*

With what contrition Christ reflects on the life He had lived on earth; v. 4. He does not complain of poverty and disgrace, what a weary life He had, as ever any man of sorrows had; He overlooks this, in reviewing the service He had done his Father, and the progress made in his undertaking. This is here recorded.

1. For the honor of Christ, that his life in all respects answered the end of his coming. Note, (1.) Our Lord had work given Him to do by Him that sent Him, and assisted Him; He came not into the world to live at ease, but to go about doing good *unto* to fulfil all righteousness. (2.) Though He had not, as yet, gone through the last part of his undertaking, yet He was so near being made perfect through sufferings, that He might say, *I have finished it*. The word signifies his performing every part of his undertaking in the most perfect manner. (3.) He glorified his Father, in that his work is perfect, and the same is the glory of the Redeemer; the Son to glorify the Father, by abasing Himself, was strange; yet it was contrived that so He should glorify Him; *I have glorified Thee on the earth*, in such a way as men on earth could bear the manifestation of thy glory.

2. It is recorded that we all may follow his example. (1.) We must make it our business to do the work God has appointed us to do, according to our capacity and sphere of activity; we must each do all the good we can. (2.) We must aim at the glory of God in all. We must glorify Him on the earth, which He has given unto the children of men; demanding only this rent; on the earth, where we are, in a state of probation for eternity. (3.) We must persevere herein to the end of our days; we must not sit down till we have finished our work, and accomplished, as a hireling, our day.

3. It is recorded for encouragement to all that rest upon Him. And He that finished his work for us, as a complete Savior, will finish it in us to the day of Christ.

See with what confidence He expects the joy set before Him; (v. 5.) Now, O Father, glorify Thou Me. He depends upon it, and cannot be denied.

Glorify Thou Me, as before, v. 1. All repetitions in prayer are not vain repetitions; Christ prayed, saying the same words, (Matt. 26: 44.) and yet prayed more earnestly. What his Father had promised Him, and He was assured of, He must pray for; promises are not designed to supersede prayers, but to be the guide of our desire, and the ground of our hopes. Christ's being glorified, includes all the honors, powers, and joys of his exalted state.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-5. Fervent prayer forms the proper conclusion of religious instructions, and the preparation for approaching trials: and our hearts should habitually be lifted up to God, that He would glorify Himself in and by us; prosper our endeavors to honor Him; support us in resisting temptations; and carry us through all difficulties to his heavenly kingdom. (2 The. 1: 5-12, v. 10-12. P. O.) But our supplications must be presented through our great High Priest, who 'hath power over all flesh;' and gives eternal life to his chosen people, and will consign unbelievers to everlasting punishment. For, however men may deny or overlook it, 'eternal life' cannot be obtained by any of our race, except through 'the knowledge of God,' revealed in Jesus, and through his meritorious obedience

Veres 4, 5.

To suppose with the Socinians, as some who were far remote from Socinianism, or from being disposed to derogate from the Savior's glory, have done, that nothing more is meant, than God's decree of glorifying the man Christ Jesus, not only enervates the language, but induces obscenity and impropriety; and sanctions a method of explaining away the Scriptures, of pernicious tendency: for thus the elect may be spoken of in similar language, as indeed some have ventured

1. By directing us to God, as the Author and felicity of our being; for Christ died to bring us to God, to love, obey, and trust in Him, as our Owner, Ruler, and Benefactor, to devote ourselves to Him as our sovereign Lord, depend on Him as our chief God, and direct all to his praise as our highest End; *this is life eternal*. God is here called the only true God, to distinguish Him from the gods of the heathen, which were counterfeiters and pretenders, not from the Son, of whom it is said, *He is the true God and eternal life*, (1 John 5: 20.) and who in this text is proposed as the object of the same religious regard with the Father. It is certain there is but one only living and true God, and the God we adore is He. He is the true God, not a mere name or notion; the only true God; and his service is the only true religion.

2. By directing us to Christ, as the Mediator between God and man. If man had continued innocent, the knowledge of the only true God

It is a glory with God; not only, *Glorify my name on earth, but Glorify Me with thine own Self*. It was heaven, to be with his Father; Prov. 8: 30. Dan. 7: 13. Heb. 8: 1. Note, Christ's brightest glories were to be displayed within the veil, where the Father manifests his glory. The praises of the upper world are offered to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb in conjunction; (Rev. 5: 13.) and the prayers of the lower world draw out grace and peace from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ in conjunction; thus the Father has glorified Him with Himself.

It is the glory He had with God before the world was. By this it appears, (1.) That Christ, as God, had a being before the world was, co-eternal with the Father; our religion acquaints us with one that was before all things, and by whom all things consist. (2.) His glory with the Father is from everlasting, as well as his existence with the Father; for He was from eternity the brightness of his Father's glory, Heb. 1: 3. As God's making the world only declared his glory, but made no real additions to it; so Christ undertook the work of redemption, not because He needed glory, for He had a glory with the Father before the world, but because we needed glory. (3.) Christ in his state of humiliation divested Himself of this glory, and drew a veil over it: though He was still God, yet He was *God manifest in the flesh*. (4.) In his exalted state He resumed this glory, and clad Himself again with his robes of light. Having performed his undertaking, He did, as it were, redeem a pledge, by this demand, *Glorify Thou Me*. He prays that even his human nature might be advanced to the highest honor it was capable of, his body a glorious body; and that the glory of the God-head might be manifested in the person of the Mediator, Emmanuel, God-man. He had despised the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, when Satan offered them to Him, and therefore might the more boldly claim the glories of the other world. Let the same mind be in us. 'Lord, give the glories of this world to whom Thou wilt, but let me have my portion of glory in the world to come.'

1. It was equitable, and admirably becoming, that if God were glorified in Him, He should glorify Him in Himself, ch. 13: 32. Such infinite value was there in what Christ did to glorify his Father, that He merited all the glories of his exalted state.

2. It was according to the covenant between them, that if the Son would make his soul an offering for sin, He should divide the spoil with the strong, (Isa. 53: 10, 12.) and the kingdom should be his: it was for the joy set before Him, that He endured the cross: and now, in his exalted state, He still expects the completing of his exaltation, Heb. 10: 13.

3. It was the most proper evidence of his Father's approving the work He had finished. By the glorifying of Christ we are satisfied that God was satisfied, and well pleased in Him.

and death; in which 'He glorified the Father on earth,' and 'finished the work which was given Him to do.'—By leaving 'the glory which He had with the Father before the world was,' by his ascension to heaven to be reinstated in his glory, and by the doctrine which He committed to his apostles, He has manifested God to man (6); and believers 'behold that glory as in a glass, till they are changed into the same image from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord.'—This knowledge, however, widely differs from those notions, which pass off for it is humbling, and sanctifying; the source of all spiritual worship and obedience; the hope, evidence, and earnest of eternal life, and the meetness for Heaven.

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to speak of their eternal justification. (Note, Rom. 8: 28-31, v. 30.)—Bring my human nature into a participation of the glory, which I, the Logos, had with Thee before the beginning of the world.' These phylact.

(5.) The glory which I had with Thee before the world was. To suppose that this refers only to that glory which he had in his decrees, seems to sink and contract it as a mere shadow of the genuine purpose.

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6 ¶ I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: ^athine they were, and thou gavest them me; ^band they have kept thy word.

7 Now ^cthey have known that all things, whatsoever thou hast given me, ^dare of thee:

8 For ^eI have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have ^freceived them, ^gand have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me.

4. Thus we must be taught that those only who glorify God on earth, and persevere in the work God hath given them to do, shall be glorified with the Father. Not that we can merit that glory, as Christ did, but our glorifying God is required as an evidence of our interest in Christ, through whom eternal life is God's free gift.

V. 6—10. *I pray not for the world.* Note, There is a world of people that Jesus Christ did not pray for. It is not meant of the world in general, (He prays for that here, (v. 21.) *That the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me*), nor is it meant of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews; but the world is opposed to the elect. Take the world for a heap of unwinnowed corn; God loves it, Christ prays and dies for it, for a blessing is in it; but the Lord perfectly knows them that are his, and extracts them; the world is the remaining heap of chaff; Christ neither prays nor dies for it, but the wind drives it away. These are called the world, because they are governed by the spirit of this world; for these, Christ does not pray; there are some things which He intercedes for with God, on their behalf, as the dresser for the barren tree; but they have no part or lot in the blessings here prayed for. He does not say, *I pray against the world*, as Elias against Israel; but, *I leave them to themselves*; they are not in the Lamb's book of life, and therefore not in the breast-plate of the High Priest. Miserable is the condition of such, as of those whom the prophet was forbidden to pray for, Jer. 7: 16. We that know not who are chosen, and who passed by, must pray for all men, 1 Tim. 2: 1, 4. While there is life, there is hope. See 1 Sam. 12: 23.

He prays for those that were given Him, meaning primarily the disciples; but it extends to all who receive and believe the words of Christ, v. 6, 8. *He prays for all that should believe on Him*; (v. 20.) and not only the petitions that follow, but those also which went before, to all believers; for He calls things that

are, must be construed to extend to them as well as though they were.

Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; (v. 6.) and again (v. 9.) *Them which Thou hast given Me*. ^aFather, those I am now praying for, are such as Thou hast intrusted Me with, and what I have to say for them is in pursuance of the charge I have received concerning them.

This is meant primarily of the disciples who were given to Christ as pupils, to be educated; and as his agents, when He went to heaven, to publish his Gospel, and plant his church. When they left all to follow Him, this was the secret spring, they were given to Him, else they had not given themselves to Him. Note, The apostleship and ministry, which are Christ's gift to the church, were first the Father's gift to Christ. As, under the law, the Levites were given to Aaron, (Num. 3: 9.) to the great High Priest of our profession the Father gave the apostles first, and ministers in every age. See Eph. 4: 8, 11. Ps. 68: 18. Christ received this gift for men, that He might give it to men. This puts great honor upon the ministry of the Gospel, and magnifies that office, so much vilified; and it lays a mighty obligation upon ministers.

But the elect are elsewhere said to be given to Christ; (ch. 6: 37, 39.) and He often laid stress upon this, that those He was to save were given Him as his charge; to his care they were committed, from his hand they were expected, and concerning them He received commandments.

Thine they were. Three ways: 1st. Their being was derived from Him. When given to Christ to be vessels of honor, they were in his hand, as clay in the hand of the potter, to be disposed of as God's wisdom saw most for God's glory. 2dly. They were criminals, and their being was forfeited to Him. They must have been made sacrifices to justice, when chosen to be monuments of mercy; might justly have been delivered to the tormentors, when delivered to the Savior. 3dly. They were chosen, and their lives and being were reserved for Him; set apart for God. This He insists upon again, (v. 7.) *All things whatsoever Thou hast given Me, are of Thee*; which, though it may take in all that appertained to his office as Mediator, seems especially to be meant of those that were given Him; *'They are of Thee, their name, their well-being is of Thee; and therefore, I bring them all to Thee, that they may be for Thee.'*

Thou gavest them Me, as sheep to the shepherd, patients to the physician, children to a tutor; thus He will deliver up his charge; (Heb. 2: 13.) *The children Thou hast given Me.* They were delivered to Christ, 1st. That not one of the little ones might perish, and that the purpose of God according to election might stand. 2dly. That the undertaking of Christ might not be fruitless; that He should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, (Isa. 53: 10, 11.) and might not spend his strength, and shed his blood, for nought, (Isa. 49: 4.) We may plead, 'Lord, keep my graces, keep my comforts, for mine they were, and Thou gavest them Me.'

I have manifested thy name to them. I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me, v. 8.

The great design of Christ's doctrine was, to manifest God's name, (ch. 1: 18.) to instruct the ignorant, and rectify mistakes concerning God. See

His faithful discharge of this undertaking: 1. He loved it. The truth of his doctrine agreed with the instructions He received from his Father. He gave not only the things, but the very words that were given Him. Ministers, in wording their message, must have an eye to the words which the Holy Ghost teaches. The tendency of his doctrine was, to manifest God's name. He did not seek Himself, but aimed to magnify his Father. Note, 1st. It is Christ's prerogative, to manifest God's name to the souls of men. No man knows the Father, but He to whom the Son will reveal Him, Matt. 11: 27. He only has acquaintance with the Father, and is able to open the truth; and He only has access to the spirits of men, and is able to open the understanding. Ministers may publish the name of the Lord, but Christ only can manifest that name. By the Word of Christ, God is revealed to us; by the Spirit of Christ, God is revealed in us. Ministers may speak the words of God to us, but Christ can give us his words, as food, as treasure. 2dly. Sooner or later, Christ will manifest God's name to all that were given Him, and will give them his Word, to be the support of their spiritual life, and the earnest of their bliss.

The good effect of his care and pains; v. 6, 7, 8.

'They have received the words I gave them, as the ground the seed, and the earth the rain.' The Word was to them an ingrafted Word.

'They have kept thy Word, have continued in it; have conformed to it.' Christ's commandment is kept, only when it is obeyed. They that were to teach others the commands of Christ, ought to be themselves observant of them. It was requisite that they should keep what was committed to them, for it was to be transmitted by them to every place for every age.

'They have understood the Word.' They have been aware that Thou art the original Author of this holy religion: that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee. Christ's offices and powers, the gifts of the Spirit, without measure, were from God; designed for his own glory in man's salvation. Note, It is a great satisfaction, in our reliance on Christ, that all He is and has, all He said and did, all He is doing and will do, are of God, 1 Cor. 1: 30. If the righteousness be of God's appointing, we shall be justified; if the grace be of his dispensing, we shall be sanctified.

To believe is, to know surely. The disciples were defective in knowledge; yet Christ, who knew them better than they knew themselves, passes his word for them that they did believe, v. 8. Note, We may know that surely, which we do not know fully; the certainty of the things which are not seen, though we cannot particularly describe them. We walk by faith, which knows surely, not yet by sight, which knows clearly.

We are to believe, that Jesus Christ came down from God; that He is the Ambassador of the eternal King; so that the Christian religion is of equal authority with natural religion; therefore the doctrines of Christ are to be received as divine truths, his commands as laws, and his promises as divine securities.

Christ speaks of this here, 1. As pleased with it. Though his disciples' dullness and weakness had grieved Him; their adherence to Him, their gradual improvement, and their great attainments at last, were his joy. Christ delights in the proficiency of his scholars. He accepts the sincerity of their faith, and graciously passes by its infirmity. He is willing to make the best of us; thereby encouraging our faith, and teaching us charity.

2. He pleads it with his Father, that they had given themselves to Him. Note, The improvement of grace, is a good plea for further grace: To him that hath shall be given. 'Them that keep Christ's Word, and believe on Him, Christ will commend, and recommend to his Father.'

He pleads the Father's own interest in them; (v. 9.) *I pray for them, for they are thine; He and the Father have a joint and mutual interest in what pertained to each; All mine are thine*

9 I ^apray for them: I pray not for the world, ^abut for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.

10 And ^aall mine are thine, and thine are mine; ^aand I am glorified in them.

11 And now ^aI am no more in the world; ^abut these are in the world, and I come to thee. ^aHoly Father, ^akeep through ^athine own name those whom thou hast given me, ^athat they may be one, as we are.

14, 15, 20. 14:16, 17. 16:25, 27. Luke 22:32. John 8:34. Heb. 7:25. 9:24. 1 John 2:1, 2. 5:19. Rev. 12:9. 13:8. 20:15.
6:24.
10:30. 16:14, 15. 1 Cor. 3:21—23. Col. 1:15—19. 2:9. 5:23. 11:4. 12:23. Acts 19:17. Phil. 1:20. 2:9—11. 2 Thes. 1:10. 12. Rev. 5:8—14.
13. 13:1, 3. 16:28. Acts 1:9—11. 3:21. Heb. 13. 9:24. Jer. 14:7, 21. 14:18. 15:18—21. 16:33. Matt. 10:16. Jam. 4:4. 1 John 3:12, 13. 5:19.
6:2. Matt. 5:48. 1 Pet. 1:15—17. Rev. 4:8. 15:4.
12:15. 10:25, 30. Ps. 17:8, 9. Ia. 27:13. 1 Pet. 1:5. Jude 1.
Ez. 7:9, 15. 44:6. Jer. 14:7, 21. Ez. 20:32, 44. Matt. 6:9. Rom. 9:17.
1:21, 22. 10:40. 14:20. Rom. 15:5, 6. 1 Cor. 1:10. 12:12, 13. Eph. 4:3.

aid at his feet, to be serviceable to Him. What we have may be comfortably committed to God's care and blessing, when it is cheerfully submitted to his disposal; ^a'Lord, take care of what I have, for it is all thine.'

I am glorified in them. 1. I have been; what little honor Christ has in this world, was among his disciples; He had been glorified by their attendance, and obedience, their preaching and working miracles in his name; therefore I pray for them. Note, Those shall have an interest in Christ's intercession, in and by whom He is glorified.

2. 'I am to be glorified in them; they are to bear up my name.' The apostles preached and wrought miracles in Christ's name; the Spirit in them glorified Christ, ch. 16:14. (1) What little interest Christ has in this world, lies in his church; therefore all its affairs lie near his heart. (2.) 'Therefore I commit them to the Father, who has engaged to glorify the Son, and, upon that account, will have an eye to those in whom He is glorified.' That in which God and Christ are glorified, may, with confidence, be committed to God's special care.

V. 11—16. The particular petitions which Christ put up for his disciples, relate to spiritual blessings. He does not pray that they might be rich and great in the world, but that they might be kept from sin, furnished for duty, and brought safe to heaven. Note, The prosperity of the soul is the best prosperity; for, what relates to that Christ came to purchase and bestow, and so teaches us to seek, in the first place, both for others and for ourselves. They are such blessings as were suited to their present state. Note, Christ's intercession is always pertinent. Our Advocate with the Father is acquainted with all the particulars of our wants, dangers and difficulties: He knew Peter's peril, which he himself was not aware of; (Luke 22:32.) I have prayed for thee. He is full in the petitions, fills his mouth with arguments, to teach us fervency and importunity in prayer, and to dwell upon our errands at the throne of grace; as Jacob, I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.

The first thing Christ prays for, for his disciples, is their preservation; He commits them all to his Father's custody. Keeping supposes danger, and their danger arose from the world; from the evil of which He begs they might be kept. There were two ways of their being delivered from the world:

1. By taking them out of it; He does not pray that they might be so delivered, (v. 15.) that is,

(1.) 'I pray not that they may speedily be removed by death.' If the world vex them, the readiest way to secure them would be, to hasten them to a better world. Christ would not pray so for his disciples, for two reasons.

and thine are mine. Note, 1. All that receive Christ's Word, are taken into covenant-relation to the Father; Christ presents them to Him, and they, through Christ, present themselves to Him. Christ has redeemed us, not to Himself only, but to God, by his blood, Rev. 5: 9, 10. They are first-fruits unto God, Rev. 14: 4. 2. This is a good plea in prayer, Christ here pleads it, They are thine; we may plead it for ourselves, I am thine, save me; and for others, (as Moses, Exod. 32: 11.) 'They are thy people. Wilt Thou not secure them, secure thine interest in them, that they may not depart from Thee? They are thine, own them as thine.'

All mine are thine, and thine are mine. This speaks the Father and the Son to be, 1. One in essence. Every creature must say to God, All mine are thine; but none can say to Him, All thine are mine, but He that is the same in substance with Him, and equal in power and glory. 2. One in interest; no separate or divided interests between them.

1st. What the Father has as Creator, is delivered to the Son, in suberviency to his undertaking. All things are delivered to Him; (Matt. 11: 27.) nothing was excepted, but He that did put all things under Him.

2dly. What the Son has, as Redeemer, is designed for the Father, and shall shortly be delivered up to Him. All the benefits of redemption, purchased by the Son, are intended for the Father's praise; in his glory all the lines of his undertaking centre. The Son owns none for his that are not devoted to the service of the Father; nor will any thing be accepted as a service to the Christian religion, which clashes with the dictates of natural religion. Every believer may say, All thine are mine; if God be ours in covenant, all He is and has is engaged for our good; and in an unlimited sense, every believer does say, Lord, all mine are thine; all

[1.] He came to conquer, not to countenance those intemperate passions which make men impatient of life. It is his will that we should take up our cross, and not avoid it. [2.] He had work for them to do in the world; the world, though sick of them, (Acts 22: 22.) and not worthy of them, (Heb. 11: 38.) yet could ill spare them. In pity therefore to this dark world, Christ would not have these lights removed out of it, especially for the sake of those in the world, that were to believe in Him through their word. Let not them be taken out of the world, when their Master is; they must each, in his own order, die a martyr, but not till they have finished their testimony. Note, 1st. The taking of good people out of the world is a thing by no means to be desired, but dreaded rather, and laid to heart, Isa. 57: 1. 2dly. Though Christ loves his disciples, He does not send for them to heaven, as soon as they are effectually called, but leaves them to do good, and glorify God on earth, and be ripened for heaven. Many good people are spared to live, because they can ill be spared to die.

(2.) 'I pray not that they may be exempted from the troubles of this world, and taken to some place of ease and safety, there to live undisturbed. Not that, being freed from trouble, they may bask in luxurious ease, but that, by the help of God, they may be preserved in danger; so Calvin. Not that they may be kept from all conflict with the world, but that they may not be overcome by it; not that, as Jeremiah wished, they might leave their people, and go from them, (Jer. 9: 2.) but that, like Ezekiel, their faces may be strong against the faces of wicked men, Ezek. 3: 8. It is more the honor of a Christian soldier, by faith to overcome the world, than by a monastic vow to retreat from it; and more for the honor of Christ to serve Him in a city than in a cell.

Another way is, by keeping them from the corruption in the world; and He prays they may be thus kept, v. 11, 15.

Holy Father, keep those whom thou hast given Me. Christ was leaving them; but let them not think their defence departed; no, He, in their hearing, commits them to his and their Father. Note, It is the unspeakable comfort of all believers, that Christ Himself has committed them to the care of God. Those cannot but be safe, whom God keeps, and He cannot but keep those whom the Son commits to Him; in the virtue of which we may commit the keeping of our souls to God, 1 Pet. 4: 19. 2 Tim. 1: 12. 'Keep their lives, till they have done their work; keep their comforts, and let them not be broken in upon by the hardships they meet with; keep up their interest in the world.' To this prayer is owing the wonderful preservation of the ministry and church in the world unto this day; if God had not kept up both, they had been extinguished long ago. He puts them under the divine tuition, that they might not themselves run away from duty, or be led aside by their own hearts. We need God's power not only to put us into a state of grace, but to keep us in it. See ch. 10: 28, 29. 1 Pet. 1: 5.

He speaks to God as a holy Father. In committing ourselves and others to the divine care, we may take encouragement, 1. From his holiness, which is engaged for the preservation of his holy ones: He hath sworn by his holiness, Ps. 89: 35. If He be a holy God, and hate sin, He will make those that are his, holy, and keep them from sin, who hate it. 2. From this relation of a Father to us through Christ. If He be a Father, He will take care of his own children; who else should?

He speaks of them as those whom the Father

Verse 11.

'Name is used in Scripture sometimes for person, (Rev. 3: 4.) sometimes for family, (Ps. 76: 1.) and sometimes, when applied to God, for his power, or other perfections, Ps. 81: 7. When mention is made of making known God's name to the heathen, we always understand it to mean, declaring to them his nature and attributes, as the only true God: only thus do we find men of revealing his name in the Old Testament. Here Christ speaks to Jews, (v. 6) and the phrase plainly suggests, that additional light was conveyed to them, which they could not have

derived from the old dispensation. We must understand this phrase, of instruction relative to life and immortality, and the recovery of sinners through Christ's mediation, which may well be called revealing God, or which, in the Hebrew idiom, is the same, the name of God, to the disciples. If, then, by the name of God, (v. 6, and 26,) be meant the great foundations of the Christian institution, the being preserved or kept in it, (v. 11, 12.) must mean their being enabled to continue in the faith and practice of that religion.'

CAMPBELL.

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

[Practical Observations.]

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

k 6:37, 39, 40, 10:27, 28. Heb. 2:13.
l 13:18, 16:9. Luke 4:26, 27, 1 John 2:19.
m 6:70, 71. 2 Thes. 2:3.
n Pa. 109:8-19. Acts 1:16-20, 26.
o 1. 13:3. Heb. 12:2.
p 3:29, 15:11, 16:22-24, 33. Neh. 8:10. Ps. 43:4, 126:5. Acts 13:52.
q Rom. 14:17. Gal. 5:22. 1 John 1:4. 1 John 14:2.

Keep them from the evil; or out of it. He had taught them to pray daily, Deliver us from evil, and this would encourage them to pray.

1. 'Keep them from the evil one, and all his instruments: that he may not have leave to sift them, or that their faith may not fail: that the destroyer may not drive them to despair.'

2. 'Keep them from the evil thing, that is, sin; from every thing that looks like it, or leads to it. Keep them, that they do no evil,' 2 Cor. 13:7. Sin is that evil which, above any other, we should dread and deprecate.

3. 'Keep them from the evil of the world, and of tribulation, so that it may have no sting, no malignity; not that they might be kept from affliction; but kept through it, that there might be no evil in it to harm them. Observe,

The reasons with which He enforces these requests for their preservation. He pleads that hitherto He had kept them, (v. 12.) in the true faith, and the service of God.

Christ faithfully discharged his undertaking concerning his disciples; while He was with them, He kept them in God's name, preserved them from dangerous errors or sins; from the Pharisees, who would have compassed sea and land to make proselytes of them; He kept them from deserting Him, and returning to the little all they had left: He had them still under his eye when He sent them to preach; went not his heart with them? Many that followed Him awhile, took offence and went off; but He kept the twelve, that they also should not go away. He kept them from falling into the hands of enemies that sought their lives; kept them when He surrendered Himself, ch. 18: 9. While

had given Him. What we receive as our Father's gifts, we may comfortably remit to our Father's care. 'Father, keep the graces and comforts Thou hast given Me; the children Thou hast given Me; the ministry I have received.'

Keep them through thine own name. That is, For thy name's sake; so some. 'Thy name and honor are concerned in their preservation as well as mine, for both will suffer by it if they either revolt or sink.' The Old-Testament saints often pleaded, for thy name's sake; more concerned for the honor of God's name than for any interest of their own.

Keep them in thy name; so others. 'In the knowledge and fear, in the profession and service of thy name, whatever it cost them; let them ever be faithful to it; keep them in thy truths and ordinances, in the way of thy commandments.'

Keep them by or through thy name; 'by thine own power, in thine own hand; keep them Thyself, let them be thine immediate care. Keep them by those means of preservation which Thou hast appointed, and by which Thou hast made Thyself known. Keep them by Thy Word and ordinances; let thy name be their strong tower; thy tabernacle their pavilion.'

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 6-12. The regard of the Savior to those who were 'given Him out of the world,' cannot be overlooked by the attentive reader: and the things spoken of them are not peculiar to the apostles, but take in all, who receive and keep his Word, are firmly persuaded that his doctrine and works were from the Father, and believe in Him for the salvation of their souls. For these persons particularly He 'came into the world;' for them He labored and suffered, rose again and reigns; for them He continually intercedes, and not for the world at large: in them He will eternally be glorified with the Father, whose also they are; as 'all things that the Father hath' are the Son's likewise. No sinner, however, need be discouraged; for the Savior is able and willing to 'save to the uttermost all who come to God by Him.' Convictions and desires are 'hopeful tokens; and when they lead a man to the throne of grace, in reliance on the intercession of Christ, the express promises of God become his security, and the work already wrought in Him evidences, that He has been 'chosen unto

salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;' nor can any one, whatever he professes or preaches, know his election of God, except by that 'faith which worketh by love,' and by its fruits. (1 Thes. 1: 1-4 v. 3, 4. 2 Pet. 1: 5-11.)—For many have called Christ Lord, and seemed to be the children of God; who at length proved 'sons of perdition.' Such examples should excite to serious self-examination and prayer: but should not distress the believer, who, though he 'cannot do the things he would,' is conscious of integrity in his professed repentance, and faith in Christ, and desire of living to his glory. These, through the intercession of Christ, shall be 'kept by the power of God,' to the glory of his name, and in his worship and service, 'through faith, unto salvation.' None of them ever were or will be lost: for 'the sons of perdition' only seemed to be of them, but never were with them in judgment, disposition, and affection. (1 John 2: 18, 19.)

SCOTT.

Verse 12.

The son of perdition. (2 Thes. 2: 3, 4.) "'The son of perdition" signifies one, who deservedly perishes: as "a son of death," (2 Sam. 12: 5.) "children of hell," (Matt. 23: 15.) and "children of wrath," (Eph. 2: 3.) signify persons justly obnoxious to death, hell, and "wrath." Doddridge.

In vs. 57. 4. the faithless and idolatrous Israelites are called children of transgression, or sons of perdition; the Greek being the same as is here used. The Hebrew signifies apostasy. Hence also in 2 Thes. 2: 3. The phrase here used, signifies an apostate from the Christian faith. That the Scripture might be fulfilled. (1. e. This happened not fortuitously, but by the wise counsel of God. Bp. Pearce explains, "by the loss of Him, the Scripture is fulfilled;" or, "what the Psalmist said in Scripture (Ps. 41: 9) may be applied to Him." And he refers to Ps. 109: 8, compared with Acts 1: 20. Most modern commentators are of opinion, that our Lord has no particular passage in view, (as Ps. 41: 10, which He at another time applies to this passage in John. 13: 18.) but rather alludes to the prophecies in general concerning his passion. Surenhusius, however, thinks there is reference to Ps. 69 and 100.

But the son of perdition. 'I am surprised that so many divines should infer from these words, that the giving to Christ in the pro-

ceeding clauses, cannot imply an election to glory, because it is here intimated that Judas, who perished, was given as well as the rest. But persons conversant in the original might easily have observed, that if this text will prove that Judas was in the number of those given to Christ, in the same manner Luke 4: 26, 27, will prove, directly contrary to plain fact, and the whole tenor of the argument, that the woman of Sarepta was a widow in Israel, and Naaman the Syrian a leper in Israel: John 3: 13, that Christ ascended into heaven before He began his ministry, and Rev. 21: 27, that there are some of the most abominable of mankind whose names are written in the book of life. In all which it is plain that the particle "but" is not used strictly as an exceptive particle.'

In the preceding verses, those who were given to Christ are stated to have 'kept his word,' and 'believed in Him;' but Judas had always been a hypocrite, and was now a traitor and apostate; and therefore Christ could not mean to include him in that number. (6: 66-71, & 70, 71, 13: 18-30, & 18, 21, 27-30.) And if in this verse we understand by those 'given to Christ,' such as were given Him to be his apostles, without reference to faith, or 'the election of grace;' we can not explain the preceding verses in that sense, because they are verified in none but true believers, of which number Judas never had been.

SCOTT.

14 I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

15 I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil.

16 They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.

17 Sanctify them

97. 15:18-21. Gen. 3:15. Prov. 29:27. Zech. 11:8. Matt. 10:24, 25. 1 Pet. 4:4, 5. 1 John 3:12, 13. 98. 6:23. 1 John 4:5, 6. 3:19, 20. 99. Ps. 30:9. Eccl. 9:10. Is. 38:19. 67:1. Luke 8:38, 39. Phil. 1:20-26. 100. Gen. 48:16. 1 Chr. 4:10. Ps. 121:7. Matt. 9:13. Luke 11:4. Gal. 1:4. 2 Thes. 3:3. 2 Tim. 4:18. 1 John 5:18.

101. 9:13, 22. 15:3. Ps. 19:7-9. 119: 9, 10, 11. Luke 8:11, 15. Acts 15:9. 2 Cor. 3:18. Eph. 5:26. Jam. 1:21. 1 Pet. 1:22, 23.

should court our stay? With a holy triumph should we say, '*Now I am no more in this world*, no more vexed with its thorns, endangered by its snares; I shall wander no more in this howling wilderness, be tossed no more on this stormy sea; now I can cheerfully give it a final farewell.'

Now I come to Thee. To get clear of the world is but the half of the comfort of a dying Christ, of a dying Christian; the far better half is to think of going to the Father, to the immediate, everlasting enjoyment of Him. When we go, to be absent from the body, it is to be present with the Lord, like children fetched home to their father's house. '*Now come I to Thee, whom my soul thirsteth after; Thee, the Fountain of light and life, the crown and centre of bliss; my longings shall be satisfied, my hopes accomplished, my happiness completed.*'

With what tender concern He speaks of those He left behind: '*But these are in the world.* I have found what an evil world it is, what will become of these dear little ones that must stay in it! *Holy Father, keep them;* they will want my presence, let them have thine. I am sending them out into the world: they must launch forth into the deep, and have business to do in these great waters, and will be lost if Thou do not keep them.'

Our Lord Jesus hears the names of his own which are in the world upon his breast-plate, and has graven them with the nails of his cross upon the palms of his hands; when He is out of their sight, they are not out of his, much less out of his mind. We should have such pity for those that are launching into the world when we have got almost through it; and for those that are left behind in it when we are leaving it.

When Christ would express the utmost need his disciples had of divine preservation, He only says, *They are in the world;* that speaks danger enough to those who are bound for heaven, whom a flattering world would divert and seduce, and a malignant world hate and persecute.

He pleads what a satisfaction it would be to them to know themselves safe, and to Him to see them easy, *v. 13.* Observe,

1. Christ earnestly desired the fullness of joy for his disciples. He was leaving them in tears and troubles, and yet took care to fulfil their joy. When they thought their joy in Him was at an end, it was advanced nearer to perfection than ever. We are here taught, (1.) *To found our joy in Christ;* '*It is my joy; I am the matter of it.*' Christ's a Christian's joy; joy in the world is withering with it, joy in Christ is everlasting. (2.) *To build up our joy with diligence,* is the duty as well as privilege of believers; no part of the Christian life is pressed upon us more earnestly, Phil. 3:1. 4:4. (3.) Christ would have us aim at the perfection of this joy.

2. In order hereunto, He solemnly committed them to his Father's keeping, and took them for witnesses that He did so; *These things I speak in the world,* while yet with them. His intercession in heaven would have been as effectual in itself; but saying this in the world, would be a greater satisfaction to them. Note, (1.) Christ has not only treasured up future comforts for his disciples, but has given them present satisfactions. He here condescended to publish his last will and testament, and (unlike many a testator) lets them know what legacies He had left them, and how well they were secured. (2.) Christ's intercession for us is enough to fulfil our joy in Him; nothing more effectual to silence fears and mistrusts, and to furnish strong consolation, than this, that He always appears in the presence of God for us; therefore the apostle puts a yea rather upon this, Rom. 8:34. And see Heb. 7: 25

plausible course of profession, than those that, like Judas, love the bag. But Christ's distinguishing Judas from those that were given Him, (for the Greek is adversative, not exceptive,) intimates that religion ought not to suffer for the treachery of those that are false to it, 1 John 2: 17.

2. The Scripture was fulfilled; the sin of Judas was foreseen in God's counsel, and foretold in his Word, and the event would certainly follow after the prediction as a consequence, though it cannot be said necessarily to follow from it as an effect. See Ps. 41: 9. 69: 25. 109: 8. One would be amazed at the treachery of the apostates, were we not told it before.

He pleads that He was now under a necessity of leaving them, and could no longer watch over them as He had hitherto; (*v. 11.*) 'Keep them now, that I may not lose the labor I bestowed upon them while with them. Keep them, that they may be one with us, as we are with each other.'

With what pleasure, with what an air of triumph and exultation, He speaks of his own departure, with reference both to the world He left, and the world He removed to. '*Now I am no more in the world.* Farewell to this troublesome world, the welcome hour is at hand when I shall be no more in it. Having finished the work I had to do in it, I have done with it; nothing remains now but to hasten from it.' Note, It should be a pleasure to those that have their home in the other world, to think of being no more in this world; for what is there here, that

He pleads the ill usage they were likely to meet with in the world, for his sake; (*v. 14.*) '*I have given them thy Word,* to be published to the world, and they have believed it themselves, and accepted the trust of transmitting it to the world; therefore the world hath hated them, as also because they are not of the world, any more than I.'

Though as yet they had given but little opposition to the world, yet it hates them; much more when they would turn the world upside down; '*Father, stand their friend;* they will have many enemies. In the midst of those fiery darts, let them be compassed with thy favor as with a shield.' It is God's honor to take part with the weaker side, and help the helpless. Lord be merciful to them, for men would swallow them up.

One reason of the world's enmity is, they had received the Word of God as sent them by Christ, when the greatest part of the world rejected it, and set themselves against those who preached and professed it. Note, They that receive Christ's good will and good word, must expect the world's ill will and ill word. Ministers have been in a particular manner hated by the world, because they call men out of it, and teach them not to conform to it; '*Father keep them, for it is for thy sake that they are exposed.*' Thus the Psalmist pleads, *For thy sake I have borne reproach,* Ps. 69: 7. Note, Those that keep the word of Christ's patience, are entitled to special protection in the hour of temptation, Rev. 3: 10. That cause which makes a martyr, may well make a joy! I sufferer.

Another reason is, they are not of this world. They to whom the Word of Christ comes in power, are not of the world; it weans them from the wealth, and turns them against the wickedness of the world.

He pleads their conformity to Himself in a holy non-conformity to the world: (*v. 16.*) *They may in faith commit themselves to God, 1. Who are as Christ was in this world,* and tread in his steps. God will love those that are like Christ. 2. Who do not engage themselves in the world's interest, nor devote themselves to its service. Observe,

1. Christ was not of this world; He never had been of it, and least of all, now He was upon the point of leaving it. This speaks, 1st. His state; He was none of the world's favorites, or grantees; worldly possessions He had none, not where to lay his head; nor worldly power, He was no judge or divider. Secondly, His Spirit; He was perfectly dead to the world, the prince of this world had nothing in Him; the things of this world were nothing to Him; not honor, for He made Himself of no reputation; not riches, for our sakes He became poor; not pleasures, for He acquainted Himself with grief. See ch. 8: 23.

2. Therefore true Christians are not of this world. The Spirit of Christ in them is opposite to the spirit of the world. 1st. It is their lot to be despised by the world; they are not in favor with it, any more than their Master. 2dly. It is their privilege to be delivered from the world; as Abraham out of the land of his nativity. 3dly. It is their duty and character to be dead to the world. Their most pleasing converse is, and should be, with another world, and their prevailing concern about the business of it. Christ's disciples were weak, yet this He could say for them, They were not of the world; therefore He recommends them to the care of heaven.

V. 17-19. The next thing He prayed for them, was, that they might be sanctified.

Sanctify them through thy truth, through thy Word for thy Word is truth itself. He desires they may be sanctified both as Christians and as ministers.

1. As Christians. Father, make them holy; that will be their preservation, 1 Thess. 5: 23.

Verse 17.
Sanctify.] 'This word may be understood in the sense of to consecrate, to separate from common use, and to devote to God and his service, and to make holy or pure. The prayer may include both.' [794]

Through thy truth.] 'The doctrine which is not drawn from the truth of God can never save souls. God blesses no word but his own, because none is truth without mixture of error, but that which has proceeded from Himself.' Dr. A. L. B.

through thy truth: *thy word is truth.

18 As *thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world.

19 And ^bfor their sakes ^cI sanctify myself, ^dthat they also might be *sanctified through the truth.

[Practical Observations.]

20 ¶ Neither *pray

8-40. 2 Sam. 7:28. Ps. 126: 19:7. 119:144. 22. Eph. 4:21, 22. 2 Tim. 2:5, 26.

a 20:21-23. Is. 61:1-3 Matt. 23:24. 2 Cor. 1:20. Eph. 3:7, 8.

b Is. 62:1 2 Cor. 4:15. 8:9. 2 Tim. 2:10.

c 10:38. Jer. 1:5. 1 Cor. 12:30. Heb. 2:11. (13:14, 18, 28. 10:5-10, 29.

d 17. Tit. 2:14.

* Or, *thy sanctified*.

8-6-11. Eph. 4:11.

stands in the written Word, is not only pure truth, without mixture, but entire truth without deficiency. (2.) This Word of truth should be the outward and ordinary means of sanctification; not of itself, for then it would always sanctify, but as the instrument which the Spirit commonly uses in beginning and carrying on that good work; it is the seed of the new birth, (1 Pet. 1:23.) the foot of the new life, 1 Pet. 2:1, 2.

2. As ministers. 'Sanctify them, set them apart for thy service; let their call to the apostleship be ratified in heaven.' Prophets were said to be sanctified, (Jer. 1:5.) and apostles, 2 Pet. 1:21. Priests and Levites were so. (1.) 'Qualify them with Christian graces and ministerial gifts, as able ministers of the New Testament.' (2.) 'Separate them to the office, Rom. 1:1. I have called them, they have consented; Father, say Amen to it.' (3.) 'Own them in the office; let thy hand go with them; sanctify them by, or in truth, as truth is opposed to figure and shadow; sanctify them really, not ceremonially, by anointing and sacrifice. Sanctify them to thy truth, to be the preachers of thy truth to the world; as the priests were sanctified to serve at the altar,' 1 Cor. 9:13, 14. Note, [1.] Christ intercedes for his ministers with particular concern, and recommends to his Father's grace those stars He carries in his right hand. [2.] The great thing to be asked of God for ministers, is, that they may be sanctified, effectually separated from the world, entirely devoted to God, and experimentally acquainted with the influence of that Word upon their own hearts, which they preach to others. Let them have the *Urim and Thummim, light and integrity*.

Two pleas enforce the petition for sanctification. 1. Their mission; v. 18. Christ speaks with great assurance of his own mission; *Thou hast sent Me into the world*. The Author of the Christian religion had his commission from the original and object of all religion. He was sent of God to say what He said, do what He did, and be what He is to those that believe on Him; which was his comfort in his undertaking, and may be ours, in our dependence upon Him.

He speaks with great satisfaction of the commission He had given his disciples; 'I send them on the same errand; to preach the same doctrine, and to confirm it with the same proofs, with a charge to commit to other faithful men that which was committed to them.' He gave them their commission, (ch. 20:21.) with a reference to his own, and it magnifies the office, that there is some affinity between the commission given to ministers, and that given to the Mediator; He is called an *Apostle*, (Heb. 3:1.) a *Minister*, (Rom. 15:8.) a *Messenger*, Mal. 3:1. Only they are sent as servants, He as a Son.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 13-19. The disciples of Christ live at present in a world, which hates and despises them: yet the recollection of his words, and the experience of his faithfulness, may fill them with joy in Him and in each other, amidst their tribulations. They should be willing to die, but not impatiently desire it: for their Advocate does not intercede for their immediate removal, but that they 'may be kept from evil.' They are not, however, left here to pursue any of those objects, which the men of the world pursue; but to glorify God, to 'serve their generation,' to finish their work, and 'to be perfected through sufferings,' after the example of 'the Captain of their salvation.' They should therefore hope and pray that the grace, which has separated them from the world, may preserve them from the evil

This is a reason, 1. Why Christ was concerned so much for them; He had Himself put them into a difficult office, which required great abilities. Note, Whom Christ sends He will stand by, and interest Himself in those whom He employs; what He calls is to, He will fit us for, and sustain us through. 2. He committed them to his Father, because He was concerned in the cause, their mission being a prosecution of his. Christ received gifts for men, (Ps. 68:18.) and then gave them to men; (Eph. 4:8.) and therefore prays aid of his Father to uphold those gifts. The Father sanctified Him when He sent Him into the world, ch. 10:36.) Now they being sent as He was, let them also be sanctified.

2. The merit He had for them is also pleaded; v. 19. Here is,

(1.) Christ's designation of Himself to the work and office of Mediator; *I sanctified Myself*: He entirely devoted Himself to the undertaking, especially to the offering up of Himself without spot unto God. He, as the priest and altar, sanctified Himself as the sacrifice. When He said, Father, glorify thy name; *thy will be done*; *I commit my spirit into thy hands*; He made the satisfaction He had engaged to make, and so sanctified Himself. This He pleads, for his intercession is made in virtue of his satisfaction; *by his own blood He entered into the holy place*, (Heb. 9:12.) as the high priest, on the day of atonement, sprinkled the blood of the sacrifice at the same time that He burnt incense within the veil, Lev. 16:12, 14. (2.) Christ's design of kindness to his disciples; it is for their sakes, that they may be sanctified, that is, that they may be martyrs; so some. 'I sacrificed Myself, that they may be sacrificed to the glory of God and the church's good.' Paul speaks of his being offered, 2 Tim. 4:6. Phil. 2:17. Whatever, in the death of the saints, is precious in the sight of the Lord, is owing to the death of Jesus. But I rather take it more generally, that they may be saints and ministers, duly qualified and accepted of God.

[1.] The office of the ministry is the purchase of Christ's blood, and one of the fruits of his satisfaction. The priests under the law were consecrated with the blood of bulls and goats, but ministers with the blood of Jesus.

[2.] The holiness of Christians is the fruit of Christ's death, by which the gift of the Holy Ghost was purchased; *He gave Himself for his church, to sanctify it*, Eph. 5:26. And He that designed the end, designed also the means, that they might be sanctified by the truth, to which Christ came into the world to bear witness, and died to confirm. The word of truth receives its sanctifying power from the death of Christ. Some read it, that they be sanctified in truth, that is, truly; for as God must be served, so, in order to that, we must be sanctified in the Spirit, and in truth. This Christ has prayed for, for all that are his; for *this is his will, even their sanctification*.

of it, and from the snares of the wicked one: they should seek to be sanctified more and more, through the Word of truth, that they may unreservedly serve Him, who 'through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God,' 'to purge their consciences from dead works, that they might serve the living God' (Heb. 9:11-14, v. 13, 14.) and they should carefully examine, whether the doctrines they hold have a sanctifying effect upon their hearts and lives. For, as divine truth is of a holy nature, if our religious opinions do not make us hate sin, and long and pray for holiness, we may be sure, either that they are not divine truths, or that we do not receive them by a living faith, under the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Scott.

Truth. 1. The head and sum of divine doctrine. See v. 3. the only true way to eternal life. *Tittman*. This clause seems added for the instruct in of the apostles, in order to excite them to devote all their strength to, nay, even lay down their lives for, this truth. In this view, the words merit the serious attention of all who have undertaken the sacerdotal office.

Verse 13.

'The sense of the passage may be thus expressed: "As Thou hast sent Me into the world, (to manifest the Father, his counsels and decrees, for the salvation of men,) so have I also (in like manner) sent them into the world, (in order that they may manifest both the Father

and the Son.)" That they may accomplish this, our Lord entreats for them the assistance of the Father, v. 17. But He Himself laid the foundation, when He said, indeed, for them I have consecrated Myself, i. e. I have dedicated and devoted Myself to them, to promote their sanctification, that they also may be devoted to the truth.' *Tittman* and *Kuinoel*. 'The disciples did this, since they devoted themselves to Christ and his religion, lived unto Christ, and suffered and died in his cause; all which may be comprehended in the expressive words of Paul, "Christ is my life." Thus Christ was especially the head and saviour of their whole instruction; the beginning and the end was Christ.' *Tittman*, in Br. *W. H. P.*

I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word:

21 That they all may be one; ^a as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: ^b that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

22 And ^c the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; ^d that they may be one, even as we are one:

^a Acts 2:41, 42. Rom. 15:18, 19. 16: 26. 2 Tim. 1:12.
^b 11:22, 23. 10:16. Jer. 32:39. Ezr. 37:16-19, 22-25. Zeph. 3:8. Zech. 14:9. Acts 2:46. 1:32. Rom. 12:13. 1 Cor. 1:10. 12:12-25-27. Gal. 3:28. Eph. 4:3-6. Phil. 1:27. 2:1-5. Col. 3:11-14. 1 Pet. 3:3, 9. 5:2-3. 10:30-32. 14:9-11. Phil. 2: 6. 1 John 5:7.
^c 1:18, 15-18, 19. 20:21-23. Mark 8:17. 16:17-20. Luke 22:30. Acts 8:41. Rom. 15:15-20. 2 Cor. 5:20. 6:1. Eph. 2:20. Phil. 1:29. Col. 1:24. 2 Thes. 1:5-10. Rev. 21:14. 1:14, 20. 1 John 1:3. 3:24.

lievers, but for the meanest and weakest; even those that in the eye of the world are inconsiderable. As Divine Providence extends itself to the meanest creature, so Divine Grace to the meanest Christian. The good Shepherd has an eye even to the poor of the flock.

5. Christ in his mediation had an actual regard to those of the chosen remnant yet unborn, the people that should be created, (Ps. 22:31.) the other sheep which He must yet bring, Jer. 1:5. Prayers are filed in heaven for them beforehand, by Him who declareth the end from the beginning, and velleth things that are not as though they were.

The intent of this prayer; (v. 21.) that they all may be one. The same was said before, (v. 11.) that they may be one as we are, and again, v. 22. The heart of Christ was much upon this. Some think that the oneness prayed for, (v. 11.) has special reference to the disciples as ministers, that they might be one in their testimony to Christ; and that the harmony of the evangelists, and concurrence of the first preachers of the Gospel, are owing to this prayer. Let them be not of one heart, but one mouth, speaking the same thing. The unity of gospel-ministers is the beauty and strength of the gospel-interest.

But it is certain that the oneness prayed for, (v. 21.) respects all believers. It is the prayer of Christ for all that are his, and we may be sure it is an answered prayer. It includes three things;

1. That they might all be incorporated in one body. Though they live in distant places, and in several ages, and cannot have personal acquaintance or correspondence, yet let them be united in Me their common Head. As Christ died, so He prayed, to gather them all in one, ch. 11. 52. Eph. 1:10.

2. That they might all be animated by one Spirit; plainly implied in—that they may be one in us. Union with the Father and Son is obtained and kept up only by the Holy Ghost. He that is joined to the Lord, is one spirit, 1 Cor. 6:17. Let them all be stamped with the same image and super-scription, and influenced by the same power.

3. That they might be knit together in love and charity. That they all may be one, (1.) In judgment and sentiment; not in every little thing; it is neither possible nor needful, but in the great things of God—that God's favor is better than life; that sin is the worst of evils, Christ the best of friends; that there is another life after this; and the like. (2.) In disposition and inclination. All that are sanctified, have the same divine nature and image; they have all a new heart, and it is one heart. (3.) In designs and aims. Every true Christian, as far as he is so, eyes the glory of God as his

Verses 20, 21.

It should be observed, from our Lord's words, that his religion may easily be found, entire and unadulterated, in the writings of his apostles, and of those who, by their sanction, wrote the other part of the New Testament. Indeed where else can we look for the words of the apostles? What standard of their doctrine have we, if the New Testament be not that standard? The miracles which they wrought proved the truth of Christianity: but if they were not inspired infallibly to communicate to the world the true doctrine of that holy religion without addition, adulteration, or omission; where shall we with certainty learn the nature of it? or how is sure, that we are not deluded by some misrepresentation?—It is peculiarly worthy of observation, that the absurd claims of popes and councils in this respect, and the plausible reasons of such moderns as want to improve Christianity by human reason, are maintained by the same vain supposition; namely, that the Scripture of itself is either insufficient, or in some degree uncertain, or too obscure, to answer the purpose. Men are apt to say, 'It will be soon or agh for us to embrace the Gospel, when the professors are agreed among themselves in what it consists;' and those who are not aware of the advantage, which infidels and ungodly men have made of the divisions and controversies among Christians, [796]

V. 20—23. Next to their purity He prays for their unity; for the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable; and amity is amiable indeed, when like the ointment on Aaron's head, and the dew on Zion's hill.

Who are included in this prayer? (v. 20.) 'Not these only that are now my disciples,' (the eleven, the seventy, with others, men and women that followed Him,) 'but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word, preached or written: I pray for them all, that they all may be one in their interest in this prayer, and receive benefit by it.' Note, 1. Those only are interested in the mediation of Christ, that do, or shall, believe in Him. By this they are described, and it comprehends the character and duty of a Christian. They that lived then, saw, and believed, but they in after-ages have not seen, and yet have believed.

2. Souls are brought to believe on Christ, through the Word, and for this end Christ appointed the Scriptures, and a standing ministry in the church, to raise up a seed.

3. It is certainly and infallibly known to Christ who shall believe on Him. He does not here pray at a venture, upon a contingency depending on the treacherous will of man, which pretends to be free, but by reason of sin is in bondage with its children; the matter was reduced to a certainty, by the divine purpose; He knew whom He prayed for, who, being ordered to eternal life, were entered in the Lamb's book, Acts 13:48.

4. Christ intercedes not only for eminent believers, but for the meanest and weakest; even those that in the eye of the world are inconsiderable. As Divine Providence extends itself to the meanest creature, so Divine Grace to the meanest Christian. The good Shepherd has an eye even to the poor of the flock.

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highest end, and the glory of heaven as his chief good. (4.) In desires and prayers; though they differ in words and the manner of expressions, yet, having all received the same Spirit of adoption, and observing the same rule, they pray for the same things. (5.) In love. Every true Christian has that in him, which inclines him to love all Christians as such. Christ prays for that communion of saints which we profess to believe; the fellowship all believers have with God, and their intimate union with the saints in heaven and earth, 1 John 1:3. But this prayer will not have its complete answer till all the saints come to heaven; for then, and not till then, they shall be perfect in one, v. 23. Eph. 4:13.

It is taken for granted, that the Father and Son are one, in nature and essence, equal in power and glory, in mutual endearments. The Father loveth the Son, and the Son always pleased the Father. They are one in design and operation. The intimacy of this oneness is expressed in these words, 'Thou in Me, and I in Thee.' This He often mentions for support under present sufferings, when his enemies were ready to fall upon Him, and his friends to desert Him; yet He was in the Father, and the Father in Him.

This is insisted on in Christ's prayer for his disciples' oneness, showing how He desired they might be one. Believers are one, in some measure, as God and Christ are; for, 1. The union of believers is a strict and close union; they are united by a divine nature. 2. It is a holy union, in the Holy Spirit, for holy ends; not a body politic for any secular purpose. 3. It is, and will be at last, a complete union. Father and Son have the same attributes, properties, and perfections; so have believers now, as far as they are sanctified; and when grace shall be perfected in glory, they will be exactly consonant to each other, all changed into the same image.

That they may be one in us. There is one God and one Mediator; and herein believers are one, they all agree to depend on the favor of this one God as their felicity, and the merit of this one Mediator as their righteousness. That is a conspiracy, not an union, which doth not centre in God as the End, and Christ as the Way. All who are truly united to God and Christ, who are one, will soon be united to one another.

The Creator and Redeemer are one in interest and design; but to what purpose are they so, if all believers were not one body with Christ? Christ's design was to reduce revolted mankind to God; 'Father, let all that believe be one, that in one body they may be reconciled;' (Eph. 2:15, 16.) which speaks of the uniting of Jews and Gentiles in the church; that great mystery, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, (Eph. 3:6.) to which I think this prayer of Christ principally refers, it being one great thing He aimed at in his dying.

Those words, I in them, and Thou in Me, show what that union is. 1. Union with Christ; I in them. Christ, dwelling in the hearts of believers, is the life and soul of the new man. 2. Union with God through Him; Thou in Me; so as by Me to be in them. 3. Union with each other, resulting from those that they hereby may be made perfect in one. We are complete in Him.

against religion, must have been very little acquainted with their writings, and made but few observations on the conduct of mankind. Here nominal Christians, indeed, give the most extensive occasion to the objections; but real believers are far from being sufficiently circumspect in this particular. 'This plainly intimates, that dissensions among Christians would be the means of bringing the truth and excellence of the Christian religion into question.' Doddridge (Matt. 13:7-9, 15-17. Luke 17:3, 4.)

Verses 22, 23.

Whatever differences prevailed in the primitive church, there is not the smallest trace of any real disunion, even in judgment, among the apostles; except for a while, concerning the admission of uncircumcised Gentiles into the church; and that matter was soon amicably settled. (Acts 11:1-18. 15:7-21.) They were all always, as far as we can learn, 'perfectly joined together in the same mind and judgment;' and this, by an abundant measure of the illuminating and sanctifying Spirit of God; as well as by that infallible inspiration by which they delivered the doctrine of their Lord. This was an especial honor conferred on them; and a remarkable accomplishment of this intercession considered as a prophetic. (2 Pet. 3:1-4, 17. 4:16. 1 John 4:1-6. Jude 17-18.)

23 ²¹ I in them, and thou in me, that they may be ²² made perfect in one; and ²³ that the world may know that thou hast sent me, ²⁴ and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

24 Father, ²⁵ I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; ²⁶ that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: ²⁷ for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

m 6:56. 14:10, 23. Rom. 8:10, 11. 1 Cor. 1:30. 2 Cor. 5:21. Gal. 3:28. 1 John 1:3. 4:12-16. Eph. 4:12-16. Phil. 3:15. Col. 1:26. 2:2, 9, 10. 3:14. 1 Pet. 5:10. 21. 13:35. 124. Eph. 1:5 &c. 1 John 3:1. 4:19. 12:28. 14:3. Matt. 25:21, 23. 26:29. Luke 12:37. 22:28-30. 23:43. 24 Cor. 5:8. Phil. 1:22. 1 Thess. 4:1. Rev. 3:21. 7:14-17. Gen 4:5. 1 Cor. 13:12. 2 Cor. 3:18. 4:13. 1 John 3:2. Rev. 21:22. n 5. Prov. 8:22-31.

Christ, and of what they *hope* for in one heaven, they may be of one mind and one mouth. Worldly glory sets men at variance; for if some be advanced, others are eclipsed, and therefore, while the disciples dreamed of a temporal kingdom, they were ever quarrelling; but Christ's subjects, being all made to our God kings and priests, there is no occasion for contest or emulation. The more Christians are taken up with the glory Christ has given them, the less desirous they will be of vain-glory, and, consequently, the less disposed to quarrel.

He pleads the influence of their oneness on others. This is twice urged; (v. 21.) *that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me*. And again, (v. 23.) *that the world may know it*; for without knowledge there can be no true faith. Believers must know what they believe, and why they believe it. They who believe at a venture, venture too far. Christ here shows His good-will to mankind. Herein, as in every thing, He is of his Father's mind, that He would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, 1 Tim. 2:4. 2 Pet. 3:9. It is His will that all means should be used, for the conviction and conversion of the world. *We* know not who are chosen, but must, in our places, do our utmost to further men's salvation, and take heed of doing any thing to hinder it.

The church's oneness will evidence the truth of Christianity, and bring many to embrace it. In general, it will recommend Christianity to the world.

1. The embodying of Christians in one society will greatly promote Christianity, when the world shall see so many, of those that were its children, called out of its family, distinguished from others, and changed from what they sometime were; when they shall see this society raised by the foolishness of preaching, and kept up by miracles of divine providence and grace, and how admirably well it is modelled and constituted, they will be ready to say, *We will go with you, for we see that God is with you*.

2. The uniting of Christians in love and charity, is the beauty of their profession, and invites others to join with them, Acts 2:42, 43. 4:32, 33. When Christianity, instead of causing quarrels about itself, makes all other strifes to cease, when it cools the fiery, smooths the rugged, and disposes men to be kind and loving, courteous and beneficent, to all men; studious to promote peace in all relations and societies: this will recommend it to all that have any thing either of natural religion or natural affection in them.

In particular, it will beget in men good thoughts, 1. Of Christ: They will know and believe that *Thou hast sent Me*. By this it will appear that Christ was sent of God, that his religion prevails to join so many, of different capacities, tempers, and interests in other things, in one body by faith, with one heart by love. Certainly He was sent by the God of power, who fashions men's hearts alike, and the God of love and peace.

2. Of Christians: They will know that *Thou hast loved them as Thou hast loved Me*. Here is, (1.) The privilege of believers; *the Father Himself loveth them with a love resembling his love to his Son*. (2.) The evidence of their interest in this privilege, is their being one. By this it will appear that God loves us, if we love one another with a pure heart; for wherever the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, it will change it into the same image. How much good it would do the world, to know better how dear to God all good Christians are! The Jews had a saying, *If the world did but know the worth of good men, they would hedge them about with pearls*. Those that have so much of God's love, should have more of ours.

Verse 24.

I will. 'I treat.' *Kuivvel.* 'I would.' *Campbell.* *Besa.* *Broomfield.*

The language of this verse has been considered by many expositors, ancient and modern, as a claim, grounded on a covenant, the terms of which would, on the part of Christ, in a few hours be perfectly fulfilled. He does not therefore say, *I pray*, or *beseech*; but, 'I will;' as

The design of Christ in all his communications of light and grace to them; (v. 22.) 'The glory which Thou gavest Me, as the channel of conveyance, I have given them, to this intent that they may be one, as we are one; so that those gifts will be in vain, if they be not one.' These gifts are either,

(1.) Those conferred on the apostles, and first planters of the church. The glory of being God's ambassadors; of working miracles; of gathering a church; and erecting God's kingdom among men; this glory was given to Christ, and some of the honor He put upon them, when He sent them to *disciple all nations*.

Or, (2.) Those given in common to all believers. The glory of being in covenant with the Father, and designed for a place at his right hand, was the glory the Father gave the Redeemer, and He has confirmed it to the redeemed. This honor He hath given them, because He hath secured it to them. This was conveyed to Him in trust for them, and He was faithful. He gave it them, that they *might be one*. [1.]

To entitle them to the privilege of unity, that by virtue of their relation to one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, they might be dominated one. The gift of the Spirit, which the Father gave the Son, by Him to be given to all believers, makes them one, for He works all in all, 1 Cor. 12:4, &c. [2.] That, in consideration of their agreement in one creed and covenant, one Spirit and one Bible; in consideration of what they have in one God and one

V. 24-26. *Father, I will that they may be with Me*. Observe,

1. The connection of this request with the foregoing. He had prayed that God would preserve, sanctify, and unite them; now He prays that He would crown his gifts with their glorification. We must pray, first for grace, then for glory; (Ps. 84:11.) for in this method God gives. Far be it from the only wise God to come under the imputation, either of that foolish builder, who, without a foundation, build upon the sand, as He would, if He should glorify any whom He has not first sanctified; or of that foolish builder, who began to build, and was not able to finish, as He would, if He should sanctify any, and not glorify them.

Father, I will. Here, as before, He addresses Himself to God as a Father, and therein we must do likewise; but *I will* is a language peculiar to Himself, and does not become ordinary petitioners, but very well became Him who paid for what He prayed for, and speaks the authority of his intercession: his word was with power in heaven, as well as on earth. Entering with his own blood into the holy place, his intercession there has uncontrollable efficacy. He intercedes as a king, for He is a priest upon his throne, (like Melchizedek,) a king-priest. Pursuant to his power to give eternal life, (v. 2.) He says, *Father, I will.* Though now He took upon Him the form of a servant, yet that power being to be most illustriously exerted when He shall come the second time in the glory of a judge, to say, *Come ye blessed*, having that in his eye He might well say, *Father, I will*.

Three things make heaven:

1. It is to be where Christ is; where I am, am to be shortly, and eternally. In this world we are on our passage; there we truly are, where we are to be forever; so Christ reckoned, and so must we.

2. It is to be with Him where He is; this is no tautology, but intimates that we shall not only be in the same happy place where Christ is, but that the happiness of the place will consist in his presence; that is the fullness of its joy. The very heaven of heaven is to be with Christ, in company and communion with Him, Phil. 1:23.

3. It is to behold his glory. Observe, (1.) The glory of the Redeemer is the brightness of heaven: before it angels cover their faces, ch. 12:41. The Lamb is the light of the new Jerusalem, Rev. 21:23. Christ is the brightness of his Father's glory. God shows his glory there, as He does his grace here, through Christ. 'The Father has given Me this glory;' He was as yet in his low estate; but it was very sure, and near.

(2.) The felicity of the redeemed consists very much in beholding that glory; they will have the immediate view of his glorious person; *I shall see God in my flesh*, Joh 19:26, 27. They will have a clear insight into his glorious undertaking, as it will be then accomplished; they will see into those springs of love, from whence flow all the streams of grace; they shall have an appropriating sight of Christ's glory; *The wife shines with the radiance of her husband*; and an assimilating sight: they shall be changed into the same image, from glory to glory.

We are to hope for heaven, on no other ground than the mediation and intercession of Christ. Our sanctification is our evidence, for he that has this hope in Him, purifies himself; but the will of Christ is our title, by which we are sanctified, Heb. 10:10. Christ speaks here, as if He did not count his own happiness complete unless his elect share in it, for the bringing of many sons to glory makes the Captain of our salvation perfect, Heb. 2:10.

The argument of this request; *Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world*. This is a reason, 1. Why He expected this glory Himself; Thou wilt give it Me, for Thou lov-

acting by authority, and as One with the Father.—It is not, however, certain, that more than a fervent, importunate desire was intended; and it is not advisable to adduce doubtful texts, in proof of a disputed point of doctrine. The language at least implies, that this concluding plea was peculiarly near the heart of the heavenly Advocate, and there can be no doubt it will infallibly be granted.

SCOTT.

25 O 'righteous Father—'the world hath not known thee: 'but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me.

26 And 'I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it: 'that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, 'and I in them.

† 11, L. 45-21. Rom. 9:26.
† 18, 55. 15:21. 16:3. Matt. 11:27.
Luke 10:22. Acts 17:23. 28:18.
Rom. 1:25. 3:11. 1 Cor. 12:1. 15:1.
2 Cor. 4:4. Gal. 4:3-9. 2 Thess.
1:8. Heb. 8:11. 1 John 5:19, 20.
Rev. 13:8.
† 12, 5:19, 20. 7:29. 10:15.
† 8, 6:69. 16:27, 30. Matt. 16:16.
† See on 6, 8:50. 15:15. Ps. 22:22.
Heb. 2:12.
† 14, 15:9. Eph. 1:6, 22, 23. 2, 4, 5.
5:30, 32. 2 Thess. 2:16.
† 23, 6:58. 14:20. 15:24. Rom. 8:10.
1 Cor. 5:30. 12:12. Gal. 2:20. Eph.
3:17. Col. 1:27. 2:10. 3:11.
1 John 3:24. 4:13, 14.

knowledge of Him; and also because of the difficulty of their work—they must bring light to those that rebelled against the light. 2. To show that they were qualified for further peculiar favors, for they had that knowledge of God, which the world had not.

The plea He insists upon for Himself; *but I have known Thee*. Christ knew the Father so as no one else ever did; knew on what grounds He went in his undertaking, knew his Father's mind in every thing, and therefore, in his prayer, came to Him with confidence, as we do to one we know. Christ is here suing out blessings for those that were his: when He had said *The world has not known Thee*, one would expect it should follow, *but they have known Thee*; no, their knowledge was not to be boasted of; *but I have known Thee*; which intimates that there is nothing in us to recommend us to God's favor, but all our interest in, and intercourse with Him, result from, and depend upon, Christ's interest and intercourse. We are unworthy, but He is worthy.

The plea He insists upon for his disciples; *and they have known that Thou hast sent Me*.

Hereby they are distinguished from the unbelieving world. Note, To know and believe in Christ, in the midst of a world that persists in ignorance and infidelity, is highly pleasing to God, and shall certainly be crowned with distinguishing glory. Singular faith qualifies for singular favors.

Hereby they are interested in the mediation of Christ, and partake the benefit of his acquaintance with the Father; *'I have known Thee*, immediately and perfectly; and these, though they have not so known Thee, yet knowing Christ as *sent of God*, they have, in Him, known the Father, and are introduced to an acquaintance with Him; therefore, Father, look after them for my sake.'

I have declared unto them thy name. 1. This He had done for his immediate followers. *All the time that He went in and out among them*, He made it his business to declare his Father's name to them, and to beget in them a veneration for it. This was the tendency of all his sermons and miracles, *ch. 1:18*. 2. This He has done for all that believe on Him; for they had not been brought to believe, if Christ had not made known to them his Father's name. Note, (1.) We are indebted to Christ for the know-

ledge we have of the Father's name; He opens the understanding to receive it. (2.) Those whom Christ recommends to the favor of God He first leads into an acquaintance with God. He intended to give further instructions to the disciples after his resurrection, (Acts 1:3.) and a more intimate acquaintance with divine things, by the Spirit; and to all believers, into whose hearts He hath shined, He shines more and more. Where Christ has declared his Father's name, *He will declare it*; for to him that *hath shall be given*; and they that know God, both need and desire to know more of Him. This is fitly pleaded: 'Father, own and favor them, for they will own and honor Thee.'

The conclusion of the prayer, is designed to enforce all the petitions for the disciples, especially the last, that they may be glorified.

When Christ prays that they may be sanctified, He calls God *holy Father*; when He prays that they may be glorified, He calls Him *righteous Father*; for it is a crown of righteousness which the righteous Judge shall give. God's righteousness was engaged to give all the good the Father had promised, and the Son had purchased.

The world has not known Thee. Note, Ignorance of God overspreads the world of mankind; in this darkness they sit. This is urged here, 1. To show that these disciples needed the aids of special grace, both because they were to bring a world that knew not God to the

knowledge of God, and also because of the difficulty of their work—they must bring light to those that rebelled against the light. 2. To show that they were qualified for further peculiar favors, for they had that knowledge of God, which the world had not.

He intended to give further instructions to the disciples after his resurrection, (Acts 1:3.) and a more intimate acquaintance with divine things, by the Spirit; and to all believers, into whose hearts He hath shined, He shines more and more. Where Christ has declared his Father's name, *He will declare it*; for to him that *hath shall be given*; and they that know God, both need and desire to know more of Him. This is fitly pleaded: 'Father, own and favor them, for they will own and honor Thee.'

He aimed in all this, not to fill their heads with curious speculations, and furnish them with something to talk of among the learned, but to advance their real happiness in two things:

1. Communion with God; 'I have given them the knowledge of all whereby Thou hast made Thyself known, that *thy love*, even that *wherewith Thou hast loved Me*, may be, not only *toward* them, but in them; that is, (1.) 'Let them have the fruits of that love for their sanctification; let the Spirit of love, with which Thou hast filled Me, be in them.' Christ declares his Father's name to believers, that with that divine light darted into their minds, a divine love may be shed abroad in their hearts, to be in them a constraining principle of holiness, that they may partake of a divine nature. When God's love to us comes to be in us, it is like the virtue which the loadstone gives the needle; it draws the soul toward God, in piety, and devout affections, which are as the spirits of the divine life in the soul. (2.) 'Let them have the relish of that love for their consolation; let them not only be interested in the love of God, but let them have the comfort of that interest; that they may not only know God, but know that they know Him,' 1 John 2:3. *The love of God thus shed abroad in the heart, fills it with joy*, Rom. 5:3, 5. This God has provided for, that we may not only be satisfied with his loving kindness, but be satisfied of it; and so may live a life of complacency in God, and communion with Him; this we must pray for, and press after; if we have it, we must thank Christ for it; if we want it, we may thank ourselves.

2. Union with Christ is in order hereto; and in them. There is no getting into the love of God but through Christ, nor can we keep ourselves in that love but by abiding in Christ, that is, having Him to abide in us; nor can we have the sense of that love but by our experience of the in-dwelling of Christ, that is, the Spirit of Christ in our hearts. Christ in us is the only hope of glory, that will not make us ashamed, Col. 1:27. All our communion with God, the reception of his love to us, and our return of love to Him again, passes

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 20-26. Blessed be God, that we, in these distant ages, are interested in this prayer of our Redeemer, if we truly believe in Him. Union and communion with the Father and the Son, by the in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit, and harmony with one another, formed the substance of our Redeemer's prayer for all his disciples, to the end of time. Let us then endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and pray, with fervor and without ceasing, for divine illumination, in behalf of ourselves and all our brethren, that we may all be united 'in one mind and judgment.' Let us also constantly beseech God to bestow on us holy love; that we may amicably differ in opinion, where we cannot see things exactly in the same light. Thus a spirit of candor, forbearance, and active, self-denying kindness, among 'all who love Christ in sincerity,' may convince the world, that we are of one heart and soul, though somewhat separated by external circumstances; and that we are all soldiers in one army, though not exactly marshalled and disciplined in the same manner; that we are in-

deed fighting against sin, the world, and the devil; and that we will not turn our arms against each other, as has too often been the case, to the joy and triumph of our enemies. Thus we shall best manifest the truth and excellency of our religion, and the divine authority of its Author. Thus we shall experience more intimate union of soul, and communion with the God of our salvation, and with his saints. Thus we shall have a measure of the Redeemer's glory conferred on us, by being conformed to his image, united with his people, and hated by those only, who 'hate Him and the Father that sent Him.' Thus at length we shall surely be with Him forever, to behold his glory, and enjoy, as one with Him, that love with which the Father 'loved Him before the foundation of the world;' and shall possess the most complete felicity, in the knowledge of that God, whom the world has not known; but in knowing whom angels find blessedness, of which in our present state we can frame no conception. (1 Cor. 2:6-9. 13:8-12. 1 John 3:1-3, v. 3.)

SCOTT.

Verse 26.

'The prayer which concludes this sermon of Christ, if we had no other knowledge of Him than was furnished by it, would serve to show us the majestic dignity of his person, his exalted magnanimity, his ardent love to the human race, and the transcendent excellence of the work He was effecting.'

TITTMAN, in BLOOMFIELD.

'Christ's sermon on the mount shows men what they should do, so as to please God: this so, non (beginning at verse 13, of ch. 13.)

shows them how they are to do the things prescribed in the other. In the former, the reader sees a strict morality, which he fears he shall never be able to perform; in this, he sees all things are possible to him who believes, for that very God who made him, shall dwell in his heart, and enable him to do all that He pleases to employ him in. No man can properly understand the nature and design of the religion of Christ, who does not enter into the spirit of the pre-eding discourses.

D. A. CLARK.

CHAP. XVIII.

Jesus returns to a garden; and Judas leads a company together to apprehend Him, 1-3. At the word of Jesus, the officers, soldiers, and company fall to the ground, 4-6. Jesus, yielding up Himself, requires that his disciples should be dismissed, 7-9. Peter cuts off Malchus's ear, and Jesus reproves Him, 10, 11. Jesus is bound, and led away to Anna, and then to Caiaphas, 12-14. Peter is admitted into the palace, and then denies Christ, 15-18. Jesus is examined by the high priest, and struck by an officer, 19-24. Peter again denies Him, 25-27. Jesus is brought before Pilate, and declares that he is king of the Jews, 28-37. Pilate testifies to his innocence, and offers to release him; but the Jews prefer Barabbas the robber, 38-40.

WHEN Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with his disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place; for Jesus oft-times resorted thither with his disciples.

3 Judas then, having received a band of men, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.

a 13:31, ecc. 14:17-18;
b 14:31. Matt. 26:36. Mark 14:32.
c Luke 22:39, 40.
d 2 Sam. 15:23. 1 Kings 15:13.
e Kings 23:8, 12. 2 Chr. 15:16. 30:14.
f Jer. 31:40. Kiriath.
g 26. Gen. 2:15. 3:23.
h Mark 11:11, 12.
i 13:27-30. Matt. 26:37, 55. Mark 14:43, 44, 48. Luke 22:47. Acts 1:16.
j 12:14. Or. Ps 31:2. 22:12.

what house He was in, in the city, and He could have staid and met his sufferings there; but,

1. It was his custom when at Jerusalem, after He had spent the day in public work, to retire at night to the mount of Olives, in the skirts of the city, for they would not make room for Him in the palaces, in the heart of the town. He would not be put out of this his custom by the foresight of his sufferings, but, as Daniel, did then just as He did a foretime, Dan. 6: 10.

2. He was as unwilling as his enemies, that there should be an uproar among the people, for it was not his way to strive or cry; if He had been seized in the city, and a tumult raised, mischief might have been done. Note, When we find ourselves involved in trouble, we should be afraid of involving others. It is no disgrace to the followers of Christ to fall tamely. They who aim at honor from men, value themselves upon selling their lives as dear as they can; but they who know that their blood is precious to Christ, need not stand upon such terms.

3. He would set us an example in the beginning of his passion, as at the end of it, of retirement from the world. Let us go forth to Him without the camp, bearing his reproach, Heb. 13: 13. We must leave behind the crowds, and cares, and comforts of cities, even holy cities, if we would cheerfully take up our cross, and keep up our communion with God.

He went over the brook Cedron; running between Jerusalem and the mount of Olives; it points, 1. At David's prophecy concerning the Messiah, (Ps. 110: 7.) He shall drink of the brook in the way; the brook of suffering in the way to his glory and our salvation, signified by the brook of Cedron; the black brook, so called, either from the darkness of the valley it ran

through the heart of the Lord Jesus, and the comfort of both is owing purely to Him. Christ had said but a little before, I in them; (v. 23.) and here it is repeated again, (though the sense was complete without it,) and the prayer closed with it, to show how much the heart of Christ was set upon it; all his petitions centre in this, and with this the prayers of Jesus, the Son of David, are ended; 'I in them; let Me have this, and I desire no more.' It is the glory of the Redeemer to dwell in the redeemed; it is his rest forever, and He has desired it. Let us therefore make sure our union with Christ, and then take the comfort of his intercession. This prayer had an end, but that, He ever lives to make.

CHAP. XVIII. v. "12. Hitherto this evangelist has recorded little of the history of Christ, only so far as was requisite to introduce his discourses; but now the time of Christ's death drew nigh, he is very particular in relating the circumstances of his sufferings, and some which the others had omitted, especially his sayings.

The hour was now come that the Captain of our salvation should engage the enemy. The day of recompense is in his heart, the year of his redeemed is come, his own arm works the salvation, for He has no second. Let us turn aside now, and see this great sight.

The office of the priest was to teach, and pray, and offer sacrifice; Christ, after teaching and praying, when He had spoken these words, (as Matt. 26: 1.) applies Himself to make atonement. Christ had said all He had to say as a prophet, and now He addresses Himself to the discharge of his office as a priest, to make his soul an offering for sin; and when He had gone through this, He entered upon his kingly office.

Having by his sermon prepared his disciples, and by his prayer, Himself, He went out. He entered not the lists, till He had put on his armor. Let those that suffer according to the will of God, in a good cause, with a good conscience, and a clear call to it, comfort themselves with this, that Christ will not engage those that are his in any conflict, but He will first prepare them for it; and if we receive Christ's instructions and comforts, and be interested in his intercession, we may, with unshaken resolution, venture through the greatest hardships in the way of duty.

He went forth with his disciples. Judas knew the place, and He could have staid and met his sufferings there; but,

through, or the color of the water, tainted with the dirt of the city; such a brook Christ drank of, when it lay in the way of our redemption, and therefore shall He lift up the head, his own and ours. 2. In David's flight, from Absalom, particular notice is taken of his passing over the brook Cedron, and going up by the ascent of mount Olivet, weeping, and all that were with him in tears, 2 Sam. 15: 23, 30. The Son of David, being driven out by the rebellious Jews, who would not have Him to reign over them, (and Judas, like Ahithophel, being in the plot against Him,) passed over the brook in meanness and humiliation, attended by a company of true mourners. The godly kings of Judah had burnt and destroyed the idols they found at the brook Cedron; (Asa, 2 Chron. 15: 16. Hezekiah, 2 Chron. 30: 14. Josiah, 2 Kings 23: 4, 6,) into that brook the abominable things were cast. Christ, being now made sin for us, that He might abolish it, and take it away, began his passion by the same brook. Mount Olivet, where Christ began his sufferings, lay on the east of Jerusalem; mount Calvary, where He finished them, on the west.

He entered into a garden. This circumstance is noticed only by this evangelist. In the garden of Eden sin began; there the curse was pronounced, the Redeemer promised, and therefore in a garden that promised Seed entered the lists with the old serpent. Christ was buried also in a garden. 1. Let us, when we walk in our gardens, take occasion thence to meditate on Christ's sufferings in a garden, to which we owe all this pleasure, for by them the curse upon the ground for man's sake was removed. 2. In the midst of our possessions and enjoyments, we must keep up an expectation of troubles, for our gardens of delight are in a vale of tears.

He had his disciples with Him, 1. Because He used to take them with Him when He retired for prayer. 2. They must witness his sufferings, and patience, that they might with more assurance and affection preach them to the world, (Luke 24: 48.) and be prepared to suffer themselves. 3. He would take them into the danger, to show them their weakness, notwithstanding their promises of fidelity. Christ sometimes brings his people into difficulties, to magnify Himself in their deliverance.

Judas the traitor knew it to be the place of his usual retirement, and, probably, by some word Christ had dropped, knew He intended to be there that night. A solitary garden is a proper place for meditation and prayer, and, after a passover, a proper time to retire for devotion, that we may pray over the impressions made, and the vows renewed, and render them permanent.

Mention is made of Judas' knowing the place, 1. To aggravate the sin, that he would make use of his familiarity with Christ, as giving him an opportunity of betraying Him; a generous mind would have scorned so base a thing! Thus has Christ's holy religion been wounded in the house of its friends, so as it could not have been any where else. Many an apostate could not have been so profane as he is, if he had not been a professor; could not have ridiculed Scriptures and ordinances, if he had not known them.

2. To magnify the love of Christ, who went where He knew the traitor would seek Him, thus showing Himself willing to suffer and die for us. He went late in the night, (eight or nine o'clock;) it was not only his meal and drink, but his rest and sleep, to do the will of Him that sent Him. When others were going to bed, He was going to prayer, to suffer.

NOTES.

CHAP. XVIII. v. 1. Garden.] 'The original properly denotes a garden, or orchard; as in 19: 41, then a garden-house, or farm-house, as here. Hence it is called in Matt. 26: 36, and Mark 14: 32, by a word (translated place) which signifies both a farm and a farm-house. See John 4: 5 where it is translated parcel of ground, and Acts 28: 7, where it is translated possessions.' Tittman, in Bloomfield.

Verse 3.

Band.] 'Many ancient and most modern commentators understand by band, the Roman cohort, in garrison at the castle of Antonia, of from 1,000 to 600 men. If that were the whole garrison, we cannot imagine that the fortress would be abandoned: and therefore may

suppose a synecdoche. What portion cannot be determined. Story and others conjecture, that it was a detachment of the soldiery which stood guard at the temple, on the nights of the festival. But such a number would scarcely be sufficient, considering the seditious spirit of the Jews, and how suddenly tumults broke out, especially at the festivals; and it can hardly be supposed that they would have been called off from so important a service. Michaelis, Kuinell, and others, understand the body of Levites, who stood guard over the temple by night. But the chief of this guard is here called *chiliarch*, which, with the term used for band, compels us to think only of Roman soldiers.' Bloomfield.

4 Jesus^a therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, ¹ Whom seek ye?

5 They answered him, ¹ Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, ¹ stood with them.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, ² they went backward, and fell to the ground.

7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

b 13:1. 19:28. Matt. 16:21. 17:22, 23. 20:18, 19. 25:21, 31. Mark 10:33, 34. Luke 18:31-33. 24:6, 7, 44. Acts 4:24-28. 20:22, 23.
1 Kings 18:10, 14-18. Neh. 6:11. Ps. 3:6. 27:3. Prov. 28:1. 1 Pet. 4:1.
k 1:46. 19:19. Matt. 2:23. 21:11.
l Is. 3:9. Jer. 8:12.
m 2 Kings 1:9-15. Ps. 27:2. 40:14. 70:5. 128:5. Luke 9:54-56. Acts 4:29, 30.

Judas received this band of men; probably he desired it, telling them how necessary it was to send a good force, and being as ambitious of the honor of commanding in chief in this expedition, as he was covetous of the wages of unrighteousness. He thought himself bravely preferred from the rear of the contemptible twelve, to the head of these hundreds; he never made such a figure before, and promised himself, perhaps, that this should not be the last time, if he succeeded in this enterprise.

They came with lanterns, and torches, and weapons.

If He should abscond, though they had moonlight, [the moon being at the full], they would have occasion for their lights; but they might have spared these; the second Adam was not driven, as the first was, to hide Himself, either for fear or shame, among the trees of the garden.

Our Lord repulsed the first onset of the enemy.

He received them with all mildness, and calmness. He met them with a very mild question; (v. 4.) *Knowing all things that should come upon Him*, and therefore not at all surprised, with wonderful intrepidity and presence of mind, *He went forth to meet them*, and, as if unconcerned, softly asked, *Whom seek ye?* What means this? See here, 1. Christ knew all that should come upon Him, for He had obliged Himself to suffer it; unless we had strength, as Christ had, to bear the discovery, we should not covet to know what shall come upon us; it would but anticipate our pain; *sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof*: yet it will do us good to expect sufferings in general, so that when they come we may say, 'It is but what we looked for, the cost we counted upon.' 2. When the people would have forced Christ to a crown, and offered to make Him king of Galilee, He hid Himself; (ch. 6: 15.) but when they came to force Him to a cross, He offered Himself; for He came to this world to suffer, and went to the other to reign. This will not warrant us needlessly to expose ourselves to trouble, for we know not when our hour is come; but we are called to suffering, when we have no way to avoid it, but by sin; and when it comes to that, let none of these things move us, for they cannot hurt us.

It would seem, *their eyes were held, that they could not know Him*. Probably many of the Roman band, at least the officers of the temple, had often seen Him; Judas, however, knew Him well enough, yet none of them could pretend to say, *Thou art the man*. Thus He showed them the folly of bringing lights to see Him, for He could make them not to know Him; and He has herein shewed us how easily He can infatuate his enemies, when they are speaking mischief.

In their inquiries for Him they called Him *Jesus of Nazareth*, the only title they knew Him by; probably, He was so called in their warrant. It was a name of reproach, to darken the evidence of his being the Messiah. By this it appears that *they knew Him not*, whence He was; for if they had known, surely they would not have persecuted Him.

Verse 4.

'The other evangelists relate that Judas went before and kissed Jesus; at what time, commentators are not agreed. I rather assent to those who think (as Kuinoel) it was before the words *whom seek ye* were pronounced; for there could be no need for the kiss after Jesus had told them that He was the person they sought.' BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 5

Judas stood with the company, so that he too was constrained to go 'backward, and fall to the ground;' yet he was not dismayed by that 1800:

The Captain of our salvation having taken the field, the enemy presently attacks Him; (v. 3.) Judas with his men comes thither, commissioned by the chief priests, especially those of them that were Pharisees, the most bitter enemies to Christ. This evangelist passes over Christ's agony, because the other three had fully related it, and presently introduces Judas and his company that came to seize Him.

The persons employed in this action—a band of men and officers from the chief priests, with Judas.

Here is a multitude engaged against Christ—a band of men, a Roman cohort, which some think was five hundred men, others a thousand. Christ's friends were few, his enemies many. Let us therefore not follow a multitude to do evil, nor fear a multitude designing evil to us, if God be for us.

It is a mixed multitude; the band of men were Roman soldiers; a detachment from the guards posted in the tower of Antonia, to be a curb upon the city; the officers of the chief priests, either their domestic servants, or the officers of their courts, were Jews; these had an enmity to each other, but were united against Christ, who came to reconcile both to God in one body.

It is a commissioned multitude; they have received orders from the chief priests, upon whose suggestions to the governor, that Jesus was a dangerous man, it is likely, they had a warrant to take Him up, for they feared the people. See what enemies Christ and his Gospel have, numerous, potent, and formidable; ecclesiastical and civil powers combined against them, Ps. 2: 1, 2. Christ said it would be so, Matt. 10: 18.

He fairly and mildly answers them, *I am He*. He did not improve the advantage He had against them by their blindness, as Elisha did against the Syrians, telling them, *This is not the way, neither is this the city*; but improves the opportunity of showing his willingness to suffer. Though they called Him *Jesus of Nazareth*, He answered to the name, for He despised the reproach: He might have said, *I am not He*, for He was *Jesus of Bethlehem*; but He would not allow equivocations. He has hereby taught us to own Him, whatever it cost us; not to be ashamed of Him or his words; but, even in difficult times, to confess Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner. *I am He*, is the glorious name of the blessed God, (Exod. 3: 14.) and the honor of that name is justly challenged by the blessed Jesus.

Judas stood with them. He that used to stand with them that followed Christ, now stood with those that fought against Him. This describes an apostate; he is one that changes sides, herds himself with those with whom his heart always was, and with whom he shall have his lot in the judgment-day. This is mentioned, 1. To show the impudence of Judas, the confidence with which he now faced his master, and was not ashamed, neither could he blush. 2. To show that Judas was aimed at in that word, *I am He*; it was an arrow levelled at the traitor's conscience, and pierced him to the quick; for Christ's coming and his voice will be more terrible to apostates and betrayers, than to other sinners.

They went backward, and, like men thunder-struck, fell to the ground. Thus Christ was declared to be more than a man, even when He was trampled upon as a worm, and no man. This word, *I am He*, revived his disciples, and raised them up; (Matt. 14: 27.) but strikes his enemies down.

When He struck them down, He could have struck them dead; when He spake them to the ground, He could have spoken them to hell, like Korah's company; but He would not. The hour of his suffering was come, and He would not put it by; He would only show that his life was not forced from Him, but He laid it down of Himself. He would give an instance of his patience and forbearance with the worst of men, and his compassionate love to his very enemies. In striking them down, and no more, He gave them both a call, and a space to repent; but their hearts were hardened.

Thus, all his implacable enemies, that will not repent to give Him glory, shall flee, they shall fall before Him. Now the Scripture was accomplished, (Ps. 21: 15.) *Thou shalt make them turn their back*; and Ps. 20: 8. And it will be accomplished more and more; with the breath of his mouth He will slay the wicked, 2 Thes. 2: 8. Rev. 19: 21. What will He do when He shall come to judge, seeing He did this when He came to be judged? Augustin.

His enemies did not lie long where they fell, but, by divine permission, rose; it is only in the other world that God's judgments are everlasting. They are still eager to seize Him. They recover themselves, in some confusion, they cannot imagine why they could not keep their ground, but will impute it to any thing rather than Christ's power. Note, There are hearts so very hard in sin, that nothing will reduce and reclaim them. When they were fallen before Him, He did not insult over them, but repeats the question, and thus seems to come yet closer to their consciences; 'Do ye not know whom ye seek?' Are ye not aware that ye are in an error? Did ever any harden his heart against God and prosper? In repeating the same answer, they showed an obstinacy in their wicked way; they still called Him *Jesus of Nazareth*, with as

display of power, but dared to proceed with his horrid purpose! It is wonderful, that the scribes, priests, and other Jews did not recollect the companies destroyed by fire from heaven, when they came to take Elijah; and that they should venture to renew their attempt after this unexpected repulse. SCOTT.

Verse 6.

Went backward.] "The phrase," says Lampe, "is appropriated to soldiers turning their backs on their enemies." So Ps. 58: 9. Jer. 46 9. &c. BLOOMFIELD

8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he. If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, "Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none."

[Practical Observations.]

10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

10-28. 13:1, 36. 16:32. Matt. 26:55. Mark 14:50-52. 1 Cor. 10:18. 2 Cor. 12:9. 1 Pet. 5:7. 17:12. p. 56. Mat. 26:51-54. Mark 14:30. 47. Luke 22:33, 49-51.

for though He has allotted us sufferings, yet He considers our frame, will wisely time the cross, and proportion it to our strength, and will deliver the godly either from, or through temptation. He gives us a good example of love to our brethren. We must not consult our own ease and safety only, but others', in some cases more than our own. There is a generous, heroic love, which will enable us to lay down our lives for the brethren, 1 John 3: 16.

2. He intended to give a specimen of his undertaking as Mediator. When He offered Himself to suffer and die, it was that we might escape.

Herein He confirmed the word He had spoken, *Of them which Thou gavest Me, I have lost none.* Christ, by fulfilling that word in this particular, gave an assurance that it should be accomplished in its full extent; not only for them that were now with Him, but for all that should believe on Him through their word. Though Christ's keeping them was meant especially of the preservation of their souls from sin, it is here applied to the preservation of their natural lives, and very fitly, for even the body was a part of Christ's care; He is to raise it up at the last day, and therefore to preserve that as well as the spirit and soul, 1 Thess. 5: 23. 2 Tim. 4: 17, 18. Christ will preserve the natural life for the service to which it is designed; it is to be used for Him, and He will not lose the service of it, but will be magnified in it, whether by life or death. Christ's witnesses shall not die till they have given in their evidence. But that is not all; this preservation of the disciples was, in the tendency of it, a spiritual preservation; they were now so weak that, in all probability, if they had been called out to suffer, they would have shamed themselves and their Master, and, at least the weaker of them, would have been lost; and therefore, that He might lose none, He would not expose them. The preservation of the saints is owing, not only to divine grace in proportioning the strength to the trial, but to divine providence in proportioning the trial to the strength.

Though his good intention excused Peter's act, (v. 10.) yet it would not justify it. 1. He had no warrant from his Master for it. Christ's soldiers must wait the word of command; before they expose themselves to sufferings, they must see not only that their cause be good, but their call clear. 2. He transgressed the duty of his place, and resisted the powers that were, which Christ had forbidden, (Matt. 5: 39.) resist not evil. 3. He opposed his Master's suffering, and, notwithstanding the rebuke he had for it once, is ready to repeat, *Master, spare Thyself*; though Christ had told him that He must and would suffer, and that his hour was now come: thus, while he seemed to fight for Christ, he fought against Him. 4. He broke the captivation his Master had lately made with the enemy: when He said, *Let these go their way*, He not only intended for their safety, but in effect passed his word for their good behavior; this Peter would not be bound by. As we may be guilty of a sinful cowardice when called to appear, so we may be of a sinful forwardness when called to retire. 5. He foolishly exposed himself

much disdain as ever, and Judas as unrelenting as any of them. *Let us therefore fear lest, by a few bold steps in a sinful way, our hearts be hardened.*

When He shows his courage with reference to Himself, *I have told you that I am He*, He shows his care for his disciples, *Let these go their way*. He speaks this as a command, rather than a contract; for they lay at his mercy. *'Let these go their way'*; it is at your peril if ye meddle with them.' This aggravated the sin of the disciples in forsaking Him, and particularly Peter's denying Him, that Christ had given them this warranty of protection. When Christ said, *Let these go their way*, He intended.

1. To manifest his concern for his disciples; when He exposed Himself, He excused them, because they were not as yet fit to suffer; their faith was weak, and their spirits low, and it would have been as much as their souls were worth, to bring them into sufferings now. *New wine must not be put into old bottles.* And they had other work to do; they are to go into all the world, to preach the Gospel; *Destroy them not, for a blessing is in them.* Herein, Christ gives us great encouragement to follow Him;

and the disciples to the fury of the multitude. Thus many have been guilty of self-destruction, in their zeal for self-preservation. 6. Peter played the coward so soon after this that we have reason to think he would not have done this, but that he saw his Master cause them to fall on the ground; but when he saw Him surrender Himself notwithstanding, his courage failed him; whereas the true Christian who will appear in the cause of Christ, not only when it is prevailing, but when it seems to be declining.

We must acknowledge God's overruling providence in directing the stroke, (so that it only cut off his ear,) as also in giving opportunity to manifest Christ's power and goodness in healing the hurt, Luke 22: 51. Thus what was in danger of turning to Christ's reproach, redounded to his honor, even among his adversaries.

Put up thy sword into the sheath; it is a gentle reproof, because zeal carried him beyond the bounds of discretion; He did not aggravate the matter, only bid him do so no more. Many think, when they are in distress, it will excuse them if they be hasty: Christ has here set us an example of meekness in sufferings. Peter must put up his sword, for it was the sword of the Spirit that was to be committed to him; weapons of warfare not carnal, yet mighty. When Christ with a word felled the aggressors, He showed Peter how He should be armed, with a word, quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and with that, not long after this, he laid Ananias and Sapphira dead at his feet. Observe

The reason for this rebuke; *The cup which my Father has given Me, shall I not drink it?* Matthew relates another reason which Christ gave for this rebuke, but John preserves this, which he had omitted; in which Christ gives us,

1. A full proof of his submission to his Father's will. Of all that was amiss in what Peter did, He seems to resent nothing so much, as that He would have hindered his sufferings now that his hour was come. If Christ be determined to suffer and die, it is presumption for Peter to oppose it; *Shall I not drink it?* The manner of expression speaks a settled resolution. He was willing to drink of this cup, though bitter, an infusion of wormwood and gall, the cup of trembling, the dregs of the cup of the Lord's wrath, Isa. 51: 22. He drank it, that He might put into our hands the cup of salvation, of consolation, of blessing; He is willing to drink it, because his Father put it into his hand. If so, it is for the best.

2. A pattern of submission to God's will in every thing that concerns us. We must pledge Christ in the cup that He drank of, (Matt. 20: 23.) and must argue ourselves into a compliance. 1. It is but a cup; a small matter comparatively, he it what it will. It is not a sea, a red, or dead sea, for it is not hell; it is light, and but for a moment. 2. It is a cup that is given us; sufferings are gifts. 3. It is given us by a Father, who has a Father's authority, and does us no hurt; a Father's affection, and means us no wrong.

Having entirely reconciled Himself to the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-9. Even the valence of our Lord's enemies did not render them more eager to crucify Him, than his love to sinners made him ready to meet those sufferings, which He knew were coming on Him, that He might effect their salvation! Yet 'the day of his wrath' will come, when all who oppose, yea, all who do not obey, his Gospel, shall be driven backward and perish forever. (2 Thes. 1: 6-10.) In the mean time He spares and warns his adversaries: yet neither his

terror, nor his forbearance, will deter men in general from their purpose, in contempt of his salvation, and in defiance of his vengeance.—But He regards the temporal peace and safety, as well as the eternal interests, of his disciples: proportions their trials to their strength; nor will ever require them to bear such sufferings for Him, as He bore for them, or any that are comparable to them.

SCOTT.

Verse 9.

Might be fulfilled.] The verb cannot be understood here of the event of prophecy. It must be interpreted—took place.

Pittman, in BLOOMFIELD.

'Jansenius justly observes, that it was a remarkable instance of Christ's power over the spirits of men, that they so far obeyed his word as not to seize Peter when He had cut off the ear of Malchus: or John, while he stood by the cross, though they must know them to have been of the number of his most intimate associates.'

DODDRIDGE.

Verses 10, 11.

Having a sword.] 'The road from Galilee to Jerusalem swarmed with robbers, and was infested with wild beasts. Lampe thinks that this sword was a sort of dagger, (spoken of by Homer, Iliad,) or the form of a falchion, or knife, not made to thrust, but to cut. That this was used both in war and hunting, appears from Servius &c.'

BLOOMFIELD.

Verses 10-14.

John alone of the evangelists mentions Peter and Malchus by name, probably Peter had suffered martyrdom before John wrote his gospel.

SCOTT.

[301]

21 Then said Jesus unto Peter, 'Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?'

12 Then the band, and the captain, and officers of the Jews, took Jesus, and bound him,

13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.*

14 Now Caiaphas was he which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

15 ¶ And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. That disciple was known unto the high priest, and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

q 26, 2 Cor. 6:7. 10:4. Eph. 6:11-17

r Ps. 73:9. Ec. 23:31. Matt. 20:22.

s 23, 28:39, 42. Mark 10:38, 39. 14:45, 56. Luke 22:42. Heb. 12:2.

t 11:41, 42. 12:27, 28. 15:10. 17:24. 20:17. Luke 12:30. Rom. 8:15-18. Heb. 12:5-10.

u 1. Matt. 25:57. Mark 14:53. Luke 22:54.

v Acts 21:31, 37. 22:24-28. 23:10, 17, &c. Gr.

w Gen. 22:9. 40:3. Judg. 16:21. Ps. 118:27. Matt. 27:2. Mark 15:1.

x Luke 5:2. Acts 4:8.

y 11:51.

z And Annas sent Christ bound unto Caiaphas the high priest, 24.

aa 11:49-52.

ab Matt. 26:58. Mark 14:54. Luke 22:54.

bonds, submitted to be bound for us, else we had been bound hand and foot, and reserved in chains of darkness. Thus the Son maketh us free. 3. The types and prophecies of the Old Testament were herein accomplished; Isaac was bound, to be sacrificed; Joseph was bound, and the irons entered into his soul, in order to his being brought from prison to reign, Ps. 105:18. Samson was bound, to slay more of the Philistines at his death than in his life. And the Messiah was prophesied of as a prisoner, Isa. 53:8. 4. Christ was bound, that He might bind us to obedience. His bonds for us are bonds upon us, by which we are forever obliged to love and serve Him. Paul's salutation to his friends, is Christ's to us all; 'Remember my bonds, (Col. 4:18.) remember them as bound with Him from all sin, and to all duty.' 5. Christ's bonds for us were designed to make our bonds for Him easy, if at any time we be so called out to suffer for Him; to sanctify, sweeten, and honor them; these enabled Paul and Silas to sing in the stocks, and Ignatius to call his bonds for Christ spiritual pearls.

V. 13-27. Some passages that occur here were omitted in the other gospels; Peter's denying Him, there given by itself, is interwoven with the other passages here. The crime laid to his charge, having relation to religion, the judges of the spiritual court took cognizance of it; both Jews and Gentiles seized Him, and so both tried and condemned Him, for He died for the sins of both.

They led Him away in triumph, as a trophy of their victory; as a lamb to the slaughter; and they hurried Him with violence through the sheep gate, (Neh. 3:1.) between the mount of Olives and Jerusalem. We had been led away of our own impetuous lusts, and led captive by Satan at his will, and, that we might be rescued, Christ was led away captive, by Satan's agents.

It was now midnight, and one would think they should have put Him in ward, (Lev. 24:12.) till a proper time to call a court; but He is hurried away, not to the justice, to be committed, but to the judges, to be condemned: partly because they feared a rescue, partly because they greedily thirsted after his blood, as the eagle that hasteth to the prey.

They led Him to Annas first; as some think, to be paid for their service. I suppose Annas was old and infirm, and could not be present in

dispensation. He calmly surrendered Himself a prisoner. One would have thought the cure of Malchus' ear would have made them relent, but nothing could win upon them. Accused rage, which the grandeur of the miracle could not appease, nor the tenderness of the favor conciliate, Anselm.

They took Jesus. Only some few of them could lay hands on Him, but it is charged upon them all, for they were aiding and abetting; in treason there are no accessories; all are principals. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, Bulls have compassed me, (Ps. 22:12, 113:12.) The breath of our nostrils is taken in their pit, Lam. 4:20. Often frustrated in attempts to seize Him, they now flew upon Him with the more violence.

They bound Him. This particular is noticed only by this evangelist, that He was pinioned; tradition says, 'They bound Him with such cruelty, that the blood started out at his finger's ends; and having bound his hands behind Him, they put an iron chain about his neck, and with that dragged Him along.'

This speaks the spite of his persecutors. 1. That they might torment Him, as they bound Samson to afflict Him. 2. That they might put Him to shame; slaves were bound, so was Christ, though free-born. 3. That they might prevent his escape, Judas having hidden them hold Him fast. See their folly, that they should think to fetter that power which had but just now proved itself omnipotent! 4. They bound Him as one already condemned, for they were resolved to prosecute Him to death, and that He should die as a fool dieth, as a malefactor, with his hands bound, 2 Sam. 3:33, 34. Christ had bound the consciences of his persecutors with the power of his word, which galled them; and to be revenged, they laid these bonds on Him.

Christ's being bound was very significant; in this, as in other things, there was a mystery. 1. Before they bound Him, He had bound Himself to the office of Mediator; He was already bound to the horns of the altar with the cords of his own love to man, and duty to his Father, else their cords would not have held Him. 2. We were bound with the cords of our iniquities, (Prov. 5:22.) with the yoke of our transgressions, Lam. 1:14. Guilt is a bond on the soul, by which we are bound over to the judgment of God; by corruption we are bound under the power of Satan. Christ, to free us from those

bonds, submitted to be bound for us, else we had been bound hand and foot, and reserved in chains of darkness. Thus the Son maketh us free. 3. The types and prophecies of the Old Testament were herein accomplished; Isaac was bound, to be sacrificed; Joseph was bound, and the irons entered into his soul, in order to his being brought from prison to reign, Ps. 105:18. Samson was bound, to slay more of the Philistines at his death than in his life. And the Messiah was prophesied of as a prisoner, Isa. 53:8. 4. Christ was bound, that He might bind us to obedience. His bonds for us are bonds upon us, by which we are forever obliged to love and serve Him. Paul's salutation to his friends, is Christ's to us all; 'Remember my bonds, (Col. 4:18.) remember them as bound with Him from all sin, and to all duty.' 5. Christ's bonds for us were designed to make our bonds for Him easy, if at any time we be so called out to suffer for Him; to sanctify, sweeten, and honor them; these enabled Paul and Silas to sing in the stocks, and Ignatius to call his bonds for Christ spiritual pearls.

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council at that time of night, yet earnestly desired to see the prey. To gratify him, therefore, and receive his blessing, they produce their prisoner before him. It is sad to see the old and sickly, when they cannot commit sin as formerly, taking pleasure in them that do. Light-foot thinks Annas was not present, because he was to attend early to examine the sacrifices whether they were without blemish; if so, there was a significance in it, that Christ, the great Sacrifice, was presented to him, and sent away bound, as approved and ready for the altar.

The kindred between Annas and Caiaphas, is a reason either why Caiaphas ordered that Annas should be favored with the first sight of the prisoner, or that Annas was willing to countenance Caiaphas in a matter so near his heart. Note, Alliance with wicked people greatly confirms many in wicked ways.

Annas was as willing as any to have the prosecution pushed on, and therefore sent Him bound to Caiaphas. His house was appointed for the rendezvous of the sanhedrim upon this occasion; or the usual place in the temple, where the high priest kept his court.

Caiaphas was high priest that same year. The high priest's commission was during life; but there were now such frequent changes by the artifices of aspiring men, that it was become almost an annual office, a presage of its approaching end; while they were undermining one another, God was overturning them all, that He might come, whose right it was. 1. When a bad thing was to be done by a high priest, according to the foreknowledge of God, Providence so ordered it, that a bad man should be in the chair to do it. 2. When God would make appear what corruption was in the heart of a bad man, He put him into a place of power, where he had temptation and opportunity to exert it. It was the ruin of Caiaphas, that he was high priest that year, and so became a ringleader in putting Christ to death. Many a man's advancement has lost him his reputation.

The malice of Caiaphas is intimated, (v. 14.) by the repeating of what he had said some time before, that, right or wrong, guilty or innocent, it was expedient one man should die for the people, ch. 11:50. This shows, 1. That this bad man governed himself and the church by rules of policy, in defiance of equity. 2. What ill usage Christ was likely to meet with in his court, when his case was adjudged before it was heard; so that his trial was a jest. Thus the enemies of Christ's Gospel are resolved, true or false, to run it down. 3. It attests our Lord's innocence; one of his worst enemies owned He fell a sacrifice to the public good, and that it was not just He should die, only expedient.

Annas made himself a partaker in guilt; for he approved it by continuing Him bound, when he should have loosed Him. He not being convicted, nor having attempted an escape. If we do not what we can, to undo what others have ill done, we are accessories after the fact. It was more excusable in the soldiers to bind Him, than in Annas to continue Him bound. The chief priest and council condemned Him to death. Annas was not present, yet thus wished them good speed.

With much ado Peter got into the hall where the court sat. His kindness to Christ appeared in two things. 1. He followed Jesus when He was led away; though at first he fled with the rest, yet afterward he took heart, and followed at some distance; calling to mind the promises he had made to adhere to Him, whatever it cost. They that followed Christ in the midst of his honors, and shared in them, ought to have followed Him now in his reproaches. They that truly love Christ, will follow Him all ways. 2. When he could not get in where Jesus was, he stood at the door without, willing to be as near Him as he could, and waiting for an opportunity to get nearer. When we meet with opposition in following Christ, we must

(12.) Officers of the Jews.] See note, Luke 22:52.

(13.) To Annas.] It appears from Josephus, that Annas had been high priest before his son-in-law Caiaphas, so that though he had resigned that office himself, yet the people paid so much regard to his

experience, that they brought Jesus first to him. We do not read of any thing remarkable which passed at the house of Annas, for which reason his being carried thither is omitted by the other evangelists.

16 But Peter stood at the door without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals, (for it was cold,) and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

e 18. Matt. 26:69, 70. Mark 14:66—68. Luke 22:55, 57.
d 5, 8. 21:15. Matt. 26:33.
e 25. Mark 14:54. Luke 22:55, 56.
f Luke 22:54.
g Gen. 49:6. 1 Kings 19:9. Ps. 1:1. 28:4—10. Prov. 13:20. Acts 4:23.
1 Cor. 15:33. 2 Cor. 6:15—17. Eph. 5:11, 12.

Nero's,) as well as in crowds. We must not conclude a man to be no friend to Christ, merely because he has acquaintance and conversation with his known enemies.

This other disciple showed respect to Peter, in introducing him, not only to gratify his curiosity and affection, but to give him an opportunity of serving his Master on his trial. Those that have a real kindness for Christ, though their temper may be reserved, and their circumstances lead them to be cautious, yet, if their faith be sincere, will discover, when called to it, their inclination, by being ready to do a disciple a good turn.

But this kindness proved a great unkindness. Note, The courtesies of our friends often prove a snare to us, through a misguided affection. Peter was immediately assaulted with the temptation. Observe, How slight the attack. It was a maid, of so small account, that she was only set to keep the door; and she only asked him carelessly, *Art not thou one of this man's disciples?* suspecting it by his sheepish look. We should many a time better maintain a good cause, if we had a *good heart on it*, and could put a *good face on it*. He might without danger have answered, *And what if I am?* Suppose the servants had ridiculed him, those can bear but little for Christ, that cannot bear that: it is but *running with the foolmen*.

How speedy his surrender; without taking time to recollect himself, he answered, *I am not*. If he had had the boldness of the lion, he would have said, 'It is my honor that I am so;' or if he had had the wisdom of the serpent, he would have kept silence. But all his care being for his own safety, he thought he could not secure that but by a peremptory denial, *I am not*; he not only denies it, but even *disdains* it.

Yet he goes further into the temptation, v. 18. The servants made much of themselves; they made a fire in the hall, not for their masters' (they were so eager in prosecuting Christ, that they forgot cold,) but to refresh themselves. They cared not what became of Christ, all their care was to sit and warm themselves, Amos 6: 6.

Peter herded with them, v. 18. (1.) It was *bad enough*, that he did not attend his Master, at the upper end of the hall, where He was *under examination*. He might have been a *witness for Him*, and have confronted the false witnesses, if his Master had called Him; however, he might have been a *witness to Him*, might have taken an exact notice of what passed, that he might relate it to the other disciples; he might have learned by his Master's example how to suffer; yet neither conscience nor curiosity could bring him into the court, but he sits by, as if, like Gallio, he cared for none of these things. At the same time we have reason to think his heart was full of grief and concern, but he had not courage to own it. *Lord, lead us not into temptation*.

(2.) He joined with his Master's enemies; he *warmed himself*; that was a poor excuse for joining with them. A little thing will draw those into bad company, that will be drawn to it by the love of a good fire. Had Peter's zeal for his Master continued as warm as it seemed a few hours before, he had not had occasion to warm himself now. Peter was much to be blamed,

show our *good-will*. Yet this kindness of Peter's was no kindness, because he had not courage enough to persevere, and so, as it proved, run himself into a snare: and even his following Christ, considering all things, was to be blamed; because Christ had expressly told him, (ch. 13: 36.) *Whither I go, thou canst not follow. Me now*; and had told him again, and again that he would deny Him; and he had lately had experience of his own weakness. Note, We must not tempt God, by running upon difficulties beyond our strength, and venturing too far in the way of suffering. If our call be clear to expose ourselves, we may hope that God will enable us to honor Him; if not, we may fear He will leave us to shame ourselves.

John several times in this gospel speaking of himself as another disciple, many interpreters have been led by that to fancy that this other disciple here was John; and many conjectures they have, how he should come to be known to the high priest;—*being of superior birth*, saith Jerom, as if he were better born than his brother James, when they were both the sons of Zebedee the fisherman: some will tell you that he had sold his estate to the high priest; others, that he supplied his family with fish. But I see no reason to think that this other disciple was John, or one of the twelve; other sheep Christ had, which were not of the fold; and this might be, as the Syriac reads it,—*one of those other disciples that believed in Christ*, but resided in Jerusalem; perhaps Joseph of Arimathea, or Nicodemus, known to the high priest, but not as disciples of Christ. Note, There are good people hid in courts, (even in

1. Because he associated *himself* with these wicked men. Doubtless, they were diverting themselves with this night's expedition, scoffing at Christ, at what He had said and done, and triumphing in their victory: what sort of entertainment would this give Peter? If he said as they said, or by silence gave consent, he involved himself in sin; if not, he exposed himself to danger. If Peter had not courage to appear for his Master, he might have had so much devotion as to retire, and weep in secret for his Master's sufferings, and his own sin in forsaking Him; if he could not have done *good*, he might have kept out of the way of doing hurt. It is better to abscond, than appear to no purpose, or bad purpose.

2. He desired to be thought *one of them*, that he might not be suspected to be a disciple of Christ. *Gather not my soul among sinners*. Hereafter, should dread the seat of the scornful now. It is ill warming ourselves with those, with whom we are in danger of burning, Ps. 141: 4.

Peter, Christ's friend, having begun to deny Him, the high priest, his enemy, begins to accuse Him, or rather urges Him to accuse Himself, v. 19—21. The first attempt was to prove Him a seducer, a teacher of false doctrine; and when they failed, they charged Him with blasphemy, which, being related by the other evangelists, is omitted here.

The process was against law and equity; they seize Him as a criminal, and now that He is their prisoner, they have nothing to *lay to his charge*; no libel, no prosecutor; but the judge must himself be the prosecutor, and the prisoner Himself the witness, and, against all reason and justice, his own accuser.

The high priest then, (or therefore, which seems to refer to v. 14.) because he had resolved that Christ must be sacrificed to private malice, under color of the public good, examined Him upon those interrogatories which would touch his life.

1. Concerning his disciples, that he might charge Him with sedition, and as being dangerous to the Roman government, as well as to the Jewish church. He asked Him who were his disciples—their number—of what country—their names and characters? insinuating that his scholars were designed for soldiers, and would in time become a formidable body. Some think his question concerning his disciples, was, 'What is now become of them? Why do they not appear?' Upbraiding Him with their cowardice; thus adding to his affliction. There was something significant in this, that Christ's calling and owning his disciples was the first thing laid to his charge, for it was for *their sakes* that He sanctified Himself and suffered.

2. Concerning his doctrine, that they might charge Him with heresy, and bring Him under the penalty of the law against *false prophets*, Deut. 13: 9, 10. This was a matter cognizable in that court, Deut. 17: 12. They could not prove any false doctrine upon Him; but hoped to extort something from Him, which they might distort to his prejudice, and to make Him an *offender for some word*, Isa. 29: 21. They said nothing concerning his miracles, by which He had done so much good, and proved his doctrine, because of these they could take no hold. Thus the adversaries of Christ, while industriously quarrelling with his truth, shut their eyes against the evidences of it.

In answer to these interrogatories, 1. As to his disciples, He said nothing; it was an impertinent question; if his doctrine were good, his having disciples to whom to communicate it, was no more than was allowed by their own doctors. If Caiaphas, in asking Him conceal-

Verse 17.

The damsel that kept the door. 1. Cazarius, quoted by Calmet, says this portress was named Ballia. Women, especially old women, were employed by the ancients as porters. In 2 Sam. 4: 6, both the Sept. and Vulg. make a woman porter to Ishboseth. Aristophanes mentions them in the same office, and Euripides and Plautus. BURDER.

Verse 18.

It was cold. [Ed. co.] 'Even snow and frost have been known to take place

in Judea about the season of the passover. Biddulph, the English traveller, speaks of heavy, cold dews, which sometimes chilled the air at that season of the year, and it was now the middle of the night.'

The evangelist shows that he himself was in the inner court with his Master, and therefore saw and heard every thing; but Peter, being in the outer one knew nothing of what was going on.

10 ¶ The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples and of his doctrine.

20 Jesus answered him, 'I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort: and in secret have I said nothing.

21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers, which stood by, struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

23 Jesus answered him, ° If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?

h. Luke 11:53, 54. 20-29.
7:14, 26. 8:2. 10:23-29. Ps. 22:22.
40:9, 10. Matt. 4:23. 9:35. 21:23.
6c. Luke 4:15, 16. 19:45-47. 20:1.
1.c. 21:37.
7d. Isa. 45:19. 45:16. Matt. 24:26.
e. Act. 26:26.
Matt. 26:59, 60. Mark 14:55-59.
Luke 22:67, 68. Acts 24:12, 13-20.
f. Job. 16:10. 30:10-12. Isa. 50:5-7.
Jer. 20:2. Mic. 5:1. Matt. 26:67, 68.
Mark 14:65. Luke 22:63, 64. Act. 22:2, 3.
g. Or, a rod.
h. Act. 23:4, 5.
i. 2 Cor. 10:1. 1 Pet. 2:20-23.

gogues—the places of meeting for worship on the sabbath-day—the time of meeting; when He came to Jerusalem, He preached the same doctrine in the temple at the feasts, when the Jews from all parts assembled there; though He often preached in houses, on mountains, and by the sea-side, to show that his Word and worship were not to be confined to temples and synagogues; yet what He preached in private, was the same with what He delivered publicly. Note, The doctrine of Christ, purely and plainly preached, need not be ashamed to appear in the most numerous assembly, for it carries its own strength and beauty with it. What Christ's faithful ministers say, they would be willing all the world should hear; wisdom cries in the places of concourse, Prov. 1:21. 8:3. 9:3. He sought no corners, for he feared no colors, nor said any thing that He needed to be ashamed of; what he spoke in private to his disciples, He ordered them to proclaim on the house-tops, Matt. 10:27. God saith of Himself, (Isa. 45:19.) *I have not spoken in secret*; his commandment is not hidden, Deut. 30:11. And the righteousness of faith speaks in like manner, Rom. 10:6. *Truth fears nothing but concealment*. Tertullian.

He appeals to those that had heard Him, and desires they might be examined what doctrine He had preached, and whether it had a dangerous tendency; *Ask them that heard Me, what I said unto them*. He means not his friends and followers, but any impartial hearer, *your own officers*. Some think He pointed to them, when He said, *Behold, they know what I said*, referring to their report, (ch. 7: 6.) *Never man spake like this man*. You may ask some upon the bench; for it is probable that some of them had heard Him. Note, The doctrine of Christ may safely appeal to all that know it, and has so much right and reason on its side, that they who will judge impartially, cannot but witness to it.

While the judges examined Him, the servants stood by, abusing Him; (v. 22, 23.) though He spake with so much calmness and evidence, this insolent fellow struck Him with the palm of his hand, probably on the side of his head or face, saying, *Answerest Thou the high priest so?* As if He had behaved Himself rudely to the court.

Some think it was a blow with a rod or wand, or with the staff, the badge of his office. Now the Scripture was fulfilled, (Isa. 50: 6.) *I gave my cheeks to blows*. The Seventy use the same Greek word as is here used. And Mic. 5: 1. *They shall smite the Judge of Israel with a rod upon the cheek*; and Job 16: 10. *They have smitten me upon the cheek reproachfully*. It was unjust to strike one that neither said nor did amiss; it was insolent for a servant to strike one that was confessedly a person of account; it was cowardly to strike one that had his hands tied; and barbarous to strike a prisoner at the bar. Here was a breach of the peace in the face of the court, [504]

ing his disciples, designed to bring them into trouble; it was in kindness to them that He had said, *Let these go their way*. If he meant to upbraid Him with their cowardice, no wonder He said nothing. He would say nothing to condemn, and could say nothing to justify them. 2. As to his doctrine, He said nothing in particular, but in general referred Himself to those that heard Him, being not only made manifest to God, but also in their consciences, v. 20, 21.

He tacitly charges his judges with illegal proceedings; He does not indeed speak evil of the rulers of the people, nor say to these princes, *Ye are wicked*; but appeals to the rules of their own court. *Do ye indeed judge righteously?* Ps. 58: 1. So here, *Why ask ye Me?* Which implies two absurdities in judgment: 1. *Why ask ye Me now* concerning my doctrine, when ye have already condemned it? They had made an order of court for excommunicating all that owned Him, (ch. 9: 22.) had issued a proclamation for apprehending Him; and now come to ask what his doctrine is. Thus was He condemned, as his doctrine and cause commonly are, unheard. 2. *Why ask ye Me?* Must I accuse Myself, when ye have no evidence against Me?

He insists upon his fair and open dealing with them in the publication of his doctrine. The crime which the sanhedrim by the law was to inquire after, was the clandestine spreading of dangerous doctrines, Deut. 13: 6. As to this, therefore, Christ clears Himself fully. He spake openly,—with freedom and plainness of speech; did not deliver things ambiguously, as Apollo his oracles. Those that would spread corrupt notions, do it by sly insinuations, queries, starting difficulties, and asserting nothing; but Christ explained Himself fully, with *Verily, verily, I say unto you*; his reproofs were free and bold, his testimonies express against the corruptions of the age. He spake to the world, to all that had ears to hear, and were willing to hear Him, high or low, learned or unlearned, Jew or Gentile, friend or foe; his doctrine feared not the censure of a mixed multitude; nor did He grudge the knowledge of it to any, (as the masters of some rare invention do,) but communicated it, as the sun his beams.

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yet the judges countenanced it. Confusion of face was our due; but Christ here took it to Himself; 'Upon Me be the curse, the shame

He checked Him in a haughty, imperious manner; *Answerest Thou the high priest so?* As if the blessed Jesus were not good enough or wise enough to know how to speak, but, like a rude and ignorant prisoner, must be controlled by the jailer, and taught how to behave.

This was done to please the high priest; for what he said, speaks a jealousy for the dignity of the high priest. Wicked rulers will not want wicked servants, to help forward the affliction of those their masters persecute. A successor of this high priest commanded the by-standers to smite Paul on the mouth, Acts 23: 2. Some think this officer took himself to be affronted by Christ's appeal to those about Him, as if He would have vouched him to be a witness; and perhaps he was one of those officers that had spoken honorably of Him, (ch. 7: 46.) and lest he should now be thought a secret friend to Him, appears a bitter enemy.

Christ bore this affront with meekness; 'If I have spoken evil, in what I have now said, bear witness of the evil to the court; let them judge of it; but if well, why smitest thou Me?' Christ could have answered him with a miracle of wrath, could have struck him dumb or dead, or have withered the hand lifted against Him. But this was the day of his patience, and He answered him with the meekness of wisdom, to teach us not to avenge ourselves, nor to render railing for railing, but to bear injuries, even when with the wisdom of the serpent we show the injustice of them, and appeal to the magistracy concerning them. Christ did not here turn the other cheek, by which it appears that that rule, Matt. 5: 39. is not to be understood literally; a man may possibly turn the other cheek, and yet have his heart full of malice; but, comparing Christ's precept with his pattern, we learn, that in such cases we must not be our own avengers, or judges; we must rather receive than give the second blow; we are allowed to defend, but not to avenge ourselves; the magistrate (if necessary) is to be the avenger, Rom. 13: 4. Our resentment of injuries must always be rational, and never passionate; Christ, when He suffered, reasoned, but threatened not. He fairly expostulated with him that did Him the injury, and so may we. When called to suffer, we must accommodate ourselves to the inconveniences of a suffering state, with patience, and by one indignity done us be prepared to receive another, and make the best of it.

While the servants were thus abusing Him, Peter was proceeding to deny Him the second time, (v. 25-27.) hearing, perhaps, that Christ was examined about his disciples, and fearing to be seized if he should own it.

It was folly to continue in the company of those that were unsuitable for him, and with whom he had nothing to do. He said to warm himself; but they that warm themselves with evil-doers, grow cold toward good people and good things. Peter might have stood by his Master at the bar, and warmed himself better, at the fire of his Master's love, which many readers could not quench, Cant. 8: 6, 7. He might have warmed himself with zeal for his Master, and indignation at his persecutors; but chose rather to warm himself with them.

He was again assaulted by the temptation, and no other could be expected, for this was a place, this an hour, of temptation. When the judge asked Christ about his disciples, probably the servants took the hint, and challenged Peter for one of them. See, 1. The subtlety of the tempter in mustering a greater force against one whom he saw falling; not a maid now, but all the servants. Note, Yielding to one temptation invites another, and a stronger. Satan troubles his attacks when we give ground. 2. The danger of bad company. We commonly study to approve ourselves to those with whom we choose to associate ourselves; we value ourselves on their good word, and covet to stand right in their opinion. As we choose our people we choose our praise; we are therefore concerned

24 Now ^p Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

25 And Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. They said therefore unto him, Art not thou a so one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

26 One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

27 Peter then denied again; and immediately the cock crew.

28 ¶ Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment; and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment-hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.

29 Pilate then went out unto them, and said, What accusation bring ye against this man?

30 They answered and said unto him, If he were not a malefactor, we would not have delivered him up unto thee.

p 18. Matt. 26:57.

q 18.

r 18. Mark 14:37, 38, 67. Luke 22:56.

s Matt. 26:71, 73. Mark 14:68-70.

t Gen. 18:15. Prov. 29:25. Gal. 2:14, 15.

u 10.

x Prov. 12:19. Matt. 26:73. Mark 14:70, 71. Luke 22:59, 60.

y 13:38. Matt. 26:74, 75. Mark 14:30, 68, 72. Luke 22:34, 60-62.

z Matt. 27:1, 2. Mark 15:1. Luke 23:1.

a 18. 19:9. Matt. 27:27. Mark 15:16. Gr.

b Or, Pilate's house.

c Prov. 1:16. 4:16. Mic. 2:1. Luke 22:66.

d Ps. 35:16. Is. 1:10-15. Jer. 7:8-11. Am. 5:1-23. Mic. 3:10-12.

e Matt. 23:23. Acts 23:24-30. 25:16.

f 19:12. Luke 13:3. Luke 20:19-26. 23:2-5.

g Mark 10:33. Luke 24:7. Acts 3:13.

Roman court, and executed his death, they took this course, 1. That He might not be put to death in a popular tumult, as Stephen, but with the present formalities of justice. Thus He was treated as a malefactor, being made sin for us. 2. If they could engage the Roman government in the matter, which the people stood in awe of, there would be little danger of an uproar. 3. The death of the cross, which the Romans commonly used, being the most ignominious, they were desirous by it to put an indelible mark of infamy upon Him. Therefore they repeatedly cried, Crucify Him. 4. It was invidious to put one to death, that had done so much good in the world, and therefore they were willing to throw the odium upon the Roman government. Many are less afraid of the sin, than of the scandal of it. See Acts 5:28.

It was early; so there would be less danger of opposition from the people that were for Christ; while, at the same time, they had their agents about, to call those together, whom they could influence against Him. How their heart was upon it, and how violent they were in the prosecution, even denouncing themselves their natural rots! See Mic. 2:1.

o make the first choice well, and not to mingle with those whom we cannot please without displeasing God.

It was his great weakness, nay, his wickedness, to yield to temptation, and say, I am not one of his disciples, as one ashamed of what was his honor. The fear of man brings a snare. When Christ was admired, and treated with respect, Peter pleased, and perhaps prided himself, that he was a disciple of Christ, and so shared in the honors of his Master; but many who seem fond of the reputation of religion when it is in fashion, are ashamed of the reproach of it; but we must take it for better and worse.

He repeated the sin the third time, v. 26, 27. He was attacked by one of the servants, a kinsman to Malchus, who gave him the lie with great assurance; Did not I see thee in the garden with Him? Witness my kinsman's ear. Peter denied again, as if he knew nothing of Christ, nothing of the garden, nothing of all this matter.

Before, his relation to Christ was only suspected, here, it is proved by one that saw him with Jesus. Note, They who by sin think to help themselves out of trouble, do but entangle themselves the more. Dare to be brave, for truth will out. A bird of the air may perhaps tell the matter which we seek to conceal with a lie. Notice is taken of this servant's being akin to Malchus, because it would make it the more a terror to Peter; 'Now,' thinks he, 'I am gone.' We should not, if we can help it, make any man our enemy, because either he or some of his relations may at some time have us at their mercy. He that may need a friend, should not make a foe. But though here was sufficient evidence against Peter, and sufficient provocation given by his denial, to have prosecuted him, no harm is done him. Note, We are often drawn into sin by groundless fears, which a small degree of wisdom and resolution would make nothing of.

He denied again. See here the nature of sin; the heart is hardened by the deceitfulness of it, Heb. 3:13. It was a strange degree of effrontery, that he could with such assurance stand in a lie against so clear a disproof; but the beginning of sin is as the letting forth of water. The sin of lying is a fruitful sin, and upon that account exceeding sinful; one lie needs another to support it, and that another. It is a rule in the devil's politics, To cover sin with sin, in order to escape detection.

The hint for awakening his conscience was seasonable and happy; Immediately the cock crew; and this is all that is said of his repentance, it being recorded by the other evangelists. This brought him to himself, by bringing to his mind the words of Christ. See here, 1. The care Christ has of those that are his, notwithstanding their follies; though they fall, they are not utterly cast down, nor utterly cast off. 2. The advantage of having faithful remembrancers near us, who, though they cannot tell us more than we know already, yet may remind us of what we have forgotten. The crowing of the cock to others had no significance; but to Peter it was the voice of God to his conscience.

V. 28-40. Here is Christ's arraignment before Pilate, the Roman governor, in the praetor's house, or hall of judgment; thither they hurried Him, to get Him condemned in the

by the Roman power. Being resolved on his death, they took this course, 1. That He might not be put to death in a popular tumult, as Stephen, but with the present formalities of justice. Thus He was treated as a malefactor, being made sin for us. 2. If they could engage the Roman government in the matter, which the people stood in awe of, there would be little danger of an uproar. 3. The death of the cross, which the Romans commonly used, being the most ignominious, they were desirous by it to put an indelible mark of infamy upon Him. Therefore they repeatedly cried, Crucify Him. 4. It was invidious to put one to death, that had done so much good in the world, and therefore they were willing to throw the odium upon the Roman government. Many are less afraid of the sin, than of the scandal of it. See Acts 5:28.

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Their superstition and hypocrisy; The chief priests and elders, though they came with the prisoner, that the thing might be done effectually, went not into the judgment-hall, because it was the house of an uncircumcised Gentile, lest they should be defiled, but kept out of doors, that they might eat the passover, not the paschal lamb, (that was eaten the night before,) but the passover-feast, upon the sacrifices which were offered on the fifteenth day, the passover-bullocks, spoken of, Deut. 16:2. 2 Chron. 30:24, 35:8, 9. They would not go into the court for fear of touching a Gentile, and thereby contracting, not a legal, but only a traditional pollution. This they scrupled, but made no scruple of breaking through all the laws of equity, to persecute Christ to death. They strained at a gnat, and swallowed a camel.

Pilate called the prosecutors first, who stated what they had to say against the prisoner, v. 29-32.

The judge calls for the indictment. Because they would not come into the hall, He went out to them. Looking upon Pilate as a magistrat, that we may give every one his due, here are three things commendable in him:

1. His diligent application to business. On a good occasion, it had been very well that he was willing to be called up early to the judgment-seat. Men in public trusts must not love their ease.

2. His condescension to the humor of the people, and receding from the honor of his place, to gratify their scruples. He might have said, 'If they be so nice as not to come in to me, let them go home as they came;' but Pilate insists not upon it, and goes out to them; when it is for good, we should become all things to all men.

3. His adherence to the rule of justice, in demanding the accusation, suspecting the prosecution to be malicious, v. 29. It was a law of nature, before Valerius Publicola made it a Roman law, That no man should be condemned unheard. See Acts 25:16, 17. It is unreasonable to commit a man, without alleging some cause in the warrant, and much more to arraign a man, when there is no bill of indictment against him.

The prosecutors demand judgment against Him, on a general surmise that He was a criminal; not alleging any thing in particular worthy of death or of bonds; v. 30. This was,

1. Very rude and uncivil to Pilate, when he was so complaisant to them. His question was most reasonable, but had it been the most absurd, they could not have answered with more disdain. It was,

2. Very spiteful towards Jesus; right or wrong, they will have Him to be a malefactor. We are to presume a man innocent till he is proved guilty; not so they. They cannot say, 'He is a traitor, a murderer, a breaker of the peace,' but say, 'He is an evil-doer.' He, who went about doing good! Let those he asked whom He had cured, and fed, and taught, rescued from devils, and raised from death, whether He were an evil-doer.

3. They were very conceited of themselves, and of their own judgment and justice, as if their delivering a man up, under the general character of a malefactor, were sufficient to ground a judicial sentence upon.

The judge remanded Him to their own court; v. 31. Some think Pilate here complimented them, acknowledging the remains of their power. Corporal punishment they might inflict, as scourging in their synagogues; whether capital or no, is uncertain; 'But,' saith Pilate, 'as far as your law will allow you, and if you go further, it shall be connived at.' This he said, willing to do the Jews a pleasure.

Others think he bantered them, upon their present state of subjection. They would be the sole judges of the guilt. 'If you will be so, go on as you have begun; you have found Him guilty by your own law, condemn Him by your own law.' Nothing is more absurd, than for those to pretend to dictate, who are weak and in subordinate stations. Some think Pilate reflects upon the law of Moses, as if that allowed the judging of a man unheard; 'It may be,

31 Then said Pilate unto them, 'Take ye him, and judge him according to your law.' The Jews therefore said unto him, 'It is not lawful for us to put any man to death.'

32 That 'the saying of Jesus might be fulfilled, which he spake, signifying 'what death he should die.

(Practical Observations.)

33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment-hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou 'the King of the Jews?'

34 Jesus answered him, 'Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?'

35 Pilate answered, 'Am I a Jew? 'Thine own nation, and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me. What hast thou done?'

b 19-27. Acts 25:18-20.
19-27. Gen. 49:19. Ec. 21:26, 27.
Hos. 3:4, 5.
c 3:14-16. 10:31, 33. 12:32, 33. Mat. 20:19. 26:2. Luke 24:7, 8.
d 21:23. Ps. 22:16. Gal. 3:13.
e 37. Matt. 27:11. Mark 15:2. Luke 23:4, 1 Tim. 6:13.
f 149. 12:13, 15. 19:3, 19-22. Ps. 2:6-12. Is. 9:6, 7. Jer. 23:6, 8. Zeph. 3:15. Zech. 9:9. Luke 19:38-40. Acts 4:34-36.
g 86.
h 22:11, 12. Neh. 4:2. Acts 18:14-16. 22:29. 25:19, 20. Rom. 3:1, 2. 9:8. 19:11.
i 19:5. Acts 21:33. 22:22-24.

Jews, but never crucifying. It was therefore necessary that Christ should be put to death by the Romans, that, being hanged upon a tree, He might be made a curse for us, (Gal. 3:13.) and his hands and feet might be pierced. As the Roman power had brought Him to be born at Bethlehem, so now to die upon a cross, and both according to the Scriptures. It is likewise determined concerning us, though not discovered to us, *what death we shall die*, which should

your law will suffer such a thing, but ours will not.' Thus, through their corruptions, the law of God was blasphemed; so is his Gospel.

They disowned any authority as judges, and growing less insolent and more submissive, are content to be prosecutors. 'It is not lawful for us to put any man to death, whatever less punishment we may inflict, and this is a malefactor whose blood we would have.'

Some think they had lost their power to give judgment in matters of life and death, by their own carelessness, and cowardly yielding to the iniquities of the age. It is not in our power to pass sentence of death upon any; if we do, we shall have the mob about us.

Others think their power was taken from them by the Romans, because they had not used it well, or because it was thought too great a trust for a conquered and yet an unsubdued people. Their acknowledgment of this they designed for a compliment to Pilate, and to atone for their rudeness; (p. 30.) but it is full evidence that the sceptre was departed from Judah, and therefore that now the Messiah was to come, Gen. 49: 10. If the Jews have no power to put any man to death, where is the sceptre? Yet they ask not, Where is the Shiloh?

However, there was a providence in it, that either they should have no power to put any man to death, or should decline the exercise but upon this occasion, v. 32.

Even they who designed to defeat Christ's sayings, were made servicable to the fulfilling of them beyond their intention, by an overruling hand of God. No word of Christ shall fall to the ground; He can never deceive or be deceived. Even the chief priests, while they persecuted Him as a deceiver, were so directed as to help to prove Him true, when we should think, by taking other measures, they might have defeated his predictions. However, they meant not so, Isa. 40: 7.

Those sayings of Christ in particular were fulfilled, which He had spoken concerning his death. 1. He had said He should be delivered to the Gentiles, and that they should put Him to death; Matt. 20: 19. Mark 10: 33. Luke 18: 32. 2. He had said He should be crucified, (Matt. 20: 19. 26: 2.) lifted up, ch. 3: 14. 12: 32. Now if they had judged Him by their law, He had been stoned; burning, strangling, and beheading, were in some cases used among the

Jews, but never crucifying. It was therefore necessary that Christ should be put to death by the Romans, that, being hanged upon a tree, He might be made a curse for us, (Gal. 3:13.) and his hands and feet might be pierced. As the Roman power had brought Him to be born at Bethlehem, so now to die upon a cross, and both according to the Scriptures. It is likewise determined concerning us, though not discovered to us, *what death we shall die*, which should

free us from all disquieting cares about that matter.

The prisoner is set to the bar. Pilate, after he had conferred with the chief priests at his door, entered into the hall, and called for Jesus. He would not examine Him in the crowd, where he might be disturbed by the noise, but ordered Him to be brought into the hall; for He made no difficulty of going in among the Gentiles. We, by sin were become liable to the judgment of God, and were to be brought before his bar; therefore, Christ being made sin, and a curse for us, was arraigned as a criminal. Pilate entered into judgment with Him, that God might not enter into judgment with us.

The other evangelists tell us that his accusers had laid it to his charge, that He perverted the nation, forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, and upon this He is examined.

A question is put to Him, with a design to insnare Him, and to find out something, upon which to ground an accusation: 'Art Thou the King of the Jews—that King so much talked of, and so long expected? Wouldst Thou be thought so?' He was far from imagining that really He was so. Some think Pilate asked this with an air of scorn; 'What! Thou a King, so mean a figure! The King of the Jews, by whom Thou art thus hated and persecuted?' Since it could not be proved He ever said it, he would constrain Him to say it now, that he might proceed upon his own confession.

Christ answers this question with another; not for evasion, but as an intimation to Pilate to consider on what grounds he went; v. 34.

'It is plain Thou hast no reason to say this of Thyself.' Pilate was obliged by office to take care of the interests of the Roman government, but he could not say that was in any danger, from any thing Jesus had ever said or done. He never appeared in worldly pomp, never assumed secular power, never acted as a judge or divider; never was any thing traitorous objected to Him, nor any thing that might give the least umbrage or suspicion.

If others tell it thee of Me, to in-sense thee, against Me, consider who they are, their principles, and whether they who represent Me as an enemy to Caesar, are not really such themselves, and use this only as a cover to their malice. Had Pilate been as inquisitive as he ought, he would have found that the reason why the chief priests were outrageous against Jesus, was, because He did not set up a temporal kingdom in opposition to the Roman power; if He would have done that, and have wrought miracles to bring them out of bondage, as Moses did, so far from siding with the Romans against Him, they

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 10—32. We should learn to receive our lighter afflictions, as 'a cup given us to drink,' and to resist every temptation to escape suffering by sin, or to despond under it, by asking ourselves, whether we ought thus to oppose our Father's will, or to distrust his love.—Self-confident rashness differs from steady courage and patience of faith: and they, who most readily venture into temptation, are often most easily overcome by it.—The company of profane and wicked men either corrupts or disarms those who are seduced into it; they soon forget their purposes and resolution, and conform to the humor, or try to shun the reproach, of their companions. We should therefore watch and pray against temptation, and get as far out of the way of them as we can: but humiliating experience of our weakness is necessary, to teach us caution and attention to the words of Christ. As He suffered every insult for the sake of Peter, even when Peter was denying Him; so He foresaw all our unfaithfulness and ingratitude, at the time when He

shed his blood for our sins! This consideration should not only encourage our hope in his mercy, but also shame us out of our base requitals of such a Benefactor.—The meekness, patience, and wisdom, of the Son of God, only served to increase the enmity of his persecutors; and their base usage illustrated his consummate excellency. This should teach us what to expect from the wicked, and how to behave towards them. (P. O. 1 Pet. 2: 18—25.)—So blind are men in things pertaining to the worship of God, that they often expect to please Him by exactness in externals, while deliberately perpetrating the basest iniquities! They hope to atone for murders and oppressions, by hypocritical forms!—Those who are scandalously unjust, frequently expect credit for their regard to justice; and are greatly affronted to be suspected of the least crime, while actually committing the greatest. (2 Sam. 20: 8—10, 20—22.)

SCOTT.

Verse 31.

It is hard to say how far the power of life and death was at this time taken from the Jews, considering the proceedings of the high priest and council in stoning Stephen to death. (Acts 6: 11—15, and 7: 1, &c.) and what power Saul received from them, for persecuting the Christians unto death. (Acts 22: 4, 5.) and how they would have judged Paul, according to their law, had not Lysias prevented them, Acts 23: 6. But it is evident this power was under some limitations from the Roman government. (See Lightfoot.)

GUYSE.

'Some maintain that a distinction must be made between sacred and civil causes, and that in the former, the Jews had at that time the power of capital punishing, subject, however, to the confirmation of the procurator.—Ed.] But in civil causes and crimes, including sedition, tumult, and treason, that was not conceded to them, the cognizance of these resting solely with the president or procurator. Now our Lord's

cause, at the beginning, did not seem to be civil; at least the Jewish rulers had pronounced Him worthy of death, because He had professed Himself the Messiah and the Son of God: (yet they lead Him to Pilate, that they may cast on Him the blame, if such there would be,) of shedding innocent blood. Afterwards, however, when Pilate had declared he found no fault in Him, and seemed to wish to remove the case from himself, they ventured (Luke 23: 2.) to bring forward a two-fold political charge, namely, that of exciting the populace to rebellion, and of discountenancing the payment of tribute; offences falling under Pilate's jurisdiction as president of Judea.

TITTMAN, in BLOOMFIELD.

Any man.] 'That is, any one whom it is your province to punish, any one guilty of treason, &c. Chrysostom; a *uip* in Kinkel, &c. interpret, It is not lawful, &c. (according to our law); i. e. 'the festival.' P. O. NEPIEL.

36 Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence.'

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a King then? Jesus answered, 'Thou sayest that I am a King. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.'

38 Pilate saith unto him, 'What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, 'I find in him no fault at all.'

39 But 'ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?'

40 Then 'cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.'

a 6:15, 8:15 Ps. 45:3-7, Is. 9:6, 7, Dan. 2:44, 7:14, Zech. 9:9, Luke 12:14, 17:20, 21, Rom. 14:17, Col. 1:12-14.

c 11. Matt. 26:54, 27:11, Mark 14:62, 15:2, Luke 22:63, 1 Tim. 6:13.

d 14, 14:6 Is. 53:4 Rev. 15:3, 14.

e 17, 7, 8:47, 10:26, 27, 1 Pet. 1:22, 23, 1 John 3:1, 19, 4:8, 5:20.

f Acts 17:19, 20, 22, 24, 25, 26, 19:4, 6, 21, 22, Matt. 27:18, 19, 24, Mark 15:14, Luke 23:14-16, 1 Pet. 1:19, 2:22, 23.

g Matt. 27:15-18, Mark 15:8, 9-10, Luke 23:17, 20.

h Matt. 27:16, 28, Mark 15:7, 15, Luke 23:18, 19, 25, Acts 3:13, 14.

allow his disciples to aim at the pomp and power of the great men of the earth. Its subjects, though in the world, are not of the world; they are chosen out of the world, are born from, and bound for, another world; are neither the world's pupils, nor governed by its wisdom, nor enriched with its wealth.

An evidence of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom. Had He designed opposition to government, He would have fought them at their own weapons; but He did not take this course; v. 36. For, 1. His followers did not offer to fight, there was no attempt to rescue Him, though the town was now full of Galileans, his countrymen, and generally armed; but the peaceable behavior of his disciples was enough to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

would have made Him their king, and fought under Him against the Romans; but He not answering his expectation, they charged that upon Him, of which they were themselves notoriously guilty—disaffection to, and design against, the government; and was such information fit to be countenanced?

Pilate resents Christ's reply, in a direct answer to his question, whether He spake of himself? 'No,' says he; 'Am I a Jew, that Thou suspectest me to be in a plot against Thee? I know nothing of the Messiah, and the dispute who is the Messiah, and who not, is alike to me.' With what disdain Pilate asks, *Am I a Jew?* The Jews were, on many accounts, an honorable people; but, having corrupted the covenant of their God, He made them contemptible and base before all the people, (Mal. 2: 8, 9,) so that a man of sense and honor reckoned it a scandal to be counted a Jew. Good names often suffer for the sake of the bad men that wear them. It is sad, that when a Turk is suspected of dishonesty, he should ask, 'What! do you take me for a Christian?'

Christ had asked him, whether others told him? 'Yes,' says he, 'thine own people, who, one would think, should be in favor of Thee, and the priests, whose testimony ought to be regarded; and therefore I have but to proceed upon their information.' Christ still suffers by those 'His own nation, even the priests that do not lie up to their profession.'

Christ had declined answering that question, *Art Thou the King of the Jews?* Therefore Pilate puts one more general, 'What hast Thou done?' What provocation hast Thou given thy own nation, and particularly the priests, to be so violent against Thee?

Christ gives a more direct answer to Pilate's former question, *Art Thou a king?* Explaining in what sense He was a king, not such a king as was dangerous to the government, for his interest was not supported by secular methods, v. 36.

Christ's kingdom is not of this world; it is expressed negatively what it is not, to rectify mistakes concerning it; its rise is not from this world; the kingdoms of men arise out of the sea and the earth, (Dan. 7: 3. Rev. 13: 1, 11,) but the holy city comes down from God out of heaven, Rev. 21: 2. It is not by succession, election, or conquest, but by the special designation of the divine will. Its nature is not worldly; it is a kingdom within men, (Luke 17: 21,) in their hearts and consciences, (Rom. 14: 17,) its riches spiritual, powers spiritual. The ministers of state in Christ's kingdom have not the spirit of the world, 1 Cor. 2: 12. Its guards and supports are not worldly; its weapons are spiritual; it needed not, nor used, secular force, nor was it hurtful to kings or provinces; it did not in the least interfere with the prerogatives of princes, or the property of their subjects; it tended not to alter national establishments in secular things, nor opposed any kingdom but that of sin and Satan. Its tendency and design are not worldly. Christ aimed not, nor would allow his disciples to aim at the pomp and power of the great men of the earth. Its subjects, though in the world, are not of the world; they are chosen out of the world, are born from, and bound for, another world; are neither the world's pupils, nor governed by its wisdom, nor enriched with its wealth.

An evidence of the spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom. Had He designed opposition to government, He would have fought them at their own weapons; but He did not take this course; v. 36. For, 1. His followers did not offer to fight, there was no attempt to rescue Him, though the town was now full of Galileans, his countrymen, and generally armed; but the peaceable behavior of his disciples was enough to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

Verses 37.

Bear witness. 'The original phrase, when used of persons, signifies to bear testimony in favor of, to recommend, praise; but used of things, as here, means to enjoin, teach. The sentence then means, to recommend and teach the truth, [see note, 17: 3.] and authoritatively enjoin the observance of it on men.'

'Our Lord means to say, that He came to recommend, establish, and confirm religion. For He does not sustain the character of teacher, or master, but of King, as He asserts. Tritmax, in Bloomfield.

It is not easy to give the character of Pilate. From the manner of his conduct we scarcely can tell when he is in jest or when in earnest. He appears to have been convinced of the innocence of Christ, and that the Jews, through envy and malice, desired his destruction. And for fear of the clamors of this bad people, he permitted all the forms and requisitions of justice to be outraged, and abandoned Jesus to their

2. He did not order them to fight; nay, He forbade them; which was an evidence, both that He did not depend upon worldly aids, (for He could have summoned legions of angels, which showed that his kingdom was from above,) as also that He did not dread worldly opposition for He was willing to be delivered to the Jews, knowing that that which would destroy a worldly kingdom, would advance and establish his; justly therefore He concludes, *Now ye may see my kingdom is in the world, but not of it.*

Pilate asks plainly; 'Art Thou a king then? Thou speakest of a kingdom; art Thou, in any sense, a king?'

Our Lord witnessed a good confession, (1 Tim. 6: 13.) Thou sayest I am a king; that is, it is as thou sayest, I am a king; for I came to bear witness of the truth.

The Messiah was expected under the character of a king; and therefore having owned to Caiaphas that He was the Christ, He would not disown to Pilate that He was a king, lest He should seem inconsistent. Note. Even when Christ took on Him the form of a servant, He justly claimed the honor and authority of a king.

He shows how He is a king; as He came to bear witness of the truth, He rules in the minds of men by the power of truth. If He had meant Himself a temporal prince, He would have said, *For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, to rule the nations, to conquer kings; no, He came to be a witness for the God that made the world, and against sin that ruins the world, and by this word of His testimony, He sets up his kingdom. It was foretold that He should be a witness to the people, and as such, a leader and commander to the people, Isa. 55: 4. Christ's kingdom was not of this world, in which truth faileth, (Isa. 59, 15.—He that cannot dissemble, knows not how to reign,) but of that world in which truth reigns eternally. Christ's errand into the world was, to bear witness to the truth. 1. To reveal to the world that which otherwise could not have been known concerning God and his will, and goodwill to men, ch. 1: 18. 17: 26. 2. To confirm it, Rom. 15: 8. By his miracles He bore witness to the truth of divine revelation, of God's perfections and providence, and the truth of his covenant, that all men through Him might believe. By doing this He is a king, and sets up a kingdom.*

The foundation and power, the spirit and genius of Christ's kingdom, is divine truth. When He said, *I am the truth*, He said, in effect, *I am a king*. He conquers by the convincing evidence of truth, rules by its commanding power, and in his majesty rides prosperously, because of truth, Ps 45: 4. With his truth He shall judge the people, Ps. 96: 13. It is the sceptre of his kingdom. He came a light into the world, and rules as the sun by day.

The subjects of this kingdom are of the truth. All that by the grace of God are rescued from the power of the father of lies, and are disposed to receive the truth, and submit to its influence, will hear Christ's voice, become his subjects, and bear true allegiance to Him. Every one that has a real sense of true religion, will entertain the Christian religion, and they belong to his kingdom; by the power of truth He makes them willing; Ps. 110: 3. All that are in love with truth, will hear the voice of Christ, for greater, surer, sweeter truths can no where be found, than in Christ, by whom grace and truth came; so that

rage and malice. He seemed disposed to pity—the Jews were full of malice and cruelty. The most that we can say for Pilate, is, that he was disposed to justice, but was not inclined to hazard his comfort or safety in doing it. He was an easy, pliable man, who had no objection to do a right thing, if it should cost him no trouble. But he felt no disposition to make any sacrifice, even in behalf of innocence, righteousness, and truth. In all the business, Pilate showed that he was not a good man, and the Jews proved that they were of their father the devil.

Verses 38, 40.

'Now follows, in the series of events, what is related in Luke 23: 5, seq. and Matt. 27: 12, seq. The transactions recorded here, and in Matt. 27: 15, seq. Luke 23: 14, seq. Mark 15: 8 took place after Herod had sent Jesus back to Pilate.'

Bloomfield

CHAP. XIX.

Jesus is scourged, crowned with thorns, and mocked by the soldiers, 1-9. Pilate, declaring his innocence, the Jews charge him with calling him self the 'Son of God,' 4-7. Pilate, after further examination, desires to release him; but craves with the clamors of the Jews, delivers him to be crucified, 8-10. He is led to Golgotha, and crucified between two robbers, 17, 18. The title placed over his cross, which Pilate refuses to alter, 19-22. Jesus and a part his garments, 23, 24. Jesus affectionately commends his mother to the care of John, 25-27; and, receiving vinegar to drink, He expires, 28-30. The legs of the robbers are broken to hasten their death; but Jesus being previously dead, his side is pierced by a soldier, and thus the Scriptures are fulfilled, 31-34. Joseph of Arimathea, assisted by Nicodemus, buries him, 39-42.

THEN Pilate therefore took Jesus, and b scourged him.

a Matt. 27:26. Mark 15:15. Luke 23:16, 23.
b Ps. 129:3. Is. 50:5. 53:5. Matt. 26:29. 28:34. Luke 22:20. 22:24. 22:25. 2 Cor. 11:24, 25. Heb. 11:36. 1 Pet. 2:24.

man at his gate, obliged Him abruptly to drop the discourse.

Some think he speaks it as a judge, inquiring further into the cause before him; 'Let me into this mystery, and tell me *what is the truth* of this matter.'

Others think He speaks it as a scoffer; 'Thou talkest of truth; canst thou tell *what truth* is?' Thus he makes a jest of the everlasting gospel, that great truth which the chief priests hated and persecuted, and for which Christ was now witnessing, and suffering; and, like men who take pleasure in bantering all religions, he ridicules both sides; therefore Christ made him no reply, *Answer not a fool according to his folly; cast not pearls before swine.* Though Christ would not tell Pilate *what is truth*, He has told his disciples, and by them has told us, ch. 14: 6.

The result of both these conferences, with the prosecutors and the prisoner, appears in two things:

1. The judge appeared his friend; (1.) He publicly declared Him innocent; (c. 38.) *I find in Him no fault at all.* He supposes there might be some controversy in judgment between Him and them, wherein He was as likely to be in the right as they; but nothing criminal appears against Him. This solemn declaration of Christ's innocency, was, [1.] For the justification and honor of Jesus. [2.] To explain the design of his death; *not for any sin of his own, even in the judgment of the judge himself, therefore as a sacrifice for our sins, and that, even in the judgment of the prosecutors, that one man should die for the people, ch. 11: 50.* This is He that did no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth, (Isa. 53: 9.) who was to be cut off, but not for himself, Dan 9: 26 [3.] To aggravate the sin of the prosecutors. If a prisoner has had a fair trial, and has been acquitted by proper judges of the crime, especially if there be no cause to suspect them partial in his favor, he must be believed innocent, and his accusers are bound to acquiesce. But Jesus, though brought in not guilty, is still run down as a malefactor, and his blood thirsted for.

(2.) He proposed an expedient for his discharge; (v. 39.) not to the chief priests, (he knew they would never agree to it,) but to the people, Matt. 27: 15. Probably, he had heard how this Jesus had been attended but the other day with the hosannas of the common people; He therefore thought Him the darling of the multitude, and the envy only of the rulers, and therefore made no doubt but they would demand the release of Jesus.

[1.] Their custom was in honor of the *passover*, a memorial of their release. But it was adding to God's words, as if He had not instituted enough for the due commemoration of that deliverance; and, though an act of mercy, it might be injustice to the public, Prov. 17: 15.

[2.] If Pilate had had the honesty and courage that became a judge, he would not have named an innocent person to be competitor with a notorious criminal for this favor; if he found no fault in Him, he was bound in conscience

by hearing Christ's voice, we know that we are of the truth, 1 John 3: 19.

Pilate hereupon puts a good question to Him, but does not stay for an answer, v. 38. He said, *What is truth?* and immediately went out again.

This question could not be put to one better able to answer it. Truth is that pearl of great price, which the human understanding desires, and is in quest of; for it cannot rest but in that which is, or at least is apprehended to be, truth. When we search the Scriptures, and attend the ministry of the Word, it must be with this inquiry, *What is truth?* and with this prayer, *Lead me into all truth.* But many put this question, that have not patience and constancy enough to persevere; nor humility and sincerity enough to receive it when they have found it, 2 Tim. 3: 7. Thus many ask those needful questions, 'What am I?' 'What have I done?' but will not take time for an answer.

It is uncertain with what design Pilate asked this question. Perhaps, as one that began to think well of Christ, and desired to be informed what new notions He advanced, and what improvements He pretended to in religion and learning. But while he desired to hear some new truth from Him, as Herod to see some miracle, the clamor and outrage of the priests' men at his gate, obliged Him abruptly to drop the discourse.

to discharge Him. But he was willing to trim, and please all sides; and was governed more by worldly wisdom than the rules of equity.

2. The people appeared implacable against Him, v. 40. See how fierce and outrageous they were. Pilate proposed the thing calmly, but they gave in their resolution with clamor. Note, The enemies of Christ's religion cry it down, and so hope to run it down; witness the outcry at Ephesus, Acts 19: 34. But those who think the word of things or persons, merely for their being thus exclaimed against, have a very small share of constancy and consideration. There is cause to suspect a deficiency of reason and justice, on that side which calls in the assistance of popular tumult.

How foolish and absurd they were, is intimated in the short account given of the other candidate; *Now Barabbas was a robber;* (1.) A breaker of the law of God; yet he shall be spared, rather than one who reproved the pride, avarice, and tyranny of the priests and elders. Though Barabbas be a robber, he will not rob them of Moses' seat, nor of their traditions, and then no matter. (2.) He was an enemy to the public safety, and personal property. The clamor of the town is wont to be against robbers, (Job 30: 5.) yet here it is for one. Thus they do who prefer their sins before Christ. Sin is a robber; so is every base lust, yet foolishly chosen rather than Christ.

CHAP. XIX. v. 1-15. Here is a further account of the unfair trial of our Lord. Between the great confusion among the people, and the great confusion in the breast of the judge, the narrative is not easily reduced to method.

He took Jesus, and appointed the lictors to scourge Him. Bede is of opinion, that Pilate scourged Jesus with his own hands, because it is said, *He took Him, and scourged Him*, that might be done favorably. Matthew and Mark mention his scourging after his condemnation, but here it appears to have been before. St. Luke speaks of Pilate's offering to chastise Him, and let Him go; which must be before sentence. This scourging was designed only to pacify the Jews, and Pilate showed that he would take their word against his own sentiments so far.

1. That the Scripture might be fulfilled, which speaks of his being stricken, smitten, and afflicted, and the chastisement of our peace being inflicted upon Him; Isa. 53: 5. Compare Isa. 50: 6. Ps. 129: 3. He Himself likewise had foretold it, Matt. 20: 19. Mark 10: 34. Luke 18: 33.

2. That by his stripes we might be healed, 1 Pet. 2: 24. We deserved to have been chastised with whips and scorpions, and with many stripes, having known our Lord's will and not done it; but Christ underwent the stripes for us, bearing the rod of his Father's wrath. Lam. 3: 1. Pilate's design in scourging Him, was, that He might not be condemned, which did not take effect, but intimated what was God's design, that his being scourged might prevent our being condemned, and that did take effect.

3. That stripes, for his sake, might be sanctified to his followers; and they might, as they did, rejoice in that shame, (Acts 5: 41. 16: 22, 25.) as Paul, who was in stripes above measure, 2 Cor. 11: 23. Christ's stripes take out the

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 33-40. The kingdom of Christ cannot then be promoted by carnal weapons or means, or by party; nor accommodated to temporal interests; and every attempt of this kind is inconsistent, unscriptural, and unholy. Our King reigns in the heart and conscience of his subjects: the princes of this world have nothing to fear from the obedience of Christians to his authority; nor does He need the countenance of theirs, though He may sometimes make use of it. His subjects are commanded to 'render tribute to whom tribute is due, and honor to whom honor;' to 'submit to the powers that be;' to 'fear God and the king, and not to meddle with those who are given to change;' though at the same time, they must 'obey God rather than man, when man interferes out of his province. It would promote the credit of the Gospel, if the professed subjects of Christ, while they stand up for liberty of conscience, would render obedience to these plain precepts. They would more resemble Him, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good conscience; and prove themselves to be 'of the truth, by

hearing and obeying his voice.—But many profess to inquire after truth, who are not disposed to wait for an answer, or to welcome that which is given by those who speak as the oracles of God.' Numbers give Jesus and his people a good word, who will not join them, or venture any thing in his cause: numbers commit injustice for fear of their dependents, and from a desire of popularity; and the majority of all ranks, even of nominal Christians, prefer Barabbas to Christ; so that it requires more constancy, than unregenerate men possess, to stem the torrent of impetuous wickedness. Let us, however, look to 'the Lamb of God,' in whom the Roman governor could 'find no fault at all;' let us endeavor in the same manner to make all our accusers ashamed; let us never indulge prejudices against persons or doctrines, because multitudes decry them; and let us beware of deliberately sparing our lusts, (those robbers of God, and murderers of the soul,) thus crucifying Christ afresh, and putting Him to open shame.

SCOTT.

2 And 'the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

3 And said, 'Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, (that ye may know that I find no fault in him).

5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

65 Ps. 22:5. Is. 49:7. 53:3. Matt. 27:27-31. Mark 15:17-20. Luke 23:11.
4 Matt. 26:57. 27:29. Luke 1:28.
19-22. 15:3.
16. 26:59. Matt. 27:29. 19:24, 54. Luke 23:11, 47. 2 Cor. 5:21. Heb. 7:26.
1 Pet. 1:19. 2:22. 3:18. 1 John 3:5.
1:29. Is. 7:14. 40:6. 62:1. Lam. 1:12. Heb. 12:2.

conceit only; so is his religion regarded as a conceit, and God and the soul, sin and duty, heaven and hell, are with them all chimeras. They crown Him with thorns, as if it were a penance, and the greatest pain and hardship in the world: as if to submit to God and conscience were to thrust one's head into thorns; but this is an unjust imputation: thorns and snares are in the way of the forehead, but roses and laurels in religion's ways.

See the condescension of our Lord. Great and generous minds can bear any thing better than ignominy; any toil, pain, loss, rather than reproach: yet this the great and holy Jesus submitted to for us. See and admire, 1. The invincible patience of a sufferer, leaving us an example of contentment, courage, and evenness of spirit, under the greatest hardships. 2. The invincible love and kindness of a Savior, who not only cheerfully and resolutely went through all this, but voluntarily undertook it for us. Herein He commended his love, that He would not only die for us, but die as a fool dies. He endured the pain; not the pangs of death only, though these were most exquisite; but, as if those were too little, He submitted to previous pains. Shall we complain of a thorn in the flesh, and of being buffeted, because we need it to hide pride from us, when Christ humbled Himself to bear those thorns in the head, and those buffets, to save and teach us; 2 Cor. 12:7. He despised the shame, the shame of a fool's coat, and the mock respect. If at any time ridiculed for well-doing, let us not be ashamed, but glorify God, for thus we are partakers of Christ's sufferings. He that bore this was recompensed with real honors, and so shall we, if we patiently suffer shame for Him.

Pilate, having thus abused the prisoner, presents Him to the prosecutors, in hope that they would now be satisfied. His intention, if indeed good, by no means justified his proceedings. He proposes two things to their consideration:

1. That he had not found any thing which made Him obnoxious to the Roman government; (v. 4.) *I do not find in Him the least fault, or cause of accusation.* Hereby he condemns himself. None ought to suffer ill but those that do ill; yet many banter religion, who still, if they be serious, cannot but own they find no fault in it. Pilate, thinking to please the people by scourging Christ, and save his conscience by not crucifying Him, behold he does both; whereas, if he had at first resolved to crucify Him, he needed not have scourged Him. Those who think to keep themselves from greater sins by venturing upon less, commonly run into both.

2. He had done that to Him, which would make Him less dangerous to them and their government. He brought Him out, wearing the crown of thorns, his head and face bloody, and said, 'Behold the man whom you are so jealous of;' intimating, that though He might have given them cause to fear that his interest in the country would lessen theirs, yet the people would never look on Him with respect, after He had been thus treated as a slave, and exposed to contempt. Little did Pilate think with what veneration even 'hate' sufferings of Christ would in after-ages be commemorated by the best and greatest, of men, who would glory in that cross and those stripes, which he thought would have been to Him and his followers a perpetual reproach.

sting of theirs. We are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world, 1 Cor. 11:32.

He turned Him over to his soldiers, to be made sport with; (v. 2. 3.) *The soldiers, the governor's life-guard, put a crown of thorns upon his head; they put on Him a purple robe, some threadbare coat of that color, to be the badge of his royalty; and complimented Him with, Hail, King of the Jews. (like people like king), and smote Him with their hands.*

See the base injustice of Pilate, that he would suffer one whom he believed innocent, and if so, an excellent person, to be thus trampled on by his servants. They who are under the arrest of the law, ought to be under the protection of it; and their being secured is to be their security. But Pilate did this, 1. To oblige his soldiers' merry humor, and perhaps his own too, notwithstanding the gravity one might have expected in a judge. Herod, as well as his men of war, had just before done the same. Luke 23:11. It was a play to them, now that it was a festival time; as the Philistines made sport with Samson. 2. To oblige the Jews' malicious humor, who desired that all possible disgrace might be done to Christ.

See the rude insolence of the soldiers, how perfectly lost to justice and humanity, to triumph over a man in misery, one that had been in reputation for wisdom and honor, and never did anything to forfeit it. But thus hath Christ's religion been misrepresented, dressed up by bad men at their pleasure, and exposed to contempt and ridicule. They clothe Him with a mock robe, in jest. As Christ is here represented a king in

Our Lord came forth, willing to be made a spectacle, and to be hated at, as no doubt He was, knowing that He was set for a sign that should be spoken against, Luke 2:34. Did He go forth thus bearing our reproach? Let us go forth to Him bearing his reproach. Heb. 13:13.

Pilate saith, Behold the man! He saith: so the original is; and the immediate antecedent being Jesus, I see no inconvenience in supposing these to be Christ's own words; He said, 'Behold the man you are so exasperated against.' But some of the Greek copies, and the generally of the translators, supply it as we do. Pilate said this with a design to affect them: not so much to move their pity, as to silence their jealousy. Behold a man not worthy your suspicion; from whom you can henceforth fear no danger; his crown is profaned and cast to the ground, and all mankind will make a jest of Him.

The word however is very affecting: Behold the man. It is good for every one of us, with an eye of faith, to behold the man Christ Jesus in his sufferings. Behold this king with the crown; the crown of thorns, Cant. 3:11. Behold Him, and mourn because of Him. Behold and love Him; be still looking unto Jesus.

The prosecutors were but the more exasperated, v. 6, 7. The chief priests, who headed the mob, cried out with fury, and their officers, or servants, joined with them, crying, Crucify Him, crucify Him. The common people perhaps would have acquiesced in Pilate's declaration of his innocence, but their leaders, the priests, caused them to err. By this it appears that their malice against Christ was, 1. Unreasonable and most absurd; they offer not to make good their charge against Him, or to object against the judgment of Pilate, but, though innocent, He must be crucified. 2. Insatiably cruel. Neither his scourging, nor his patience under it, nor the expostulations of the judge, could mollify them: nor could the jest into which Pilate turned the cause, put them into a pleasant humor. 3. Violent, and exceeding resolute; they will have their own way, and hazard the governor's favor, the peace of the city, their own safety, rather than abate the utmost of their demands. Were they so violent in running down our Lord, and in crying, Crucify Him, crucify Him; and shall not we be vigorous and zealous in advancing his name, and in crying, Crown Him, crown Him? Did their hatred sharpen their endeavors, and shall not our love quicken ours for Him and his kingdom?

Pilate still insisted on the prisoner's innocence; 'Take ye Him, and crucify Him, if He must be crucified.' This is ironical: he knew they could not, durst not, crucify Him; but, 'You shall not make me a drudge to your malice; I cannot with a safe conscience crucify Him.' A good resolve, had he kept it. He found no fault in Him, and therefore should not have continued to parley with the prosecutors. They that would be safe from sin, should be deaf to temptation. He should have secured the prisoner from their insults. Why was He armed with power, but to protect the injured? The guards of governors ought to be the guards of justice. But Pilate had not courage to act according to his conscience; and his cowardice betrayed him into a snare. See

The further color the prosecutors gave their demand; (v. 7.) *We hate a law, and by our law, if it were in our power to execute it, He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God.* 1. They boast of the law, even when through breaking the law they dishonored God, Rom. 2:23. They had indeed an excellent law, far exceeding that of other nations; but in vain did they boast of it, when they abused it to such

NOTES.

CHAP. XIX. v. 2. A crown of thorns.] 'Probably, of the napa tree, abaka of the Arabians, which grows very common in the East, and was very fit for the purpose, having many sharp spines well adapted to give pain. The branches are pliant, and the deep green leaves much resemble those of the ivy.'

Purple robe.] 'The sarga (round cloaks, confined on the right side by a clasp and used by captains, other officers, and the pri-

vates) of the generals were made of a superior kind of wool, and were twice dyed in scarlet: those of the emperors were purple, and longer than the soldiers' cloaks. This cloak Matthew calls scarlet, Mark and John purple. The scarlet dye was made from a certain shrub, the purple from a kind of sea-shell. But by the Greek (translated purple) is denoted whatever is of a dazzling red; and the two words translated scarlet and purple, are not unimportantly interchanged.'

AUNOZ.

[809]

6 When the chief priests therefore and others saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him; for I find no fault in him.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

9 And went again into the judgment-hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

b 15. Matt. 27:22, 23. Mark 15:12—15. Luke 23:21—23. Acts 2:23. 3: 13—15. 7:22. 13:27—29.
c 18—31. Matt. 27:24—25.
d Lev. 24:16. Deut. 18:20.
e 15:18. 8:58, 59. 10:30—33, 38—39. Matt. 26:63—65. 27:43, 45. Mark 14:61—64. 15:39. Rom. 14.
f 13. Acts 14:11—19.
g 8:14. 9:22, 30. Judg. 13:6.
h Ps. 38:13—15. Is. 53:7. Matt. 27: 12—14. Mark 15:3—5. Acts 8:29, 33.

cille them to a pretended God. If this be at the bottom of the tumult, thinks Pilate, it will not be turned off with a jest. 2. There was more danger of offending his own conscience, if he should condemn Him. Is He one that makes Himself the Son of God; what if it should prove that He is so? What will become of me then? Even natural conscience makes men afraid of being found fighting against God. The heathen had some fabulous traditions of incarnate deities appearing in mean circumstances, and treated ill by some that paid dear for so doing. Pilate fears this for himself.

To give the prosecutors all they could desire, he resumed the trial. 1. He went into the judgment-hall, that he might be out of the noise and clamor of the crowd, and might examine the thing more closely. They that would find out the truth as it is in Jesus, must retire from the noise of prejudice, as it were, into the judgment-hall, to converse with Christ alone.

2. The question he put; Whence art Thou? From men or heaven? From beneath or from above? He had before asked directly, Art Thou a king? But here he does not directly ask, Art Thou the Son of God? Lest he should seem to meddle with divine things too boldly; but in general, Whence art Thou? Where wast Thou, and in what world hadst Thou a being?

3. Jesus gave him no answer. This was not because He knew not what to say, nor was it a sullen silence, in contempt of court; but, (1.) A patient silence, as a sheep before the shearers is dumb, so He opened not his mouth, Isa. 53:7. It loudly spake submission to his Father's will, which He thus composed Himself to bear. He was silent, because He would say nothing to hinder his sufferings. Had Christ avowed Himself a God as plainly as He avowed Himself a king, probably he would not have condemned Him; (for he was afraid, at the mention of it by the prosecutors;) and the Romans, though they triumphed over the kings of the nations they conquered, yet stood in awe of their gods. See 1 Cor. 2:8. If they had known Him to be the Lord of glory, they would not have crucified Him; how then could we have been saved? (2.) It was a prudent silence. When the chief priests asked Him Art Thou the Son of the Blessed? He answered, I am, for He knew they went upon the Old Testament, which spoke of the Messiah; but when Pilate asked Him, He knew he did not understand his own question, having no notion of the Messiah, and of his being the Son of God, and therefore to what purpose should He reply to him, whose head was filled with the pagan theology? Observe

The haughty check Pilate gave Him for his silence; 'Speakest Thou not unto me? Dost Thou affront me so as to stand mute? Knowest Thou not, then, as president of the province, I have power, if I think fit, to crucify, or to release Thee?'

Verse 7.

'They had before accused Him of arrogating to Himself the title of King Messiah; (a crime against Caesar;) but here, that of Son of God, a sin against God. Whence it clearly appears, that in common acceptation among the Jews, the names Messiah and Son of God, were of very different meaning; the former expressing office, the latter divine nature. So Pilate understood it, as appears from what follows.' Tittman, in BLOOMFIELD.

Verse 9.

Whence. That is, what is your origin; what are your parents, [610]

purposes. 2. They discover a restless, inveterate malice. When they could not incense Pilate, by alleging that He pretended Himself a king, they urged that He pretended Himself a God. 3. They pervert the law to an instrument of their malice. Some think they refer to a law made particularly against Christ, which must be executed, right or wrong; whereas there is a woe to them that decree unrighteous decrees, and that write the grievousness which they have prescribed, Isa. 10:1. See Mic. 6:16. But it would rather seem they refer to the law of Moses; if so, (1.) It was true that blasphemers, idolaters, and false prophets, were to be put to death. Whoever falsely pretended to be the Son of God, was guilty of blasphemy, Lev. 24:16. But then, (2.) It was false that He pretended to be Son of God, for He really was so; and they ought to have inquired into the proofs. If He said that He was the Son of God, and the tendency of his doctrine was not to draw people from God, but to bring them to Him, and He confirmed his mission by miracles, by their law they ought to hearken to Him, (Deut. 18:18, 19,) and if they did not, they were to be cut off. His honor, and their happiness, (if they had not stood in their own light,) they impute to Him as a crime, for which He ought to die; yet if He ought to die, He ought not to be crucified, for that was not inflicted by their law.

Pilate, when he heard that his prisoner pretended not to royalty only, but to deity, was the more afraid. This made the case more embarrassing both ways; 1. There was more danger of offending the people, if he should acquit Him, for he knew how jealous that people were for the unity of the Godhead; and what aversion they had to other gods; and therefore, though he might hope to pacify their rage against a pretended king, he could never reconcile them to a pretended God.

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1. Pilate magnifies himself, in his authority, as not inferior to that of Nebuchadnezzar, of whom it is said, that whom he would he slew and whom he would he kept alive, Dan. 5:16. Men in power are apt to be puffed up, and the more absolute and arbitrary their power is, the more it gratifies their pride. But he magnifies his power to an exorbitant degree, when he boasts that he had power to crucify one whom he had declared innocent, for no prince or potentate has authority to do wrong.

2. He tramples on our blessed Savior; reflects upon Him, as disrespectful to those in authority; ungrateful to one that had been tender of Him; and unwise for Himself. If Christ had indeed sought to save his life, now had been his time to have spoken; but that which He had to do, was, to lay down his life.

Christ boldly rebukes his arrogance, and rectifies his mistake, v. 11. Though Christ did not answer him when he was impertinent, yet He thought fit to when he was imperious; then answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit, Prov. 26:4, 5. When Pilate used his power, Christ silently submitted to it; but when he grew proud of it, He made him know himself; reminding him that his power in general, as a magistrate, was limited. God is the fountain of power; and the powers that are, as they are ordained by, and derived from Him, are subject to Him. They ought to go no further than his law directs, they can go no further than his providence permits. They are God's hand, and his sword, Ps. 17:13. Though the axe may boast itself against him that handleth therein, still it is but a tool, Isa. 10:5, 15. Let the oppressors know that there is a higher than they, Eccl. 5:8. Let this silence the murmurings of the oppressed, It is the Lord; (God has bid Shimei curse David,) and let it comfort them, that their persecutors can do no more than God will let them. See Isa. 51:12, 13.

His power against Him in particular, and all the efforts of it, were by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, Acts 2:23. Pilate never fancied himself to look so great as now, when he sat in judgment upon a prisoner who was looked upon by many as the Son of God and King of Israel; but Christ lets him know that he was herein but an instrument in God's hand, Acts 4:27, 28.

He mildly extenuates his sin, in comparison with the sin of the ringleaders; 'Therefore he that delivered Me unto thee, lies under greater guilt; for thou as a magistrate hast power from above, art in thy place, thy sin is less than theirs, who, from malice, urge thee to abuse thy power.'

It is plainly intimated that what Pilate did, was a great sin, and that the force which the Jews put upon him, would not justify him, Christ hereby intended to awake his conscience, and to increase his fear. The guilt of others will not acquit us, nor will it avail in the great day to say, that others were worse than we; we are not to be judged by comparison, but must bear our own burden.

Yet theirs that delivered Him to Pilate, was the greater sin; all sins are not equal; some are more heinous than others; some comparatively, as goats, others as camels; some as moles in the eye, others as beams; some as pence, others as pounds. He that delivered Christ to Pilate, was either,

1. The people of the Jews; they had seen Christ's miracles, Pilate had not: to them the Messiah was first sent, and to them who were enslaved, a Redeemer should have been most welcome; therefore it was much worse in them to appear against Him than in Pilate.

2. Or He means Caiaphas in particular, who

terrestrial, or celestial; merely human, or divine; or mixed? Kypke, Rosenm., Kuinoel, &c. For Pilate was thinking of the heathen superstition, that the gods and goddesses descended upon earth, had connection with mortals, and from thence sprung demi-gods, or heresies. See Acts 14:11. 28:16. Matt. 27:54. Pilate, it seems, calling to mind the wonderful works of Jesus, struck with the divine iniquity of his countenance, (stamped with innocence,) and perhaps somewhat influenced by the message of his wife, feared (v. 8.) to draw upon himself the anger of some god, by slaying his son. So the most judicious commentators. BLOOMFIELD

10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

12 And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Cæsar.

13 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment-seat, in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.

p 19,39. Dan. 3:15. 5:19.
e 3:27. Gen. 45:7,8. Ex. 9:14-16.
1 Chr. 29:11,12. Ps. 92:11. Jer. 27:
5-8. Lam. 3:37. Dan. 4:17,25,32,
35. 5:21. Matt. 6:13. Luke 22:63.
Acts 2:3. 4:28. Rom. 11:36. 13:1.
Jam. 1:17.
p 14,39,50. Matt. 9:6,65. 27:2.
e 9:41. 15:22-24. Luke 7:41,42. 10:
11-14. 12:47,48. Jam. 4:17.
e Mark 6:16-26. Acts 24:24-27.
13:35-38. Luke 23:2-5. Act 17:5,7.
8. Is. 51:12,13. 57:11. Luke 12:5.
y Ps. 68:1,2. 82:5-7. 94:20,21. Ec.
5:8. Am. 5:7.

vote of the Jews, that He should be crucified. In this outcry they endeavored two things:

1. To blacken the prisoner as an enemy to Cæsar. He had refused the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them, yet they will have it that He speaks against Cæsar—He opposes Cæsar; invades his dignity and sovereignty. The enemies of religion represent it as hurtful to kings and provinces, when it would be highly beneficial to both.

2. 'If thou let this man go unpunished, thou art not Cæsar's friend, and therefore false to the trust, and obnoxious to the emperor's displeasure.' They intimate a threat that they would inform against him; and here they touched him in a tender part. But of all people those Jews should not have pretended a concern for Cæsar, who were themselves so ill affected to him and his government. A pretended zeal for that which is good, often covers a real malice against that which is better.

When he heard that saying, that he could not be true to Cæsar's honor, nor sure of Cæsar's favor, then he thought it time to look about him. All that he had said to prove Christ a malefactor, did not move him, he still kept to his conviction of Christ's innocence; but when they urged that it was his interest to condemn Him, then he began to yield. Note, That they bind up their happiness in the favor of men, make themselves an easy prey to Satan.

Pilate brought Jesus forth, and in great state took the chair; we may suppose that he called for his robes, and then sat down in the judgment-seat. He was condemned with all ceremony. 1. That all believers, through Christ's being judged here, might be acquitted in the court of heaven. 2. To take off the terror of pompous trials, which his followers would be brought to for his sake. Paul might the better stand at Cæsar's judgment-seat, when his Master had stood there before him.

Christ was condemned in a place called the Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha, probably the place used to try causes or criminals. Some make Gabbatha

was at the head of the conspiracy, and first advised his death, ch. 11:49,50. Caiaphas prosecuted Christ deliberately from enmity to Him and his doctrine. Pilate condemned Him for fear of the people, by a hasty resolution.

3. Some think Christ means Judas; for though he did not immediately deliver Him into the hands of Pilate, he betrayed Him to those that did. The sin of Judas was, on many accounts, greater than the sin of Pilate. Pilate was a stranger to Christ, Judas his friend and follower. Pilate found no fault in Him, but Judas knew a deal of good by Him. Pilate, though biassed, was not bribed; but Judas took a reward against the innocent; the sin of Judas let in all that followed. He was a guide to them that took Jesus. So great was the sin of Judas, that vengeance suffered Him not to live; but when Christ said this, or soon after, he was gone to his own place.

Pilate struggles with the Jews to deliver Jesus out of their hands, but in vain. From thenceforth: from this time, and for this reason, because Christ had given Him that answer; (v. 11.) which he took kindly, though it had a rebuke in it, and though Christ found fault with him, he still continued to find no fault in Christ, but sought to release Him; he contrived how to do it, so as not to disoblige the priests. It never does well, when our resolutions to do our duty are swallowed up in projects how to do it plausibly and conveniently. If Pilate's policy had not prevailed above his justice, he would not have been long seeking to release Him.

The Jews were more furious than ever, and more violent to get Jesus crucified. They carry on their design with noise and clamor as before; they cried out: labored to get Him cried down by a multitude, and it is no hard matter to pack a mob; whereas if a fair poll had been granted, it would have been carried by a great majority to release Him. A few madmen may out-shout many wise men, and fancy themselves to speak the sense (when it is but the nonsense) of a nation, or of all mankind; but it is not so easy a thing to change the sense of the people as it is to misrepresent it, and change their cry. Now that Christ was in the hands of his enemies, his friends were shy and silent; and those that were against Him, were forward to show themselves so, and this gave the chief priests an opportunity to represent it as the concurring

vote to signify an inclosed place placed against the insults of the people, whom therefore He did the less need to fear; others, an elevated place, that all might see Him.

The day was the preparation of the passover, that is, for the passover-sabbath, and the rest of the days of the feast of unleavened bread. This is plain from Luke 23:54. It was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on. So that this preparation was for the Sabbath. Note, Before the passover there ought to be preparation. This is mentioned as an aggravation of their sin in persecuting Christ: it was when they should have been purging out the old leaven; but the better the day the worse the deed.

It was about the sixth hour. Some ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts read it about the third hour, which agrees with Mark 15:25. And it appears by Matt. 27:45, that He was upon the cross before the sixth hour. But it comes in here, not as a precise determination of the time, but as an additional aggravation of the sin, that they were pushing on the prosecution, not only on a solemn day, but from the third to the sixth hour, which was, as we call it, church-time; they dropped the temple-service, for they did not leave Christ till the sixth hour, when the darkness began. Some think that the sixth hour, with this evangelist, is, according to the Roman reckoning and ours, six of the clock in the morning, answering to the Jews' first hour of the day; this is very probable, that Christ's trial before Pilate was at the height about six in the morning, a little after sun-rising.

Pilate saith unto the Jews, 'Behold your King, Him whom you accuse as a pretender to the crown. Is this a man likely to be dangerous to the government? I am satisfied He is not: let Him alone.' Some think he upbraids them with secret disaffection to Cæsar; 'You would have this man to be your king, if He would but have headed a rebellion against Cæsar.' But Pilate, though far from meaning so, seems as if he were the voice of God to them. Christ, now crowned with thorns here, is, as a king at his coronation, offered to the people; 'Behold your King, which God hath set upon his holy hill of Zion'; but they, instead of entering into it with acclamations of consent, protest against Him; they will not have a king of God's choosing.

They cried out with the greatest indignation, Away with Him, away with Him, which speaks disdain as well as malice. 'Take Him. He is none of ours; we disown Him for our kinsman, much more for our king; away with Him out of sight'; for so it was written of Him, He is one whom the nation abhors, (Isa. 49:7.) and they hid as if were their faces from Him, Isa. 53:2,3. Away with Him from the earth, Acts 22:22. This shows, 1. How we deserved to have been treated at God's tribunal; we were by sin odious to God's holiness, which cried, Away with them, away with them, for God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; we were also obnoxious to God's justice, which cried against us, 'Crucify them, crucify them.' Had not Christ interposed, and been thus rejected of men, we had been forever rejected of God. 2. We are often in Scripture said to crucify sin, in conformity to Christ's death; now they that crucified Christ, did it with detestation. With a pious indignation we should run down sin in us, as they with an impious indignation ran Him down, who was made sin for us. The true penitent casts away from him his transgressions, Away with them, away with them, (Isa. 2:20. 30:22.) crucify them, crucify them; is not fit that they should live in my soul, Hos. 14:8.

Verse 12.
Thou art not Cæsar's friend.] The jealous tyranny and cruelty of Tiberius Cæsar, who was then emperor, [see note Luke 23:2.] are well known [from Suetonius and Tacitus:] and Pilate, [no longer reticent] fearing lest spies should carry an accusation against him to Rome.

Verse 13.
The most probable etymology derives Gabbatha from a word which signifies raised on high. It is perhaps a kind of [raised] stage, or

scaffold, in the midst of a space, or area, (belonging to the palace,) its floor ornamented with a variegated pavement of little square pieces of marble, or of stones of various colors, arranged [in tessellated or Mosaic work] with great art and elegance, to form a hequered and pleasing appearance. T. H. HOBBS

In this the governor might place himself on public, and especially on judicial occasions. It appears from the connection, that it was some where without his house, probably in some open place.

Donninos.

[811]

14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

15 But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Cæsar.

16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led him away.

[Practical Observations.]

17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha;

18 Where he crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

1. 32, 42. Matt. 27:52. Mark 15:42. Luke 23:54.
2. Mark 15:25, 33, 34.
3. 5, 19, 22.
4. Luke 23:18. Acts 21:36. 22:22.
5. 18:31. Gen. 49:10. Ex. 21:36, 37.
6. Matt. 27:29. Mark 15:15-20.
7. Matt. 27:34, 35.
8. Matt. 10:38. 16:24. 27:32. Mark 8:34. 10:21. 15:21. Luke 9:23. 14:27. 23:26.
9. Lev. 16:21, 22. 24:14. Num. 15:35. 28:4. 1 Kings 21:13. Luke 23:33.
10. Acts 7:58. Heb. 13:11-12.
11. Matt. 27:33, 34. Mark 15:21, 22. Luke 23:33.
12. 18:32. Ps. 22:16. Ia. 53:12. Matt. 27:35-34, 44. Mark 15:24-28. Luke 23:32-34. Gal. 3:13. Heb. 12:2.

prevailed; the fear of man had greater power over him than the fear of God. See,

1. He sinned against his conscience; he had again and again pronounced Him innocent, yet at last condemned Him. He had in many instances disobliterated the Jewish nation, for he was a man of a haughty, implacable spirit. He had seized on the corban, and spent it on a water-work; he had brought in shields stamped with Cæsar's image, which was very provoking to the Jews; he had sacrificed the lives of many to his resolutions herein; fearing to be complained of, for those and other insolencies, he was willing to gratify the Jews. This makes the matter much worse. If he had been of an easy disposition, his yielding thus had been more excusable; but for a man so wilful in other things, and of so fierce a resolution, to be overcome in a thing of this nature, shows that he could better bear the wronging of his conscience, than the crossing of his humor.

V. 1-16. The conflict between convictions and corrupt affections, is often strong: but where faith is wanting, the world will get the victory; and the dread of reproach or loss, or the hope of advantage, will induce men to venture the wrath of God, and its tremendous consequences. (P. O. Matt. 27: 19-25. Acts 24: 24-27. 26: 24-29.)—Every one is inexcusable, who acts contrary to his conscience; but the greater opportunities men possess of knowing the truth, the more aggravated will their guilt be found, in rebelling against the light. (Matt.

Pilate, willing to have Jesus released, and yet that it should be their doing, asks them, *Shall I crucify your king?* In saying this, he designed either, 1. To show them how absurd it was for them to reject one who offered to be their king, when they needed one more than ever. Have they no sense of slavery? No desire of liberty? No value for a deliverer? Though he saw no cause to fear Him, they might see cause to hope for something from Him; since crushed and sinking interests are ready to catch at anything. Or, 2. To stop the mouth of his own conscience; 'If this Jesus be a king, he is only king of the Jews, therefore I have nothing to do but to make a fair tender of Him to them; if they refuse Him, and will have their king crucified, what is that to me?' He banters them for their folly in expecting a Messiah, and yet running down one that did so fair to be He.

The chief priests, that they might effectually renounce Christ, and engage Pilate to crucify Him, cried out, *We have no king but Cæsar.* This they knew would please Pilate, and so they hoped to carry their point, though they hated Cæsar and his government. What a plain indication this is, that the time for the Messiah to appear, was now come; for if the Jews have no king but Cæsar, then is the scepter departed from Judah, and the lawgiver from between his feet. What a righteous thing it was with God, to bring upon them that ruin by the Romans, which followed not long after. They adhere to Cæsar, and to Cæsar they shall go. God gave them enough of their Cæsars, and, according to Jotham's parable, the trees choose the bramble for their king, rather than the vine and the olive, Judg. 9: 12-19. Thenceforward they were rebels to the Cæsars, and the Cæsars tyrants to them, and it ended in their overthrow. It is just with God to make that a scourge and plague to us, which we prefer before Christ. They would have no other king than Cæsar, and never have they had any other to this day, but have now abode many days without a king, and without a prince, (Hos. 3: 4.) of their own; the kings of the nations have ruled over them; since they will have no king but Cæsar, so shall their doom be; themselves have decided it.

V. 16-18. Here sentence of death is passed upon our Lord, and execution done soon after. Pilate's convictions yielded, and his corruptions

2. He endeavored to transfer the guilt upon the Jews. He delivered Him, not to his officers, (as usual,) but to the prosecutors; excusing the wrong to his own conscience with this, that it was but a permissive condemnation, and that he did not put Christ to death, but only connived at it.

3. Christ was made sin for us. We deserved to have been condemned, but Christ was condemned for us, that to us there might be no condemnation.

Judgment was no sooner given, than the prosecutors, having gained their point, resolved to lose no time, 1. Let Pilate should change his mind, and order a reprieve. Those are the worst enemies to our souls, that hurry us to sin, and then leave us no room to undo what we have done amiss. 2. Let there should be an uproar among the people, and a greater number against them, than they had with so much artifice got to be for them.

It were well if we would be thus expeditious in good, and not stay for more difficulties.

They immediately hurried away the prisoner. The chief priests greedily flew upon the prey which they had been long waiting for. Or they, that is, the soldiers who were to attend the execution, took Him, and led Him away, not to the place whence He came, and thence to the place of execution, as is usual with us, but directly to the place of execution. Both the priests and the soldiers joined in leading Him away. Now was the Son of man delivered into the hands of wicked and unreasonable men. By the law of Moses (and in appeals by our law) the prosecutors were to be the executioners, Deut. 17: 7. The priests here were proud of the office. His being led away does not suppose Him to have made opposition, but the Scripture must be fulfilled, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter, Acts 8: 32. We deserved to have been led forth with the workers of iniquity, as criminals to execution, Ps. 125: 5. But He was led forth for us, that we might escape.

To add to his misery, they obliged Him to carry his cross, according to the custom among the Romans. The cross was removed when the execution was over, and commonly buried with the body; so that every one that was crucified had a cross. Christ's carrying his cross may be considered, 1. As a part of his sufferings; He endured the cross literally. It was a long and thick piece of timber, and some think neither seasoned nor hewn. The body of Jesus was tender, and unaccustomed to such burdens; it had now lately been harassed and tired out. His shoulders were sore with the stripes they had given Him; every jog of the cross would renew his smart, and he apt to strike the thorns He was crowned with into his head; yet all this He patiently underwent, and it was but the beginning of sorrows. 2. It was very significant to his undertaking, the Father having laid upon Him the iniquity of us all, (Isa. 53: 6.) and He being to take away sin, by bearing it in his own body on the tree, 1 Pet. 2: 24. 3. Our Master hereby taught all his disci-

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

11-20-24. Luke 12: 47, 48.) Yet persons thus distinguished, have often been most desperate in opposing the power of godliness, and prosecuting those, whose doctrine and example tended to detect their hypocrisy and usurpations.—Those rulers of every description, who have sat in judgment on Christ and his servants, will soon stand before his tribunal; where they will 'know the power of his wrath,' and be constrained to confess with terror and anguish, 'Truly this was the Son of God.' (Rev. 1: 7. 6: 15-17.)

SCOTT.

Verse 14.

About the sixth hour.] As there is no reason to think that John computed time in a different manner from the other evangelists; as six o'clock, (according to the Roman computation,) or soon after sunrise, must have been much too early for all the events which preceded our Lord's crucifixion to have occurred that morning; as Mark (15: 25.) has expressly mentioned the third hour, or nine o'clock, for the time of that event, to which the accounts of the other evangelists accord; and as the sixth hour, or noon, (according to the Jewish computation,) would be too late to agree with the parallel Scriptures; so it seems the most easy way of solving the difficulty, to suppose that sixth, instead of third, was inserted by some of the early transcribers of this gospel. The mistake would be very trivial, and very easily fallen into; and in a few places it is necessary to allow that something [812]

of this kind has happened. Indeed some manuscripts read 'the third hour.'

Verse 15.

'Josephus expressly assures us, that Pilate, having slain a considerable number of seditious Samaritans, was deposed from his government by Vitellius, and sent to Tiberius at Rome, who died before he arrived there. And Eusebius tells us, that quickly after, (having as others say, been banished to Vienne, in Gaul,) he laid violent hands on himself, falling on his own sword. Agrippa, who was an eye-witness to many of his enormities, speaks of him in his oration to Caligula Cæsar, as one who had been a man of a most inhuman character. Probably, the accusations of other Jews, following him, had borne that proved his destruction.' Doddridge.

15.

19 ¶ And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

20 This title then read many of the Jews; for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city; and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin.

21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews: but that he said, I am King of the Jews.

22 Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

1. Matt. 27:37. Mark 15:26. Luke 23:38.
1. 3:12. 14:45, 46. 18:33. Acts 3:6. 28:3.
18. 5:2. Acts 21:40. 22:2, 28:14. Rev. 16:16.
n Acts 21:37. Rev. 9:11.
o 15. 24. 65:7. 76:10. Prov. 8:29.

hanging upon the tree some hours, dying gradually in the full use of reason and speech, that He might actually resign Himself a Sacrifice. 2. In what company He died; *two other with Him*. Probably, those had not been executed at that time, but at the request of the chief priests, to add to the disgrace of our Lord; which might be the reason why one of them reviled Him, because their death was hastened for his sake. It was ordered that his fellow-sufferers should be the worst of sinners, that He might bear our reproach, and the latter appear to be his only. This exposed Him to the people's contempt, who would conclude Him not only a malefactor, because He was yoked with malefactors, but the worst of the three, because put in the midst. But thus the Scripture was fulfilled; *He was numbered among the transgressors*. He did not die at the altar among the sacrifices, nor mingle his blood with that of bulls and goats; but among the criminals, and mingled his blood with theirs who were sacrificed to public justice.

Let us pause, and with an eye of faith look upon Jesus. Was ever sorrow like his? See Him, who was clothed with glory, stripped, and clothed with shame; Him, who was the praise of angels, made a reproach of men; Him, who had been with eternal delight and joy in the bosom of his Father, now in the extremities of pain and agony. See Him bleeding, struggling, dying; see Him and love Him, love Him and live to Him, and [let us] study what we shall render.

V. 19-30. Some remarkable circumstances of Christ's dying, ere here more fully related than before, which they will take special notice of, who covet to know Christ, and Him crucified.

1. The inscription which Pilate wrote, and ordered to be fixed to the top of the cross, declaring the cause for which He was crucified, Matthew called the accusation; Mark and Luke, the inscription; John calls it by the proper Latin name, the title; and it was this, *Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews*. Pilate intended this for his reproach, that He, being *Jesus of Nazareth*, should pretend to be King of the Jews, in competition with Cæsar, to whom Pilate would thus recommend himself, as very jealous for his honor and interest; but God overruled this matter, 1. That it might be a further testimony to the innocency of our Lord; for here was an accusation, which, as it was worded, contained no crime. If this be all they have to lay to his charge, surely He has done nothing worthy of death or bonds. 2. That it might show forth his dignity and honor. This is Jesus a Savior, the blessed Nazarene, sanctified to God; the King of the Jews, Messiah the Prince, the Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, as Balaam had foretold; dying for the good of his people, as Caiaphas had foretold. Thus three bad men witnessed to Christ, though they meant not so.

2. The notice taken of this inscription; *Many of the Jews read it*, not only those of Jerusalem, but those out of the country, and from other countries, that came up to the feast. Multitudes read it, and it occasioned a great variety of objections and speculations. Christ Himself was set for a sign. The title was so much read,

(1.) Because the place where Jesus was crucified, though without the gate, was nigh to the city; which intimates that if it had been any great distance

ples to take up their cross, and follow Him. Whatever cross He calls us to bear, we must remember that He bore the cross first, and by bearing it for us, bears it off from us in a great measure, for thus He hath made his yoke easy, and his burden light. He bore that end of the cross that had the curse upon it; and thence all that are his, are enabled to call their afflictions for Him light, and but for a moment.

They brought Him to the place of execution; *He went forth*, voluntarily; out of the city, for He was crucified without the gate, Heb. 13: 12. And to put the greater infamy on his sufferings, He was brought to the common place of execution, as numbered among the transgressors; a place called *Golgotha*, the place of a skull, where they threw skulls and bones; a place ceremonially unclean; there Christ suffered, because He was made sin for us, that He might purge our consciences from dead works, and the pollution of them. There is a tradition of the elders, that Adam was buried here, and that this was the place of his skull, and they observed that where death triumphed over the first Adam, there the second Adam triumphed over him. Gerhard quotes for this tradition, Origen, Cyprian, Epiphanius, Austin, Jerome, and others.

There they crucified Him. Observe, 1. What death Christ died; the death of the cross, a bloody, painful, shameful, cursed death. He was nailed to the cross, a sacrifice bound to the altar, a Savior fixed for his undertaking. He was lifted up, as the brazen serpent, between heaven and earth, because we were unworthy of either, and abandoned by both. He

off, they would not have been led to go and see it. It is an advantage to have the means of knowing Christ brought to our doors.

(2.) It was written in Hebrew and Greek, and Latin, which made it legible by all; they all understood one or other of these languages, and none were more careful to bring up their children to read than the Jews. It likewise made it the more considerable - every one would be curious to inquire what it was, which was so industriously published in the three most known languages. In the Hebrew, the oracles of God were recorded; in Greek, the learning of the philosophers; and in Latin, the laws of the empire. In each of these Christ is proclaimed King, in whom are hid all the treasures of revelation, wisdom, and power: it was intimated thereby, that Christ should be a Savior to all nations; and also that every nation should hear in their own tongue the wonderful works of the Redeemer. Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, were the common languages at that time in this part of the world; so that this, so far from what the Papists would have, teaches us the knowledge of Christ ought to be diffused throughout every nation in their own tongue, that people may converse as freely with the Scriptures as with their neighbors.

The offence the prosecutors took at it. They would not have it written, the King of the Jews; but that He said of Himself, I am the King of the Jews. Here they show themselves, 1. Very spiteful against Christ. It was not enough to have Him crucified, but they must have his name crucified too; to justify themselves they thought themselves concerned to represent Him as an usurper of honors and powers. 2. Foolishly jealous of the honor of their nation, though a conquered and enslaved people, yet they stood so much upon their reputation, that they scorned to have it said, this was their king. 3. They show themselves very impertinent to Pilate; they could not but be sensible that they had forced him, against his mind, to condemn Christ, and yet, in such a trivial thing as this, they continue to tease Him. It was so much the worse, that, though they had charged Him with pretending to be the King of the Jews, they had not proved it, nor had He ever said so.

The judge's resolution to adhere to it; 'What I have written I have written, and will not alter it to humor them.'

Herbly an affront was put upon the chief priests. By Pilate's manner of speaking, he was uneasy in himself for yielding to them, and vexed at them for forcing him to it; and therefore was resolved to be cross with them; and by this inscription insinuates, 1. That they were not sincere in their affections to Cæsar and his government; but were willing to have a king of the Jews, if they could have one to their mind. 2. That a king mean and despicable, was good enough to be the king of the Jews; and this would be the fate of all that should dare oppose the Roman power. 3. That they had been unjust in prosecuting Jesus, when there was no fault to be found in Him.

Herbly honor was done to Jesus. Pilate adhered to it with resolution, that He was the King of the Jews; what he had written, was what God had first written, and therefore he could not alter; for thus it was written, the Messiah the Prince shall be cut off; Dan 9: 26. This therefore is the true cause of his death; He dies, because the King of Israel must die thus. When the Jews reject Christ, and will not have Him for their king, Pilate, a Gentile, insists that He is a king; an earnest of what came to pass soon after, when the Gentiles submitted to the kingdom of Messiah, against which the unbelieving Jews had rebelled.

Four soldiers were employed, who, when they

Verse 19.
Title.] 'A white board with an inscription in black letters. This inscription is detailed at length by John; but abridged by the other evangelists. It was written in a dubious manner, some suppose in derision; which seems probable from Pilate's refusing to alter it, saying, What I have written, I have written.'

Dr. Townson, to reconcile the evangelists here, supposes that as the title was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, it might have slightly

varied in each language. Luke and John, writing for the Gentiles, would prefer the Greek inscription; Matthew, addressing the Jews, would use the Hebrew; Mark, writing to the Romans, would naturally give the Latin.'

Near the city.] The place of Christ's crucifixion and burial, is now shown within the city; if rightly, the site of Jerusalem, it is probable must have been considerably altered in the lapse of ages.

Verse 20.

GREENFIELD.

23 Then the soldiers, when they had crucified Jesus, took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part; and also his coat: now the coat was without seam, *woven from the top throughout.

24 They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be: *that the scripture might be fulfilled, which saith, 'They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did.

25 ¶ Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, *his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, *and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, *Woman, behold thy son!

¶ Matt. 27:35. Mark 15:24. Luke 23:34.
 * the, wrought. Ex. 39:22, 23.
 † 28:38, 37. 10:35. 12:53, 39.
 ‡ Ps. 22:18. Is. 10:7. Acts 1:20.
 § Luke 2:35.
 ¶ Matt. 27:55, 56. Mark 15:40, 41.
 † Luke 23:49.
 ‡ Jn. Cleopas. Luke 24:18.
 § 20:11, 11-18. Mark 16:9. Luke 8:2.
 † 19:28. 21:7, 20, 24.
 ‡ 2:4.

long before, and which came to pass according to the prediction. (2.) That Jesus is the true Messiah; for in Him all the Old-Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah had, and have, their accomplishment. *These things therefore the soldiers did.* Observe

The care He took of his mother.

His mother attends Him to his death; *there stood by the cross*, as near as they could get, *his mother*, and some of his relations, and friends. At first, they stood near, as it is said here; but, it is probable, afterward the soldiers forced them to stand far off, as it is said in Matthew and Mark: or they themselves removed out of the ground.

See here the tender affection of these pious women to Jesus in his sufferings. When all his disciples, except John, had forsaken Him, they continued their attendance. Thus the feeble were as David, (Zech. 12:8.) they were not deterred by the fury of the enemy, or the horror of the sight; they could not rescue, or relieve Him, yet they attended Him, to show their good-will. It is an impious and blasphemous construction which some popish writers put upon the virgin Mary's standing by the cross, that thereby she contributed to the satisfaction He made for sin, no less than He did.

We must easily suppose what an affliction it was to them to see Him thus used. Now was fulfilled Simeon's word, Luke 2:35. His torments were her tortures; she was upon the rack, while He was upon the cross; and her heart bled with his wounds; and the reproaches wherewith they reproached Him, fell on them that attended Him.

We may justly admire the power of divine grace in supporting these women, especially the mother, under this trial. We do not find her wringing her hands, or tearing her hair, or making an outcry; but, with wonderful composure, standing by the cross, and her friends with her. Surely she and they were strengthened by a divine power; and surely Mary had a fuller expectation of his resurrection than the rest, which supported her thus. We know not what we can bear till we are tried, and then we know who has said, *My grace is sufficient for thee.*

Verse 23.

Coat.] 'An under garment', the tunic. It commonly consisted of two pieces of cloth, one before the other behind, connected by fibulae, and clasps, or hooks.

Ferrarius, in Bloomfield.

Woman.] A respectful compellation, in common use. Wakefield quotes Plutarch note 2: 1-6.

Verse 33.

A respectful compellation, in common use. Wakefield who makes Thymistocles address his wife thus. See Ed

had nailed Him to the cross, and lifted it up, and nothing more was to be done than to wait his expiring through the extremity of pain, went to divide his clothes; and so made four parts, as near of the same value as they could; but his coat, or upper garment, being a curiosity, without seam, woven from the top throughout, they agreed to cast lots for that. Observe,

1. The shame they put upon our Lord, in stripping Him of his garments before they crucified Him. The shame of nakedness came in with sin. He, who was made sin for us, bare that shame, to roll away our reproach. He was stripped, that we might be clothed with white raiment, (Rev. 3:13.) and that when we are unclothed, we may not be found naked.

2. The wages with which these soldiers paid themselves for crucifying Christ. They were willing to do it for his clothes. Nothing is to be done so bad, but there will be found men bad enough to do it for a trifle. Probably, they hoped to make more than ordinary advantage of his clothes, having heard of cures wrought by the touch of the hem of his garment; or expecting that his admirers would give any money for them.

3. The sport they made about his seamless coat; we read not of any thing about Him valuable or remarkable but that, and that not for its richness, but only its variety; for it was woven from the top throughout. The soldiers thought it pity to rend it, for then it would unravel, and a piece of it would be good for nothing; they therefore cast lots for it. While Christ was in his dying agonies, they were merrily dividing his spoils.

The preserving of Christ's seamless coat is commonly alluded to, to show the care all Christians ought to take, that they rend not the church of Christ with strifes and divisions; yet some have observed, that the reason why the soldiers would not rend Christ's coat, was not out of respect to Christ, but because each hoped to have it entire for himself. So, many cry out against schism, only that they may engross all the wealth and power to themselves. Those who opposed Luther's separation from the church of Rome, urged much the seamless coat; and some of them laid so much stress upon it, that they were called *The seamless*.

David, in spirit, foretold this circumstance of Christ's sufferings, Ps. 22:18. The event so exactly answering the prediction, proves, (1.) That the Scripture is the Word of God, which foretold contingent events concerning Christ so

He tenderly provides for his mother at his death. It is probable that Joseph, her husband, was long since dead, and that her Son, Jesus, had supported her, and her relation to Him had been her maintenance; and now that He was dying, what would become of her? He saw her standing by, knew her cares and griefs, and saw John standing not far off, and so settled a new relation between his beloved mother, and his beloved disciple; for He said to her, 'Woman, behold thy son; for whom be beforehand thou must have a motherly affection;' and to him, 'Behold thy mother; to whose thou must pay a filial duty.' And from that hour, never to be forgotten, that disciple took her to his own home.

Christ was not so much taken up with his sufferings, as to forget his friends. His dear mother, perhaps, was so taken up with his sufferings, that she thought not what would become of her; but He admitted that thought. Silver and gold He had none to leave, no estate real or personal, his clothes the soldiers had seized, and we hear no more of the bag since Judas hanged himself. He had, therefore, no other way to provide for his mother, than by his interest in a friend.

He calls her woman, not mother, not out of any disrespect to her, but because mother would have been a cutting word to her; like Isaac saying to Abraham, *My father*. He speaks as one now no more in this world, but already dead to those in it that were dearest to Him.

He directs her to look upon John as her son. See here, An instance of divine goodness, for our encouragement. When God removes one comfort from us, He raises up another, perhaps where we looked not for it. We read of childer which the church shall have, after she has lost the other, Isa. 49:20. Let none therefore reckon all gone with one cistern dried up, for from the same fountain another may be filled. Christ has here taught children, to the utmost of their power, to provide for the comfort of their aged parents. When David was in distress, he took care of his parents, and found out a shelter for them; (1 Sam. 22:3.) so the Son of David here.

Observe his confidence in the beloved disciple. Be thou as a son to guide her, (Isa. 51:18.) and forsake her not when she is old. Prov. 23:22. This was an honor to John, and a testimony to his prudence and fidelity. If He, who knows all things, had not known that John loved Him, He would not have made him his mother's guardian. It is a great honor to be employed for Christ, and to be trusted with any of his interest in the world. It would be a care and some charge to John; but he cheerfully accepted it, and took her to his own home, not objecting the trouble or expense, or his obligations to his own family, or the ill-will he might contract by it. Note, Those that truly love Christ, and are loved of Him, will be glad of an opportunity to serve Him, or his. Some say that Mary lived with John at Jerusalem eleven years, and then died. Others, that she removed with him to Ephesus.

Christ, knowing that all things hitherto were accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, which spake of his drinking in his sufferings, saith, *I thirst*, that is, He called for drink.

Well might He thirst, after all the toil He had undergone; and being now in the agonies of death, ready to expire by the loss of blood and extremity of pain. The torments of hell are represented by a violent thirst in the complaint of the rich man. To that everlasting thirst we had been condemned, had not Christ suffered for us.

This is the only word He spake, that looked like complaint of his outward sufferings. When they scourged Him, and crowned Him with thorns, He did not cry out. But now He cried, *I thirst*. For, 1. He would thus express the travail of his soul, Isa. 53:11. He thirsted to glorify God, and accomplish the work of our

27 Then saith he to the disciple, 'Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.'

28 ¶ After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, 'It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.'

[Practical Observations.]

- a Gen. 45:8, 47:12, Matt. 12:48-50, 23:49, Mark 3:34, 35, 1 Tim. 5:2-4.
 b 1 John 3:18, 19.
 c 16:12, marg.
 d 30, 13:1, 18:4, 32, Luke 9:31, 12: 50, 38:31, 22:37, Acts 13:29.
 e 17: 29-15, 62:21.
 f Matt. 27:34, 48, Mark 15:36, Luke 23:36.
 g Ex. 12:22, Num. 19:18, 1 Kings 4:1, Ps. 51:7.
 h Gr. 4:34, Gen. 3:15, Ps. 22: 18, Is. 52:12, Dan. 9:24, 26, Zech. 13:7, Matt. 3:15, Rom. 3:25, 28, 10:1, 1 Cor. 5:7-8, Col. 2:14-17, Heb. 9:11-14, 26-28, 10:1-14, 12:2, 13:10, 11, 18, Mark 20:28, 27:50, Mark 15:37, 23:46, Phil. 2:3, Heb. 2:14, 15.

sop-inder, and this they gave Him to drink when thirsty; we had forfeited all comforts and refreshments, and therefore they were withheld from Him; when heaven denied Him a beam of light, earth denied Him a drop of water, and yet vinegar in its room. Observe

The dying word wherewith He breathed out his soul; (v. 30.) When He

redemption. 2. He would thus see the Scripture fulfilled. Hitherto, all had been accomplished, and He knew it; for this He had carefully observed all along; now He called to mind one thing more, of which this was the proper season for the performance. By this it appears that He was the Messiah, in that not only the Scripture was punctually fulfilled in Him, but strictly eyed by Him. By this it appears that God was with Him of a truth—that He went exactly according to the Word of God, taking care not to destroy, but to fulfil, the law and the prophets.

The Scripture had foretold his thirst, and He Himself related it, because it could not otherwise be known; it was foretold that his tongue should cleave to his jaws, Ps. 22: 15. Samson, a type of Christ, when laying the Philistines heaps upon heaps, was himself sore athirst; (Judg. 15, 18.) so was Christ, when spoiling principalities and powers.

The Scripture had foretold, that in his thirst He should have vinegar given Him to drink, Ps. 69: 21. They had given Him vinegar to drink before they crucified Him, (Matt. 27: 34,) but the prophecy was not exactly fulfilled in that, because that was not in his thirst; therefore now He said, I thirst; then He would not drink, but now He received it. Christ would rather court an affront than see any prophecy unfulfilled. This should satisfy us under all our trials, that the will and Word of God is accomplished.

How little respect his persecutors showed Him; (v. 29.) There was set a vessel full of vinegar, probably, according to the custom at all executions of this nature; or, as others think, now set designedly for an abuse to Christ, instead of the cup of wine, which they used to give to them that were ready to perish; with that they filled a sponge, for they would not allow Him a cup, and put it upon a hyssop stalk, and with that heaved it to his mouth; they stuck it round with hyssop; so it may be taken; or, as others, they mingled it with hyssop. He to drink when thirsty; we had forfeited all comforts and refreshments, and therefore they were withheld from Him; when heaven denied Him a beam of light, earth denied Him a drop of water, and yet vinegar in its room. Observe

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 17-36. We cannot pass over this narrative, without again reflecting on the complicated cruelties and indignities, to which Christ was exposed, not for any fault of his own, nay, directly contrary to his deservings. But He was wounded and scourged, that we might be healed; He was arrayed with scorn in the purple robe, that He might procure for us 'the robe of righteousness;' He was crowned with thorns, that we might be 'crowned with honor and immortality;' He stood speechless, that we might have an all-prevailing plea; He endured torture, that we might have 'a strong consolation;' He thirsted, that we might drink of the waters of life; He bore the wrath of the Father, that we might enjoy his favor; He was numbered with transgressors, that we might be made 'equal to angels;' He died, that we might live forever!—Let us then often survey this scene, and admire his immeasurable love; that we may learn to mourn for sin, and rejoice in our obligations to the Redeemer; and be 'constrained to live no longer to ourselves, but to Him who died for us and rose again.' (2 Cor. 5: 13-15.)—As we ought to hear with thankful exultation, that the ransom of our souls was perfected, when Jesus said, 'It is finished;' so we should be excited to redouble our diligence, that the work of sanctifying grace may be carried on towards

perfection in our hearts. For we should look to Him as our King, as well as our High Priest.—In every way, it has been decidedly written, and the writing shall never be reversed, 'that Jesus of Nazareth is King;' and all, who profess his religion, and 'will not have Him to reign over them,' will be deemed guilty of 'crucifying their King.'—We may be encouraged by our Lord's attention to his mother, to hope for his pity in all our sorrows, now He is exalted to the throne: but we may also learn, that the surest interest in his love will not secure our exemption from the sharpest temporal sufferings. His example likewise teaches all to honor their parents, in every circumstance of life and death; to provide for their wants; to promote their comfort; and we ought also to show our love to Jesus, by behaving with courteous respect, affection, and kindness, to the poorest and meanest of those whom He loves, and who love Him. We ought indeed to act towards them as though they were our most honored relatives, and we heard Jesus say to us, from his cross, and from his throne of glory, concerning this and the other believer, 'Behold my mother,' 'my brother,' 'my sister;' and, 'Whatsoever ye do unto the least of these, ye do it unto Me.' (P. O. Matt. 12: 38-50, 25: 31-40. Mark 3: 20-35.)

SCOTT.

Verse 29.

The hyssop, (see cut,) is termed a reed by Matthew and Mark; and it appears that a species of hyssop, with a reedy stalk about two feet long, grew about Jerusalem. Greenfield. 'Such a stalk might have been long enough to enable a man to reach the mouth of the crucified person, who was raised about three feet from the ground.' Bloomfield.

To the Notes, Matt. 27: 34, Mark 15: 23, Luke 23: 36, the following is added from a source accessible to but few. 'To give vinegar to dying malefactors, was diametrically contrary to the common and courteous custom of the Jews. For, whereas that sharp liquor awakens the sense of pain, and recovers out of swoons, the Jews did use to give such persons a stupefying and narcotic potion, so to ruffle their minds, that they might not attend unto their an-

guishes, namely, frankincense in a cup of wine. To countenance this practice, they quote the words of Solomon, Prov. 31: 6, 7. There is a tradition among them, that the ladies of the city of Jerusalem were at this charge, of their own good will towards the poor sufferers. But for all this practice, the cruelty of the Jews fulfilled what the Spirit of prophecy had foretold, (Ps. 69: 21.) In my thirst, they gave Me vinegar to drink. Some tell us, the vinegar, with the sponge was set ready at executions, to stop the violent flux of blood, that the death of the malefactors might be prolonged. It seems in scorn exhibited to the dying Savior. The mingling of gall with it made it a nauseous and horrid potion. C. MATHER'S MS. 'Illustrations of the Scriptures.'

There was set a vessel, &c.] This and the other things can hardly be thought prepared to linger out the lives of the sufferers, at least now, when the Jews' Sabbath drew nigh, and they were in haste to have the executions over. The Jews themselves say, that Jesus asked for water, and they gave Him sharp vinegar confirming so far the evangelic history.



31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath-day, (for that sabbath-day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs.

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.

35 And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true; and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe.

36 For these things were done, that the scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of him shall not be broken.

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strangling or beheading, which would have been a compassionate hastening out of misery, but by the breaking of their legs, which would carry them off in the most exquisite pain.

Note. 1. The tender mercies of the wicked are cruel. 2. The pretended sanctity of hypocrites is abominable. These Jews would be thought to bear a great regard to the Sabbath, and yet had no regard to justice; they made no conscience of bringing an innocent and excellent person to the cross, and yet scrupled letting a dead body hang upon the cross.

Pilate was still gratifying the Jews, and gave orders as they desired; and the soldiers came, hardened against pity, and broke the legs of the two thieves. One of these thieves was a penitent, and had received from Christ an assurance that he should shortly be with Him in paradise, and yet died in the same misery with the other thief; for all things come alike to all; many go to heaven, that have bands in their death, and die in the bitterness of their soul. The extremity of dying agonies is no obstruction to the comforts that wait for holy souls. This is the order of going to heaven—Christ, the first-fruits and forerunner, afterward they that are Christ's.

They supposed Christ to be dead, and therefore did not break his legs, p. 33. Jesus died in less time than persons crucified ordinarily did; [which sometimes was not till the next day, or later.] The structure of his body, perhaps, being extraordinarily fine, was the sooner broken by pain; or, rather, it was to show that He laid down his life of Himself, and could

pinness laid, that shall never fail. As for God, his work is perfect; when I begin, (saith He,) I will also make an end, as in the purchase, so in the application, of the redemption.

He bowed his head, and gave up the ghost. He was voluntary in dying; for He was not only the Sacrifice, but the Priest and the Offerer; and the mind of the offerer was all in all in the sacrifice. Christ showed his will in his sufferings; by the which will we are sanctified.

He gave up the ghost. He had said, Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit; thereby expressing the intention of this act. I give up Myself as a ransom for many; and, accordingly, He did give up his spirit, paid down the price of pardon and life at his Father's hands. Father, glorify thy name.

He bowed his head. God had laid upon Him the iniquity of us all; putting them upon the head of this great sacrifice; and some think that by this bowing of his head He would intimate his sense of the weight upon Him. See Ps. 38: 4. 40: 12. The bowing of his head shows his submission to his Father's will, and his obedience to death. He accommodated Himself to his dying work, as Jacob, who gathered up his feet into the bed, and then yielded up the ghost.

V. 31—37. This passage concerning the piercing of Christ's side after his death, is recorded only by this evangelist.

The superstition of the Jews occasioned it; Because it was the preparation for the Sabbath, and that Sabbath, falling in the passover-week, was a high day, one of the days of unleavened bread, and (some reckon) the day of the offering of the first-fruits; to show a veneration for it, they would not have the dead bodies remain on the cross, but besought that their legs might be broken, (a certain, but cruel dispatch,) and that then they might be buried out of sight. Passover-sabbaths are high days; sacrament-days are high-days, and there ought to be more than ordinary preparation for them, that these may be to us as the days of heaven.

They reckoned it a reproach to that day, if the dead bodies should be left upon the cross. Dead bodies were not to be left at any time; (Deut. 21: 23.) yet, in this case, the Jews would have let the Roman custom, [which frequently left the bodies to be consumed or devoured by birds,] take place, had it not been an extraordinary day; and many strangers being then at Jerusalem, it would have offended them; nor could they well bear the sight of Christ's body; for, unless their consciences were quite seared, when the heat of their rage was a little over, they would upbraid them.

They petition Pilate, that their bodies, now as good as dead, might be dispatched; not by what would have been a compassionate hastening out of misery, but by the breaking of their legs, which would carry them off in the most exquisite pain.

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die when He pleased. Though He yielded to death, He was not conquered. His enemies were satisfied He was really dead. The Jews, who stood by to see the execution effectually done, would not have omitted this piece of cruelty, if they had not been sure He was out of the reach of it. Whatever devices are in men's hearts, the counsel of the Lord shall stand. It was fully designed to break his legs, but, God's counsel being otherwise, see how it was prevented.

Because they would be sure He was dead they made such an experiment as would put it past dispute. God designed herein,

1. To evidence the truth of his death, in order to the proof of his resurrection. If He was only in a trance or swoon, his resurrection was a sham; but, this spear broke up the very fountains of life, and it was impossible a human body should survive such a wound in the vitals.

2. To illustrate the design of his death. There was much mystery in it, and this same apostle refers to it as a very considerable thing, 1 John 5: 6, 8.

The blood and water were significant:

1. They signified the two great benefits which all believers partake of through Christ—justification, and sanctification; blood for remission, water for regeneration; blood for atonement, water for purification. Blood and water were used very much under the law. Guilt contracted must be expiated by blood; stains contracted must be done away by the water of purification. These two must always go together. Ye are sanctified, ye are justified, 1 Cor. 6: 11. Christ has joined them together, and we must not think to put them asunder. They both flow from the pierced side of our Redeemer. To Christ crucified we owe merit for our justification, and Spirit and grace for our sanctification, 1 Cor. 1: 30.

2. They signify the two great ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's supper; they both owe their efficacy to Christ. It is not the water employed that will be to us the washing of regeneration, but the water out of the side of Christ; not the blood of the grape that will pacify the conscience and refresh the soul, but the blood of Christ. Now was the rock smitten, (1 Cor. 10: 4,) now the fountain opened, (Zech. 13: 1.) the wells of salvation digged, Isa. 12: 3. Here is the river, the streams whereof make glad the city of our God. See here

The attestation of the truth of this by an eyewitness, the evangelist himself.

What a competent witness he was of the matter of fact. What he bore record of he saw; it is what we have seen and looked upon, (1 John 1: 1. 2 Pet. 1: 16.) and had perfect understanding of, Luke 1: 3. What he saw he faithfully bare record of; as a faithful witness, he told not only the truth, but the whole truth. His record is undoubtedly true; for he wrote not only from personal knowledge and observation, but from the dictates of the Spirit of truth, that leads into all truth. He had himself a full assurance of what he wrote, and did not persuade others to believe that which he did not believe himself; he knows that he saith true. He therefore witnessed these things, that we might believe; did not record them merely for his own satisfaction, or the private use of his friends, but made them public to the world; not to please the curious, or entertain the ingenious, but to draw men to believe.

What care he showed in this particular instance. That we may be well assured, both of the truth of Christ's death, he saw his heart's blood let out; and also of the benefits that flow

Verses 33—36.

Lactantius says, that it was a common custom to break the legs of criminals on the cross, which we are told was done at the instigation of an iron mallet, as a kind of coup de grace, the sooner to put them out of pain. It appears that the spear went through the pericardium and pierced the heart, and that the water proceeded from the former, and the blood from the latter.

(36.) (Marg. Ref. — Ex. 12: 46. Ps. 34: 19, 20. Zech. 12: 9—14.) Perhaps this may intimate, that as the natural body of Christ, after all his tortures, was so preserved by a special providence, that no bone was broken, but the whole was found entire at his resurrection; so the

members of the mystical body of Christ, whatever sufferings and temptations they pass through, shall be preserved by divine grace from essential detriment, none shall be wanting, but all shall be forth-coming, complete and entire, at 'the resurrection of the just.' (6: 36—40.) SCOT.

Verses 37—37.

'It would seem that a candid attention to the facts narrated in this chapter, collated with those passages in the law and the prophets which the Jews acknowledge to speak of the Messiah, would be sufficient to give them the fullest conviction that He is the Christ. But where people once make a covenant with unbelief, argument, reason, demonstration, and miracles themselves, fail to convince them.' Dr A. CLARKE.

37 And again another scripture saith, 'They shall look on him whom they pierced.'

38 ¶ And after this, 'Joseph of Arimathea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore and took the body of Jesus.'

39 And there came also * Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

42 There ^blaid they Jesus therefore, * because of the Jews' preparation-day, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

¶ Ps. 22:16, 17. Zech. 12:10. Rev. 1:14. Matt. 27:57-60. Mark 15:42-45. Luke 23:50-54. 9:22. 12:42. Prov. 29:25. Phil. 1:14. 3:11, 12. 7:50-52. Matt. 12:30. 19:20. 19:27. 2 Chr. 16:14. Cant. 4:6, 14. 12:1. 20:5-7. Acts 5:6. 20:15. 2 Kings 23:30. 12. 22:16. Matt. 27:60, 64-66. Luke 23:53. 9:22. 15: 53. 9. Matt. 12:40. Acts 13:29. 1 Cor. 15:4. Col. 2:12. e 14, 31.

Come and see a burial that *conquered the grave*, and buried it; a burial that beautified the grave, and softened it for all believers!

No mention is made in all the New-Testament story of Joseph, except in the narrative of Christ's funeral. He was a disciple of Christ *in secret*, a better friend to Christ than he would willingly be known to be. It was his honor to be a *disciple of Christ*; and some such there are, that are great men, and unavoidably jinked with bad men; but it was his weakness that

to us from his death, signified by the blood and water. Let this silence the fears of weak Christians; *iniquity shall not be their ruin, for there came both water and blood out of Christ's pierced side, both to justify and sanctify them; and if you ask, how can we be sure of this? He that saw it bare record.*

The accomplishment of the Scripture in all this; that the Scripture should be fulfilled, and so both the honor of the Old Testament preserved, and the truth of the New Testament confirmed.

The Scripture was fulfilled. A bone of Him shall not be broken. There was a promise of this made indeed to all the righteous, but principally pointing at Christ; (Ps. 34:20.) *He keepeth all his bones, not one of them is broken.*

There was a type of this in the paschal lamb; (Exod. 12:46.) *Neither shall ye break a bone thereof: and it is repeated, (Num. 9:12.) Ye shall not break any bone of it;* for which law the will of the law-maker is the reason, but the antitype must answer the type. Christ our passover is sacrificed for us, (1 Cor. 5:7.) He is the Lamb of God, (ch. 1:29.) and, as the true passover, his bones were kept unbroken. This commandment was given concerning his bones, when dead, as of Joseph's, Heb. 11:22.

There was a significance in it; the strength of the body is in the bones. The Hebrew word for the bones signifies the strength, and therefore not a bone of Christ must be broken, to show that though He be crucified in weakness, his strength to save is not at all broken. Sin breaks our bones, it broke David's, (Ps. 51:8.) but it did not break Christ's bones; He stood firm under the burthen, mighty to save.

The Scripture was fulfilled in the piercing of his side; v. 37. Zech. 12:10. And there the same that pours out the Spirit of grace, and can be no less than the God of the holy prophets, says, *They shall look upon Me*, which is here applied to Christ, *They shall look upon Him.* (1.) It is here implied that the Messiah shall be pierced; and here it had a more full accomplishment than in the piercing of his hands and feet; He was pierced by the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, wounded in the house of his friends, Zech. 13:6. It is promised that when the Spirit is poured out, they shall look on Him and mourn. This was in part fulfilled, when many of his betrayers and murderers were pricked to the heart, and brought to believe in Him; it will be further fulfilled, when all Israel shall be saved; and when they who persist in infidelity, shall see Him whom they have pierced, and wail because of Him, Rev. 1:7. But it is applicable to us all; we have all been guilty of piercing the Lord, and are all concerned with suitable affections to look on Him.

V. 38-42. The solemn funerals of great men are looked at with curiosity; the mournful funerals of friends are attended with concern.

(Marg. Ref.—Matt. 27:57-61. Mark 15:42-47. Luke 23:50-56.) (39.) *An hundred pound.* 'This was an indication, not only of the wealth, but also of the great affection of Nicodemus to Jesus. Hence also, they not only anoint Him, as they commonly used to do others; but bury Him with so great a mixture of spices, as was done at the funerals of great men. So Jacob was embalmed after the Egyptian manner, (Gen. 50:2.) and Asa with spices and sweet odors. [The Egyptians, says Herodotus, embalmed the body, and filled it with spices; but the manner of the Jews was to sprinkle it with pulverized spices, and wrap it up in linen. Kuinoe.] (2 Chr. 16:14.) *Whitby* (3:1, 2:7:40-53 v. 50-52.) 'Thus his grave should be appointed with the wicked, (which was the case of those who suffered as criminals), but that He should be "with the rich in his death," are circumstances which, before they happened, it was very improbable should ever concur in the same person.' Campbell, 10:53:9, 10.)

(39.) *Myrrh.* 'The juice of a certain tree (as we learn from Dioscorides and Piny) in Arabia, which, on the trunk being bored, exudes a kind of gummy liquid, that is caught on mats, &c.' Bloomfield.

Aloes.] (See cut.) 'A plant with broad leaves, nearly two inches



(41.) 'It was an ancient custom for particular families to have burying places in their gardens. See 2 Kings 21:19, 26.' Dr A. CLARKE.

thick, prickly and chamfered. A very bitter gum is extracted from it, used for medicinal purposes, and anciently for embalming. *Harris.* 'Some have objected to the great quantity of spices employed on this occasion; [but the addition of one letter would alter the Greek to signify ten, instead of a hundred. *Harris, &c.*] yet Josephus states, that 500 servants, bearing spices, attended the funeral of Herod, and 80 lbs. of opobalsam are said to have been used at the funeral of rabbi Gamaliel. GREENFIELD.

(40.) *Linen clothes.* 'The sepulchral bandages.' Bloomfield. [See note 11:44. and cut.] *Ed.*

CHAP. XX.

Mary Magdalene goes to the sepulchre, and, discovering that the stone was taken away, runs to tell Peter and John; who hasten thither, and find not the body, but only the grave-clothes in exact order. 1-10. Mary as she weeps sees two angels, and afterwards Jesus, who sends her to inform the apostles. 11-18. Jesus meets them, as assembled in the evening, and speaks peace to them. 19-23. Thomas, who was absent, remains resolutely incredulous. 24, 25. Jesus again meets the assembled disciples, and satisfies Thomas, who confesses Him as his Lord, and his God. 26-28. These things were written, that we might believe, and have life through his name. 29, 31.

THE first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

a 19, 25. Acts 20:7. 1 Cor. 16:2. Rev. 1:10.
b Matt. 28:1. Mark 16:1, 2, 9. Luke 24:1-10.
c Matt. 27:60, 64-66. 28:2. Mark 15:46. 16:3, 4.

them easy to us. They wound the body with the spices, for all his garments smell of myrrour and aloes, (the spices here mentioned,) out of the ivory palaces; (Ps. 45: 8.) and the sepulchre hewn out of a rock, was an ivory palace to Christ. Dead bodies and graves are offensive; hence sin is compared to a body of death and an open sepulchre; but Christ's sacrifice, being to God as a sweet-smelling savor, hath taken away our pollution. No ointment or perfume can rejoice the heart so as the grave of our Redeemer does, where there is faith to perceive the fragrance of it.

We ought to regard the dead bodies of Christians; not to enshrine and adore their relics, (nothing like that was done to Christ Himself,) but carefully to deposit them, the dust in the dust, as those who believe the bodies of the saints are still united to Christ, and designed for glory and immortality. The resurrection of the saints will be in virtue of Christ's resurrection, and therefore in burying them we should have an eye to Christ's burial, for He, being dead, thus speaketh, *They dead men shall live*, Isa. 26: 19. In burying our dead, it is not necessary, that in all circumstances we imitate the burial of Christ, as if we must be buried in linen, in a garden, and be embalmed: but He being buried after the manner of the Jews, it teaches us, that in things of this nature we should conform to the usages of the country where we live, except those that are superstitious.

The grave pitched upon, was in a garden which belonged to Joseph of Arimathea, very near the place where He was crucified.

Christ was buried without the city, for thus the manner of the Jews was to bury; there was then a peculiar reason for it, which does not hold now; the touching of a grave contracted a ceremonial pollution; but now that the resurrection of Christ has altered the property of the grave, we need not keep at such a distance from it; nor is it incapable of a good improvement, to have the congregation of the dead in the church yard, encompassing the congregation of the living in the church, since they also are dying, and in the midst of life we are in death. Those that would not superstitiously, but by faith, visit the holy sepulchre, must go forth out of the noise of this world.

Joseph had his sepulchre in his garden, that it might be a memorandum, 1. To himself while living; when taking the pleasure of his garden, let him think of dying, and be quickened to prepare for it. The garden is a proper place for meditation, and a sepulchre there may furnish a proper subject, and such a one as we are loath to admit in the midst of our pleasure. 2. To his heirs and successors when he was gone. It is good to acquaint ourselves with the place of our father's sepulchres; and perhaps we might make our own less formidable, if we made theirs more familiar.

2. In a sepulchre, in a garden Christ was laid. In the garden of Eden, death and the grave first received their power, and now in a garden they are triumphed over. In a garden Christ began his passion, and from a garden He would begin his exaltation. Christ fell to the ground as a corn of wheat, (ch. 12: 24.) and therefore was sown in a garden among the seeds, for *his dew is as the dew of herbs*, Isa. 26: 19. He is the fountain of gardens, Cant. 4: 15.

3. He was buried in a new sepulchre. This was so ordered, (1.) To honor Christ; He was not a common person, and therefore must not mix with common dust. (2.) To confirm the truth of his resurrection; that it might not be

cost. Those bodies to which the grave is a long home, need to be clad accordingly; but what need of such furniture of the grave for one that, like a way-faring man, did but turn aside to *lay for a night or two*?

However, we may plainly see in it the strength of their love. They showed the value they had for his person and doctrine, and that it was not lessened by the reproach of the cross. They that had profaned his crown, and laid his honor in the dust, may already see that they imagine a vain thing; for as God had done Him honor in his sufferings, so did men too, even great men. They snowed not only the charitable respect of committing his body to the earth, but the honorable respect showed to great men. This they might do, and yet believe and look for his resurrection; nay, this they might do in the belief and expectation of it. Since God designed honor for this body, they would honor it. We must do our duty according as the present day and opportunity are, and leave it to God to fulfil his promises, in his own way and time.

They took the body into a house adjoining, and, having washed it from blood and dust, wound it in linen clothes, with the spices melted down, it is likely, into an ointment, as the manner of the Jews is to bury, or to embalm.

Among other clothing that belongs to us, Christ put on even the grave-clothes, to make

suggested that it was not He, but some other that rose, when many bodies of saints rose: or, that He rose by the power of some other, as the man that was raised by the touch of Elisha's bones, and not by his own power. He that has made all things new, has new-made the grave for us.

Observe the deference the Jews paid to the Sabbath, and to the day of preparation. Before the passover-sabbath they had a day of preparation. This day had been ill kept by the chief priests, who called themselves the church, but was well kept by the disciples of Christ, who were branded as dangerous to the church; and it is often so. They would not put off the funeral till the Sabbath, because the Sabbath is to be a day of rest and joy, with which the business and sorrow of a funeral do not agree. They would not drive it too late on the day of preparation for the Sabbath. What is to be done on the evening before the Sabbath, should be so contrived, that it may neither intrench upon sabbath-time, nor indispose us for sabbath-work.

The sepulchre they made use of, was *nigh at hand*. Perhaps, if they had had time, they would have carried Him to Bethany, among his friends. And I am sure He had more right to have been buried in the chief of the sepulchres of the sons of David, than any of the kings of Judah; but it was so ordered, that He should be laid in a sepulchre nigh at hand. They that prepared it, little thought who should handle it; but the wisdom of God has reaches infinitely beyond ours, and makes what use He pleases of us and all we have. We are hereby taught not to be over-curious in the place of our burial. Faith in the promise of Canaan, directed the Patriarchs' desires to be carried thither for a burying-place; but now that promise is superseded by a better, such care is over.

Thus, without pomp or solemnity, is the body of Jesus laid in the grave? Here lies our surety under arrest for our debts, so that if He be released, his discharge will be ours. Here is the Sun of righteousness set for a while, to rise again in greater glory, and set no more. Here lies a seeming captive to death, but a real conqueror over death; here lies death itself slain, and the grave conquered. Thanks be to God who giveth us the victory.

CHAP. XX. v. 1-10. There was nothing of which the apostles were more concerned to produce substantial proof, than the resurrection of their Master. 1. He Himself had appealed to this as the last and most cogent proof of his being the Messiah. They that would not believe other signs, were referred to the sign of the prophet Jonas. Therefore his enemies were most solicitous to stifle this, because if He be risen, they are not only murderers, but murderers of the Messiah. 2. Our redemption depended on this. If He give his life a ransom, and do not resume it, it does not appear that his giving of it was accepted as a satisfaction. If He be imprisoned for our debt, and lie by it, we are undone, 1 Cor. 15: 17. 3. He never showed Himself alive after his resurrection to all the people, Acts 10: 40, 41. We should have said, 'Let his ignominious veil be private, and his glorious resurrection public.' But God's thoughts are not as ours; and He ordered it that his death should be public. But the demonstrations of his resurrection should be reserved as a favor for particular friends, and by them be published, that they might be blessed, who have not seen, and yet have believed. The method of proof gives abundant satisfaction to those who are piously disposed to receive the doctrine of

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 31-42. The preparation of hypocrites for religious ordinances, by the commission of horrible crimes, is the most detestable of abominations. Yet believers, if called to witness such scenes, should peculiarly observe, how God overrules every thing to fulfil his Word. Thus, comparing the sacred oracles with the events which occur in the church and in the world, our faith will be increased even by the most discouraging transactions. May we then continually look to Him, whom by our sins we also have, ignorantly and heedlessly, nay, [890]

sometimes against convictions and mercies, pierced. Thus our hearts will be habitually affected with sorrow and humiliation for sin, believing hope, and gratitude; and prepared for every service. Thus feeble and timorous believers will grow in grace, in knowledge, in stability; and so be prepared to avow their relation to Jesus, in the time of danger: though they perhaps have formerly hesitated to confess Him before men, when it might have been done with comparative safety. Score.

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, "They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together: and the other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

5 And he, stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie,

d 13-23. 19-28. 21-7, 20-24.

e 9, 13-15. Matt. 27, 63, 64.

f Luke 24:12.

g 8 Sam. 18:23. 1 Cor. 9:24. 2 Cor.

h 1:14. 19:40.

i 6:67-69. 18:17, 65-67. 21:7 15-17.

Matt. 16:15, 16. Luke 22:31, 32.

and what real service could she do Him by it? But her love answers these and a thousand such objections. Note, 1. We must study to honor Christ in those things wherein yet we cannot be profitable to Him. 2. Love to Christ will take off the terror of death and the grave. If we cannot come to Christ but through that darksome valley, even in that, if we love Him, we will fear no evil.

She came as soon as she could. 1. On the first day of the week, as soon as the Sabbath was gone, longing, not to sell corn and to set forth wheat, (as Ananias 8: 5,) but to be at the sepulchre. They that love Christ, will take the first opportunity of testifying their respect to Him. The first Christian Sabbath she begins with inquiries after Christ.

2. She came while it was yet dark; so early did she set out. Note, Those who would seek Christ so as to find Him, must seek Him early. (1.) Solicitously, with such a care as even breaks the sleep. (2.) Industiously; we must deny ourselves repose in pursuit of Christ. (3.) Seek Him belimely, early in our days, early every day. My voice shall thou hear in the morning. That day is in a fair way to be well ended, that is thus begun. They that diligently inquire after Christ while it is yet dark, shall have such light given them concerning Him as shall shine more and more.

It surprised her to find the stone away. Christ crucified is the fountain of life, his grave one of the wells of salvation, if we come to it in faith, though to a carnal heart it be a spring shut up; we shall find the stone rolled away, as Gen. 29: 10. Surprising comforts are the encouragements of early seekers.

It was a discovery that the Lord was risen, though she did not at first apprehend it. Note, 1. Persons most constant to Christ, and diligent in inquiries after Him, have the first and sweetest notices of divine grace. Mary Magdalene, who followed Christ to the last of his humiliation, met Him the first in his exaltation. 2. God reveals himself and his comforts to us by degrees; to raise expectation and quicken our inquiry.

Finding the stone taken away, she hastens back to Peter and John; and acquaints them with it; "They have taken the Lord out of the sepulchre, envying Him the honor of such a burying place, and we know not where they have laid Him, nor where to find Him, that we may pay Him our last respects."

Mary found the stone gone, looked into the grave, and saw it empty. One would expect that her first thought would have been, Surely the Lord is risen; for whenever He had told them that He should be crucified, He subjoined that the third day He should rise again. Could she feel the great earthquake that happened as she was coming to the sepulchre, and see the grave empty, and yet have no thought of the resurrection? no conjecture, no suspicion of it? The construction she puts upon the removing of the stone, was very far-fetched. Note, When we come to reflect upon our conduct in a cloudy and dark day, we shall stand amazed at our dulness and forgetfulness, that we could miss of such thoughts, when we had occasion for them, as afterward appear obvious. They have taken away the Lord; either the chief priests, to put Him in a worse place; or Joseph and Nicodemus, to avoid the ill-will of the Jews. Whatever was her suspicion, it was a great vexation to her; whereas, if she had understood it rightly, nothing could be more happy. Note, Weak believers often make it the matter of their complaint, which is really just

Christ, and yet leaves room for those to object, who are willingly ignorant and obstinate in unbelief. This is a fair trial, suited to probationers.

1. Mary Magdalene comes to the sepulchre, and finds the stone taken away. This evangelist does not mention the other women that went with Mary Magdalene, because she was the most active; and, 1. Her affection was kindled by what Christ had done for her. Much was forgiven her, therefore she loved much. 2. She had showed her affection to Him, while He lived, attended his doctrine, ministered to Him of her substance, Luke 8: 2, 3. It does not appear that she had any business at Jerusalem, but to wait upon Him, for the women were not bound to go up to the feast, and, probably, she and others followed Him the closer, as Elisha did Elijah, now that they knew their Master would shortly be taken from their head, 2 Kings 2: 1, 2. 3. The continued instances of her respect to Him at and after his death, proved the sincerity of her love. Note, Love to Christ, if cordial, will be constant. Her love to Christ was strong as the death of the cross, for it stood by that; cruel as the grave, for it was not deterred by its terrors.

She came to the sepulchre, to weep there, and to anoint the body with the ointment she had prepared. The grave is a house that people do not care to visit. They that are free among the dead, are separated from the living; and it must be an extraordinary affection to the person, which will endear his grave to us. It is especially frightful to the weaker sex. Could she, that had not strength to roll away the stone, pretend to such presence of mind as to enter the grave? The Jews' religion forbade them to meddle any more than needful with graves and dead bodies. In visiting Christ's sepulchre she exposed herself, and perhaps the disciples, to the suspicion of a design to steal Him away;

matter of joy. We cry out that this and the other comfort are taken away, when the removal of temporal comforts, is in order to the resurrection of spiritual comforts.

She did not pore upon her grief, but acquainted her friends with it. Note, The communication of sorrows is one improvement of the communion of saints. Peter, though he had denied his Master, had not deserted his Master's friends; by this appears the sincerity of his repentance, that he associated with the disciple whom Jesus loved. And the disciples keeping up their intimacy with him as formerly, teaches us to restore those with a spirit of meekness, that have been faulty. If God has received them upon their repentance, why should not we?

Peter and John go with all speed to the sepulchre, to satisfy themselves of the truth. Some think that the other disciples were with Peter and John when the news came; for they told these things to the eleven, Luke 24: 9. Others think that Mary told only Peter and John, and the other women the other disciples; yet none of them went to the sepulchre but Peter and John, two of the first three of Christ's disciples, often distinguished by special favors. Note, It is well when those that are more honored with the privileges, are more active in the duty of disciples, more willing to take pains, and run hazards in a good work.

See what use we should make of the experience of others. They would not in this sense take her word, but would go and see with their own eyes. Do others tell us of the comfort and benefit of ordinances? Let us be engaged thereby to make trial of them. Come and see how good it is to draw near to God.

We should be ready to share with our friends in their cares and fears. Peter and John hasten to the sepulchre, to give Mary a satisfactory answer to her jealousy. We should not grudge any pains we take to succor and comfort the weak and timorous followers of Christ.

We should make haste in a good work, and when we are going on a good errand. Peter and John consulted neither their ease nor their gravity, but ran to the sepulchre, to show the strength of their zeal and affection, and lose no time. If in the way of God's commandments, we should run that way.

What a good thing it is to have good company in a good work. Perhaps neither of these disciples would have ventured to the sepulchre alone; but, together, they made no difficulty of it, Eccl. 4: 9.

What a laudable emulation it is among disciples to strive which shall excel in that which is good. It was no breach of good manners for John, though the younger, to outrun Peter. We must do our best, and neither envy those that can do better, nor despise those that do as they can, though behind.

The foremost in this race, was the disciple whom Jesus loved in a special manner, and who therefore in a special manner loved Jesus. Note, Sense of Christ's love to us, will make us excel in virtue. His love will constrain us more than any thing to abound in duty.

Peter had denied his Master, and was in sorrow and shame for it, and this clogged him as a weight; sense of guilt cramps us in the service of God. When conscience is offended, we lose ground.

John went no further than Mary Magdalene. He had the curiosity to look into the sepulchre, and saw it empty. He stooped down, and looked in. Those that would find the knowledge of Christ, must stoop down, look in, and veil to the authority of divine revelation.

He had not courage to go into the sepulchre. The warmest affections are not always accompanied with the boldest resolutions; many are swift to run religion's race, that are not stout to fight her battles.

Peter, though he came last, went in first. Though John outran him, he did not turn back, or stand still; and while John was with caution looking in, he came, and with courage went into the sepulchre.

Observe the boldness of Peter, and how God dispenses his gifts. John could outrun Peter, [621]

7 And the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself.

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. *(Practical Observations.)*

11 ¶ But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre;

¶ 25, 29, 150. Matt. 16:21, 22. Mark 8:31—33. 9:9, 10, 31, 32. Luke 24:45. 18:33, 34. 21:6, 14—16. m Ps. 16:10. 22:15, 22, &c. Is. 25:8. 25:19. 53:10—12. Hos. 13:14. Acta 2:23—32. 13:28—37. 1 Cor. 15:4. 17:55. 16:22.

dropt his mantle. 3. When we rise from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, we must leave our grave-clothes behind us, put off all our corruptions.

The grave-clothes were found in good order, an evidence that his body was not stolen away while men slept; nor can it be supposed that robbers of tombs should find leisure to fold up the linen.

Peter's boldness encouraged John; now he took heart and ventured in; and he saw and believed; not barely believed what Mary said, that the body was gone; but he began to believe that Jesus was risen, though his faith, as yet, was weak and wavering.

John durst not have gone into the sepulchre if Peter had not gone in first. Note. It is good to be imboldened in a good work by others. The dread of difficulty and danger will be taken off by observing the resolution and courage of others. Perhaps John's quickness had made Peter run faster, and now Peter's boldness makes John venture further. Though Peter had lately fallen under disgrace, and John had been advanced to honor, (Christ having committed his mother to him,) yet John not only associated with Peter, but thought it no disparagement to follow him.

Yet John got the start of Peter in believing. Peter saw and wondered, (Luke 24:12,) but John saw and believed. A mind disposed to contemplation, may perhaps sooner receive evidence of divine truth than a mind disposed to action.

But why were they so slow to believe? The evangelist tells us, they knew not the Scripture, did not consider and apply what they knew of it, that He must rise again from the dead. The Old Testament spake of the resurrection of the Messiah; they believe Him to be the Messiah; He Himself had often told them that, according to the Scriptures of the Old Testament, He should rise again; but they had not presence of mind sufficient to explain present appearances.

How unapt the disciples themselves were, at first, to believe the resurrection of Christ, which confirms the testimony they afterward gave concerning it; by their backwardness to believe it, it appears that they were not credulous. If they had had any design to advance their own interest, they would greedily have caught at the first spark of evidence; would have prepared the minds of those that followed them to receive it; but, on the contrary, it was to them as a strange thing, and the furthest in their thoughts. Peter and John were so shy of believing it at first, that nothing less than the most convincing proof could bring them to testify it with so much assurance. Hereby it appears that they were not only honest, but cautious men.

The reason of their slowness to believe was, they knew not the Scripture.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1—10. They who love the Lord will seek Him early and diligently; and, notwithstanding all sorrows, delays, misapprehensions, and discouragements, they will find Him.—External forms and notions will no more satisfy the inquirer after salvation, than the sepulchre and the grave-clothes did Mary and the apostles, who sought the Lord in faith and love.—Under a large proportion of preaching, by men called Christian ministers, we are ready to say, 'They have taken away

This seems to be the evangelist's acknowledgment of his own fault among the rest; he does not say, 'For as yet Jesus had not appeared to them, he' not showed them his hands and his side;' but, 'As yet He had not opened their understandings to understand the Scriptures;' Luke 24:44, 45.

Peter and John pursued their inquiry no further, but desisted, between faith and unbelief; (v. 10.) The disciples went away to their own friends, the rest of the disciples; to their own lodgings, for homes they had none at Jerusalem. They went away,

1. For fear of being taken up on suspicion of a design to steal the body; instead of improving their faith, their care is to secure themselves. In difficult, dangerous times, it is hard even for good men to go on in their work with becoming resolution.

2. They were at a loss what to do next, and what to make of what they had seen; and therefore, not having courage to stay at the grave, they resolve to go home, and wait till God shall reveal even this unto them; an instance of their weakness as yet.

3. Probably the rest of the disciples were together; to them they return, to report to, and consult with them; and, perhaps, now they appointed their meeting in the evening, when Christ came to them.

Before Peter and John came to the sepulchre, an angel had appeared there, rolled away the stone, frightened the guard, and comforted the women; as soon as they were gone from the sepulchre, Mary Magdalene sees two angels in the sepulchre, yet Peter and John go into it, and see none; what shall we make of this? Where were the angels when Peter and John were at the sepulchre. 1. Angels appear and disappear at pleasure, according to the orders given them. They may be, and are really, where they are not visibly; they may be visible to one, and not to another, at the same time 2 Kings 6:17. Num. 22:23. How they make themselves visible, then invisible, it is presumption for us to inquire; but that they do so is plain from this story. 2. This favor was showed to those who were early and constant in their inquiries after Christ, and was the reward of them that came first, and staid last, but denied to them that made a transient visit. 3. The apostles were not to receive their instructions from the angels, but from the Spirit of grace. See Heb. 2:5.

V. 11—18. Mark tells us, (16:9.) that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene; that appearance is here largely related.

1. The constancy and fervency of Mary's affection to Jesus, v. 11.

1. She staid at the sepulchre, when Peter and John were gone, because there her Master had lain; and there she was likely to hear some tidings of Him. Note, (1.) Where there is love to Christ, there will be a constant adherence to Him, and a resolution to cleave to Him. This good woman, though she has lost Him, yet, rather than seem to desert Him, will abide by his grave, and continue in his love, even when she wants the comfort of it. (2.) Where there is a true desire of acquaintance with Christ, there will be a constant attendance on the means of knowledge. See Hos. 6:2, 3. The third day He will raise us up; and then shall we know the meaning of that resurrection, if we follow on to know, as Mary did.

2. She staid there weeping; these tears spake her affection to her Master. They that have

the Lord, and we know not where they have laid Him; but the broken-hearted disciple cannot be thus contented, though others be filled with admiration of the preacher's eloquence, genius, or learning.—Those who are equally in earnest do not always make equal progress: some men take things more quickly, others investigate more deeply; and they may be mutually helpful, in bringing each other to understand the Scripture, and to establishment in the faith. SCOT.

NOTES.

CHAP. XX. v. 11. 'The sepulchres of the common people were, without doubt, mere excavations in the earth, such as are common at the present day. Persons of a higher rank owned large subterranean

recesses, or caverns; either the work of nature, or merely artificial excavations of the earth, or cut out from rocks. Josh. 10:27. Isa. 22:16. 2 Kings 13:21. John 11:38. Numerous sepulchres of this kind still remain in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, &c.' JAM.

12 And 'seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, 'Woman, 'why weepest thou? She saith unto them, 'Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

c Matt. 28:3-5. Mark 16:5-8. Luke 24:3-7, 22, 23.
p 2 Chr. 5:12. Dan. 7:9. Matt. 17:2. Acts 1:10. Rev. 3:4. 7:14.
e 24. 19:26.
f 15. 14:27, 28. 16:5, 7, 20-22. 1 Sam. 18. Ps. 42:3-5, 11. Ec. 3:4. Jer. 31:16. Luke 24:17. Acts 21:13.
g 2.
h Cant. 3:3, 4. Mark 16:9. 9:5-9. 21:8. Mark 16:12. Luke 4:30. 24:16, 31.

heavenly host, to sing praise, only two, to bear witness; for out of the mouth of two witnesses this word would be established.

3. Their array; they were in white; denoting, their purity and holiness. The best of men, standing before the angels, and compared with them, are clothed in filthy garments; (Zech. 3:3.) but angels are spotless; and glorified saints, when they come to be as the angels, shall walk with Christ in white.

4. Their posture and place. These angels went into the grave, to teach us not to fear it, nor to think that our resting in it awhile, will prejudice our immortality; matters are so ordered, that the grave is not out of our way to heaven. It intimates likewise that angels are to be employed about the saints, not only at their death, to carry their souls into Abraham's bosom, but at the great day, to raise their bodies, Matt. 24:31. These angelic guards (and angels are called watchers, Dan. 4:23.) keeping possession of the sepulchre, when they had frightened away the guards, represents Christ's victory over the powers of darkness. Thus Michael and his angels are more than conquerors. Their sitting to face one another, one at his bed's head, the other at his bed's feet, denotes their care of the entire body of Christ, his mystical as well as his natural body; it may also remind us of the two cherubim placed one at either end of the mercy-seat, looking one at another, Exod. 25:18. Christ crucified was the great propitiator, at the head and feet of which were these two cherubim, not with flaming swords, but welcome messengers, to direct us to the way of life.

They inquire into the cause of Mary Magdalene's grief; (v. 13.) Woman, why weepest thou? This question was, 1. A rebuke to her weeping; 'Why weepest thou, when thou hast cause to rejoice?' Many floods of tears would dry away, before such a search into the fountain of them. Why art thou cast down? 2. It was designed to show how much angels are concerned at the griefs of the saints. Christians should thus sympathize with one another. 3. It was to make an occasion of informing her of what would turn her mourning into rejoicing.

The account she gives them of her distress; Because they have taken away the body I came to embalm, and I know not where they have laid it. See,

1. The weakness of her faith. If she had had faith as a grain of mustard-seed, this mountain would have been removed; but we often perplex ourselves with imaginary difficulties, which faith would discover to us as real advantages. Many good people complain of clouds and darkness, which are the necessary methods of grace for humbling their souls, mortifying their sins, and endearing Christ to them.

Verses 11-18.

It is supposed, that several women agreed to meet at the sepulchre, to embalm the body of Jesus; and that Joanna and some others with her, having undertaken to prepare the spices, purposed being there about sun-rising; (Luke 23:55, 24:1-10.) but Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, and Salome, came to view the sepulchre, as the day began to dawn. (Matt. 28:1.) Mary Magdalene seems to have arrived some short time before her companions (1); and observing that the stone had been removed, left them to wait for Joanna and her company, and returned back to inform Peter and John. In the mean time the other Mary and Salome came to the sepulchre, and saw the angel as recorded by Matthew and Mark. While these women returned to the city, Peter and John went to the sepulchre, passing them at some distance, or going another way; but the angel did not appear to them. After their return Mary Magdalene saw a vision of two angels, and then Jesus Himself, as here related; (Mark 16:9-11.) and immediately after, Jesus appeared to the other women as they returned to the city. (Matt. 28:9, 10.) In the mean while Joanna and her company

2. The strength of her love. They that have true affection for Christ, cannot but be in great affliction when they have lost either the tokens of his love, or the opportunities of converse with Him. Mary is not diverted from her inquiries by the surprise of the vision, nor satisfied with the honor. A sight of angels and their smiles, will not suffice without a sight of Christ. Nay, the sight of angels is but an opportunity of pursuing her inquiries after Christ. All creatures, the most excellent, should be used as means, and but as means, to bring us into acquaintance with God in Christ. The angels ask her, Why weepest thou? I have cause enough to weep; they have taken away my Lord, and, like Micah, What have I more? My Beloved has withdrawn Himself, and is gone. Note, None know, but they that have experienced, the sorrows of a deserted soul, that has had evidences of the love of God in Christ, and hopes of heaven, but now walks in darkness; such a wounded spirit who can bear?

III. Christ appeared to her while talking with the angels; before they had given her an answer, Christ steps in to satisfy her inquiries, for God now speaketh to us by his Son. Mary would fain know where her Lord is, and behold, He is at her right hand. Note, 1. Those that will be content with nothing short of Christ, shall be put off with nothing less. He never said to the soul that sought Him, Seek in vain. 2. Christ, in manifesting Himself to those that seek Him, often outdoes their expectations. Mary longs to see the body of Christ, and complains of the loss of it, and behold, she sees Him alive. Thus He does for his praying people more than they ask or think.

She stood expecting an answer from the angels; and either seeing the shadow, or hearing the tread of some person behind her, turned herself back from talking with the angels, and sees Jesus Himself, the very person she was looking for, and yet knew not that it was Jesus. Note, 1. The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart, (Ps. 34:18.) never than they are aware. They that seek Christ, though they do not see Him, may yet be sure He is not far from them. 2. Those that diligently seek the Lord, will turn every way in their inquiry after Him. Mary turned herself back, in hopes of some discoveries. Several of the ancients suggest, that Mary was directed to look behind her, by the angels' rising up, and doing obeisance to the Lord Jesus, whom they saw before Mary did; and that she looked back to see to whom they paid such profound reverence. But if so, it is not likely that she would have taken Him for the gardener; rather, therefore, it was her earnest desire in seeking, that made her turn every way. 3. Christ is often near his people, and they are not aware of Him. She knew not that it was Jesus; not that He appeared in any other likeness, but either it was a transient look she cast upon Him, and, her eyes being full of care, she could not well distinguish; or they were holden that she should not know Him; Luke 24:16.

His question was natural; 'Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? What business hast thou in the garden so early?' Perhaps, it was spoken with some roughness, as Joseph spake to his brethren when he made himself strange, before he made himself known to them. It would seem, this was the first word

arrived at the sepulchre, and, entering it, at first saw nothing, only observed that the body was not there; but two angels appeared and addressed them, as the one angel had done the other women. (Lk. 24:1-10.) They therefore returned immediately to the city, and found the apostles, before the other women arrived, and informed them of what they had seen; upon which Peter went a second time to the sepulchre, but saw no angels, only the clothes lying. (Luke 24:12.) About this time the two disciples set off for Emmaus, having only heard the report of these women, and neither that of Mary Magdalene, nor yet that of the other Mary and Salome. (Luke 24:22-24, 33, 34.) These at length arrived, and informed the apostles, that they had seen Jesus Himself, and that two of them had been permitted to touch Him; and some time after, on the same day, He appeared to Peter. There are other ways of reconciling the apparent differences between the evangelists; but this seems to answer every purpose, as will readily appear to the attentive reader. (See West, on the Resurrection.) [So Doddridge.]

I conceive that Mary Magdalene was a considerable time before

15 Jesus saith unto her, 'Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, 'Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, 'Rabboni'; as he is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, 'Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, 'I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God.

x 1.38. 18:47. Cant. 3:2. 2:1. 3:1. 28:5. Mark 16:6. Luke 24:15. 7:1. 11:6. Matt. 19:34. Luke 24:15. 10:34. Gen. 22:11. Ex. 34. 3:3. 17:1. Sam. 3:5, 10. Is. 43:1. Luke 10:41. Acts 9:4. 10:3. 1 Gen. 45:12. Cant. 2:8, &c. 5:2. Matt. 14:27. 26:1. 1 Cor. 15:45. 2 Cor. 6:25. 11:28. 13:1. 14:12. 25:10. 26:1. 27:1. 28:1. 29:1. 30:1. 31:1. 32:1. 33:1. 34:1. 35:1. 36:1. 37:1. 38:1. 39:1. 40:1. 41:1. 42:1. 43:1. 44:1. 45:1. 46:1. 47:1. 48:1. 49:1. 50:1. 51:1. 52:1. 53:1. 54:1. 55:1. 56:1. 57:1. 58:1. 59:1. 60:1. 61:1. 62:1. 63:1. 64:1. 65:1. 66:1. 67:1. 68:1. 69:1. 70:1. 71:1. 72:1. 73:1. 74:1. 75:1. 76:1. 77:1. 78:1. 79:1. 80:1. 81:1. 82:1. 83:1. 84:1. 85:1. 86:1. 87:1. 88:1. 89:1. 90:1. 91:1. 92:1. 93:1. 94:1. 95:1. 96:1. 97:1. 98:1. 99:1. 100:1. 101:1. 102:1. 103:1. 104:1. 105:1. 106:1. 107:1. 108:1. 109:1. 110:1. 111:1. 112:1. 113:1. 114:1. 115:1. 116:1. 117:1. 118:1. 119:1. 120:1. 121:1. 122:1. 123:1. 124:1. 125:1. 126:1. 127:1. 128:1. 129:1. 130:1. 131:1. 132:1. 133:1. 134:1. 135:1. 136:1. 137:1. 138:1. 139:1. 140:1. 141:1. 142:1. 143:1. 144:1. 145:1. 146:1. 147:1. 148:1. 149:1. 150:1. 151:1. 152:1. 153:1. 154:1. 155:1. 156:1. 157:1. 158:1. 159:1. 160:1. 161:1. 162:1. 163:1. 164:1. 165:1. 166:1. 167:1. 168:1. 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counsels of his love, (Exod. 33: 12.) are called by name in the efficacy of his grace, then He reveals his Son in them, as in Paul, (Gal. 1: 16.) when Christ called to him by name, *Saul, Saul*. Christ's sheep know his voice, ch. 10: 4. This one word *Mary*, was like that to the disciples in the storm, *It is I*. The Word of Christ does us good, when we put our names into the precepts and promises. 'In this Christ calls to me, and speaks to me.'

How readily she received this discovery. 'Mary, dost thou not know me?' She turned herself, and said, *Rabboni, My master*. It might properly be read with an interrogation, 'Rabboni? Is it my master?'

The Jews called their doctors *Rabbies*, great men. Their critics tell us, that *Rabbon* was with them a more honorable title than *Rabbi*; and therefore Mary chooses that, and adds a note of appropriation, *My great Master*. Note, Notwithstanding the freedom of communion with Himself Christ is pleased to admit, we must remember that He is our *Master*, and to be approached with *godly fear*.

hand with the rest of the women, with whom she had agreed to go and embalm the body. Hence Matthew and Mark, putting together this successive visitation of the sepulchre by the women, constantly place Mary Magdalene first. She, however, finding the sepulchre empty, immediately retraces her steps, and meeting Peter and John, persuades them to run to the sepulchre and back: she, in the mean time, waiting in expectation of coming at some important knowledge on the subject. The second message is that of the other women to all the eleven apostles, (Luke 24: 9.) intimating that they had seen two angels, who had announced our Lord's resurrection. While Mary Magdalene awaits in the city the return of Peter and John, the rest of the women go to the sepulchre, and bring immediately back to the disciples an account of what they had seen and heard. Now that Mary Magdalene had no participation in this, is plain, from its being conjoined with the appearing of our Lord. There are besides, some other discrepancies; namely, that according to Mark, the angels were seen by the women, when they had entered the sepulchre, but by Mary, standing outside; that she converses with them, *sola cum solis*; (alone, with them only;) that she does not receive an answer from them on the resurrection of Christ, who just after appears unexpectedly. Moreover, by this second message, Peter is induced to repair to the sepulchre, as is related by Luke, 24: 12, whose narrative is also to be distinguished from this of John 17. The third message is that which was afterwards brought by Mary Magdalene and the other women, namely, that they had seen the Lord. Mary Magdalene had, meanwhile, herself returned to the sepulchre and, as is clear, from John 20: 13, thus

Christ spake after his resurrection; 'Why weepest thou? I am risen.' The resurrection of Christ has enough in it to allay all our sorrows, and dry up the fountains of our tears. Christ takes cognizance, 1 Of his people's griefs. 2 Of his people's cars; *Whom seek ye, and what would ye have?* When He knows they are seeking Him, yet He will know it from them; they must tell Him whom they seek.

Her reply is natural: she does not give Him a direct answer, but, as if she should say, 'Why do you upbraid me with my tears? You know why I weep, and whom I seek;' and therefore supposing Him to be the gardener, employed by Joseph, come thither thus early to his work, she said, *Sir, if thou hast carried Him hence, pray tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away*.

1. The error of her understanding; she supposed Jesus to be the gardener, perhaps, because He asked what authority she had to be there. Note, Troubled spirits, in a cloudy and dark day, are apt to misrepresent Christ to themselves, and to put wrong constructions upon the methods of his providence and grace.

2. The truth of her affection. How her heart was engaged to find Christ! She questions every one she meets, like the careful spouse, *Saw ye Him whom my soul loveth?* When she speaks of Christ, she does not name Him; but, *If thou have borne Him hence*, taking it for granted that *this gardener* was as full as herself of thoughts concerning *this Jesus*, and therefore could not but know whom she meant. Another evidence of the strength of her affection was, that, wherever He was laid, she would undertake to remove Him. Such a body, with such a weight of spices about it, was much more than she could carry; but true love makes nothing of difficulties. She supposed *this gardener* grudged that the body of one crucified, should be laid in his master's new tomb, and that therefore he had removed it to some sorry place.

Jesus saith unto her, *Mary*. It was said with an emphasis, and that air of kindness with which He was wont to speak to her. Now He changed his voice, and spake like Himself. Christ's way of making Himself known to his people is by his Word, applied to their souls, speaking to them in particular.

When those, whom God knew by name in the 33: 12.) are called by name in the efficacy of his grace, then He reveals his Son in them, as in Paul, (Gal. 1: 16.) when Christ called to him by name, *Saul, Saul*. Christ's sheep know his voice, ch. 10: 4. This one word *Mary*, was like that to the disciples in the storm, *It is I*. The Word of Christ does us good, when we put our names into the precepts and promises. 'In this Christ calls to me, and speaks to me.'

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With what lively affection she gives this title to Christ. She turned herself from the angels to look to Jesus. We must take off our regard from all creatures, even the highest and best, to fix them upon Christ, from whom nothing must divert us, and with whom nothing must interfere. The soul that hears Christ's voice, and is turned to Him, calls Him, with joy and triumph, *My Master*. With what pleasure those who love Christ, speak of his authority over them! *My Master, my great Master*.

He diverts her from the expectation of familiar conversation with Him at this time.

Touch Me not thus at all, for I am to ascend to heaven. He bid the disciples touch Him, for the confirmation of their faith: He allowed the women to take hold of his feet, and worship Him; (Matt. 28: 9.) but Mary, supposing that He was risen, as Lazarus, to live among them as He had done, in her transport at seeing Him, and forgetting his exalted state, was about to take his hand with her usual freedom; this mistake Christ rectified; she must believe and adore Him, as exalted, but must not expect to be familiar with Him as formerly. See 2 Cor. 5: 16 He forbids her to do to upon his bodily presence, or expect the continuance of it, and leads her to the spiritual communion which she should have after He was ascended to his Father; for the greatest joy of his resurrection was, that it was a step toward his ascension. Mary thought, now that her Master was risen. He would set up a temporal kingdom. 'Touch Me not, think not to lay hold on Me, so as to detain Me here; for though I am not yet ascended, go to my brethren, and tell them, I am to ascend.' As before his death, so now after his resurrection, He repeats again and again that He was *no more in the world*; and therefore they must look higher than his bodily presence, and further than the present state of things.

'Touch Me not, do not stay to touch Me now or to make any further inquiries, or give any further expressions of joy; for I am not yet ascended, I shall not presently depart, it may as well be done another time; the best service thou canst do, is, to carry the tidings to the disciples; lose no time, go away with all speed.' Note, Public service ought to be preferred before private satisfaction. *It is more blessed to give than to receive*. Jacob must let an angel go, when the day breaks, and it is time for Him to look after his family. Mary must not stay, to talk with her Master, but must carry his message; for it was a day of good tidings, of which she must not engross the comfort. See 2 Kings 7: 9.

Go to my brethren; for He is not ashamed to call them so. 1. Though He was now entering upon his glory, and was declared to be the Son of God with greater power than ever, He owns his disciples as his brethren, and expresses Himself with more tender affection to them than before; He had called them *friends*, but never *brethren* till now. Notwithstanding his elevation, He disdains not to own his poor relatives,

far had understood or believed nothing of what had happened to the other women. There she also converses with the angel, and meets our Lord Himself. Then she relates what she had heard, (v. 18.) and that by herself, as is manifest from Mark 16: 9 and 10, although she is not believed, (v. 11.) especially, since Peter had lost his labor; and thus the testimony of one woman would seem very suspicious. A little after, the other women, incited by the example of Mary Magdalene, retrace their steps, and obtain their wish. (See Matt. 28: 9, 10.) And Peter, (Luke 24: 34.) meeting with Jesus, confirms the testimony of the women, and paves the way for the belief of the other disciples. Now this mole (which, if probable or very possible, is enough for the purpose) of reconciling the evangelists, by multiplied journeys backwards and forwards, is not only adapted to the nature of the thing itself, (since the sepulchre was very near the city,) but also suitable to the vehement agitation of mind, which must have been felt by these affectionate votaries of Christ. It is agreeable, also, to divine wisdom, which, it seems, so disposed all these things, that it might appear there was no collusion: that the particulars were in succession examined; that the disciples were brought by very slow degrees to a belief in the resurrection. Finally, this hypothesis is supported by the opinions of several of the ancient fathers, as Jerome, Dionysius Alexandrinus, &c. [So Markland]

(17.) Touch Me not. The original signifies to embrace, & lay the knees, all at the feet of any one. For I am not yet ascended, &c.) 'For I am not yet immediately going to ascend.' BLOOMFIELD.

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

19 ¶ Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

¶ Mark 16:10-13. Luke 24:36-49. 1 Cor. 15:5.
22. Neh. 6:10-11. 14:19-23. 16:22. Matt. 19:20.
21. 14:27. 16:33. Ps. 81:8-10.
14. 57:19. Matt. 10:13. Luke 24:36. Rom. 15:33. Eph. 2:14. 6:23.
Phil. 1:12. 2 Thes. 3:16. Heb. 7:32. Rev. 1:4.

ditions of the relation; He is Christ's Father by eternal generation, ours by adoption; yet even that warrants us to call Him, *Abba, Father*. This is a reason why Christ called them *brethren*. Christ was now ascending to appear as an *Advocate with his Father*; we may hope He will prevail for any thing with our Father, and therefore for us.

It is the great condescension of Christ, that He is pleased to own the believer's God for his God; *my God, and your God*; mine, that He may be yours; the God of the Redeemer, (Ps. 89:26.) that He might be the God of the redeemed. The summary of the new covenant is, *God will be to us a God*; and therefore Christ being the Head of the covenant, who is primarily dealt with, and believers only through Him, this covenant relation fastens first upon Him, *God becomes his God, and so ours*; Christ's Father is our Father; and He partaking of the human nature, *our God is his God*.

2. Christ's ascension into heaven in prosecution of his undertaking, is likewise an unsearchable comfort; 'Tell them I must shortly ascend.' This was intended to be,

(1.) A word of caution to these disciples, not to expect his continuance on earth, nor the setting up of his temporal kingdom among men. Thus they who are raised to a spiritual life, must reckon that they rise, to ascend; they are quickened with Christ, that they may sit with Him in heavenly places, Eph. 2:5, 6. Let them not think that this earth is to be their home; being born from heaven, they are bound for heaven; their eye must be upon another world, and this ever upon their hearts, *I ascend*.

(2.) A word of comfort to them, and to all that shall believe in Him, through their word; He is now ascended to his Father, and our Father. This was his advancement, to receive those honors and powers which were to recompense his humiliation; He says it with triumph, that they who love Him may rejoice. This is our advantage; for He ascended as a Conqueror, leading captivity captive for us; (Ps. 68:18.) as our Forerunner, to prepare a place for us, and to be ready to receive us.

Some make these words, *I ascend to my God, and your God*, to include a promise of our resurrection, for Christ had proved the resurrection of the dead from these words, *I am the God of Abraham*, Matt. 22:32. So that Christ here insinuates, 'As He is my God, and hath therefore raised Me, so He is your God, and will therefore raise you'; Rev. 21:3. *Because I live, e shall live also*. I now ascend, to honor my God, and ye shall ascend to Him as your God.

Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples, whom she found together, that she had seen the Lord. Peter and John had left her seeking Him carefully, with tears; she comes to tell them she had found what she sought; and, what was infinitely better, she had joy in her sight of the Master herself, and was willing to communicate her joy, for she knew it would be good news to them. When God comforts us, it is that we may comfort others.

As she told them what she had seen, so also what she had heard; she had seen the Lord alive, of which this was a token, that He had spoken these things to her, to be delivered to them. Those who are acquainted with the Word of Christ themselves, should communicate their knowledge for the good at others, and not grudge that others should know as much as they.

V. 19-25. The infallible proof of Christ's resurrection, was, his showing Himself alive, Acts 1:3. In these verses, we have an account of his first appearance to the disciples, on the day He rose. He had sent them the tidings of his resurrection; but, to show his love to them, and confirm their faith in Him, He came Himself, that they might be eye-witnesses of his being alive, because they must attest it to the world, and build the church upon that testimony.

Verse 19.

Though it be an ancient opinion, that Christ made his body penetrate the doors; it is both groundless and absurd, and contrary to the design of Christ in coming to them. It is groundless: for why might not He, by his power, secretly open the doors; as the angel opened the prison doors and gates to let out Peter? (Acts 12:10.) It is absurd: for since Christ rose in that natural body, which was cruci-

2. Though his disciples had lately carried themselves disingenuously toward Him; He had never seen them together since they forsook Him, and fled; justly might He now have sent them an angry message. He forgives, forgets, and does not upbraid.

Mary Magdalene, out of whom had been cast seven devils, is now thus favored. This was her reward for her constancy in adhering to Christ, and inquiring after Him; and a rebuke to the apostles, who had not been so close as she in attending on the dying Jesus, nor so early in meeting the rising Jesus.

I ascend to my Father. Two consolations are in these words:

1. Our joint relation to God, resulting from union with Christ. Speaking of that inexhaustible spring of light, life, and bliss, He says, He is my Father, and your Father; my God, and your God. This expresses the relation between Christ and believers; He that sanctifieth, and they that are sanctified, are both one; for they agree in one, Heb. 2:11. Here are, such an advancement of Christians, and such a condescension of Christ, as bring them near togetherness.

It is the dignity of believers, that the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ is their Father. A vast difference indeed there is between the foun-

This appearance was the same day that He rose, being the first day of the week, the day after the Jewish Sabbath, at a private meeting of the disciples, ten of them, and some of their friends with them, Luke 24:33.

There are three secondary ordinances (as may call them) instituted by our Lord to continue in his church, for its support, and for the administration of the principal ordinances—the Word, sacraments, and prayer: these are, the Lord's day, solemn assemblies, and a standing ministry; the mind of Christ concerning each of these is plainly intimated to us in these verses, and of the first two, in the circumstances of this appearance, the other, v. 21. Christ's kingdom was to be set up among men, immediately upon his resurrection; and, accordingly, we find the very day He rose, though but a day of small things, graced with those solemnities which should help to keep up religion throughout all ages of the church.

Here is a Christian Sabbath observed by the disciples, and owned by our Lord. The visit Christ made to his disciples, was, on the first day of the week. And the first day of the week is the only day of the week, or month, or year, that is ever mentioned by number in all the New Testament; and that is several times spoken of as a day religiously observed. Though it was said here expressly, (v. 1.) that Christ rose the first day of the week, and it might have been sufficient to say here, (v. 19.) He appeared the same day at evening; yet, to put an honor upon the day, it is repeated, being the first day of the week; not that the apostles designed to put honor upon the day, (they were yet in doubt concerning the occasion of it,) but God designed to put honor upon it, by ordering it that they should be together, to receive Christ's first visit on that day. Thus, He blessed and sanctified that day, because in it the Redeemer rested.

Here is a Christian assembly solemnized by the disciples, and owned by the Lord Jesus. Probably, the disciples met here to pray together; or, perhaps, to compare notes, and consider whether they had sufficient evidence of their Master's resurrection, and to consult whether they should keep together, or scatter: they met, to strengthen one another's hands, and concert proper measures.

This meeting was private, because they durst not appear publicly, in a body; they met in a house, but kept the doors shut, that they might not be seen, and that none might come among them but such as they knew; for they feared the Jews, who would prosecute the disciples as criminals, that they might seem to believe the lie they would deceive the world with, that they came by night, and stole Him away. Note, 1. Disciples of Christ, even in difficult times, must not forsake the assembling of themselves together, Heb. 10:25. Those sheep of the flock were scattered in the storm; but sheep are sociable, and will come together again. It is no new thing for the assemblies of Christ's disciples to be driven into corners, and forced into the wilderness, Rev. 12:14. Prov. 28:12. 2. God's people have been often obliged to enter into their chambers, and shut their doors. Persecution is allotted them, and retirement from persecution is allowed them; and then where shall we look for them but in dens and caves of the earth? It is a grief, but no reproach, to Christ's disciples, thus to ascend.

When they were assembled, Jesus came, yet drawing a veil over the brightness of his body now begun to be glorified, else it would have dazzled their eyes, as in his transfiguration. Christ came, to give them a specimen of the performance of his promise, that, where two or three are gathered together in his name, He will be in the midst of them.

He came, though the doors were shut. This does not weaken the evidence of his having a

'fied and laid in the grave, such a body could not penetrate through another more solid body. This fancy destroys not only the end of Christ's coming among them, but of all that He had said and done to convince them it was the same body that was crucified, in which He appeared to them. It being as certain, that flesh and bones cannot penetrate through a door, as that 'a spirit hath not flesh and bones.'—Whitby.

20 And when *he* had so said, *he* shewed unto them *his* hands and his side. *Then* were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

22 And when he had said this, *he* breathed on them, and saith unto them, *Receive ye the Holy Ghost.*

23 Whose *soever* sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose *soever* sins ye retain, they are retained.

[Practical Observations.]

n 27. Luke 24:39, 40. 1 John 1:1.
c 16:22. Luke 24:39, 40. Matt. 28:18. Luke 24:41.
p 13:20. 17:18, 19. 21:15-17. Ia. 61:1-3. Matt. 10:16-40. 28:18-20.
Mark 16:15-18. Luke 24:47-49.
Acts 1:8. 2 Tim. 2:2. Heb. 3:1.
Gen. 27. Job 33:4. Ps. 33:6. Ezr. 37:9.
1 Ti. 1:16. 15:26. 16:7. Acts 2:4, 3, 4, 8. 8:15. 10:47. 19:2. Gal. 3:2.
e Matt. 16:19. 18:18. Mark 2:5-10. Acts 2:38. 10:43. 13:38, 39. 1 Cor. 5:4, 5. 2 Cor. 2:6-10. Eph. 2:20. 1 Tim. 1:20.

were to speak on earth, that it was He Himself, and therefore He rose with them; they were to speak in the intercession He must ever live to make, and therefore He ascended with them, and appeared in the midst of the throne, a Lamb as it had been slain, Rev. 5: 6. He will come again with his scars, that they may look on Him whom they have pierced.

These marks He showed his disciples, for their conviction. They had not only the satisfaction of seeing Him look with the same countenance, and hearing Him speak with the same voice, they had been so long accustomed to, but they had the further evidence of those marks; *He opened his hands to them; He opened his breast, to show them the wounds there.* Note, When Christ manifests his love to believers by his Spirit, assures them that because He lives, they shall live also, then *He shows them his hands and his side.*

real body after his resurrection; though the doors were shut, He knew how to open them without noise; as formerly He had walked on the water, and yet had a true body. When our solemn assemblies are reduced to privacy, no doors can shut out Christ's presence.

Peace be unto you. This was not a word of course, though commonly used at the meeting of friends, but a solemn, uncommon benediction, conferring upon them all the fruits of his death and resurrection. The phrase was common, but the sense peculiar. *Peace*, is as much as, All good. Christ had left them his peace for their legacy, ch. 14: 27. By the death of the testator the testament was become of force, and He was now risen from the dead, to prove the will, and be Himself the executor; He here makes payment of the legacy. His speaking peace, *crea's the fruit of the lips, peace; peace with God; in your own consciences; peace with one another; peace in Christ.* His sudden appearing, when they were full of doubts concerning Him, of fears concerning themselves, could not but put them into some disorder, the noise of which waves He stills with this word, *Peace be unto you.* See

The method He took to convince them of his resurrection. They now saw Him alive, whom multitudes had seen dead two or three days before. The only doubt was, whether this that they saw alive, was the same body that had been seen dead; and none could desire a further proof that it was so, than the scars or marks of the wounds.

The marks of the wounds, (though without pain or soreness,) remained in the body of Jesus even after his resurrection, that they might demonstrate the truth of it. Conquerors glory in the marks of their wounds. Christ's wounds

They were convinced that they saw the Lord so was their faith confirmed. At first, they thought they saw an apparition only; but now they knew it was the Lord Himself. Many true believers, who, while they were weak, feared their comforts were but imaginary, afterward find them, through grace, real. They ask not, *Is it the Lord?* but are assured, *it is He*

Then they were glad; and that which strengthened their faith, raised their joy; believing, they rejoice. The evangelist seems to write it with something of transport and triumph. *Then! then! were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.* Now that word of Christ was fulfilled, (ch. 16: 22.) *I will see you again, and your hearts shall rejoice.* This wiped away all tears from their eyes. Note, A sight of Christ will gladden the heart of a disciple at any time; the more we see of Christ, the more we shall rejoice in Him; and our joy will never be perfect, till we come there where we shall see Him as He is. Observe

The honorable and ample commission He gave them to be his agents in planting his church.

The preface was the repetition of the salutation before; *Peace be unto you.* This was intended, either, 1. To raise their attention. The former salutation was to still their fear, that they might attend to the proofs of his resurrection; this was to reduce the transport of their joy, that they might sedately hear what He had further to say; or, 2. To encourage them to accept the commission. Though it would involve them in much trouble, yet He designed their honor and comfort in it, and, in the issue, it would be peace. Gideon received his commission with this word, *Peace be unto thee*, Judg. 6: 22, 23. *Christ is our Peace; if He be with us, peace is to us.* Christ was sending the disciples to publish peace to the world; (Isa. 52: 7.) and here not only confers it on them for their satisfaction, but commits it to them, to be by them transmitted to all the sons of peace, Luke 10: 5, 6.

The commission itself sounds very great; *As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.*

Christ sent them; He appointed them to go on with his work, and spread his Gospel, and set up his kingdom among men. He sent them authorized with a divine warrant, armed with divine power; sent them as ambassadors of

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 11-23. Great love is manifested by proportionable sorrow, when the beloved object is removed: thus the believer mourns, when he seeks in vain for the comfort of the Redeemer's presence, or the opportunity of honoring Him. At such times, he is apt to imagine that others, as well as himself, must be thinking of his Beloved: and the same state of mind often incapacitates him from perceiving the evidences of the Lord's love to him, or the grounds of his own consolation. Thus he is led to weep, when he should rejoice: but mourners of this character shall be comforted; angels rejoice over them, and are ready to minister to their comfort; Jesus will 'manifest Himself to them, as He doth not unto the world;' and in this manner the most disconsolate penitents, and the chief of sinners, become the messengers of peace and comfort to others.—

Our Redeemer, in his exaltation, deigns to call his disciples brethren, notwithstanding their falls and ingratitude! and when we consider how low He stooped, how much He suffered, in order to form the relation and to fulfil the part of a Brother to sinful worms; we shall not hesitate to expect the greatest honor from Him. He has 'ascended to his Father and our Father, to his God and our God;' and there He continually manages our concerns, with perfect love and faithfulness: yet when we assemble in his name, especially on his holy day, He will meet with us and speak peace to us; (Matt. 18: 19, 20. 28: 19, 20.) He will assure us of his forgiveness; counterbalance our sorrows and alarms from foes; and communicate his Spirit, according as our services or difficulties require his special assistance and support. SCOTT.

Verse 22.

Receive ye the Holy Ghost. It does not appear, that the apostles, on any occasion, used these words. Peter and John prayed for the disciples in Samaria, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. 'Then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 8: 15, 17.) The language of authority, used by our Lord on this occasion, seems exclusively appropriate to the great Head of the church, and marks the immense disparity between Him and his most eminent servants.

Breathed. 'All the best commentators are agreed in considering this as no other than a *symbolical action*. 'Of this mode of teaching by actions, we have examples both in the Old and New Testament. See Jer. 27. Ia. 20: 3. Matt. 27: 21. John 13.' ROSENF. That the very Gentiles thought some inspiration necessary to produce any remarkable genius or virtue, is certain. So Aeschines, &c.' BLOOMF.

Verse 23.

Most theologians recognise in these words a concession, not only to the disciples and apostles, but to all succeeding teachers of the church, as a power to remit sins. They are not, however, agreed, whether this remission of sins be declarative only, or also *exhibitive*. But remission of sins, properly so called, does not seem to be the subject here. The word 'remit' is to be explained *declaratively*, as many other verbs of that kind. 2dly. In the formula 'to remit sins,' the part is put for the whole, i. e. remission of sins for the whole of the salvation obtained by Christ, which is frequently done in Scripture, especially

in the discourses of Christ, and in those sayings in which He expresses any thing only negatively, where the offence is also to be understood. Therefore to remit sins, *here*, denotes to declare that pardon of sins, and salvation in general, will be granted to all those who seek it by the appointed means, and observe the stipulated conditions. This interpretation is confirmed by the parallel passage in Luke 24: 47. *wee, I ratify the promise of my Father made to you.* For our Lord promised, on the Father's part, the Holy Spirit and his gifts. These gifts He, in the subsequent passage, calls the power from on high, for which they were to wait at Jerusalem. Moreover, what in John our Lord has said in the words, *as the Father hath sent me, so I send you*, He has expressed in Luke by, *Ye are witnesses of these things.* Finally, what in John is signified by *whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them*, is in Luke thus expressed: *Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.* For in these words our Lord laid open the divine counsels concerning the Messiah. The present passage may also be illustrated by a remarkable one in Matt. 16: 18 and 19, where Peter is promised the power and authority of bringing others to the Christian society: and this power bestowed here, and in Matt. 18: 18, on the other disciples, namely, that of preaching, or remission of sins by his authy, is in this passage called the power of remitting or not remitting sin.

Tittman, in 11-40 and 41, 42, 43.

24 ¶ But 'Thom., one of the twelve, called Didymus, 'was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, 'We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, 'Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

11:16, 14:5, 21:2, Matt. 10:3, 6:68, 57, Matt. 18:20, Heb. 10:25, 14:20, 141, 21:7, Mark 16:11, Luke 24:34-40, Acts 5:30-32, 10:40, 1, Cor. 15:5-8, 7:29, 5:30, Job 9:16, Ps. 78:11-22, 93:9-10, 108:21-24, Matt. 18:1-4, 27:42, Luke 24:25, 39-41, Heb. 8:12, 18, 19, 4:1, 2, 10:38, 39.

on his throne; nay, equal with that given to the Mediator Himself for his work. He had an incontestable authority, and an irresistible ability, for his work; so had they for theirs. Or thus, *As the Father hath sent Me*, is, as it were, the recital of his power; by virtue of the authority given Him as Mediator, He gave authority to them, to act in his name, with the children of men; so that they who received them, or rejected them, received or rejected Him, and Him that sent Him, ch. 13: 20.

He breathed on them; (p. 22.) not only to show them by this breath of life, that He Himself was alive, but to signify the spiritual life and power they should receive from Him. Probably, He breathed on them all together, not on each severally; and though Thomas was not with them, the Spirit of the Lord knew where to find him, Numb. 11: 26. Christ here seems to refer to the creation of man, by the breathing of the breath of life into him, (Gen. 2: 7.) and to intimate that He was the Author of that work, and that the spiritual life and strength of ministers and Christians are derived from and depend upon Him, as much as the natural life of Adam and his seed. As the breath of the Almighty gave life to man and began the old world, so the breath of the Savior gave life to his ministers, and began a new world, Job 33: 4. This intimates, that the Spirit is the breath of Christ, proceeding from the Son. The Spirit, in the Old Testament, is compared to breath; (Ezek. 37: 9.) Come, O breath; but the New Testament tells us, it is Christ's breath. The breath of God is put for the power of his wrath, (Isa. 11: 4. 30: 33.) but the breath of Christ signifies the power of his grace; the breathing of threatenings is changed into the breathings of love by Christ. Our words are uttered by our breath, so the Word of Christ is spirit and life. The Word comes from the Spirit, and the Spirit comes with the Word. The Spirit is the gift of Christ. The apostles communicated the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, those hands being first lifted up in prayer, for they must beg his blessing; but Christ conferred the Holy Ghost by breathing, for He is the Author of the gift; Moses could not give his Spirit, (God did it; Numb. 11: 17.) but Christ did it Himself.

'Receive ye the Holy Ghost, in part, as an earnest of what you shall further receive not many days hence.' They now received more of the Holy Ghost than they had yet received. Spiritual blessings are given gradually; to him that has shall be given. Now that Jesus began to be glorified, more of the Spirit began to be given; see ch. 7: 39.

Christ hereby gives them assurance of the Spirit's aid in their work; in the execution of the commission given them; 'I send you, and you shall have the Spirit to go with you.' The Spirit of the Lord rested upon them, to qualify them for the services that lay before them. Whom Christ employs, He will furnish with all needful powers.

He gives them experience of the Spirit's influences. He had showed them his hands and his side, to convince them of his resurrection; but the plainest evidences will not work faith; witness the infidelity of the soldiers, the only eye-witnesses of the resurrection. 'Receive the Holy Ghost to work faith in you, and to open your understandings.' They were now in danger of the Jews; 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost, to work courage in you.' What Christ said to them, He says to all believers, Eph. 1: 13. What Christ gives we must receive; submit our whole souls to the influences of the Spirit; receive his powers, and use them; they who obey his Word as a precept, shall have the benefit of it as a promise; they shall receive the Holy Ghost, as the guide of their way, and the earnest of their inheritance. See

One particular branch of the power given them by their commission; 'Whosoever sins ye remit, in the execution of the powers intrusted, they are remitted to them. And whosoever sins ye pronounce unpardoned, they are retained.' This follows their receiving the Holy Ghost; for if they had not a spirit of discerning, they had not been fit to be intrusted with such authority; for this is a special commission to the apostles, and the first preachers of the Gospel, who could distinguish who were in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and who were not. By virtue of this power, Peter struck Ananias and Sapphira dead, and Paul struck Elymas blind. It must be understood as a general charter to the church and her ministers, not securing infallibility to any man, or men, but encouraging the stewards

of the mysteries of God to stand to the Gospel they were sent to preach, for that God Himself will vindicate it. The apostles, in preaching remission, must begin at Jerusalem though she had lately brought upon herself the guilt of Christ's blood. Peter did so, Acts 2: 38, 3: 19. Christ, being risen for our justification, sends his heralds to proclaim the jubilee, the act of indemnity; and by this rule men shall be judged, ch. 12: 48. Rom. 2: 16, James 2: 12. God will never alter this rule of judgment, nor vary from it; those whom the Gospel acquits, shall be acquitted, and those whom that condemns, shall be condemned; which puts immense honor on the ministry, and should give immense courage to ministers.

Two ways the apostles and ministers of Christ remit and retain sin. 1. By sound doctrine. They are commissioned to tell the world, that salvation is to be had upon gospel-terms, and no other; and they will find God will say Amen to it. 2. By a strict discipline, applying the general rule of the Gospel to particular persons. 'Whom you admit into communion, according to the rules of the Gospel, God will admit into communion with Himself; and whom you cast out, as impenitent and obstinate in scandalous and infectious sins, shall be bound over to the judgment of God.'

Thomas is said to be one of the twelve apostles, who, though now eleven, had been twelve, and were to be so again. They were but eleven; one was missing; Christ's disciples will never be all together till the great day. Perhaps it was Thomas' unhappiness that he was absent; he was not well, or had not notice; or perhaps it was his sin; either he was diverted by business or company, which he preferred before this opportunity, or he durst not come for fear of the Jews; and called that prudence and caution, which was his cowardice. However, he missed the satisfaction of seeing his Master risen, and of sharing the disciples' joy. Note, Those know not what they lose, who carelessly absent themselves from solemn assemblies.

The other disciples, the next time they saw him, no doubt, related with joy all that had passed. Though Thomas was then from them, he was not long from them; absenters must not be condemned as apostates; Thomas is not Judas.

With what exultation and triumph they speak it: 'We have seen the Lord.' This they said to upbraid him with his absence; or rather, to inform him; 'We have seen the Lord, and wish thou hadst seen Him too, to satisfy thee.' Note, Disciples should endeavor to build up one another in their most holy faith, both by repeating what they have heard, to those that were absent; as also by communicating what they have experienced. They that by faith have seen the Lord, should tell others what God hath done for their souls; only let boasting be excluded.

Thomas objects; 'Tell me not you have seen the Lord alive, you are too credulous; except I shall not only see in his hand the print of the nails, but put my finger into it, and thrust my hand into the wound in his side, I am resolved I will not believe.' Some, by comparing this with what he said, (ch. 11: 16, 14: 5.) conjecture him to have been of a rough, morose temper, apt to speak peevishly; for all good people are not alike happy in their temper; however, there was certainly much amiss in this.

He had either not heeded, or not duly regarded, what Christ had often said, according to the Old Testament, that He would rise again the third day; he ought to have said, He is risen, though he had not seen Him, nor spoken with any that had.

He did not pay just deference to the testimony of his fellow-disciples, who were men of wisdom and integrity, and ought to be credited. He knew them to be honest men; they all concurred in the testimony with great assurance; yet he cannot persuade himself that their record is true. Christ had chosen them to be his witnesses of this thing to all nations; yet Thomas will not allow them to be competent witnesses

26 And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them. Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, ^bPeace be unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, ^cReach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: ^dand be not faithless, but believing.

^a 19. Matt. 17:1. Luke 9:28.

^b 24.

^c 1. Is. 26:12. 27:5. 54:10.

^d 25. Fr. 78:38. 103:13, 14. Rom. 5:2.

1 Tim. 1:14-15. John 14:2.

^e Matt. 17:17. Mark 9:19. Luke 9:41.

nor trust them further than he can see them. He did not, however, question their veracity, but their prudence; he feared they were too credulous.

He tempted Christ, and limited the *Holy One of Israel*, when he would be convinced by his own method. He could not be sure that the print of the nails would admit his finger, or the wound in his side his hand; nor was it fit to deal so roughly with a living body; yet Thomas ties up his faith to this evidence; he will be humored, or he will not believe; see Matt. 16:1. 27:42.

The open avowal of this in the presence of the disciples, was an offence and discouragement; not only a sin, but a scandal. As one coward makes many, so does one unbeliever, one sceptic, making his brethren's heart to faint like his heart, Deut. 20:8. Had he only thought this evil, and then laid his hand upon his mouth, to suppress it, his error had remained with himself; but his proclaiming his infidelity so prominently might be of ill consequence to the rest, who were as yet but weak and wavering.

V. 26-31. Christ repeated his visit to his disciples, after eight days; which must therefore be, as that was, the first day of the week.

He deferred his next appearance, to show his disciples that He was not risen to such a life as He had formerly lived, to converse constantly with them but belonged to another world. Where Christ was during these eight days, is folly to inquire, and presumption to determine. In the beginning of his ministry He had been forty days unseen, tempted by the evil spirit, Matt. 4:1, 2. Now, in the beginning of his glory, He was forty days, for the most part unseen, attended, no doubt, by good spirits.

He deferred it seven days, 1. To rebuke Thomas for his incredulity; he had neglected the former meeting; and to teach him to prize those seasons better, he cannot have such another opportunity for several days. A melancholy week, we have reason to think, he had, while the other disciples were full of joy.

2. To try the faith and patience of the rest. Thus He would gradually wean them from his bodily presence.

3. To honor the first day of the week, and plainly intimate his will, that it should be observed as the Christian Sabbath. That one day in seven should be religiously observed, from the beginning, was an appointment as at first; and that in the kingdom of the Messiah, the first day of the week should be the day; this was indication enough, that Christ once and

again met his disciples in religious assembly on that day; and it is highly probable, that in his former appearance He appointed them that day seven-night to be together again, and also appeared to them every first day of the week, beside other times, during the forty days. The religious observance of that day has been from thence transmitted through every age of the church. It is the day the Lord has made.

Christ made them this visit at Jerusalem for the doors were shut now, as before, for fear of the Jews. There they staid, to keep the feast of unleavened bread seven days, which expired the day before; yet they would not set out on their journey to Galilee on the first day of the week, because it was the Christ's Sabbath.

Thomas was with them this time. When we have lost one opportunity, we should lay hold on the next. It is a good sign if such a loss whet our desires, and a bad sign if it cool them. The disciples did not insist on his believing the resurrection of Christ, as they did, because as yet it was but darkly revealed; they did not receive him to doubtful disputation, but bid him welcome to come and see. Observe, Christ did not appear to Thomas, for his satisfaction, till He found him in society with the disciples, because He would countenance the meetings of Christians and ministers. Besides, He would have all the disciples witness the rebuke He gave Thomas, and yet, withal, his tender care of him.

Christ stood in the midst, and they all knew Him, for He showed Himself as before. See the condescension of our Lord! The gates of heaven were open, and there He might have been in the midst of the adoration of a world of angels; yet, for the benefit of his church, He lingered on earth, and visited the little private meeting of his poor disciples, and is in the midst of them.

He saluted them in a friendly manner, as before, Peace be unto you. This was no vain repetition, but significant of abundant and assured peace; and of the continuance of his blessings

Verses 27-30.

Be not faithless, but believing. 'Become not an unbeliever, but a believer.' 'Renounce not thy former professed faith in Me: but be established in faith.' 'Not seeing, yet believing.' The indefinite tenses are used; and all, in every age, who have believed, do, or shall believe, in an unseen Savior, are blessed. Our version seems to limit it to the past; 'have believed.' It may here be proper to add

A COMPREHENSIVE VIEW of the evidence, which we, after so many ages, possess of our Lord's resurrection; for this is the grand external demonstration of the truth of Christianity. — Almost all human affairs are conducted in man's testimony; in the great concerns of life and death, the concurring evidence of two or three persons of good character, and competent information, is deemed sufficient proof of any fact, in its own nature credible; especially if it be clear, that they derive no advantage from their testimony. The resurrection of Christ, as connected with the authority of Revelation, and the glory of God in the salvation of multitudes of immortal souls, was an event in itself perfectly credible; as sufficient reasons may be assigned, for the interposition of almighty power to effect it. (Acts 26: 4-8.) To prepare the way for the testimony to be given of this event, it was expressly foretold by the prophets (Ps. 16: 8-11. 22: 22-31. Is. 53: 9-12. Luke 24: 44-49. Acts 2: 25-32. 13: 24-27.) and even the enemies of our Lord knew, that He had clearly predicted it, and the very time when it would take place. (Matt. 27: 62-66.) Accordingly, on the day prefixed, the body was gone, after all the precautions taken to secure it: and, though their authority and reputation were at stake; though they could give no rational account what was become of it; and though they had the whole authority in their hands; they never ventured to bring, either the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre, or the apostles who were said to have stolen the body, to trial; — rather to sit down under the imputation of murder, perjury, and wickedness, than excite further inquiry. The eleven apostles were a sufficient number of witnesses; they were men of plain sense and irreproachable character; had been constant attendants on Jesus during some years; and unanimously testified, that they repeatedly saw Him, conversed, ate, and drank with Him, after his resurrection; that they examined the wounds in his hands and side; and at length they beheld Him ascend towards heaven, till a cloud intercepted their view. In this testimony they persisted with one voice; and nothing induced one of them to vary from it. In the smallest particular. They had evidently no previous expectation of the resurrection of their Lord; and notwithstanding the miracles they had witnessed, were remarkably incredulous. They were also exceedingly intimidated by his crucifixion; and could have no possible temporal motive, to invent and propagate a report of his resurrection; for labor, poverty, reproach, imprisonment, and death alone could be expected, as their recompense, for embracing the cause of one who had been crucified as a deceiver. In every thing else, they appeared to be most simple, upright, pious men; and if in this they falsified, they must have been the most wicked and artful persons who ever existed, and that without any prospect of advantage. For they spent all the rest of their lives in propagating the religion of Jesus as risen from the dead;

renouncing worldly interest; facing opposition and persecution; enduring all hardship; prepared at all times to seal their testimony with their blood; and most of them actually suffering martyrdom, confirming their testimony with their latest breath, and leaving it in their writings to posterity. Moreover, there were other competent witnesses, to the number of five hundred persons, who saw Jesus after his resurrection. (1 Cor. 15: 3-11. v. 6.) These also concurred in the testimony to their latest breath; and neither terror, hope, nor any other motive, ever induced one of them to contradict or dissent from the testimony of the others. Were we to suppose, we could scarcely conceive of a more complete human testimony to any matter of fact. Yet perhaps some may think, that if Jesus had openly appeared, after his resurrection, to the Jewish nation and rulers, it might have put the matter beyond all doubt; but it should be considered, that if this measure had been adopted, and the rulers had persisted in rejecting Him, as they certainly would, if their hearts had remained unchanged; (Luke 16: 27-31.) the Gospel would have had still greater disadvantages to encounter, both among the other Jews, and the Gentiles. On the other hand, if the whole Jewish nation and their rulers had received Jesus as the Messiah, when the Gospel had been sent among the Gentiles, it would have appeared as a plan formed for aggrandizing that nation, and as such would probably have been disregarded; and after all, they who lived in after ages could have no further proof of this public appearance, than the testimony of those individuals who recorded it. In short, if our Lord was not to give ocular demonstration of this resurrection to every man, in every age; (which would have been impossible) the number of competent witnesses was sufficient, and even preferable to a greater multitude. — But God Himself was pleased to bear witness with the apostles, conferring on them the gifts of tongues, and of working miracles, by the Holy Spirit; and enabling them to impart the truth to others, by laying on of the hands. (15: 26, 27. Acts 13: 24. Heb. 2: 1-4. v. 4.) Thus the number of unexceptionable witnesses was increased, the testimony to our Lord's resurrection diffused on every side, and his enemies could not deny, that most extraordinary miracles were performed by those who attested that event. (Acts 4: 13-22. v. 16.) In this manner, the number of the disciples of Jesus was speedily multiplied, by tens of thousands, from among those who had demanded his crucifixion; and Christianity got ground rapidly on every side, in opposition to wealth, power, learning, superstition, and philosophy; and by unarmed, unlearned, poor, and despised instruments; till at length whole nations embraced the religion of the crucified Nazarene, as the prophets had expressly foretold. (Jer. 16: 19-21. Ezr. 9: 11, 12. Zech. 8: 20-23.) This effect, which could be ascribed to no power but that of God, and the continuance of so humbling and holy a religion to this day, form a demonstration even to us of this important fact: nor has any event since the beginning of the world ever been proved, with such complicated and abundant evidence. St. Paul's conversion, and the prophecies contained in the writings of those who testified our Lord's resurrection, and which have been accomplishing for almost eighteen hundred years, may be considered as additional, complete, divine attestations. (1st

9: 31. 2 Thes. 2: 3-12. 1 Tim. 4: 1-5.)

NOTE.

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, 'My Lord and my God'

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: 'blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.'

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book.

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

16:31. 9:35-38. Pa. 45:6-11, 102: 24-28. 118:24-28. Is. 7:14. 9:5. 29:10. 40:9-11. Jer. 23:5-6. Mal. 3:1. Mat. 14:33. Luke 24:52. Acts 7:59-60. 1 Tim. 3:16. Rev. 5:9-14. R. 4:48. Luke 1:45. 2 Cor. 5:7. Heb. 11:1, 28. 1 Pet. 1:3. 2:123. Luke 1:34. Rom. 15:4. 1 Cor. 10:11. 2 Tim. 3:15-17. 2 Pet. 3:12. 1 John 1:3, 5:13. 9:2. 14:9. 6:69, 70. 8:38. Pa. 2:7, 12. Mat. 16:10. 27:54. Acts 8:37. 9:20. Rom. 1:34. 1 John 4:15. 5:1, 10, 20. 2 John 1:3. Rev. 2:18. 3:15, 16, 18, 38. 5:24, 39, 40. 6:40. Mark 16:16. 1 Pet. 1:9. 1 John 2:23-28. 5:10-13. 1. L. 24:47. Acts 3:16. 10:43. 13:38, 39.

for, if we are faithless, we are Christless and graceless, hopeless and joyless; as we therefore say, *Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.*

Thomas, now ashamed of his incredulity, cries out, *My Lord and my God.* It would seem, he did not put his finger into the print of the nails; for Christ says, (v. 29.) *Thou hast seen and believed;* seeing sufficed. Faith comes off conqueror, after a struggle with unbelief.

Thomas is now fully satisfied of the truth of Christ's resurrection. His willingness to believe may help to strengthen our faith; for hereby it appears that the witnesses of Christ's resurrection, who pawned their lives upon it, were not credulous men, but cautious, suspending their belief till they saw the utmost evidence they could desire.

He believed Him to be Lord and God, and we are to believe Him so. 1. We must believe his Deity—that He is God; not a man made God, but God made man, as this evangelist had laid down at first, ch. 1: 1. The Author and Head of our religion has the wisdom, power, sovereignty, and unchangeableness of God; because He was to be not only the Founder, but the Foundation of it, and the Fountain of life for its supply. 2. His mediation—He is Lord, the one Lord, 1 Cor. 8: 6. 1 Tim. 2: 5. He is sufficiently authorized, as Plenipotentiary, to settle the great concerns between God and man; see Acts 2: 36. Rom. 14: 9.

He consented to Him as his Lord and his God. In faith there must be the consent of the will to gospel-terms, as well as the assent of the understanding to gospel-truths. We must accept of Christ to be that to us, which the Father hath appointed Him. *My Lord* refers to *Adonai*—my foundation and stay; *My God*, to *Elohim*—my prince and judge. God having constituted Him the Umpire, we must approve the choice, and entirely refer ourselves to Him. This is the vital act of faith, Cant. 2: 16.

He made profession of this, before the witnesses of his unbelief. He says *to* Christ, and, to complete the sense, we must read it, *Thou art my Lord and my God;* or, speaking to his brethren, *This is my Lord and my God.* Do we accept of Christ as our Lord God? We must tell Him so, as David, (Ps. 16: 2.) tell others so, as those that triumph in our relation to Christ; *This*

upon his people, for they fail not, but are new every morning; new, every meeting.

Only that which passed between Christ and Thomas at this meeting is recorded.

Christ singled him out from the rest; '*Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and satisfy thy curiosity about the print of the nails; reach hither thy hand, and if nothing less will convince thee, thrust it into my side.*'

An implicit rebuke of his incredulity, is in the plain reference to what Thomas had said, answering it word for word, for he had heard it, though unseen. Note, There is not an unbelieving word in our tongues, nor thought in our minds, at any time, but it is known to the Lord Jesus, Ps. 78: 21.

An express condescension to his weakness, appears in two things. 1. That He suffers his wisdom to be prescribed to. Great spirits will not be dictated to by their inferiors, especially in acts of grace; Christ is pleased to accommodate Himself even to Thomas' fancy in a needless thing, rather than leave him in his unbelief. He will not break the bruised reed, but, as a good shepherd, gathers that which was driven away, Ezek. 34: 16. We ought thus to bear the infirmities of the weak, Rom. 15: 1, 2. 2. He allows Thomas even to thrust his hand into his side, if then he would believe. Thus, for the confirmation of our faith, He hath instituted an ordinance to keep his death in remembrance, though an ignominious death; yet, because such an evidence of his love would encourage our faith, He appoints the memorial of it. *Reach hither thy hand to Him, who reacheth forth his helping, inviting, giving hand to thee.*

It is an affecting word with which Christ closes what He had to say to Thomas, *Be not faithless but believing; do not thou become an unbeliever;* as if he should have been sealed up under unbelief, had he not yielded now. This warning is given to us all, *Be not faithless;* we are Christless and graceless, hopeless and joyless; as we therefore say, *Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.*

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is my Beloved. Thomas speaks with ardent affection, as one that took hold of Christ with all his might. See

The judgment of Christ on the whole; '*Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed, and it is well thou art brought to it at last on any terms; but blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.*'

1. Christ owns Thomas a believer. Sound and sincere believers, though slow and weak, shall be graciously accepted. They who have long resisted, if at last they yield, shall find Him ready to forgive. No sooner does He consent to Christ, than Christ gives Him the comfort of it, and lets him know that he believes.

2. He upbraids him with his former incredulity. He might well be ashamed to think, (1.) That he had been so backward to believe. They that in sincerity have closed with Christ, see great reason to lament that they did not do it sooner. (2.) That it was not without much pains, that he was brought to believe at last; 'If thou hadst not seen Me alive, thou wouldest not have believed;' but if no evidence must be admitted, but that of our own senses, and we must believe nothing but what we ourselves are eye-witnesses of, farewell commerce and conversation. If this must be the only method of proof, how must the world be converted to the faith of Christ? He is therefore justly blamed for laying so much stress upon this.

3. He commends the faith of those who believe on easier terms. Thomas, as a believer, was blessed; but rather blessed are they that have not seen. It is not meant of not seeing the objects of faith, (for those are invisible Heb. 11: 1. 2 Cor. 4: 18.) but the motives of faith—Christ's miracles, and especially his resurrection. This may look, either backward, upon the Old-Testament saints, who had not seen the things which they saw, and yet believed the promise; or forward, upon the Gentiles, who had never seen Christ in the flesh, as the Jews had. This faith, (1.) Evidences a better temper of mind in those that believe. Not to see, and yet to believe, argues greater industry in searching after truth, greater ingenuousness in embracing it. He that believes upon that sight, has his resistance conquered by a sort of violence; but he that believes without that, like the Bereans, is more noble. (2.) It is a greater instance of the power of grace. The less sensible the evidence, the more the work of faith appears to be the Lord's doing. Peter is blessed in his faith, because flesh and blood have not revealed it to him, Matt. 16: 17. Flesh and blood contribute more to their faith that see and believe, than to theirs who see not, and yet believe. Lightfoot quotes one of the rabbins, 'One proselyte is more acceptable to God than all the thousands of Israel that stood before Sinai; for they saw, and received the law, but a proselyte sees not, and yet receives it.'

The evangelist assures us that many other things worthy to be recorded occurred, but are not written in the book: many signs. Some refer this to all Jesus did during his whole life, the words He spake, and the wondrous works He did. But it seems rather to be confined to the signs He did after his resurrection, for these were in the presence of the disciples only, which are here spoken of, Acts 10: 41. Divers of his appearances are not recorded, as appears, 1 Cor. 15: 5-7. See Acts 1: 3.

(23.) 'The commendation bestowed on Thomas defends the meaning I attach to this verse. The evidence that he believed was contained in the expression under examination; for, before uttering this expression, he is represented as doubting. On the supposition, then, that the expression was a mere exclamation, what evidence was to the mind of Jesus, or could it be to the minds of others, that he admitted the claims of the Savior of men to the character connected with that office? If it be but an exclamation, what more proof of belief is it, than that men are Christians, when they repeat (from surprise or delight) the name of Christ, by way of exclamation? (Besides, that idiom, if countenanced by some moderns, has no place in the ancient languages, and the words preceding are a sort of form, never introducing exclamation. Bloomfield.) Admitting that the words of Thomas were the proper evidence and expression of the belief the Savior commended, we must admit that He will commend us, for believing that He is both Lord and God.'

Prof. STUART

(29.) 'Divine Wisdom saw it expedient to suffer the apostles to doubt, for the greater confirmation of the faith. And those doubts

were so managed, that no circumstance should be wanting at last to prove his resurrection. Though let into those proofs by degrees, as they were able to bear them, yet it was so artificially, that every fresh instance confirmed, and added something, to those that went before. The empty sepulchre confirmed the women's report; Christ's appearance to Mary Magdalene showed He was alive; that to the disciples at Emmaus proved that it was at least the spirit of Christ, by expounding the prophecies and breaking of bread; that to the eleven showed the reality of his body; the conviction given to Thomas, proved it the self-same body that had been crucified; and that miracle of the fishes, (John 21: 6.) argued the divine nature, still united to the human body. So that though there were many proofs, yet none of them were superfluous. Every one hath something new and peculiarly its own; and all together are a demonstration so full and satisfactory of the same Christ, the same God and man in one person, returned from the dead, that we have great reason to praise God for suffering the disciples to doubt so much and so long.'

Dean STANHOPE

CHAP. XXI.

Jesus appears to some of his disciples, at the sea of Tiberias; makes Himself known by a miraculous draught of fishes; and eats with them, 1-13. He thrice demands of Peter, whether he loves Him; and thrice requires him to show his love, by feeding his lambs and sheep, 15-17. He foretells Peter's martyrdom, commanding him to follow Him, 18, 19; and reproves his curiosity concerning John, who showed his readiness in the same way to follow Him, 20-23. The rash of John's testimony affirmed; and it is stated that Jesus did many miracles besides, even too numerous to be all recorded, 24, 25.

AFTER these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.

2 There were together Simon Peter, and Thomas called Didymus, and Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, and the sons of Zebedee, and two other of his disciples.

a 20:19-29.
b Matt. 26:32. 28:7, 16. Mark 16:7.
c 6:1, 23.
d 20:28.
e 14:5-51.
f 21:11. 4:48. Josh. 19:28. *Kanah.*
g Matt. 4:21, 22.

He instructs us in the design of recording what we find here; (*v.* 31.) 'These accounts are given, in this and the following chapter, that ye might believe, upon these evidences, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.' Some write books for their diversion, and publish them for profit or applause, others to oblige the Athenian humor, others to instruct the world in arts and sciences, for their secular advantage; but the evangelists wrote to bring men to Christ and heaven, and, in order to that, to persuade men to believe; and for this they took the most fitting methods, they brought to the world a *divine revelation*, supported with *due evidences*. It is the duty of those that read and hear the Gospel, to embrace the doctrine of Christ, 1 John 5: 11.

We are here told what the great gospel-truth is—that *Jesus is that Christ, that Son of God*. 1. He is the *Christ*; promised and expected by the Old-Testament saints; and who, according to the signification of the name, is *anointed* of God to be a Prince and a Savior. 2. He is the *Son of God*; not only as Mediator, (for then He had not been greater than Moses, the prophet, intercessor and lawgiver,) but antecedent to his being the Mediator; for if He had not been a divine person, endued with the power, and entitled to the glory, of God, He had not been qualified for the undertaking; either to do the Redeemer's work, or wear the Redeemer's crown.

The great gospel-blessedness which we are to hope for, is, *That believing we shall have life through his name*. This is, 1. To direct our faith to the life, the crown of life, the tree of life, set before us. *Life through Christ's name*, proposed in the covenant made with us in Christ, we must propose to ourselves as the fullness of our joy, and the abundant recompense of our services and sufferings. 2. To encourage our faith. Men will venture far on the prospect of great advantage; and greater advantage cannot be then is offered by the words of *this life*, as the Gospel is called, Acts 5: 20. It includes spiritual life, in conformity to God and communion with Him, and eternal life, in the vision and fruition of Him. Both are *through Christ's name*, by his merit and power, and sure to all believers.

CHAP. XXI. v. 1-14. Let us compare this appearance with those before. In those Christ showed Himself to his disciples when met in a solemn assembly, on a Lord's day, and perhaps expecting his appearing; but in this He showed Himself to some of them on a week-day, when they were fishing, and little thought of it. Christ has many ways of making Himself known to his people, usually in his ordinances, but sometimes by his Spirit He visits them when employed in common business, as the *shepherds* who were *keeping their flock by night*, (Luke 2: 8,) even so *here also*, Gen. 16: 13. This appearance was while they were waiting for that at the mountain of Galilee, (Matt. 28: 16,) that they might not be weary of waiting.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 24-31. Unbelief is the source of almost all our sins and disquietudes. We all have too much copied the example of Thomas' incredulity, by refusing to believe the Word of God, and rely on his help, even when our experience of his care has been abundant; and we are often apt to demand such proof of his truths, and of his will, as we have no right to expect. But He does not deal with us after our iniquities, and therefore 'we are not consumed.' He knows all our difficulties and temptations; He rebukes and obviates the unbelief of those, whose hearts are upright before Him; He will convince them who He is, and what He has done for them; that they

Christ now showed Himself, not to all the twelve, but to seven of them. Nathanael we have not met with since *ch.* 1. But some think he was the same with Bartholomew, one of the twelve. The two not named, are supposed to be Philip of Bethsaida, and Andrew of Capernaum. Observe here,

1. It is good for disciples to be much together; not only in religious assemblies, but in common conversation, and common business. Thus they testify and increase their affection to, and delight in, each other, and edify one another by discourse and example.

2. Christ chose to manifest Himself to them when together; not only to countenance Christian society, but that they might, as joint witnesses, corroborate one another's testimony. On which occasion some observe, that the Roman law required seven witnesses to a testimony.

3. Thomas is named next to Peter, as if he now kept closer to their meetings than ever.

They knew not well what to do with themselves. For my part, says Peter, *I will go a-fishing*; We will go with thee then, say they, for we will keep together. Some think they did *amiss* in returning to the boats and nets they had left; but then Christ would not have countenanced them in it with a visit. It was rather commendable; for they did it, 1. To *redeem time*, and not be idle. They were not yet appointed to preach the resurrection. Their commission was drawing, but not perfected. The hour for action was not come. Probably their Master had directed them to say nothing of his resurrection till after his ascension, not till after the pouring out of the Spirit, and then they were to begin at Jerusalem. It is an instance of humility; though advanced to be sent of Christ, as He was of the Father, they did not take state upon them, but remembered the *rock out of which they were hewn*. It is an instance of their industry. While waiting, they would not be idling. Those who would give an account of their time with joy, should contrive to gather up the fragments of it. 2. To help maintain themselves. While their master was *with them*, those who ministered to Him were kind to them; but now that the *Bridegroom was taken from them* they must *fast* in those days, and therefore their own hands must minister to their necessities. This teaches us with *quietness to work, and eat our own bread*. Observe

Their disappointment in *fishing*. That night they caught nothing, though they *toiled all night*, as Luke 5: 5. See the vanity of this world; the band of the diligent often returns empty. Even good men may come short of desired success. We may be in the way of duty, and yet not prosper. Providence ordered that they should *catch nothing*, that the miraculous draught in the morning might be more *wonderful and acceptable*. In very grievous disappointments God has often very gracious designs.

Christ's body, though a true and real body was raised, as ours will be, a spiritual body, and so was visible only when He Himself was pleased to make it so; or, rather, came and removed so quickly, that it was *here or there in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye*.

Christ's time of making Himself known to his people, is, when they are *most at a loss*, *v.* 4. When they think they have *lost themselves*, He will let them know they have *not lost Him*. Weeping may endure for a night; but joy comes, if Christ comes, in the morning. Some of the ancients put this significance upon it, that Christ, having finished his work, was got through a stormy sea to a safe shore, where He

may trust, love, and obey Him as 'their Lord and their God.' We have not indeed that kind of ocular proof, with which Thomas was favored, and which infidels still demand; yet we are equally within the reach of the blessing. We have abundant evidence of the Redeemer's resurrection and glory: some of us, like Thomas, have withheld our credence, till we could no longer 'be faithless,' but were constrained to believe; and these things were written for the benefit of every reaver, 'that he may believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing he may have life through his name.'

SCOTT

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, ^b I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; ^c and that night they caught nothing.

4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore; ^d but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus saith unto them, *Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, ^e Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. ^f They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for ^g the multitude of fishes.

7 Therefore ^h that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, ⁱ It is the Lord. Now ^j when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat ^k unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea.

8 And the other disciples came in a little ship, (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred ^l cubits,) dragging the net with fishes.

^b 2 Kings 6:1-7. Matt. 4:18-20. Luke 5:10, 11. Acts 1:3, 40-34. 1 Cor. 9:6. 1 Thes. 2:9. 2 Thes. 3:7-9.

^c Luke 5:5. 1 Cor. 3:7. Mark 16:12. Luke 24:15, 16, 31.

^d Or, *Serv.* 1 John 2:13, 18. Gr. 1 Ps. 37:3. Luke 24:41-43. Phil. 4:11-13. Heb. 13:5.

^e Matt. 17:27. Luke 24:4-6. ^f 35. Ps. 8:8. Heb. 2:6-9.

^g Acts 2:41, 44. 20:24, 13:23. 19:26, 20:2. 20:21, 23. Ps. 118:23. Mark 11:3.

^h Luke 2:11. Acts 2:36, 10:35. 1 Cor. 15:47. Jam. 2:1.

ⁱ Cant. 8:7. Matt. 14:28, 29. Luke 7:47. 2 Cor. 5:14. ^j Dent. 3:11.

The draught of fishes may be considered, 1. As a miracle designed to prove that Christ was raised in power, though *seen in weakness*; and that all things were put under his feet, the fishes of the sea not excepted. Christ manifests Himself to his people by doing that for them which none else can do, and things which they looked not for.

2. As a mercy for the reasonable supply of their necessities. When ingenuity and industry failed them, the power of Christ came for their relief; for He would take care that they, who had left all for Him, should not want any good thing.

3. As the memorial of a former mercy, with which Christ had recompensed Peter for the loan of his boat, Luke 5: 4, &c. This miracle nearly resembled, and could not but remind Peter of that, which helped him to improve this; for both affected him much, as meeting him in his own element. Latter favors are designed to bring to mind former, that eaten bread may not be forgotten.

stood in triumph; but the disciples, having their work before them, were yet at sea. It is a comfort, when our passage is rough and stormy, that our Master is at shore, and we are hastening to Him.

He shewed Himself gradually. Little expecting to see Him there, and not looking intently upon Him, they took Him for some common person waiting the arrival of their boat. Note, Christ is often nearer us than we think He is, as we find afterward, to our comfort.

He showed Himself to them by an instance of pity. He called to them, *Children*; *Lads*, have ye any meat? Have ye caught any fish? The compellation is very familiar; He speaks with the care and tenderness of a father. Though now entered on his exalted state, He spake with as much affection as ever. They were not children in age, but his children, which God had given Him. The question is very kind; *Have ye any meat?* That, if not, He may take care for their supply. Note, *The Lord is for the body*, 1 Cor. 6: 13. Christ takes cognizance of the temporal wants of his people, and has promised not only grace sufficient, but food convenient, *Verily they shall be fed*, Ps. 37: 3. Christ looks into the cottages of the poor, and asks, *Children, have ye any meat?* Thereby inviting them to open their case before Him, and by the prayer of faith to make their requests known; and then let them be careful for nothing; for Christ takes care of them, and for them. Christ here sets us an example of concern for our brethren; there are many poor householders disabled for labor, or disappointed in it, whom the rich should inquire after thus, *Have ye any meat?* For the most necessitous are commonly the least clamorous.

To this the disciples gave a short answer, and, some think, with an air of discontent and peevishness. They said, *No*; not giving Him such a friendly and respectful title as He had given them. So short do the best come in their returns of love to Jesus. Christ puts the question to them, not because He did not know their wants; but He would know them from them. They that would have supplies from Christ, must own themselves empty and needy.

He showed Himself to them by an instance of his power; this perfected the discovery. *Cast the net, and you shall find.* He from whom nothing is hid, not the inhabitants under the waters, (Job 26: 5.) knew on what side of the ship the shoal of fishes was. Note, Divine Providence extends itself to things minute and contingent; and they are happy that know how to take hints thence in their affairs, and acknowledge it in all their ways.

They are willing to be advised by any but y, and did not bid this supposed stranger n to meddle, but took his counsel; in being thus observant of strangers, they were obedient to their Master unawares. It sped wonderfully well. Note, The humble, diligent and patient, sometimes live to see their affairs take a happy turn, after many struggles and fruitless attempts. There is nothing lost by observing Christ's orders; the rule of the Word, the guidance of the Spirit, and the intimations of Providence; for that is casting the net on the right side of the ship.

4. As a mystery significant of that work in which Christ was now sending them forth. The prophets had been fishing for souls, and caught very little; but the apostles, who let down the net at Christ's word, had wonderful success. Many were the children of the desolate, Gal. 4: 27. They themselves, in pursuance of their mission, when first made fishers of men, had comparatively small success. When, soon after this, three thousand were converted in one day, then the net was cast on the right side of the ship. It encourages Christ's ministers to continue their diligence in their work. One happy draught, at length, may repay many years' toil at the gospel-net.

John was the most intelligent and quick-sighted. He whom Jesus loved, first said, *It is the Lord*; for those whom Christ loves He will in a special manner manifest Himself to; his secret is with his favorites. John had adhered more closely to his Master in his sufferings; and therefore has a clearer eye and a more discerning judgment. John communicated his knowledge to those with him; for this dispensation of the Spirit is given to every one, to profit withal. They that know Christ themselves should endeavor to bring others acquainted with Him. John tells Peter particularly knowing he would be glad to see Him above any of them.

Peter was the most zealous and warm-hearted; for as soon as he heard it was the Lord, the ship could not hold him, nor could he stay the bringing of it to shore, but into the sea he throws himself, that he might come first to Christ.

He showed his respect to Christ by girding his fisher's coat about him, that he might appear before his Master in the best clothes he had, and not rudely rush into his presence, stripped as he was, because the work he was about was toilsome. Perhaps this fisher's coat was of leather, or oil-cloth, and would keep out wet.

When Peter walked upon the water to Christ, (Matt. 14: 23, 29.) it was said, *He came down out of the ship* deliberately; but here it is said, *He cast himself into the sea*; sink or swim, he would show his aim to be with Jesus. 'If Christ suffer me to drown, and come short of Him, it is but what I deserve for denying Him.' Peter had had much forgiven, and made it appear he loved much, by his willingness to run hazards, and undergo hardships. They that have been with Jesus, will be willing to swim through a stormy sea, a sea of blood, to come to Him. And it is a laudable contention among Christ's disciples, to strive who shall be first with Him.

The rest of the disciples were careful and honest-hearted. Though not so zealous as to throw themselves into the sea, they made the best of their way in the boat to the shore; came slowly, yet they came to Christ.

How variously God dispenses his gifts. Some excel, as Peter and John; are very eminent in gifts and graces, and thereby distinguished; others are but ordinary disciples, mind their duty, and are faithful to Him, but do nothing to make themselves remarkable; yet both, the eminent and the obscure, shall sit together with Christ in glory; and perhaps the last shall be first. Of those that excel, some, like John, are eminently contemplative, have great gifts of knowledge, and serve the church with that; others, like Peter, eminently active and courageous, do exploits, and are thus very serviceable to their generation. Some are useful as the church's eyes, others as the church's hands, and all for the good of the body.

What a great difference there may be between good people in the way of honoring Christ, and yet both accepted of Him. Some serve Christ more in acts of devotion, and extraordinary expressions of religious zeal; and they do well, to

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Verse 7. Fishes s coat.] 'A somewhat short, linen garment worn by the common people over the interior tunic.' Lampe. Naked.] 'Among the Jews, [and Greeks,] they were said to be naked, who had only an under garment [or garments] on.' Compare 1 Sam. 19: 24. 2 Sam. 6: 20. Isa. 20: 2, 3 and Acts 19: 16.' Doddridge.

NOTES. Chap. XXI. v. 3. All night.] Aristotle tells us that the night is the most favorable time for fishing.

Children.] 'A term of affectionate address, used especially by superiors or elderly persons.'

Verse 5. Lampes.] 'A term of affectionate address, used especially by superiors or elderly persons.'

Bloomfield.]

9 As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread.

10 Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three; and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

12 Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord.

13 Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

[Practical Observations.]

1st ver. 9, 5, 6. Matt. 4:11. Mark 8:3. Luke 12:29-31.
 2^d Luke 5:8-8. Acts 2:41
 3^d 4:27. 16:19. Gen. 32:29, 30. Mark 9:32. Luke 9:45.
 4th Luke 24:42-43. Acts 10:41.
 5th 90:19, 26.

He called for some of that which they had caught; not as if He needed it, but He would have them eat the labor of their hands, Ps. 128: 2. What is got by God's blessing on our industry and labor, if without God give us power to eat of it, and enjoy good in our labor, hath a peculiar sweetness. It is said of the slothful man, he cannot find in his heart to dress what he has been at the pains to take, Prov. 12: 27. Christ would hereby teach us to use what we have.—He would have them taste the gifts of his bounty, that they might be witnesses both of his power and of his goodness. He would give a specimen of the spiritual entertainment He has for all believers, which, in this respect, is most free and familiar—that He sups with them, and they with Him; their graces are pleasing to Him, and his comforts are so to them; what He works in them He accepts from them, Ministers, who are *fishers of men*, must bring all they catch to their Master, for on Him their success depends.

They were not able to draw the net to shore, for the multitude of fishes; that is, they found it difficult, it was more than they could well do; but He that bade them bring it to shore, made it easy. If He that helped us catch them, when, without his help, we should have caught nothing, do not help us to draw them to land, by building them up in their most holy faith, we shall lose them at last, 1 Cor. 3: 7.

Peter, in the former instance, (v. 7.) had shown a more zealous affection to his Master than any, so in this He showed a more ready obedience; but all that are faithful, are not alike forward.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 1-14. O Lord is often near us, as to his providential care and spiritual consolations, when we are ready to conclude that he is far off. He does not allow his ministers to 'entangle' themselves with the affairs of this life, or his people to perplex themselves with worldly cares; but He approves of honest industry, and vouchsafes his special presence and blessing to those, who conscientiously attend to present duty.—Our

Verse 12.

Dine, i. e. ancients used to make two principal meals; the first of which is generally called *dinner*, and the latter *supper*, in translating the Greek and Latin writers into English; and I believe, the same method prevails in rendering them into most other modern languages. The first meal was indeed commonly taken much earlier than the dining hours at present. Thus our forefathers used to dine at eleven and sup at five: yet that has not altered the name of the meals.

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Scott.

the Lord they do it. Peter ought not to be censured for casting himself into the sea, but commended for his zeal and the strength of his affection; and so must they be, who, in love to Christ, quit the world, with Mary, to sit at his feet. But others serve Christ more in the affairs of the world: they continue in the ship, drag the net, and bring the fish to shore; and such ought not to be censured as worldly, for they, in their place, are as truly serving Christ as the other. If all the disciples had done as Peter did, what had become of their fish and their nets? And yet had Peter done as they did, we had wanted this instance of holy zeal. Christ was well pleased with both, and so must we be.

There are several ways of bringing Christ's disciples to shore to Him, from off the sea of this world. Some are brought to Him by a violent death, as the martyrs, who threw themselves into the sea for Christ; others are brought to Him by a natural death, dragging the net, which is less terrible; but both meet at length on the safe and quiet shore with Christ.

When they came ashore, He had provision ready for them. When they came to land, wet and cold, weary and hungry, they found a good fire to warm and dry them, and fish and bread.

We need not curiously inquire whence this fire, and fish, and bread came, any more than whence the meal came, which the ravens brought Elijah. He that could multiply the loaves and fishes that were, could make new ones if He pleased, or turn stones into bread, or send his angels to fetch it.

We may be comforted in this instance of Christ's care of his disciples; He knows, and has wherewith to supply, all our needs. He kindly provided for those fishermen, when they came weary from their work; for verily they shall be fed, who trust in the Lord, and do good. It is encouraging to Christ's ministers, whom He hath made *fishers of men*, that they may depend upon Him to provide for them; and if they should miss of encouragement in this world, should be reduced, as Paul was, to hunger and thirst and fastings oft, let them content themselves with what they have here; they have better things in reserve, and shall eat and drink with Christ at his table in his kingdom, Luke 22: 30.

They had the curiosity to count the fishes caught, and perhaps to make a dividend.

Yet was not the net broken. It was said, (Luke 5: 6.) *Their net brake*. Perhaps this was a borrowed net, for they had long since left their own; and if so, Christ would teach us to take as much care of what is borrowed, as of our own. The gospel-net has inclosed multitudes, three thousand in one day, and yet is not broken; it is still as mighty as ever to bring souls to God.

How free Christ was with his disciples; observing them to keep their distance, and that they were afraid to ask Him, *Who art Thou?* He treated them as friends; He did not say, *Come, and wait, come, and attend Me*, nor, *Go dine by yourselves, as servants, but familiarly, Come, and dine with Me*. This kind invitation may be alluded to, to illustrate, 1. The call Christ gives his disciples into communion with Him here. All things are now ready; *Come, and dine*. Christ is a feast; his flesh is meat indeed, his blood drink indeed. Christ is a friend; *come, dine with Him*. He will bid you welcome, Cant. 5: 1. 2. The call He will give them hereafter; *Come, ye blessed of my Father; sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*.

How reverent the disciples were before Christ; they were somewhat shy of using this freedom, and by his courting them to their meat, it would seem that they stood pausing. Being to eat with such a ruler, they consider diligently what is before them. None of them durst ask Him, *Who art Thou?* Either, 1. Because they would not be so bold with Him. Though perhaps He appeared in something of a disguise at first, as to the two disciples, when their eyes were holden, that they should not know Him, yet they had good reason to think it was He. Or, 2. Because they would not so far betray their own folly. When He had given them this instance of his power and goodness, they must be stupid indeed if they questioned whether it was He or no. When God, in his providence, has given us sensible proofs of his care for our bodies, and of his good-will to our souls, we should be ashamed of our distrusts, and not dare to question that which He has left us no room to question.

The entertainment was but ordinary; it was but a fish, coarsely dressed; nothing pompous, nothing curious; plentiful indeed, but plain and homely. Christ, though He entered upon his exalted state, shewed Himself alive by eating, not a prince by feasting. Those that cannot content themselves with bread and fish, would scarcely have found in their hearts to dine with Christ Himself here.

Christ began, Though, perhaps, having a glorified body, He needed not to eat, yet He would show that He had a true body capable of eating. The apostles produced this as one proof of his resurrection, that they had eaten and drank with Him, Acts 10: 41.

He gave the meat to all his guests. He not only provided it for them, and invited them to it, but Himself divided it among them, and put it into their hands. To Him we owe the application, as well as the purchase of the benefits of redemption.

The evangelist remarks, (v. 14.) *This is now the third time that Jesus shewed Himself alive to his disciples, or the greater part of them. This is the third day; so some. On the day He*

dependence on Him is peculiarly to be recognised in the work of the ministry; and He often permits his servants to labor for a time without visible success, to prove their faith and patience, to render them more observant of his directions, or more simply dependent on his assistance; and that their usefulness, when vouchsafed, may more evidently appear to be his work.

Scott.

'The word (*dine*) is literal. But it was early in the morning, and Kypke has largely shown that the original word is used by Homer, Xenophon, &c. to signify breakfast, or an early meal, as well as what we call dinner.'

Durst.] 'Rather, presumed, ventured; for the word implies not austerity in our Lord, but a backwardness, proceeding from no other fear than may be the consequence of the most perfect esteem and veneration.'

Campbell.

15 ¶ So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. 16 He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

a 16:17. 1422. Jona. Matt. 16:17. b 16:17. c 16:17. d 16:17. e 16:17. f 16:17. g 16:17. h 16:17. i 16:17. j 16:17. k 16:17. l 16:17. m 16:17. n 16:17. o 16:17. p 16:17. q 16:17. r 16:17. s 16:17. t 16:17. u 16:17. v 16:17. w 16:17. x 16:17. y 16:17. z 16:17. Aa 16:17. Ab 16:17. Ac 16:17. Ad 16:17. Ae 16:17. Af 16:17. Ag 16:17. Ah 16:17. Ai 16:17. Aj 16:17. Ak 16:17. Al 16:17. Am 16:17. An 16:17. Ao 16:17. Ap 16:17. Aq 16:17. Ar 16:17. As 16:17. At 16:17. Au 16:17. Av 16:17. Aw 16:17. Ax 16:17. Ay 16:17. Az 16:17. Ba 16:17. Bb 16:17. Bc 16:17. Bd 16:17. Be 16:17. Bf 16:17. Bg 16:17. Bh 16:17. Bi 16:17. Bj 16:17. Bk 16:17. Bl 16:17. Bm 16:17. Bn 16:17. Bo 16:17. Bp 16:17. Bq 16:17. Br 16:17. Bs 16:17. Bt 16:17. Bu 16:17. Bv 16:17. Bw 16:17. Bx 16:17. By 16:17. Bz 16:17. Ca 16:17. Cb 16:17. Cc 16:17. Cd 16:17. Ce 16:17. Cf 16:17. Cg 16:17. Ch 16:17. Ci 16:17. Cj 16:17. Ck 16:17. Cl 16:17. Cm 16:17. Cn 16:17. Co 16:17. Cp 16:17. Cq 16:17. Cr 16:17. Cs 16:17. Ct 16:17. Cu 16:17. Cv 16:17. 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Gs 16:17. Gt 16:17. Gu 16:17. Gv 16:17. Gw 16:17. Gx 16:17. Gy 16:17. Gz 16:17. Ha 16:17. Hb 16:17. Hc 16:17. Hd 16:17. He 16:17. Hf 16:17. Hg 16:17. Hh 16:17. Hi 16:17. Hj 16:17. Hk 16:17. Hl 16:17. Hm 16:17. Hn 16:17. Ho 16:17. Hp 16:17. Hq 16:17. Hr 16:17. Hs 16:17. Ht 16:17. Hu 16:17. Hv 16:17. Hw 16:17. Hx 16:17. Hy 16:17. Hz 16:17. Ia 16:17. Ib 16:17. Ic 16:17. Id 16:17. Ie 16:17. If 16:17. Ig 16:17. Ih 16:17. Ii 16:17. Ij 16:17. Ik 16:17. Il 16:17. Im 16:17. In 16:17. Io 16:17. Ip 16:17. Iq 16:17. Ir 16:17. Is 16:17. It 16:17. Iu 16:17. Iv 16:17. Iw 16:17. Ix 16:17. Iy 16:17. Iz 16:17. Ja 16:17. Jb 16:17. Jc 16:17. Jd 16:17. Je 16:17. Jf 16:17. Jg 16:17. Jh 16:17. Ji 16:17. Jj 16:17. Jk 16:17. Jl 16:17. Jm 16:17. Jn 16:17. Jo 16:17. Jp 16:17. Jq 16:17. Jr 16:17. Js 16:17. Jt 16:17. Ju 16:17. Jv 16:17. Jw 16:17. Jx 16:17. Jy 16:17. Jz 16:17. Ka 16:17. Kb 16:17. Kc 16:17. Kd 16:17. Ke 16:17. Kf 16:17. Kg 16:17. Kh 16:17. Ki 16:17. Kj 16:17. Kk 16:17. Kl 16:17. Km 16:17. Kn 16:17. Ko 16:17. Kp 16:17. Kq 16:17. Kr 16:17. Ks 16:17. Kt 16:17. Ku 16:17. Kv 16:17. Kw 16:17. Kx 16:17. Ky 16:17. Kz 16:17. La 16:17. Lb 16:17. Lc 16:17. Ld 16:17. Le 16:17. Lf 16:17. Lg 16:17. Lh 16:17. Li 16:17. Lj 16:17. Lk 16:17. Ll 16:17. Lm 16:17. Ln 16:17. Lo 16:17. Lp 16:17. Lq 16:17. Lr 16:17. Ls 16:17. Lt 16:17. Lu 16:17. Lv 16:17. Lw 16:17. Lx 16:17. Ly 16:17. Lz 16:17. Ma 16:17. Mb 16:17. Mc 16:17. Md 16:17. Me 16:17. Mf 16:17. Mg 16:17. Mh 16:17. Mi 16:17. Mj 16:17. Mk 16:17. Ml 16:17. Mm 16:17. Mn 16:17. Mo 16:17. Mp 16:17. Mq 16:17. Mr 16:17. Ms 16:17. Mt 16:17. Mu 16:17. Mv 16:17. Mw 16:17. Mx 16:17. My 16:17. Mz 16:17. Na 16:17. Nb 16:17. Nc 16:17. Nd 16:17. Ne 16:17. Nf 16:17. Ng 16:17. Nh 16:17. Ni 16:17. Nj 16:17. Nk 16:17. Nl 16:17. Nm 16:17. Nn 16:17. No 16:17. Np 16:17. Nq 16:17. Nr 16:17. Ns 16:17. Nt 16:17. Nu 16:17. Nv 16:17. Nw 16:17. Nx 16:17. Ny 16:17. Nz 16:17. Oa 16:17. Ob 16:17. Oc 16:17. Od 16:17. Oe 16:17. Of 16:17. Og 16:17. Oh 16:17. Oi 16:17. Oj 16:17. 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Zz 16:17.

rose, He appeared five times; the second day was that day seven-night; and this was the third. Or, though He had appeared to Mary, to the women, to the two disciples, to Cephas, yet He had but twice before this appeared to a company of the disciples together. This is noticed, 1. To confirm the truth of his resurrection; the vision was doubled, was tripled, for the thing was certain. They who believed not the first sign, would be brought to believe the voice of the latter signs. 2. As an instance of Christ's continued kindness, once, and again, and a third time, He visited them. It is good to keep account of Christ's visits; for He keeps account of them, and they will be remembered against us if we walk unworthily of them, as they were against Solomon, when he was reminded that the Lord God of Israel had appeared unto him twice. This is now the third; have we made a due improvement of the first and second? See 2 Cor. 12: 14. This is the third, perhaps it may be the last. Observe

V. 15—19. When Christ entered into this discourse with Peter, after they had dined; and it is probable, were entertained with such edifying discourse as our Lord used to make at his table. Christ, foreseeing that what He had to say to Peter would give him uneasiness, would not say it till they had dined. Peter was conscious to himself that he had incurred his Master's displeasure, and could expect no other than to be upbraided with treachery and ingratitude, or struck out of the roll of the disciples, and expelled. Twice, if not thrice, he had seen his Master since his resurrection, and He said not a word to him of it. We may suppose Peter full of doubt on what terms he stood with his Master; sometimes hoping, because he had received favors in common with the

rest; yet not without fears, lest the chiding would come at last. At length, his Master put him out of pain, and confirmed him in his place as an apostle. He did not tell him of his fault hastily, nor unseasonably, to disturb the company, but when they had dined together in token of reconciliation, He discoursed with him about it, as with a friend. Peter had reproached himself for it, and therefore Christ did not tell him of it directly, but by a tacit intimation; and being satisfied in his sincerity, the offence was not only forgiven, but forgotten; and Christ let him know that he was as dear to Him as ever. An encouraging instance of his tenderness toward penitents, teaching us, in like manner, to restore such as are fallen, with a spirit of meekness.

The same question is three times asked, the same answer three times made, and the same reply three times given, and yet no vain repetition. It was repeated by our Savior the more to affect Peter, and the other disciples present; by the evangelist, the more to affect us, and all that read it.

The first time the question is, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these?

He speaks to him by name, the more to affect him, as Luke 22: 31. He does not call him Cephas, or Peter, the name He had given him, for he had lost the credit of his strength and stability, which those names signified. Yet He gives him no hard language; but as He had called him when He pronounced him blessed, Simon Bar-jona, (Matt. 16: 15.) He calls him son of Jonas, (or John, or Johanan,) to remind him of his mean extraction, unworthy the honor to which he was advanced.

Lovest thou Me? If we would try whether we are Christ's disciples indeed, this must be the inquiry, Do we love Him? But there was a special reason why Christ put it to Peter.

His fall had given occasion to doubt his love; 'Peter, I have cause to suspect thy love.' Note, We must not reckon it an affront to have our sincerity questioned, when we ourselves have done that which makes it questionable; after a shaking fall, we must take heed of settling too soon, lest we settle upon a wrong bottom. The question is affecting; He does not ask, 'Dost thou fear Me? Dost thou honor Me?' but, 'Dost thou love Me? Give but proof of that, and the affront shall be passed by.' Peter had professed himself a penitent, witness his tears, and his return to the society of the disciples; He was now on probation as a penitent; but the question is not, 'Simon, how much hast thou wept? How often hast thou fasted, and afflicted thy soul?' but, 'Dost thou love Me? That will make the other expressions of repentance acceptable. The great thing Christ eyes in penitents, is, their eyeing Him in their repentance. Much is forgiven her, not because she wept much, but because she loved much.

Verſes 15—17.

The arguments of the papists for the supremacy of the pope, from this passage, only prove their cause to be desperate, as to scriptural argument. To do more a laborious in feeding the weakest of Christ's flock, with the wholesome food of his pure doctrine, from love to Him and his cause; to submit to any abasement or hardship, and to face any peril or persecution, in this work of compassion and tender care to the poor, the tempted, and afflicted;—this is a pre-eminence, which excites the ambition of very few, compared with the number of those who aspire after ecclesiastical authority and distinction. (Matt. 18: 1—4. P. O. 1—6. Mark 9: 33—37, v. 35.) It is indeed true, that one of the words here translated feed, may be rendered

rule; but then it is the rule of a careful shepherd over his valued flock; and very different from that of those who, both in opposition to Peter's example and exhortation, have pretended to derive authority from him, 'to lord it over God's heritage.' (1 Pet. 5: 1—4.)

Sooner. Bellarmine's distinction between lambs and sheep, as signifying the laity and clergy, is very trifling, nor can any example of the like distinction be produced. This argument for the pope's supremacy seems almost as contemptible as that, which some writers of that communion have drawn from these words, to prove that heretics, though princes, are to be put to death by authority derived from Peter; because feeding the flock implies a power of killing wolves.

DOESBRO

17 He saith unto him, 'the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved, because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, 'Feed my sheep.

[Practical Observations.]

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

13:38. 19:27. Matt. 26:73,74. Rev. 3:19.
1 Kings 17:18. Lam. 3:33. Matt. 26:75. Mark 14:72. Luke 22:61.
2 Cor. 2:4-7. 7:8-11. Eph. 4:30. 1 Pet. 1:6.
1:24,25. 16:39. 18:4. Jer. 17:10. Acts 1:24. 15:8. Rev. 2:23.
15:18. Josh. 22:22. 1 Chr. 29:17. Job 31:4-8. Ps. 7:8,9. 17:3. 2 Cor. 1:12.
15:16. 12:8. 14:15. 15:10. Matt. 23:40. 2 Cor. 8:8,9. 2 Pet. 1:12-15. Gal. 1 John 3:16-24. 3 John 7,8. Arle 123,4.
19:27,28. 2 Cor. 5:4.

sheep likewise with food convenient. The lost sheep of the house of Israel, seek and feed, and the other sheep which are not of this fold.' Note, It is the duty of all Christ's ministers, to feed his lambs and sheep: that is, teach them; for the doctrine of the Gospel is spiritual food. 'Lead them to the green pastures, presiding in their religious assemblies, and ministering all the ordinances to them. Feed them by personal application to their respective state and case; not only lay meat before them, but feed them with it, that are wilful and will not, or weak and cannot, feed themselves.' When Christ ascended on high, He gave pastors; left his flock with them that loved Him, and would take care of them for his sake.

knowest that I love thee. He does not vouch his fellow-disciples to witness for him; they might be deceived: nor does he think his own word might be taken; the credit of that was destroyed; but he calls Christ Himself to witness. Peter was sure that Christ knew all things, and particularly that He was a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart, ch. 16:30. He was satisfied that Christ knew the sincerity of his love, and would attest it in his favor. It is a terror to a hypocrite, to think that Christ knows all things; for the divine omniscience will be a witness against him. But it is a comfort to a sincere Christian, My witness is in heaven, my record is on high. Christ knows us better than we know ourselves. Though we know not our own uprightness, He does.

He was grieved, when Christ asked him the third time. It put him in mind of his threefold denial of Christ, and was plainly designed to do so. Every remembrance of past sins, even pardoned sins, renews the sorrow of a true penitent. Thou shalt be ashamed, when I am pacified toward thee. It put him in fear, lest his Master foresaw some further miscarriage; which would be as great a contradiction to his profession of love. 'Surely, my Master would not thus put me upon the rack, if He did not see cause. What would become of me, if I should be again tempted!' Godly sorrow works carefulness and fear, 2 Cor. 7:11.

Three times Christ committed the care of his flock to Peter; his lambs and his sheep. The church of Christ is his flock, purchased with his own blood, (Acts 20:28.) and He is the Chief Shepherd: in this flock some are lambs, young, tender and weak, others are sheep, grown to some strength and maturity. The Shepherd takes care of both, of the lambs first, for upon all occasions He showed a particular tenderness for them; Isa. 40:11.

The charge is, to feed them. The word used, (v. 15, 17.) strictly signifies, give them food; but the word used, (v. 16.) signifies more largely, to do all the offices of a shepherd. 'Feed the lambs with what is proper for them, and the

But why did He give this charge particularly to Peter? The advocates for the pope's supremacy, will tell you, that Christ hereby designed to give Peter, and therefore his successors, and therefore the bishops of Rome, an absolute nomination over the whole church; as if a charge to serve the sheep, gave a power to lord it over all the shepherds; whereas, Peter himself never claimed such power, nor did the other disciples ever own it in him. This charge to Peter to preach the Gospel, is by a strange fetch made to support the usurpation of his pretended successors, that fleece the sheep, and, instead of feeding them, feed upon them. But the particular application to Peter here, was designed, 1. To restore him to his apostleship, now that He repented of his abjuration of it, and to renew his commission, both for his own satisfaction, and that of his brethren. A commission to one convicted of a crime, amounts to a pardon; no doubt, this commission to Peter, evinced that Christ was reconciled to Him, else He would never have reposed such confidence in him. Of some that have deceived us we say, 'Though we forgive them, we will never trust them;' but Christ trusted him with the most valuable treasure on earth. 2. It was designed to quicken him to a diligent discharge of his office as an apostle. Peter was a man of a bold and zealous spirit, always forward to speak and act, and, lest he should be tempted to take upon him the directing of the shepherds, he is charged to feed the sheep, as he himself charges all the presbyters to do, and not to lord it over God's heritage, 1 Pet. 5:2,3. 3. What Christ said to him, He said to all his disciples; He charged them all, not only to be fishers of men, (though that was said to Peter, Luke 5:10.) by the conversion of sinners, but feeders of the flock, by the edification of saints.

Christ, having confirmed to him the honor of an apostle, now tells him of further premerit designed him—the honor of a martyr. Thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, being compelled to it, and another shall gird thee, (as a prisoner that is pinioned,) and carry thee whither naturally thou wouldest not. He prefaces the notice of his sufferings, with a solemn asseveration, Verily, verily, I say unto thee. It was not spoken of as a thing probable, but certain. As Christ foresaw his own sufferings, so those of his followers, and foretold them, though not in particular, as to Peter, yet in general, that they must take up their cross. Having charged him to feed his sheep, He bids him not to expect

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 15—17. It is a blessed effect, when our falls and mistakes render us more humble, watchful, and zealous. [This conduct of our Lord, shows that He receives us into favor only when we confess our sins, make reparation for them, and return to duty.] OSTERVOLD.—Our Lord will readily pardon the sins of his believing servants: but He will rebuke them, in one way or other; that they may be more sensible how greatly He abhors their offences, notwithstanding his mercy to their souls. 'The sincerity of our love' must at length be brought to the test; and it behooves us to inquire seriously, and with earnest and persevering prayer, whether we be able to stand this test: for He says to us, in his Word, as certainly as to Peter, 'Lovest thou Me?' and the same will be the grand subject of inquiry at the solemn day of judgment. (Matt. 25:31—46. 1 Cor. 16:21—24. Eph. 6:21—24.) If we indeed love Him, his perfections, truths, precepts, and ordinances will be cordially approved, and observed by us; we shall love those most, who appear most to love and resemble Him, shall render Him our thankful returns for his mercies, and endeavor to recommend Him to those around us; we shall take pleasure in speaking of Him or to Him, in hearing Him praised, and in promoting his glory; we shall be ready to labor, venture, or suffer for his sake; yet after all we shall be grieved and ashamed, that we love Him no more, and serve Him no better. We shall imitate his example, and be gradually conformed to his image: yet it will be humiliating and afflicting to us, that we so little resemble Him. Those who thus 'love the Lord Jesus in sincerity,' have a consciousness of it, notwithstanding all their defects; and, as they believe

and are assured that 'He knoweth all things,' and especially that He knows whether they love Him or not, they will apply to Him to determine the question for them, and to enable them to love Him, when they cannot confidently aver that they do.—As obedience is the general evidence of our love to Jesus, so the love of his afflicted people for his sake, and an endeavor to be useful to the meanest of his flock, is that particular expression which He requires of every one. No man, therefore, can be qualified to 'feed the lambs and sheep' of Christ, who do not love the good Shepherd more than all secular emolument, and all those professed ministers, without distinction of rank and station, who are too ambitious, haughty, slothful, delicate, studious of human learning, or occupied in worldly pursuits, to apply themselves to feed the souls of the people, even the weakest, and poorest of them, will be left under an awful condemnation, as utterly destitute of the love of Christ.—Those who have been greatly tempted, and have had humiliating experience of their frailty and sinfulness, and who have had much forgiven them, generally prove the most tender and attentive pastors, and the best guides of young converts: and the Lord often leaves those whom He loves to pass through painful conflicts, as well as much experience of his compassion, in order to render them more gentle to their weak brethren, and the lambs of his flock. Thus, when they feel their unworthiness for the least and meanest employment in his service, they become far abler ministers, than when they had a much higher opinion of themselves, and of their qualifications for the ministry; and were disposed to look down on those, whom they now 'in honor prefer.'

Scott.

Verse 18.

'I was a prisoner at Rome, [where Peter was crucified,] to put the necks of persons to be crucified into a yoke, and to stretch out their hands.'

hands, and fasten them to the end of it, and having thus led them through the city, they were carried out to be crucified. Thus, then Peter was girded, chained, and carried whither he would not. Wetstein, in CLARE.

19 This spake he, signifying 'by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, 'Follow me.

20 Then Peter, turning about, 'seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved, 'following; 'which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter seeing him, saith to Jesus, 'Lord, and what shall this man do?

¶ Phil. 1:20. 1 Pet. 4:11-14. 2 Pet. 1:14.
22. 12:26. 13:36, 37. Matt. 10:33.
10:21-25. Mark 8:33-38. Luke 8:22-26.
¶ 7:24. 20:2.
13:23-26.
¶ Matt. 24:3, 4. Luke 13:23, 24. Acts 1:17.

otherwise; and to fret the more at grievances, because we have known the sweets of liberty, health and plenty, Job 29: 2. Ps. 42: 4. But we may turn it, and reason thus, 'How many years of prosperity have I enjoyed more than I deserved and improved? And, *having received good, shall not I receive evil also?*'

What a change may possibly be made with us, as to our condition in this world! See 1 Sam. 2: 5.

What a change is presently made with those that *leave all to follow Christ!* They must no longer *gird themselves*, but *He must gird them*; and must no longer *talk whither they will*, but *whither He will*.

Christ tells Peter he should suffer thus in his old age. Though he should be old, and, in the course of nature, not likely to live long, his enemies would put out his candle when it was almost burned to the socket. See 2 Chron. 36: 17. God would shelter him from the rage of enemies till he should come to be old, that he might be made the fitter for sufferings, and the church might the longer enjoy his services.

It is not only appointed to all *once to die*, but it is appointed to each what death he shall die, v. 19. When Paul speaks of *so great a death*, he intimates that there are degrees of death: there is one way into the world, but many ways out, and God has determined which way we should go.

It is the great concern of every good man, whatever death he dies, to *glorify* God in it; for what is our chief end but this? *To die to the Lord?* When we die patiently, submitting to the *will of God*; cheerfully, rejoicing in hope of the glory of God; and usefully, witnessing to the truth and goodness of religion, and encouraging others, we glorify God; and this is the earnest expectation and hope of all good Christians, as it was Paul's, *that Christ may be magnified in them living and dying*, Phil. 1: 20.

The death of the martyrs was in a special manner the glorifying of God. The truths of God are hereby confirmed. The grace of God, which carried them with so much constancy through their sufferings, is magnified. And the consolations of God, which have abounded toward them in their sufferings, and his promises, the springs of their consolations, have hereby been recommended to all the saints. The blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the church, and the conversion and establishment of thousands. *Precious therefore in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints*, as that which honors Him; and those who at such an expense honor Him, He will honor.

When He had spoken thus, observing Peter, perhaps, to look blank upon it, He saith unto him, *Follow Me*. Probably, He rose from the place where He sat at dinner, walked off a little, and bid Peter attend Him. This word further confirms his restoration to his Master's favor, and to his apostleship; for, *Follow Me*, was the first call. It explained the prediction of his sufferings, which perhaps Peter at first did not fully understand, till Christ gave him that key to it, *Follow Me*; 'Expect to be treated as I have been, and to tread the bloody path I have trod before thee; for the disciple is not greater than his Lord.' It excited him, and encouraged him in, faithfulness and diligence in his work. He had bid him *feed his sheep*, and let him set his Master before him as an example of pastoral care. Let the under-shepherds study to imitate the Chief Shepherd. They had followed Christ while here upon earth; and now He was leaving them, He still preaches the same duty, still they must follow his rules and his example. What greater encouragement could they have, both in services and sufferings? Herein they followed Him, and it was their present honor; who would be ashamed to follow such a leader? Hereafter they should follow Him, and that would be their future happiness.

Verse 20.

'And Peter did so, but turning about, and seeing John also following, and thereby showing his comprehension of the meaning of Jesus, he feels a curiosity to know if John will also accompany him in death, &c. There is a spirit of tenderness here, which I can never read without the most sensible emotion. John *etats* not for Christ's call; but

ease and honor in it, but *trouble and persecution*, and to suffer ill for doing well.

The stretching out his hands, some think, points at the manner of his death by crucifying; and the tradition of the ancients informs us that Peter was crucified at Rome under Nero, A. D. 68, or as others say, 79. Others think, it points at the bonds and imprisonments of such as are sentenced to death. The pomp and solemnity of an execution add much to the terror of death. Death, in these horrid shapes, has often been the lot of Christ's faithful ones, who yet have overcome it by the blood of the Lamb. This prediction, though pointing chiefly at his death, was to have its accomplishment in his previous sufferings. It began to be fulfilled when he was imprisoned, Acts 4: 3, 5: 18. 12: 4. No more is implied in his being carried *whither he would not*, than a violent death; such as even innocent nature could not think of without dread, nor approach without reluctance. He that puts on the Christian, does not put off the man; Christ Himself prayed against the bitter cup. A natural aversion to pain and death is reconcilable with holy submission to the will of God in both. Paul, though longing to be unloosed, owns he cannot desire to be unloosed, 2 Cor. 5: 4.

He compares this with his former liberty. Time was, when thou knewest not any of these hardships, v. 18. Where trouble comes, we are apt to aggravate it with this, that it has been

ness; and so it is a repetition of the promise Christ had given Peter, (ch. 13: 36.) *Thou shalt follow Me afterward*. They that faithfully follow Christ in grace, shall certainly follow Him to glory.

V. 20-25. Peter, in obedience to his Master's orders, followed Him, and, turning about, pleased with the honor his Master now did him, he sees the disciple whom Jesus loved following likewise.

John does not name himself, thinking his own name not worthy to be preserved in these records; but his description sufficiently informs us whom he meant, and gives us a reason why he followed Christ; *he was the disciple whom Jesus loved*, whom He had a particular kindness for above the rest; and therefore you cannot blame him for coveting to be as much as possible within hearing of Christ, during those few minutes with which He favored his disciples. John's having leaned on Jesus's breast, and his inquiring concerning the traitor, at the instigation of Peter, (ch. 13: 24.) is a reason why Peter made the following inquiry concerning him, to repay his kindness. Note, As we have interest at the throne of grace, we should improve it for the benefit of one another. They that help us by their prayers, should be helped by us with ours. This is the communion of saints.

John also followed Jesus. When Christ called Peter to follow Him, it looked as if He designed to have some private talk with him; but such an affection John had to his Master, that he would rather do a thing that seemed rude, than lose the benefit of Christ's discourse. What Christ said to Peter, he took as said to himself; for the word *Follow Me*, was given to all the disciples. He desired to have fellowship with those that had fellowship with Christ, and to accompany those that attended Him. The bringing of one to follow Christ, should engage others. *Draw me, and we will run after thee*, Cant. 1: 4. Peter should have been wholly intent upon Christ, and have waited to hear what He had further to say to him; but he looked about to see who followed. Note, The best men find it hard to attend upon the Lord without distraction; and a needless and unseasonable regard to our brethren often diverts us from communion with God. Or, it was a laudable concern for his fellow-disciples. He was not so elevated with the honor his Master did him, as to deny a kind look to one that followed. Acts of love to our brethren must go along with faith in Christ.

'Lord, and what shall this man do? Thou hast told me my work, and my lot. What shall be his work, and his lot? This may be, 1. Concern for John: 'Lord, Thou showest me great favor; here comes thy beloved disciple, who never forfeited thy favor, as I have done; hast Thou nothing to say to him? Wilt Thou not tell how he must be employed, and how he must be honored? Or, 2. Uneasiness at what Christ had said to him. 'Lord, must I alone be carried whither I would not? Must this man have no share of the cross? It is hard to reconcile ourselves to distinguishing sufferings, and the troubles in which we think we stand alone. Or, 3. Curiosity. It seems, by Christ's answer, there was something amiss in the question; when Christ had given him the charge of such a treasure, and the notice of such a trial, it had become him to have said, 'Lord, what shall I do then to approve myself faithful to such a trust, in such a trial? Lord, increase my faith. As my day is, let my strength be.' But,

He seems more concerned for another than for himself. So apt are we to be busy in other men's matters, but negligent in the concerns of our own souls; quick-sighted abroad, but dull-sighted at home; judging others, when we have enough to do to prove our own work, and under stand our own way.

rites and follows too; he says not one word of his love and zeal. He chose that the action should speak that; therefore with great simplicity relates the fact only, not telling us what the action meant. If here, and there a generous heart that, like his own, glows with love to Christ, sees and emulates it, be it as, but let it be not solicitous man Understood.

22 Jesus saith unto him, 'If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.'

23 Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, 'what is that to thee?'

24 ¶ This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things; and we know that his testimony is true.

Matt. 16:27, 28. 24:33, 42. 25:31. Mark 9:1. 1 Cor. 4:5. 11:26. Rev. 2:23. 3:11. 22:7, 20. y Dent. 28:29. Job 28:23. 33:13. Dan. 4:35. 19:35. 1 John 1:1, 2. 5:8. 3 John 12.

coming to destroy Jerusalem: so some. All the apostles but John died before that destruction. God wisely so ordered it, that one of them should live so long, as to close up the canon of the New Testament, Rev. 22: 18. And, to obviate the design of the enemy that *sowed tares* even before the servants *fell asleep*, John lived to confront Ebion, and Cerinthus, and other heretics, who rose betimes, *speaking perverse things*.

Others think that it is only a rebuke to Peter's curiosity, and that his tarrying till Christ's second coming, is only the supposition of an absurdity. Note, We are apt to be solicitous about many things, that are *nothing to us*. Other people's characters are *nothing to us*; it is out of our line to judge them: Rom. 14: 4. *Whatsoever they are*, saith Paul, *it makes no matter to me*. Other people's affairs are *nothing to us* to intermeddle in; we must quietly work, and mind our own business. Many nice and curious questions are put by the scribes and disputers of this world concerning the counsels of God, and the invisible world, of which we may say, *What is this to us?* What do you think will become of such and such? is a common question, which may easily be answered with another; *What is that to me?* To his own Master he stands or falls. What is it to us to *know the times and the seasons?* Secret things belong not to us. The great thing that is *all in all to us*, is duty, and not event; for duty is ours, events are God's: *our own duty*, and not another's; for every one shall bear his own burthen: *our present duty*, and not the duty of the time to come; for sufficient to the day shall be the directions thereof: *a good man's steps are ordered by the Lord*; (Ps. 37: 23.) he is guided step by step. Our duty is summed up in this, of *following Christ*; we must attend his motions, and accommodate ourselves to them, *follow Him* to do Him honor; we must walk in the way He walked in, and aim to be where He is. If we will closely attend to the duty of following Christ, we shall find neither heart nor time to meddle with what does not belong to us.

See the easy rise of a mistake in the church, by misconstruing the sayings of Christ, and turning a supposition to a position. Because John must not die a martyr, they conclude he must not die at all, v. 23.

Desiring it, they expect it. *We easily believe what we wish to be true*. For John to abide in the flesh when the rest were gone, till Christ's second coming, they think, will be a great blessing to the church, which in every age might have recourse to him as an oracle; when they must lose Christ's bodily presence, they hope to have that of his beloved disciple; as if that must supply the want of his; forgetting that the Comforter was to do that. Note, We are apt to dote too much on men and means, and to think we are happy, if we may but have them *always with us*; whereas God will change his workmen, and yet carry on his work, that the *excellency of the power may be of God, and not of men*. There is no need of immortal ministers to guide the church, while it is under the conduct of an eternal Spirit.

Perhaps they were confirmed in their expectations, finding that John survived the rest of the apostles; because he lived long, they were ready to think he should live always: whereas that which *waxeth old, is ready to vanish away*, Heb. 8: 13.

Hence learn, 1. The uncertainty of human tradition, and the folly of building our faith upon it. Here was a tradition, an apostolical tradition, that *went abroad among the brethren*; it was early, common, public, and yet false. How little we are those unwritten traditions to be relied on, which the council of Trent decreed to be received, with a veneration and pious affection *equal to that which is owing to the holy Scripture*. Here was a traditional exposition of Scripture; no new saying of Christ's advanced, but only a construction put by the brethren upon what He did really say, yet it was a misconstruction. Let the Scripture be its own interpreter; as it is in a great measure its own evidence, and proves itself for it is light.

2. The aptness of men to misinterpret Christ's sayings. The grossest errors have sometimes shrouded themselves under the umbrage of incontestable truths; and the Scriptures themselves have been wrested by the unlearned and unsable. We must not think it strange, if we hear the sayings of Christ misinterpreted, to patronize the errors of antichrist and the impudent doctrine of transubstantiation pretending to build upon that word of Christ *This is my body*.

Such mistakes are easily rectified by adhering to the Word of Christ. So the evangelists here corrects that saying among the brethren, by repeating the very words of Christ. *Add thou not unto his words*. Note, The best end of controversies, would be to keep to the express words of Scripture, and speak, as well as think, according to that word, Isa. 8: 20. Scripture-language is the safest and most proper vehicle of scripture-truth: the words which the Holy Ghost teacheth, 1 Cor. 2: 13. As the Scripture, itself, is the best weapon wherewith to wound all dangerous errors, (and therefore Deists, Socinians, Papists, and Enthusiasts, do all they can to derogate from the authority of the Scripture,) so it is the best weapon-sword to heal the wounds made by different modes of expression concerning the same truths. Those that cannot agree in the same logics, metaphysics, or terms of art, may yet agree in the same scripture-terms, and then may agree to love one another.

The conclusion of this Gospel, and of the evangelical story, (v. 24, 25,) is not so abrupt as the others, but ends with a sort of cadence. An account of the penman of it, *This is the disciple which testifies of these things to the present age*, and wrote these things for the benefit of posterity, this same that Peter and his Master had that conference about in the foregoing verses—John the apostle.

Those who wrote the history of Christ, were not ashamed to put their names to it. John in effect subscribes his name. As we are sure who was the author of the first five books of the Old Testament, the foundation of that revelation, so we are sure who were the penmen of the four Gospels and the Acts, the pentateuch of the New Testament. The record of Christ's life and death is not the report of *see know not who*, but was drawn up by men of known integrity, ready not only to depose it upon oath, but, to seal it with their blood.

Those who wrote the history of Christ, wrote on their own knowledge; they themselves were eye and ear witnesses. The penman of this history was a beloved disciple, that had leaned on Christ's breast, had himself heard his sermons and conferences, seen his miracles, and the proofs of his resurrection. *This is he who testifies*.

Those who wrote the history of Christ, as they testified what they had seen, so they wrote what they had first testified. It was published by word of mouth, before it was committed to writing. They testified it in the pulpit, at the bar, steadfastly avowed it, not as travellers give account of their travels, to entertain the company, but as witnesses, on oath, of what they know in a matter of consequence, with caution and exactness to found a verdict upon. Their writings are testimonies to the world of the truth of Christ's doctrine, and will be testimonies either for or against us, according as we do or do not receive it. It was appointed for the support and benefit of the church, that the history of Christ should be put into writing, that it might with the greater fulness and certainty spread to every place, and last through every age.

It concludes with an attestation of the truth of what had been related; *We know it at his testimony is true*.

The common sense of mankind is, that a testimony of an eye-witness, of unspotted reputation, who solemnly deposes what he had seen, and puts it into writing for greater certainty, is an unexceptionable evidence. We know, that is, all the world knows, that such testimony is valid, and the common faith of mankind requires us to credit it; and in other cases verdict and judgment are given on such testimonies. The truth of the Gospel comes confirmed by all the evidence we can rationally desire or expect. The fact, that Jesus did preach such doctrines, work such miracles, and rise from the dead, is proved beyond contradiction.

25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

20:30, 31. 16:28-14. Ps. 40:5, 71:15. Ec. 12:12. Matt. 11:5. Acts 13:28. 20:35. Heb. 11:32. Am. 7:10. Matt. 19:24.

wrote, like ch. 19: 35. *He knows that He saith true.* He speaks of himself in the plural number, not for majesty-sake, but for modesty-sake; as 1 John 1: 1. *That which we have seen;* and 2 Pet. 1: 16. Note, The evangelists do not require us to believe what they did not believe themselves; they *knew their testimony was true*, for they ventured both this life and the other upon it; threw away this life, and depended upon another, on the credit of what they spoke and wrote.

It concludes with an *et cætera*; a reference to many other very memorable things said and done by our Lord, well known by many then living, but not thought fit to be recorded for posterity; (p. 25.) and which, if written at large, with the circumstances of them, even the world itself, that is, all the libraries in it, could not contain the books that might be written. Thus he concludes like an orator, as Paul, (Heb. 11: 32.) *What shall I more say? For the time would fail me.*

If it be asked why the Gospels are not larger, why the New-Testament history is not as copious and as long as the old; it may be answered,

It was not because they had nothing more to write, that was worth writing. Every thing that Christ said and did, was worth our notice, and capable of being improved. He never spake an idle word, nor did an idle thing; He never spake or did any thing mean, or little, or trifling, which is more than can be said of the wisest or best of men. His miracles were very many, of many kinds, and the same often repeated. Though one *true miracle* might perhaps suffice to prove a divine commission, yet the repetition of the miracles on a great variety of persons, in a great variety of cases, and before a great variety of witnesses, helped very much to prove them true. Every new miracle rendered the report of the former the more credible; and the multitude of them render the whole report incontestable. The evangelists, on several occasions, give general accounts of Christ's preaching and miracles, inclusive of many particulars, as Matt. 4: 23, 24. 9: 35. 11: 1. 14: 14, 36. 15: 30. 19: 2 &c. When we speak of Christ, we have a copious subject before us, and, after all, *the one half is not told.* St. Paul quotes one of Christ's sayings, which is not recorded by any of the evangelists; (Acts 20: 35.) and doubtless there were many more.

But it was for these three reasons:

1. *It was not needful to write more.* This is implied here. What is written, is a sufficient revelation of the doctrine of Christ, and the proof of it, and the rest was but to the same purpose. They that hence argue against the sufficiency of the Scripture, as the rule of our faith and practice, and for the necessity of unwritten traditions, ought to show what there is in the traditions they pretend to, perfective of the written Word; we are sure there is that which is contrary to it, and therefore reject them. By these therefore let

us be admonished, for of writing many books there is no end, Eccl. 12: 12. If we do not believe and improve what is written, neither would we if there had been much more.

2. *It was not possible to write all.* It was possible for the Spirit to indite all, but morally impossible for the penmen to pen all. The world could not contain the books. It is an hyperbole common enough, [especially in the East,] and justifiable, when no more is intended than that it would fill an incredible number of volumes. It would be such a large and overgrown history as never was; such as would justify all other writings, and leave us no room for them. What volumes would be filled with Christ's prayers, had we the record of all those He made, when He continued all night in prayer to God, without vain repetitions? Much more if all his sermons and conferences were particularly related, his miracles, cures, labors, sufferings; it would have been an endless thing.

3. *It was not advisable to write much;* for the world, in a moral sense, could not contain the books that should be written. Christ said not what He might have said to his disciples, because they were not able to bear it; and for the same reason the evangelists wrote not what they might have written: This word contain, is the word used, ch. 8: 37. My Word has no place in you; they would have been so many, that they would have found no room. People's time would have been spent in reading, and other duties would thereby have been crowded out. Much is overlooked of what is written, much forgotten, and much made matter of doubtful dispute; this would have been the case much more, if there had been such a world of books of equal authority and necessity; especially since it was requisite, that what was written should be meditated upon, and expounded, which God wisely thought fit to leave room for. Parents and ministers, in giving instruction, must consider the capacities of those they teach, and, like Jacob, must take heed of overdriving. Let us be thankful for the books that are written, and not prize them the less for their plainness and brevity, but diligently improve what God has thought fit to reveal, and long to be where our capacities shall be so elevated and enlarged, that there will be no danger of their being overloaded.

The evangelist concluding with *Amen*, the ehy sets to his seal; and let us set to ours, an *Amen* of faith, subscribing to the Gospel; and an *Amen* of satisfaction in what is written, as able to make us wise to salvation. AMEN.

PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS.

V. 18—25. The resolutions which upright young converts rashly form and break, are sometimes at length performed, when in a course of years they have been humbled and proved. They must first learn, that 'without Christ they can do nothing;' and then they will be shown, that they 'can do all things through Him who strengtheneth them.' (2 Cor. 2: 14—17. 3: 4—6. 12: 7—10.) Yet sufferings, pain, and death will appear formidable to the most experienced Christian: nor wot, did he be willing to meet them, did he not hope to glorify God by so doing; and were he not desirous of being present with his Lord. (2 Cor. 5: 1—8.) But with these objects presented to faith, he obeys the Redeemer's call, and follows Him through death to glory; and the more love he had experienced, the readier will he be to tread in his steps.—Curiosity is too

apt to interrupt us in our course: a thousand questions are started and discussed, about which Jesus says to us, 'What is that to thee? Follow thou Me.' If we attend to this voice, even 'death itself will be gain to us,' and we shall be ready for his coming. (Phil. 1: 19—26.) While here, we must live by faith in the sure testimony of his Word.—We ought to bless God for all that is written in the Scriptures; but we may also be thankful that they are so compendious. We may, however, anticipate joy in heaven from a far more complete knowledge of all that Jesus did and said; as well as from the conduct of his providence and grace, in his dealing with each of us. May this be the happiness of the writer and of every reader! Amen.

SCOTT.

Verse 25.

The concluding words are generally understood to be *hyperbolic*; but perhaps they also intimate, that if every one of the actions and words of Jesus had been written, the books would have been so voluminous, as to counteract their intention; for men, in the present state

of the world, would neither be able to purchase, peruse, or remember them; and the men of the world, would have made the multiplicity of them an additional reason for not receiving them. SCOTT.

ADDITIONAL NOTES. With reference to the closing scene of our Lord's life, upon the cross, the Rev. Mr. Townsend, in his 'New Testament arranged in chronological order,' judiciously remarks: 'It is singular that our translators have not observed the three modes of expression adopted by the evangelists; [in describing the death of Christ:] Mark and Luke say "He expired," John 19: 30. "He yielded up his spirit." Matthew 27: 50, "He dismissed his spirit." The spirits of mere men are in general violently separated from the body in a way over which they can have no control: it was for our Lord only to die as the Prince of Life, by an act of supernatural power, and to separate at his own pleasure, and at his own command, the spirit from the body.' See note on Matt. 27: 50. from Doddridge and Scott. Ed.

Though simplicity of manner is common to all our Lord's historians, yet the simplicity of one differs from that of another. The style of John

is thought to be more idiomatic, and less conformable to syntactic order than that of any other writer in the New Testament; his manner of speaking an author destitute of the advantages of education. His mode of expression are also, in many instances, peculiar. Yet, though he appears, more than any of the evangelists, to excel in that artless simplicity, which is scarcely compatible with the subtlety of disputation, we have, in his work, a fuller display of the evidences of our religion, as it then stood, than in all the rest. Not without design, he mostly passes over the passages of our Lord's history and teaching, which the other evangelists had treated at large, or touches them but slightly; while he records miracles overlooked by the rest, and expatiates on the sublime doctrines of the pre-existence, the divinity, and the incarnation of the Word, the great ends of his mission, and the blessings of his purchase. CAMPBELL.

A HARMONY

OF THE SEVERAL GOSPELS ACCORDING TO DR. DODDRIDGE.

| SECT. | MATTHEW. | MARK. | LUKE. | JOHN. | SECT. | MATTHEW. | MARK. | LUKE. | JOHN. |
|-------|----------------|-------|----------------|---------|-------|----------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1 | | | 1: 1-4 | 1: 1-14 | 104 | | | | 8: 30-47 |
| 2 | | | 1: 5-25 | | 105 | | | | 8: 48, ad. fn. |
| 3 | | | 1: 26-38 | | 106 | | | 10: 17-24 | |
| 4 | | | 1: 39-54 | | 107 | | | 10: 25-37 | |
| 5 | | | 1: 57-66 | | 108 | | | 10: 38, ad. fn. | |
| 6 | | | 1: 67, ad. fn. | | 109 | | | 11: 1-13 | |
| 7 | 1: 18, ad. fn. | | 2: 1-12 | | 110 | | | 11: 37, ad. fn. | |
| 8 | 1: 17 | | 2: 13-21 | | 111 | | | 12: 1-12 | |
| 9 | | | 2: 22-39 | | 112 | | | 12: 13-21 | |
| 10 | | | 2: 40, ad. fn. | | 113 | | | 12: 22-34 | |
| 11 | | | 3: 1-6 | | 114 | | | 12: 35-48 | |
| 12 | | | 3: 7-18 | | 115 | | | 12: 49, ad. fn. | |
| 13 | | | 3: 19-23 | | 116 | | | 13: 1-9 | |
| 14 | | | 3: 24-35 | | 117 | | | 13: 10-23 | |
| 15 | | | 3: 36-43 | | 118 | | | 13: 24, ad. fn. | |
| 16 | | | 3: 44-51 | | 119 | | | 14: 1-14 | |
| 17 | | | 3: 52-59 | | 120 | | | 14: 15-24 | |
| 18 | | | 3: 60-67 | | 121 | | | 14: 25, ad. fn. | |
| 19 | | | 3: 68-75 | | 122 | | | 15: 1-10 | |
| 20 | | | 3: 76-83 | | 123 | | | 15: 11, ad. fn. | |
| 21 | | | 3: 84-91 | | 124 | | | 16: 1-18 | |
| 22 | | | 3: 92-99 | | 125 | | | 16: 19, ad. fn. | |
| 23 | | | 3: 100-107 | | 126 | | | 17: 1-11 | |
| 24 | | | 3: 108-115 | | 127 | | | 17: 12-19 | |
| 25 | | | 3: 116-123 | | 128 | | | 17: 20, ad. fn. | |
| 26 | | | 3: 124-131 | | 129 | | | 18: 1-14 | |
| 27 | | | 3: 132-139 | | 130 | | | | 9: 1-23 |
| 28 | | | 3: 140-147 | | 131 | | | | 8: 24-38 |
| 29 | | | 3: 148-155 | | 132 | | | | 9: 39, ad. fn. |
| 30 | | | 3: 156-163 | | 133 | | | | 10: 1-10 |
| 31 | | | 3: 164-171 | | 134 | | | | 10: 11-21 |
| 32 | | | 3: 172-179 | | 135 | | | | 10: 22, ad. fn. |
| 33 | | | 3: 180-187 | | 136 | | | | |
| 34 | | | 3: 188-195 | | 137 | | | | |
| 35 | | | 3: 196-203 | | 138 | | | | |
| 36 | | | 3: 204-211 | | 139 | | | | |
| 37 | | | 3: 212-219 | | 140 | | | | |
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| 40 | | | 3: 236-243 | | 143 | | | | |
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| 96 | | | 3: 684-691 | | 199 | | | | |
| 97 | | | 3: 692-699 | | 200 | | | | |
| 98 | | | 3: 700-707 | | 201 | | | | |
| 99 | | | 3: 708-715 | | 202 | | | | |
| 100 | | | 3: 716-723 | | 203 | | | | |
| 101 | | | 3: 724-731 | | | | | | |
| 102 | | | 3: 732-739 | | | | | | |
| 103 | | | 3: 740-747 | | | | | | |
| 104 | | | 3: 748-755 | | | | | | |
| 105 | | | 3: 756-763 | | | | | | |
| 106 | | | 3: 764-771 | | | | | | |
| 107 | | | 3: 772-779 | | | | | | |
| 108 | | | 3: 780-787 | | | | | | |
| 109 | | | 3: 788-795 | | | | | | |
| 110 | | | 3: 796-803 | | | | | | |
| 111 | | | 3: 804-811 | | | | | | |
| 112 | | | 3: 812-819 | | | | | | |
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| 114 | | | 3: 828-835 | | | | | | |
| 115 | | | 3: 836-843 | | | | | | |
| 116 | | | 3: 844-851 | | | | | | |
| 117 | | | 3: 852-859 | | | | | | |
| 118 | | | 3: 860-867 | | | | | | |
| 119 | | | 3: 868-875 | | | | | | |
| 120 | | | 3: 876-883 | | | | | | |
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| 133 | | | 3: 980-987 | | | | | | |
| 134 | | | 3: 988-995 | | | | | | |
| 135 | | | 3: 996-1003 | | | | | | |
| 136 | | | 3: 1004-1011 | | | | | | |
| 137 | | | 3: 1012-1019 | | | | | | |
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| 144 | | | 3: 1068-1075 | | | | | | |
| 145 | | | 3: 1076-1083 | | | | | | |
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| 160 | | | 3: 1196-1203 | | | | | | |
| 161 | | | 3: 1204-1211 | | | | | | |
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| 190 | | | 3: 1436-1443 | | | | | | |
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| 192 | | | | | | | | | |

